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Current Affairs of the Day

ADB cuts India's 2021-22 growth forecast to 10%

1. The Asian Development Bank has cut its forecast for India's GDP growth in 2021-22 to 10%, from 11% projected earlier, with downside risks dominating the economic outlook. The ADB also sees rising input costs fuelling inflation to a faster 5.5% pace than the 5.2% previously estimated.

ADB cuts India's 2021-22 growth forecast to 10%

Bank sees risks to outlook tilt to downside, hitting on pandemic; projects input costs to fan inflation to a faster 5.5% pace

The Asian Development Bank has cut its forecast for India's GDP growth in 2021-22 to 10%, from 11% projected earlier, with downside risks dominating the economic outlook. The ADB also sees rising input costs fuelling inflation to a faster 5.5% pace than the 5.2% previously estimated.

The ADB's annual economic outlook report says the 2021-22 growth forecast for India is 10%, down from 11% in the April forecast. The bank expects the economy to rebound strongly in the remaining three quarters and grow by 10% in the full fiscal year before moderating to 7.5% in 2022-23.

Still, the risks to the outlook tilt to the downside and depend mainly on the evolution of the pandemic. Until we get to the point that we have really widespread vaccination, countries still are at risk of renewed outbreaks as the Delta variant is much more infectious.

2. While the COVID-19 second wave had disrupted the recovery since the ADB's April forecast for 11% growth, the Bank expects the economy to 'rebound strongly in the remaining three quarters and grow by 10% in the full fiscal year before moderating to 7.5% in 2022-23.

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'India added 521 MW of rooftop solar in Q2 2021'

- India has added 521 MW of rooftop solar capacity in April-June this year, which is the highest capacity installed in a quarter, according to a Mercom India report.
- Rooftop solar installations were up 517% year-on-year (y-o-y) compared with the 85 MW installed in Q2 2020 (April-June 2020).
- The target set for installed solar energy capacity is 100 GW by March 2023 — 40 GW rooftop solar and 60 GW ground-mounted utility-scale.
- The country has managed to install only 43.94 GW till July 31, 2021, the data suggests.

'India added 521 MW of rooftop solar in Q2 2021'

'Highest capacity installed in a quarter'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India has added 521 MW of rooftop solar capacity in April-June this year, which is the highest capacity installed in a quarter, according to a Mercom India report.

India added 521 megawatts (MW) of rooftop solar capacity in the second quarter of the calendar year 2021, a 53% increase quarter-on-quarter compared with 341 MW installed in Q1 2021 (January-March), according to Mercom India Research's newly released Mercom India Rooftop Solar Market Report Q2 2021.

Rooftop solar installations were up 517% year-on-year (y-o-y) compared with



the 85 MW installed in Q2 2020 (Apr-June 2020). Rooftop solar capacity additions in India in Q2 2021 (April-June) were the highest in a quarter.

As per the report, installations were significantly higher than the previous quarter despite the second wave of the COVID-19 and related state lockdowns.



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5. The rooftop solar installation has been particularly dismal at 7GW till December 2020, according to Bridge to India, a renewable energy consultancy.

India's Renewable Energy Target by 2022 (By Source)

Unit: Gigawatts



5GW
Small hydro

10GW
Biomass

40GW
Rooftop solar

60GW
Wind

60GW
Solar photovoltaic

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A farmer becomes a labourer

The challenge for doubling farmers' income is this foundational change in the economy of an agricultural household



A foundational change in the economy of such households:

1. By next year, India has a promise to keep: To double farmers' income from 2015-2016 levels. The 77th round of the National Sample Survey, Land and Livestock Holdings of Households and Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households, by the National Statistical Office has some indicators on whether this promise can be kept.
2. The survey covers situations in 2018-2019; before this, a similar survey was done in 2012-2013.
3. The monthly income of agricultural households has increased by 59 per cent since 2012-2013. So, it is an annual growth rate of 7.8 per cent.
4. The survey also shows that income from cultivation has come down during these two survey rounds — during 2012-2018.
5. There are three sources of income for an agricultural household: Cultivation, wage and livestock. In the total income of an agricultural household, cultivation accounts for just 38 per cent, a steep decline from 48 per cent in 2013. Wages and livestock incomes dominate the economic profile of this sector. Wage is the biggest contributor to household income.



