Message
Takeo Konishi, Country Director

We are pleased to announce the launch of India Resident Mission's newsletter with this issue. We anticipate this will serve as a platform to better connect with our stakeholders in India by sharing the latest updates on ADB activities, strategies, priority projects and programs catering to India’s priority needs, flagship knowledge outputs, and key events, among others. The newsletter will offer the opportunity to be more responsive and engaging, delivering content that is current and relevant to our partners.

For the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all in different ways. It is heartening to see most COVID-19 restrictions being lifted and things getting back to near normalcy in India. Hopefully, future pandemic waves will be less severe, held in check by India’s remarkable success in vaccinating most of its population.

ADB has worked closely with the government and other development partners to provide holistic support to its fight against the pandemic. To help India emerge quickly from the pandemic, ADB focused on strengthening India’s healthcare systems, providing social protection to vulnerable groups and helping industries bounce back. At the same time, ADB operations continue to support the country’s development priorities in upgrading basic infrastructure particularly in less-developed states, climate actions, logistics improvement, and economic corridor development.

Despite the tremendous challenges, 2021 was a landmark year for ADB’s operations in India, with a record lending commitment of $4.6 billion which included $1.5 billion financing to support India’s vaccination program. That was made possible with the proactive support and advice of our government counterpart, the Department of Economic Affairs, in ensuring high-quality project proposals, consistent project readiness, and implementation discipline.

To support India’s evolving development needs, ADB continues to align its operations with the government’s priorities apart from ADB’s corporate Strategy 2030, and the upcoming Country Partnership Strategy for India, 2023-2027 for which we have already started consulting stakeholders and partners across the country.

Through this newsletter, we will keep you posted on our ongoing and planned initiatives and activities in India. We welcome any suggestions for topics that merit attention and discussion. Your feedback will also help our efforts to continually improve so that each issue will be better than the last.
India is the world’s third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs). This puts the country in focus for measures on global warming and enroute towards decarbonization. Recent Government of India policies and programs emphasize climate change action as one of the central pillars of its governance framework.

Back in 2008, India launched the National Action Plan on Climate Change through eight national missions supported by states’ climate change action plans. Following the Paris Agreement in 2015, India committed its Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce carbon intensity of GDP by 33%-35% by 2030 from the 2005 level estimated at 1.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This target was further raised to 45% at the most recent UN climate change conference (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021.

Among the biggest contributors to carbon emissions, transport and power sectors are currently prioritized in the government’s decarbonization push. The challenges to decarbonize these sectors and ADB’s support to some of the government initiatives are discussed here.
TRANSPORT SECTOR

India’s transport sector accounted for 14% of the country’s GHG emissions in 2019, according to the IEA Country report, 2021. Road transport contributed 90% of transport emissions due to dominant use of fossil fuel in both passenger and freight transport. Fast urbanization and increasing use of private vehicles worsen the problem. The government policies focus on diverse paths to decarbonize the transport sector. These include promoting electric mobility, mode choices management, and promoting alternative fuels.

ADB is working with the government, particularly NITI Aayog, on national e-mobility initiatives. ADB supported a study that explores battery manufacturing ecosystem for the local manufacture of EVs. ADB is also preparing an analysis of various credit options and models for EV adoption, increasing private sector participation in developing EV charging infrastructure, formulating comprehensive electric mobility plans, and promoting EV startups and grid scale storage systems.

Diversifying Modes of Transport

A shift in transport mode to rail, shifting cargo from road to railway, and promoting inland waterways and coastal shipping also form part of the government’s focus areas to decarbonize the transport sector.

ADB has been assisting in urban mobility like metros, metro neo, regional rapid transit system (RRTS), inland waterway transport and coastal shipping. ADB is currently assisting metro systems in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai and had earlier supported Jaipur Metro. ADB is also supporting the construction of Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor, the first of its kind in India, that will reduce travel time and encourage commuters to shift from road-based transportation to safer and more environmentally sustainable rail-based mass transport. To promote shifting of cargo from road to rail, ADB is exploring opportunities to finance the East Coast Dedicated Freight Corridor. ADB is also complementing its support to develop coastal shipping with logistics improvement such as developing multimodal logistics parks.

Smog envelopes India’s national capital, New Delhi, due to air pollution

Promoting electric mobility

Electrification is key to decarbonizing transport. Realizing this, India’s policy makers have a strong commitment to electric passenger mobility via several initiatives. The challenge is to create a favorable ecosystem for different stakeholders to enable, leverage, and streamline electric vehicles (EVs) across India.

An electric vehicle charging station in Delhi

The Delhi-Meerut regional rapid transit system network will promote environmentally sustainable rail-based mass transport.
POWER SECTOR

India is the world’s third-largest energy consuming country with 80% of demand still being met by coal, oil, and solid biomass (IEA, India Energy Outlook 2021). Transition from coal-based dominated power generation to renewable energy sources, promoting energy efficiency and resilience will help reduce carbon intensity of the power sector and is crucial for the country’s ambition to achieve the target of net-zero emissions by 2070. India has already pledged to have 500 GW of non-fossil fuel generation by 2030 with massive push to energy generation from renewable sources particularly solar.

