

|| WEEKLY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ||

BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI)

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

|| 22 October 2021 – 28 October 2021 ||

SOUTH ASIA: COVID-19 CRISIS: AT A GLANCE

Afghanistan has recorded a total of 156,000 cases of coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic. Total deaths reported stood at 7,234 as of 29 October 2021.

Bangladesh has reported 7 new deaths and 305 coronavirus cases on 29 October 2021 and has thus far recorded a total of 27,854 fatalities and 1,569,162 confirmed cases. Bangladesh has administered a total 60,869,463 Covid-19 vaccine doses, totaling 12.63% of the population.

Bhutan has reported no new cases or deaths as of 29 October 2021. A total of 2,621 cases have been registered until 29 October 2021, while 67.82% of Bhutan's population has been vaccinated.

India has reported 231 deaths and 15,786 new coronavirus cases bringing the total number of cases to 34,246,157, while the total number of deaths stands at 457,191. 23.19% of Indian population has been vaccinated until 29 October 2021.

Maldives has reported 87,487 active cases and 243 deaths as of 30 October, 2021. 66.82% of the population is vaccinated. The United States pledged 2 million US dollar on 27 October 2021, as urgent assistance to Maldives through USAID to support the country's COVID-19 response efforts.

Myanmar has reported a total of 497,700 cases and 18622 deaths as of 30 October 2021.

Nepal has reported 490 new coronavirus cases on 29 October 2021 taking the nationwide infection tally to 811,897. To date, the countrywide death toll has now reached 11,388. The number of active cases stands at 10,151.

Pakistan has recorded a total of 659 new cases of coronavirus on 29 October 2021. To date, total 17 more fatalities were also recorded according to the reports.

Sri Lanka has reported 538,860 active cases and 13696 deaths as of 30 October, 2021. 61.09% of the population is vaccinated till date. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced on 26th October 2021 to inculcate children of 5 years old and above. To curtail the immigration time and physical contact during travelling, the Bandarainaike International Airport (BIA) introduced a web based Health Declaration System, where the passengers can lodge their medical details before arriving at the airport.

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

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BLUE ECONOMY HOLDS MASSIVE POTENTIAL; BANGLADESH WORKING TO MAKE FOREIGN INVESTMENT EASIER; PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA INAUGURATES 'BANGLADESH TRADE AND INVESTMENT SUMMIT'

In a workshop titled 'Prospects of Blue Economy of Bangladesh and Course of Action presenting a keynote paper', secretary of maritime affairs unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Md. Khurshid Alam mentioned that the 19,467 square kilometer resource rich bay area Bangladesh got through dispute settlement with India and Myanmar might be one of the key solutions to the many challenges of post-LDC graduation. It was jointly organized by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) where Prime Minister's private industry and investment adviser Salman F Rahman was present as a chief guest. Mr. Alam added that the ocean-economic zone of Bangladesh is equal to 81% of the main land and there are 150,000 ships transporting goods through the ocean all over the world, which is worth 9.0 billion dollars but Bangladesh owns only 70 ships although some 74% of containers are used in Asia which is a great investment potential itself. Matarbari deep-sea port will help exploit the potential of the blue economy. Mr Alam, also a retired rear admiral of Bangladesh's naval force, said the total sea area of Bangladesh is 664 kilometers, but fish is harvested in only 60-kilometre waters. He added that Myanmar has already started to extract oil near the sea block of Bangladesh whereas plans have not come under fruition to extract deep sea resources. Experts recommend building infrastructure to harness the resources which lie dormant in this particular area. Bay-based blue economy will create jobs, foreign investment and export in diverse industries. Offshore oil and gas resources are yet to be delved which might change Bangladesh's economy model itself. Tourism, shipbuilding, deep-sea fishing, container, medicine, cosmetics and plethora of opportunities wait in the deep-sea economy.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that the Bangladesh government is actively trying to make foreign investment easily accessible to the business community during the inauguration of Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre on 28th October. She added that entrepreneurs can decide whether foreign investment is a viable option for them, market or import their products to Bangladesh. The Prime Minister thanked the Chinese government and its "friendly people" for extending financial and technical support to build the Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre. The prime minister suggested the traders consider the product demand in other countries and also ensure the quality of products.

