

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

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**TODAY'S EDITION**

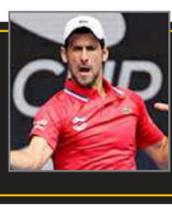
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**STUDENT EDITION**  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021

**Puducherry MAKES JOB MANDATORY**

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## INDIA: Fourth-most powerful NATION IN ASIA

**IMF's Gopinath Warns Variants Could Derail Economic Recovery**

The International Monetary Fund sees 'downside risks' to the global economic rebound it forecast for this year and next, and is concerned that the new coronavirus variants may hinder the recovery, its chief economist said.

"Most of the overall risks are to the downside," Gita Gopinath said, adding, "The omicron strain may increase risks to the outlook and the world could also see more aggressive variants that further damage the recovery."

Countries should tailor monetary and fiscal policies based on their own circumstances, as there are differences in underlying or core inflation from country to country," she said.

India is the fourth-most powerful country in Asia, as per the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021. The annual Asia Power Index, launched by the Lowy Institute in 2018, measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in Asia. The project maps out the existing distribution of power as it stands today, and tracks shifts in the balance of power over time.

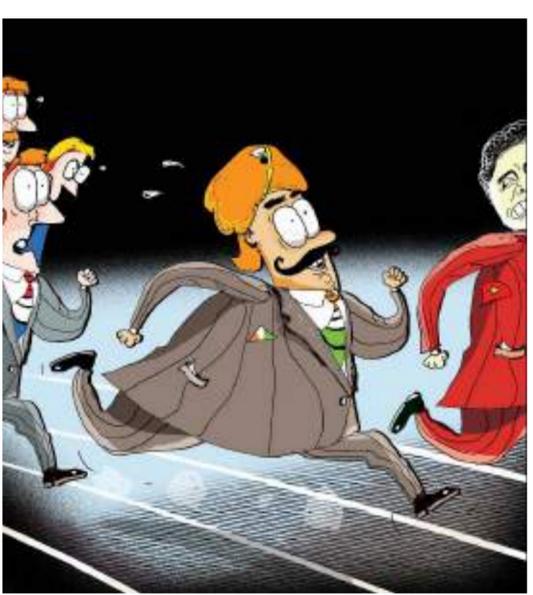
**Why is India middle power?**

As the fourth-most powerful country in Asia, India again falls short of the major power threshold in 2021. Its overall score declined by two points compared to 2020. India is one of the 18 countries in the region to trend downward in its overall score in 2021, the report said.

The lost growth potential is due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic that has led to a diminished economic forecast for 2030, Lowy Institute said. India finishes in 4th place in four other measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence.

**Indian economy hardest hit by Covid**

As per the report, many developing economies, including India, have been hardest hit in comparison to their pre-Covid growth paths. This has the potential to reinforce bipolarity in the Indo-Pacific, driven by the growing power differential of the



**India finishes in 4th place in four measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence**

two superpowers, the US and China, in relation to nearly every other emerging power in the region.

The top 10 countries for overall power in the Asia-Pacific region are the US, China, Japan, India, Russia, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, Lowy Institute said.



**1** The Union Territory of Puducherry has made it mandatory for all people to get the Covid-19 vaccine amidst fears of the Omicron variant. The mandate was invoked under the provisions of the Puducherry Public Health Act 1973, and "those violating this will be liable for penal action," the order from the Director of Health stated.

**2** The Union government has not made vaccination mandatory, but advises that all eligible take both doses of the vaccine.

**3** But states are imposing their own mandates. Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have imposed certain curbs



on the movement of the unvaccinated people in public places. Delhi has made it mandatory for government servants to be vaccinated in order to work. Madhya Pradesh has said a vaccination certificate is mandatory to avail ration.

**4** A petition has been moved in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of such mandates. The court, in a previous hearing, has said such mandates have to be proportionate to personal liberty. The next hearing is on December 13. ANI

Got an opinion? Write to toinie175@gmail.com



**KASHI VISHWANATH DHAM CORRIDOR**

At Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor, devotees will also see a statue of Maratha Queen Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar, who once reconstructed the temple.

■ The estimated cost of this entire project is close to ₹800 crore. It will connect Kashi Vishwanath Temple with the Ganga river.

■ Known to be Prime Minister's dream project this corridor will shorten the travel time between the temple and the Ganga river.

■ The corridor aims to give the temple area a decongested look that the historic city grapples for. Multiple constructions such as Temple Chowk, Varanasi city gallery, museum, multipurpose auditoriums, hall, devotee facilitation centre, public convenience among others have also been constructed. ANI

**Varanasi Decks Up For KASHI VISHWANATH CORRIDOR LAUNCH**

The city of Varanasi has been decked up before the inauguration of the Kashi Vishwanath corridor by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 13. The entire stretch of Godowlia to Maidagin has been painted in pink, to maintain a consistent look and bring out its rich heritage. "It is one of the biggest events for Varanasi. The city is gradually being decorated with lights for the inaugural day. Temples are also getting decked up with lights. A day before the inauguration 'shiv barat' will be held," said a state official to ANI.



## Mobile Library Restarts In Kabul

A mobile library bus chugged to a Kabul orphanage last weekend and opened its doors for the first time since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, eliciting beaming smiles from children.

"I'm really feeling happy. I'm studying the books I love again," said 11-year-old Arezo Azizi, whose favourite tome is a counting aid about a cat who gets more pieces of cheese the higher it can count.

The library "didn't come for three months, until now," she said, aboard a converted public bus and her voice rising above the excited chatter of her peers. The mobile library is one of five buses leased by a local organisation



called Charmaghz, established by Freshta Karim - an Afghan graduate from Oxford University. Hundreds of children have in recent years made use of the mobile libraries as they criss-crossed Kabul, as many schools lack their own library. AFP

## India reclaims top spot in ICC Test rankings



After registering an emphatic 372-run victory against defending World Test champions New Zealand at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday, India reclaimed the top spot in the ICC Test rankings. The victory in Mumbai also meant that India registered their 14th consecutive series win at home and 11th straight under Virat Kohli's leadership.



## Say Ameca! & her face comes alive



As robots evolve to do more work around us, the UK-based humanoid robot manufacturer Engineered Arts has infused more human-like facial expressions into one of its robots, which may leave you with an eerie feeling. In a video posted on YouTube, the robot called Ameca displays human expressions, like appearing to "wake up" from sleep, as its face shows confusion and frustration when it opens its eyes. Once awake, Ameca starts looking at its hands and arms, opens its mouth and raises its eyebrows, just like a human does. At the end of the video, Ameca smiles and holds a welcoming hand out towards the viewer. According to the Engineered Arts, the humanoid bot is currently unable to walk and it is working towards giving it the ability in the near future. "Designed specifically as a platform for development into future robotics technologies, Ameca is the perfect humanoid robot platform for human-robot interaction," said the company. Ameca is scheduled to be on display at the CES 2022 meet in Las Vegas in January. IANS

# The World

## this week

### WILL

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

Expressing concern about the critical levels of air pollution in Delhi, a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant, on Wednesday had emphasised that the authorities should anticipate that the air quality will deteriorate in the future and then develop measures accordingly. The judges suggested that the statistical models should be examined to identify the major factors for air pollution and then act on them.

## Delhi air problem get solved?

### WE SPEAK

1 There is a Decision Support System (DSS) offered by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) that zero in on exact sources contributing to Delhi's pollution and predict practical solutions.

2 The DSS, devised by the scientists at the IITM, exclusively for Delhi NCR has been regularly dishing out forecasts and possible scenarios that - if heeded to - can help curb pollution.



### YOU SPEAK

We all know that Delhi has AQI levels that has reached unimaginable levels. People need to act. To begin with, we need to minimise use of cars and adopt car-pooling and Metro services. While the public do their bit, the Govt needs to stop stubble burning and trace statistical models and find solutions.

We students wrote a letter to the Prime Minister seeking urgent action against rising AQI levels in Delhi. The Govt needs to stop stubble burning and set up anti-pollution towers across the city.



AADI VASUDEVAN, class IX, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, Delhi



INAYA GALA, class VIII, Springdales, Pusa Road, Delhi

### WHY

## is it that India can't do away with coal?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

International pressure is growing on India to further reduce its carbon footprint and commit to getting to a net-zero emissions goal. Scientists have warned that global warming will worsen if we don't reach 'net zero' emissions - that is, the point at which we are no longer pumping any additional greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. So, in recent years, a growing number of countries and businesses have been making their own pledges to 'go net zero' by various dates. Reducing coal dependence was the primary focus of the UN climate conference COP26 in Glasgow.



