S-400 Triumf Missile System

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Why in News

The first group of Indian military specialists are scheduled to depart for Moscow (Russia) soon to undergo training courses on the S-400 Triumf missile defence system.

Key Points

- **Background:**
  
  In October 2018, India signed a 5.43 billion USD deal with Russia for the S-400 Triumf missile system despite objections from the US and the threat of sanctions under Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
**About the S-400 Triumf Missile System:**
- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia. It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed **Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).**
- The system **can engage all types of aerial targets** including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and ballistic and cruise missiles within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km.
- The system **can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously.**

**Significance for India:**
- From India’s point of view, **China is also buying the system.** In 2015, China signed an agreement with Russia to purchase six battalions of the system. Its delivery began in January 2018.
  - China’s acquisition of the S-400 system has been viewed as a “game changer” in the region. However, its effectiveness against India is limited.
- India’s acquisition is **crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war,** including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

**India Russia Defence Cooperation**

**Important Pillar:**
- Defence cooperation is an important pillar of the **India-Russia strategic partnership.**

**Regular Meetings:**
- The two **Defence Ministers meet annually,** alternately in Russia and India, to discuss and review the status of ongoing projects and other issues of military technical cooperation.
- In 2008, the **High Level Monitoring Committee (HLMC)** was set up with **Defence Secretary** from the Ministry of Defence (India) and **Director of Federal Service** for Military Technical Cooperation (FSMTC - Russia) as its co-chairs.

**Downturn:**
- While India and Russia’s economic relationship has been a weak point in the **post-Cold War period,** the US emerged as the top arms supplier to India, pushing Russia to the second position based on data for the years 2011-13.
• **Current Scenario:**
  - The low of 2013-14 has since been corrected and the crucial deal of S-400 Triumf Air Defence Missile System was initiated despite fears of sanctions under CAATSA.
  - As India has been spreading its supplier base with Israel, US and France, Russia still remains a major supplier. This is indicated by following latest developments:
    - India has approved proposals to acquire **Mig29** and **Su30 MKI** fighter aircraft from Russia for 2.4 billion USD.
    - The two sides are successfully moving towards the implementation of a **AK-203 rifle contract** and **200 Ka-226T utility helicopters** supplies.
  - **According to a paper published** by Stimson Center, 86% of the equipment, weapons and platforms currently in military service in India are of **Russian** origin.

• **From Imports to Joint Production:**
  - Over the years, cooperation in the military technical sphere has evolved from a purely buyer-seller relationship to joint research, design development and production of state of the art military platforms.
  - Production of the **Brahmos cruise missile** is an example of this trend.

• **Joint Exercises:**
  - **Exercise INDRA**, is a joint, tri services exercise between India and Russia.

• **Russia’s Military Equipment Deployed by India:**
  - **Navy:**
    - The Navy’s only active aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya** is from Russia.
    - A **nuclear attack submarine Chakra II** is also in service.
  - **Army:**
    - Army’s **T-90** and **T-72** main battle tanks.
  - **Air Force:**
    - IAF’s **Su30** MKI fighter.

**Source:**TH