

UPSC Syllabus Topic GS Paper 2 International Relations.

India's Strategy in Defence Modernization – Advancements in Sukhoi Aircraft

The Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a twin-engine, multi-role fighter jet developed by Russia's Sukhoi and India's HAL, utilized by the Indian Air Force. Key features include thrust vectoring for enhanced maneuverability and a range of up to 3,000 km. It is equipped with advanced avionics, radar, and has the capacity to carry a variety of weapons. Introduced in 2002, it continues to be a cornerstone of India's air defense.

India is upgrading its SU30 MKI jets to "Super Sukhoi," employing a diverse technology mix that incorporates advancements from Russia, Israel, France, and Britain.

Enhancements Include:

1. **Israeli Avionics:** Integration of advanced avionics from Israel.
2. **French Navigation Systems:** Inclusion of navigation systems from France.
3. **Compatibility with British Equipment:** Ensuring compatibility with British equipment for improved performance.
4. **Virupaksha AESA Radar System:** Introduction of the Virupaksha AESA radar system, expanding the range of compatible weapons, including those from Europe and America.
5. **Engine Improvements:** Plans to enhance the jet's engines, potentially utilizing technology from France and America, with the aim of extending the jets' service life until 2050.

Significance of the Upgrade:

1. **Foreign Policy Reflection:** Demonstrates India's independent foreign policy by selectively incorporating cutting-edge technologies globally.
2. **Integration of Indian Weaponry:** The indigenous radar system facilitates the integration of Indian-made weapons, enhancing the capabilities of the Indian Air Force.
3. **Addressing Regional Security Challenges:** Critical for India in tackling evolving security challenges, particularly with the rising presence of stealth aircraft in the region.
4. **Breaking Traditional Aviation Norms:** Sets a unique precedent by combining Russian aircraft design with technologies from the West and Israel.

Terminology:

1. **Virupaksha AESA Radar System:** An advanced radar system designed for the Sukhoi-30MKI aircraft.
2. **Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Missile Systems:** Air-to-air missiles engineered to engage targets at long distances, typically over 37 km, beyond the direct visual range of the pilot.

UPSC Syllabus Topic GS Paper 2 Indian Polity – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

The Necessity of Guidelines to Safeguard Journalists from Digital Device Seizures

Preserving Freedom of the Press: Guidelines are essential to thwart the seizure of journalists' devices based on unsubstantiated claims, preserving their ability to report impartially and objectively.

Ensuring Source Confidentiality: Clear rules are necessary to guarantee the confidentiality of journalists' sources. Unauthorized seizures of devices can compromise sensitive information and discourage whistleblowers.

Protecting Journalists' Livelihoods: Journalists depend on their digital devices for their work, and seizing these tools without proper cause can hinder their ability to make a living.

Upholding Privacy and Rights: Guidelines are crucial to respecting the privacy and fundamental rights of journalists, as acknowledged by the Court, preventing unjustified intrusions into their personal and professional lives.

Maintaining Data Integrity: It is vital to have procedures in place that prevent data on seized devices from being leaked, tampered with, or wrongly accessed, ensuring the integrity of journalistic work and investigations.

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What are some comparable incidents that have transpired in the past?

Similarities can be drawn with other cases involving the arrest of Indian nationals by foreign authorities.

- **Case of Kulbhushan Jadhav:** He was sentenced to death in Pakistan in 2017 on charges of espionage and sabotage. India approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which directed Pakistan to reevaluate Jadhav's trial and conviction and grant India consular access.
- **Case of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman:** His aircraft was downed by Pakistani fighter jets, and he was captured on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control. However, he was later released following intense back-channel communications between India and Pakistan.

What are India's alternatives in the Qatar case?

1. **Legal Recourse under Qatari law:** India can pursue a legal battle with the objective of reducing the sentence to imprisonment.
2. **India-Qatar Prisoner Transfer Agreement:** A 2015 agreement regarding the transfer of sentenced prisoners allows Indian citizens sentenced in Qatar to choose to serve their sentence in India.
3. **ICJ Approach for Vienna Convention Violation:** Similar to the Jadhav case, India could approach the International Court of Justice, citing a violation of the Vienna Convention. Article 36 of the Convention requires immediate notification of an arrest and the right to consular access.

4. **Diplomatic Dialogue:** India can exert diplomatic pressure on Qatar due to significant economic ties, such as being the largest provider of LNG to India and hosting the largest expatriate group from India.
5. **Engage Civil Society:** Involving global human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, could mobilize support and advocate for the release of the individuals.

What should be done?

This challenging diplomatic issue demands thoughtful consideration and strategic action. India's response should factor in the implications of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, international precedents, and the broader context of India-Qatar relations. Whether through diplomatic dialogues, political interventions, legal appeals, or a combination of these strategies, India has the potential to seek a resolution.