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May 2022



SOUTH ASIA
SDG
UPDATE



Announcement

Appointment of Ms. Mikiko Tanaka as Head, Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia from May 2, 2022

Ms. Mikiko Tanaka brings with her over twenty-five years of experience within the United Nations system. She most recently served as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Guyana after working as the UNDP Resident Representative. As Resident Coordinator, she led strategic dialogues with the Government and brought coherence to the work of the United Nations Country Team for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She furthermore supported the conduct of its Voluntary National Review and consolidated socio-economic policy recommendations in response to COVID-19. Prior to Guyana, Ms. Tanaka served as the UNDP Country Director in Yemen and Timor-Leste, UNDP Deputy Country Director (Programmes) Pakistan, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Benin as well as in several other capacities with UNDP at its headquarters as well as in China and Lao People's Democratic Republic. Before joining the United Nations system, she worked as project coordinator for a non-governmental organization in Thailand as well as in the financial sector in Japan. Ms. Tanaka holds master's degrees in public policy and management from the University of London and in rural development management from the Khon Kaen University, and a bachelor's degree from the International Christian University.



Mr. Adnan Aliani, Director, Strategy and Programme Management Division, ESCAP, has completed his assignment as Officer-in-Charge of ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia. During his tenure, he provided strategic leadership in expanding ESCAP's analytical, normative and technical cooperation initiatives in economic, environment and social development dimensions of sustainable development in South and South-West Asia. He also contributed to strengthening relations with ESCAP member States; with United Nations Country Teams and with intergovernmental organizations, such as SAARC and BIMSTEC.

We would like to express our most sincere appreciation to Mr. Aliani for serving as the Officer-in-Charge of the SRO-SSWA over the past year.



I. KEY ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY ESCAP ON SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA



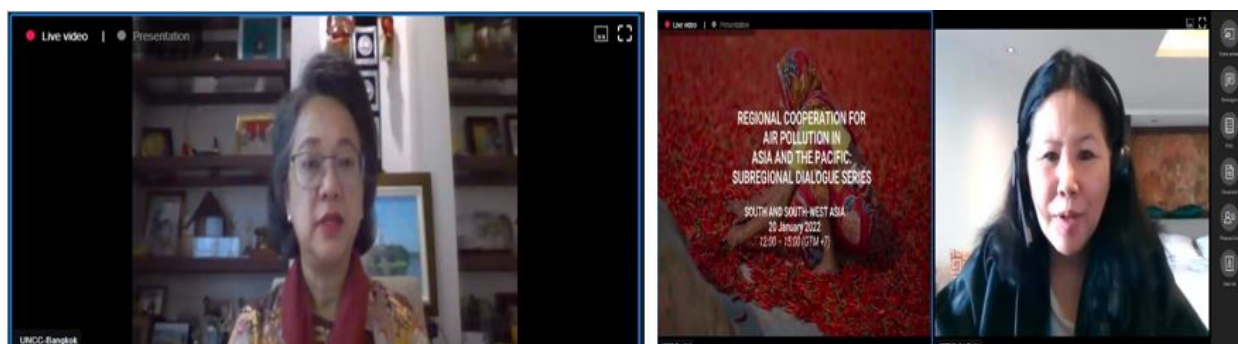
1. Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report 2022



Report 2022, produced in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the five United Nations Regional Commissions. The United Nations World Tourism Organization also contributed to the report. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, in his remarks highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened hard-won achievements towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that governments around the world are facing difficult policy choices. For more on East and South Asia, click [here](#). Read more [here](#).



2. Subregional Dialogue on Regional Cooperation for Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific – South and South-West Asia



Virtual, 20 January 2022. This dialogue on South and South-West Asia is part of a series of sub-regional dialogue series organized by ESCAP to identify opportunities to address air pollution in Asia and the Pacific; strengthen regional cooperation; and facilitate an exchange of innovative air pollution solutions and best practices, including policies, data and technologies, and capacity needs. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary, ESCAP, and Ms. Dechen Tsering, Asia Pacific Regional Director, UNEP, delivered the opening remarks. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, shared his insights on the theme “Innovative Approaches to Reducing Open Burning from Crop Fires”. Read more [here](#).

