

Financial and Banking News

ADB lowers India's GDP forecast for FY18 to 6.7 per cent

The Asian Development Bank on Wednesday raised its economic growth estimate for developing Asia to 6 percent for this year from a previous estimate of 5.9 per cent, citing stronger than expected exports and China's resilience.

The Manila-based ADB kept its 2018 growth forecast at 5.8 per cent.

"Developing Asia's growth momentum, supported by recovering exports, demonstrates that openness to trade remains an essential component of inclusive economic development," ADB chief economist Yasuyuki Sawada said in a report, an update of the bank's previous estimates released in September.

China's economy, the world's second largest, is projected to expand by 6.8 per cent this year, higher than the ADB's prior estimate of 6.7 per cent, on strong consumption, the bank said. It kept China's 2018 growth forecast at 6.4 per cent.

By region, South Asia will remain the fastest growing region in Asia Pacific, the ADB said, even after the bank cut its 2017 forecast to 6.5 per cent from 6.7 per cent, with India's growth outlook lowered to 6.7 per cent from 7.0 per cent.

The recovery in the Indian economy "is more subdued than assumed earlier due to rising crude oil prices, soft private investment growth, and weather-related risks to agriculture," the ADB said.

For 2018, India's economy is projected to grow by 7.3 per cent, slower than ADB's previous estimate of 7.4 per cent, while the overall growth forecast for South Asia was maintained at 7.0 per cent.

Boeing to manufacture and assemble aircraft components near Bengaluru

The state government of Karnataka on 11 December 2017 approved global aerospace major Boeing's proposal to set up an engineering and technology facility with electronics and avionics manufacturing and assembly on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

The facility will be set up at an investment of Rs 1152 crore. It would be used to make aircraft components and subsystems.

The facility will be built on the 41.7 acres of land that has been allotted to the company in the Aerospace Park at Devanahalli, about 40km from Bengaluru. It would be adjacent to the Bengaluru international airport.

When commissioned, the Boeing facility is expected to provide 2,300 direct jobs and many more indirect and associative jobs.

DCI, NHAI sign MoU to facilitate supply of sand

The Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on 12 December 2017 to enable the availability of sand for highway construction work.

The Concessionaires working on highways projects have been facing a shortage of sand at many sites. Hence, the agreement aims to fill this gap by facilitating the availability of sand for these concessionaires.

Key Highlights

- The agreement aims to facilitate the supply of sand for highways construction work.
- Under the MoU, the business intermediaries will ship and store the sand at various ports in India and market it across the country.
- The NHAI will facilitate the whole process by displaying the availability of sand at various stockyards at the ports.

Reports

UN releases World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 Report

The United Nations (UN) on 11 December 2017 released the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2018 report in New York.

As per the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018, the current macroeconomic conditions offer policy-makers greater scope to address some of the deep-rooted issues that hamper progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Highlights of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018

- In 2017, world economic growth reached 3 per cent, the highest growth since 2011. The global growth is expected to remain steady at 3 per cent in 2018 and 2019.
- The recent pickup in global growth originates from firmer growth in several developed economies, although East and South Asia remain the world most dynamic regions.

- In 2017, East and South Asia accounted for nearly half of global growth, with China alone contributing about one-third.
- The end of recessions in Argentina, Brazil, Nigeria and Russia also contributed to the rise in the rate of global growth between 2016 and 2017.
- The world economy also faces longer-term challenges - increasing economic diversification, reducing inequality, supporting long-term investment and tackling institutional deficiencies.
- Few least developed countries (LDCs) are expected to reach the Sustainable Development Goal target for GDP growth of at least 7 per cent in the near term.
- Environmental sustainability Preliminary estimates suggest that the level of CO2 emissions increased in 2017. The frequency of weather-related shocks continues to increase, calling for building resilience against climate change and prioritizing environmental protection.
- Policies that target international shipping and aviation emissions, which do not fall under the purview of the Paris Agreement, need to be strengthened, as emissions from these sectors continue to grow faster than those from road transport.

Current Affairs related to India

Rajasthan government to recognise political prisoners as 'Loktantra Sainani'

- The state government of Rajasthan has decided to recognise political prisoners held in jails during the emergency period as 'Loktantra Sainani'.
- The state's cabinet decided to change the name of Rajasthan MISA and DIR Bandi Pension Rules 2008 to the Rajasthan Loktantra Sainani samman Nidhi 2008 on 12 December 2017.