To assist this endeavor, ADB initiated a study to holistically assess existing policy directives, technologies, applications, and finances required to achieve India’s COP26 decarbonization goals. The study will also assess implications of decarbonization on parameters such as GDP and its composition, jobs, income, reach and efficacy of relevant social development and poverty alleviation programs.

Through technical assistance and investments, ADB has been supporting India’s ambitious energy transition plan. This includes projects and programs to support solar power systems, green transmission and promote energy efficiency. ADB will be working with global partners to assist India’s phaseout of coal plants and will support the government’s Green Hydrogen initiative.

Going forward, ADB proposes to work with the government for key power sector reforms to advance renewable energy integration. The reforms will also focus on improving operational and financial performance of power distribution companies which are currently in poor financial state.

Diversification of low carbon energy use

The government’s National Policy on Biofuels sets the target of blending 20% ethanol in petrol and 5% biodiesel in diesel by 2030. ADB is supporting the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in research and development on hydrogen fuel cell technology for possible transport applications through combustion or fuel cells.
ADB SUPPORTS INDIA’S VACCINATION DRIVE

Continuing its holistic support to the Government of India’s COVID-19 pandemic response, ADB approved in November 2021 a $1.5 billion financing to accelerate the countrywide vaccination drive. The financing will help procure at least 667 million doses of safe and effective vaccines to cover 317 million beneficiaries, 47.5% of them women.

Earlier when the pandemic broke out in 2020, ADB fast-tracked a $1.5 billion loan to meet the government’s immediate priorities to upgrade hospital facilities and increase test-track-treatment capacity, and to support social protection for immediate relief to the poor, women, and other vulnerable groups.

As part of the pandemic support, ADB also approved a $300 million loan to strengthen primary healthcare in urban areas and enhance the country’s pandemic preparedness. Through multiple technical assistance grants, ADB has been helping India strengthen its vaccine delivery system, monitor pandemic trends, and raise awareness on pandemic protocols.

ADB HELPS IMPROVE QUALITY OF INDIA’S SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

India has made tremendous progress in raising school enrolment. However, the progress in schooling has not yet translated into improved learning outcomes. Prolonged school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened learning deficits among many students, particularly those from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and rural areas.

ADB approved in November 2021 a $500 million loan to Accelerating State Education Program to Improve Results which aims to assist the Government of India in enhancing the quality of school education through its flagship program, Samagra Shiksha (Integrated Scheme for School Education). Focusing on five select states—Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand—the results-based lending will support improvement of education outcomes, particularly foundational learning at the primary level, and reduction of dropout rates at the secondary level.

To achieve these outcomes, the program will help the states: i) provide about 1,800 government schools with improved learning environments and quality learning programs; ii) scale up foundational learning for primary students and enhance the relevance of secondary education by introducing science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) and integrated vocational education; and iii) mainstream digital learning to mitigate the pandemic impact on students’ learning.
ADB SUPPORTS POLICY REFORMS FOR BETTER URBAN SERVICE DELIVERY

India’s current estimated urban population of 460 million is the second largest in the world and is projected to reach nearly 600 million by 2030. Cities contribute over 60% of India gross domestic product and will become a strong engine of growth for the country. However, due to uncontrolled urbanization, many cities are not able to provide basic urban services which can negate their economic potential. To support the Government of India’s agenda in transforming cities into economically vibrant and sustainable communities, ADB approved in December 2021 a $350 million loan to the Sustainable Urban Development and Service Delivery Program to improve urban services needed for improving the quality of life of urban residents.

The program continues ADB’s long-term engagement with India to improve basic urban services delivery in various states. It supports the policies established by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) through its national urban flagship missions to accelerate universal coverage of piped water supply and improve sanitation, beside affordable housing, by accelerating a series of policy actions and reforms that will also mainstream performance-linked funding for urban service delivery.

ADB will provide knowledge and advisory support to MoHUA in implementing the program, including monitoring and evaluation. It will also help select less-developed states and urban local bodies to implement policy reforms, prepare investment plans, and provide recommendations on cross-cutting issues like climate change, environmental and social safeguards assessment, and gender equality and social inclusion.

ADB SUPPORTS SKILL UNIVERSITY IN ASSAM TO PROMOTE INDUSTRY-ALIGNED SKILLS EDUCATION

Growth potential of Assam, India’s largest northeastern state, hinges on aggressive infrastructure and industrial development—specifically corridor-based industrial development—as brought out by ADB studies. These studies also identified a limited skilled workforce in the state as one of the key constraints to this strategy. To address this, the state government in September 2020 decided to establish the Assam Skill University (ASU) which would offer industry-aligned skills education and training programs with multiple entry and exit options to raise the skills and employability of the state’s youth.

ADB approved in December 2021 a $112 million loan to Assam Skill University Project to support the state government in establishing the university. ADB will help establish ASU’s management and operating systems, business models, and faculty and staff, and support the design and construction of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient university campus and facilities to ensure efficient and sustainable operations. It will also support the design and delivery of flexible skills education and training programs catering to industrial needs, including cutting-edge digital skills programs, career development programs and services, and continuing education programs.

