

## || WEEKLY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ||

### BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI)

|| Brief Highlights on Current Issues of South Asia ||

|| July 02, 2021 – July 07, 2021 ||

#### SOUTH ASIA: COVID-19 CRISIS: AT A GLANCE

Afghanistan has recorded 1,092 new cases of coronavirus and 62 deaths on July 7, 2021. The new cases came out of 3,481 suspected samples on the day. The Ministry of Public Health warned about the outbreak of the Black Fungus disease in Afghanistan, saying that it had registered so far three positive cases in the provinces of Kabul, Baghlan and Samangan.

Bangladesh has reported 164 new death toll and 9,964 fresh cases of coronavirus on July 7, 2021. The total cases in Bangladesh becomes 9, 54,881 and total death toll reached to 15,229. The country has administered 2.6 per cent of its population under Covid-19 vaccination program till July 7, 2021. The country has extended its strict lockdown till July 14, 2021 with stay-at-home orders for citizens by another week, a day after the daily coronavirus deaths reached a record high.

Bhutan has reported 10 new cases on July 7, 2021 and no death toll since the country reported only one death toll due to Covid- 19. In Bhutan, 2,169 cases of coronavirus cases have been identified so far. Bhutan administered 485,315 doses of Covid-19 vaccine till July 7, 2021.

In India, the active cases continue to decline as recoveries outnumbered the new cases. As of July 7, 2021, India has reported 553 death toll and 34,703 new cases due to coronavirus. Country's total cases became 30,619,932 and total death toll had reached to 403,281. In India, 4.72 per cent population has been fully vaccinated as of July 7, 2021.

Maldives has reported 74,585 active cases and 213 deaths as of July 7, 2021. As the positivity rate dropped below 5% the government decided to lift curfew from June 8, 2021. The government has started issuing online tokens for administering vaccination programs, whilst 37.63% of the population has been vaccinated.

Myanmar has recorded its highest fatality of 35 deaths on July 5, 2021. Total number of confirmed cases was 1, 71,976 and the death toll rises to 3,513 till July 7, 2021. Nearly 90 percent of the country has been affected by the third wave of coronavirus infections, with 296 of 330 townships nationwide reporting COVID-19 cases since May, 2021.

Nepal has reported 2,077 new coronavirus cases on July 7, 2021 taking the nationwide infection tally to 650,162. Similarly, 902 people tested positive in a total of 4,063 antigen tests, according to the Health Ministry. Total 3,391,379 PCR and 217,421 antigen tests have been carried out across the country as of July 7, 2021. The country is likely to get 1.5 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine next week under the COVAX facility.

Pakistan has recorded 966,007 positive cases with 22, 469 deaths as of July 7, 2021 since the pandemic started. Total 909,525 patients have been recovered since the pandemic. Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the nerve center of Pakistan's coronavirus response, the team of the Ehsaas Programme and the State Bank of Pakistan after The Economist ranked Pakistan among the best performing countries for handling the coronavirus pandemic.

Sri Lanka has reported 2, 67,433 confirmed cases and 3,313 deaths as of July 7, 2021. 5.74% of the population is vaccinated. Nationwide strike of the nurses due to ill pay and worsening work conditions ended on July 7, 2021.

Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> (John Hopkins University)

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## TRADE AND INVESTMENT: BANGLADESH'S APPAREL EXPORTS TO USA BOUNCED BACK; BANGLADESH RANKED AS THE THIRD-LARGEST EXPORTER OF BICYCLES TO THE EU

Bangladesh's apparel exports to the United States clawed back during the first five months of this calendar year, registering a double-digit growth both in terms of value and volume compared to the same period of last year. The readymade garment (RMG) exports to the USA grew by 15.38 per cent to US\$ 2.58 billion during the period from January to May this year than that of the same period last year. Bangladesh had fetched \$ 2.24 billion during the corresponding period of 2020. Apparel exporters said the industry registered better performance due to the start of economic recovery aided by the good coverage of Covid-19 vaccination, better control in coronavirus infection, and a shift of orders from China. During the first five months of the 2021 calendar year, Bangladesh shipped 1.02 billion square meters of apparel items.

