Message
Takeo Konishi, Country Director

Welcome to the latest issue of the India Resident Mission’s e-Newsletter! The highlight of this issue is, of course, the coverage of India’s G20 Presidency and its grand conclusion with the Leaders’ Summit in New Delhi.

One of the most noteworthy achievements of India’s G20 Presidency was the forging of a consensus G20 Leaders’ Declaration reflecting the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which emphasizes global unity. ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa had the honor of joining the summit and personally congratulating Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the excellent outcomes of India’s G20 Presidency. He also reaffirmed ADB’s commitment to help advance the agreed G20 agenda to carry forward India’s legacy.

As an international partner, ADB was privileged to contribute to India’s Presidency in both the Finance and Sherpa tracks as well as to be a part of various engagement groups. We are proud to have contributed to some of India’s key G20 agenda items, as reflected in the Leaders’ Declaration. These include financing cities of tomorrow, energy transition, climate and health initiatives, gender, and women-led development. These contributions are further detailed in the Spotlight section.

Continuing our discussion on India’s energy transition challenge and opportunity, we present a Call-to-Action on promoting green hydrogen as an alternative fuel. One of the lasting legacies of India’s G20 Presidency, in collaboration with the International Solar Alliance, is the establishment of the Green Hydrogen Innovation Center. This center aims to support the production, utilization, and trade of green hydrogen, leading to a more sustainable future.

In addition, we provide insights into ADB’s recent organizational reforms, which we refer to as our new operating model. These reforms are designed to enhance ADB’s ability to respond to the ever-changing landscape and development challenges in Asia and the Pacific. This issue also showcases an ADB-funded urban project that promotes gender mainstreaming, as well as information on ADB’s new and upcoming projects, blogs, videos, publications, and latest events.

We look forward to your valuable feedback.

Wishing you a pleasant reading experience!
ADB President Joins G20 Leaders’ Summit, Lauds India’s G20 Presidency on Driving Key Global Agenda
The G20 Leaders’ Summit in New Delhi on 9–10 September was the culmination of India’s G20 Presidency, which featured a series of high-level G20 working group meetings throughout the year to address key global challenges. G20 consultations across the country were also carried out to make the G20 more inclusive and people-centered, following the One Earth, One Family, One Future philosophy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his inaugural address at the summit described India’s G20 Presidency as “the People’s G20” due to its huge scale of engagement. It connected with some 15 million people in over 200 meetings held in over 60 cities across the country. As part of its presidency, since December 2022 India has welcomed over 100,000 participants from some 125 countries.
India’s G20 Presidency identified a range of bold priorities to be deliberated by various G20 working groups to address emerging global challenges. The Indian presidency was emphatic in stressing global development along with the pursuit of climate action.

This focused approach and sustained deliberations were reflected in the Leaders’ Declaration, which called for addressing global challenges by advancing robust, sustainable, equitable, and inclusive global growth. To reach these objectives, the declaration calls for putting sustainable development goals back on track, tackling the climate crisis, preparing for health emergencies, transforming multilateral development banks, remediating the debt crisis, spreading digital public infrastructure, creating jobs, bridging the gender gap, and bringing forth the opinions of the global south.

“India’s G20 Presidency has been marked by unparalleled ambition, evident in the 112 outcomes and presidency documents generated, effectively tripling the substantive output compared to prior presidencies.”

— Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa

ADB SUPPORT TO INDIA’S G20 PRESIDENCY

As a partner international organization, ADB had a significant presence in the G20 process, supporting various key agenda items outlined in the Leaders’ Declaration. ADB’s involvement extended across both the Finance and Sherpa tracks and selected engagement groups.

Background papers and inputs for the Infrastructure Working Group (IWG), among others, were drafted by ADB and reflected in the Leaders’ Declaration. Furthermore, ADB organized 10 workshops to support the G20 work program. Resource people and panelists from ADB also featured in various workshops and side events.

President Masatsugu Asakawa, accompanied by other members of senior ADB leadership, attended the G20 Leaders’ Summit as well as the meetings of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

ADB assistance towards India’s G20 agenda included:

FINANCING CITIES OF TOMORROW

As a knowledge partner to the IWG on Financing Cities of Tomorrow, ADB worked on framing a capacity building framework for urban administrations. This framework—one of the key outputs of India’s presidency—equips city administrations with the capacity to mobilize municipal resources, raise their creditworthiness, and access more market-based financing. It also draws on international good practices shared by G20 members, development partners, and city networks.
ADB in India

Key concerns to financing cities of tomorrow, another key achievement of the Indian Presidency, have been to mobilize resources, financing sustainable, resilient, and inclusive cities of tomorrow, to promote effective and efficient use of financial resource, and to support urban development that is socially inclusive, environmentally responsive and economically sustainable. Multilateral Development Banks and development financing institutions can use these principles for their financing plans for urban infrastructure.

— Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

ENERGY TRANSITION

ADB played a key role in propelling G20 discussions on green hydrogen, biofuels, and transition to clean energy. Key areas of ADB support are the examination of energy saving approaches to extend India’s cold chain infrastructure and the launch of a virtual green hydrogen center of excellence in partnership with the International Solar Alliance. The center supports a comprehensive platform that consolidates and spreads the latest advancements, insights, and resources related to green hydrogen. ADB also joined the Global Biofuels Alliance at the invitation of the Government of India. This alliance was launched on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders’ Summit to help speed up the move to sustainable biofuels and reduce the world’s dependence on traditional fossil fuels. India views this alliance as a way to promote energy transition in emerging countries and back the development of a circular economy.

HEALTH

As a leading international partner organization for improving health outcomes, ADB has brought forth high-level principles for Sustainable Health Emissions Reduction and Resilience opportunity. The work is a result of several support streams, including the digital public health initiative, side events for climate and health, and ADB’s commitment to transform India’s National Center for Disease Control into a regional center for disease control. The Leaders’ Declaration will take forward ADB’s recommendation to develop climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

ADB delivered two input papers for the Sustainable Finance Working Group. The first paper, “Promoting Climate Action through Non-Pricing Policy Measures,” outlines the appropriate instruments and design elements that countries may use to promote a shift to greener practices that accommodate a nation’s circumstances and priorities. The second paper, “Policy Measures for Catalyzing the Rapid Development and Deployment of Green and Low-Carbon Technologies,” compiles global best practices and examples of implementing policy measures and mobilizing financial instruments specifically for early-stage green and low-carbon technologies.