This will help improve skills and employability of youth and adults, especially women and disadvantaged groups, and their prospect of getting higher-paying decent jobs. The improved skill ecosystem will contribute to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Assam’s economy and industries. Other states and neighboring countries will also have access to professional development, quality skills, and training resources in Assam.
Chennai is one of India’s fastest growing urban clusters and a major hub of industry and business, but also the most vulnerable to climate change-related threats among major Indian cities. ADB seeks to help build Chennai’s flood preparedness via infrastructure that integrates flood risk management measures with urban planning.

Chennai’s emergence as an industrial center and India’s largest export hub attracted a large influx of migrants who then resided in unplanned settlements and slums. Rapid urbanization not only put severe pressure on the city’s urban services but also altered the city’s natural landscape and land usage. This worsened the risk of decreased surface water storage, water pollution, encroachment, and biodiversity loss. These developments led to frequent and intense flooding in the city over the past decade. Its worst episode occurred in 2015 and claimed over 400 lives. Exposure to sea surges and floods caused by the clogging of city’s main rivers and drainage channels further compounded the problem.
The city urgently needed to build up its disaster preparedness which would then protect the lives of its residents as well as their livelihoods and properties.

In response, ADB approved in September 2021 the $251 million Integrated Urban Flood Management for the Chennai-Kosasthalaiyar Basin Project to support the Government of Tamil Nadu’s efforts to build the city’s climate and disaster resilience to make it a safer place to live in.

Chennai-Kosasthalaiyar basin area attracts the most number of new developments in the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) area, which now has a high concentration of industry.

This raises demand for both industrial plants and housing putting additional strain on urban services. As a result, nearly one-third of the basin area is flood-prone, which then bore the brunt of devastating floods in 2015.

Many low-income communities in the city are located along watercourses and densely populated low-lying areas, making the residents vulnerable to flooding. The project addresses safety concerns of these residents.

While planning the project, the ADB team followed a holistic approach combining flood risk management measures with urban planning.

The project will build climate-resilient flood protection infrastructure such as stormwater drains, pumping stations, and water channels. Catchpits in road side drains will boost groundwater recharge in paved areas in the region which are at risk of water scarcity.

Infrastructure will be supplemented by raising community awareness on flood risks, solid waste management, house sewerage connections, and protection of water bodies along with rainwater harvesting. A flood observatory system centered on citizens’ participation will gather real-time local information in flood areas.

For sustaining operation and maintenance of the drainage system, the project will establish a performance-based incentive mechanism for zonal offices for timely and efficient operation, and develop a road map for enhancing municipal resource mobilization by GCC.

These measures are expected to build urban flood preparedness of Chennai and make it a safer place to live in.
ADB in 2018 introduced the project readiness financing (PRF) modality to fully meet diverse needs of client and achieve higher development impact. Since low project readiness often results in project extensions and cost overruns, PRF intends to support executing agencies’ project preparation activities, such as detailed engineering design, preparation of safeguards and bidding documents, and upfront capacity building. In India, PRF is especially useful in states with limited capacity to prepare readily investable projects. ADB has so far approved six PRFs for 5 states mostly in the Northeastern region till date - Tripura (2), Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh. ADB India Resident Mission’s Urban Specialist Ashok Srivastava, who was instrumental in conceptualizing the first PRF for the state of Tripura to develop an urban and tourism development project, shares his experience of processing and implementing the modality.

Why was PRF thought necessary for infrastructure development projects in Tripura?

Ashok S: The Government of Tripura planned to ramp up urban services and tourism infrastructure to support urbanization-led growth. The plan was to develop urban infrastructure in seven district headquarter towns and 13 urban local bodies (ULBs). Tourism infrastructure and road connectivity to different tourism destinations was also planned to be upgraded. However, state agencies and ULBs had limited capacity to plan and design the project interventions. This is where the PRF’s advance financing for project preparation came in handy.

How did the PRF help in project planning and designing?

Ashok S: After ADB approved India’s first PRF for $4.21 million in 2020, the ADB project team worked closely with the state government agencies on the project scope and design of urban and tourism components. The PRF supported various project preparatory actions. It supported development of sector strategy and prepared a long list of projects based on stakeholder consultations. City level investment plans were prepared based on shortlist of prioritized projects. Thereafter, feasibility studies and detailed project reports were prepared for urban services improvements such as water supply, sanitation, stormwater drainage, urban roads, and urban amenities. For tourism, the PRF helped prepare marketing and promotion strategies for tourist destinations and circuits. The team is also working on the sector and institutional reforms required to strengthen the implementation and the service delivery mechanism. In the process, the PRF is also strengthening agencies’ capacities in technical, procurement, safeguards and financial aspects of project planning and implementation.

What is the way forward after the PRF implementation?

Ashok S: Government of Tripura has submitted the project proposal for the ensuing loan in the urban and tourism sectors. The proposal was screened and supported by relevant line ministries of Government of India and has now been posed to ADB for it to process the ensuing loan. The PRF outputs could help deliver an investment project with high readiness in a short time.
In a wide-ranging interview with Indian Infrastructure magazine, ADB Country Director for India, Mr. Takeo Konishi, touched upon ADB’s long-term partnership with India; support for India’s emerging development priorities; ADB’s experience of working with states; and ADB’s post-COVID-19 operational priorities.