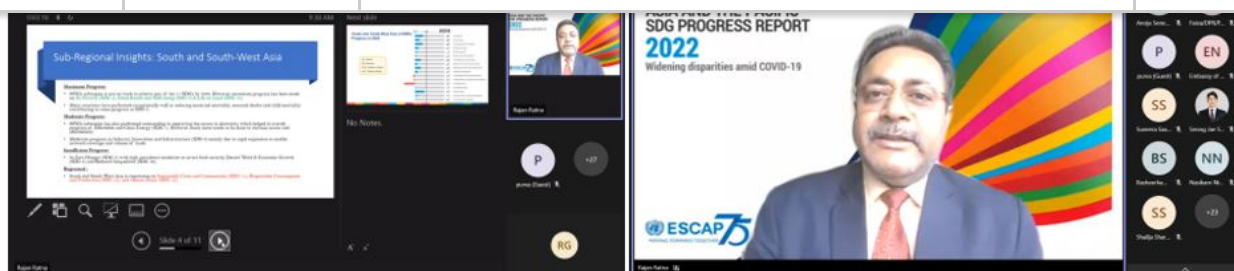


3. Webinar “Untapped business opportunities in South Asia - explore new business avenues for 2022”

Virtual, 21 January 2022. The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (ESCAP-SSWA), in collaboration with Women Entrepreneurs International Trade and Technology Center, ALEAP, organized the webinar. Key remarks were made by Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP-SSWA, who shared insights on the potential of e-commerce in expanding business opportunities for women entrepreneurs and on the empowerment of women and economies. More than 100 stakeholders participated in the webinar.



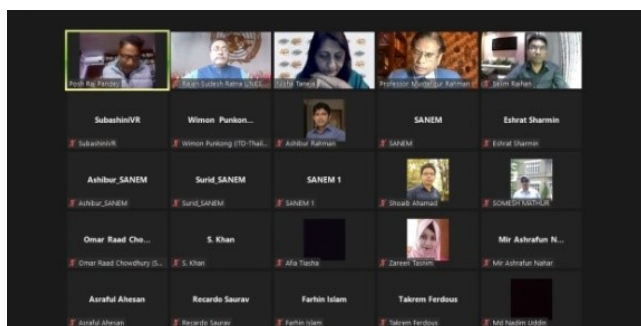
4. National Workshop on Resource Mobilization for Bangladesh’s Smooth Graduation from the LDC Group



Bangkok, Thailand, 17 March 2022. The 2022 edition of the Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report was launched by Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. “Understanding development outcomes for distinct population groups and intersecting vulnerabilities is a key to fairer recovery from the pandemic” said Ms. Alisjahbana at the launch. Following the plenary event, a subregional breakout session was held on South and South-West Asia, led by Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia. Sharing insights on SDG progress in the subregion, Dr. Ratna observed that “South and South-West Asia is not on track to achieve any of the 17 SDGs by 2030. Having said that, encouraging progress has been made on SDG 1 (No Poverty), 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 15 (Life on Land).” Read more [here](#).



5. Launch of Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2022: Report highlights widening disparities, increased vulnerabilities in region

