

## NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Rating agency ICRA has warned of serious downside risks to the economy next fiscal with runaway current account deficit (CAD) steep fall in the rupee and hardening yields on government bonds, as a result of the Russian-Ukraine crisis and the resultant spike in crude and other commodity prices. While elevated commodity prices and pessimistic sentiments in global markets will impart a depreciating bias to the rupee, which fell to its lifetime low of 77.01 on Monday, large forex reserves of \$631.5 billion as of February 25 are likely to avert a sudden, sharp depreciation.

With Bhutan continuing to sit out the Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) of the subregional Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) grouping, a meeting of the other three countries was held to discuss the next steps in operationalising the agreement for the free flow of goods and people between them. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to travel to Colombo at the end of March to attend the summit of another subregional grouping, BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), which includes Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan as well.

Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani on Tuesday said that creches will be set up at the district level for women police personnel across the country in a bid to help them overcome challenges they face at work.

A gangster's case triggered concern in the Supreme Court on Tuesday about the "international ramifications" India may face if seen to renege on "solemn" promises made to foreign powers and their courts while securing an extradition. The court's apprehension gains significance with the Union government pursuing the extradition of several prominent fugitives, especially those involved in money laundering cases.

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

## HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS

1. Russia announced humanitarian corridors would open in several Ukrainian cities, after civilians came under fire in two previous attempts of the Moscow's forces pummeling cities across the country. The United Nations considers humanitarian corridors to be one of several possible forms of a temporary pause of armed conflict.

2. They are demilitarized zones, in a specific area and for a specific time - and both sides of an armed conflict agree to them. Humanitarian corridors have been put in place since the mid-20th century. Purpose - Via these corridors, either food or medical aid can be brought to areas of conflict, or civilians can be evacuated.

3. **The corridors are necessary when cities are under siege and the population is cut off from basic food supplies, electricity and water. In cases where a humanitarian catastrophe unfolds because the international law of war is being violated humanitarian corridors can provide crucial relief.** Setting up - In most cases, humanitarian corridors are negotiated by the United Nations. Sometimes they're also set up by local groups.

4. Since all sides need to agree to set up the corridors, there is a risk of military or political abuse. Accessibility - Access to humanitarian corridors is determined by the parties to the conflict. It's usually limited to neutral actors, the UN or aid organizations such as the Red Cross.

5. They also determine the length of time, the area and which means of transport - trucks, buses or planes - are allowed to use the corridor. These corridors can also be used by UN observers, NGOs and journalists to gain access to contested areas where war crimes are being committed.

## RECONNAISSANCE SATELLITE

1. North Korea is preparing to launch a reconnaissance satellite, a move that may prove as controversial as the nuclear-armed country's weapons tests, because they use the same banned ballistic missile technology. Reconnaissance satellite is an artificial satellite launched by a country to provide intelligence information on the military activities of foreign countries.

2. **It is an Earth observation satellite or communications satellite. It is also known as a spy satellite or intelligence satellite. The United States, Russia (before 1991, the USSR), and other nations have launched numerous reconnaissance satellites since 1960.** Types of Reconnaissance Satellites Early-warning satellites detect enemy missile launchings.

3. Nuclear-explosion detection satellites are designed to detect and identify nuclear explosions in space. Photo-surveillance satellites provide photographs of enemy military activities, e.g., the deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). There are two subtypes: Close-look satellites provide high-resolution photographs that are returned to earth via a reentry capsule, Area-survey satellites provide lower-resolution photographs that are transmitted to earth via radio.

4. Later satellites have combined these two functions. Signals intelligence (SIGINT) satellites or Electronic-reconnaissance (ferret) satellites pickup and record radio and radar transmissions while passing over a foreign country. They are optimized either for characterizing ground-based radar systems or for eavesdropping on communications.

## NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

1. Ukraine becoming part of NATO poses an existential threat to Russia that is serious enough for it to start a war of the scale that Europe has not seen since the end of World War II in 1945. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a mutual-defense and political alliance was established in 1949, after World War II.

2. It was set up in 1949 by the US, Canada, and several western European nations to ensure their collective security against the Soviet Union. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, NATO was the US's first peacetime military alliance outside the western

**breakaway pro-Russian territories that President Vladimir Putin recognised as independent just before unleashing the invasion on February 24.**

**International flights to and from India are set to resume fully from March 27, two years after the country imposed a total ban on them to curb the spread of COVID19 cases. "After having recognised the increased vaccination coverage across the globe and in consultation with stakeholders, the Government of India has decided to resume scheduled commercial international passenger services to and from India from 27.03.2022, i.e. start of Summer Schedule 2022," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.**

**With the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) facing hurdles in the execution of its land pooling policy, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said amendments to the Delhi Development Act, 1957, have been proposed to speed up its implementation. Through the proposed amendments, pooling of land for owners who are yet to express their willingness becomes mandatory once the participation rate reaches the minimum threshold of 70%.**

