

## || WEEKLY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS ||

### BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI)

|| Brief Highlights on Current Issues of South Asia ||  
|| August 07 -August 13, 2022||

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

Afghanistan has recorded a total of 168,550 cases of coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic. Total deaths reported stood at 7,465 as of 15 August .

Bangladesh reported 01 new deaths and 226 coronavirus cases on 15 August and has thus far recorded a total of 29,313 fatalities and 2,008,870 confirmed cases. Bangladesh has administered a total 279,480,539 Covid-19 vaccine doses, totaling 85.70% of the population.

Bhutan reported no new cases and no deaths on 15 August. A total of 60,663 cases have been registered until 15 August, while 87.28 % of Bhutan's population has been vaccinated.

India reported 32 deaths and 14,917 new coronavirus cases on 15 August, bringing the total number of cases to 44,268,381 while the total number of deaths now stands at 527,069. Until 15 August, 67.96% of Indian population has been vaccinated.

Myanmar reported total 19,435 deaths and 614,389 confirmed cases while 50.63 percent of population got vaccinated till 15 August.

Maldives has recorded 180,384 and 300 deaths since the beginning of pandemic.

Nepal reported 10,687 new coronavirus cases on 15 August taking the nationwide infection tally to 970,462 since the beginning of the pandemic. To date, the total number of deaths stands at 11,852.

Pakistan reported 276 deaths and 31,812 positive cases in the last week.

Sri Lanka has recorded 664,065 cases and 16,521 deaths since the beginning of pandemic..

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

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## **BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT: IMF TEAM DUE EARLY SEPT FOR NEGOTIATING MAJOR LOAN: DHAKA EXPECTS \$4.5B AS BUDGET SUPPORT; BD'S DUTY-FREE FACILITY FOR BHUTAN COMES INTO EFFECT: PTA SIGNED IN DECEMBER 2020; BANGLADESH BANK EASES RULES FOR INWARD REMITTANCES AMID FOREX CRUNCH**

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation will visit Dhaka early next month to negotiate a major loan Bangladesh seeks specifically for funding budget deficit. Sources say the foreign-exchange fund is especially required for boosting the country's reserves that have come under pressure because of soaring import costs. The IMF has responded positively to the loan proposal that Bangladesh has sent for borrowing from the global lender's newly created Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST).

In the meantime, Bangladesh has finally made the duty-free market-access facility under preferential trade agreement (PTA) effective for Bhutan through a much-awaited official gazette. The customs authority has offered tax waiver on import of 16 Bhutanese products by issuing a statutory regulatory order (SRO). The SRO, signed by Internal Resources Division (IRD) Senior Secretary Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem, came into effect on August 4. With the SRO issuance, the duty-free market access under PTA officially came into effect on both ends of Bangladesh and Bhutan. The countries signed the PTA on December 6, 2020 in a bid to reduce or waive import tariff and para-tariff. On July 1, 2022, Bhutan made the duty-free market access facility effective for around 100 Bangladeshi products under the PTA.

On the other hand, the central bank has relaxed the banking rules governing remittance inflows amid an ongoing foreign currency crunch. Bangladesh Bank said that Banks can now establish drawing arrangements, an official channel to receive remittances, with exchange houses abroad without prior permission. They must, however, provide detailed information about the arrangements afterwards.

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/imf-team-due-early-sept-for-negotiating-major-loan-1660010475>

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bds-duty-free-facility-for-bhutan-comes-into-effect-1660012154>

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh-bank-eases-rules-for-inward-remittances-amid-forex-crunch-1660118336>

## AFGHANISTAN: INDIAN DIPLOMATS RETURNED TO KABUL; IRAN'S MINISTER OF ENERGY VISIT KABUL DISCUSSING HELMAND RIVER WATER SHARE

The Indian Foreign Minister SJ Shankar, has said that a team of Indian diplomats has gone to Afghanistan, except for the ambassador of that country, and India is interested in continuing its people-to-people relations, considering the long historical relations with the Afghan society. He stated that Indian diplomats had left the embassy in Afghanistan in August last year due to the situation at that time. But now a group of diplomats have returned to Afghanistan. According to him, the Afghan employees who were hired there are still there and India is paying them.

