

India Gets List for Supply of Key Parts to Russia



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attend a news conference following their talks in Moscow, Russia, November 8, 2022.

NEW DELHI (Reuters) -- Moscow has sent India a list of more than 500 products for potential delivery including parts for cars, aircraft and trains, four sources familiar with the matter said, as sanctions squeeze Russia's ability to keep vital industries running.

The list, a version of which has been seen by Reuters in New Delhi, is provisional and it is unclear how many of the items will eventually be exported and in what quantity, but an Indian government source said the request was unusual in its scope.

India is keen to boost trade in this way, said the source, as it tries to nar-

row a ballooning trade deficit with Russia. Some companies have expressed concern, however, about potentially falling foul of Western sanctions.

An industry source in Moscow, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue, said Russia's Ministry of Industry and Trade asked large companies to supply lists of raw materials and equipment they needed.

The source added that further discussion would be needed to agree specifications and volumes and that the outreach was not limited to India.

Russia's requests were made weeks ahead of Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's visit to Mos-

cow starting Nov. 7, two of the Indian sources said. It was not immediately clear what was conveyed by New Delhi to Russia during the visit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has not joined Western countries in openly criticizing Moscow for the war in Ukraine, and has sharply increased purchases of Russian oil that have cushioned it from some of the impact of sanctions.

During the Moscow visit, Jaishankar said India needed to boost exports to Russia to balance bilateral trade that is now tilted towards Russia.

He was accompanied on the visit by senior officials in charge of agriculture, petroleum and natural gas, ports and shipping, finance, chemicals and fertilizer, and trade - which he said showed the importance of ties with Russia.

A source in Russia's car sales industry said the trade ministry had sent a list of car parts needed to corresponding ministries and state agencies in other countries, including India.

The list of items from Russia, which runs to nearly 14 pages, includes car engine parts like pistons, oil pumps and ignition coils. There is also demand for bumpers, seatbelts and infotainment systems.

For aircraft and helicopters, Russia requested 41 items including landing gear components, fuel systems, communication systems and fire extinguishing systems, life jackets and aviation tires.

U.S., NATO Pledge More Aid to Ukraine as War Rages



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg poses with foreign ministers of member countries during the family photo at their meeting in Bucharest, Romania November 29, 2022.

KYIV (Reuters) -- Air raid sirens wailed across Ukraine on Tuesday for the first time this week, as the United States and NATO allies unveiled new pledges of money and equipment to help restore power and heat knocked out by Moscow's missile and drone strikes.

Ukrainians fled the streets for bomb shelters, although there were no immediate reports of major attacks away from the front. The all-clear was later sounded in the capital Kyiv, but officials said the threat had not necessarily lifted.

Foreign ministers from the NATO alliance were starting a two-day

meeting in Bucharest, looking for ways both to keep millions of Ukrainian civilians safe and warm, and to sustain Kyiv's military through the coming winter campaign.

"NATO will continue to stand for Ukraine as long as it takes. We will not back down," alliance General-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said in a speech in Bucharest.

He told reporters Russian President Vladimir Putin was "trying to use winter as a weapon of war" as Moscow's forces lose on the battlefield, and that Western allies would step in to help.

U.S. and European officials, briefing ahead of the meeting on condition of

anonymity, described packages of aid including cash, electricity transmission equipment and more weapons to fight off drones and replenish diminished ammunition stores.

"It is going to be a terrible winter for Ukraine, so we are working to strengthen our support for it to be resilient," a senior European diplomat said.

Russia has been carrying out huge attacks on Ukraine's electricity transmission and heating infrastructure roughly weekly since October, in what Kyiv and its allies say is a deliberate campaign to harm civilians, a war crime.

Moscow says hurting civilians is not its aim but that their suffering will end only if Kyiv accepts its demands, which it did not spell out. Although Kyiv says it shoots down most of the incoming missiles, the damage has been accumulating and the impact growing more severe with each strike.

The worst attack so far was last Wednesday, leaving millions of Ukrainians in cold and darkness. President Volodymyr Zelensky told Ukrainians at the start of this week to expect another soon that would be at least as damaging.

There are no political talks to end the war. Moscow has annexed Ukrainian territory which it says it will never relinquish; Ukraine says it will fight until it recovers all occupied land.

'Gaslighting' is Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year

NEW YORK (AP) — "Gaslighting" — behavior that's mind manipulating, grossly misleading, downright deceitful — is Merriam-Webster's word of the year.

Lookups for the word on merriam-webster.com increased 1,740% in 2022 over the year before. But something else happened. There wasn't a single event that drove significant spikes in curiosity, as it usually goes with the chosen word of the year.

The gaslighting was pervasive.

"It's a word that has risen so quickly in the English language, and especially in the last four years, that it actually came as a surprise to me and to many of us," said Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press ahead of Monday's unveiling.

