

|| WEEKLY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ||

BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI)

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

|| July 08, 2021 – July 15, 2021 ||

SOUTH ASIA: COVID-19 CRISIS: AT A GLANCE

Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health on July 15, 2021 has recorded 1,210 new cases and 60 deaths across the country. The total tally since the outbreak of the epidemic has reached to 137,853 with the death case exceeding 5,983 in the country.

Bangladesh has reported 210 fatalities and 12,383 new coronavirus cases on July 15, 2021. Till date, total cases in Bangladesh became 10, 59,538 and total death toll reaching 17,052. The country has administered vaccines to 2.63 per cent of its population till July 15, 2021. Bangladesh has lifted its nationwide coronavirus lockdown from July 15, 2021 up to July 23, 2021 dawn for the celebration of country's second-biggest religious festival 'Eid-ul-Adha'.

Bhutan has reported 46 new cases on July 15, 2021 without any death. In Bhutan, total 2,370 coronavirus cases have been identified so far. Till July 15, 2021, 0.20 percent of Bhutanese got vaccinated

India has recorded 583 fresh death toll and 41,733 new cases due to coronavirus on July 15, 2021. Country's total confirmed cases became 3, 09,87,880 and total death toll reached to 4,11,989. In India, 5.69 per cent population has been fully vaccinated as of July 15, 2021.

Maldives has reported 75,405 confirmed cases and 214 deaths as of July 15, 2021. 45.67% percent of the total population has been is vaccinated. Movement restrictions have been eased for fully vaccinated travelers with a negative PCR test result. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reassured that India will assist Maldives in her fight with Covid-19 pandemic.

Myanmar has recorded 2, 08,357 number of active cases and 4,181 deaths as of July 15, 2021. 90 percent of the townships have been affected and the country is in the grip of the third wave of pandemic. With the rising infections and fatalities, the State Administrative Council (SAC) admitted that they had lacked adequate resources to handle the deteriorating situations. The hospitals are only receiving critical patients and people are forced to take treatments at their homes.

Nepal's Covid-19 tally has reached 662,570 with 1,782 new cases on July 15, 2021. The countrywide death toll has now reached 9,463 since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Pakistan appears to be in the grip of the fourth round of Covid-19 wave as it has recorded 2,545 cases on July 15, 2021. This is the first time the country has reported more than 2,500 infections since May 29, 2021 when 2,697 cases were reported. The overnight increase in cases came as officials in recent weeks had sounded the alarm over a fourth wave fuelled by the Delta variant, first detected in India.

Sri Lanka had 2, 79,059 numbers of active cases and 3,611 deaths had been reported till July 15, 2021. Only 6.90% of the population has been is vaccinated. Asian Development Bank and the Government of Sri Lanka have signed a loan agreement of one hundred and fifty million dollars on July 9, 2021, under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX). The loan is expected to contribute to the government's target to vaccinate eighty percent of the population by 2030.

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

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TRADE AND INVESTMENT: GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE FINAL DRAFT OF 'BANGLADESH'S INVESTMENT POLICY ABROAD-2021' SOON

The government is set to release a final draft policy, entitled 'Bangladesh's Investment Policy Abroad-2021' soon to allow the country's investors to invest in other countries. To this effect, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) has already formulated a draft of 13 articles with the help of the Bangladesh Bank and sent it to various stakeholders for feedback. BIDA Executive Chairman Md Sirazul Islam made the disclosure at a virtual workshop organized by the BIDA on July 11, 2021. The draft policy will include various additions and deductions, including sector identification after getting the feedback from the concerned stakeholders. Mr. Salman F Rahman, private sector industry and investment advisor to the Prime Minister was present at the function as the chief guest. Speaking at the function, Mr. Salman F Rahman said that Bangladesh's economic growth had steadily increased over the past decade. He also said the country was is now considering investing abroad which was unimaginable even ten years ago.

Source: <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/first-page/govt-to-release-final-draft-policy-soon-1626025304>

PRIVATE SECTOR CREDIT GROWTH FALLS AMID SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19

Private sector credit growth in Bangladesh had dropped significantly in May 2021 mainly due to the ongoing second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to latest Bangladesh Bank (BB) statistics, credit flow fell to 7.55 per cent in May 2021 on a year-on-year basis, from 8.29 per cent a month ago. The growth was 8.79 per cent in March 2021. It was 7.25 percentage points lower than the central bank's target of 14.80 per cent for the second half (H2) of fiscal year (FY) 2020-21. Senior bankers observed that higher viral infections along with deepening uncertainty pushed down the credit growth in the past couple of months. The existing trend might continue until the pandemic induced uncertainty is overcome. In addition, domestic demand has decelerated in recent months amid the pandemic. As the number of Covid-19 cases has continued to rise alarmingly since mid-March, the government imposed a nationwide lockdown for a week from April 05 to curb infections. Later, the lockdown was extended several times on the same ground.

