

## Ukraine drops pitch for NATO



President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was no longer pressing for NATO membership for Ukraine, a delicate issue that was one of Russia's stated reasons for invading its pro-Western neighbour. In another apparent nod aimed at placating Moscow, Mr. Zelensky said he was open to "compromise" on the status of two breakaway pro-Russian territories that President Vladimir Putin recognised as independent just before unleashing the invasion on February 24.

## US, EU, and UK target Russia with oil ban and gas curbs over Ukraine crisis



US, European Union, and UK have targeted Russian oil and gas sector with new restrictions over its military action in Ukraine. US President Joe Biden has announced a ban on all imports of Russian oil and gas energy. He added that the Russian oil will no longer be accepted in US ports, and the American people will deal another powerful blow to Russian President Vladimir Putin. President Biden said the move targeted the main artery of Russia's economy.

Meanwhile, the European Commission said it would reduce EU demand for Russian gas by two-thirds, the 27-nation bloc gets 40% of its gas from Russia.

### **Bangladeshi environmental lawyer Rizwana Hasan to get US International Women of Courage Award for 2022**



A Bangladeshi environmental lawyer Rizwana Hasan has been selected for the International Women of Courage (IWOC) Award for 2022. She is among the 12 women from around the world who will be honoured by the US Department of State with the award for showing exceptional courage and leadership to make a difference in their communities. She received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2012 for her activism.

The International Women of Courage (IWOC) award was established in 2007 by the US Department of State to honour women of exceptional courage, strength and leadership who work to bring change to their communities. Till now 170 women from 80 countries have been honoured under the IWOC programme.

### **Reversing its earlier stand, WHO recommends booster dose against Coronavirus**



World Health Organization has recommended the COVID-19 booster shots, reversing its position. In a statement, WHO said its expert group concluded that immunization with authorized COVID-19 vaccines provide high levels of protection against severe disease and death amid the continuing spread of the hugely contagious omicron variant. It said vaccination, including the use of boosters, is especially important for people at risk of severe disease.

The WHO further said it continues to monitor the global spread of Omicron, including a 'stealth' version known as BA.2, which has been documented to have re-infected some people after an initial case of omicron.

## **Executive board approves 723 million dollar package of loans and grants for Ukraine: World Bank**



The World Bank announced that its executive board had approved a 723-million-dollar package of loans and grants for Ukraine. The global lender in a statement said that the World Bank approved a supplemental budget support package for Ukraine, called Financing of Recovery from Economic Emergency in Ukraine. The World Bank further said, the funds would help the Ukrainian government provide critical services, including wages for hospital workers, pensions and social programs.

## **Germany to host virtual meeting of G7 agriculture ministers to discuss Russia-Ukraine conflict on Food Security**



In Germany, the government has announced that it will host a virtual meeting of agriculture ministers from the G7 countries to discuss the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on world food security. The meeting on Friday would also focus on how to stabilize food markets.



## **India, Bangladesh, and Nepal finalise MoU for implementation of BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement**



Bangladesh, India, and Nepal held a meeting to discuss the passenger and Cargo protocols to operationalize the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA). Bhutan participated in the meeting as an observer. This is the first meeting of the group since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The last meeting was held in February 2020 in New Delhi.

The meeting discussed the protocols to operationalize Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement for the regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular Traffic between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal, signed on June 15, 2015.

## **All Indian students safely evacuated from Sumy city of Ukraine, says MEA**



External Affairs Ministry said that all the Indian students stranded at Sumy city of Ukraine have been successfully moved out. In a tweet, External Affairs' Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, India have been able to move out all Indian students from Sumy. He said, they are currently en route to Poltava, from where they will board trains to western Ukraine. He added, flights under Operation Ganga are being prepared to bring them home.

## India, Japan hold joint military exercise in Karnataka



As part of Joint Exercise between India-Japan, 15 Maratha LIRC UNIT and Japan 30 Infantry regiment participated at Maratha Light Infantry Regimental Centre in Belgaum in Karnataka. Indo-Japan Joint Exercise is scheduled between 27th of February till Thursday. As part of the exercise Insertion by helicopter into the 'area of operation' is being carried out in the Regimental Center. With the objective of creating better coordination during joint operation the exercise is being conducted between Indian and Japanese military personnel.

## India to resume regular International Flights from 27th March



International Flights to and from India are to be resumed from 27th of this month. The Civil Aviation Ministry has suspended the regular international flights in March 2020 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Civil Aviation Ministry said, after having recognized the increased vaccination coverage across the globe and in consultation with the stakeholders, the Government has decided to resume scheduled commercial international passenger services to and from India from 27 of this months.

### Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog join hands with Snap Inc to drive Augmented Reality skilling amongst Indian youth



Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog announced their partnership with Snap Inc. to drive Augmented Reality (AR) skilling among the Indian youth. NITI Aayog in a statement said that over a two-year timeframe, Snap Inc is expected to train over 12,000 teachers affiliated with the Atal Tinkering Labs on Augmented Reality, enabling the reach of the program to millions of students affiliated with ATL's network of schools. Snap Inc also announced its partnership with the Atal Incubation Centers (AICs) to support the Indian start-up ecosystem with AR advertising boot camps, Ad credits and other opportunities.

### Union Minister RK Singh launches Virtual Smart Grid Knowledge Center and Innovation Park



Union Minister for Power R.K. Singh launched the Virtual Smart Grid Knowledge Center (SGKC) and Innovation Park virtually as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav Programme. The SGKC has been established by POWERGRID for demonstration and advancement of frontier smart grid technologies. SGKC aims to be one of the leading Centers of Excellence globally to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and research in smart grid technologies and create capacities in the power distribution sector.

The Virtual SGKC that was launched enables a digital footprint of the physical setup of SGKC, the need for which was felt during COVID-19 pandemic.



## **GeM launches 'Stitching and Tailoring Services' in partnership with USHA**



Government eMarketplace -GeM has launched Stitching and Tailoring Services on the GeM portal in partnership with USHA International Ltd through its Silai School Programme. The service will open new opportunities for Usha Silai Women and self-help groups to enhance their livelihood incomes through sewing orders placed by various Government departments and agencies. It will also fulfil three percent procurement target set aside for women MSE entrepreneurs.

## **Sebi raises investment limit via UPI to Rs 5 lakh for retail investors**



Sebi increased the investment limit for payments through UPI mechanism for retail investors buying debt securities in public issues to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh at present in its effort to bring ease of investment for investors. The new framework will be applicable to public issues of debt securities which open on or after May 1, 2022, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

The current Sebi rules provide an option to investors to apply in public issues of debt securities with the facility to block funds through UPI (unified payment interface) mechanism for application value of up to Rs 2 lakh.

## RBI accepts \$5.135 bn in USD/INR sell-buy swap auction



The Reserve Bank of India has accepted USD 5.135 billion in USD/INR sell-buy swap auction conducted against the notified amount of USD 5 billion. Last month, the RBI had announced to undertake a USD/INR two-year sell/buy swap auction of USD 5 billion. The central bank received 246 bids but accepted 86 bids in the auction. The bid to cover ratio was 2.71.

Under the sell-buy swap auction, a bank buys US dollars from the Reserve Bank and simultaneously agrees to sell the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period.

## RBI launches UPI123pay and 24x7 helpline for digital payments in Mumbai



RBI launched UPI for feature phones called UPI123pay. RBI governor Shaktikanta Das launched the UPI123pay and also launched a 24x7 helpline for digital payments in Mumbai. This new initiative by RBI will facilitate use of UPI with text and allow feature phone users to seamlessly perform various financial and non-financial transactions. The 24x7 helpline will give an opportunity to provide solutions to various queries about digital payments. There are more than 40 crore feature phone users in India and they are not able to use digital payment solutions. Considering this fact RBI has launched the UPI for feature phones. There is server side common library which enables the user to do digital payments. User will have to link his bank account with the feature phone and will have to set a UPI pin with the details of the debit card.



## Norway fund puts Adani arm on watch list



Norway's \$1.3-trillion wealth fund put India's Adani Ports under observation, for possible exclusion from its investments, for the company's involvement in building a port terminal in military-ruled Myanmar, the fund said. The fund also put several other companies under observation.

## Jamshedpur FC wins first ISL Winner's Shield after beating ATK Mohun Bagan by 1-0



Jamshedpur FC, an Indian professional football club based in Jamshedpur, won their first Indian Super League (ISL) Winner's Shield after a gritty 1-0 win over ATK Mohun Bagan at the P.J.N. Stadium, Goa. A goal by Ritwik Das separated both the teams that won the trophy for the Men of Steel.

## Women's Cricket World Cup: Australia defeat Pakistan by 7 wickets



In the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup, Australia cruised through an easy victory over Pakistan. Aiming at a target of 191, Australia got off to a quick start and they finished with 193 for 3 with having 15 overs to spare. Earlier Australian spirited bowling performance helped it to restrict Pakistan to 190/6 in the allotted fifty overs.