In the meantime, according to Eurostat, Bangladesh has emerged as the third largest exporter of bicycles to the EU and the 8th largest exporter in the global market. The European Union (EU) countries are one of the biggest markets for bicycles, where consumers buy around 18 million units a year. Bangladeshi manufacturers are targeting the European markets for exports, especially to the UK, Germany, Italy and Netherlands. According to Bangladesh Bicycle Merchant Assembling and Importers Association (BBMAIA), the local market demands nearly 1.5 million bicycles a year with an annual growth rate of 30%.

**Sources:** <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/bangladeshs-apparel-exports-to-us-claw-back-1625366860>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2021/07/03/bangladesh-is-the-third-largest-exporter-of-bicycles-to-the-eu>

## MICROSOFT GETS VAT REGISTRATION IN BANGLADESH

Microsoft Regional Sales PTE Ltd obtained Value Added Tax (VAT) registration on July 3, 2021 following the government's law to operate in Bangladesh. From now on, the non-resident company will have to submit monthly VAT returns to the government. Dhaka South VAT Zone has issued the registration, known as business identification number (BIN), in favor of the company's Singapore office. Earlier, Facebook, Amazon and Google also obtained VAT registration from the National Board of Revenue (NBR). As per VAT and Supplementary Duty Act- 2012, the government made VAT registration and submission of VAT returns mandatory from July 1, 2019, for the non-resident companies. However, the companies were facing difficulties to comply with the law due to complex provisions that have been amended in phases to facilitate them.

**Source:**

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/public/first-page/microsoft-gets-vat-reg-in-bangladesh-1625161743>

## AFGHANISTAN: INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT RUSSIA TO HOLD TALKS ON AFGHANISTAN

India, seen as a key player in peace-making in Afghanistan, is ramping up diplomatic efforts with Russia, with its External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar heading to Moscow to discuss the current situation in the war-torn country. Indian foreign minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar is, however, taking a detour in Iran where a meeting of Taliban and Afghan officials is on the anvil. He is expected to be in Moscow later this week. According to Hindustan Times, situation in Afghanistan will dominate Jaishankar's agenda of high-level meetings with Russian leaders. They are expected to "discuss all bilateral and international developments, including the most

vital and current issues such as Afghanistan," the report said. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow comes on the heels of an official trip by his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, to New Delhi in April, 2021. With Moscow's overarching view that New Delhi is a key player in Afghanistan, Russia has been engaging extensively with India in recent months seeking to "formulate a coordinated response to the situation in Afghanistan."

### Source:

<http://www.afghanistantimes.af/india-russia-to-hold-talks-on-afghanistan/>

## AFGHANISTAN: FOREIGN TROOPS STILL IN THE COUNTRY BEYOND SEPTEMBER DEADLINE WILL BE TREATED AS OCCUPIERS AND FACE CONSEQUENCES; TALIBAN WARNED

As U.S. troops fully withdraw from Afghanistan ahead of the September 11, 2021 deadline, the Taliban leaders warned in a BBC interview that foreign troops still in the country beyond that date would be treated as occupiers and face consequences, amid reports that 1,000 U.S. and NATO troops will stay behind to safeguard diplomatic missions and Kabul's international airport as the Taliban fighters gain ground across the country. Under a deal with the Taliban leadership, the US and its NATO allies agreed to withdraw all troops in return for a commitment by the Taliban not to allow al-Qaeda or any other extremist group to operate in the areas they control. President Joe Biden set a deadline of September 11, 2021, the 20-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the US - for American troops to fully withdraw, but reports suggest the pullout may be complete within days.

As Afghan forces prepare to take charge of security alone, concern is growing for the future of Kabul. Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said seizing Kabul militarily was "not Taliban policy". But speaking to the BBC from the group's office in Qatar, he said no foreign forces including military contractors should remain in the city after the withdrawal was complete. "If they leave behind their forces against the Doha agreement then in that case it will be the decision

of our leadership how we proceed," Mr Shaheen told the BBC. Diplomats, NGOs and other foreign civilians would not be targeted by the Taliban, he insisted, and no ongoing protection force for them was needed.

Meanwhile, Taliban captured another area in southern Kandahar province on July 4, 2021. The militants say they now control about a quarter of the country's nearly 400 districts. Taliban also threatened to shut down all activities of 20 radio stations in north until the issue order. "Unfortunately, 20 radio stations have stopped broadcasting in the northern provinces as war has intensified.