Some excerpts from the interview: (for full interview, click here)

**ON ADB’S LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP WITH INDIA**

- Since the start of our operations in India in 1986, ADB’s support to India has been aligned with the country’s evolving development priorities over various phases of its economic transition.
- The current ADB country partnership strategy (CPS), 2018-2022 for India centers on assisting the country in accelerating its economic transformation through interventions to boost industrial competitiveness, create much-needed jobs, enable the growth of less-developed states, and address environment and climate challenges.

**ON ADB’S EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH STATES**

- Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, ADB has deployed additional resources, apart from its regular lending program, to help India meet its emergency needs and support social protection and economic stabilization.
- First, ADB’s lending support is helping states bridge the infrastructure gap through improved connectivity and
services in urban and rural areas, especially in less-developed states.

- Second, ADB’s knowledge support through technical assistance and grants helps to improve project preparedness and implementation, build capacity, and undertake strategic studies to identify transformative investments.

- Third, ADB is assisting partner states to better implement projects through capacity building of executing agencies, and promoting cross-learning among project agencies, and state government institutions.

- Recently, ADB expanded its collaboration through holistic strategic engagement with select states to identify areas of possible investment support in line with their rising aspirations and emerging development priorities.

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### ON ADB’S FUTURE PLANS FOR INDIA

- Broadly, ADB’s India operations cover agriculture, energy, finance and public sector management, social sector (health, education, and skills), transport and urban sectors. While continuing support to these sectors, ADB’s operations will be further expanded to emerging subsectors and new areas such as road safety, urban mobility, affordable housing, solid waste management, modernized irrigation, agriculture value chains, financial technology, and digitalization across sectors.

- Climate change will certainly continue to be a critical area of ADB support to help the Government of India meet its climate action commitments.

- Clean energy transition projects like electric vehicles and battery storage, and biofuel development are included in ADB’s future lending program, alongside climate change adaptation projects on flood and erosion control, and coastal protection. Efficient water and energy use in urban, agriculture, and building of disaster-resilient infrastructure will also be supported.

- ADB will continue its assistance to less-developed states through provision of basic infrastructure services and capacity building support.

- Transformative projects such as economic corridor development at the national and state level, logistics development, urban and inter-city rapid transit systems and multimodal transport supporting PM-Gati Shakti initiative that will link industries to global value chains, promote industrial development, and create jobs will be pursued.

- ADB will have more investments in health and education, finance and small business, social protection, and public sector management. ADB will support government initiatives on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, developing MSME clusters, and improving rural water supply.

- Last but not the least, ADB’s non-sovereign operations will also expand assistance to transport, logistics, affordable housing, and other non-infrastructure sectors such as health, education, and agriculture while supporting renewable energy expansion.

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### ON ADB’S LENDING STRATEGIES IN INDIA

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, ADB has provided comprehensive support to India’s COVID-19 response.

- In the next phase, ADB’s focus is to reinvigorate India’s economy in the post-pandemic era, building investment competitiveness by enhancing ease of doing business, expediting infrastructure creation, and rebuilding human capital to meet sustainable development goals.

- ADB operations will shift from crisis response mode to the pursuit of medium- and long-term development goals. The country program will explore a way of providing more assistance towards improved health system to enhance preparedness for and resilience to future pandemics, comprehensive urban primary healthcare, health service infrastructure, and system digitalization. ADB is also expanding assistance to protect small businesses and underpin education, social protection, rural development and climate change.
PM Modi acknowledges ADB support for Master Plan for Transport Connectivity

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 30 March addressed the 5th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit. The member states adopted the ADB-prepared long-term Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, a comprehensive 10-year strategy and action plan for improving the subregion’s multimodal transport linkages. In his statement, PM Modi acknowledged and appreciated ADB’s support in developing the Master Plan. He emphasized early implementation of the Master Plan affirming improved connectivity means better integration, better trade, and better people-to-people relations.

Asian Development Bank lends record $4.6-bn loans to India in 2021

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said it provided a record $4.6 billion loans to India in 2021, including $1.8 billion towards coronavirus response. "The Asian Development Bank committed a record $4.6 billion in sovereign lending to India in 2021 for 17 loans, including $1.8 billion for the country’s coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response," the multilateral funding agency said in a statement.

Indian Economy Expected to Grow At 7.5% In 2022-23: ADB

Asian Development Bank (ADB) said the Indian economy is projected to grow by 7.5% in the current financial year and the growth would accelerate to 8% in 2023-24. The economic growth in the coming years will be supported by increased public investment in infrastructure and a pickup in private investment, according to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022, the latest edition of ADB’s flagship economic publication.

