

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The Supreme Court asked the Government to respond to a petition filed by a body representing workers of app based delivery and transport services seeking statutory benefits, social security rights and recognition as “unorganised workers”. A Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao issued notice on the petition filed by the Indian Federation of App based Transport Workers (IFAT), which represents workers employed by food and taxi apps such as Zomato, Swiggy, Ola and Uber.

A supersonic missile assisted torpedo system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was successfully launched from Wheeler Island in Odisha. “The system is a next generation missile based standoff torpedo delivery system. During the mission, full range capability of the missile was successfully demonstrated. The system has been designed to enhance antisubmarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo,” the DRDO said in a statement.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju told the Rajya Sabha that there was a call from within the judiciary and parliamentarians to change the collegium system for appointment of judges. He said a draft memorandum of procedure for bringing transparency and accountability to the system was submitted by the Government to the Supreme Court, and it was pending. The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Bill passed by both the Houses of Parliament was declared ultra vires by the Supreme Court in 2015.

India’s retail inflation hardened for the second month in a row in November, touching 4.91% from 4.48% recorded in October, with urban parts experiencing a sharper rise in prices at a pace of 5.54% and vegetable prices jumping 7.45% from the previous month. Transport and communication inflation eased only marginally to 10.02% in November, from 10.9% in the previous month, despite tax cuts on petrol and diesel announced by the Centre in the first week of the month, followed by most States paring their own fuel duties in subsequent weeks. This suggests that upward price pressures persist, owing to the rise in input and commodity costs, as reflected in the wholesale price inflation touching a five month high of 12.54% in

S-400 AND CAATSA

- 1.The U.S. State Department spokesperson has said that there will be no “blanket” waiver for India, indicating that even if S-400 Triumf anti-aircraft missile systems deal is not sanctioned, other “significant” military and nuclear transactions between India and Russia could still trigger sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- 2.What’s the concern? There has been unease in Washington ever since 2016 when India announced the deal with Russia, which remains New Delhi’s biggest defence partner. Now, the S-400 deal could attract sanctions under US’ CAATSA law. The US has already sanctioned China and Turkey over similar purchases.
- 3.What is the S-400 air defence missile system? Why does India need it? 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).
- 4.What is CAATSA, and how did the S-400 deal fall foul of this Act? **Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)’s core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.** Enacted in 2017. Includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia’s defence and intelligence sectors.
- 5.What sanctions will be imposed? **prohibition on loans to the sanctioned person. prohibition of Export-Import bank assistance for exports to sanctioned persons.** prohibition on procurement by United States Government to procure goods or services from the sanctioned person. denial of visas to persons closely associated with the sanctioned person.
- 6.Significance of the deal: **The S-400 decision is a very strong example of how advanced our defence and strategic partnership is, and how strong Indian sovereignty is,** to choose its international partners, especially when it comes to issues of national interest and national security.

LOGISTICS AGREEMENTS AND THEIR BENEFITS

- 1.India is all set to conclude the bilateral logistics agreement with Russia (the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)) soon. About RELOS: **RELOS will be an important step forward in the military sphere as it aims at fostering interoperability and sharing of logistics.** The “long overdue” agreement was to have come up for signing in 2019 but that was put off pending finalisation of its terms. Does India Have Similar Arrangements With Other Countries? India has logistical exchange agreements with six other countries, including Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, partners US, Japan and Australia. Singapore, France and South Korea are the other countries with which similar arrangements have been effected.
- 2.**Logistics agreements**-The agreements are administrative arrangements facilitating access to military facilities for exchange of fuel and provisions on mutual agreement simplifying logistical support and increasing operational turnaround of the military when operating away from India. India has signed several logistics agreements with all Quad countries, France, Singapore and South Korea beginning with the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the U.S. in 2016.
- 3.Benefits of such logistics agreements: The Navy has been the biggest beneficiary of these administrative arrangements, signed with several countries, improving operational turnaround and increasing inter-operability on the high seas.
- 4.**LEMOA**- It is a tweaked India-specific version of the Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), which the U.S. has with several countries it has close military to military cooperation. It is also one of the three foundational agreements — as referred to by the U.S. LEMOA gives access, to both countries, to designated military facilities on either side for the purpose of refuelling and replenishment.

October.

In an escalation of the protests against the suspension of 12 Rajya Sabha members, the Opposition parties will hold a joint rally later this week in which the national heads of the parties will participate. Monday was the 13th day of the protest. With the Government remaining adamant on its position that the suspension would be revoked only if an apology is made on the floor of the House, the Opposition leaders, at a meeting in the morning, decided that there was an urgent need to intensify the protests.

The Delhi Government has sent a proposal to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas for schools and colleges to be reopened and would abide by its decision. The Education Department has proposed an immediate reopening of colleges and schools for Class VI and above, and of classes below from December 20.