Source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/private-credit-growth-falls-remarkably-amid-second-wave-of-covid-1625798211>

ABDUL HAI SARKER RE-ELECTED AS DHAKA BANK CHAIRMAN

Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker has recently been re-elected chairman of Dhaka Bank. Abdul Hai is also the founder chairman of Dhaka Bank, former president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, former vice-chairman of the Bangladesh Association of Banks and a former director of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries. He has recently been elected an executive board member of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Bangladesh. Abdul Hai has also been accorded the Commercially Important Person (CIP) status by the government. He is also a founding member of the Board of Governors of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI)

Source: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/143468/abdul-hai-re-elected-dhaka-bank-chairman>

AFGHANISTAN: PRESIDENT BIDEN SAYS USA WILL COMPLETE PULLOUT FROM AFGHANISTAN BY AUGUST 31, 2021

President Joe Biden announced on July 8, 2021 that the rapid withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan would conclude by August 31, 2021 bringing America's longest war to a swift end weeks before the September 11, 2021 deadline he had set earlier. "We did not go to Afghanistan to nation build," President Biden said in remarks at the White House. "It's the right and the responsibility of Afghan people alone to decide their future and how they want to run their country." President Biden said he was advised by his military commanders to move swiftly once the draw-down began, declaring "speed is safety" as he outlined the end of the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan. The new deadline comes as the Taliban continue to gain new territory at an alarming pace, raising concerns that the Taliban could topple the Afghan government. President Biden told reporters it was not inevitable the Taliban would seize control of the government and

that he trusts the ability of the Afghan National and Defense Security Forces, who is better trained, better equipped and more competent in terms of conducting war. The US will continue to have a few hundred troops in Afghanistan to maintain security for the US embassy and diplomatic community in Kabul as well as the city's airport. And US officials have said the military will maintain an "over-the-horizon" capability to respond to events. President Biden and his national security advisers have repeatedly emphasized that the US will continue to provide humanitarian and economic assistance to Afghanistan as the security situation has rapidly deteriorated as Taliban fighters continue to overtake Afghan security forces across the country.

Source- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/8/mission-accomplished-us-speeds-afghanistan-withdrawal>

AFGHANISTAN: AFGHAN GOVERNMENT DELEGATION MEETS TALIBAN IN IRAN; IRANIAN AND INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS STRESS NEED TO BOOST INTRA-AFGHAN TALKS

An Afghan government delegation had met Taliban representatives in Tehran on July 8, 2021, the Iranian foreign ministry said the high-level peace talks between the warring Afghan sides followed months-old discussions in Qatar that had been stalled by a diplomatic impasse and escalating violence. A joint statement released after the talks on July 8, 2021 said, the Afghan government and Taliban agree that "war is not the solution to the Afghanistan problem" and that all efforts must be directed or toward achieving a peaceful political solution. The two sides also agreed to continue talks on the specific mechanisms of achieving lasting peace and establishing an Islamic state at a later meeting whose location or date was not mentioned. "Both sides condemn attacks that target people's homes, mosques and hospitals and lead to destruction, and also condemn the destruction of public institutions and call for the punishment of the perpetrators," the statement said, referring to talks hosted by Tehran as an opportunity to strengthen a political solution. In another statement, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif thanked both the sides for the meeting and prioritizing the Afghan people. Zarif called

on both sides to utilize the opportunity to talk and put an end to the fighting for the benefit of the Afghan people. He stressed that Iran would always be ready to facilitate more talks.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, in a meeting in Tehran on July 1, 2021, underlined the need to give a boost to Intra-Afghan talks to pave the way for participation of all the Afghan sides in the political process of the country. The meeting took place as the Indian foreign minister was in Tehran to deliver a congratulatory message of his country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi. The two foreign ministers also discussed the latest regional developments and the situations in Afghanistan. The Indian foreign minister hailed Iran's efforts to bring close the viewpoints of both sides to reach a comprehensive political solution.