WOMEN-LED DEVELOPMENT

ADB contributed several inputs on the theme of women-led development. A high-level think piece “Delivering Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—One Earth, One Family, One Future—Through Investing in Women” was prepared at the request of the G20 Sherpa. Policy notes were prepared for an ADB-organized side-event at the Ministerial Conference on Women’s Empowerment, which discussed gender-responsive budgeting, the care economy, climate change, and gender equality. Sustained advocacy for gender equality at the G20 led to an agreement for creation of a working group on the empowerment of women to support the G20 Women’s Ministerial, as mentioned in the Leaders’ Declaration.

ADB also provided inputs to the multilateral development bank capital adequacy framework work plan that was prepared by the International Financial Architecture Working Group. Additionally, ADB gave support to the agriculture, trade and investment, and disaster risk reduction working groups.
On the sidelines of the summit, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa congratulated India’s Finance Minister and ADB Governor Nirmala Sitharaman for the excellent results of India’s G20 Presidency. He affirmed ADB’s continued commitment to help advance the vision of the G20 Leaders’ Declaration relating to climate action, inclusive growth, multilateral development bank reforms, and women-led development beyond India’s tenure.

The finance minister and ADB president also discussed various ADB operational matters in India, including expanding nonsovereign operations and initiatives related to the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). Mr. Asakawa assured Finance Minister Sitharaman of ADB’s continued support to India’s green, climate-resilient, and inclusive growth under the new country partnership strategy.
ADB AT WORK: NEW PROJECTS

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE ROADS IN BIHAR

ADB has approved a $295 million loan for the Enhancing Connectivity and Sustainability in Bihar Roads Project that will upgrade 265 kilometers of state highways in Bihar with climate- and disaster-resilient design and road safety elements. This project forms part of the Government of Bihar’s program to upgrade all state highways to two lanes and improve road safety, aiming to enhance connectivity in some of Bihar’s poorest rural districts and promote access to health and education services and markets. The ADB project builds on earlier efforts to enhance the state road agency’s management and implementation capacity and will strengthen systems for planning, road safety, and sustainability.

EXPANDING WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN RAJASTHAN

ADB approved a $200 million loan as additional financing for the ongoing Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project, which aims to expand water supply and sanitation systems in selected towns, while also enhancing urban resilience and revitalizing heritage living. The additional funds will be used to improve water supply systems in at least seven towns by converting all groundwater sources to surface water, replacing about 700 km of leaking water pipes, install 1,400 km of new water supply pipelines, and providing 77,000 households connections with water meters. It will also establish three new water treatment plants. In at least eight towns, the project will improve sanitation systems. This includes rehabilitating at least 580 km of sewers, building seven sewage treatment plants with co-treatment units to process fecal sludge and septage, and connecting at least 54,000 households to the sewage system. Aside from expanding basic urban services, the project will employ various innovative and climate-resilient solutions. It will also incorporate nature-based solutions to rehabilitate heritage structures and pilot public-private partnerships in the state’s water and sanitation sector, deepening private sector engagement.

An ADB-funded project will upgrade state highways in Bihar to boost road safety in order to improve access to health and education services and markets.

An ADB-supported project will strengthen sanitation systems in selected towns in Rajasthan.
ADB FINANCING TO HELP FOURTH PARTNER ENERGY TO BUILD SOLAR POWER PLANT

ADB has provided up to ₹1.2 billion ($14.7 million) in loan funds to Fourth Partner Energy to construct and operate a 25-megawatt solar photovoltaic-based power plant in Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu. When completed, the power plant is expected to generate about 50.7 gigawatt-hours of clean and low-cost electricity annually, which will be sold directly to commercial and industrial users. The project will reduce nearly 41,700 tons of carbon dioxide emissions a year, as compared to similar plants using conventional fossil fuels. This is the outcome of India’s progressive open access renewable energy policy, which allows consumers to purchase electricity directly from independent power producers.

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PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND MATERNAL HEALTH IN MEghalaya

ADB approved a $40.5 million loan for the Early Childhood Development Project in Meghalaya for the purpose of improving early childhood development (ECD) and maternal mental health. The project is in line with the Government of Meghalaya’s ECD mission to strengthen home-based childcare (for children 0–1.5 years) and center-based childcare for children (1.5–6 years) through daycare Anganwadi centers (AWCs). It aims to improve access to nurturing care, including a component of maternal mental health care and group-based parenting programs to enable the inclusion of fathers in caregiving. The project will involve the upgrade of at least 1,800 AWCs and construction of around 600 new AWCs in hard-to-reach areas with climate-resilient design. As daycare centers, the AWCs will be staffed with additional employees and new ECD educators who will help extend center-based childcare services to children aged 1.5–3 years old, in addition to children 3–6 years of age.

$2 million technical assistance grant from the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific will help develop guidelines and training curricula for AWC staff and ECD educators.
Sameer Kumar Khare, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from batch 1989, joined ADB’s Board of Directors in October 2020. Together with other directors, he had a critical role in offering guidance to operations in ADB developing member countries during the difficult coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic period, as well as promoting organizational reforms and initiating recovery efforts. In a frank dialogue, Mr. Khare discussed his role and experience as an ADB Board member, the Board’s future priorities, ADB’s support to India’s development goals, and the reform of multilateral development banks (MDBs). This conversation offers a rare opportunity to solicit his views and insights on ADB operations in India and other member countries.

Executive Director (ED) Khare, what has been the most rewarding or satisfying aspect of being a member of the ADB Board?

