



CURRENT AFFAIRS

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1. Key Highlights Of The Economic Survey

The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2021-22.

State of the Economy:-

- Indian economy estimated to grow by 9.2 percent in real terms in 2021-22 (as per first advanced estimates) subsequent to a contraction of 7.3 percent in 2020-21.
- GDP projected to grow by 8- 8.5 percent in real terms in 2022-23.
- The year ahead poised for a pickup in private sector investment with the financial system in good position to provide support for economy's revival.
- Agriculture and allied sectors expected to grow by 3.9 percent; industry by 11.8 percent and services sector by 8.2 percent in 2021-22.
- On demand side, consumption estimated to grow by 7.0 percent, Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) by 15 percent, exports by 16.5 percent and imports by 29.4 percent in 2021-22.

Fiscal Developments:

- The revenue receipts from the Central Government (April to November, 2021) have gone up by 67.2 percent (YoY) as against an expected growth of 9.6 percent in the 2021-22 Budget Estimates (over 2020-21 Provisional Actuals).
- With the enhanced borrowings on account of COVID-19, the Central Government debt has gone up from 49.1 percent of GDP in 2019-20 to 59.3 percent of GDP in 2020-21, but is expected to follow a declining trajectory with the recovery of the economy.

External Sectors:

- India's merchandise exports and imports rebounded strongly and surpassed pre-COVID levels during the current financial year.
- India's external debt rose to US \$ 593.1 billion at end-September 2021, from US \$ 556.8 billion a year earlier, reflecting additional SDR allocation by IMF, coupled with higher commercial borrowings.
- Foreign Exchange Reserves crossed US\$ 600 billion in the first half of 2021-22 and touched US \$ 633.6 billion as of December 31, 2021.
- As of end-November 2021, India was the fourth largest forex reserves holder in the world after China, Japan and Switzerland.

Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation:

- The liquidity in the system remained in surplus.
- Repo rate was maintained at 4 per cent in 2021-22.
- RBI undertook various measures such as G-Sec Acquisition Programme and Special Long-Term Repo Operations to provide further liquidity.
- The Gross Non-Performing Advances ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) declined from 11.2 per cent at the end of 2017-18 to 6.9 per cent at the end of September, 2021.
- Net Non-Performing Advances ratio declined from 6 percent to 2.2 per cent during the same period.
- Capital to risk-weighted asset ratio of SCBs continued to increase from 13 per cent in 2013-14 to 16.54 per cent at the end of September 2021.

Prices and Inflation:

- The average headline CPI-Combined inflation moderated to 5.2 per cent in 2021-22 (April-December) from 6.6 per cent in the corresponding period of 2020-21.
- The decline in retail inflation was led by easing of food inflation.
- Food inflation averaged at a low of 2.9 per cent in 2021-22 (April to December) as against 9.1 per cent in the corresponding period last year.

- Wholesale inflation based on Wholesale Price Index (WPI) rose to 12.5 per cent during 2021-22 (April to December).

Sustainable Development and Climate Change:

- India's overall score on the NITI Aayog SDG India Index and Dashboard improved to 66 in 2020-21 from 60 in 2019-20 and 57 in 2018-19.
- Number of Front Runners (scoring 65-99) increased to 22 States and UTs in 2020-21 from 10 in 2019-20.
- In North East India, 64 districts were Front Runners and 39 districts were Performers in the NITI Aayog North-Eastern Region District SDG Index 2021-22.
- India has the tenth largest forest area in the world.
- In 2020, India ranked third globally in increasing its forest area during 2010 to 2020.
- In 2020, the forests covered 24% of India's total geographical, accounting for 2% of the world's total forest area.

Agriculture and Food Management:

- The Agriculture sector experienced buoyant growth in past two years, accounting for a sizeable 18.8% (2021-22) in Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country registering a growth of 3.6% in 2020-21 and 3.9% in 2021-22.
- Minimum Support Price (MSP) policy is being used to promote crop diversification.
- Net receipts from crop production have increased by 22.6% in the latest Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) compared to SAS Report of 2014.

Industry and Infrastructure:

Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew at 17.4 percent (YoY) during April-November 2021 as compared to (-) 15.3 percent in April-November 2020.

Services:

- GVA of services crossed pre-pandemic level in July-September quarter of 2021-22; however, GVA of contact intensive sectors like trade, transport, etc. still remain below pre-pandemic level.
- Overall service Sector GVA is expected to grow by 8.2 percent in 2021-22.

- During the first half of 2021-22, service sector received over US\$ 16.7 billion FDI – accounting for almost 54 percent of total FDI inflows into India.
- IT-BPM services revenue reached US\$ 194 billion in 2020-21, adding 1.38 lakh employees during the same period.

Social Infrastructure and Employment:

- 157.94 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines administered as on 16 January 2022; 91.39 crore first dose and 66.05 crore second dose.
- As per NFHS- 5, Total Fertility Rate (TFR) came down to 2 in 2019-21 from 2.2 in 2015-16.
- Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), under-five mortality rate and institutional births have improved in 2019-21 over year 2015-16.

2. India – ASEAN Digital Work Plan

During the second ADGMIN, India and ASEAN countries have approved the India – ASEAN Digital Work Plan. ADGMIN is ASEAN Digital Ministers meet. The meet was held virtually.

About:-

- Under the plan, the countries will share their knowledge in the emerging areas of digital technologies such as 5G, Internet of Things, cyber forensics and advanced Satellite communication.
- They will work together and develop technologies to fight against internet hacking, mobile phone stealing. Also, they will formulate plans to combat the wrong anti – social use of stolen mobile phone.
- It is an annual meeting. The meeting is attended by the dialogue partners such as US, UK, Russia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Japan, EU, China, Canada and Australia.
- The ASEAN countries are Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines.

3. NASA HERMES Mission

On January 27, 2022, NASA's HERMES mission passed a critical mission review.

Key Points:-

- HERMES mission is a four-instrument suite, which will be mounted outside NASA's Moon-orbiting Gateway.
- The review, called Key Decision Point C, evaluated the preliminary design and program plan of the mission, in a bid to achieve launch by its target launch readiness date of November 2024.
- With the successful review, the mission now moves into Phase C, which includes final design of HERMES mission.
- HERMES Mission will be a critical part of Artemis mission as well as NASA's goals of creating a permanent presence on the Moon.
- HERMES stands for “Heliophysics Environmental and Radiation Measurement Experiment Suite”.
- It will be mounted outside the “Habitation and Logistics Outpost module” of Gateway outpost of NASA.

4. Sergio Mattarella – Italy's President for 2nd term

Italian President Sergio Mattarella was again elected for second term.

Key points:-

- Mattarella was re-elected with a broad majority. He got 759 votes in favour out of 983 lawmakers and regional representatives.
- His candidacy emerged prominently at the end of a tense week, in which the center-left and the center-right political blocs failed to agree on different common candidature.
- Thus, seven rounds of voting were held. All the rounds delivered inconclusive results and exposed deep fractures within both coalitions.