On 26th October, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the week-long "Bangladesh Trade and Investment Summit 2021". The summit aims to provide a mutual ground to policymakers, business leaders and investors from different foreign countries and Bangladesh business hub. A total of 552 companies from 38 countries along with Bangladesh of five continents will participate in 450 business to business (B2B) match-making sessions, which will help explore new business opportunities and attract FDI in Bangladesh. The summit includes nine sectors underscoring critical enablers and avenues of the economy, seeking massive investments especially in Infrastructure (Physical, logistics and Energy), IT/ITES and FINTECH, Leather goods, Pharmaceuticals, Automotive and Light Engineering, Plastic products, Agro and Food Processing, Jute and Textiles and FMCG (Fast-moving consumer goods) and retail business.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/industrial-modelling-emphasised-to-harness-blue-economy-1635130024>

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/overseas-investment-to-be-made-easier-says-pm-1634821767>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/pm-opens-weeklong-bangladesh-trade-and-investment-summit-321001>

AFGHANISTAN: PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER AND ISI CHIEF MET TALIBAN LEADERS IN KABUL; FOREIGN MINISTERS OF AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES IN HELD TALKS IRAN; CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER MET AFGHANISTAN'S ACTING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN DOHA

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Kabul on 21 October 2021 along with ISI chief Lt. General Faiz Hameed to meet the Taliban leadership and vowed to provide humanitarian assistance worth \$28m to save the Afghan people from an economic crisis. Mr. Qureshi met interim Afghanistan Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund and underlined that Pakistan wanted lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. Mr. Qureshi said Pakistan was determined to help the Afghan people to save them from an economic crisis. He said Pakistan would also allow duty free import of fresh fruits and vegetables from Afghanistan to facilitate bilateral trade.

Foreign ministers of Afghanistan's neighbor countries - Iran, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan plus Russia issued a joint statement after their talks on Afghanistan in Tehran on 27 October 2021. The participants voiced their concerns about the situation in Afghanistan and said forming a broad-based political structure is the only solution to the problems in Afghanistan. The foreign ministers in the joint statement also called for a non-interference approach toward Afghanistan. The statement said that the situation in Afghanistan changed fundamentally and stressed need for support of national sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, and non-interference in its internal affairs. The participants expressed their concerns about the complexities in Afghanistan's military, political and social areas, but said they remain hopeful for a durable peace in the country and for the wish of the Afghan people to become realized.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghani Baradar and Amir Khan Muttaqi in Doha on 26 October 2021. Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman of Afghanistan, said that China promised to provide \$5 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. He added that three committees would be created: the first committee for working on political and diplomatic relations, the second would focus on creating relations and understanding between the two countries, and the third committee for working on economic projects. According to the Afghanistan's political office in Doha, Abdul Ghani Baradar assured China that Afghan territory would never be used against any country and the Chinese delegation in return pledged to not interfere to Afghanistan's affairs. During the two days of high-level talks, the Chinese delegation and Afghan officials agreed to work on strengthening diplomatic relations and implementing Chinese projects in Afghanistan.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/22/pakistan-eases-travel-restrictions-aid-afghanistan-taliban>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/27/afghanistans-neighbours-gather-in-tehran-to-discuss-its-future>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/chinas-foreign-minister-meets-taliban-offers-support/article37175100.ece>

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"AID TO AFGHANISTAN NEEDED, WILL DETER MIGRATION"; GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL; UN PLEDGED TRUST FUND FOR AFGHANISTAN AMID CASH SHORTAGES; TALIBAN

UN offered a special trust fund to provide urgently needed cash directly to Afghans through a system that taps into donor funds frozen. The aim is to inject liquidity into Afghan households to permit them to survive this winter and remain in their homeland despite the turmoil, it said on 28 October 2021. Achim Steiner, UNDP's administrator, said Germany had pledged \$58m to the fund, and that it was in touch with other donors to mobilize resources. The UNDP had sponsored activities to be covered over the first 12 months at approximately \$667m, she said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the international community should ensure humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to decrease the migration of Afghans into neighboring countries and to Europe. Talking alongside her Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on 23 October 2021 in Istanbul, Merkel said Afghans should not become victims of human traffickers and smugglers. Merkel's visit to Turkey follows a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report that accused Turkish authorities of

violating international law by mistreating Afghan refugees who try to cross from the Iranian border into Turkey.

