

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

With foreign exchange reserves of \$677 billion, India is comfortably placed to deal with any effect of war [in Ukraine] or any challenges with regard to financing of the Current Account Deficit (CAD), RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday. "The economy is better placed today," Mr. Das said in an address to the National Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Mumbai. "In external sector we are better placed but we are living in an uncertain world. So there is no reason for complacency.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman acknowledged concerns about the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) return falling to a more than four decade low of 8.1% in 202122, stressing that the decision was taken based on 'today's realities', and added that the returns on other savings instruments were even lower. Responding to Rajya Sabha MPs who had flagged the EPF rate cut, from 8.5% to 8.1%, Ms. Sitharaman said she appreciated and recognised their point about the decision, while emphasising that it was approved by the EPF Organisation's Central Board of Trustees, which includes representatives of workers, management, and the government.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said on Monday the world is "sleepwalking to climate catastrophe", with major economies allowing carbon pollution to increase when drastic cuts are needed. The planet saving goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius is already "on life support," he told a sustainability conference in London. Keeping 1.5 degrees Celsius in play requires a 45% drop in emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by mid century, according to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Developments such as those in Ukraine should never happen in the Indo-Pacific region, Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia said on Monday. Addressing the bilateral annual leaders' meeting, Mr. Morrison argued for greater cooperation among "likeminded democracies", and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to provide leadership within the Quad. In his address, Mr. Modi focused on the Indo-Pacific region, and called for

EUGENE PARKER

1.Eugene Parker, an American astrophysicist who theorized the existence of solar wind has died. Dr. Parker is a visionary in the field of helio-physics, focused on the study of the sun and other stars.

2.He has contributed to science and to understanding how our universe works. He is best known for his 1958 Theory of the existence of solar wind - a supersonic flow of particles off the sun's surface.

3.In 1962, a NASA's Mariner II spacecraft mission to Venus confirmed his theory and solar wind's effect on the solar system, including occasional disruptions of communications systems on Earth. In 2018, he became the first person to witness the launch of a spacecraft bearing his name, NASA's Parker Solar Probe.

KAMIKAZE DRONES

1.After Ukraine urged the US for more military support to defend the country against Russia's invasion, the US has send kamikaze drones as part of a massive military aid package. There are drones that fire missiles and then there are ones which are missiles themselves. The Kamikaze are called the Killer or Suicide drones.

2.These are small unmanned aircraft packed with explosives that can be flown directly at a tank or troops that are destroyed when it hits the target and explodes. The single-use weapons are cheaper than most US drones, and come in two sizes, according to AeroVironment, the manufacturer. The Switchblade 300 flies up to 15 minutes at a time, and is designed to be carried in a backpack, assisting small infantry units.

3.The Switchblade 600 flies up to 40 minutes, and is known as a "loitering missile" that can target armoured vehicles. The Switchblade can be taken into battle in a backpack and fly up to 7 miles to hit a target. They are called Switchblade because their bladelike wings spring out on launch. It is also described as a flying shotgun.

4.**Significance - As it has a feature that allows the operator to adjust the blast radius, it can kill the driver of a vehicle but not a passenger. The Switchblade can be "waved off" up to 2 seconds before impact,** in the event of a mistake or a risk to civilians. It also has cameras that show a target seconds before impact.

5.The drones have the capability of going past traditional defences to strike its targets and also cost a fraction of what the larger counterparts do. The small lethal drones are difficult to detect on radar, and they can even be programmed to hit targets without human intervention, based on facial recognition. Although the Kamikaze might be the most advanced form of this genre of drones, Russia, China, Israel, Iran and Turkey all have some version of it.

PAR TAPI NARMADA RIVER LINKING PROJECT

1.The Par Tapi Narmada link project was envisioned under the 1980 National Perspective Plan under the former Union Ministry of Irrigation and the Central Water Commission (CWC). A MoU was signed between Gujarat, Maharashtra and the central government in 2010.

2.**The Par Tapi Narmada link project is a multipurpose project that proposes to link three rivers - Par, Tapi and Narmada. It has envisioned transferring river water from the surplus regions of the Western Ghats to the deficit regions of Saurashtra and Kutch.**The link mainly includes the construction of 7 dams (Jheri, Mohankavchali, Paikhed, Chasmandva, Chikkar, Dabdar and Kelwan), 3 diversion weirs (Paikhed, Chasmandva, and Chikkar dams), 2 tunnels (5.0 km and 0.5 km length), The 395-km long canal (205 km in Par-Tapi portion including the length of feeder canals and 190 km in Tapi-Narmada portion), and 6 powerhouses.

3.Of these, the Jheri dam falls in Nashik, while the remaining dams are in Valsad and Dang districts of South Gujarat. Working

“appropriate” global standards for emerging technologies.

Oil prices jumped more than \$6 on Monday, with Brent crude climbing above \$114 a barrel, as European Union nations considered joining the U.S. in a Russian oil embargo and after a weekend attack on Saudi oil facilities.

An ASEAN special envoy met with Myanmar’s junta chief on Monday in the regional bloc’s latest attempt to jumpstart dialogue between the military and opponents of its coup and bloody crackdown.

Sri Lanka has sought a new loan and buyer’s credit from China for \$2.5 billion as the island nation struggles to cope with one of its worst economic meltdowns, a top Chinese official said, days after Colombo obtained a billion dollar credit line from New Delhi.