6. It means an average agricultural household depends more on wages than the farm. This is a foundational change in the economy of such households.

How to Double in such a scenario

1. It is obvious that income from cultivation can't be targeted to increase so significantly it will become the largest source of income and also double the overall income of the family by 2022.
2. The terms of trade for farmers have not been favourable for long; they have not been receiving fair prices for their produce.
3. The next biggest contributor is the livestock component. It is a reality now that this economy is bigger than the foodgrain one. Despite the fast growth in this component, the income from this source can't be increased to a level that the overall income would double. Thus, it leaves the third component to be focused on, the wage part of the total income.
4. Since 2018, India's overall employment scenario has worsened. First, there was a slump in the economy since 2016. Then came the demonetisation leading to a shock in the informal sector. The pandemic, as we all know, is the biggest jolt to the informal sector.
5. As we have more agri-labourers than cultivators, and farmers are earning more from wages, this situation is going to aggravate the employment scenario in rural areas.

Agriculture is known to reduce rural poverty at a speed twice faster than the overall economic growth. If the sector is already reeling under a low growth phase and will be further flooded with job demands, it may just stop creating the income enough to reduce poverty at the above level. So, it is the biggest challenge to double farmers' income, and also to the national income.

NSO survey: Most farmers selling in local markets, government agencies procure the least

1. The majority of Indian farmers sell their produce in local markets, the 77th round of the National Sample Survey by the National Statistical Office titled Land and livestock holdings of households and situation assessment of agricultural households has found.
2. Government agencies and Agricultural Produce Market Committees account for an insignificant portion of farmers' produce sales.

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- For the 18 types of crops, including paddy, wheat and arhar covered under the survey, farmers sold 55-93 per cent of their produce in local markets. In APMC markets, it ranged from 3-22 per cent; while government procurement accounted for 2-14 per cent. Farmers preferring to sell in local markets are the trend across crops.
- For instance, in the case of paddy, farmers sold 75.1 per cent of their produce in local markets. Government agencies and APMC markets accounted for 10.5 per cent of their sold produce.
- In the case of wheat, farmers sold 66 per cent of their produce in local markets while APMC and government procurement took up 26 per cent of wheat production.
- Among the crops that farmers sold to APMC markets and government agencies, paddy, wheat and sugarcane had the highest share. This is due to the fact that these crops have minimum support price coverage and have established procurement channels.
- In the case of pulses, farmers mostly sell in local markets. Farmers sold 68 per cent of their arhar (red gram) in local markets and 22 per cent in APMC markets. Government agencies accounted for just 1.7 per cent of the farmers' sales.

The Porunai in Sangam Literature: A river of wealth, power and antiquity

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Down To Earth

- The latest discoveries about human settlements along the Porunai or Thamirabarani river in Tamil Nadu are exciting; the river and its valley have also figured extensively in the lives of the ancient Tamils
- Scientists from the United States, recently carbon dated and analysed rice and soil found in a burial urn at the Sivakalai archaeological excavation centre in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
- The results showed that the rice and soil dated back to 1155 Before Common Era. In other words, they were nearly 3,200 years old, almost as old as the Indus Valley Civilisation, in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent.





4. This is not the first time the Porunai or Thamirabarani river, in the basin of which Sivakalai is located, has been found to have supported an ancient settlement.
5. Sivakalai and Adichanallur were just seven kilometres apart along the Porunai. There have been several millennia of civilisation along the Porunai's banks.