Ladakh observed a shutdown to press for the demands of Statehood, constitutional guarantees on protecting local interests and increase in number of Parliament seats.

The Supreme Court adjourned to next year the hearing of the dispute among the neighbouring States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on the allocation of Krishna water. A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud scheduled the case for hearing on January 10. In the previous hearing in November, Telangana had submitted that there was no information forthcoming from Karnataka for the past 14 years about how much Krishna water it had diverted. In turn, Karnataka had argued that a lot of water was going to waste, "flowing down into the ocean" and there was a need to harness it for irrigation and to replenish dry regions.

India is awaiting responses from leaders of five Central Asian nations to an invitation to attend as chief guests of Republic Day, with the details expected to be finalised during a ministerial level meeting of the India-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' dialogue, which External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will host this weekend in Delhi.

Standing crops on more than 5.78 lakh hectares of land were damaged following untimely rain that lashed Odisha under the impact of Cyclone Jawad over the Bay of Bengal earlier this month.

India remained committed to promoting a free, open and rules -

G7 AND RUSSIA

1. G7 has sought to present a united front against Russian aggression toward Ukraine. This decision was taken at the recent G7 meeting, attended in person by the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his counterparts from France, Italy, Germany, Japan and Canada. This decision comes amid international concern that Russia could invade Ukraine. However, Russia denies planning any attack.

2. Issue-Ukraine is at the centre of a crisis in East-West relations as it accuses Russia of amassing tens of thousands of troops in preparation for a possible large-scale military offensive. Russia accuses Ukraine and the United States of destabilising behaviour, and has said it needs security guarantees for its own protection.

3. G7-The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations. Composition: The summit gathers leaders from the European Union (EU) and the following countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on international economic issues. It sometimes acts in concert to help resolve other global problems, with a special focus on economic issues.

4. How did G7 become G8? Russia was formally inducted as a member in the group in 1998, which led G7 to become G8. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin's condemnable act of moving Russian troops into eastern Ukraine and conquering Crimea in 2014 drew heavy criticism from the other G8 nations. The other nations of the group decided to suspend Russia from the G8 as a consequence of its actions and the group became G7 again in 2014.

BANK DEPOSIT INSURANCE PROGRAMME

1. The Central government has highlighted the significance of increase in bank deposit insurance cover, in case of problems occurring such as closure, from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. PM Modi is to address the nation on Bank Deposit Insurance. Background: Earlier, there used to be a bank deposit insurance cover of Rs 1 lakh for the deposit of the same amount or more under the 'Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Scheme'.

2. Deposit insurance- How is it regulated in India? Deposit insurance is providing insurance protection to the depositor's money by receiving a premium. The government has set up Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) under RBI to protect depositors if a bank fails. DICGC charges 10 paise per ₹100 of deposits held by a bank. The premium paid by the insured banks to the Corporation is paid by the banks and is not to be passed on to depositors. DICGC last revised the deposit insurance cover to ₹5 lakh in Feb, 2020, raising it from ₹ 1 lakh since 1993.

3. Deposit Insurance- Coverage: Deposit insurance covers all deposits such as savings, fixed, current, recurring deposits, etc. in all commercial banks, functioning in India. Deposits in State, Central and Primary cooperative banks, functioning in States/Union Territories are also covered.

4. Procedure for depositors to claim the money from a failed bank-The DICGC does not deal directly with depositors. The RBI (or the Registrar), on directing that a bank be liquidated, appoints an official liquidator to oversee the winding up process. Under the DICGC Act, the liquidator is supposed to hand over a list of all the insured depositors (with their dues) to the DICGC within three months of taking charge. The DICGC is supposed to pay these dues within two months of receiving this list.

ASIAN POWER INDEX FOR 2021

1. Asian Power Index ranks 26 nations and territories. It is released by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute. Highlights of the latest report: India has risen as the 4th most powerful country in the Asia-Pacific region for comprehensive power out of 26 countries, with an overall score of 37.7 out of 100.

2. India's overall score declined by 2 points compared to 2020. India again falls short of the major power threshold in 2021. India is one of 18 countries in Asia to trend downward in its overall score in 2021.

3. The top 10 countries for overall power in the Asia-Pacific region are: United States China Japan India Russia Australia South Korea Singapore Indonesia Thailand

based order rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion, the Centre informed Parliament on Monday while reiterating support for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). "Government of India is committed to safeguarding maritime interests and strengthening security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to ensure a favourable and positive maritime environment," Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. India also supported freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded commerce based on the principles of international law, reflected notably in the UNCLOS 1982.

FINN'S WEAVER BIRD

1. Finn's weaver (*Ploceus megarhynchus*) bird, numbering less than 500 in India, which until now was listed as "vulnerable" in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List has been uplisted to "endangered" category.
2. The bird is primarily found in Terai grasslands in Uttarakhand and western Uttar Pradesh, apart from a few pockets in Assam.