The Biden administration is exploring having three Central Asian countries temporarily take in thousands of Afghans who worked with U.S. forces and face threats from the Taliban now that American troops are withdrawing after 20 years, three sources familiar with the matter said on July 4, 2021. They said Washington is in talks with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan about letting in the at-risk Afghan citizens.

### Sources:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57714808>

<http://www.afghanistantimes.af/taliban-threats-shutter-20-radio-stations-in-north/>

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## BANGLADESH: PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA STRESSES NEW AVENUES OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CHINA

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Describing China as a trusted partner in socio-economic development of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need of exploring more avenues to take the strategic partnership between the two countries to a new height. The Prime Minister said this in her pre-recorded message shared on July 1, 2021 afternoon at a function marking 100 years of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). She also said Bangladesh and China enjoy excellent relations based on mutual respect, shared values and commonalities in core national objectives. In her speech, she acknowledged with deep appreciation about the cooperation and assistance by China dur-

ing this Covid-19 pandemic, including the recent gifts of vaccine doses and CPC's gifts of medical equipment to Awami League. The Prime Minister said Communist Party of China, through its judicious policies and visionary leadership, has transformed the country into a modern state to ensure prosperity for all.

**Source:**  
<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/bangladesh-china-should-explore-more-avenues-2122285>

## BANGLADESH: HUMAN TRAFFICKING: BANGLADESH STILL IN TIER 2 IN USA REPORT

In the recent USA government report titled '2021 Trafficking in Persons Report' on global human trafficking situation, Bangladesh still remains at Tier 2 as the government is still behind to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. However, the report praised the government noting that it is making significant efforts to do so. Bangladesh had been on the Tier 2 Watch List from 2017 to 2019. As per the USA law, countries on Tier 3 could trigger severe restrictions and even full curtailment of non-humanitarian and non-trade-related assistance. The USA government report put forward a set of recommendations for decreas-

ing trafficking which includes increasing prosecutions for trafficking offences, eliminating recruitment fees charged to workers, expanding services for trafficking victims, allowing NGOs to provide services to trafficking victims in government shelters without a court order, and fully implementing the 2018-2022 National Plan of Action.

**Source:**  
<https://www.unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/trafficking-report-bangladesh-still-on-tier-2/74841>

## BHUTAN: BHUTAN EXPECTS 3.5 LAKHS DOSES FROM EU; DENMARK DONATES AROUND 2.5 LAKHS DOSES OF ASTRAZENECA

The Danish government's announcement of 250,000 AstraZeneca doses for Bhutan on July 1, 2021 has come as a major boost for Bhutan's second dose efforts whose 16-week gap now ends by the end of July. The Prime Minister Dasho Dr Lotay Tshering said, Bhutan is in touch with various European countries for the second dose and many have informally indicated that they would send vaccines, but there is yet to make the official announcements. The Prime Minister said that around 300,000 to 350,000 doses are expected from European countries. The Prime Minister also said that Bhutan had also approached non EU countries like Japan and others for the same purpose. In addition to that he said, Bhutan is also in talks with Moderna to see if the company can send some vaccines early for a mixed-vaccine dose

and Bhutan has also offered to buy them. Bhutan has also asked COVAX to frontload Bhutan's 108,000 vaccines coming to it through USA. Bhutan has already requested USA to include more of Pfizer doses which are approved for use for children from 12 to 18.

**Source:**  
<https://www.dailybhutan.com/article/denmark-donates-around-250-000-doses-of-astrazeneca-vaccines-to-bhutan>

## INDIA: PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI ANNOUNCES BIGGEST CABINET RESHUFFLE

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inducted 36 new ministers into his government is the biggest cabinet reshuffle on July 7, 2021 since he came to power in 2014. At least 12 cabinet members, including IT and health ministers, resigned ahead of the reshuffle to make way for their colleagues. The new cabinet will have 77 ministers, up from the current figure of 52. The move comes ahead of elections in important states, including the crucial battleground of Uttar Pradesh.

The new cabinet has been announced amid criticism of the government over its handling of the pandemic and economic condition. The second wave of Covid-19 killed thousands and ravaged even small towns and cities. Mr Modi has also inducted more women ministers this time. There were four women ministers in the earlier cabinet, but now the number is 11 with seven new members.

