



Current Affairs of the Day

State obliged to facilitate access to education says Supreme Court

A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah pronounced the verdict in favour of two students from Ladakh, who were nominated by the Union Territory administration for MBBS studies. They were allocated seats in the prestigious Lady Hardinge and Maulana Azad Medical Colleges. However, they were not admitted.

Highlights:

1. The students moved to the top court for justice, saying their fundamental right to education was at the whims and fancies of the government authorities.
2. The court said the state has an “affirmative obligation to facilitate access to education at all levels”. “This obligation assumes far greater importance for students whose background (by virtue of such characteristics as caste, class, gender, religion, disability and geographical region) imposes formidable obstacles on their path to accessing quality education,” the recent judgment read.
3. “We would like to take this opportunity to underscore the importance of creating an enabling environment to make it possible for students, such as the petitioners, to pursue professional education. While the right to pursue higher (professional) education has not been spelt out as a fundamental right in Part III of the Constitution, it bears emphasis that access to professional education is not a governmental largesse,” Justice Chandrachud wrote in the judgment authored for the Bench.

Panel’s vision

1. The court referred to the vision envisaged by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
2. “As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities,” the court said, referring to one of the Committee’s clauses.



India, Russia committed to S-400 deal: envoy

India and Russia are “committed” to completing their contract for the S-400 missile system, due to be delivered to India at the end of the year, both countries opposed U.S. sanctions on the issue.

Highlights:

1. India and Russia do not recognise bilateral sanctions as they are illegal tools of unfair competition, pressure and blackmail. This was clearly stated by the two Foreign Ministers in their exchange.
2. The S-400 contract is on track for delivery of the systems, despite America’s repeated threat that the deal could attract sanctions under its CAATSA law. Washington has already sanctioned China over its purchase of the S-400.

Background:

What is CAATSA?

The Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) aims to counter the aggressions by Russia, Iran and North Korea. Its major objective is to discourage exports of Russian defence equipment. CAATSA banned 39 Russian entities, dealings with which could make third parties like India liable to sanctions.

Implications on India’s weapon purchase

1. It directly affects India’s arms procurement from Russia.
2. India has already signed a deal for the S-400 air defence system. Some other projects like 1135.6 frigates and Ka226T helicopters will also come under the US scanner.
3. CAATSA can affect India-Russia joint defence ventures like India-Russia joint ventures are - Brahmos Aerospace.
4. Indian manufacturing entities generally import spare parts from various Russian companies for defence equipment. Raw materials, components, spare parts and research products will also affect CAATSA.



SCO Members



‘India’s public debt level among highest in emerging economies’

News: India’s public debt level is among the highest in emerging economies with a quantitative easing programme underway, while its debt affordability is among the weakest, Moody’s Investors Service said.

Highlights:

1. The Reserve Bank of India’s programme aims to stabilise the domestic bond market, the report titled, ‘Quantitative easing programs are largely positive, but risks vary across economies’, noted.
2. While the bank does not operate in the primary market, dividend payments and transfers of excess reserves to the government fund part of the budget deficit, the report said.
3. The bank targets buying more than ₹3 trillion [\$41.3 billion] of government bonds this fiscal year, having purchased ₹3.1 trillion bonds in the previous fiscal year,” Moody’s added in the report. “Most economies’ debt burdens will rise before they stabilise over the next few years,” it said.
4. Depending on recovery prospects and future debt servicing costs, high debt levels may become unsustainable for the more vulnerable economies,” the report warned.



'India can be hardware manufacturing hub'

There is an opportunity for India to become a hardware manufacturing location as the world's technology majors have been moving their supply chains out of China over the past 18 months.

Highlights:

1. The changing relationship between China and the U.S. and some other countries is one of the most significant geopolitical developments of this decade, and the change was certainly impacting the technology sector.
2. We are seeing not a decoupling, but some drifting apart. We are definitely seeing an impact in terms of hardware supply chains, with many companies moving parts to, (or) in some instances, perhaps, almost all, or all of their hardware manufacturing out of China to other countries.
3. This is something that creates potential new opportunities from a longer-term perspective for, say, India, as well as others to make themselves more of a location for hardware manufacturing. Capacity had been shifting to Mexico, Vietnam, South Korea, and some southeast Asian countries.