Afghanistan welcomed the decision of reopening of the European Union's office in Kabul on 25 October 2021, saying that the step could be the beginning of engagement with European countries. The European Union is considering restarting its political activities in a limited way in Kabul. Though the move is not intended to recognize the current government in Afghanistan.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-sets-up-trust-fund-peoples-economy-afghanistan-2021-10-21/>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/two-months-on-eu-mulls-reopening-diplomatic-office-in-afghanistan-101635177199503.html>

BANGLADESH : NATURAL DISASTERS COST BANGLADESH \$11.3 BILLION LAST YEAR: UN ESTIMATES; PM SHEIKH HASINA USHERS UN AS BEACON OF HOPE In Cox's Bazar

Drought, floods, tropical cyclones, extensive risks and indirect losses have incurred 11.3 billion dollars in loss for Bangladesh last year according to World Meteorological Organization (WMO) of United Nations. The estimation was expressed in a report titled "State of Climate in Asia 2020" released on 26th October. Disasters left a heavy toll on infrastructures and ecosystems. WMO used United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)'s estimation in their reports. Bangladesh came in 9th position among the ten countries the report mentioned which suffered the most damages. China was placed first with the highest yearly loss of \$238 billion. Last year cyclone Amphan alone cost Bangladesh \$130 million. Bangladesh is ranked 163rd among 178 countries in the ecological threat report. The report was published ahead of the UN organized summit on climate change, the twenty-sixth session of the conference of parties (COP26) scheduled to begin on November 12 in Glasgow city of Scotland.

On the occasion of the United Nations 76th anniversary PM Sheikh Hasina hopes for an inclusive UN built on mutual respect, partnership, cooperation and solidarity. She added that United Nations has lent strength to people, fought actively for human rights, decolonization, women empowerment, lasting development and so on but yet in a significant percentage of the world people are still deprived of basic rights. Palestinian people and Rohingyas in Myanmar are few examples.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/2021/10/23/pm-hasina-calls-for-united-efforts-to-build-inclusive-un>

<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/environment/climate-change/bangladesh-lost-113b-due-natural-disasters-last-year-un-321319>

BHUTAN: BHUTAN AND JAPAN SIGNED DOCUMENTS TO DIGITALLY MAP VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

Bhutan and Japan on 22 October 2021 have signed documents to digitally map the country's area that are not digitally mapped. Ambassador of Bhutan to Japan H. E. V Namgyel and Ambassador of Japan to Bhutan H.E. Satoshi Suzuki have signed the project in New Delhi, India. As per the agreement, Japan government will provide 796 million Yen to Bhutan to develop a digital topographic map of parts of Bhutan that are not digitally mapped. Bhutan's foreign ministry in a press release said that the project will be implemented by the National Land Commission Secretariat. The project will provide updated and reliable geospatial information which will benefit numerous

sectors including agriculture, land management, environment, infrastructure development and disaster prevention. The government of Japan has been supporting Bhutan in agriculture, telecommunications, rural electrification, construction of bridges, building of schools, providing farm machinery fire engines, police patrol cars, compactor trucks, ambulances, and medical equipment.

<https://kuenselonline.com/bhutan-and-japan-signs-document-to-digitally-map-various-parts-of-the-country/>

INDIA: PRIME MINISTER NANRENDRA MODI: MUTUAL COOPERATION IN COVID- ERA WILL STRENGTHEN INDIA-ASEAN TIES IN FUTURE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while virtually addressing the India-ASEAN Summit on 28 October 2021 has said that India regards ASEAN's unity and centrality as an important priority for the country. Prime Minister Modi also said that India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN's Outlook for the Indo-Pacific comprise shared vision and mutual cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. He announced that India would celebrate the year 2022 as the 'ASEAN-India Friendship Year' to mark 30 years of partnership. The Prime Minister added that both India and ASEAN countries are dealing with many challenges due to ongoing pandemic but this challenging time brought an opportunity for both sides to continue strengthening mutual cooperation for future India- ASEAN friendship. Prime Minister Modi also said that that India and ASEAN historically have had vibrant relations for thousands of years as both side shared similar values, traditions, languages, texts, architecture, culture

and food. The 10-nation ASEAN is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/asean-s-unity-centrality-always-important-priority-for-india-pm-modi-121102800736_1.html

