

France aircraft engine tech transfer



In a latest development India and France will extend their “ground-breaking” defence cooperation in advanced aeronautical technologies by supporting the joint development of a combat aircraft engine and an engine for the Indian Multi Role Helicopter (IMRH), which is being designed and developed by the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

India has been in talks with a few global firms, including the French aircraft engine manufacturer Safran SA, for developing engines for the AMCA Mk II – India’s futuristic fifth generation fighter aircraft for its Air Force – with full technology transfer for over a year now. The AMCA would require an engine of a higher thrust of 110 kN.

An official statement says that France is one of India’s key partners in the development of a self-reliant defence industrial and technological base, it said that both countries “are committed to cooperating in the co-development and co-production of advanced defence technologies, including for the benefit of third countries”.

It also said that both countries hail the success of the first Scorpene submarine construction programme (P75 – Kalvari), a model of Make in India and the sharing of naval expertise between companies in the two countries.

Other major defence collaborations highlighted by the statement include a MoU between Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) and Naval Group France to collaborate in the field of surface ships to fulfil the requirement of India and International Naval forces.

India is diversifying its defence partnerships and taking the comparative advantage in to consideration while forming the next level partnerships.

SCO meet.



A joint declaration by the leaders at the end of an online summit hosted by India said SCO-Shanghai Cooperation Organisation- members oppose bloc, ideological and confrontational approaches to address problems and security challenges.

The leaders were critical of what they said was the negative impact of "unilateral and unlimited expansion of global missile defence systems by certain countries or groups of countries", without directly referring to NATO's expansion and Western military assistance to Ukraine.

Expressing concern about the situation in Afghanistan, the leaders said they consider "it essential to establish an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of representatives of all ethnic, religious and political groups in Afghan society".

All members bar India also supported China's vast Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) scheme which envisions rebuilding the old Silk Road to connect China with Asia, Europe and beyond with large infrastructure spending. Iran joined the grouping becoming its ninth member.

Belarus signed a memorandum of obligations which will lead to its membership in 2024.

Forest (Conservation) Amendment bill 2023



The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, is an important Central statute for the conservation of forests in the country. It provides that the de-reservation of reserved forests, use of forest land for non-forest purpose, assigning forest land by way of lease or otherwise to private entity and clearing of naturally grown trees for the purpose of reforestation requires prior permission of the Central Government.

Latest amendment is aimed to achieve the country's national as well as international commitments of NDCs, carbon neutrality, eliminate the ambiguities and bring clarity about the applicability of the Act in various lands, promoting the plantation in non-forest land, enhancing the productivity of the forests, amendment has been proposed in the Act and the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023 has been moved by the Central Government.

The amendments passed by the Lok Sabha include insertion of a Preamble to broaden the scope of the Act, changing the name of the Act as Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhinyam, 1980 so as to ensure that potential of its provisions is reflected in its name, clarifying the scope of applicability of the Act in various lands to eliminate ambiguities.

In addition to these amendment, certain exemptions, as proposed in the Bill, have also been passed by the Lok Sabha which include exemption of strategic projects concerning national security located within 100 km of distance from the International Borders, Line of Actual Control, Line of Control, 0.10 ha of forest land proposed to be provide connectivity to habitation and establishments located on the side of roads and railways, up to 10 ha of land proposed for security related infrastructure and up to 5 ha of forest land in Left Wing Extremism Affected Districts for public utility projects. All these exemptions considered in

the Bill will be subject to such terms and conditions, including compensatory afforestation, mitigation Plans, etc., as will be specified by the Central Government.

The Bill also added new activities viz. infrastructure for frontline forest staff, ecotourism, zoo and safari into the array of forestry activities for the cause of conservation of forests. Surveys and investigation in the forest areas will not be considered as a non-forestry activity in view of the fact that such activities are temporary in nature and involve no perceptible change in the land use. The Section 6 of the Bill empowering the Central Government to issue directions for the proper implementation of the Act, has also been passed by the Lok Sabha.