Source- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/8/afghan-govt-delegation-meets-taliban-in-iran>

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Afghan government and the Taliban met for peace negotiations in Qatar on July 10, 2021 breaking the deadlock that stalled the crucial talks for months since April, 2021. Delegations of Afghanistan government and the Taliban have held several meetings in recent days in Doha after a flurry of pressure from United Nations and the United States to jumpstart the moribund process. Kabul delegates say the

meetings discussed the constitution, ceasefire, a political roadmap, political participation and transition period.

Source-

<http://www.afghanistantimes.af/high-stakes-afghan-talks-resume-after-long-impasse/>

BANGLADESH: WORLD SHOULD CONSIDER ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO TACKLE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COVID-19: PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA AT CVF-V20 SUMMIT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on July 8, 2021, said that the world community should recognize people's vulnerability, common aspirations, need for technology transfer and additional funding to tackle the impacts of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister made the remarks while opening the First Climate Vulnerable Finance Summit as she is the President of Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). In the Summit, the Prime Minister put forward five-point proposals, where she first pointed out that every country must pursue an ambitious target to curb greenhouse gas emissions to keep global temperature-rise below 1.5°C. Secondly, the developed nations should facilitate the green

recovery of the CVF-V20 countries and, dedicate support for reducing the cost of capital and encouraging private sector participation. Thirdly, the flow of funds must be predictable, balanced, innovative and incremental. Fourthly, rich nations must help the CVF-V20 countries by closing the existing financial gaps in protecting climate-induced disasters. Finally, she said, every vulnerable country may actively consider adopting a "climate prosperity plan".

Source-

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/environment/climate-change/world-should-consider-additional-funding-tackle-impacts>

BANGLADESH: US PRESIDENT BIDEN NOMINATES PETER HAAS AS NEXT US AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH

White House has nominated Mr. Peter D Haas to be the next US ambassador to Bangladesh. Once the US Senate gives its approval, Peter Haas will replace Ambassador Earl Miller in Bangladesh. US President Joe Biden has nominated ambassadors for a few other countries too like India, Chile and Monaco. White House made these nominations on July 9, 2021. According to The Voice of America, Peter Haas is now the acting US Assistant Secretary of State. Concurrently, he is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for economic and

business affairs. He has served as a diplomat for the US state department in four other missions including in Mumbai, India. Along with English, Mr. Peter Haas is fluent in French and German.

Source-

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/2021/07/10/biden-chooses-peter-haas-as-next-us-ambassador-to-bangladesh>

BHUTAN: US SENDS 500,000 DOSES OF MODERNA VACCINE TO BHUTAN

USA, on July 9, 2021 announced that it had dispatched 500,000 doses of Moderna vaccine to Bhutan. The White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced this during a press briefing. This is a part of the US government's pledge to share an initial batch of 80 million USA made vaccines globally amid concerns about the wide disparity in vaccination rates between advanced and developing countries.

This puts Bhutan in a very good position to vaccinate its entire population, including children below 18 years.

Source-

<https://kuenselonline.com/us-sends-500000-doses-of-moderna-vaccine-to-bhutan/>

INDIA: INDIAN DIPLOMATS, SECURITY PERSONNEL EVACUATED AS FIGHTING ESCALATES IN KANDAHAR

India has evacuated some 50 diplomats and security personnel from Kandahar in an Indian Air Force aircraft after Taliban fighters seized key areas around the southern city in Afghanistan. The evacuation was done on July 10, 2021 just four days after India said there were no imminent plans to close its mission in Kabul and consulates in the cities of Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif. However, officials had said that India was closely tracking the deteriorating security situation across Afghanistan and all steps will be taken to

ensure that Indian officials and nationals were not put in harm's way. In April last year, India had shuttered its consulates in Herat and Jalalabad because of the spread of Covid-19 although some reports suggested security was a factor in the decision.

Source-
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-evacuates-diplomats-security-personnel-from-kandahar-as-taliban-captures-new-areas-281561>

INDIA: UTTAR PRADESH GOVERNMENT RELEASES NEW POPULATION POLICY

On the occasion of World Population Day, Uttar Pradesh government has announced a new population policy for 2021-2030 on July 11, 2021. The new policy has provisions to give incentives to those who help in population control. The issue has emerged as one of the main focus areas in the state ahead of assembly polls. The opposition has slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state, saying it wants to 'murder the democracy' in Uttar Pradesh. A draft bill on population control has already been uploaded on UP government's website, and

suggestions invited till July 19, 2021. If enacted, the provisions of the proposed legislation titled The Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilization and Welfare) Bill, 2021 will come into force after one year from the date of publication in the gazette.