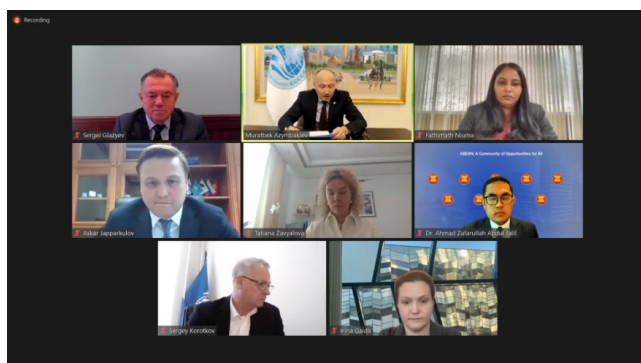


Virtual, 14 March 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, moderated a panel discussion and an open discussion at the virtual workshop organized jointly by the Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh, and ESCAP. Among the panellists were Dr. Abu Eusuf, Professor of Development Studies, Dhaka University; Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman, Chief Economist, Bangladesh Bank; and Mr. Rizwan Rahman, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Understanding Bangladesh's current state of resource mobilization, challenges and policy actions for LDC

graduation were the core highlights of the discussion. Read more [here](#).



6. Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2022 – Side Event “International cooperation to achieve the SDGs during the COVID-19 pandemic: current challenges and prospects”



Bangkok, Thailand 30 March 2022. Ms. Fathimath Niuma, Deputy Minister of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure of the Republic of Maldives, participated as a speaker in a side event of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2022 titled “International cooperation to achieve the SDGs during the COVID-19 pandemic: current challenges and prospects”. The event aimed at bringing together representatives of executive authorities, development institutions, integration associations and businesses to identify the most comprehensive approach to solving the problems of global economic development and exchanging the best practices in SDGs implementation and monitoring. Ms. Niuma highlighted that Maldives has achieved Sustainable

Development Goals 1, 4 and 7 and was able to maintain momentum towards achieving Goals 6, 11 and 16 even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The welcome and concluding remarks were delivered by Mr. Sergei Glazyev, Member of the Board (Minister) in charge of Integration and Macroeconomics, Eurasian Economic Commission. Other speakers included Mr. Zhang Ming, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; Ms. Anastasia Nesvetailova, Head of Macroeconomic and Development Policies Branch, UNCTAD; Mr. Yaroslav Lissovolik, Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Mr. Sergey Korotkov, Director of UNIDO Centre for International Industrial Cooperation in the Russian Federation; Dr. Ahmad Zafarullah Abdul Jalil, Director of the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate, ASEAN Secretariat; Ms. Tatiana Zavyalova, Senior Vice



7. Subregional Training of Women Entrepreneurs on Expanding Business through E-commerce and Digital Marketing

Kathmandu, Nepal 4-6 April 2022.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia Office (ESCAP-SSWA) organized a training in Kathmandu, Nepal, in partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework, Geneva, the South Asia Network on the SDGs, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the South Asian Women Development Forum. Ms. Ram Kumari Jhakri, Minister of Urban Development, Government of Nepal, gave the inaugural address. The first segment of the training involved sectoral discussions with leading experts and trade consultants who shared their experiences on digitally diversifying their enterprises during the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed the recent innovations, trends and challenges encountered, and solutions adopted to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic. The second part of the training involved sessions on enhancing the capacity of women entrepreneurs of South Asia to use online platforms for promoting their business through e-commerce and creating awareness about existing opportunities. There were also dedicated hands-on sessions on registering and creating products and services catalogues as well as uploading their profiles as entrepreneurs one-market platforms, including ESCAP's training platform <https://www.unescap.wesellonline.org/>. The first advanced hands-on training programme organized in physical form for ESCAP-SSWA since the COVID-19 pandemic, the training was attended by around 80 participants from the subregion (8 countries), many of whom had the opportunity to display their products during the networking sessions. Read more [here](#)



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II. Select Outreach Activities



1. Impact of COVID on Global Supply Chains



Virtual, 21 January 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, was invited as a guest speaker for the webinar "Impact of COVID on Global Supply Chains", organized by the Amity Business School and the Directorate of International Affairs, Amity University, Jaipur. Professor