In Sangam literature

1. The Porunai or Thamirabarani river is mentioned several times in Sangam-era literature composed from the first to fourth centuries Common Era. The Sangam corpus is considered to be a 'treasure trove' containing crucial records of the subcontinent's ancient history.
2. The only major perennial river in Tamil Nadu, Thamirabarani has been mentioned as Porunai, Than Porunai, Porunal and Poruntham in Tamil literature right from the Sangam era.
3. Than Porunai finds a place in Tholkappiam, an ancient treatise on Tamil grammar. Than Porunai is also mentioned in the Sangam work Puranaanooru.
4. Researchers say 'Than Porunai' evolved into 'Tamira Porunai', before becoming 'Thamirabarani'. Puranaanooru, one of the eight books in the secular anthology of Tamil Sangam literature describes the present day 'Thamirabarani' as 'Than Porunai'.

Port of Korkai

1. The Thamirabarani River flows 128 kilometres, from the Western Ghats to the Gulf of Mannar. One folk etymology says that the river was also called 'Tamraparani' in the classical period.
2. This was later changed to 'Taprobana', the name given to the island of Sri Lanka, just across the Gulf, by the ancient Greeks.
3. The spot where the river meets the Gulf was the location of Korkai, an important port of the ancient Tamil Pandyan Kingdom. Korkai port was famous for the export of pearls.
4. The latest research was conducted on rice and soil found in an urn. Earthen pots were made by the people of Tamil Nadu during the Sangam period.
5. Pot making was known to the inhabitants of the area that is today Tamil Nadu since at least the New Stone Age period, which is said to be around 7000 BC. The art of making mud pots is believed to be about 9000 years old.



6. The ancient Tamils at Korkai and other ports of the ancient Tamil country had good trade relations with the Romans. The Romans are known as 'Yavanar' in Tamil. The term 'Yavana' was originally used for the Greeks and meant 'Ionian'. The flavoured liquor was brought in good looking bottles by Yavanar (Romans). The ships of Yavanar brought gold and returned with pepper.

Researchers say Porunai is not only a non-Sanskritised word but also the right word for Thamirabarani in Tamil. Paddy cultivation has continued in the Porunai valley for nearly three millennia. The new findings of Sivakalai are exciting. In addition, there is existing knowledge about Adichannallur and Korkai.

Extreme weather events in India made women, children more vulnerable to modern slavery, flags report

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT FORTNIGHTLY

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1. Climate change-induced extreme weather events put women, children and minorities at risk of modern slavery and human trafficking. The phenomenon is on the rise in India, among other countries, warned the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Anti-Slavery International in a recent report.
2. Modern slavery — including debt bondage, bonded labour, early / forced marriage and human trafficking — converge with climate change, particularly climate shocks and climate-related forced displacement and migration, the report said.
3. The report observed what happened in Sundarbans, for instance.
4. The delta region is characterised by intense, recurrent and sudden-onset disasters, as well as slow-onset ecological degradation making large areas uninhabitable. Rising sea levels, erratic rainfall, increased frequency of cyclones, tidal surges and floods, mean that millions of people across the Sundarbans are unable to work for most of the year.
5. Severe cyclones and flooding in the Sundarbans delta had also reduced the land for agriculture, which is the major source of livelihood. While restrictions were imposed by bordering countries, smugglers and traffickers operating in the affected region targeted widows and men desperate to cross the border to India to find employment.
6. Women were trafficked and often forced into hard labour and prostitution, with some working in sweatshops along the border.



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7. People displaced and migrating from rural to urban areas with no resources, skills or social networks at their destination, are targeted by agents and/or traffickers in Dhaka or Kolkata.

Scale of displacement

1. The report has been released a month ahead of the Conference of Parties (CoP26) United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, the United Kingdom.
2. Over 216 million people could be internally displaced by 2050 across six regions due to climate change, according to World Bank estimates. Of these, over 81 per cent will be in Sub-Saharan Africa (86 million), East Asia and the Pacific (49 million) and the South Asian region (40 million).
3. As many as 55 million people were internally displaced within their countries due to extreme weather events in 2020. This is the highest in the last decade. This would be in addition to the existing 40.3 million people living under slavery in the world.