Source-
<https://www.firstpost.com/india/uttar-pradesh-govt-to-release-new-population-policy-for-2021-2030-today-9795811.html>

MALDIVES: MALDIVES TO COLLECT DEPARTURE TAX FROM JANUARY 2022

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih ratified the first amendment to the Airport Taxes and Fees Act on July 11, 2021. The Amendment was passed by the Parliament on July 5, 2021, at the eighteenth sitting session of the People's Majlis for the current year. The legislation introduces the 'Departure Tax' which will be imposed on all passengers departing from any airport in the Maldives to be put into force from January 1, 2022 until then, Airport Service Charge will remain in effect. The tax is categorized into four fee schedules, according to which locals and

foreigners will be charged the same amount in all categories except for in Economy Class. The Passengers with diplomatic immunity and children under two will be exempt from Departure Taxes.

Sources-
<https://en.sun.mv/67725>
<https://corporatemaldives.com/news/president-ratifies-first-amendment-to-the-airport-taxes-and-fees-act/>

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MYANMAR: UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION CALLS FOR RECONCILIATION IN MYANMAR, INCLUDING EARLY AND SAFE RETURN OF ROHINGYAS TO MYANMAR

The United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHCR) unanimously adopted a resolution on the "Human Rights Situation of Rohingya Muslims and other Minorities in Myanmar" on July 12, 2021. The resolution called s the international community to continue providing humanitarian assistance until they return to Myanmar and call to account those responsible for persecution and war crimes against Rohingyas to justice. The resolution was put forward by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The United Nation council approved the resolution without a vote, however China refrained from joining the consensus. The United Nation Human Rights Council expressed grave concern on the spiraling violence in the country since the coup and demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities against the civilians. The resolution underlined the importance of a constructive and peaceful dialogue including the Rohingya Muslims and other minorities. UN Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet warned that the current situation in Myanmar had raised the possibility of state failure or a broader civil war. Meanwhile, former State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has been is charged with four new cases. The charges have been filed in

the court of Mandalay city, Suu Kyi's legal team had little knowledge about the charges. However, they assume the charges are related to corruption. The military did not mention the added charges on Suu Kyi at a press conference held on July 12, 2021. When asked, the military spokesman Zaw Min Tun told the press that she was is accused of breaching the constitution while being in power.

Sources- <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/asia/news/un-resolution-calls-reconciliation-myanmar-2128901>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/unhrc-adopts-resolution-emphasising-justice-and-repatriation-rohingyas-back-myanmar-2128401>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmars-suu-kyi-faces-new-charges-mandalay-court-lawyer-2021-07-12/>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/aung-san-suu-kyi-faces-75-years-in-prison-as-myanmar-junta-brings-fresh-charges.html>

Source-

NEPAL: SHER BAHADUR DEUBA NAMED AS NEPAL'S PRIME MINISTER FOR THE FIFTH TIME

Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, who leads the Nepali Congress party, has been appointed as the new prime minister. Mr. Deuba will lead the nation as it struggles with political divisions and the coronavirus. The Supreme Court court on July 12, 2021 ordered that KP Sharma Oli who had been running a caretaker government until planned elections, be replaced by Mr. Deuba. It also ordered the reinstatement of the House of Representatives, which was dissolved by Mr. Oli in May, 2021, and said the lawmakers must meet within seven days. Mr.Deuba will have to prove in a vote that he had the support of more than half the House members to continue in office. Mr. Deuba was previously appointed prime minister in 1995, 2001, 2004 and 2017, but has never served a full term. This time as well, he is to serve only until parliamentary elections are held by 2022. In May 2021,

Mr. Oli directed the president to dissolve the House of Representatives, Parliament's lower house, and announce new elections later this year. The decision was challenged in the Supreme Court by a coalition of opposition parties that said they had the support of a majority in Parliament to form a new government. Mr. Oli became prime minister in 2018 after his Communist Party of Nepal had won a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives. He has been criticized for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Source- <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/07/14/nepal-gets-new-prime-minister-as-deuba-of-congress-party-sworn-in>