Inclusion of more activities, as forestry activities in the Bill such as infrastructure for frontline will help to secure quick response to natural hazards in the forests. For want of enabling provisions in the Act, it is difficult to create such basic infrastructure in the forest area thereby affecting the forestry operations, regeneration activities, monitoring and supervision, prevention of forest fires, etc. These provisions will pave the way for better management of forest for improved productivity and flow of ecosystem goods and services will also add to mitigate the impact of climate change and conservation of forests.

G20 Expert Group on Strengthening Multilateral Development Banks



Under the aegis of India's G20 Presidency, a G20 Expert Group on "Strengthening Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) has been constituted.

The objectives of the Expert Group are:

- A roadmap for an updated MDB ecosystem for the 21st century, with milestones and timelines, touching upon all aspects of MDB evolution, including but not limited to

vision, incentive structure, operational approaches and financial capacity so that MDBs are better equipped to finance a wide range of SDG and transboundary challenges such as climate change and health.

- An evaluation of various estimates regarding the scale of funding required by and from MDBs for addressing their and member countries' increased financing needs for SDG and transboundary challenges, taking into account the additional capacity that can be derived from the CAF recommendations alongside other important sources such as the private sector and public sector funds (AND)
- Mechanisms for coordination among MDBs for them to address and finance global development and other challenges more effectively.

To address global challenges of the 21st century, G20 members recognised the importance of strengthening MDBs and to let its ecosystem evolve.

Volume I recommendation, co-authored by the chairman of 15th Finance Commission, N.K. Singh, stresses on the greater engagement with private sector for MDBs. It notes that private financing worth \$740 billion per year will be required to reach overall goals for additional climate and sustainable development goals (SDGs)-related finance, an increase of \$500 billion over the 2019 level of sovereign borrowing and private participation in infrastructure.

It calls for better coordination between MDBs, noting that while some MDBs have been leaner and faster (AIIB), others are experimenting with raising new forms of capital (AfDB and IDB), engaging with the private sector (EBRD and IFC) or better utilising their balance sheets in other ways (IBRD and ADB).

The report also goes onto to add that a 'triple mandate' is required to address poverty, inclusive growth and the financing of global public goods. These, the reports says, can be made possible by tripling the level of financing commitments and establishing a third funding mechanism. It further calls for the setting up of a 'Global Challenges Funding' mechanism for 'Global Public Goods', for which the modalities will be detailed in the second volume of the report to be released later.

Sensex surge – reasons



The major driver is the return of FPIs, the buoyancy in the global markets, strong macroeconomic fundamentals and the easing of inflation in India.

The mood in the frontline market is very optimistic looking at the aggressive FPI inflows and settling down of global macro headwinds followed by better than strong domestic micro economic data.

The 5-big positive domestic catalysts driving the current upsurge are India's strong GST collection that crossed Rs 1.60 lakh crore mark in June, better recovery in the monsoon in June and normal rains expected in July as well, expected stable interest rate scenario worldwide, the US Q1 GDP reassessment from 1.3% to 2%, and easing of US PCE inflation that offers relief to investors who were worried about further interest rate hikes.

Global markets are supported by resilient economic data, avoiding the possibility of a recession. India's stock market trend was broad-based, owing to the outperformance from energy, financial, metal, and FMCG sectors. Economic activities are gaining strength with the manufacturing PMI level at 57.8, indicating sustained demand for products, fostering a sense of confidence in the manufacturing prospects.

Delhi ordinance and federal structure



The central government's ordinance that virtually strips the elected government of Delhi (GNCTD) of its administrative control over the civil service and which is seen as an extension of the unending political slugfest between the BJP and AAP, will test the boundaries of politics within the constitutional framework.

The challenge to the ordinance's constitutionality can be mounted on several grounds. It can be impugned as a legislative excess intended to negate the effect of the Supreme Court's May 11 judgment which affirmed the GNCTD's legislative and executive competence over services dealing with subjects originally reserved for the Union Territory. It can thus be faulted as the legislature's impermissible encroachment on the judicial sphere, clearly interdicted by the doctrine of separation of powers embedded in the Constitution.