"It was a word looked up frequently every single day of the year," he said.

There were deepfakes and the dark web. There were deep states and fake news. And there was a whole lot of trolling.

Merriam-Webster's top definition for gaslighting is the psychological manipulation of a person, usually over an extended period of time, that "causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories and typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one's emotional

or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator."

More broadly, the dictionary defines the word thusly: "The act or practice of grossly misleading someone especially for one's own advantage."

Gaslighting is a heinous tool frequently used by abusers in relationships — and by politicians and other newsmakers. It can happen between romantic partners, within a broader family unit and among friends. It can be a corporate tactic, or a way to mislead the public. There's also "medical gaslighting," when a health care professional dismisses a patient's symptoms or illness as "all in your head."

Despite its relatively recent prominence — including "Gaslighter," The Chicks' 2020 album featuring the rousing angry titular single — the word was brought to life more than 80 years ago with "Gas Light," a 1938 play by Patrick Hamilton.

It birthed two film adaptations in the 1940s. One, George Cukor's "Gaslight" in 1944, starred Ingrid Bergman as Paula Alquist and Charles Boyer as Gregory Anton. The two marry after a whirlwind romance and Gregory turns out to be a champion gaslighter. Among other instances, he insists her complaints over the constant dimming of their London townhouse's gaslights is a figment of her troubled mind. It wasn't.

South Korea Orders Truckers Back to Work or Face Jail



Concrete mixer trucks are parked at a factory in Anyang, South Korea, Nov. 28, 2022.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's government issued an order Tuesday for some of the thousands of truck drivers who have been on strike to return to work, insisting that their nationwide walkout over freight fare issues is hurting an already weak economy.

Despite facing the threat of delicensing or even prison terms, the strike's organizers said they would defy the order and accused President Yoon Suk Yeol's conservative government of suppressing their labor rights and ignoring what they described as worsening work conditions and financial strain caused by rising fuel costs and interest rates.

The order was approved in a Cabinet meeting called by Yoon and targeted about 2,500 drivers of cement trucks among a broader group of truckers participating in the walkout. It marked the first time a South Korean government has exercised controversial powers under a law revised in 2004 to force truckers back to their jobs.

A failure to comply without "justifiable reason" is punishable by up to three years in jail or a maximum fine of 30 million won (\$22,400). Critics have denounced the law as unconstitutional, saying it doesn't clearly define what qualifies as acceptable conditions for a strike.

The strike's damage so far has been

largely limited to domestic industries such as construction and there have been no reports of substantial disruptions of key exports such as computer chips and automobiles.

Yoon said the truckers' strike is threatening to "devastate the foundation of our industries," citing delays in deliveries of materials such as cement and steel to construction sites and factories. He accused the strikers of illicit activities such as disrupting the work of colleagues who have refused to participate in the strike.

"There's no way to justify the act of taking the lives of people and the national economy as hostage to accomplish their own interest," Yoon said in the Cabinet meeting.

Officials said the "work start order" was issued to cement truckers first because the construction industry has been hit hardest by the strike. Finance Minister Choo Kyung-ho said in a briefing Tuesday that cement shipments have been reduced by more than 90% since the start of the strike and about half of the country's construction sites have experienced disruptions.

Thousands of members of the Cargo Truckers Solidarity union have been striking since last Thursday, in their second nationwide walkout since June, calling for the government to make permanent a minimum freight rate system that is to expire at the end of 2022.

World's Largest Volcano Erupts in Hawaii



Lava pours out of the summit crater of Mauna Loa on Nov. 28, 2022, as seen from Gilbert Kahele Recreation Area on Maunakea, Hawaii.

KAILUA-KONA, Hawaii (AP) — Waves of orange, glowing lava and smoky ash belched and sputtered from the world's largest active volcano in its first eruption in 38 years, and officials told people living on Hawaii's Big Island to be ready in the event of a worst-case scenario.

The eruption of Mauna Loa wasn't immediately endangering towns, but the U.S. Geological Survey warned the roughly 200,000 people on the Big Island that an eruption "can be very dynamic, and the location and advance of lava flows can change rapidly."

Officials told residents to be ready to evacuate if lava flows start heading toward populated areas.

The eruption began late Sunday night following a series of fairly large earthquakes, said Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

The areas where lava was emerging — the volcano's summit crater and vents along the volcano's northeast flank — are both far from homes and communities.

Officials urged the public to stay away from them, given the dangers posed by lava, which is shooting 100 to 200 feet (30 to 60 meters) into the air out of three

separate fissures roughly estimated to be 1 to 2 miles (1.6 to 3.2 kilometers) long.

Volcanic gases wafting out of the vents, primarily sulfur dioxide, are also harmful.

Air quality on the Big Island more generally is good right now but officials are monitoring it carefully, said Dr. Libby Char, the director of the state Department of Health.