Serving on the Board has provided me with an exceptional opportunity to gain insight on the needs of developing member countries (DMCs) and beneficiaries. Our mission at the Board is to ensure ADB operations are fully aligned with the evolving needs of DMCs for tackling their development challenges and opportunities. Take the case of COVID-19, where the focus of governments across the region has progressed from their initial concern of containment and social support to putting together a plan for fast recovery. ADB reacted admirably well to the countries’ pandemic responses throughout the spread of COVID-19 and then recuperation. Understanding the emerging requirements of the region and individual countries through interactions with diverse groups of stakeholders within the development community and facilitating programs and projects that would impact the lives of people was certainly most gratifying and rewarding.

You joined the ADB Board at the onset of the pandemic, a time that called for a reset in the bank’s regular assistance to DMCs. As we now move into the post-pandemic era, what are the key areas that the ADB Board should focus on and prioritize?

COVID-19 was certainly an unprecedented event in our lifetime and severely impacted governments, businesses, and individuals across the world. It is satisfying to note that ADB fast-tracked its business processes to approve emergency assistance needed by countries in Asia and the Pacific during that turbulent phase. The COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO) was a particularly noteworthy intervention that helped member countries respond to the immediate health and economic consequences of the pandemic. Equally important was ADB’s Asia Pacific Vaccine Facility, or APVAX, to expand vaccination access in the region to control the contagion.

Economies in the region now continue to recover from the pandemic, although challenges remain. The ADB Board has emphasized support for recovery and enhanced resilience of DMCs to future emergencies. I think that will be the focus of the Board going forward. A key emphasis would be on tackling cross cutting global challenges such as climate change and food security, enhanced investments in social sectors for inclusive growth, boosting resilience of infrastructure, and natural resources sustainability. To help ADB’s organizational transformation and improve its capacity to evolve and better service its DMCs, the Board has already set in motion the bank’s new operating model. We believe this new operating model will allow ADB to be more agile and help raise its capacity as the region’s climate bank, spur private sector development, provide high-quality development solutions, and promote greater responsiveness to DMCs.
As a Board member, you have had the opportunity to visit various states in India to oversee ADB-funded projects as well as meet key officials to discuss future opportunities. What is your assessment of ADB’s ongoing work in supporting India’s priority development agenda and what are potential areas for improvement?

It has certainly been a great learning as well as satisfying experience to witness the implementation of ADB-funded projects and their impact and interact with beneficiaries during my travels across India. As a long-term partner, ADB has done commendable work in responding to the Government of India’s priority development agenda. As India evolves in its development journey, ADB also adjusts its operational focus, as reflected in its new country partnership strategy for 2023–2027, which is forward-looking and aligns with India’s priorities over the next 5 years. ADB’s strategic priorities center on helping accelerate India’s structural transformation by improving India’s logistics efficiency. This should enhance the competitiveness of its manufacturing, industrial corridor development, sustainable urban development, the upgrading of its skills ecosystem, and climate change adaptation, among other areas.

There are certainly a few areas where improvements can be made to maximize the impact of ADB’s assistance. For one, ADB needs to accelerate its project processing and compress project preparation timelines. More concerted effort is needed to develop a robust pipeline of projects across various sectors, particularly those addressing the government’s climate ambitions, and agriculture and urban development. From the Government of India’s point of view, Finance-plus elements of knowledge, best practices, and capacity building continue to be an important part of ADB’s contributions to the country. Last but not least, ADB’s private sector operations in India need to further scale up to help make a more meaningful impact of the bank’s overall support to India.

The debate on MDB reforms is topical and necessary so the banks can effectively respond to fast-changing economic and financial dynamics and emerging global challenges, most notably climate change. The issue gained renewed traction during India’s G20 Presidency. The Independent Expert Group on MDB reforms has emphasized transformative reforms and the need for more financing to achieve developmental goals and support the climate agenda. Mobilizing adequate resources is key to the role of MDBs in supporting countries in addressing their development priorities, along with promoting knowledge and innovations. This would require pursuing innovative financial instruments, balance sheet optimization, and greater leveraging of private sector capital by MDBs. Commendably, ADB has taken several measures to advance these goals. To enhance its lending capacity, ADB is undertaking the Capital Adequacy Framework review and launched the Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (IF-CAP) to augment climate finance. Such measures will provide additional headroom to enable ADB to build larger and stronger India pipeline projects and programs under the new country partnership strategy.
INSTRUCTION: 
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PRESIDENT MASATSUGU ASAKAWA IS IN INDIA TO ATTEND THE G20 SUMMIT. RESPONDING TO A QUESTIONNAIRE FROM TOI, HE SAID INDIA IS ON A PROMISING GROWTH PATH AND STRONG DOMESTIC DEMAND WILL ACT AS A BUFFER AGAINST EXTERNAL SLOWDOWN. HE ALSO ELABORATED ON HOW ADB IS SEEKING TO REVAMP OPERATIONS TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES, A KEY AGENDA ITEM FOR THE SUMMIT.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

INDIAN ECONOMY ON A PROMISING GROWTH TRAJECTORY, SAYS ADB PRESIDENT

Asian Development Bank president Masatsugu Asakawa is in India to attend the G20 Summit. Responding to a questionnaire from TOI, he said India is on a promising growth path and strong domestic demand will act as a buffer against external slowdown. He also elaborated on how ADB is seeking to revamp operations to meet new challenges, a key agenda item for the summit.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

READY TO PLAY OUR PART IN MDB REFORMS: ADB PRESIDENT MASATSUGU ASAKAWA

The Asian Development Bank, one of the oldest MDBs, is undertaking a range of bold reforms on its own, to attune itself to the new development paradigms. ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa tells FE’s Prasanta Sahu that India’s infrastructure investments, focus on fiscal consolidation and business-oriented reforms have enhanced the climate for private investments in the country.

The Indian Express

MASATSUGU ASAKAWA: ‘READY TO PLAY OUR PART IN MDB REFORMS’

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ADB LOOKING TO PARTNER WITH INDIA ON DPIs IN ITS PROJECTS
Asian Development Bank (ADB) intends to partner with India to promote digital public infrastructure, or DPIs, in its own projects which would help in generating better impact of developmental projects besides bridging the digital divide that had become the new face of inequality, said Director General, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Tomoyuki Kimura in an interaction with Mint.