**Source-**<https://news.yahoo.com/12-indian-cabinet-ministers-resign-122530229.html>

## INDIA: BIG WIN FOR BJP IN UTTAR PRADESH ZILA PARISAD ELECTIONS; SAMAJWADI PARTY DEFEATED

The BJP clinched a massive victory in local body elections on July 3, 2021 in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the UP Assembly election early 2022. The party has registered a thumping victory by winning 67 out of 75 seats in the Uttar Pradesh Zila Panchayat elections. Opposition party, the Samajwadi Party was able to win only 6 seats at the polls. In comparison, back in the same election in 2016, the party took 60 of the 75 seats. Analysts, however, say the local body polls are unlikely to be any indicator of which direction the wind will blow in the assembly election next year, which will also serve as an ultimate test for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of the BJP. Samajwadi Party workers who held a

street protest alleged rigging in the local body elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted after the win 'The glorious victory of BJP in the UP District Panchayat elections is the blessing given by the people for development, public service and rule of law. The credit for this goes to the policies of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the tireless hard work of the party workers.'

**Source-**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/bjp-supported-candidates-head-for-win-in-up-zila-panchayat-chairperson-elections/articleshow/84093203.cms>

## INDIA: AMAZON, TATA RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT INDIA'S AMENDED E-COMMERCE RULES; UNION MINISTER PRAISES GOOGLE, FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM FOR REMOVING OFFENSIVE POSTS; TWITTER TO APPOINT GRIEVANCE OFFICER SOON

US e-retailer giant Amazon Inc. and India's Tata Group have told Indian government that plans for tougher rules for online retailers would have a major impact on their business models. The warning came on July 3, 2021 after representatives of the companies met government officials of consumer affairs ministry and the government's investment promotion arm, Invest India had met. The Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, 2020, announced on June 21 and the rules are expected to tighten regulations on e-commerce players, which include barring affiliated entities from selling on the platforms and restricting flash sales. In the meantime, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on July 3, 2021 lauded significant social media platforms such as Google, Facebook and Instagram for publishing their first compliance report on voluntary removal of offensive posts as per new IT

rules. Under the new IT rules, large digital platforms that have over 5 million users are required to publish periodic compliance reports every month, mentioning the details of complaints received and action taken thereon. The publishing of compliance reports by Google, Facebook and Instagram are bound to turn up the heat on Twitter, which has been engaged in a legal tussle with the Indian government over the new social media rules. Meanwhile, Twitter has told the Delhi high court that it is in the 'final stages' of appointing an interim chief compliance officer and an interim resident grievance officer under the new Information Technology (IT) Rules.

**Sources-**<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/global/amazon-tata-raise-concerns-about-indias-e-commerce-rules-1625372611>

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## INDIA: INDIANS VALUE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, BUT PRACTICE SEGREGATION: RECENT SURVEY FINDINGS

A new poll by Pew Research Center released on June 29, 2021 revealed that most Indians say it is important to respect all religions, but major religious groups see little in common among different religious group, and want to live separately. Pew said the survey was conducted among 30,000 Indians through face-to-face interviews in 17 languages in late 2019 and the beginning of 2020, a period marked by escalation in sectarian tension over the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act and the revocation of the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority erstwhile state. According to the survey, most of the Indians said they are free to practice their faith and 91 per cent of Hindus and 89 per cent of Muslims said respect for other religions is 'very im-

portant' to being truly Indian and respect for other religions is a very important part of their religious identity. However, people in India mostly do not believe in commonalities as 66 per cent of Hindus and 64 per cent of Muslims believe that these two religious communities are different from each other, hence disapprove of inter-faith marriages, and overwhelmingly make friends within their respective religious communities. In addition, 64 per cent of Hindus say it is very important to be Hindu to be 'truly' Indian and 59 per cent of them also believe that Indians should be able to speak Hindi.

### Source-

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-religious-life-of-indians-according-to-a-recent-survey-7385080/>

## MYANMAR: MYANMAR'S MILITARY REGIME GETTING A HARD TIME AS USA IMPOSES FRESH SANCTIONS

The United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned twenty two individuals related to the Myanmar military regime. Among the sanctioned individuals there are seven key members of the Tatmadaw, who had pivotal roles in suppressing the pro-democratize movements and executed virulent activities against common people including women and children. The other fifteen individuals subsume the spouses and adult children of previously designated senior Myanmar's military officials whose financial networks contributed to the illegal income of the officials. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) entitled them according to the Executive Order (E.O.) 14014 i.e. all the financial assets within the jurisdiction of the United States will be blocked. The sanction complements the previous sanctions by the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.