Way ahead

1. Climate and development policy-makers urgently need to recognise that millions of people displaced by climate change are being, and will be, exposed to slavery in the coming decades, the IIED report flagged.
2. Policymakers should therefore develop targeted actions, at national and international levels, to address the issue. The global and regional discourse on development and climate policy must consider trafficking and slavery risks due to climate shocks.
3. Several ongoing initiatives — including the Warsaw International Mechanism Task Force on Displacement (WIM TFD), the Sendai Framework, etc — should be coordinated to increase understanding of, and response to, growing risks of climate-induced migration/displacement and exposure to modern slavery.

How effective is CPCB in its management of e-waste?

The world produced around 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste in 2019, out of which only 17.4% was recycled. Electronic waste (e-waste) is the fastest-growing stream of waste globally.





The tsunami of e-waste

1. The world produced around 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste in 2019, out of which only 17.4 per cent was recycled, a recent report by the United Nations (2020) found. The agency even termed this phenomenon a 'tsunami of e-waste'.
2. The global e-waste monitor reported that India, with a population of around 1.38 billion, generated 3,230 kilotonnes (KT) of e-waste, out of which only 30 KT of e-waste was formally collected in 2019.
3. India generated around 2.4 kilograms of e-waste per capita; only 1 per cent of e-waste was formally collected. The informal sector of waste collection dominates over the formal sector, which is still in its infancy.
4. It should be noted here that while India's per-capita generation is among the lowest in the world, the country is the third-largest generator of e-waste in the world.
5. The facts are disturbing. The responsibility of managing e-waste in India lies with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB).
6. The authorities were recently summoned by the principal bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), when the latter took cognizance of unscientific disposal of e-waste in *Shailesh Singh v. the State of UP*.

The NGT asked the authorities to submit a report on the actions taken to manage the e-waste in and around the capital.

Important data on e-waste

1. The number of producers having extended producer responsibility authorisation (EPR) is few
2. The number of registered producer responsibility organisations (PRO) is also way below need
3. The number of authorised dismantlers/recyclers is also way below the desired level

Shortcomings in e-waste management

- Producers of the notified 21 categories of electronic equipment are not able to collect e-waste as per the specified target
- Only a few producers have been granted EPR from CPCB.
- Many unauthorised dismantling and recycling units are still in function



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- Efficient monitoring of the authorised dismantlers/recyclers is required due to the leakage from authorised to unauthorised dismantlers and recyclers
- Authorised dismantlers and recyclers have been given processing capacity beyond their actual processing capacity by the SPCBs
- Ensure allocation of industrial space or shed for e-waste dismantling and recycling in the existing and upcoming industrial parks and clusters
- The generation data collected by CPCB is based on the sales data of producers registered with it. They do not include imported e-waste figures. Therefore, actual figures for e-waste generation are likely to be far higher than the current estimates
- A national-level inventory of e-waste generation should be prepared. State-wise data is not produced due to a lack of reported data by SPCBs

What can be done?

- Strict enforcement of the existing domestic rules and regulations
- An integration model for the informal as well as the formal sector will result in lower costs at the pre-processing stage and efficient recycling
- Data inventory for data analysis and interpretation to know an estimate of e-waste produced annually. This will help strategize tackling the menace of e-waste
- Publishing data in the public domain will create transparency with respect to generation, flow channels and methods of handling and disposal of e-waste

Mains DAWP	Q1. Discuss the relevance of the decadal census in the socio-economic and political developments of the country. Why is it losing its significance? Suggest reforms to make it more relevant.
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Practice MCQs	Q1. The ancient Tamirabarani river valley Civilization is situated in the state of a. Kerala b. Rajasthan c. Haryana d. Tamil Nadu
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