Maharashtra CM inaugurates ADB-supported Mumbai Metro lines

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray inaugurated on 2 April the first phase of Line 2A (Yellow Line) and Line 7 (Red Line) of the ADB-supported Mumbai Metro Rail Systems Project. This first phase comprises of the elevated corridor of the 19-kilometer route length and 18 stations, while the entire 35-kilometer section of Lines 2A and 7 is expected to be operational by 15 August 2022. The train services will be available every day from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm with a headway of 10 minutes. The two corridors run parallel to the Western Expressway Highway and the Western Railway sub-section. The opening of the two corridors is expected to decongest traffic on the highway and reduce overcrowding of the local trains by up to one third. The trains will be operated initially with 11 trainsets of six coaches with a maximum speed of 70 kilometres per hour. ADB’s assistance of $906 million is financing the systems contracts of combined 58 km of Lines 2A, 2B, and 7.
Pandemics are known to worsen all inequalities. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in India in early 2020 followed by the national lockdown to contain the infection brought out systemic weaknesses in the health and social security ecosystems in the country. The pandemic impacted the health, economic, social, and psychological wellbeing of the people with evident disproportionate effect on women and children. Some of the reasons included over representation of women as front-line health care workforce, limited access to health care facilities and financial resources for treatment, loss of livelihoods due to concentration of women in the hard-hit informal sector, and increased burden of household responsibilities.

The government sought to address these concerns in its $23 billion pro-poor economic relief announced in March 2020 under the Prime Minister’s Welfare Scheme for the Poor, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGY) as well as the $2 billion COVID-19 preparedness package.

To provide budgetary support to these measures, ADB approved the $1.5 billion COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) program in April 2020.

The program committed to ensure that the poor and vulnerable, especially women, benefit from the schemes supported through the CARES program. Other measures under the program included free distribution of food grains and pulses, monetary transfers into bank accounts, free liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders, training opportunities for health care staff, insurance cover for health personnel, and higher wages under the government’s rural employment guarantee scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
Gender Features of ADB CARES program

- Health personnel including accredited social health activists (ASHA) fighting COVID-19 in government hospitals and health care centers including at least 60% female health personnel covered under life insurance
- District hospital doctors and nurses including 60% women personnel trained in clinical treatment for COVID-19
- Monetary benefit of ₹500 ($7) for 3 months for women PM Jan Dhan Yojana accounts holders under PMGKY
- Free entitlement of wheat, rice or pulses under Public Food Scheme (PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana) for households registered under public distribution system (PDS) which have women, and other vulnerable groups
- Grant support of ₹1,000 for at least 20 million poor senior citizens, widows and people with disabilities who are beneficiaries under the National Social Assistance Program
- Free cooking gas cylinders issued to at least 60 million poor women under the PM Ujjwala Yojana, the scheme for free LPG connections to poor households
- Rural women daily wage workers represent at least 50% of beneficiaries of higher wages under the MGNREGA

Key achievements of the CARES program’s gender responsive features

Over the one-year implementation period, notable progress was achieved in terms of enhancing the program benefits for women health workers as well as women from the disadvantaged groups.

The gender action plan under the CARES program helped reach out to vulnerable women and groups, raised awareness, and encouraged them to enrol for the government’s social security measures. The interventions helped them cope with loss of employment and wages during the national lockdown and increased expenses incurred on treatment.

- About 2.2 million health workers including 10,47,324 ASHA were provided with a life insurance coverage of ₹5 million
- More than 90% of the doctors and nurses posted at the public health facilities/hospitals were trained on clinical treatment of COVID-19
- More than 206 million poor women received all three instalments of ₹500 in their PM Jan Dhan Yojana accounts and a total amount of ₹309.5 billion has been disbursed to beneficiary women
- From April to November 2020, about 725 million households on average received free food grains and pulses
- A total of 28.1 million beneficiaries received the ex-gratia payment of ₹1,000 ($13.35) in two instalments in April and May 2020. The beneficiaries included 21.4 million senior citizens, 5.9 million widows, and 0.8 million differently abled
- A total of 141.7 million free cooking gas cylinders/free refills were issued by oil marketing companies (OMCs) to the PM Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries [between April – December 2020]
- 3,328 million person–days of employment were generated under the MGNREGA, of which 1,755 million person–days, i.e., 52.7% accrued to women beneficiaries [between April 2020 to January 2021]
NORTHEAST REGION AT THE HEART OF INDIA’S INTEGRATION WITH SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

The COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years, which saw the collapse of supply chains and loss of millions of jobs plus a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable across South Asia, has underscored the need for neighboring countries to work together to fight the ensuing health and humanitarian crisis. This renewed focus on regional cooperation and integration has allowed South Asian countries to track infection and keep essential goods flowing across borders, and harness digital technologies to strengthen public health and harmonize trade procedures.

In this revitalized regional atmosphere, the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program supported by ADB has stepped in with initiatives to mitigate the pandemic’s adverse consequences in the subregion. The SASEC program, which brings together Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in a project-based partnership to promote regional prosperity, promotes a common vision of boosting intraregional trade and cooperation in South Asia, while also developing the subregion’s connectivity and trade with the East from Southeast Asia up to the People’s Republic of China, and ultimately the global market. As of April 2022, SASEC member countries have signed and implemented 72 ADB-financed investment projects worth over $17.28 billion in the transport, trade facilitation, energy, and economic corridor sectors.