What is India trying to do in such circumstances: India is looking for more foreign investment to help meet its climate targets, not pressure from the West



### WE SPEAK

1 India is the world's second-largest producer of coal, behind China. Critics worry that fossil fuel will be the centrepiece of the country's energy production for several decades yet, along with the environmental and health consequences that come with it.

2 The largest coal miner in the world, Coal India Ltd., is owned by the national government, and at least seven of India's states are heavily reliant on the revenues from extraction of the fossil fuel, including Maharashtra state, where Chandrapur is located.

3 The industry provides jobs for some four million Indians, as well as strong ripple effects in the economy.

### YOU SPEAK



We all know that India is the world's second-largest producer of coal after China. We are dependent on it for energy needs. The industry employs over four million people. Also, if we were to abandon coal completely, then the country's economy will be hit drastically. With coal, we meet our energy requirements, without depending upon imports. In India, approximately 72% of electricity is generated using coal. This is the reason that coal is said to be the backbone of India's industry grid. So, for India, it is difficult to totally abandon coal.



RADHIKA CHOPRA, class X, Father Agnel Multipurpose School, Vashi

### WHAT

## can we do to contain Omicron?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

The government on Wednesday decided not to resume scheduled international flights from December 15, less than a week after announcing the decision in the wake of rising concerns over the coronavirus variant Omicron. Aviation watchdog DGCA said the effective date for resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services will be notified in due course. Scheduled international flights remain suspended since March 23, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic.



### WE SPEAK



1 Even as the threat of the newest Covid variant - Omicron - looms large, on November 29, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said the situation was being closely monitored regarding 'any further decision' on resuming scheduled international passenger services.

2 However: The aviation ministry said 14 countries designated by the health ministry as 'at risk', and with whom there is an existing 'air bubble' agreement, would be allowed to resume 75% of pre-Covid operations (or a minimum of seven frequencies per week).

3 The 14 countries: The UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Finland, South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Singapore.

### YOU SPEAK

A few measures concerning international flights must be taken. Firstly, allow passengers to enter the country only if it is very necessary. Secondly, rigorous screening and testing of passengers should be done. Also, the passengers entering the country should undergo the strict period of quarantine. This is the holiday season and a lot of expats travel to India. The government will have to tighten the checks.



SUDHIKSHA INNANJE, class XII, DPS South, Bengaluru

### HOW

## DO YOU THINK CRYPTOCURRENCY WILL CHANGE THE WORLD?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

The Centre has no proposal to recognise Bitcoin as a currency in the country, Parliament was informed during its Winter Session. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, also said that the government does not collect data on Bitcoin transactions.



### YOU SPEAK

Cryptocurrency is like Gold 2.0. The future of it depends on many factors - the biggest being changing our mindset about physical form of currency. Also, govt is yet to take a stance. Currently, it is neither banned nor regulated.

POORNA GHOSH, class XII, Anand Niketan School, Ahmedabad

I feel that crypto currencies, although a nascent concept, will usher in stability and slowly phase out the currency exchange system. It will revolutionise future payments.

NIMISHA SONI

### WE SPEAK

#### WHAT IS BITCOIN?

Bitcoin is the original and most popular cryptocurrency, or digital coin, and started circulating in 2009. It was created by 'Satoshi Nakamoto,' designed to be free of central financial authorities like governments, banks and central banks. It is 'peer-to-peer,' meaning it can be transferred directly between online users without any intermediaries. Bitcoin is based on blockchain technology, which acts like a public ledger of transactions.



## Do you think X'mas cheer will be hit this year?



#### IN THE NEWS FOR

Nations across Europe are taking new measures in an attempt to keep a Covid-19 spike from spiraling out of control, hoping that action now will safeguard the joys of Christmas this month.

### WE SPEAK

Those who start the X'mas season while clearing Thanksgiving dishes might be right. "You're lucky you got your tree when you did," James Bianco, founder of a US research firm, said, adding, "It might actually be harder to get it in the coming weeks" as the new omicron variant further clogs supply lines, threatening to push US inflation even higher.

### YOU SPEAK

Christmas time spreads cheer with its traditions - the crib, the tree, gifts, carol and togetherness. We set the crib and decorate the tree on Dec 1. Let's hope the Covid cloud won't dampen the X'mas spirit.



REYMA REJI, class IX, Gregorian Public School, Ernakulam