The promulgation of the ordinance is questionable as an onslaught on the constitutionally ordained and sacrosanct federal structure premised on a dispersal of sovereign power between the Union and its constituents, anchored in a distrust of concentrated power. It is thus pre-eminently arguable that the concurrent legislative power of Parliament cannot be exercised to emasculate the GNCTD's long recognised legislative and executive control over matters originally within its remit.

It is also arguable that in the absence of demonstrable urgency, resort to the extraordinary constitutional power of promulgating an ordinance, bypassing the deliberative processes of the Houses of Parliament, is impermissible in terms of the law declared by the apex court in that regard.

Most importantly, the challenge to the constitutionality of the ordinance is its frontal assault on representative democracy and the parliamentary form of government in as much as it transfers the overriding administrative control and power to the unelected lieutenant governor acting as representative of the Union government. The ordinance enables departmental secretaries to disregard policy decisions by the council of ministers. They are now not answerable to the chief minister or ministers representing the popular will but to the lieutenant governor, in his capacity as the President's delegate and a nominee of the Union government. Pertinently, the power to make key appointments to posts directly concerned with the peoples' welfare and in departments providing vital services to the citizens of Delhi now vest with the President and not the government chosen by the people.

In the broader constitutional scheme, democratic institutions of the Indian state are not expected to "offset against each other" and are mandated to work in "an amicable community of purpose." For this reason as well, the Union government's legislative action through the ordinance route without a clear necessity, makes it constitutionally suspect.

Rupee trade with more nations



In the wake of the Ukraine and Russia war and US sanctions on the use of dollars for payments to Russia and Iran, the RBI in July 2022 allowed settlement for import and export of goods and services in rupee. To facilitate settlement in rupee, Indian banks also opened 'Special Vostro Rupee Accounts' with several countries.

So far, 18 countries have opened SVRAs to settle trade in rupee, according to reports. They include Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, United Kingdom, Russia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka,

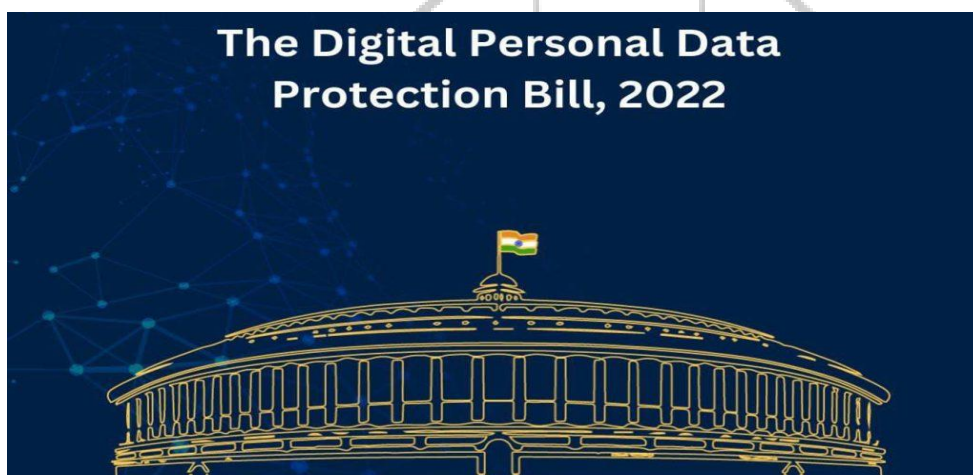
Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Israel, and Kenya.

India has been attempting to internationalize the rupee to reduce dollar demand and insulate its economy from global shocks.

The government is looking to bring countries that are short of dollars into the rupee mechanism. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are talking through ways to invest Indian rupees they earn as part of these transactions, as the gulf nation's exports to India exceed imports from it.

As part of the rules issued earlier this year, the Indian central bank has allowed for any rupee holdings to be invested in government securities.

Key Points of Draft DPDP Bill, 2022



The draft bill requires a data fiduciary -- i.e. an entity which processes user data -- to give an itemised notice to user on data sought to be collected, in clear and plain language. It also mandates that the user should be allowed the right to give, manage, withdraw consent from sharing his/her information.