NEPAL: NEPAL, INDIA SIGN DEAL FOR \$1.3 BILLION ON LOWER ARUN HYDROPOWER PROJECT

Nepal on July 11, 2021 signed a pact with India's state-owned Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam to develop the 679-megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower project in eastern Nepal. The \$1.3 billion project, the single biggest foreign investment project, as per the 2017 cost estimates, is located in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts. This is the second mega project undertaken by the southern neighbor after the \$1.04 billion 900-MW Arun-3 hydroelectric project in the Arun River. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the Investment Board of Nepal Chief Executive Officer Sushil Bhatta and Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Chairman and Managing Director Nand Lal Sharma in Kathmandu, on July 11, 2021, the Investment Board said in a statement. According to the Board, the developer should com-

plete the detailed project study of the project and submit the detailed project report for approval at the Board within two years from the agreement date. The project will be built under the build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) model. According to the statement, Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel, who is also the Vice-Chairman of the Board, expressed commitment to extend necessary support to expedite and fast-track the project development.

Source-

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/07/11/nepal-india-sign-deal-for-1-3-billion-lower-arun-hydropower-project>

PAKISTAN: PAKISTAN WANTS TO ADOPT JOINT STRATEGY ON AFGHANISTAN; PAKISTAN WON'T HOST MORE AFGHAN REFUGEES: FM MAKHDOOM SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI AT SCO FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN TAJIKISTAN

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on July 13, 2021 that Pakistan wanted to adopt a joint strategy on Afghanistan after consultation with important countries of the region. "As Pakistan is fulfilling its responsibilities, the improved situation in Afghanistan will benefit all. If, God forbids, the situation in Afghanistan deteriorates, all will be affected," Qureshi said in a statement from Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. The foreign minister said since he was in Tajikistan to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting, he wanted to utilize the opportunity to discuss the situation in Afghanistan with important countries of the region, which were also monitoring the situation. He said after a detailed discussion already held with his Tajik counterpart on the situation in Afghanistan on July 12, 2021, that he had held meetings with foreign ministers of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. He was also expected to meet the foreign ministers of China and Russia, he added. He said Pakistan was the only country, which, despite its limited resources, was hosting three million Afghan refugees for decades;

however, it could not afford to welcome more refugees if the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated again. The minister said Pakistan, by sacrificing 70,000 lives and suffering huge economic losses, had paid a heavy price in the war against terrorism. He said since under the guise of Afghan refugees, some anti-Pakistan elements could enter the country and it was their obligation to remain cautious. Mr. Qureshi said he considered most of the Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan as innocent and wanted to return to their country. He said Pakistan wanted to help the Afghan people on humanitarian grounds, but also wanted to ensure the safety and security of its own people. It also desired sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Source-

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2310475/pakistan-wont-host-more-afghan-refugees-fm>

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SRI LANKA: PRESIDENT RAJAPAKSA CALLED TO SHUT DOWN COAL POWER PROJECTS; UNESCAP DRAFTS FREIGHT TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR SRI LANKA

With a view to shifting Sri Lanka towards renewable energy, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa called on to stop setting up of any coal power plants in the country. The statement came at the monthly review meeting of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), the Ministry of Power and the State Ministry of Solar Power, Wind and Hydro-Power Generation. Fifty four percent of Sri Lanka's primary energy supply in the year 2017 was generated by thermal power plants. The decision jeopardized several outlined thermal plants including a three hundred megawatt extended project of the Norochcholai LakVijaya coal power plant by China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC). Sri Lanka is considered one of the world's most vulnerable countries with regard to climate change and President Rajapaksa is determined to procure electricity from renewable resources. Earlier on December 8, 2020 while inaugurating the Mannar wind power plant he announced that Sri Lanka will produce eighty percent of energy through renewable sources by the year 2030.

The United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the United Nation twelfth tranche development account project on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in Asia and the Pacific aims to develop sustainable and improved freight transport policies. Sri Lanka is

among the four countries primarily selected by the United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and a questionnaire was sent to the Ministry of Transport of Sri Lanka earlier in the current year. In light of the assessment the organization developed a draft strategy and organized a national consultation workshop on June 5, 2021.

