



Tension Between Russia-Germany

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Why in News

Recently, tensions between Russia and Germany have deepened over the **alleged poisoning of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny**.

Germany has **threatened sanctions against Russia** which, in turn, has **accused Germany of delaying the investigation** on the matter.

Key Points

- Alexei Navalny is Russia's **opposition leader and anti-corruption campaigner** who was evacuated to Germany after falling ill.
- Germany claims that the opposition leader has been **poisoned using the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok**.
 - It is **one of the strongest accusations yet from Germany** on the basis that the deadly substance has been used by the Russian authorities, in the past as well.
- Germany, which **currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union (EU)**, will discuss possible sanctions against Russia if it fails to provide an explanation.
 - The EU can discuss sanctions on **Nord Stream 2**, which is a **critical energy export project** for the Russian government.

Novichok

- It means "**newcomer**" in Russian and applies to a **group of advanced nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s**, under a programme codenamed **Foliant**.
 - Nerve agents act by **blocking messages from the nerves to the muscles**, causing a collapse of many bodily functions.
 - The main nerve agents are the **chemicals sarin (GB), soman (GD), tabun (GA) and VX**. **Sarin was used by Syrian air force** in chemical attacks on a village in Syria's western Hama region in 2017.
 - Nerve agents are **man-made and have been manufactured for use in chemical warfare**.
- These nerve agents were **designed to escape detection** and are **extremely toxic**.

Nord Stream 2

- **About:**

- It is a **nearly constructed 1,200-kilometre pipeline** from **Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea**.
- It will **run alongside the already constructed Nord Stream** and will **double the amount of gas** being funnelled through the Baltics to 110 billion cubic meters per year.

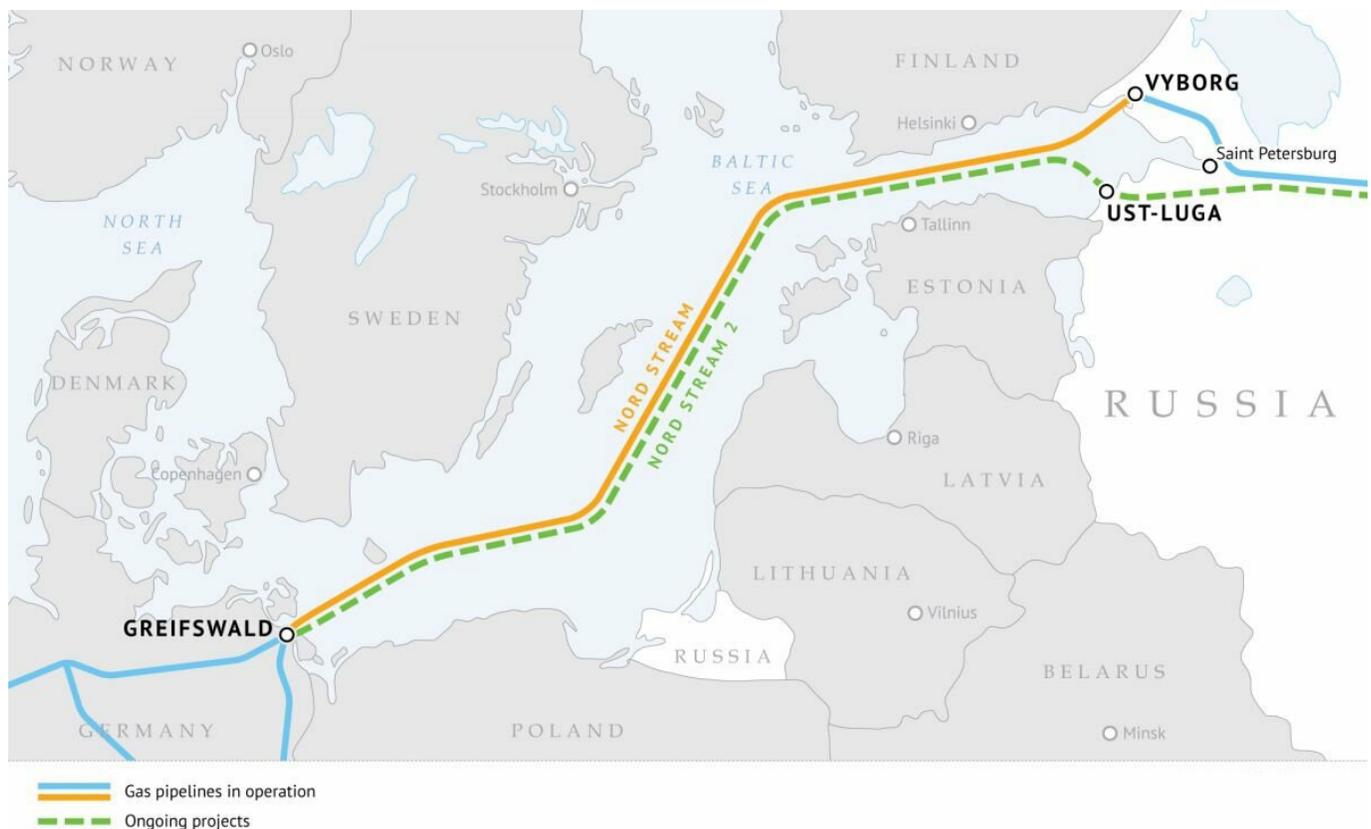
- **Benefits:**

- It is intended to **provide Europe with a sustainable gas supply** while **providing Russia with more direct access to the European gas market**.
- Its proposed route **enters the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of three other countries: Finland, Sweden and Denmark**. National governments and local authorities **will benefit economically** from investment and employment in the pipeline.

- **Security Concerns and Criticism:**

The project has been **criticized by the USA and Germany's Eastern neighbours** like Poland, Czech Republic etc. citing **Russian dependence as a threat** to the common market and the EU's strategic interests.

The pipeline will **enable Russia to increase its military presence in the Baltic Sea** and also to **transmit military information** on the movements of naval vessels.



Source: TH