The bill states that a data fiduciary shall not undertake tracking or behavioural monitoring of children or targeted advertising directed at children. Before processing any personal data of a child, the fiduciary has to obtain verifiable parental consent. Moreover, non-fulfilment of these obligations relating to children can lead to penalties of up to Rs 200 crore

The bill includes almost all the provisions of the last draft that was issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for consultation. The government entities have not

been granted a blanket exemption under the proposed law. In case of disputes, Data Protection Board will decide. Citizens will have the right to claim compensation by approaching the civil court.

This bill was necessitated due to the withdrawal of another data protection bill formulated by the Justice BN Srikrishna Committee in 2018 as it had garnered a lot of criticism on grounds of being too complicated and placing onerous responsibilities related to data localisation on industry, among other things.

Global shipping and net zero



The agreement by International Maritime Organization reflected in a 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, was adopted at the 80th meeting of the IMO's Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC). It unites all 175 member states in a common objective: to ensure a just and equitable transition to a 20-30% reduction in shipping emissions by 2030, progressing to a 70-80% reduction by 2040.

The IMO's GHG strategy:

1. Sets a level of ambition to keep 1.5C within reach, reducing shipping emissions to net zero by 2050 with ambitious, robust interim targets for 2030 and 2040.
2. Commits to a lifecycle approach for assessing emissions to avoid shifting emissions from sea to land.
3. Specifies a clear and rapid timeline for adopting and applying binding regulatory measures.

4. Makes a commitment that shipping's green transition will be just and equitable, and leave no one behind.

Over the next seven years, the 2030 target will be met by transitioning 5-10% of marine fuels to zero emission alternatives, in alignment with the Climate Champions 2030 Shipping Breakthrough. Additionally, all ships being ordered from now onwards must be capable of running on zero emission fuels by 2040 if they are to be useful for their full lifespan.

Global mandatory measures and regulations will enter into force in 2027, consisting of a global GHG fuel standard and an economic measure that sets a price on GHG emissions based on the full lifecycle emissions.

With the first global stocktake at COP28, the resolution provides shipowners, cargo owners, investors and fuel producers alike with the required certainty that the Race to Zero is well and truly on.

El Niño trade off.



Scientists say this year looks particularly worrying. The last time a strong El Niño was in full swing, in 2016, the world saw its hottest year on record. Meteorologists expect that this El Niño, coupled with excess warming from climate change, will see the world grapple with record-high temperatures.

Experts are also concerned about what is going on in the ocean. An El Niño means that waters in the Eastern Pacific are warmer than usual. But even before this El Niño began, in May, the average global sea surface temperature was about 0.1C (0.2F) higher than any other on record. That could supercharge extreme weather.

This year's El Nino could lead to global economic losses of \$3 trillion, according to a study published last month in the journal Science, shrinking GDP as extreme weather decimates agricultural production, manufacturing, and helps spread disease

Elnino and world's weather

This shift in storm activity affects the current of fast-flowing air that moves weather around the world — called the subtropical jet stream — pushing its path southward and straightening it out into a flatter stream that delivers similar weather along the same latitudes.

During an El Nino, the southern United States experiences cooler and wetter weather, while parts of the U.S. West and Canada are warmer and drier.

Hurricane activity falters as the storms fail to form in the Atlantic due to changes in the wind, sparing the United States. But tropical cyclones in the Pacific get a boost, with storms often spinning toward vulnerable islands.

Some parts of Central and South America experience heavy rainfall, although the Amazon rainforest tends to suffer from drier conditions.

And Australia endures extreme heat, drought, and bushfires.

El Nino could offer a reprieve to the Horn of Africa, which recently suffered five consecutive failed rainy seasons. El Nino brings more rain to the Horn, unlike the triple-dip La Nina which desiccated the region.

Historically, both El Nino and La Nina have occurred about every two to seven years on average, with El Nino lasting 9 to 12 months. La Nina, which takes hold when waters are cooler in the Eastern Pacific, can last one to three years.

Anthropocene began in 1950s.