Sources-

<https://www.sundaytimes.lk/210711/news/president-says-no-more-coal-power-449129.html>

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/12/09/finance/235575/%E2%80%98govt-produce-80-energy-through-renewable-sources-2030%E2%80%99>

<https://www.unescap.org/events/2021/national-consultation-workshop-sustainable-freight-transport-0>

<https://mfa.gov.lk/unescap-and-sri-lankan-authorities-held-national-consultation-workshop-on-sustainable-freight-transport-strategy-in-sri-lanka/>

SRI LANKA: EUROPEAN UNION WANTS MORE PROTECTION FOR SRI LANKAN WORKERS

The European Commission (EC) has called for more proactive actions to protect Sri Lankan workers from anti-union discrimination referring to the GSP February 2020 report of Sri Lanka. The European Commission will continue to cooperate with the Sri Lankan authorities to monitor progress, ensure freedom of association in the Export Processing Zones, given the limited number of collective agreements in those areas. The organization highlighted that the Generalized Scheme of Preference monitoring is ongoing on a continuous basis and welcomed regular open discussions with trade unions and Sri Lankan authorities. The

statement came in response to the letter sent by the Free Trade Zone Trade and General Services Employees' Union Joint Secretary, Anton Marcus for ensuring the protection of workers.

Source-

<https://www.sundaytimes.lk/210711/business-times/eu-wants-more-protection-for-sl-workers-in-ftzs-448799.html>

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VIRTUAL VISIT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE (NDC) COURSE 2021 TEAM TO BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI) ON JULY 13, 2021

On July 13, 2021 BEI received the National Defense College (NDC) 2021 Course Members virtually. This was a part of long standing collaboration between NDC and BEI under which NDC Course members from each course undertake a visit to BEI. The NDC team included 88 senior military, police and civilian officers, in which there were 27 senior military officers from different countries. The NDC team was led by **Rear Admiral Moyeenul Haque**, NPP, nswc, psc.

On behalf of BEI, **Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir**, President of BEI, welcomed the NDC team and briefly outlined the focus

and various activities of BEI. Prof. Shahab Enam Khan, Research Director, made a presentation on the "**Bangladesh Foreign Policy: The US-China Dimensions & the Indo-Pacific Dimensions**".

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session where BEI senior staff fielded questions from the NDC course members. NDC team leader thanked BEI for their support to NDC and for providing an excellent opportunity for an interactive and useful interaction with the BEI leadership. They also promised to continue this collaboration in the future.

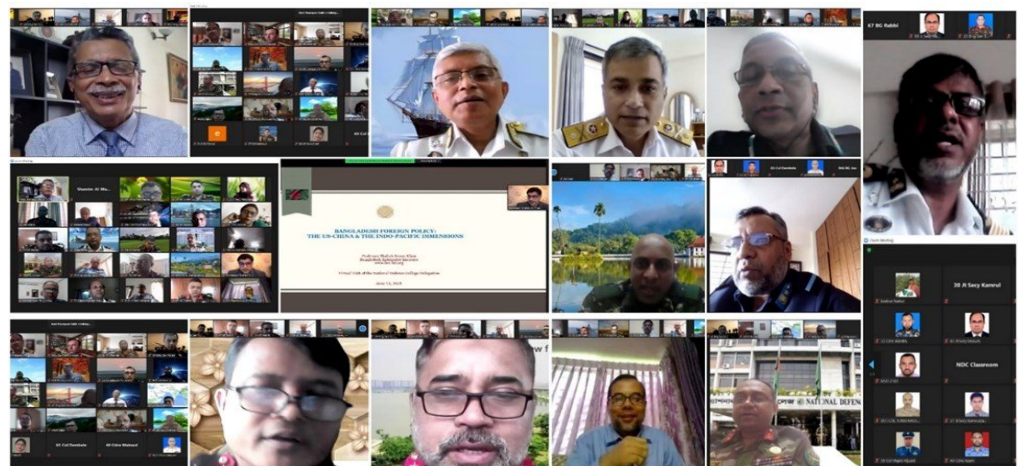


Image 01: Participants discussion session in zoom conference

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.

DISCLAIMER

In compiling this weekly news update, BEI has attempted to include the most relevant news accounts from the past week concerning South Asian Region. From time to time, news beyond South Asia has also been included if it finds relevance on any issues to the region. We recognize that some developments may have been overlooked, and that some sources may not be viewed by all as credible or balanced. Inclusion of a news story and its summary does not constitute any kind of endorsement or position taken by BEI, and the text and positions included in the above are solely extracted from various news articles published in the print media in various countries in South Asia and beyond. If you have any comments or feedback for us regarding this digest, please email at bei@bol-online.com. For more information about BEI and our work, please visit <https://www.bei-bd.org/>

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