

veKLY NEWSWRAP

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ECONOMY

ADB retains India's economic growth forecast at 6.4%

Date: 19 July 2023



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) retained India's economic growth forecast at 6.4% for FY24 on recovery in consumption demand in both rural and urban areas, but said suppressed exports due to global slowdown will be a drag. The Indian economy grew 7.2% in 2022-23. Assuming normal rainfall and other weather factors, and no further geopolitical shocks, India is expected to grow by 6.4% in FY2023 (current fiscal) and 6.7% in FY2024, as projected in ADO April 2023, ADB said.

Source: Business Standard

TRADE

India's rice export ban sparks global price rise fear

Date: 21 July 2023

The world's biggest rice exporter, India, has banned some overseas sales of the grain "with immediate effect", the government said, in a move that could drive international prices even higher. Rice is a major world food staple and prices on international markets have soared to decade highs as the world grappled with the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the impact of the El Nino weather phenomenon on production levels. India would ban exports of non-basmati white rice.



Source: India Today

TRADE

Japan keen to make investments worth 5 trillion yen in India

Date: 20 July 2023



Japan is keen to invest 5 trillion yen, or about Rs 2.95 trillion, in India across various sectors, including steel, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said. The two countries also signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) in semiconductors focused on key areas like research and development (R&D), manufacturing, design, and talent development. The pact was signed during a meeting of top Indian government officials with a Japanese delegation led by Nishimura Yasutoshi, minister of economy, trade and industry of Japan.

Source: The Economic Times

CYBER SECURITY

Cybersecurity bill to define contours of online safety, security

Date: 21 July 2023

The Centre is working on the contours of a cyber-security bill that may define various aspects of online safety and set down objective parameters and rules spelling out what constitutes cyber fraud, providing a contemporary legal framework to tackle 21st century crime. The proposed legislation, which could either act as a supplement or be part of the larger Digital India Bill, will also likely detail the penal provisions in cases of cyber breaches while specifying who is a cybercriminal under provisions of the new law.



Source: The Economic Times

G20

G20 nations agree to India's proposal on energy efficiency improvement

Date: 20 July 2023



G20 member nations meeting for the final Energy Transition Working Group (ETWG) meeting on Thursday agreed to India's voluntary action plan which includes a proposal to double the rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, Pankaj Agarwal, ETWG chair and secretary of the Union ministry of power told reporters in a briefing. An important outcome of the discussions was agreement on enabling access to low-cost financing of energy transition projects in India.

Source: Mint

G20 agency gives a miss to several key crypto concerns

Date: 18 July 2023

The recommendations of the Financial Stability Board (FSB) on crypto assets have not dealt with several areas crucial to regulate the instrument, a top Indian official said after the agency set up by the G20 proposed licensing & regulation of issuers and service providers, while pushing for cross-border cooperation, including consultation and arrangements to share information. Areas such as anti-money laundering, combating terror finance and cybersecurity — have been left out of the framework to manage the instruments on which opinion is widely split, especially after some of them collapsed.



Source: The Times of India

HEALTHCARE

India recorded all-time high of 93% DPT3 immunisation coverage

Date: 18 July 2023



The coverage rate for DPT3, the third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccines, in India rose to an all-time of 93% in 2022, surpassing the previous pre-pandemic best of 91% recorded in 2019, and also marking a sharp increase from the 85% recorded in 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. The WHO and UNICEF estimates showed that the WHO South-East Asia Region also witnessed a 6% improvement in the coverage of the measles vaccine, rising to 92% in 2022 from 86% in 2021.

Source: The Hindu

STEEL

New stainless steel policy to target 5X jump in capacity

Date: 20 July 2023

The Union steel ministry has started industry consultations to frame India's first stainless steel policy, an official aware of the matter said. The policy will aim to raise domestic capacity by nearly fivefold by 2047, from the current 6.6 million tonnes (mt) to 30 mt. A key objective of the policy is to reduce dependence on China for nickel, silicon and chromium, which are used to make stainless steel. The policy is being formulated at the request of the stainless steel industry.



