



Current Affairs of the Day

Doubts over defence supplies to India

With tensions escalating between Russia and the West over the Ukraine crisis, India, which has major defence cooperation with Moscow and Kyiv, faces uncertainty over timely deliveries in the near future in addition to the lingering threat of the U.S. sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) over the S-400 deal.

Highlights:

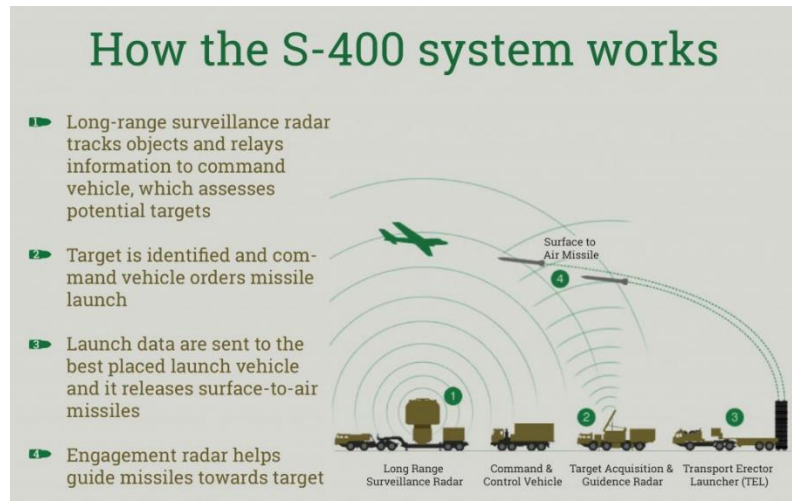
1. In the past, tensions between Russia and Ukraine had considerably delayed the modernisation of the An-32 transport fleet of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
2. It is too early to say at the moment, but there could be delays in deliveries from Russia both due to their own domestic commitments as well the sanctions imposed by the West.
3. The current crisis could also complicate the CAATSA waiver India is looking for from the U.S. administration, two officials independently said. While the S-400 deliveries began in December and are underway, clarity on the timely completion was awaited.
4. With the current offensive, the Russian defence industry may be preoccupied to supply to their own forces, a military officer observed, adding that they hoped it would be able to ensure timely deliveries.
5. Several observers termed the severance of links and economic sanctions by the West on Russia "unprecedented." In this backdrop, India requires a functioning supply chain relationship with Russia for spares and support, which is critical for its military.





Traditional supplier

1. While Russia has been a traditional military supplier sharing platforms and technologies that others would not, the cooperation has further deepened in recent years. The defence trade between the two countries has crossed \$15 billion since 2018.



2. Even today, over 60% of Indian military inventory is of Russian origin, especially with respect to fighter jets, tanks, helicopters and submarines among others, while several deals are in the pipeline.
3. For instance, in December, India and Russia signed a ₹5,000-crore deal for 6.1 lakh AK-203 assault rifles to be manufactured jointly in Uttar Pradesh.
4. In addition, Russia is manufacturing two stealth frigates for the Navy. They are to be delivered next year onwards, while another two are being manufactured by the Goa Shipyard Limited under technology transfer.

Deals with Ukraine

1. India had signed a separate deal with Ukraine for eight Zorya-Mashproekt gas turbine engines for the frigates.
2. Ukraine is also upgrading over 100 An-32 transport aircraft of the IAF under a deal finalised in 2009.
3. At Aero India in February 2021, Ukraine signed four agreements worth \$70 million, which includes the sale of new weapons as well as maintenance and upgrade of the existing ones in service with the military, as reported earlier.





‘War may spur shift of IT jobs from Russia, Ukraine to India’

1. The Russia-Ukraine conflict may disrupt the services of 80,000 to 1 lakh highly qualified professionals with digital engineering and IT skills from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and other neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe, according to Everest Group.
2. These jobs will have to move to safe havens and about 70% of these are likely to come to India, the Dallas-based management consulting and IT analyst firm said.
3. Ukraine is a key global delivery location for IT and engineering R&D services. Now, the war has created widespread uncertainty and significant concerns for companies, including Indian players, in the region, the firm said.

‘Ukraine war will lift import bill, widen current account deficit’

1. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is set to push the country’s import bills beyond the \$600-billion mark this fiscal, given India’s import dependence on crude oil, natural gas, gems and jewellery, edible oils and fertilizers, which can lead to a spike in inflation, wider current account deficit, and a falling rupee, India Ratings warned.
2. The rating agency said the ongoing geopolitical risks arising from the Russia-Ukraine war would push India’s import bills higher for items such as mineral oils and gas, gems and jewellery, edible oils and fertilizers.
3. The impact will be felt more on inflation, a widening current account deficit and a falling rupee. The ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine war on the domestic economy will be felt via higher global commodity prices — crude oil has been on a boil, surging to \$103.15 a barrel in February 2022.

When the maximum is minimum: Winter days in 2021-22 coldest in 71 years, shows IMD data

1. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the second part of its sixth assessment report, its latest analysis of the wide-ranging and



complex impact that the climate crisis is likely to have, with some irreversible changes that have already taken place.