The idea of the Anthropocene was proposed at a science conference more than 20 years ago by the late Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen. Teams of scientists have debated the issue since then and finally set up the working group to study whether it was needed and, if so, when the epoch would start and where it would be commemorated.

Crawford Lake, which is 79 feet (29 meters) deep and 25,800 square feet (24,000 square meters) wide, was chosen over 11 other sites because the annual effects of human activity on the earth's soil, atmosphere and biology are so clearly preserved in its layers of sediment. That includes everything from nuclear fallout to species-threatening pollution to steadily rising temperatures.

Geologists measure time in eons, eras, periods, epochs and ages. The scientific working group is proposing that Anthropocene Epoch followed the Holocene Epoch, which started about 11,700 years ago at the end of an ice age.

They are also proposing that it starts a new age, called Crawfordian after the lake chosen as its starting point.

The reason geologists didn't declare the Anthropocene the start of a bigger and more important time measurement, such as a period, is because the current Quaternary Period, which began nearly 2.6 million years ago, is based on permanent ice on Earth's poles, which still exist. But in a few hundred years, if climate change continues and those disappear.

Jan viswas amendment bill2023



The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022, was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 22, 2022. It amends 42 Acts to decriminalise certain offences, reduce the compliance burden on individuals and businesses and ensure ease of doing business. The Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (Chair: Mr. P.P. Chaudhary), which submitted its report on March 17, 2023.

The benefits of the Amendment Bill are outlined as under:

1. The Amendment Bill will contribute to rationalizing criminal provisions and ensuring that citizens, businesses and the government departments operate without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural defaults.
2. The nature of penal consequence of an offence committed should be commensurate with the seriousness of the offence. This bill establishes a balance between the severity of the offence/violation committed and the gravity of the prescribed punishment. The proposed amendments ensure the adherence to law by businesses and citizens, without losing the rigor of the law.
3. The criminal consequences prescribed for technical/procedural lapses and minor defaults, clog the justice delivery system and puts adjudication of serious offences on the back burner. Some of the amendments proposed in the Bill are to introduce suitable administrative adjudication mechanisms, wherever applicable and feasible. This would go a long way in reducing undue pressure on the justice system, reduce the pendency of cases and help in a more efficient and effective justice dispensation.

4. Decriminalization of provisions which affect citizens and certain categories of government employees will help them live without the fear of imprisonment for minor violations.

5. The enactment of this legislation would be a landmark in the journey of rationalizing laws, eliminating barriers and bolstering growth of businesses. This legislation would serve as a guiding principle for future amendments in various laws. Consolidated amendments in various laws with a common objective will save time and cost for both Government and Businesses alike.

Key Features

- The Bill amends 42 Acts which include: the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, and the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- **Decriminalising certain offences:** Under the Bill, several offences with an imprisonment term in certain Acts have been decriminalised by imposing only a monetary penalty. For example, under the Information Technology Act, 2000, disclosing personal information in breach of a lawful contract is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, or a fine of up to five lakh rupees, or both. The Bill replaces this with a penalty of up to Rs 25 lakh. In certain Acts, offences have been decriminalised by imposing a penalty instead of a fine. For instance, under the Patents Act, 1970, a person selling a falsely represented article as patented in India is subject to a fine of up to one lakh rupees. The Bill replaces the fine with a penalty, which may be up to ten lakh rupees.
- **Removal of offences:** The Bill removes certain offences. These include all offences under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.
- **Revision of fines and penalties:** The Bill increases the fines and penalties for various offences in the specified Acts. The fines and penalties will be increased by 10% of the minimum amount every three years.
- **Adjudicating Officers:** The central government may appoint one or more Adjudicating Officers for determining penalties. These Officers may summon individuals for evidence and conduct inquiries into violations of the respective Acts. These Acts include the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937 and the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991. The Bill also specifies the appellate mechanisms for the orders passed by these Officers. For instance, in the

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, appeals against the Adjudicating Officer's orders may be filed with the National Green Tribunal within 60 days.

AIDS can end by 2030.