INDIA, ADB SIGN $295 MILLION LOAN TO UPGRADE STATE HIGHWAYS IN BIHAR
The Indian government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday signed an agreement for a $295-million loan to upgrade around 265 km of state highways with climate and disaster resilient design and road safety elements in Bihar, the ministry of finance said.

ADB, CENTRE SIGN $200 MILLION LOAN FOR EXPANDING URBAN SERVICES IN RAJASTHAN
The central government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday signed a USD 200 million loan as additional financing for the ongoing Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project. The additional financing will support the Rajasthan government in reducing basic infrastructure gaps in its secondary towns by expanding water supply and sanitation services and improving livability in selected urban local bodies, the finance ministry said in a statement.

ADB, FOURTH PARTNER ENERGY TO BUILD SOLAR POWER UNIT IN TAMIL NADU
The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fourth Partner Energy Private Limited (Fourth Partner) signed a long-term loan of up to 1.2 billion Indian rupees (about $14.7 million) to construct and operate a 25-megawatt solar photovoltaic-based power plant to increase clean and low-cost energy supply.

TRIPURA GOVT TO DEVELOP 13 INDUSTRIAL ESTATES WITH ADB LOAN
With the financial support of Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Tripura government will undertake improvement of infrastructures in 13 industrial estates in the state. According to an official press statement, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, the Tripura government has been giving priority to industrial development in the state.
GREEN HYDROGEN TO FUEL INDIA’S ENERGY TRANSITION AMBITION

In January this year, to help it achieve its lofty goal of becoming energy independent by 2047 and achieving net zero by 2070, India launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM). As a renewable energy source, green hydrogen is considered a promising solution to decarbonize transportation, especially marine transport and long-distance rail, industries such as steel, cement, and fertilizers, and potentially also for decentralized power generation.

INDIA’S NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION

The NGHM aims to make India a global hub for production, utilization, and export of green hydrogen.

India aims to develop its green hydrogen production capacity to at least 5 million metric ton (MMT) per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 gigawatt (GW), and 100 GW electrolyzer capacity. This will require investments of over $100 billion by 2030 that will reduce fossil fuel imports by over $15 billion. NGHM aims to abate India's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions by 50 MMT annually by 2030 with an initial investment support of US$25 billion.

Green hydrogen is produced using electrolysis of water with electricity generated by renewable energy. Therefore, scaling up green hydrogen will require access to affordable renewable energy and electrolysis technology. India is beginning to build its electrolysis technology base as well as the supply chains of the green hydrogen economy.

Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre

ADB and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as international organization partners of India’s G20 Presidency, have set up a Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre (GHIC) to support the production, utilization, and trade of green hydrogen.

The GHIC provides a one-stop platform that consolidates and disseminates the latest advancements, insights, and resources related to green hydrogen.

The centre provides a centralized knowledge platform for decision-makers while promoting training and awareness, tracking global developments, and inspiring innovation.

A Global Start-Up Program supports the scale-up of the green hydrogen ecosystem, creating a bridge between producers and investors in the sector and accelerating investment in entrepreneurs in this space.

The GHIC stands as a hub for all things related to green hydrogen, fostering a collaborative, informed, and inspired community dedicated to advancing the global transition towards a greener and more sustainable energy landscape.

H₂ HYDROGEN
To date, 40 projects to produce green hydrogen or green ammonia have been outlined in order to boost domestic supply and exports (19 of them relate to electrolyzers). These projects target a production capacity of 3.5 MMT per year.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) recently released a draft definition for green hydrogen, specifying the threshold carbon emissions and hydrogen production manufacturing sources needed to classify hydrogen as ‘green’. With this definition, MNRE hopes to implement standards and regulations in 2024. A draft policy for green hydrogen and electrolyzer manufacturing is under preparation. MNRE also issued a request for expressions of interest to support green hydrogen manufacturing with direct incentives.

Through developing a green hydrogen ecosystem, NGHM aims at large scale job creation with a potential to generate over 600,000 jobs aided by necessary skill development support by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Several state governments are also proactively pursuing opportunities in green hydrogen manufacturing. Green hydrogen hubs or valleys are being proposed in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, and ADB is actively working to support these initiatives. State-level green hydrogen policies are also under development or have been issued in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Several ports have also been identified as strategic hubs for green hydrogen handling purposes.

**ADB SUPPORT TO HYDROGEN MISSION**

Apart from the state-level efforts to promote India’s green hydrogen economy, ADB is providing policy support to MNRE on evaluation of technology options and benchmarking of standards based on learning from best available global practices.

Under the auspices of India’s G20 Presidency, ADB recently collaborated with ISA to set up the Green Hydrogen Innovation Center, meant as a one-stop green hydrogen knowledge repository for all stakeholders (See box).

**WAY FORWARD**

Merchant markets for hydrogen are still at a developing stage, so is the needed transport infrastructure. In most cases, hydrogen is produced where it is used, such as by several enterprises working on pilot projects. Scaling up will need incentives for green hydrogen production and public investment to develop hydrogen transportation. The Government of India has shown the desired commitment to boost these efforts through the roadmap paved by the NGHM.

The transition to green hydrogen represents a critical component in the pursuit of a cleaner and more prosperous world. India has already made a head start with its strong commitment to promote green hydrogen.

India must take the lead in incorporating sustainable practices into mineral development. Prioritizing an indigenous and resilient clean energy supply chain is essential to meeting that goal.
About half of Tamil Nadu’s population dwells in urban areas, making it the most heavily urbanized of India’s major states. This brisk migration to urban centers has put a strain on the state’s urban infrastructure and services, and also contributes to swelling numbers of people living in slums and waterways pollution.

In September 2018, to assist the state in overcoming these complex urban challenges, ADB approved a $500 million multi-tranche financing facility to the Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program. Ten cities located within strategic industrial corridors of Tamil Nadu are receiving program assistance to construct priority water supply, sewerage, and drainage systems.

The assistance benefits residents, workers, and industries in the state’s main economic hubs, thus enhancing industrial competitiveness and creating sought-after employment opportunities.