2. International Conference on the Evolving Role of Women in Science, Technology & Innovation and Science Diplomacy

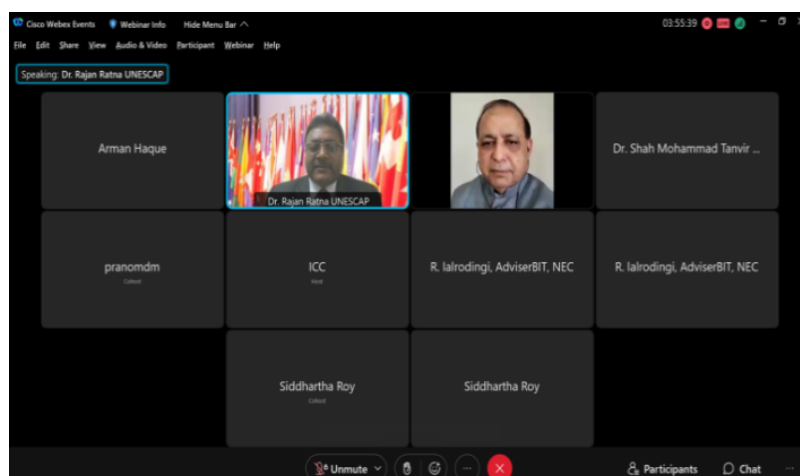


Virtual, 18 February 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated as a panelist on Day 1 of the two-day “International Conference on the Evolving Role of Women in Science, Technology & Innovation and Science Diplomacy” organized by Tillotoma Foundation, in association with the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The other distinguished speakers included Dr. Nisha Mendiratta, Head, WISE-KIRAN Division, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India; Ms. Kehkashan Basu, UN Human Rights Champion and Winner of the 2016

International Children’s Peace Prize; and Professor Qudsia Tahseen, Department of Zoology, Aligarh Muslim University.



3. Virtual India-Bangladesh Stakeholders’ Meet 2022

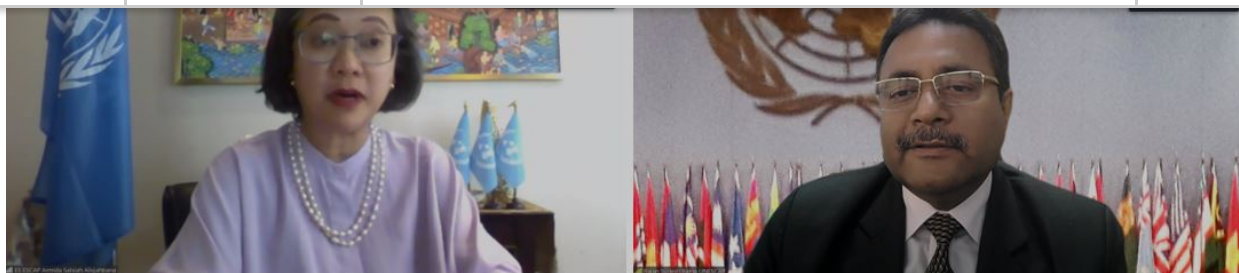


Virtual, 7 March 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated in the second technical session on “Potential Cross Border Surface Route Trade” on Day 1 of the “Virtual India-Bangladesh Stakeholders’ Meet 2022” organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce. In his remarks, Dr. Ratna highlighted the need for India and Bangladesh to move from a process-based trade regime to a trust- and IT-based system which will significantly lower the overall trade cost between the two countries. The session discussed the potentialities of Indo-Bangladesh cross-border trade through the surface route,

and was coordinated by Dr. Mashiur A K M Rahman, Honourable International Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and Shri B.V.R Subrahmanyam, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. Other panelists included Shri Dr. M. Angamuthu, Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority; Shri Noor Haq, Additional Secretary (FTA), Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh; Smt. R. Lalrodingi, Advisor (Banking, Industries & Tourism), North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region Government of India; Md. Maniruzzaman, Director (Traffic), Benapole Land Port; Shri Abdul Matlub Ahmad, President, India–Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Shri Mr Arman Haque, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry; and Shri Sushil Patowary, Regional Chairman, Eastern Region, Federation of Indian Exporters’ Organizations.