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INDIAN SUPREME COURT ORDERS INDEPENDENT PROBE INTO ISRAELI SPYWARE; FACEBOOK STRUGGLES WITH MISINFORMATION, HATE SPEECH AND CELEBRATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN THEIR BIGGEST MARKET, INDIA

The Indian Supreme Court says that the Indian government can't get away by providing national security as an excuse. The ruling came based on a batch of 12 petitions which sought an independent probe into the allegations which was drawn to attention by the media regarding unauthorized surveillance. The Supreme Court ordered a "thorough inquiry" into allegations of unauthorized surveillance using the Israeli NSO Group spyware Pegasus. The inquiry will be conducted by a three-member technical committee constituted by the court and its functioning will be overseen by Justice R V Raveendran, a retired judge of the Supreme Court, who will be assisted by two other experts. The committee has been asked to conduct the inquiry and submit its report to the Supreme Court "expeditiously". The matter will be heard again after eight weeks. The bench of Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli said "the Petitioners have placed on record certain material that prima facie merits consideration by this Court. There has been no specific denial of any of the facts averred by the Petitioners by the Respondent — Union of India. There has only been an omnibus and vague denial in the 'limited affidavit' filed by the Respondent — Union of India, which cannot be sufficient. In such circumstances, we have no option but to accept the prima facie case made out by the Petitioners to examine the allegations made".

Facebook's internal documents demonstrate that the company has been

struggling with hate speech, fake news, misinformation and disinformation in their biggest market: India. Facebook has pointed out that there are considerable numbers of groups and pages loaded with inflammatory and anti-Muslim content. New York Times published an article on 23 October highlighting the story of a Facebook researcher who opened an account in February 2018 and showed how the user experience is for a person living in Kerala. The researcher observed that for the next three weeks, the account was operated by a simple rule: following all suggestions and recommendations generated by Facebook algorithms to join groups, watch videos and explore new pages on the site. The following result was abundant hate speech, misinformation and celebrations of violence.

The documents are part of material collected by data engineer and whistleblower Frances Haugen, a former Facebook employee who recently testified before the US Senate. The document contained details on how bots and fake accounts tied to the country's ruling party and opposition figures were wreaking havoc on India's national elections.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/supreme-court-pegasus-spyware-surveillance-verdict-7592853/>
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/facebook-struggles-with-hate-speech-celebrations-of-violence-in-india-us-report-101635099544970.html>

MYANMAR: ASEAN EXCLUDED STATE ADMINISTRATION COUNCIL FROM

Maldivian Tourism Ministry invited both local and foreign investors to bid for resorts development on 18 newly selected islands from 10 atolls at the Investment Forum held in Dubai Expo 2020 on 26th October 2021. President Ibrahim Mohammad Solih visited Maldivian pavilion accompanied by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the United Arab Emirates, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

Addressing the Maldivian Investment Forum, President Solih stated that his government had been working to revitalize the economy through consolidated response, innovation, environmental sustainability and the prosperity of societies. Maldives economic reform strategy includes

private sector development curtailing bureaucratic complexities, simplified procedures for establishing businesses, increased access to finance, ensured greater responsiveness, transparency, immutability and security for the investors. With this being said, he invited interested investors to participate in the tourism success of Maldives. Maldives reported that it had hosted 112,773 foreign tourists between 1 to 25 October 2021.

<https://en.sun.mv/70007>
<https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/25537?term=0>
<https://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Press/Article/25543>
<https://raajje.mv/108504>

DELIVERING CLIMATE ACTION – FOR PEOPLE, FOR PLANET & FOR PROSPERITY

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The President of the 76th session of the General Assembly, Maldivian Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdulla Shahid convened a virtual high-level meeting titled 'Delivering Climate Action – for People, for Planet & for Prosperity' on 27th October 2021. The event underlined the gap between the current and required technical as well as financial capacities to achieve the 1.5 degrees temperature decrease target. The objective of the event was to showcase best practices that simultaneously address climate action

and the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Mr. Shahid urged all the countries to make sustainable recovery plans and that all the funds or investments should be climate friendly.
<https://en.sun.mv/70027>

MYANMAR: THE 38th ASEAN LEADERS SUMMIT HELD WITHOUT MYANMAR

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held a three-day regional summit from 26 to 28 October 2021, without Myanmar, after the country's ruling junta refused to send veteran diplomat, Chan Aye as the nonpolitical representative to the meeting instead of its military leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The leaders of the Southeast Asian countries deplored Myanmar's nonattendance in the

regional summit.