Hon said air quality could deteriorate while the eruption lasts, which scientists expect will be about one or two weeks if the volcano follows historical patterns.

Seeing Mauna Loa erupt is a new experience for many residents of the Big Island, where the population has more than doubled from 92,000 in 1980.

More than a third of the island's residents live either in the city of Kailua-Kona to the west of the volcano, or about 23,000 people, and Hilo to the east, with about 45,000. Officials were most worried about several subdivisions some 30 miles (50 kilometers) to the volcano's south that are home to about 5,000 people.

Mauna Loa is one of five volcanoes that together make up the Big Island of Hawaii, the southernmost island in the Hawaiian archipelago.

News in Brief

LONDON (AFP) — Britain on Tuesday ousted China General Nuclear from construction of its new Sizewell C power station, further cutting controversial economic ties with the world's second biggest economy. The CGN announcement came one day after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warned that the "golden era" of UK-China relations was "over", adding Beijing posed a "systemic challenge" to UK interests and values. Tuesday's announcement comes also amid a diplomatic storm over the arrest and alleged assault of a BBC journalist covering Covid protests in China. Sunak's Conservative government is stripping CGN of its controversial 20-percent Sizewell stake under plans to form a joint venture with remaining French partner EDF. London last month ordered a Chinese-owned company to divest most of Britain's biggest semiconductor maker -- a leading UK industrial asset -- after a national security probe.

KYIV (Reuters) -- European countries should double their defense expenditure because of Russia's war in Ukraine, Estonia's foreign minister said, adding that his own country planned to raise national defense spending to 3% of GDP. Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu made his comments in an interview with Reuters during a trip to Kyiv with six other foreign ministers. The visit was intended to show support for Kyiv as it struggles with power outages following a wave of drone and missile strikes by Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week that countries in the military alliance, of which Estonia is a member, may decide to aim to spend more on defense than their current target of 2% of national output. Many NATO allies have already increased their military spending since the Ukraine war in February.

SEOUL (Reuters) -- South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol warned of an unprecedented joint response with allies if North Korea goes ahead with a nuclear test, and urged China to help dissuade the North from pursuing banned development of nuclear weapons and missiles. In a wide-ranging interview with Reuters, Yoon called on China, North Korea's closest ally, to fulfill its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. He said not doing so would lead to an influx of military assets to the region. When asked what South Korea and its allies, the United States and Japan, would do if North Korea conducts a new nuclear test, Yoon said the response "will be something that has not been seen before", but declined to elaborate what that would entail. Amid a record year for missile tests, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said this week his country intends to have the world's most powerful nuclear force. South Korean and U.S. officials say Pyongyang may be preparing to resume testing nuclear weapons for the first time since 2017.

JERSEY CITY, N.J. (AP) -- Cryptocurrency lender BlockFi filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Monday, the latest casualty of the collapse of crypto exchange FTX. New Jersey-based BlockFi had been struggling for much of this year but was given a lifeline this summer in the form of an FTX line of credit. FTX's own bankruptcy, however, all but sealed BlockFi's financial fate. BlockFi suspended withdrawals after FTX's failure, and it had hired bankruptcy specialists in recent days. BlockFi was one of several crypto currency lenders to pop up in recent years. The company gave loans to customers using their crypto assets as collateral. The severe drop in the value of bitcoin, ethereum and other cryptocurrencies made the collateral that BlockFi had secured often worth less than the loans it had outstanding. In its bankruptcy filing, BlockFi claimed more than 100,000 creditors, and liabilities ranging from \$1 billion to \$10 billion.

ROME (AFP) -- Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said she will not withdraw her defamation suit against journalist Roberto Saviano, in an interview published Tuesday, despite criticism that her position of power makes it an unfair trial. The far-right leader sued anti-mafia reporter Saviano for alleged defamation after he called her a "bastard" in a 2020 televised outburst over her attitude towards vulnerable migrants. Press freedom watchdogs and supporters of Saviano have called for the trial, which opened this month, to be scrapped. Saviano, best known for his international mafia bestseller "Gomorrah", faces up to three years in prison if convicted.

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- Twitter owner Elon Musk opened fire against Apple over its tight control of what is allowed on the App Store, saying the iPhone maker has threatened to oust his recently acquired social media platform. Musk also joined the chorus crying foul over a 30 percent fee Apple collects on transactions via its App Store -- the sole gateway for applications to get onto its billion plus mobile devices. A series of tweets fired off by Musk included a meme of a car with his first name on it veering onto a highway off-ramp labeled "Go to War," instead of continuing onwards towards "Pay 30%." The billionaire CEO also tweeted that Apple has "threatened to withhold Twitter from its App Store, but won't tell us why." Musk on Monday accused Apple of also having "mostly stopped advertising on Twitter." "Do they hate free speech in America?" he asked, before replying with a tweet tagging Apple CEO Tim Cook.