Key Highlights

- Till now, only those people who were detained under MISA and DIR and kept in any of the Rajasthan jails were given the monthly pension of Rs 12,000 and a monthly allowance of Rs 1200.
- The total number of such people is 1050.
- However, after the cabinet's decision, every Rajasthani, who was held in any jail in the country during emergency period will also be eligible for the pension.
- Such people will not need to produce the certificate of the respective Jail Superintendent or Superintendent of Police for getting pension.
- Now only self certification has to be given.

Delhi government to launch accident victim policy

- The Delhi government has decided to launch accident victim policy which will cover all hospital expenses of victims of road accidents, acid attacks or burns.

- As per government, there is no upper limit on the cost of treatment and all victims irrespective of residence, and even foreigners will be entitled to get free treatment in any Delhi hospital, government or private if the accident takes place in the capital.
- However, the proposed scheme accident victim policy will require the lieutenant governor's approval.
- It is aimed to save as many lives as possible. Through this scheme, the victims can be taken to any private hospital next to the accident site.
- Private hospitals will not ask for any money from such patients or their relatives for treatment.
- Private hospitals will be asked to keep records of victims so that it could be reimbursed after due verification.
- It also intends to end the practice to not admit accident victims under various pretexts if the patients are poor by private hospitals.

India hosts 4th India-Australia-Japan trilateral meeting

- Issues related to counter-terrorism, economic cooperation and maritime security were highlighted in the 4th India-Australia-Japan trilateral meeting hosted by Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar here on Wednesday.
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar took to twitter to inform about the meeting that the Foreign Secretary held with his Australian and Japanese counterparts.
- "Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar hosts the 4th India-Australia-Japan trilateral meeting with his Australian and Japanese counterparts in New Delhi. Issues of maritime security, counter terrorism and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region were discussed," he tweeted.
- On Monday, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held the 15th Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
- In the trilateral meeting, the foreign ministers of the three countries discussed terrorism, the political scenario in the Middle East and North Africa, different challenges in putting world economy back on growth track, transnational organised crime, illicit drug trafficking, food security and climate change, Swaraj said, in a press briefing after the meeting.

Current Affairs around the World

In a first, Sikh American Gurbir Grewal nominated to be New Jersey Attorney General

- Sikh American Gurbir Grewal on 12 December 2017 became first Sikh public prosecutor to be nominated for the post of Attorney General of New Jersey. Grewal was nominated to the post by Democrat Governor-elect Phil Murphy.

- If Grewal's nomination is approved by the State Senate, he will be the first Sikh to assume the top state law enforcement position in the US. He will also be the second Indian-American after Kamala Harris, who held the position in California before her election to the US Senate.

'Feminism': Merriam-Webster's Word of the year 2017

- 'Feminism' was on 13 December 2017 named as the Merriam-Webster's word of the year for 2017 is "feminism."
- In the year 2017, searches for 'feminism' increased by 70 per cent over 2016 on Merriam-Webster.com. 'Feminism' has also been in Merriam-Webster's annual Top 10 list for the past few years.

Meaning of Feminism

- 'Feminism' has its roots in the Latin language, where it was used for "woman" and "female" in 14th century English.
- As per the 1841 version of Webster Dictionary, Feminism was defined as qualities of females or femaleness.
- Later in the 19th century, the word was used in a medical sense for describing the physical characteristics of a developing teenager.
- At present, Merriam-Webster defines feminism as the "theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes" and "organized activities on behalf of women's rights and interests."

Current Affairs related to Sports

Rohit Sharma becomes 1st batsmen to score 3 ODI double centuries

- Indian batsman Rohit Sharma created history on 13 December 2017 by becoming the first batsman in the history of cricket to score three double centuries in one-day internationals (ODI).
- The ace batsman achieved the feat during India's second ODI against Sri Lanka in Mohali, Punjab, in which India put up a mammoth score of 394/4 in 50 overs.
- The batsman, who opened the innings alongside Shikhar Dhawan, remained unbeaten till the end. His individual score card read 208 not out in mere 153 balls, which was studded with 13 fours and 12 sixes.
- This is Sharma's second double century in the 50-overs' format against Sri Lanka. The last one was at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata in November 2014 when he played a knock of 264, the highest-ever score by a batsman in an ODI innings.
- His first-ever double century in ODI was against Australia in November 2013 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru when he made 209 runs.