

Iskander-M missile system

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In news— Russia has promised its ally Belarus, the delivery of Iskander-M missiles system (nuclear capable) in the coming months.

About Iskander-M missile system-

- **Codenamed “SS-26 Stone” by NATO**, Iskander-M is a term used by Russia to **define both the transporter-erector launch system and the short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) it fires.**
- The system **can also fire ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs)** – the SSC-7 and the SSC-8.
- It has been exclusively used by the Russian military, whereas Iskander-E is the one meant for export.
- **It has a range of 500 km** and it can **carry a payload of up to 700 kg.**
- It is **capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads.**
- The conventional warheads can be equipped with include cluster bombs, electromagnetic pulse (EMP) warheads and bunker-buster munitions, according to US-based Missile Defence Advocacy Alliance (MDAA).
- **The export variant, Iskander-E, has a range of 280 km with a reduced 480 kg payload.**
- **While the Iskander system was inducted by Russia in 2006, its development picked pace in the late 1980s** after the “Oka” SRBM or the OTR-23 was banned under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty.
- **The Oka was Russia’s first attempt to replace the Soviet Scud missiles and Iskander was the second.**
- Russia first used the Iskander in combat in Georgia in 2008.
- According to a US-based think tank, these missiles are

designed to confuse missile defences by flying on a low trajectory and manoeuvring in flight to strike targets within 2 to 5 metres accuracy.

- In the past too, Russia has used the Iskander system to project power against Europe, more so because of its ability to be fitted with tactical nuclear warheads.