

COVID-10 catalyst for change impacting tech, trade: Seetharaman

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DOHA Bank Group CEO R Seetharaman described the COVID-19 pandemic as a "catalyst for change" that impacts trade and technology around the world.

He was addressing a webinar hosted by European University on Wednesday.

Sharing insights on world economy, the banker said, "According to the IMF, the global growth is projected at - 4.4 percent in 2020 and at - 5.2 percent in 2021. Growth in the advanced economy group is projected at - 5.8 percent in 2020. In 2021, the advanced economy growth rate is projected to strengthen to 3.9 percent. Among emerging market and developing economies, growth is forecast at - 3.3 percent in 2020, strengthening to 6 percent in 2021."

In Sept 2020 meeting, the US Federal Reserve stated it will aim to achieve inflation moderately above 2 percent for some time so that inflation averages 2 percent over time and longer-

term inflation expectations remain well anchored at 2 percent, he said.

In its September 2020 meeting, the European Central Bank (ECB) decided to keep its interest rates and coronavirus-stimulus programme unchanged, the CEO added.

Highlighting certain global trade developments, Seetharaman said, "The WTO (World Trade Organisation) now forecasts a 9.2 percent decline in the volume of world merchandise trade for 2020, followed by a 7.2 percent rise in 2021.

"Strong trade performance in June and July has brought some signs of optimism for overall trade growth in 2020.

"Downside risks still dominate, particularly if there is resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the coming months. COVID-19 brought about new consumer habits, risk-mitigation business strategies and government emergency measures that resulted in an unprecedented dislocation of international trade and supply chains."

