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# Notes from Davos: Defining themes at this year's Davos



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## Synopsis

Some of the words recurring at Davos this year are: ESG, Green Energy, Green Hydrogen, Coalitions, Pandemic



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By Ajay Khanna, ET CONTRIBUTORS

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## Dialling Geopolitics

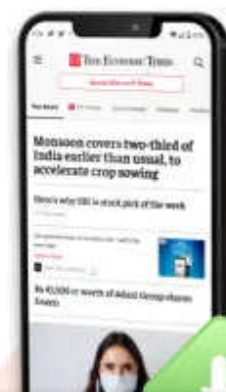


Given the exigent circumstances triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war and the strong views, it was widely expected to dominate the conversation at Davos. It surpassed expectations.

The first day, the main Congress Hall was all but overflowing to hear the special address, delivered virtually, by President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine. The plucky leader received a standing ovation, the minute his image beamed on the screen.

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I was in the hall, and I could see the audience was busy clicking away pictures with their cell phones—a first even for a Davos vet like me. Full disclosure: I too am guilty of succumbing to the emotional moment. No prizes for guessing which of the two warring countries has won overwhelming support.



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Some of key words recurring at Davos this year are: ESG, Green Energy, Green Hydrogen, Geopolitics, Pandemic, Inflation, Energy cost, Metaverse and Globalisation. It is more than a subtle giveaway about the issues concerning the world—future matters.

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I have not dwelled on it, but the fact is that these are defining the themes at this year's Davos



## Networking

The more people I meet , the more I want of it. If there is one pastime, it must be networking. It is not just me; everyone is making the best of the face-time, something that has not happened for two years. And frankly, no matter what the virtues of #WFH, nothing beats an in-person meeting.

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## Different States

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And the thing about networking at Davos is that it can happen in the most unexpected places. I would say if you believed in serendipity then it is omnipresent in Davos.

I just bumped into the chief minister of Karnataka Basavaj Bommai at the Congress centre; given that it came after our scheduled meeting with him, it undoubtedly renewed my acquaintance.

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This year, as I mentioned earlier, we have a record number of state governments at Davos. Though Madhya Pradesh was a last-minute no-show, we still have five states: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

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of each state government along with the India Lounge.

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quizzing us on the nature and scope of the next round of reforms. As they say, the world's 'Dil mange more'.

Not surprising then that the all the ministers of the union cabinet, Piyush Goyal, Hardeep Singh Puri, Mansukh Mandaviya (he arrives tomorrow) & state government representatives have a very busy official schedule for the rest of the week.

I am given to understand that in addition to their speaking commitments, each of the two ministers, Goyal and Puri, have scheduled like 30 to 40 bilateral meetings. Wow! Equally busy are Amitabh Kant, CEO Niti Aayog and Anurag Jain, secretary of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.

### Musical Tables

Previously networking at Davos had one handicap: demand for tables outstripped supply. Not this year.

The Congress Centre has for the first time, made adequate provision for bilateral meetings. There are far more rooms and lounges for bilateral meetings than ever before at the Centre.

One highlight this year is the "Partners Lounge" which is meant for partner company members of WEF. Normally located at Level-1 near Aspen Hall, it was the most sought-after location for a bilateral.

This year it has a new address. Innovatively, the WEF used the area of the swimming pool to build a gigantic 'Partners Lounge'. I am told that divers were deployed to secure the scaffolding. If you didn't already know there is no way you would guess that you are just meters above a pool. Kudos!

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## Thank you WEF

I must compliment WEF and its 800 plus staff (several are Indians) who take personal care of every delegate, including resolving any issues that are flagged.

## A Winter Davos

Guess what! We will be back in Davos in January 2023 . Yes, we will have to bear the biting cold. Though I have already been spoilt silly by the supine summer of Davos. So not too sure about a winter rendezvous.

## Cozy Dinners

A table for two during a WEF is unthinkable. Official dinners, receptions, company events soak up every available space. A private dinner is therefore a luxury.

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## Crypto Everywhere

The world, including the Reserve Bank of India, are sceptical about crypto currencies. But at Davos they are a stand-out: A raft of lounges have been sponsored



Asia's largest technology and innovation summit will be hosted in September. Eight founders of tech start-ups based out of Chennai have travelled to showcase the summit. Nothing to beat a B2B public relations pitch.

## Ukraine calling

A Davos-based marketing services firm founded by an Indian has supported embattled Ukraine. Ukraine House', curated by them, is offering free hospitality. According to the founder, this was merely payback for the gains that accrued to the firm when they ran the campaign Ukraine@Davos for 2019 and 2020.

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## Cheers Team India

Cowell this has been a good "Team India" effort at Davos. Commerce Minister

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participants from India.

This was much needed. I hope with seven months to go for the White Davos in January 2023 , we will renew our efforts when we are back in India.

*The writer is with Jubilant Bhartia Group and Co-Founder of PAFI.*

(Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this column are that of the writer. The facts and opinions expressed here do not reflect the views of [www.economictimes.com](http://www.economictimes.com).)

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