Iran's Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian has traveled to Afghanistan days after Taliban authorities finally

ordered the release of water from the country's Helmand River into Iran based on a long-stalled water treaty between the two neighbors. Mehrabian held talks with senior Taliban authorities in Kabul. The trip comes two days after Iranian president's special envoy for Afghanistan, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, announced that large volumes of water released from the Kamal Khan Dam in Afghanistan had flowed into Iran.

<https://www.afghanistantimes.af/indian-diplomats-returned-to-kabul/>

<https://www.afghanistantimes.af/irans-minister-of-energy-visit-kabul-discussing-helmand-river-water-share/>

## BANGLADESH: INDIAN DIPLOMATS RETURNED TO KABUL; IRAN'S MINISTER OF ENERGY VISIT KABUL DISCUSSING HELMAND RIVER WATER SHARE; UN RIGHTS CHIEF'S VISIT: BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT STRONGLY REJECTS VISIBLE 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED EFFORTS'

Russia-Ukraine war has created a new crisis in the economy of Bangladesh when the country was bouncing back from the Covid fallout like other countries of the world. Under such circumstances, China has pledged to stand beside Bangladesh in facing any crisis. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi conveyed his country's assurances in his recent Bangladesh visit.

In the meantime, Saudi Arabia is going to sign some MoUs with Bangladesh regarding defence and security, in an effort to gear up the prevailing defence cooperation. Issa bin Youssef Al-Dahilan, ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Bangladesh, came up with the disclosure at a press conference at the embassy. He also expressed hope for strengthening military and security cooperation between the two nations. Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia have been cooperating to bolster defence capacity for long, but the two sides signed the maiden memorandum of understanding (MoU) on defence in 2019.

The Bangladesh government has strongly rejected what it says some

visible "politically motivated efforts" of some corners to mislead the people by showcasing the upcoming visit of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet as an occasion to "put undue pressure" on the government. Indeed, the government says Bangladesh, as a responsible and responsive member state of the UN, looks forward to having a constructive dialogue with the High Commissioner for the promotion and protection of human rights, with the view to continue and further enhance ongoing close engagement and cooperation of Bangladesh with the UN Human Rights mechanism. Bangladesh hoped to benefit from an objective appreciation of the High Commissioner regarding the achievements of the country, despite challenges.

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/government/mf71p7bkk>

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/uy11xtc2j3>

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/47qd028lqa>

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## BHUTAN: BHUTAN'S ENERGY LIKELY TO BE COSTLY IN INDIAN MARKET

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In the wake of the increasing cost of building hydropower projects and huge deviation from initial estimation, the power tariff of Bhutanese electricity is bound to increase. This will impact both domestic users and importers on the Indian side. Power tariff is determined on cost plus modality, which means all costs incurred during the construction of hydropower including its financing costs, operation and maintenance charges, and depreciation are taken into account. In addition, a return on equity is provisioned. According to a journal published by the Center for Bhutan Studies titled 'Export price of electricity in Bhutan,' taking the case of Mangdechhu Project,

the journal pointed out that electricity should be priced at a competitive rate in order to secure a comparative advantage and for the economy to gain. The study also stated that local industries, especially power-intensive industries, who are already paying higher than the export tariff, may barely break even while a few may even run at a loss if domestic price runs high.

<https://kuenselonline.com/bhutans-energy-likely-to-be-costly-in-indian-market/>

## INDIA: JAISHANKAR, UKRAINIAN FM DISCUSS RUSSIA CONFLICT; TAIWAN CRISIS: INDIA CALLS FOR RESTRAINT, DE-ESCALATION OF TENSIONS

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has spoken to Ukraine's Foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba and discussed the recent developments of conflict with Russia and its continuing global repercussions. Jaishankar assured Kuleba that the next consignment of Indian humanitarian assistance will reach Ukraine very soon. This conversation took place weeks after names of three Indians, including that of chairman of National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), P S Raghavan, have appeared in a list of individuals prepared by a Ukrainian government agency for, what it says, "promoting Russian propaganda".

