

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated two ordinances that would allow the Union Government to extend the tenures of the directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) from two years to up to five years. The chiefs of the Central agencies currently have a fixed two year tenure, but can now be given three annual extensions. While the change in tenure of the post of CBI Director was effected by amending the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003 was amended with respect to the ED Director's post. The move comes just days before the present ED chief, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, is to retire on November 17.

Ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India early next month, Moscow has started deliveries of the S400 air defence systems to India, a senior Russian official confirmed. This risks the possibility of sanctions from the U.S. under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) which would come up for discussion at the India-U.S. 2+2 ministerial dialogue, also scheduled for early December. "Russia has started supplying S400 air defence system to India, the first division will be delivered by the end of 2021".

A day after the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in Glasgow ended, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, in a personal blog, dwelt on India's last - minute intervention that played a key role in the final text of the agreement that called for coal to be "phased down" rather than "phased out". "Fossil fuels and their use have enabled parts of the world to attain high levels of growth. Even now, developed countries have not completely phased out coal. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) refers to mitigation of GHG emissions from all sources. UNFCCC is not directed at any particular source," he wrote, "Developing countries have a right to their fair share of the global carbon budget and are entitled to the responsible use of fossil fuels within this scope."

The economy is "bouncing back" strongly with festive sales hitting

PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR WOMEN OFFICER

1.After the Supreme Court cautioned the Indian Army of contempt, the Centre has assured the court that it will roll out Permanent Commission (PC) option to all eligible women Army officers. What's the issue? The Supreme Court in February 2020 directed the government to ensure that women officers in the Army be granted permanent commission (PC) as well as command postings in all services other than combat. Lt. Col. Nitisha vs. Union of India Case: On 25th March 2021, the Supreme Court held that the Army's selective evaluation process discriminated against and disproportionately affected women officers seeking permanent commission.

2.What is a Permanent Commission? A Permanent Commission means a career in the army till retirement, while Short Service Commission is for 10 years, with the option of either leaving or opting for Permanent Commission at the end of 10 years. If an officer doesn't get Permanent Commission then, the officer can choose a four-year extension.

3.Women in Army: Background of the case: The induction of women officers in the Army started in 1992. They were commissioned for a period of five years in certain chosen streams such as Army Education Corps, Corps of Signals, Intelligence Corps, and Corps of Engineers. Recruits under the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) had a shorter pre-commission training period than their male counterparts who were commissioned under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme. In 2006, the WSES scheme was replaced with the SSC scheme, which was extended to women officers. They were commissioned for a period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years. Serving WSES officers were given the option to move to the new SSC scheme, or to continue under the erstwhile WSES. They were to be however, restricted to roles in streams specified earlier — which excluded combat arms such as infantry and armoured corps.

4.What was the main issue now? While male SSC officers could opt for permanent commission at the end of 10 years of service, this option was not available to women officers. They were, thus, kept out of any command appointment, and could not qualify for government pension, which starts only after 20 years of service as an officer.

5.Why was the government against granting a permanent Commission? Motherhood, childcare, psychological limitations have a bearing on the employment of women officers in the Army. Family separation, career prospects of spouses, education of children, prolonged absence due to pregnancy, motherhood were a greater challenge for women to meet the exigencies of service. **6.Physical limitations: Soldiers will be asked to work in difficult terrains, isolated posts and adverse climate conditions. Officers have to lead from the front. They should be in prime physical condition to undertake combat tasks.** The Govt. said women were not fit to serve in ground combat roles. Behavioural and Psychological Challenges: Army units were a "unique all-male environment". The presence of women officers would require "moderated behaviour". The male troop predominantly comes from a rural background and may not be in a position to accept commands from a female leader.

NEW RBI INITIATIVES

1.Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched two customer-centric initiatives of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI): The RBI Retail Direct Scheme. The Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme. The two schemes will expand the scope of investment in the country and make access to capital markets easier and more secure for investors.

2.What is the RBI Retail Direct Scheme? The Scheme is aimed at enhancing access to the government securities market for retail investors. It offers them a new avenue for directly investing in the securities issued by the Centre and the state governments. Investors will be able to easily open and maintain their government securities account online with the RBI, free of cost. The scheme offers a portal avenue to invest in central

highs “not seen in a long time” and is set to record the highest ever exports of \$550 billion in 2021-22, Commerce, Industry and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. Merchandise exports stood at \$235 billion for the first seven months of the year and are “well on track” to hit \$400 billion, while services exports are expected to go up to about \$150 billion, Mr. Goyal said at the launch of the India International Trade Fair.

Reiterating the demand for Karnataka’s rightful share in Cauvery, Krishna and Pennar basins in the Godavari-Cauvery link project, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai urged the Centre not to give statutory clearances to large scale permanent projects planned for utilising surplus waters in violation of water tribunal awards. “Though the shares of co-basin States have not been decided in the Godavari-Cauvery link, Tamil Nadu has been going ahead with the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link which is inadmissible in law. The Karnataka Government has urged the Centre not to approve the proposal of Tamil Nadu for taking up the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link as an advance action in anticipation of the realisation of the Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link project,” Mr. Bommai said in his address at the 29th Southern Zonal Council meeting at Tirupati.