The program seeks to foster an inclusive environment, offering enhanced access for women and socially marginalized groups in terms of project benefits and employment opportunities. To achieve this, a strong gender action plan is being implemented to guide activities to optimize the project’s benefits, impacts, and long-term sustainability.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN**

The gender action plan endeavors to bring about solutions to issues commonly encountered by women, such as: i) increasing women’s access to safe water and sanitation, especially in poor communities.

**Gender Action Plan Activities in Tamil Nadu**

- Awareness campaign for women to join self-help groups on water conservation and hygiene
- Skills training for sewerage and sanitary workers
- Reconstitution of Prevention of Sexual Harassment Committee
- Community awareness programs on water conservation and hygiene
- Training on menstrual hygiene for girls at schools
- Awareness program on personal hygiene

An overview of gender action plan activities being carried out under the Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program.
areas; (ii) promoting the participation of women from poor urban communities and increasing representation of women in decision-making bodies; (iii) gender-related capacity building for project stakeholders; (iv) promoting equitable access to project employment opportunities; and (v) providing equal opportunity employment across positions in urban local bodies.

These actions are coordinated under three broad outputs:

1) Sewerage connections to women-led households

To include everyone, the program plans to provide sewerage connections to households headed by people and women below the poverty line. To raise awareness of the benefits of sewage collection, training sessions are offered to community-based organizations and water and sanitation committees in slums. Skills training on mechanized machinery and safety gear is provided to sewer and sanitary workers, prioritizing women workers.

So far, 18 sensitization and skills trainings have been conducted in 9 urban local bodies of Tamil Nadu for frontline sewer and sanitary workers of both genders; 705 people have been reached, of which 375 (53%) were females. During these sessions, participants learned about operation and maintenance of sewerage systems, safety and hygiene, safe handling of municipal solid waste, new livelihood opportunities for further income, and various social sector schemes.

2) Water supply connections to poor women-led households

One of the project outputs is to give Thoothukudi’s specially targeted poor and poor women-led households water connections. To maximize its impact, campaigns were conducted in slum areas to educate residents about water and sewerage connections. In addition, the implementing agencies with water projects undertook training programs on preventing water wastage.

An awareness program for school students held in Madurai spread a message about the importance of water conservation and hygiene.

- Awareness Program on Water Conservation and Hygiene A series of water conservation and hygiene awareness programs targeting school students and staff were implemented. One of the girls commented that the discussions were a great opportunity to talk among themselves within the group because they otherwise felt shy to talk outside about periods. So far, 2,089 students and staff have attended these trainings, of which 1,495 (72%) were females.

Separate training programs were organized for women self-help groups. At least 378 participants (100% women) across 9 urban local bodies attended these trainings. These interactive sessions were very useful in disseminating messages about urban water security and conservation in an interactive manner. One participant said, “It is our responsibility to first start saving water at home and then slowly everyone will save water collectively in the communities.”

Similar awareness campaigns were organized for disadvantaged communities lacking basic sanitation. Some 3,502 participants, of which 2,085 (60%) were women, across 9 project urban local bodies benefited from them. The project also used days such as International Women’s Day, World Water Day, and World Health Day to spread key messages across the community.

- Constitution and Orientation of Water and Sanitation Committees

To strengthen participation of community members in sustainable urban sanitation, the project encouraged the formation of water and sanitation committees in all project urban local bodies. To date, 20 committees have been formed across 9 bodies, with 263 committee members being trained on committee goals, procedures, roles, responsibilities, and expectations. The committees are also taking active participation in community/neighborhood – level campaigns related to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

3) Strengthening Institutional Capacity on Preventing Sexual Harassment

To bolster the capability of the state Directorate of Municipal Administration and build awareness among its employees about preventing sexual harassment, a series of training programs were conducted. These sessions focused on legal standards, the definition of sexual harassment, and redressal mechanisms, as well as highlighting the responsibilities of the Internal Compliance Committee in fostering a safe and respectful work environment. A total of 48 employees, including 32 (67%) women, attended these programs.

The implementation of these interventions for women’s involvement has provided a strong platform for their participation and changed the project’s perspective with regards to water conservation, hygiene, and sanitation. This has led to increased community participation in all the processes and overall management of the project’s infrastructure and assets. It is likely that a better understanding of water conservation will lead to a decrease in water waste over time.
ADB’s New Operating Model

SPECIAL COVERAGE

ADAPTING TO BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS OF DEVELOPING MEMBER COUNTRIES

In July, ADB began implementing a wide-ranging reform plan featuring a new operating model (NOM) geared towards improving organizational effectiveness, empowering personnel to maximize the bank’s development impact, and bettering its ability to serve the rapidly changing needs of its developing member countries (DMCs) in Asia and the Pacific. ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa led an extensive review of the organization starting in June 2021, taking into consideration the voices of regional clients, the Board of Directors, management, and staff. This culminated in the road map outlining the changes proposed.

FOUR KEY SHIFTS

The NOM will enable ADB to increase its capacity as the region’s climate bank; strengthen its work to develop the private sector and mobilize private investments in the region; provide a larger range of high-quality development solutions for its DMCs; and modernize ways of working to make it more responsive, agile, and closer to clients.

These four key shifts (see figure) will help ADB deliver on the ambitious goals of its corporate strategy, Strategy 2030.

These reforms undertaken by ADB are the most significant since 2002, when another reorganization process was done.

Increase our capacity as the region’s climate bank by embedding climate action across our operations and near-doubling our annual climate financing

Strengthen our role as a catalyst for the private sector by spurring greater private sector participation in Asia’s development

Elevate our role as the region’s solutions bank through holistic, knowledge-based, innovative, and integrated solutions

Empower staff to provide value and impact to clients by living our values and becoming more efficient, agile, and collaborative.

These reforms are both timely and essential. Our new operating model will position us to better respond to the complex development challenges now faced by Asia and the Pacific. It builds on ADB’s core strength, our staff, to help us deliver solutions with the greatest development impact for the region.

—ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa

Figure: Four functional shifts promoted through ADB’s new operating model.
ADB’s five regional departments—covering Central and West Asia, East Asia, the Pacific, South Asia, and Southeast Asia—and its resident missions in countries with ADB operations will now offer the convenience of a single window to clients for access to all ADB products and services, both sovereign and nonsovereign. For ADB’s clients, the NOM is designed to improve the experience of working with the bank.

ADB will consolidate its staff and expertise from different sectors, themes, and other specializations, allowing them to deploy a more extensive range and quality of solutions to regions and countries. More staff will also be placed in the field to better meet client needs.

ADB has proposed that the implementation of the NOM should be done in phases to minimize any negative impacts on ADB’s clientele and development partners.

THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Under the NOM, clients engage with regional departments in collaboration with the local resident mission, allowing for a ‘one-stop shop’ for all ADB services, whether sovereign or nonsovereign.

Specialists coming from a relevant sector, thematic areas, private sector operations, markets development, and public–private partnership will come together to form interdisciplinary teams. These teams will serve both regional operations and resident missions.

Sectors Group: ADB has formed a single Sectors Group and created a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department to deliver integrated solutions to DMCs in line with country programs. This reorganization will improve the quality of ADB operations by allowing for specialization and collaboration, reducing specialized expertise fragmentation, and moving the right experts and integrated solutions closer to clients.

Expanded Operational Synergy: To accelerate its private sector shift, ADB will make moves to facilitate tighter collaboration between its sovereign and nonsovereign operations. This will help ADB identify activities that leverage its resources to aid market-based development.

Renewed Role of Economists: ADB will expand the work of its economists and create stronger relationships between economic research and operations. The revamped Economic Research and Development Impact Department will lead agenda-setting and strategic research to open new opportunities for ADB to engage with DMCs, in line with ADB’s priorities.

Cultural, Skills, and People Reforms: Several initiatives are underway to bolster ADB’s people practices and culture. Plans to modernize ADB’s job and career management practices have been set in motion, which will involve assessing the current job band structure covering international, national, and administrative staff classifications. Furthermore, it is envisioned to create job families that reflect different areas of functional expertise and delineate career paths accordingly.

Business Process Reforms: The roll out of business process improvements along with the NOM should improve the quality of solutions and decisions, boost efficiency, and improve consistency, thereby advancing ADB’s client-centricity.

ADB’s new operating model will strengthen ADB’s organizational culture, job architecture, and strategic workforce management.
UPCOMING PROJECTS

CLIMATE-RESILIENT BRAHMAPUTRA INTEGRATED FLOOD AND RIVERBANK EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN ASSAM

This proposed project will build upon the Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program, supported by ADB, to increase the reliability and effectiveness of flood and riverbank erosion risk management systems in flood-prone areas. It will focus on the main stem of the Brahmaputra River in Assam, using a climate-resilient, holistic, integrated, and systematic approach for managing riverbank erosion and related flood risks. The project will stabilize about 60 kilometers (km) of riverbanks, install 32 km of pro-siltation measures, and build 4 km of climate-resilient flood embankments in 5 high-priority districts. These measures will help restore lost floodplains and improve navigation.

AHMEDABAD PERI-URBAN LIVABILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

This project is designed to help control urban sprawl in the peri-urban areas surrounding Ahmedabad city. To achieve this goal, basic infrastructure will be provided in five growth centers in the vicinity. Planned interventions include upgrades to the city’s water supply, stormwater drainage, and sewerage, as well as recycling sewage for industrial use through public–private partnership initiatives. Additionally, 10 junction improvements along the existing Sardar Patel Ring Road will be established to improve connectivity between Ahmedabad city and surrounding growth centers.

POWER SECTOR REFORM PROGRAM

The proposed Power Sector Reform Program will support India’s urgently required electricity sector reforms to improve cost recovery and quality of service and drive decarbonization of the sector. The policy-based loan program will strive to restore financial viability at the electricity distribution level, improve quality of service, and increase private sector participation. Moreover, it will contribute to climate change mitigation by facilitating renewable energy integration. The program has two main pillars: (i) reform the power market and introduce incentive policies to promote renewable energy integration and energy transition; and (ii) improve financial performance, governance, and quality of service of electricity distribution companies.
ADB PRESIDENT VISITS ADB-FUNDED PROJECT IN MADHYA PRADESH

ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa on 12 September visited the Global Skills Park in Bhopal, which is being developed through the Madhya Pradesh Skill Development Project and is funded by ADB. During his visit, the president spoke with trainees at the school and state officials associated with the project. The Global Skills Park is the first of its kind in India, providing job-ready skills training of an international standard to help meet the country’s skills shortage.

ADB PRESIDENT JOINS G20 EVENT IN GUJARAT, MEETS CHIEF MINISTER

ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa visited India 16–18 July and attended the third G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. He made substantive interventions on several topics during ministerial sessions, including the global economy and global health, sustainable finance and infrastructure, and international taxation. Further, he participated in a side event on “Financing Cities of Tomorrow,” in which he drew attention to prominent issues faced by cities in Asia and the Pacific, and highlighted how ADB could help with integrated solutions to urban infrastructure development that would involve providing an enabling environment, developing capacities, and striving for financial sustainability.

The ADB president addresses the session on International Financial Architecture at the third G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Gandhinagar.

The ADB president joined the Ministerial Panel at a side event on the theme of Financing Cities of Tomorrow.

ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa meets with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

During his visit to Gandhinagar, the ADB president met with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. In their discussion, the president affirmed ADB’s partnership with the state of Gujarat, which began in 1996, and emphasized its continued engagement with the state government on its development initiatives. These include planned urban expansion, skill development, development of Gujarat.
ADB in India

Participants of the training program on transit-oriented development and multimodal integration in Bengaluru.

Ministry of Railways Executive Director (Planning) Manoj Kumar Gangeya at the workshop on the India–Bangladesh study.