The President of United States, Joe Biden attended the summit virtually and expressed grave concerns about the crisis and violence in Myanmar. He then announced plans to provide funding of 102.7 million US dollar for the development of health, climate, economic and educational programs in the region and another fund of 40 million US dollars to help address the

TOP US OFFICIAL MET NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT; UN APPOINTS NOELEEN HEYZER AS SPECIAL ENVOY OF MYANMAR; UN ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT INDICATED ABOUT MASS ATROCITIES IN MYANMAR

National Security Advisor of the United States, Jake Sullivan virtually met Duwa Lashi La and Zin Mar Aung as the representatives of Myanmar's shadow government, National Unity Government (NUG) on 25th October 2021. Mr. Sullivan reiterated America's continuous support for the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar and discussed about the ongoing activities to restore the country's democracy. He further discussed about the growing violence, confinement of political prisoners, COVID-19 pandemic and imparting humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday appointed Noeleen Heyzer as UN special envoy to Myanmar. Being a social scientist and the former head of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Heyzer had been bestowed with the task to persuade Myanmar military leaders to engage in dialogue and settle the ongoing political and social turmoil caused by the coup.

Earlier, on 22nd October 2021, UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar Tom Andrews,

presented the findings of annual human rights report on Myanmar to the United Nations General Assembly. The report affirms, ten thousand troops and heavy weapons were being moved in the north and northwestern regions of Myanmar which indicates even greater human rights catastrophe in Myanmar. The report contains hint of the military government being associated with crimes against humanity and war crimes in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-national-security-advisor-met-representatives-myanmars-shadow-government-2021-10-26/>
<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-chief-appoints-singaporean-new-myanmar-special-envoy-2021-10-25/>

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NEPAL : JUDGES CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF CHIEF JUSTICE CHOLENDRA SHUMSHER RANA, ACCUSING HIM OF MAKING DEALS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

The Supreme Court of Nepal has become sharply divided with judges taking the unprecedented step of boycotting their Benches on 25 October 2021, holding up hundreds of cases. Judges are calling for the resignation of Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana, accusing him of making deals with political parties. On 26 October 2021, 14 out of the 20 judges met the Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana and insisted that he resign to save

the dignity and credibility of the judiciary. Mr. Rana told the judges he would not resign just because they want it, but would be ready to face an impeachment motion in Parliament, the only way provided in the Constitution to seek the exit of a judge or chief justice.

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/10/26/what-is-the-controversy-about-chief-justice-rana>

PAKISTAN: PAKISTAN TO REMAIN ON 'GREY LIST' OF GLOBAL TERROR FINANCING WATCHDOG FATF

Pakistan will continue to be on the 'Grey List' of the FATF as it needs to "further demonstrate" that action is being taken against UN-designated terrorists against terror financing said on 21 October 2021. Three new countries: Turkey, Jordan, and Mali have also been added. Inclusion in the 'Grey List' implies "strategic deficiencies" detected in a jurisdiction's policies to prevent money laundering and the terror financing, according to an IMF working paper. Not as severe as black listing, inclusion in the 'Grey List' shows that a country is working to remove flagged deficiencies. Pakistan has two concurrent action

plans, actions against UN-designated terror groups and anti-money laundering, along with 34 action plan items. Pakistan has two concurrent action plans, actions against UN-designated terror groups and anti-money laundering, along with 34 action plan items. It has now largely addressed 30 of the items, the president of the FATF said. Regarding its earlier action plan, which focused on terrorist financing issues, and dates back to June 2018, Pakistan is still assessed to have largely addressed 26 out of 27 items.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1653195>

SRI LANKA: PRESIDENT GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA ADDRESSED THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON DELIVERING CLIMATE ACTION FOR PEOPLE, PLANET AND PROSPERITY

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa attended the High-Level Meeting on Delivering Climate Action for People, Planet and Prosperity convened by United Nations General Assembly President, Mr. Abdulla Shahid held virtually on 27th October 2021. Addressing the event the president stated that his country adhere to the teaching of Buddha which accentuates the balance between environment and human needs.