2. According to India Meteorological Department's (IMD) gridded temperature dataset, this was the coldest winter India has experienced since the winter of 1951-52 by maximum temperature, largely a result of unseasonal rainfall.
3. The average maximum temperature in India this winter (up to February 27) was 24.29°C. This is 1.51°C less than the average temperature for the December-February interval in the 1981-2010 period, considered normal.
4. On no day this winter was India's average maximum temperature above normal.

SC enforces a landmark ruling on the death penalty

More than four decades after a landmark ruling on death sentence cases, a bench in the Supreme Court has made the psychological evaluation of the condemned prisoner mandatory, along with seeking a report on the inmate's conduct at the time of examining whether the gallows remains the only fitting punishment.

CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab

- Capital punishment is violative of Art. 19 of the Constitution because the freedom guaranteed therein cannot be enjoyed without the basic right to life.
- Capital punishment as an alternative punishment in Sec. 302 of IPC violates Art. 21.
- India was a party to the Stockholm Declaration of 1977 was committed to abolish death sentence.
- The court through the majority of four judges rejected all the contention and did not find it to be unconstitutional.

Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980)

1. The measure has been adopted by a bench, headed by Justice Uday U Lalit, which took recourse to the spirit of the Supreme Court's verdict in Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980).



2. This verdict established the doctrine of “rarest of rare” crime in handing down capital punishment while mandating a comparative analysis of aggravating and mitigating circumstances in connection to the accused.

3. Taking a cue from the Bachan Singh verdict, justice Lalit, in a series of death sentences cases, has recently held that “complete assistance” to the court in such matters would necessitate the production of not just the evidence in the case but also the latest state of the mental health of the prisoner.

4. The Bachan Singh case laid down that a court must scrutinise both the crime as well as the criminal, and then decide whether the death penalty is the only suitable punishment in the facts of the case.

5. Emphasis is to be also laid on the aggravating and mitigating factors which are dependent upon the facts and circumstances of the case, it held.

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ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR & AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

FOR

- It deters people and other criminals.
- It is a social need.
- It saves the state money.
- Humanitarian.
- It is definite.
- It is moral war.
- Selected process to fight with anti social elements,
- It is legal demand.

AGAINST

- It cannot deter the criminals and peoples.
- It is not a social need.
- It does not save the public money.
- It is inhuman and barbaric.
- Law is not definitive but change.
- Moral values are not inherited.
- It is not selected process to fight with anti social elements.

The aggravating and mitigating factors:

1. In Machi Singh vs State of Punjab (1983), the Supreme Court elucidated the doctrine of “rarest of rare” and set down some guiding principles in the death sentences cases.

2. The aggravating circumstances included the manner in which the crime was committed, the motive for committing the crime, the severity of the crime, and the victim of the crime. The mitigating circumstances comprised of the possibility of reformation and rehabilitation of an accused, his mental health and his antecedents.

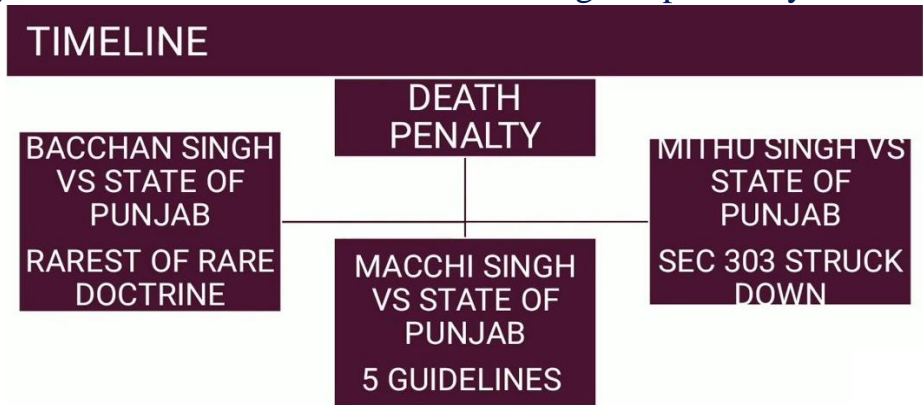
3. In 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that unexplained delay in execution was a ground for commutation of the death penalty, and an inmate, his or her kin, or even a public-spirited citizen, could file a writ petition seeking such commutation.



4. It held that prolonging the execution of the death sentence has a “dehumanising effect” on condemned prisoners who have to face the agony of waiting for years under the shadow of death during the pendency of their mercy plea.

5. In the same year, a Constitution bench also held that a review petition by a death-row convict will

be heard by a three-judge bench in open court. Such cases were earlier being considered by two-judge benches in the judges’ chamber without any oral arguments.



<p>MAINS DAWP</p>	<p>Q1. What is the Non-alignment policy of India? Discuss whether non-alignment is an expression of strategic autonomy or a compromise of it.</p> <p>Q2. What is the “Rarest of the rare” doctrine? Discuss its significance and challenges to its practice.</p>
<p>MCQs</p>	<p>Q1. Which of the following countries border with Ukraine?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belarus 2. Poland 3. Romania 4. Hungary <p>Select the correct answer from the codes given below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 and 2 only b. 3 and 4 only c. 2, 3 and 4 d. 1, 2, 3 and 4