TRAINING PROGRAM ON TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN BENGALURU

Country Director Takeo Konishi opened the Module 3 training on transit-oriented development and multimodal integration for city transit agencies, planning authorities, municipal corporations, and water and power utilities in Bengaluru. The training on 21–25 August saw the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited and the Directorate of Urban Land Transport facilitate three training modules funded by ADB. Over 50 participants attended, including officials from various agencies of the Government of Karnataka. Module 3 focused on preparing the participants to undertake implementation of transit-oriented development and multimodal integration. Directorate of Urban Land Transport Commissioner Deepa Cholan chaired the closing session of the training. ADB supported the preparation of the training manual and Module 1 training (theory and policy aspects of transit-oriented development and multimodal integration) in October 2021. Module 2 training (implementation) was held in November 2022. ADB is supporting the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited in expanding the metro

India Resident Mission holds Portfolio Review Meeting

Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Joint Secretary Juhi Mukherjee and Country Director Takeo Konishi presided over this year’s second tripartite portfolio review meeting for ongoing projects on 26 September. The meeting drew over 140 participants, including government officials, executing agencies, and representatives from ADB. The discussion revolved around the performance of ADB-financed projects, critical issues influencing the projects’ execution, and strategies to improve portfolio performance. Both the DEA and ADB underscored the necessity of maintaining strict discipline in the execution of projects.

ADB conducts Inception Workshop on India–Bangladesh Study

On 24 August, ADB held a workshop in New Delhi with government officials from India and Bangladesh to discuss the inception report of a research study on India–Bangladesh cargo-based rail movement. ADB’s South Asia Regional Department’s Thiam Hee Ng gave the opening remarks, stressing the importance of modal shift in the subregion to bring about logistics efficiency. The ADB team made a presentation about the inception report of the study, explained its objectives, hypothesis, major infrastructure and policy challenges, and action points to address them. Ministry of Railways Additional Secretary Sheikh Sakil Uddin Ahmed, who joined virtually as the Bangladesh delegation leader, supported the study, and emphasized that Bangladesh is striving to increase bilateral trade with India and transit trade with Bhutan and Nepal. Ministry of Railways Executive Director (Planning) Manoj Kumar Gangeya led the Indian delegation and highlighted India’s endeavor to connect the northeastern region with neighboring countries in South Asia.

International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) as a global fintech and data hub, plus making Gujarat into a hub for green hydrogen development. The president made a trip to GIFT to see progress being made on constructing the facilities that will transform it into a smart city.

India Resident Mission holds Portfolio Review Meeting

Department of Economic Affairs Joint Secretary Juhi Mukherjee and Country Director Takeo Konishi presiding over the tripartite portfolio review meeting.

ADB in India
ADB HOLDS CONSULTATIONS ON STRATEGY 2030 MID-TERM REVIEW

On 10–11 August, ADB's Strategy, Policy, and Partnership Department Deputy Director General Vijay Padmanabhan led consultations on the mid-term review of ADB's Strategy 2030 in collaboration with the India Resident Mission. The ADB team met with selected think tanks specializing in climate change, private sector representatives, and development partners, namely, World Bank, JICA, and KfW. The team further consulted with representatives of the Government of India’s Department of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and NITI Aayog. The discussions around the mid-term review emphasized how to sustain ADB’s strategic relevance and responsiveness to India’s evolving development priorities and how to enhance ADB’s support to areas of India’s development experience that could be shared with other ADB member countries.

ADB ORGANIZES STUDY TOUR ON BEST-IN-CLASS URBAN INFRA

ADB organized a study tour to GIFT and Dholera Special Investment Region in Gujarat for officials of the industry department of the Government of Tripura on 17–20 August. In GIFT, participants met city officials and visited best-in-class infrastructure facilities relating to water supply, sewerage services, solid waste collection, electricity and power supply, and road networks. In Dholera Special Investment Region, the government officials visited the plug and play infrastructure which had separate trenches for optical fiber cables, electric cables, storm water drain, and water supply. Participants benefitted from site visits and learnt about best practices for replicating them in the ADB-financed project to develop industrial estates in Tripura.

ADB HOLDS WORKSHOP ON WEST BENGAL ECONOMIC CORRIDOR STUDY

ADB in collaboration with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Deloitte India organized a private sector stakeholder workshop on 16 August in Kolkata to invite feedback on the inception stage findings of the West Bengal Economic Corridor Study. The study aims at strategizing economic development across selected nodes and growth centers in West Bengal based on urban-industrial-logistics-skills-energy-social sector convergence. More than 40 senior executives and leaders from the private sector attended the workshop. Senior industry leaders and executives gave valuable feedback on the findings of the report, identified infrastructure and policy bottlenecks in the states, and discussed opportunities for the development of a robust industry logistics ecosystem in West Bengal.
ADB in India

ADB CONDUCTS WEBINAR ON LOAN FINANCING OPTIONS FOR BORROWERS

India Resident Mission’s Capacity Development Resource Center collaborated with the Treasury Department to conduct on 9 August a webinar on ADB loan financing options for India’s central and state government officials. The webinar detailed key features of ADB flexible loan products, loan conversion options, local currency loan products, and other ADB finance products. The webinar aimed to build capacity of finance officials in making more informed decisions on selecting optimal terms for financing their projects and managing their debt. ADB Country Director Takeo Konishi in his opening remarks stated that the webinar aimed to help address India’s concerns regarding the cost of financing and attest to how ADB’s Treasury Department has been making themselves available to explain alternative and cost-efficient ways of reducing borrowing costs. Assistant Treasurer, Client Solutions Division, Jonathan P. Grosvenor gave closing remarks. Over 130 participants from 20 state governments, including ADB strategic engagement states, and from 13 government agencies, including the Reserve Bank of India, joined the webinar.