Indo-Myanmar Road constructed as part of the ADB-supported SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program
DEVELOPING THE SUBREGION’S
CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE WITH
SOUTHEAST AND EAST ASIA

With this renewed interest in regional cooperation, the geographic position and extensive international borders of India’s northeast region (NER) have become the heart of the government’s Act East Policy, which envisions strengthening of India’s economic and strategic relationship with its neighboring countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia. This vision involves building upon common cultural ties and increasing connectivity and people-to-people contact with the “East” through the NER. The NER then becomes a physical and strategic link in enhancing connectivity by land, air, and sea to transform corridors of connectivity into corridors of economic cooperation.

For its part, ADB through SASEC, has been supporting the NER through various road projects to help improve intra-state and inter-state connectivity and by enhancing the capability of states to manage road assets. ADB also supported a vision study for Assam, the largest NER state, to be developed into India’s gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The report laid down an outward looking growth strategy with the objective of developing Assam into a $75-billion economy, banking on the development of multimodal transport corridors, enabling infrastructure, and institutional and regulatory reforms. At the request of the Government of India, ADB further supported a feasibility study for the Northeast Economic Corridor, which aims to help NER integrate into global and regional trade and supply chains, among others. The study identified priority sectors in terms of growth centers, industries, and key enablers, like projects in infrastructure, trade facilitation, and regulatory reforms for equitable economic development across the states and the region.

Based on these studies, ADB is focusing on investment projects according to what the government thinks is crucial alongside the current and emerging needs of industries. In delivering these investments, ADB has been extending a new instrument called project readiness financing to assist NER states in preparing ready projects. Beyond these, ADB initiated strategic engagement with select states, including those in the NER. In partnering with the states, ADB intends to take a more holistic approach to interventions based on constant dialogue to make sure investments are in strategic areas, catering to client priority needs, and have greater synergies. ADB is ready to join this journey in a full swing.
Comprehensive ADB Support to India’s Fight Against COVID-19

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, ADB has provided holistic support to the Government of India’s efforts to contain and fight the dreaded disease. This short video shows how ADB has supported India in its COVID-19 response.

Satellites and Earth Observation Solutions to Water Challenges in India

Watch this video that shows how space-age technology is combined with nature-based approaches in an ADB-supported project in West Bengal designed to bring 24x7 sustainable water supply to the state's rural areas.

In India, Capturing the Value of Land Near Metro Stations is Critical

To realize the potential of transit-oriented development and land value capture in India, strong and effective planning is needed, alongside institutional and financial support, argues the latest ADB blog.

It is Time to Address COVID-19’s Disproportionate Impact on India’s Women

ADB experts argue that women should be at the heart of India’s strategy to recover from the pandemic to ensure actions improve Indian women’s lives and foster widespread societal benefits.

In India, Financial Literacy Programs Are Lifting Families Out of Debt and Fueling New Prosperity

ADB’s private sector investment supports the expansion of RBL Bank’s Saksham and Unnati programs, which combine access to loans with financial inclusion and financial literacy improvement.

Transformative skill initiative boosts employability of educated youth in India’s State of Kerala

An ADB-supported skill development project in Kerala is transforming the state's skill ecosystem and raising employability of the state’s youth.
ADB’s proposed investments in India will support the country’s fast, green, and inclusive recovery from the pandemic. The planned assistance program for 2022 has good balance between hard infrastructure sectors such as transport, urban, energy, industry and social sectors comprising education, health, finance, and agriculture and natural resources.

Here is a look at some of the upcoming ADB projects.

**STRENGTHENING MSME CLUSTER ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The program supports the Government of India’s priorities of improving competitiveness of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country towards the larger goal of increasing economic output and employment generation. Currently, the MSME sector is dominated by informal microbusinesses which lack the scale, experience, and resources to adopt latest technologies and professional business management tools for operational efficiency and integrate with global value chains. The project will help establish enterprise development centers (EDC)/national resource center for enterprise (NRCE) network, enhance MSMEs’ access to enterprise development services and promote strategic cluster development, thereby contributing to improved competitiveness of the MSME sector.

**HIMACHAL PRADESH RURAL DRINKING WATER IMPROVEMENT AND LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM**

The project will improve rural water supply and sanitation systems in several districts. The project interventions target increasing the minimum 70 liters per capita per day of potable uninterrupted water supply to 500,000 rural residents. Some 187 water supply schemes will be rehabilitated. The project also includes the implementation of a pilot inclusive sanitation program to ensure fecal sludge is safely managed, treated, and disposed of, with consideration of resource recovery and re-use. Institutional strengthening for the Jal Shakti department and gram panchayats (village bodies) for improved efficiency and sustainable service delivery will be a core component of the project and includes a training program.