On July 1, 2021, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Myanmar's military to release State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint along with the rest of the political prisoners detained arbitrarily. The statement came just a day after the Junta released 2,296 political detainees on June 30, 2021. According to the human rights group, Assistance Association for

Political Prisoners (AAPP) the regime detained 6,421 people which means more 4125 are still in prison. The Human Rights Affairs Minister of the shadow government, National Unity Government (NUG) stated that the conditional release should not be appalled as the regime will keep them in surveillance.

### Sources-

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-adds-four-entities-trade-blacklist-relation-myanmar-2021-07-02/>

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0260>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-myanmar-military-now-release-aung-san-su-kyi-2021-07-01/>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/un-demands-release-of-all-political-prisoners-in-myanmar.html>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-frees-political-prisoners-and-journalists.html>

## NEPAL: PRIME MINISTER KP SHARMA OLI AND CPN-UML LEADER MADHAV KUMAR NEPAL SEEM UNITED; NEPALI CONGRESS PRESIDENT DEUBA'S FUTURE UNCERTAIN

Chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist Centre) went to Koteswor to meet senior CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal at his residence on July 6, 2021. The visit came as the UML has begun discussions to chart out the roadmap for party unity. The UML had revived its two-month old task force to resolve the dispute inside the party as Mr. Nepal has been siding with the opposition alliance Prime Minister and UML chair KP Sharma Oli. The UML task force, with five members each from Prime Minister Oli and Mr. Nepal factions, held two meetings on July 5, 2021 and July 6, 2021 and, according to its members, talks are heading towards a positive direction. And if Prime Minister Oli and Mr. Nepal patch up their differences, the opposition alliance will break down. Mr. Nepal did not participate in the alliance's meeting at the residence of Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba on July 5, 2021, raising suspicion

and doubt in the opposition bloc, leaders said. Mr. Nepal and 25 members of the dissolved House of Representatives close to him had sided with Deuba when the latter staked his claim to form a government under Article 76 (5) of the constitution. Prime Minister Oli too had made a bid claiming the support of his UML and the Rastriya Janata Party. President Bidya Devi Bhandari, however, invalidated both claims calling them 'insufficient' following which, on Oli's recommendation, she dissolved the lower house and announced midterm elections for November 12 and 19, 2021. The dissolution was subsequently challenged in court and among the signatories of the writ petition were Mr. Nepal and 22 former UML lawmakers.

*Source-* <https://kathmandupost.com/politics/2021/07/07/fate-of-opposition-alliance-at-stake-as-cpn-uml-factions-step-up-unity-talks>

## NEPAL: NEPAL, INDIA REVISED THE RAILWAY SERVICE AGREEMENT

In a major boost to the Nepal-India bilateral ties, the two neighboring countries have revised the Railway Service Agreement. According to the revised text of the Letter of Exchange, all authorized private container train operators (Indian as well as Nepali) will be able to utilize the Indian railway network to carry freight containers for Nepal's imports or exports, ending the monopoly of the Indian government-owned Container Corporation of India (CONCOR). The agreement was signed in 2004 and the two sides have tried to amend it several times in the past. As the countries are planning to expand and extend more cross-border railway service in both passengers and cargo facilities, the agreement was needed to be revised without any delay. This liberalization will allow market forces to come up in the rail-container-freight segment in the Himalayan nation, and is likely to reduce transportation costs in the

medium term, benefiting the Nepalese consumer. The new agreement will come into effect after the Cabinets of the two countries endorse it. The agreement also allows the Indian Railway's freight services to bring goods to and take goods from other border points besides Raxaul/Birgunj. As Nepal and India are planning to extend more cross-border railway networks, experts and officials said this agreement has opened new vistas of cooperation in bilateral trade and transit sectors. Nepali officials, experts and business community have welcomed the revised agreement that Nepal is going to get huge concessions in doing bilateral and third-country trade.