ADB ORGANIZES WORKSHOP ON TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN NEW DELHI

Country Director Takeo Konishi on 21 July delivered the inaugural address at a two-day workshop on transit-oriented development held in New Delhi. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi gave the keynote address at the workshop organized by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation and supported by ADB and World Bank. Ministry Secretary, Mr. Konishi, and National Capital Region Transport Corporation Managing Director Vinay Kumar Singh also took the occasion to unveil a knowledge work on transit-oriented development and value capture financing. Noting that incorporation of transit-oriented development in mass rapid transit systems will help in enhancing the livability of cities, reducing cost of transport and housing, and facilitating sustainability, Mr. Konishi highlighted that transit-oriented development, value capture financing, and decarbonization all form an integral part of ADB’s India country partnership strategy.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KHARE VISITS INDIA

Executive Director for India on the ADB Board Sameer Kumar Khare visited India from 13 July to 3 August to see ongoing ADB-funded projects in the health, skills, transport, urban, and natural resources sectors. In Gujarat, Mr. Khare met with the state Chief Secretary Raj Kumar and senior officials to discuss ADB support for planned urban expansion, skills development, Gujarat International Finance Tec-City and developing Gujarat as a hub for green hydrogen. In Patna, Bihar, Mr. Khare met with state Chief Secretary Amir Subhani to discuss prospective projects in the skills, tourism, transport, and urban sectors, and climate change. In Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, he met senior officials from agriculture and natural resources, skills, and urban sectors to discuss ADB-funded projects. In New Delhi, he discussed with government officials areas of collaboration between the Government of India and ADB under the newly approved country partnership strategy for 2023-2027.

Participants of the webinar on loan financing options for borrowers organized on 9 August 2023.
He further stressed the importance of the decarbonization of transport and integration of transport with spatial planning.

Country Director Takeo Konishi at his meeting with Government of Jharkhand Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh.

ADB TEAM DISCUSSES STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH JHARKHAND

Country Director Takeo Konishi on 4–5 July led a follow-on mission to Ranchi to meet with Government of Jharkhand Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh and other senior state government officials and discuss the way forward for ADB’s strategic approach to engagement with the state. Mr. Konishi informed the chief secretary about ADB Board approval of the new country partnership strategy for 2023–2027 and discussed how proposed interventions in Jharkhand are aligned with the strategy’s new pillars and cross cutting thematic areas. ADB has been engaging with Government of Jharkhand officials for the past year to develop upstream knowledge work and work on preliminary project proposals for new loans to the state. Based on ADB’s knowledge work and input for the new project proposals, the chief secretary agreed that the state will propose projects in the road, energy, health, and irrigation sectors for ADB support and also move ahead with studies on economic diversification and development of growth centers, logistics, public finance management, and skills and capacity development of selected government departments.

ADB JOINS NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE INDUSTRIAL PARK RATING SYSTEM

Country Director Takeo Konishi participated in a national workshop on the Industrial Park Rating System in New Delhi on 2 July, organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. The workshop was the culmination of the ADB-supported Industrial Park Rating System 2.0 study released in October 2021 and 25 subsequent gap assessment workshops with the states, intended to reduce infrastructure and service level shortcomings among industrial parks in India. Mr. Konishi highlighted that ADB is ready to support the department and states in operationalizing key findings of the study. The latest workshop provided a platform for participants to showcase best practices and facilitate learnings across different aspects of the industrial ecosystem. Department Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh delivered the workshop’s keynote address.
ADB’s Safeguard Policy Update: Doing Good by Doing Better

Managing Director General Woochong Um announces the launch of ADB’s draft Environmental and Social Framework, which modernizes the 2009 Safeguard Policy Statement, and invites stakeholders to provide feedback to further enrich the framework. Since 2020, stakeholder participation in the Safeguard Policy Statement review process has been tremendous and helped shape the draft framework. Watch Video.

ADB–ISA Collaboration on Hydrogen

ADB and the International Solar Alliance are collaborating to promote green hydrogen through the Green Hydrogen Innovation Center launched during India’s G20 Presidency.

Asian Impact Webinar 63: Asia in the Global Transition to Net Zero

The success of a global transition to net zero emissions depends on Asia. This webinar sees experts discuss how policymakers can help guide the region toward the path of an efficient and fair transition.

India’s G20 Presidency: An Opportunity to Steer the World Toward Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

India’s G20 Presidency this year presented an exceptional opportunity for the country to spearhead a collective approach to tackle multiple, complex, and interconnected challenges, while placing front and center the aspirations and needs of the developing world, says Takeo Konishi, Country Director for ADB in India.
Child’s Play: The Surprising Gender Gap in Children’s Leisure Time
As the world commemorates International Youth Day, governments should consider targeted policies, and cultural changes, to address the differences in leisure time among girls and boys.

Global Supply Chains Need Fixing: Help Is on The Way
Facing global supply chain challenges, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework promotes economic cooperation among 14 economies, strengthening supply chain resilience, fostering innovation, and driving growth.

How to Increase Boys’ Attendance in Secondary Education
In countries across South Asia, boys are dropping out of school for economic reasons, illness, and other issues. This hurts not only families and the futures of these children but the broader economy and society. Governments can take basic steps to help keep boys in school.

Powering Forward: Four Ways to Harness the Rule of Law for a Just Energy Transition
Asia and the Pacific’s developing countries should entrench the rule of law, grounded in openness, transparency, and inclusion, to achieve an equitable transition to decarbonized economies.

Banking on Fun: How Gamification and Nudges Can Foster Sustainable Finances
Gamification and nudges are emerging as powerful tools to engage customers, foster sustainable financial behaviors, and promote social development.

The “Invisible” Water Crisis: Groundwater Sustainability in Asia and The Pacific
Rapid socioeconomic development and population growth are escalating groundwater overexploitation, creating a potential crisis in Asia and the Pacific.
This framework outlines how to integrate gender equality and social inclusion into ADB’s operations in South Asia to help close the gender gap, combat exclusion, and bolster equitable economic growth. It highlights the experience of women and disadvantaged groups and assesses the impact of pervasive gender inequality and social exclusion. It includes practical guides and tools that can be integrated throughout project design and implementation.
Quality infrastructure can give economies in developing Asia a critical boost by enhancing growth and reducing poverty, especially during times of economic crisis. However, the increasing demand for public funds for health, education, and social welfare programs diminishes their availability for infrastructure. The study calls upon policymakers to consider novel financing solutions to attract private investment essential for meeting the region’s expanding infrastructure needs.