**CONNECTING ECONOMIC CLUSTERS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN MAHARASHTRA**

The project will supplement ADB’s ongoing support to improve road connectivity in the state and support further development of the state’s strategic core road network through upgradation of state highways and major district roads. Upgraded roads will connect underdeveloped rural communities to nearby industrial zones; provide indirect opportunities to the primarily agrarian population; improve road connectivity to border districts such as Nanded to neighboring states; improve industrial value chains for small scale industries by reducing transportation costs; and enhance risk and climate change resilience in flood-prone areas.
ADB JOINS NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

Country Director Takeo Konishi in his opening remarks at the National Consultation on Good Practices: Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) on 10 May, emphasized ADB’s commitment to gender mainstreaming through gender-inclusive project designs across all sectors of its operations in India. Mr. Konishi highlighted ADB support through the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and Pacific (JFPR) financed technical assistance that assisted the four participating states, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Manipur, in institutionalizing the GRB-processes. Three states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Manipur have engendered the Budget Call Circular and published the Gender Budget Statements for the first time.

Further, all four States have prepared the state Action Plan for institutionalizing GRB, created Gender Budget Cells in the nodal department and designated state institutes as nodal centers for institutionalizing the training and capacity building on GRB.

Mr. Konishi also highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing by documenting the good practices on GRB for wider dissemination and replication in other states in India and in other countries in the region. India’s Ministry of Women and Child Development Secretary Indevar Pandey and UN Women Country Representative Susan Jane Fergusson also spoke at the event.

ADB AFFIRMS SUPPORT TO INDIA’S PRIORITY PROGRAMS

ADB South Asia Regional Department Director General Kenichi Yokoyama visited India on 7-12 April 2022. He presided over the year’s first tripartite pipeline review meeting that discussed ADB’s upcoming projects in 2022 and met with senior officials of the Government of India to discuss ADB’s ongoing engagements and future collaborations. In his meetings with government secretaries—including Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and Special Secretary, Logistics Division in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry—Mr. Yokoyama discussed ADB’s ongoing engagements and future collaborations aligned with India’s priority programs. He also discussed exploring new areas and strategies promoting cross-disciplinary synergies under the new country partnership strategy currently being prepared.

Among key areas, he affirmed ADB’s support to India’s commitment to climate change action, including decarbonization of transport, energy transition, and clean air through financing, knowledge, and capacity building assistance. He further highlighted the importance of integrated and multisectoral approaches to development, including improving logistics efficiency, digital agriculture, and value chain financing to increase rural incomes. Mr. Yokoyama also traveled to Kolkata and met with West Bengal Chief Secretary H. K. Dwivedi and senior officials to discuss expanding ADB’s engagement in the state across urban development, industry, logistics, renewable energy, livelihood support, climate change and environmental stability.
ADB ASSERTS PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR INDIA’S SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ADB Vice-President for Private Sector Operations and Public-Private Partnerships Ashok Lavasa visited India on 21–25 March 2022. He met with senior officials of the Government of India, including Department of Economic Affairs Secretary and ADB Alternate Governor Ajay Seth, and private sector clients and partners in the infrastructure, financial institutions, agribusiness, microfinance and private equity space. In the meeting with Mr. Seth, Mr. Lavasa discussed ways to expand private sector and public-private partnerships, including transaction advisory services, to support India’s sustainable growth. He also met with Secretary Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Manoj Joshi and management of 19 key public and private sector entities.

ADB JOINS EVENT TO MARK INDIA’S SUCCESSFUL VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

Country Director Takeo Konishi on 21 March joined the event on “Lessons from India – from the World’s Largest Vaccination Drive” – organized by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to mark India’s success in delivering safe vaccinations on a huge scale. India’s Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya gave a keynote speech at the event joined by partner organizations such as UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, and USAID. While lauding India’s leadership for the successful vaccination campaign, Mr. Konishi said the speed and scale of the campaign presented a replicable model for other countries.

ADB DISCUSSES REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE THROUGH SASEC PROGRAM

ADB South Asia Regional Department Deputy Director General Manmohan Parkash visited India on 21–31 March 2022 to discuss with senior officials of the Government of India the new strategic directions and initiatives of SASEC program, cross-border projects, and upstream knowledge works and related regional cooperation initiatives of ADB.
ADB’S CDRC HOSTS WEBINARS ON WATER AND ENERGY ISSUES

On 21 March, India Resident Mission’s Capacity Development Resource Center (CDRC) held a webinar to discuss planning and designing of 24x7 water supply and effective ways of maintaining the system. Another series of webinars was held on 24-25 March for executing agencies of energy projects in India to discuss current and emerging policy and regulatory framework and technologies. On 20 April, the CDRC organized an outreach session to disseminate key features of two ADB publications, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Procurement of Goods and Works, and Consulting Services.

ADB DISCUSSES LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT WITH ASSAM, TRIPURA STATES

Continuing ADB’s endeavor for closer and long-term strategic engagement with select states, ADB Country Director Takeo Konishi led missions to Tripura on 21-22 February and to Assam on 7-8 March. In Agartala, the ADB delegation met Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, Chief Secretary Kumar Alok, and other senior officials and discussed new areas of ADB engagement in social sectors with focus on health, education, rural livelihood, gender, and climate change action plan. In Guwahati, the ADB delegation met with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua and other senior officials to discuss the long-term engagement to develop the state as the fulcrum of the Northeast Economic Corridor and India’s gateway to ASEAN. ADB will consider expanding its engagement with the State in various sectors with focus on urban, industries, energy, roads, agriculture and allied sectors, and climate change and environmental sustainability.