The president stated that the climate crisis must be addressed urgently and decisively, the developed countries must fulfill their commitments to help the planet to heal and added that the developing countries need multilateral and bilateral support to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

He then reiterated his government's commitment towards climate action. Sri Lanka had been leading the 'Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods' under the Commonwealth Blue Charter Initiative, co-leading the Energy Compact for 'No New Coal Power',

complying to the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management the country had decided to curtail 50% Nitrogen waste by 2030, the government had plans to procure 70% of energy needs from renewable sources, moreover, the island nation targeted to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Sri Lanka took substantive steps to limit overuse of artificial fertilizers and reduce environmental pollution. President Rajapaksa called for international assistance through technology transfers, skills development, investment and financing support for the country's sustainable development agenda.

https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/SL-understands-importance-of-maintaining-balance-between-environment-and-human-needs-Prez/108-223407

<https://island.lk/lanka-understands-the-importance-of-maintaining-balance-between-environment-and-human-needs/>

<https://www.newsfirst.lk/2021/10/27/sri-lanka-will-go-carbon-neutral-by-2050-president/>

SRI LANKAN CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF VISITED RUSSIAN GENERAL OF THE ARMY

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- Sri lankan chief of defense staff visited
- Russian general of the army

The Chief of Defense Staff and Commander of the Army, General Shavendra Silva visited his Russian counterpart, General of the Army, Oleg Salyukov on 25th October 2021. The two Army Chiefs had cordial discussions on wide-ranging matters of mutual interest, bilateral importance, including further enhancement of training slots for Sri Lankan Tri-Service personnel, the conduct of joint military exercises, exchange of knowledge on mechanical and engineering technologies among

others.

<https://www.news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/33189-sri-lankan-army-chief-invited-to-the-moscow-higher-combined-arms-command-school>

ACTIVITY- BEI GOVERNANCE PROJECT

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), in collaboration with The Asia Foundation, is implementing a project titled 'Building Capacity of CSOs/NGOs and Media to Promote Accountability in Governance and Influence Elite Opinion'. As part of this project, BEI held several contact building meetings with government officials, organized an inception meeting on 19th October, 2021 at Parjatan "Hotel Shaikat" followed by a three day-

long training workshop for the members of local CSOs/NGOs and Media personnel of Chattogram division at the Asian SR hotel, Chattogram. A total of 20 participants were trained on good governance tools enacted by the Government of Bangladesh (Right To Information act-RTI, National Integrity Strategy-NIS and Annual Performance Agreement-APA) from 21-23 October 2021.



Photo: Contact building meeting with Civil Surgeon, Chattogram at his office on October 17, 2021.



Photo: Chief Guest Mr. Kamrul Hasan, Divisional Commissioner, Chattogram, was giving his speech during inception meeting on October 19, 2021 at Hotel Shaikat, Chattogram.



Photo: Amb. M Humayun Kabir, President, BEI, was giving lecture during training session on October 21, 2021.



Photo: A trainee was giving presentation on behalf of her group after group exercise on October 22, 2021.

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.

DISCLAIMER

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held a three-day regional summit from 26 to 28 October 2021, without Myanmar, after the country's ruling junta refused to send veteran diplomat, Chan Aye as the nonpolitical representative to the meeting instead of its military leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The leaders of the Southeast Asian countries deplored Myanmar's nonattendance in the regional summit.

The President of United States, Joe Biden attended the summit virtually and expressed grave concerns about the crisis and violence in Myanmar. He then announced plans to provide funding of 102.7 million US dollar for the development of health, climate, economic and educational programs in the region and another fund of 40 million US dollars to help address the current COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen ASEAN's ability to prevent, detect and respond to future outbreaks of infectious diseases. Biden highlighted the importance of US-ASEAN cooperation and strategic partnership for a free and open Indo-Pacific, which had been the foundation for shared security and prosperity.

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