Source: Mint

TELECOM

5G smartphone user base crosses 100 million mark

Date: 19 July 2023



The total active install base of 5G smartphones stands at around 100 million, comprising around 14% of the total smartphone base, with 5G subscriptions lingering around the 30-35 million-mark, said market trackers. Counterpoint Research said India's mobile industry crossed a significant milestone of 100 million 5G smartphone sales in May 2023, surpassing 4G smartphone shipments per month for the first time. The research firm expects the active install base of 5G handsets to cross 140 million by the end of 2023.

Source: The Economic Times

News from International Publications

UK Inflation falls further than expected to shift rates bets

Date: 20 July 2023



UK Inflation fell to a 15-month low of 7.9% in June, a bigger than expected drop that sent the pound lower while lifting property share prices. Figures led investors to trim their expectations of an interest rate rise, with markets now betting on a quarter-rather than half-point increase at the Bank of England's next meeting on August 3. Sterling fell to its lowest in a week, trading down 1.1% against the dollar at \$1.2897.

Source: Financial Times

US cuts funding to Chinese virology lab embroiled in pandemic probes

Date: 20 July 2023

Federal health officials this week suspended funding to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the Chinese lab at the center of investigations about the novel coronavirus's origins, saying the move was "necessary to mitigate any potential public health risk" given insufficient information about the lab's research. The institute, which received the memo and an accompanying letter that recommended its debarment, has 30 days to respond. Suspended and debarred organizations are ineligible to receive new federal contracts and grants and other types of funding from the United States.



Source: The Washington Post

News from International Publications

Car sector buoyed by Tata plans to invest in £4bn battery gigaplant

Date: 20 July 2023



India's Tata Group ended months of suspense with news that it would build a £4bn gigafactory in the UK, which will be big enough to supply not just its own luxury-car maker, Jaguar Land Rover, but other customers. Rishi Sunak unveiled the deal with Natarajan Chandrasekaran, chair of parent company Tata Sons, at JLR's factory at Gaydon in Warwickshire. At an estimated capacity of 40 gigawatt hours, Tata's plant will be "twice the size of the average battery plant", said Stephen Gifford, chief economist at the Faraday Institution.

Source: The Financial Times

Dubai realty surges 37% in Q2 as ultra-rich rush in

Date: 15 July 2023

Dubai's real estate market continued to perform well in the second quarter of 2023, delivering the second highest volume of transactions on record to post a 37% year-on-year growth. The surge was driven as an increasing number of high net-worth individuals sought a safe haven, tax efficiency and positive investment returns. According to the latest Dubai Land Department data, real estate transactions reached 27,215 in the second quarter, with the total value of properties sold touching Dh69.8 billion.



Source: Khaleej Times

News from International Publications

G20 talks make progress on financial reform

Date: 19 July 2023



India said yesterday that G20 finance chiefs and central bankers had made headway on plans to reform the world's financial architecture, despite differences over the war in Ukraine that surfaced during the talks. Ajay Seth, a finance ministry official, also said that India was "taking the discourse forward" after policymakers from the group of large economies met to discuss plans to overhaul multilateral lenders, forge an agreement on international taxation, and share the burden of restructuring poor countries' debt.

Source: Financial Times

IMF expects weak global growth

Date: 20 July 2023

Global economic activity is slowing, especially in the manufacturing sector, and medium-term growth prospects remain weak, the chief of the International Monetary Fund told financial leaders of the Group of 20 nations. IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva, speaking to G20 finance ministers and central bank governors in the western Indian state of Gujarat, said divergence in countries' economic fortunes was a persistent concern. Inflation was finally trending downward, she said, though "headline inflation is still too high and core inflation remains sticky despite the significant monetary policy tightening."



Source: Khaleej Times

News from International Publications

China deletes deaths data that showed 73% jump when Covid curbs were lifted

Date: 14 July 2023



One of China's most populous provinces has deleted mortality data that offered an indication of the heavy death toll from Beijing's relaxation of Covid-19 controls at the end of last year. The statistics reported by Zhejiang province last week showed that the number of cremations in the wealthy coastal region during the first quarter of the year jumped 73% from a year earlier, to 171,000. The figure was well above the 99,000 and 91,000 deaths reported in the same period in 2022 and 2021 respectively. By Monday, with the statistics attracting attention on Chinese social media, Zhejiang had pulled the information offline.

Source: Financial Times