ADB JOINS MEETING TO DISCUSS BBIN MVA PROTOCOLS

India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) convened a meeting on 7–8 March to discuss the protocols under the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA) and to formulate an implementation plan. ADB joined the meeting that was attended by delegations from Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, while Bhutan participated as an observer. MEA Joint Secretary (Bangladesh and Myanmar) Smita Pant chaired the meeting. ADB presented an overview of the BBIN MVA, progress made so far, main features of the protocols, work plan for implementation, and way forward. ADB, as an honest facilitator, has been providing all-round support for this initiative since November 2014.
ADB JOINS WEBINAR ON FINANCING FOR GROWTH AND ASPIRATIONAL ECONOMY

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on 8 March the webinar organized by the Department of Economic Affairs to discuss the implementation of the central budget announcements that prioritize infrastructure development. ADB India Deputy Country Director Hoe Yun Jeong joined the session on Financing of Infrastructure moderated by DEA Secretary and ADB Alternate Governor for India Ajay Seth. Mr. Jeong reiterated ADB’s readiness to support India’s infrastructure development through knowledge support and capacity building besides financing. He emphasized blended finance, including public-private partnerships, to create viable investment opportunities for private sector participation to meet India’s large infrastructure financing needs.

ADB JOINS MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY WEBINAR LAUNCHED BY INDIA PM

ADB South Asia Regional Department Director General Kenichi Yokoyama on 28 February joined a webinar launched by India Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the PM Gati Shakti initiative, India’s national master plan for multimodal connectivity. Joining the panel on cooperative federalism, Mr. Yokoyama emphasized greater central–state collaboration to optimize India’s logistics efficiency under the initiative. He highlighted the need for states to develop state level logistics policies and master plans that facilitate last mile connectivity of network infrastructure with multimodal logistics parks, industrial zones, and urban centers with integrated planning.

ADB is actively partnering with the Logistics Division of Department of Commerce and the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation to implement PM Gati Shakti, and to help formulate logistics policies and master plans at the state level.
Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022

The ADO 2022 outlines economic prospects in developing Asia amid global turbulence and lingering pandemic risks. It discusses the implications of school closures and the invasion of Ukraine and explores mobilizing taxes for development.

Asian Development Bank and India: Fact Sheet

Updated yearly, ADB Fact Sheet provides information on ADB’s operations in India. ADB’s program for India over 2022–2024 supports the country’s fast, green, and inclusive COVID-19 recovery. In doing so, ADB continues to align its operations with the government’s priorities, ADB’s Strategy 2030, and the upcoming India Country Partnership Strategy which is to cover 2023-2027.

Assam As India’s Gateway to ASEAN

This publication outlines the potential of Assam in northeast India to increase multimodal connectivity and regional trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

Improving Agricultural Value Chains in Uttar Pradesh

This technical study reviews agricultural value chains in Uttar Pradesh to improve value chains of the selected five focus crops: potato, mango, guava, mustard, and gram.

Rajasthan Rising: A Partnership for Strong Institutions and More Livable Cities

This publication showcases how ADB and the Government of Rajasthan have partnered together to bring sustainable development to the cities and towns of Rajasthan, in northwest India.
**WORKING PAPERS**

**Land Pooling in South Asia: Lessons Learned for Equitable, Participatory, and Inclusive Urban Expansion**

The case study discusses land pooling as a promising tool to rein in urban sprawl and reach equitable and inclusive outcomes for sustainable urban development in South Asia region.

**Developing a Risk Management System for Participating Government Agencies of India: Policy Lessons in Trade Facilitation Design**

This working paper outlines specific development needs for six major participating government agencies on trade facilitation in India, including a comprehensive single window trade facilitation system.

**Technology Framework for India’s Road Freight Transport: Compliance and Enforcement Architecture Reform**

This paper discusses an alternative technology-based reform model for enforcement agencies with regulatory mandates on on-road movement and conveyance of cargo in India to help improve the efficiency of domestic trade facilitation.

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**ADB BRIEFS**

**Reforming Port Processes in India for Logistics Efficiency**

This brief offers policy recommendations for streamlining and digitizing port logistics and operations in India based on findings of a study conducted on the Jawaharlal Nehru and Visakhapatnam ports.

**Enhancing Competitiveness and Productivity of India’s Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises during Pandemic Recovery**

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of MSMEs in providing essential goods and services. In India, MSMEs have faced more difficulties since the pandemic hit. This brief provides insights on supporting pandemic recovery for MSMEs.

**TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIVE MATERIALS**

**Frequently Asked Questions on Goods and Works**

This document aims to capture and disseminate knowledge on procurement procedures, based on experiences relevant to ADB-financed projects in India and issues raised with the India Resident Mission’s Capacity Development Resource Center.

**Frequently Asked Questions on Consulting Services**

This document aims to capture and disseminate knowledge on consultant selection procedures, based on experiences in ADB-financed projects in India and issues raised in trainings organized by ADB India Resident Mission’s Capacity Development Resource Center.
WORKING WITH ADB

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