*Source-* <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/07/04/revised-railway-service-deal-with-india-to-facilitate-nepal-s-trade-officials-say>

## NEPAL: Nepal RANKED 94TH IN GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY INDEX

Nepal has moved up to the 94th position from the 106th slot in the 2018 edition of Global Cyber security Index, showing that its commitment to cyber security has increased. The Himalayan republic scored 44.99 out of 100 points among 182 countries. It was placed 17th among the 18 countries in Asia-Pacific region, said the ITU. The ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communi-

cation technologies, driving innovation in information and communications technology together with 193 member states and a membership of over 900 companies, universities and international and regional organizations.

*Source-* <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2021/07/03/nepal-moves-up-in-global-cybersecurity-ranking>

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## PAKISTAN: PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN TO VISIT UZBEKISTAN TO ENHANCE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE KEY CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLIC

Prime Minister Imran Khan is leaving for Uzbekistan next week with trade and investment leaders to enhance bilateral relations with the key Central Asian republic. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood stressed on the importance of enhancing Pakistan's regional trade and lamented that the volume of trade with the country's neighbors was "very low". Mr. Dawood added that Pakistan had decided to approach other regional countries, such as Uzbekistan, to enhance trade relations. The commerce adviser pointed out that the deputy prime minister of Uzbekistan had visited Pakistan this year, showing keen interest in Islamabad's proposal for business and investment ties. "Their interest is to have a route for their goods from Pakistan to African markets while we need a country in the Central Asian Republics that's regionally connected and that is Uzbekistan," he said.

Appearing on Dawn News TV show Live on July 6, 2021, the commerce adviser was asked whether Pakistan-US relations could have an impact on CPEC. "I don't think so," he responded, adding that the US knew how important the project was for Pakistan and "it will continue to remain so." "Fifty per cent of investments have come from China and our exports to China increased by 30 per cent following the FTA (free trade agreement). So China is very important for us from a trade and investment perspective and China is a strategic partner for us," he said.

### Source-

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1633711/pakistan-us-relations-wont-impact-cpec-dawood>

## SRI LANKA: CENTRAL BANK TIGHTENS EXCHANGE CONTROLS AMID FOREIGN LIQUIDITY CRUNCH; GOVERNMENT TO TAKE STEPS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Sri Lanka is facing a liquidity crisis, abated foreign exchange reserves and heavy foreign debt. The government is taking substantial measures to stabilize the economy. On July 4, 2021, Sri Lanka's central bank introduced a few added rules to restrict the currency outflow which included six months restriction of overseas investment by local businesses, limited withdrawals of capital from the country and extended ban on luxury goods like cellphone, computers and electronic consumer goods.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to swap four hundred million US dollars with Sri Lanka in August 2021, through the SAARC facility and negotiations are in progress to swap another one billion US dollars. To repay its massive external debt Colombo borrowed money from China, South Korea and other South Asian countries including Bangladesh. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is lending eight hundred million US dollars to the country as well.

The National Development Bank (NDB) of

Sri Lanka received an award of seventy five million US dollars from the Development Finance Corporation of the United States. The aid is sanctioned as a long term funding line to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to ensure inclusive economic growth, empower and encourage women-led organizations.

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## About Us

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute is a non-profit, non-political research centre. Established in October 2000, the Institute has established for itself a reputation for excellence in its research and advocacy work focusing on the growth of private enterprise in Bangladesh. The Institute promotes issues of importance to the private sector and seeks to initiate essential measures and influence policy for the development of a market-oriented economy. Through the promotion of sustainable growth in domestic trade, commerce and industry, BEI hopes to address the enormous challenge for Bangladesh in securing a fair share of the global market.

BEI has a particular interest in the support and growth of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), which have the potential to be the engine of economic growth in Bangladesh. BEI also undertakes research and policy advocacy work focusing on the issues of foreign policy and security, particularly those of terrorism impacting Bangladesh and South Asia.

Being conscious of the enormous challenge to securing a fair share for Bangladesh in the global market as well as to address issues of trade and investment promotion, the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) was established under the initiative of some leading business personalities of the country. Salman F. Rahman, Deputy Chairman of the BEXIMCO Group, has been working as the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador, and past Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment, has been working as a Distinguished Fellow and Member of the Board of Governors of the institute and M Humayun Kabir, former Ambassador, has been working as the President and Chief Executive of the institute.

The institute is registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Bangladesh, under the Societies Registration Act.

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