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs has said that India is concerned over the developments between Taiwan and China and called for avoiding unilateral action to change the status quo in the region. In its first reaction on the crisis in Taiwan, India also underlined the need to maintain peace and stability in the region. Addressing the media, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said that like many other countries, India too is concerned at recent developments and it urge the exercise of restraint, avoidance

of unilateral actions to change status quo, de-escalation of tensions and efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region. Responding to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan recently, China launched extensive military drills around Taiwan.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jaishankar-ukrainian-fm-discuss-russia-conflict-8078998/>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/taiwan-china-india-de-escalation-tensions-8086591/>

## MYANMAR: MOUNTING PROOF OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN: MYANMAR: UN PROBE; MALAYSIAN FM CALLS ON ASEAN TO ENGAGE WITH MYANMAR'S NATIONAL UNITY GOVT; MYANMAR JUNTA CHIEF AMONG KEY SUSPECTS IDENTIFIED IN ROHINGYA GENOCIDE CASE

The United Nations' Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) has said that women and children were particularly being targeted since the military takeover in February 2021 and crimes have been committed in Myanmar on a scale and in a manner that constitutes a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population. Myanmar's military seized power on Feb. 1 last year, ousting the civilian government and arresting de facto leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The junta has waged a bloody crackdown on dissent, with the violence leaving more than 2,100 civilians dead and nearly 15,000 arrested, according to a local monitoring group. The investigation team warned in its annual report that over the 12 months to the end of June, the scope of potential international crimes taking place in Myanmar has broadened dramatically. The IIMM was established by the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018 to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and prepare files for criminal prosecution.

On other hand, Malaysia's foreign minister has urged member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to engage directly with the Myanmar junta's opponents, and to bring other countries into efforts to bring peace to the military-ruled country. During a visit to Thailand, Saifuddin Abdullah said that it was of the "utmost importance" that ASEAN members morally support Myanmar's people and engage with opposition groups formed after the coup, including the National Unity Government (NUG), a shadow government that has been designated as a terrorist group by the regime. Since the military coup last year, Myanmar has been in social and political turmoil due to the regime's brutal crackdowns on the opposition and popular armed resistance against military rule. ASEAN has been trying to mediate peace in the country since then by engaging only with the junta. The

bloc's efforts, however, have been criticized for making little progress. Mr. Saifuddin said that ASEAN's efforts are now one-sided as the group is only engaging with the junta. He also said that ASEAN foreign ministers discussed last week the possibility of seeking support from third-party states to help with the bloc-led peace process.

Meanwhile, some 20 key suspects, including junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and senior Myanmar military generals, have been identified as being responsible for a clearance campaign against the Rohingya ethnic minority in Rakhine State that is now the subject of a genocide case at the United Nations (UN) highest court. The investigation by the Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA), an independent war crimes investigator, also reveals that the Myanmar military planned the brutal purge of the Rohingya years in advance. Its execution in 2017 forced over 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. Those who fled said that the Rohingya were subjected to extrajudicial killings, rapes and arson attacks by security forces. UN investigators said that the operation had "genocidal intent".

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/mounting-proof-of-crimes-against-humanity-in-myanmar-un-probe.html>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/malaysian-fm-calls-on-asean-to-engage-with-myanmars-national-unity-govt.html>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-chief-among-key-suspects-identified-in-rohingya-genocide-case.html>

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## NEPAL: CHINA TO PROVIDE RS 15 BILLION ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL TO INVEST IN PROJECTS

China has pledged Rs 15 billion in grant assistance to Nepal to invest in various projects this year in the landlocked Himalayan nation after visiting foreign minister Narayan Khadka held wide-ranging talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to further cement the bilateral ties. Khadka, who is on an official visit to China at the invitation of Wang, met Wang in the eastern Chinese city of Qingdao.

[https://  
economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/  
international/world-news/china-to-  
provide-rs-15-billion-assistance-to-  
nepal-to-invest-in-projects/  
articleshow/93494007.cms?  
utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_m  
edium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/china-to-provide-rs-15-billion-assistance-to-nepal-to-invest-in-projects/articleshow/93494007.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

## PAKISTAN: PM RENEWS CALL FOR 'CHARTER OF ECONOMY' ON EVE OF 75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY; IMF MONEY TO ARRIVE IN PAKISTAN BY AUGUST-END; PAKISTAN FOREX RESERVES FALL TO NEAR 3-YEAR LOW

On the eve of the country's 75th Independence Day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif renewed his offer to reach a consensus on the "charter of economy" in the greater national interest amid worsening economic crises. Coming a day after President Dr Arif Alvi offered his offices to broker some dialogue between the prime minister and the PTI chief, the offer from Shehbaz attains greater significance. The president had called upon the country's political leadership to lower rhetoric and adopt the policy of reconciliation, feeling that the country was drifting away from achieving its real objectives because of self-created political and economic crises.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) convened a meeting of its executive board on August 29 to approve a bailout package for cash-starved Pakistan, including disbursement of about USD 1.18 billion, before the close of the current month. The move follows the completion of the USD 4 billion in bilateral financing from four friendly nations and would pave the way for immediate disbursement, expected to be in Pakistan's account before the end of working hours on August 31.