A child victim of a sexual offence, whose identity is disclosed in the media, may “very well be in need of care and protection”, Supreme Court judge, Justice Indira Banerjee, said in a judgment on Monday. “Disclosure of the identity of the child in the media may also expose the child victim to vindictive retaliation by the perpetrators of the crime or their accomplices,” Justice Banerjee said in her opinion.

U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland met Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla on Monday for Foreign Office consultations (FOC) that focused on preparations for the “2+2” Ministerial meetings likely to be held in Washington next month, ahead of an in person Quad summit due to be held in Tokyo later this year.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has placed Boeing 737s in the country under “enhanced surveillance” after an aircraft of the same model crashed in China with 132 persons onboard on Monday morning. A Boeing 737800 aircraft of China Eastern Airlines on a domestic flight crashed in mountains in Southern China.

Ukraine rejected a Russian ultimatum to surrender the besieged southern city of Mariupol on Monday, as renewed overnight shelling killed at least eight persons at a shopping mall in the capital Kyiv. Almost 3,50,000 people are trapped without water and electricity in the port city of Mariupol, which has been bombarded by Russian troops for almost a month in what has been described as

- During the monsoon season, the water which is supplied to Saurashtra through the state government from Sardar Sarovar dam will be saved and used for other purposes.

4.Presently the water of Sardar Sarovar is used in urban areas and for irrigation in Saurashtra. Benefits - It provides irrigation benefits to the enroute command and Narmada command. The reservoirs will also provide flood relief to the people residing in downstream areas. The six power houses installed at 4 dam sites will generate 93.00 Mkw of hydropower.

GANDHI GREEN TRIANGLE

1.A “Green Triangle” named after Mahatma Gandhi was jointly inaugurated in Madagascar’s capital Antananarivo.

2.This naming was done as part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ to commemorate India’s 75th year of independence.

3.This “Gandhi Green Triangle” would create the maximum green space in the capital city of Madagascar, Antananarivo.

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

1.India may be one of the fastest growing economies of the world, but it is among the least happy countries. Ahead of the UN International Day of Happiness, observed on March 20, the World Happiness Report 2022 ranked India 136th — tenth from the bottom of the list. The World Happiness Report: The World Happiness Report is a publication of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network powered by the Gallup World Poll data.

2.The report, which is in its tenth year, uses global survey data to report on how people evaluate their own lives, besides economic and social parameters. The rankings are based on average data of a three-year period of 2019-2021. World Happiness Report evaluates levels of happiness by taking into account factors such as GDP, social support, personal freedom, and levels of corruption in each nation.

3.**Highlights of the report: Finland topped the list for the fifth time in a row, according to the 10th edition of the World Happiness Report. Finland was followed by Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.** Among other western countries, while the United States managed to bag the 16th position, Britain was ranked 17th and France 20th. India continued to fare poorly in the world happiness index, with its position marginally improving to 136 as against last year’s 139.

4.Among the South Asian nations, only Taliban-ruled Afghanistan fared worse than India. Afghanistan was named the most unhappy country in the world, ranking last on the index of 146 countries. Nepal (84), Bangladesh (94), Pakistan (121) and Sri Lanka (127) managed to get better ranks in the list. The Happiness report also stated that India was one among the countries that witnessed, over the past 10 years, a fall in life evaluations by more than a full point on the 0 to 10 scale.

5.Significance: Over the years, happiness has become a key metric to track for not just countries but corporates as well. The goal behind the report is to identify key determinants of well-being. This information is expected to help countries to craft policies aimed at achieving happier societies.

6.Interconnections between law, governance and happiness-Happiness has come to be accepted as a goal of public policy. And this discourse has given a fillip to a new narrative where the interconnections between law, governance and happiness are being searched. **Experiences from several nations confirm that the countries with higher GDP and higher per capita income are not necessarily the happiest countries and there exists a link between the state of happiness and rule of law.**

FOREST ELEPHANTS

1.Across the African continent the populations of both species of African elephants — forest and savanna — have been declining due to habitat loss, poaching and human-wildlife conflict. Forest elephants are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as “Critically Endangered” — a category for species that have declined over 80 per cent within three generations.

2.And it has listed savanna elephants as “Endangered” — indicating a decline of over 50 per cent within three generations.

3.Forest elephants: It is native to humid forests in West Africa and the Congo Basin. It is the smallest of the three living elephant species, reaching a shoulder height of 2.4 m (7 ft 10 in).

WORLD SPARROW DAY

1.Every year March 20 is observed as World Sparrow Day to

a “massive war crime” by EU policy chief Josep Borrell. Elsewhere in Ukraine, Russian bombs struck targets overnight, allegedly damaging a chemical plant in the north of the country causing an “ammonia leakage” that sparked a temporary alarm.

raise awareness about the bird. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world. The theme for this year is “Monitor the Sparrows & other common birds”.

2. World Sparrow Day is an initiative of the Nature Forever Society, which is a non-government organisation (NGO) run by Mohammed Dilawar, who’s an internationally acclaimed conservationist.

3. Sparrow is a very social bird and is gregarious at all seasons when feeding, often forming flocks with other types of bird. House sparrows are becoming extinct everywhere, including in India. Experts say there’s a need to spread awareness on their conservation.