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Innovations for Defence Excellence

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Why in News

Recently, the Defence Minister has approved the budgetary support of Rs. 498.8 crore to **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** challenge under the **Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)** for the next five years.

Earlier, the Defence Minister released an E-booklet titled '20 Reforms in 2020' highlighting the major **reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2020.**

Key Points

- **About:**

- The iDEX initiative was launched by the **Prime Minister in April 2018**.
- It aims to achieve **self - reliance and foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace** by engaging Industries including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**), start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia.
- iDEX is **funded and managed by the DIO**, and functions as the executive arm of DIO.
- DIO is a '**not for profit**' company registered under **Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013**.
- Its two founding members are **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) & Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** - Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). HAL and BEL are **navratna companies**.
- It will provide the engaging industries with **funding and other support to carry out Research & Development**.
 - Self-reliance in manufacturing of defence equipment is a crucial factor for **maintaining India's strategic autonomy**.
 - **India's arms imports fell 33% between 2011-15 and 2016-20**, said a report released by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.
- iDEX has partnered with leading incubators in the country to provide hand holding, technical support and guidance to the winners of iDEX challenges.

- **Other Related Initiatives:**

- **Defence Industrial Corridors:**

To support the growth of the Defence sector and enhance manufacturing capacity in the sector, two **Defence Industrial Corridors** are being set up in India, one in **Uttar Pradesh** and another in **Tamil Nadu**.

- **Strategic Partnership (SP) Model:**

It identifies a few Indian private companies who would initially tie up with global **Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)** to seek technology transfers to set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains. It is a part of **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**.

Under DAP 2020, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has also notified a '**positive indigenisation list**' of 108 items.

- **Artificial Intelligence in Defence:**

- **N Chandrasekaran Task Force** was set up in 2018 to study implications of AI in national security.
- **Defence Artificial Intelligence Project Agency (DAIPA)** was created in March, 2019.
- DAIPA aims for greater thrust on **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** in Defence, formulation of an AI roadmap for each Defence PSU and Ordnance Factory Board to develop AI-enable products.

Source:TH