A new report released by UNAIDS shows that there is a clear path that ends AIDS. This path will also help prepare for and tackle future pandemics and advance progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The report, 'The Path that Ends AIDS', contains data and case studies which highlight that ending AIDS is a political and financial choice, and that the countries and leaders who are already following the path are achieving extraordinary results.

Botswana, Eswatini, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe have already achieved the "95-95-95" targets. That means 95% of the people who are living with HIV knowing their HIV status, 95% of the people who know that they are living with HIV being on lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 95% of people who are on treatment being virally suppressed. A further 16 other countries, eight of them in sub-Saharan Africa, the region which accounts for 65% of all people living with HIV, are also close to doing so.

The report highlights that HIV responses succeed when they are anchored in strong political leadership. This means following the data, science, and evidence; tackling the inequalities holding back progress; enabling communities and civil society organizations in their vital role in the response; and ensuring sufficient and sustainable funding.

Progress has been strongest in the countries and regions that have the most financial investments, such as in eastern and southern Africa where new HIV infections have been reduced by 57% since 2010.

The number of people on antiretroviral treatment worldwide rose almost fourfold, from 7.7 million in 2010 to 29.8 million in 2022.

However, the report also sets out that ending AIDS will not come automatically. AIDS claimed a life every minute in 2022. Around 9.2 million people still miss out on treatment, including 660 000 children living with HIV.

Women and girls are still disproportionately affected, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, 4,000 young women and girls became infected with HIV every week in 2022. Only 42% of districts with HIV incidence over 0.3% in sub-Saharan Africa are currently covered with dedicated HIV prevention programmes for adolescent girls and young women.

Almost one quarter (23%) of new HIV infections were in Asia and the Pacific where new infections are rising alarmingly in some countries. Steep increases in new infections are continuing in eastern Europe and central Asia (a rise of 49% since 2010) and in the Middle East and North Africa (a rise of 61% since 2010). These trends are due primarily to a lack of HIV prevention services for marginalized and key populations and the barriers posed by punitive laws and social discrimination.

Energy transition in developing countries- the problems



Goal 7, as defined by United Nations, is about ensuring access to clean and affordable energy, which is a key ingredient to any economic activities, transportation, social well-being, and

human welfare. Latest data suggest that the world continues to advance towards sustainable energy targets, but at a much slower pace than expected.

UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2023 published recently shows that much of the growth in international investment in renewable energy, which has nearly tripled since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, has been concentrated in developed countries.

Developing countries need renewable energy investments of about \$1.7 trillion annually but attracted foreign direct investment in clean energy worth only \$544 billion in 2022, according to the report.

Total funding needs for the energy transition in developing countries are much larger and include investment in power grids, transmission lines, storage, and energy efficiency.

The report says the investment gap across all sectors of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has increased to more than \$4 trillion per year from \$2.5 trillion in 2015.

The largest gaps are in energy, water, and transport infrastructure. The increase is the result of both underinvestment and additional needs.

The growing SDG investment gap in developing countries contrasts with positive sustainability trends in global capital markets. The value of the sustainable finance market reached \$5.8 trillion in 2022.

Facts

- The global electricity access rate increased from 83 per cent in 2010 to 91 per cent in 2020. Over this period, the number of people without electricity shrank from 1.2 billion to 733 million.
- From 2018 to 2020, the electricity access rate rose by an average of 0.5 percentage points annually, compared to 0.8 percentage points between 2010 and 2018.
- At the current pace, only 92 per cent of the world's population would have access to electricity in 2030, leaving 670 million people unserved.
- Financing of Renewable energy will always be an issue as the goal-posts keep shifting. At COP26, with multiple countries pledging additional climate financing to developing countries, it was estimated that the USD 100 billion per year target could

be met by 2023. Driven by the imperative to achieve a better balance between mitigation and adaptation financing, countries also committed to double global adaptation finance by 2025. But today, the annual adaptation costs of developing countries are expected to be in the range of USD 140 billion to USD 300 billion by 2030 (Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance 2020). This exceeds the overall climate financing target, which comprises both mitigation and adaptation support.