As of August 5 (from \$8.385 billion the week prior), the State Bank NSE 1.13 % of Pakistan's (SBP) foreign currency reserves hit their lowest level in almost three years due to debt payments. Rising debt payments and a lack of external financing caused the State Bank of Pakistan's foreign reserve holdings to fall by \$555 million, or 6.6%, over the course of one week.

[https://tribune.com.pk/  
story/2371001/pm-renews-call-for-  
charter-of-economy-on-eve-of-75th-  
independence-day](https://tribune.com.pk/story/2371001/pm-renews-call-for-charter-of-economy-on-eve-of-75th-independence-day)

[https://  
economictimes.indiatimes.com/  
news/international/business/imf-  
money-to-arrive-in-pakistan-by-  
august-end-report/  
articleshow/93534954.cms?  
utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_  
medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/imf-money-to-arrive-in-pakistan-by-august-end-report/articleshow/93534954.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

[https://  
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news/international/world-news/  
pakistan-forex-reserves-fall-to-near-  
3-year-low/  
articleshow/93519047.cms?  
utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_  
medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/pakistan-forex-reserves-fall-to-near-3-year-low/articleshow/93519047.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

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## SRI LANKA: SRI LANKA SAYS CONTROVERSIAL CHINESE SHIP CAN DOCK IN ITS PORT; END PROTEST CRACKDOWN: UN, RIGHTS GROUPS TELL SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

Sri Lanka says it has granted permission for a controversial Chinese research vessel to visit the island, despite security concerns raised by neighboring India. The Yuan Wang 5 is described as a research and survey vessel by international shipping and analytics sites, but according to Indian media, it is a dual-use spy ship.

The United Nations and several prominent international human rights organisations have condemned the repeated use of emergency regulations against peaceful protesters by the Sri Lanka government. They have

urged the newly appointed Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe to end the crackdown against the months-long protests over the island nation's worst economic crisis in decades.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/13/sri-lanka-allows-entry-for-controversial-chinese-ship>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/10/end-protest-crackdown-un-rights-groups-tell-sri-lanka-president>

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## BEI ACTIVITIES: BEI ORGANIZED 20 COMMUNITY DIALOGUES IN RAJSHAHI UNDER YOUNG LEADERS FOR PRO- MOTING DEMOCRACY IN BANGLADESH PROJECT FROM 01 AUGUST- 11 AUGUST 2022

www.Dhunkatnews.com  
**ধুমকেতু বিউজ**  
সত্য ও মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য নিয়ে গভীরে ঘুরে থাকো।

প্রবন্ধ জাতীয় নগর-গ্রাম রাজশাহী রাজনীতি অর্থনীতি আন্তর্জাতিক অন্যান্য  
নিউজ ক্রন্দন লেন নাচোলে যথাযোগ্য মর্যাদায় জাতীয় শোক দিবস উদযাপন টিপু-ত্রিতি হত্যার আসামী ভারতে পালানোর সম

Home >> রাজশাহী >> পবায় সাংবাদিকদের সাথে বাংলাদেশ এন্টারপ্রাইজ ইনস্টিটিউটের কর্মকর্তাদের মতবিনিময়

রাজশাহী

### পবায় সাংবাদিকদের সাথে বাংলাদেশ এন্টারপ্রাইজ ইনস্টিটিউটের কর্মকর্তাদের মতবিনিময়

৯ অগস্ট, আগস্ট ৯, ২০২২; ৮:৩৭ অপরাহ্ন

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**ধুমকেতু প্রতিবেদক :** রাজশাহীর পবায় সাংবাদিকদের সাথে বাংলাদেশ এন্টারপ্রাইজ ইনস্টিটিউটের কর্মকর্তাদের মতবিনিময় সভা অনুষ্ঠিত।

রোববার (৭ আগস্ট) সকাল ১০ টার দিকে পবা উপজেলার দামকুড়া ইউনিয়নে দামকুড়া উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক স্কুলে এ সভার আয়োজন করা হয়।

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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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