**Crude prices surged as the U.S. banned Russian oil imports, while nickel prices rocketed to a record peak on Russian supply fears. While remaining below Monday's peak of \$139.13 per barrel, the main international oil contract, Brent, jumped 6.8% to \$131.63.**

**India may consider alternative payment mechanisms for exporters if the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues for a long time and key trade sectors face a problem in international cash transfers due to the sanctions on Russia, government sources said on Tuesday. According to the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), the rupee-rouble trade is one of the alternative mechanisms for payments between India and Russia.**

**Saying that the U.S. was targeting "the main artery of the Russia's economy", President Joe Biden announced that the U.S. would ban the import of all Russian oil, gas and energy, in retaliation for Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.**

**Social revolution does not come overnight and takes time, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while refusing to deal at this stage**

hemisphere. The European Recovery Programme or the Marshall Plan promoted the idea of shared interests and cooperation between the US and Europe.

**3.Members of NATO are committed to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party. Collective defence lies at the very heart of NATO, "a unique and enduring principle that binds its members together, committing them to protect each other and setting a spirit of solidarity within the Alliance".** This is laid out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the founding treaty of NATO.

**4.Members -** Currently, 30 countries are members of NATO. In addition to the United States and Canada, 10 other countries became part of NATO in 1949: Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Britain.

**5.Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia** joined in 2004, Albania and Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, and North Macedonia in 2020, taking the membership of the alliance to 30. Over the years, the some European countries including Sweden and Finland avoided joining NATO.

#### **NO-FLY ZONE**

**1.Russia** said that it would view any Western attempts to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine as "participating in the armed conflict" against Russia. A no-fly zone bans aircraft from certain areas. Ukraine is asking that aircraft be barred from its skies, which would, in theory, stop aerial bombardment by Russia.

**2.No-fly zones** are used over government buildings or public places for security reasons. In the United States, for example, aircraft are prohibited from flying over the White House, the National Mall and the vice president's residence in Washington.

**3.No-fly zones** like this are not controversial. However, they can be contentious if they are used to stop military aircraft from engaging in hostile actions as they were in Iraq.

#### **SAVITRIBAI PHULE AND JYOTIRAO PHULE**

**1.Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari** has recently received flak for his remarks on the social reformist couple Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule. He said in a video, "Savitribai was married off at the age of 10 and her husband was 13 years old at that time. Now think about it, what must girls and boys be thinking after getting married".

**2.About Savitribai Phule:** Born in Naigaon in Maharashtra on January 3, 1831, Phule is widely regarded as one of India's first generation modern feminists for her significant contributions in ensuring equal education opportunities under the British raj. She became the first female teacher in India in 1848 and opened a school for girls along with her husband, social reformer Jyotirao Phule. The two also worked against discrimination based on caste-based identity, something vehemently opposed by the orthodox sections of society in Pune.

**3.The couple** set up 'Balyata Pratibandak Gruha', a childcare centre for the protection of pregnant widows and rape victims. Phule also played a pivotal role in directing the work of the Satyashodhak Samaj, formed by her husband with the objective to achieve equal rights for the marginalised lower castes. As an extension, they started, 'Satya Shodhaka Marriage' where the marrying couple has to take a pledge to promote education and equality. Savitribai opened a clinic in 1897 for victims of the bubonic plague that spread across Maharashtra just before the turn of the century.

**4.She** also set up "Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha". She organised a boycott by barbers against the tradition of head tonsuring of widows. In her honour, University of Pune was renamed Savitribai Phule University in 2015.

**5.About Jyotirao Phule:** Born in 1827 in Satara district of Maharashtra. Phule was given the title of Mahatma on May 11, 1888, by Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar, a Maharashtra social activist. His famous works: Tritiya Ratna (1855), Gulamgiri (1873), Shetkarayacha Aasud, or Cultivator's Whipcord (1881), Satyashodhak Samajokt Mangalashthakasaah Sarva Puja-vidhi (1887).

**6.Need of the hour:** Complete women's empowerment is still a distant dream in India. While celebrating her legacy, we must also remember the contributions of her husband Jyotiba, who dreamt of equity for women and people of lower castes.

#### **KANYA SHIKSHA PRAVESH UTSAV SCHEME**

**with the issue of castebased reservation in the National Defence Academy (NDA). The top court gave the Centre time till July to study the implication of induction and deployment of ex National Defence Academy (NDA) women cadets in the armed forces.**

**1.**On the eve of International Women's Day, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched 'Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav' scheme to bring back the out-of-school girls back to the education system.

**2.**Key features of the scheme: Launched by the Women and Child Development Ministry in partnership with the Education Ministry.

**3.**This scheme will fulfil the target of Right To Education act that says to bring out-of-school girls back to the education system.