The lush green hills of Nallamala are now open for tourists to explore and learn from, thanks to the ecotourism package announced by the Telangana Forest Department. Safari ride into the Amrabad Tiger Reserve, which had been a minor sojourn for the pilgrims bound for the Srisailem temple, will be part of the ‘Tiger Stay Package’ which is set to begin from November 17.

The Gadchiroli encounter in which 26 members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) — including key fugitive Milind Teltumbde — were “neutralised” was a severe blow to the Naxals’ urban and jungle networks in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, said authorities. They said the death of Teltumbde, central committee member and incharge of the newly formed Maharashtra Madhya Pradesh Chhattisgarh confluence (MMC) zone, was likely to affect the recruitment and expansion of the Maoists in this zone.

A less known Naga extremist group involved in killing seven, including an Assam Rifles officer and his wife and minor son, in an ambush in Churachandpur district of Manipur on Saturday has puzzled the security forces and counterinsurgency

government securities, treasury bills, state development loans and Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs). The scheme places India in a list of select few countries offering such a facility.

3.What is the Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme? It is aimed at further improving the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against entities regulated by the central bank. The central theme of the scheme is based on ‘One Nation-One Ombudsman’ with one portal, one email and one address for the customers to lodge their complaints. The RBI has decided to integrate the three ombudsman schemes into one and also simplified the scheme by covering all complaints involving deficiency in service by centralising the receipt and initial processing of complaints to enhance process efficiency.

4.Importance of the schemes: The move comes at a time when rising inflation adds pressure on the RBI to lift rates. Tighter monetary policy is likely to weaken the demand for bonds, making it challenging for the government to execute its near-record borrowing program. Other emerging-market nations in Asia, like the Philippines, have also sought to raise funds from citizens to battle the pandemic.

CENTRE ALLOWS SEVEN STATES TO BORROW MORE

1.The Finance Ministry has permitted seven States to borrow an additional ₹16,691 crore, linked to their having met specified capital expenditure targets in the June to September quarter. Background: States were required to achieve at least 45% of their capex targets for the year by the second quarter to be eligible for a nod to raise incremental borrowings from the market. Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan and Telangana had met the targets for the first half of the year.

2.Why do states need the centre’s permission while borrowing? Is it mandatory for all states? Article 293(3) of the Constitution requires states to obtain the Centre’s consent in order to borrow in case the state is indebted to the Centre over a previous loan. This consent can also be granted subject to certain conditions by virtue of Article 293(4). In practice, the Centre has been exercising this power in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Commission. Every single state is currently indebted to the Centre and thus, all of them require the Centre’s consent in order to borrow.

3.Does the Centre have unfettered power to impose conditions under this provision? Neither does the provision itself offer any guidance on this, nor is there any judicial precedent that one could rely on. Interestingly, even though this question formed part of the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission, it was not addressed in its interim report. So, when can the centre impose conditions? The Centre can impose conditions only when it gives consent for state borrowing, and it can only give such consent when the state is indebted to the Centre.

4.Why are such restrictions necessary? **One possible purpose behind conferring this power upon the Centre was to protect its interests in the capacity of a creditor.** A broader purpose of ensuring macroeconomic stability is also discernible, since state indebtedness negatively affects the fiscal health of the nation as a whole.

NEXT COP VENUES

1.The 2021 UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, concluded recently at Glasgow.

2.At the end of the conference, the council decided that the 2022 edition of the Conference of Parties, or the 27th COP, will take place at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and the 28th edition in 2023 will be held in the UAE.

KASHI CORRIDOR PROJECT

1.The project connects the Kashi temple with the ghats of the Ganga, with a paved walkway around 320 metres long and 20 metres wide.

2.It will also have facilities for a museum, library, a facilitation centre for pilgrims and a Mumuksha Bhawan (salvation house).

PAKKE TIGER RESERVE

1.Pakke Tiger Reserve is also known as Pakhui Tiger Reserve. This Tiger Reserve has won India Biodiversity Award 2016 in the category of ‘Conservation of threatened species’ for its Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.

specialists. The Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF) had along with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) claimed responsibility for the attack that killed Colonel Viplap Tripathi and his family. The PLA had been lying low for about six years until Saturday's strike but has been around since September 1978 as one of the fiercest of the VBIGs, an abbreviation used by the armed forces to mean groups comprising mostly of fighters from the Meitei community who dominate Manipur's Imphal Valley. VBIG expands to Valley based insurgent group.

2.It is bounded by Bhareli or Kameng River in the west and north, and by Pakke River in the east. Neighbours: Papum Reserve Forest in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam's Nameri National Park, Doimara Reserve Forest and Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary.

3.The main perennial streams in the area are the Nameri, Khari and Upper Dikorai. West of Kameng River is Sessa Orchid Sanctuary. It falls within the Eastern Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot.