



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

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TODAY'S EDITION

➤ From the Ukraine crisis to who could win Nobel Peace Prize, know what's trending in 'Your Newsroom' **PAGE 2**



➤ Know more about Chilika lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, its flora and fauna, through the lens of a young traveller **PAGE 3**



➤ India to begin New Zealand series with one-off T-20 **PAGE 4**



**STUDENT EDITION**  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022

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## WHY ARE OIL PRICES SO HIGH

### WHAT

Oil prices are increasing, again, casting a shadow over the economy, driving up inflation and eroding consumer confidence. Crude prices rose more than 15 per cent in January alone, with the global benchmark price crossing \$90 a barrel for the first time in more than seven years, as fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine grew. Many energy analysts predict that oil could soon touch \$100 a barrel, even as electric cars become more popular and the coronavirus pandemic persists.

■ Besides, western oil companies, partly under pressure from investors and environmental activists, are drilling fewer wells than they did before the pandemic to restrain the increase in supply.  
■ Industry executives say they are trying not to make the same mistake they made in the past when they pumped too much oil when prices were high, leading to a collapse in prices.  
■ Elsewhere, in countries like Ecuador, Kazakhstan and Libya, natural disasters and political turbulence have curbed output in recent months.  
■ On the demand side, much of the world is learning to cope with the pandemic and people are eager to shop and make other trips. Wary of coming in contact with an infectious virus, many are choosing to drive rather than taking public transportation.  
■ But the most immediate and critical factor is geopolitical. A potential Russian invasion of Ukraine has kept the oil market on edge.

### WHY

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#### HOW RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS IS IMPACTING OIL

**1** Russia produces 10 million barrels of oil a day, or roughly one of every 10 barrels used around the world on any given day

**2** Any interruption of Russian shipments that transit through Ukraine, or the sabotage of other pipelines in northern Europe, would cripple much of the continent and distort the global energy supply chain. That's because, traders say, the rest of the world does not have the spare capacity to replace Russian oil

**3** Even if Russian oil shipments are not interrupted, the US and its allies could impose sanctions or export controls on Russian companies, limiting their access to equipment, which could gradually reduce production in that country

**4** In addition, interruptions of Russian natural gas exports to Europe could force some utilities to produce more electricity by burning oil rather than gas. That would raise demand and prices worldwide

#### WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES DO IF RUSSIAN PRODUCTION IS DISRUPTED?

The United States, Japan, European countries and even China could release more crude from their strategic reserves. Such moves could help, especially if a crisis is short-lived. But the reserves would not be nearly enough, if Russian oil supplies were interrupted for months or years.

#### WHAT IS OPEC DOING?

US President Joe Biden has been urging the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to pump more oil, but several members have been falling short of their monthly production quotas, and some may not have the capacity to quickly increase output



X-PLAINED

#### WHAT ABOUT INDIA

In India, domestic oil marketing companies are likely to swiftly raise prices substantially after the elections in order to align domestic prices with international rates and to make up for the losses they may be incurring now. The government had cut duty in November 2021. But higher fuel prices can induce broader inflation, which can affect interest rates and economic recovery

#### WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR OIL PRICES TO FALL?

- Oil prices go up and down in cycles. According to experts, oil prices can be controlled if certain things fall in place
- For instance, China has shut down several cities to stop the spread of the virus, slowing its economy and demand for energy.
- Much, however depend on the Ukraine situation. If Russia and the West reach an agreement, formal or tacit that forestalls a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, oil prices will come down
- Many experts feel the nuclear agreement between the US and Iran also holds key to the oil crisis. If the US and its allies restore a 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran that former President Donald Trump abandoned, it would allow Iran to sell oil much more easily than now
- Ultimately, high prices could depress demand for oil enough that prices begin to come down. One of the main financial incentives for buying electric cars, for example, is that electricity tends to be cheaper per kilometre than petrol. Sales of electric cars are growing fast in many countries

## An 8-year-old writes a book and hides it in cupboard. NOW, IT'S A HIT

When eight-year-old Dillon Helbig finished writing his book, 'The Adventures of Dillon Helbig's Crisimis', in mid-December, he wanted everyone to read it. The only problem was that he did not have an agent. So, he decided to self-publish. During a visit with his grandmother to the Lake Hazel branch of the Ada Community Library in Boise, Idaho, in US, Dillon quietly deposited his book, signed 'by Dillon His Self', on to a nearby shelf. The 81-page book details adventures that ensue after the star on a Christmas tree Dillon is decorating explodes. Dillon is transported

into a portal and time-travels to the very first Thanksgiving and to the north pole. "Everything about it was a bit crazy," the second-grader admitted. Days later, when Dillon came to check on the book, he noticed it was gone. His mom called the library. It turned out that the Lake Hazel library branch manager, Alex Hartman and his colleagues discovered Dillon's book in the "stories" section and read it.



YOUNG ACHIEVER

■ Dillon has been awarded the library's Whoodini Award for best young novelist, a category created for him and named after the library's owl mascot ■ The young author has announced that a sequel is in the works, this time about a visit from the Grinch and also featuring Dillon's dog, Rusty ■ He is also writing a book about a jacket-eating closet, based, Dillon said, on a true story from his kindergarten days

## NO DIGITAL DETOX: INSTA MAY ROLL OUT NEW FEATURES

Instagram is ramping up things to keep its young user base interested, although only three months ago, it had promised to introduce an app that nudges users to 'take a break' after they had been online for a certain time. A slew of new features are likely to be introduced on the photo-sharing app that ranges from 3-D avatars to screen sharing while video calling, and to giving a better flow to the home feed, by making it chronological. According to a report in Gadgets Now, the app, which is wildly popular in India, and saw the highest number of downloads in the previous year, is currently working on introducing a new feature that would make the users' home feeds more personalised.



Instagram is likely to offer two options as a part of this feature. The first one is the 'Following' option, which will allow you to view the content of those you are following on your home feed in a chronological order, and the other option is the 'Favourites' which will allow you to see contents of the accounts you have 'added to your favourites' on your feed. This too shall appear in a chronological order, by default

## Scientists discover supermountains four times longer than the Himalayas

Mount Everest, at its towering height of 8,848 metres, is the tallest in the Himalayan range, but scientists have revealed that there were ranges that stretched across the continent. Longer than the Himalayas, these mountain ranges helped in the evolution of the planet. Researchers have tracked the formation of these supermountains throughout Earth's history.



#### THE SUPERMOUNTAINS

➤ The first supermountains are being called Nuna Supermountain, which coincides with the likely appearance of eukaryotes, organisms that later gave rise to plants and animals ➤ The second that evolved around 650 and 500 million years ago is the Transgondwanan Supermountain, which coincides with the appearance of the first large animals and the Cambrian explosion 45 million years later when most animal groups appeared in the fossil record

#### HOW DID THEY CONTRIBUTE IN THE EVOLUTION OF EARTH

■ Researchers said that when the mountains eroded, they provided essential nutrients like phosphorous and iron to the oceans, supercharging biological cycles and driving the evolution to greater complexity. The supermountains may also have boosted oxygen levels in the atmosphere, needed for complex life to breathe  
■ Researchers attribute a decrease in evolution rate on the planet between 1,800 and 800 million years to the absence of these supermountains. This period is known as the Boring Billion

Stretching up to 8,000 kilometres across, they were nearly four times the length of the present-day Himalayan ranges (2,300 kilometres) and formed twice in Earth's history – the first between 2,000 and 1,800 million years ago and the second between 650 and 500 million years ago. Researchers believe that there are links between these two instances of supermountains and the two most important periods of evolution in Earth's history.

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# The World

this week



## CAN

### sanctions stop Putin's ambitions?



#### IN THE NEWS FOR

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has accused the US of trying to draw his country into a war in Ukraine. He said America's goal was to use a confrontation as a pretext to impose more sanctions on Russia. Putin also said the US was ignoring Russia's concerns about the expansion of Nato, the Western military alliance which Ukraine is seeking to join. The US and its allies accuse Russia of planning to invade Ukraine, something Russia has repeatedly denied.

#### YOU SPEAK

Sanctions will not stop President Putin from his ambitions for Ukraine for 3 main reasons: ■ Russia is not excessively dependent on foreign markets. ■ Past sanctions have not been very effective and it may now aggravate the situation. ■ Russia is a nuclear superpower. In the likely case of a full-fledged war, Russia will be able to hold base competently. Also, world power countries like China are more likely to back up Russia's ambitions than Ukraine's.



T. NIMISHA, class XI, Flitjee, Hyderabad

#### WE SPEAK

Experts say it's unlikely the US and its allies would agree to something as sweeping as a complete ban on trade with Russia or an embargo. Rather, industries and individuals probably will continue to bear the brunt of sanctions as the crisis deepens.

The US and its allies have threatened Russia with financial sanctions carrying "severe consequences" if it invades Ukraine

## WHO

### could win Nobel Peace?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

Pope Francis, British nature broadcaster David Attenborough, the World Health Organisation and Belarusian dissident Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya are among the nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Also among the candidates for the accolades are Greta Thunberg, the Myanmar National Unity Government formed by opponents of last year's coup and Tuvalu's foreign minister

Simon Kofe, last-minute announcements showed on Monday. Thousands of people, from members of parliaments worldwide to former winners, are eligible to propose candidates.

#### WE SPEAK



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

Exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was nominated for the second year running for her "brave, tireless and peaceful work" for democracy and freedom in her home country, said parliamentarian Haarek Elvenes. The Belarusian human rights activist and politician ran in the 2020 Belarusian presidential election as the main opposition candidate after her husband Sergei Tikhanovsky was arrested by Belarusian authorities.



Sir David Attenborough

Attenborough is best known for his landmark TV series illustrating the natural world, including Life on Earth and The Blue Planet. He was nominated jointly with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which assesses the state of biodiversity worldwide.

Environmentalists have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past, including Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai and former US VP Al Gore



Pope Francis

Pope Francis was nominated for his efforts to help solve the climate crisis and his work towards peace and reconciliation, by Dag Inge Ulstein, ex-minister of int'l development.



The World Health Organisation (WHO)

The coronavirus pandemic has been front and centre of people's concerns over the past two years and this year the international body tasked with fighting it, the WHO, has again been nominated.

#### YOU SPEAK

Even though all the nominees have had a big impact on our society, I think David Attenborough deserves to win the Nobel Peace Prize this year. Most of us know him from his work on the famous broadcast network, BBC, as a presenter but he is also an active environmentalist and has helped in raising awareness for natural preservation. His work has brought about significant changes in climate change, planetary biodiversity, renewable energy and much more. For the better part of 30 years, he has dedicated his life for the advancement of environmental conservation and it should be recognised.

LIKHITH L. GOWDA, class XI, Vyasa Int'l, B'luru



## DID

### FM do

### enough for education sector?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

The Union Budget gains applause for digitalization of education and making it accessible at the grassroots level. Still, many believe more could have been done to elevate the quality of education as well.

The sector appreciated the budget being in line with promoting human capital through digital tools such as the 'one class one TV channel' programme proposed under the PM e-Vidya scheme.



#### WE SPEAK



It laid out a progressive vision the Government holds for capitalizing on India's demographic advantages by suggesting a digital university, creating a conducive environment for inter-university collaborations, and introducing a number of skill development programmes. The Budget has allocated ₹63,449.37 crore to the Department of School Education and Literacy, an increase of about 6.6% over the current financial years.

#### YOU SPEAK

Rather than focusing on digital revolution in education, the government should bolster the existing public schooling first. Even when students have Internet access, the quality of online education remains poor.

POORNA GHOSH, class XII, Anand Niketan, Ahmedabad

The Budget has focused on bridging the digital divide among students, which will help in killing the 'digital apartheid'. Setting up of virtual labs and digital university will definitely help the sector.

MANAS KAPUR, class XI, Sri Venkateshwar Int'l, Delhi

## DO

### you think Boris Johnson should quit after 'PartyGate'?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

Senior Conservative lawmaker Tobias Ellwood said he would submit a letter of no confidence on British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, saying so-called 'partygate' was distracting the government at a time of international crisis. Johnson is facing calls to resign after weeks of a steady drip of reports alleging his aides, and he himself, had staged and attended parties in his Downing Street office and residence at a time when millions of Britons were under Covid-19 lockdown.

#### YOU SPEAK

I think Boris Johnson should resign or at least face severe consequences for his actions. Leaders must abide by the regulations laid out for the security of citizens. In fact, in such situations they should be role models for others and cooperate willingly with the protocols.

AVANI PANDIT, class X, Apeejay School, Nerul



#### WE SPEAK

British PM Boris Johnson will probably hold onto his job for now despite a scathing report about government coronavirus lockdown parties, but his long-term future is out of his hands as police probe claims of rule breaking, analysts said. His position has been hanging by a thread because of the steady drip of revelations since last year.

## WILL

### 'delete all' help?

#### IN THE NEWS FOR

We all have sent text messages that we have regretted instantly, however, Meta owned WhatsApp allows us to remove unwanted messages through its 'Delete for Everyone' feature. The extension would help users delete their wrongly sent messages within a longer time frame. The feature would allow group admins to add and manage their multiple WhatsApp groups from a single place.



#### WE SPEAK

WhatsApp has developed a beta version for Android where the app suggests extending the time limit for 'Delete for Everyone'. ■ In this, the users will get a notification saying 'This message was removed' after a text gets deleted. ■ The date of implementation of the new feature has still not been announced by the app but it will definitely happen soon.

#### YOU SPEAK

In recent years, WhatsApp has brought in a flurry of new updates and features to make their platform more secure and user-friendly. However, the recent decision to give the group admin the power to delete messages seems to be a bit far-fetched. It is extremely tedious to keep track of conversations and have a concrete record of them, especially when any person can be anonymous and potentially dangerous on an online platform. Yes, but extending the time limit is a good move.

MANEEZA KHAN, class XI, The Heritage School, Kolkata