4. National workshop on “Building forward better: Securing inclusive, resilient and green development in Nepal”



Virtual, 9 march 2022. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP gave the opening remarks at the virtual national workshop on “Building Forward Better: Securing Inclusive, Resilient and Green Development in Nepal” organized by ESCAP and the UN country team of Nepal. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, moderated “Session 2: Policy Options and Implications” of the workshop while presenters were Dr. Chakra Pani Acharya, Program Director, National Planning Commission; and Ms. Dawn Holland, senior consultant on macroeconomic modeling. Highlights of the session included a discussion on the potential for accelerating digitalization and developing innovative financial instruments to stimulate Nepal’s growth.



5. Second Bay of Bengal Economic Dialogue 2022 - Building Resilient BIMSTEC



Virtual, 12 March 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated as a panelist in “Organized Session III: Trade and Investment” of the “Second Bay of Bengal Economic Dialogue 2022 - Building Resilient BIMSTEC.” Dr. Ratna emphasized that BIMSTEC countries can support least developed countries by giving them free market access and financing for development. Chaired by Dr. Poshraj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, Nepal, the panel included Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh; Dr. Nisha Taneja, Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, India; Dr. Chandra Shekhar Dhakal, Senior Lecturer, Royal Thimphu College, Royal University of Bhutan; Mr. Wimon Punkong, Director, Office of Research, Development and Promotions, International Institute for Trade and Development, Thailand; and Ms. Subhashini Abeyasinghe, Director of Research, Verité Research, Sri Lanka.



6. 6th International Conference on Women-Led MSMEs as Catalysts of Transformation–Mission Possible 2022



New Delhi, India, 24 March 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated in a panel discussion “Session IV: ISID–ESCAP Session – Leveraging E-Commerce and Digital Marketing for Women-led MSMEs” at the “6th International Conference on Women-Led MSMEs as Catalysts of Transformation” organized by the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India and Institute for Studies in Industrial Development. In his remarks, Dr. Ratna highlighted that over 1,400 women entrepreneurs have been trained in the past two years under ESCAP’s project on e-commerce and digital marketing. Chaired by Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Director, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, other distinguished speakers on the panel included Mr. Anurag Awasthi, Product Manager, Centre of Excellence for Indigenous and Inclusive Products, Government e-Marketplace; Ms. Shirley Jayawardena, President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka; Ms. K. Ratna Prabha, IAS (Retired), former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, India; and Ms. Arundhati Mukherjee, marketing consultant.



7. Sustainable Growth for Women Entrepreneurship and Exports Promotion SWEEP 2022: Edition 3.0



Bhopal, India, 25 March 2022. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated in a panel discussion “Gender Considerations in International Trade Policies & Compliance” at the “SWEEP-2022: Global Summit for Women Entrepreneurs”, organized by the Madhya Pradesh Association of Women Entrepreneurs in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh; the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India; ESCAP; World Trade Organization; Madhya Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation; Women’s Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Madhya Pradesh Council; and UBUNTU: Consortium of Women Entrepreneur’s Associations. In his remarks, Dr. Ratna highlighted that women entrepreneurs were a key factor in the progress of economies, nations and societies and shared that more than 1400 women have been trained under the e-commerce and digital marketing project co-initiated by the ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia. The session explored progress made and gaps remaining in making policies and compliances more gender responsive. The keynote address was delivered by Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, World Trade Organization; Ms. Kanta Singh, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women India, as the chair and catalyst. The panel included Mercy Epao (IAS), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India; Dr. Mariyam Shakeela, President, Maldives Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Addu Women’s Association; and Dr. Sulochana Seger, Founder and Chairperson, Women in Management, Sri Lanka, Maldives & Canada.



III. ESCAP-SSWA KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS 2022

- [Strategies to Promote Regional Power Grid Connectivity and Cross-Border Electricity Trade \(CBET\) in South and South-West Asia](#) (January 2022)
- [Resource Mobilization for Sustainable LDC Graduation of Bhutan in the Context of Emerging Challenges to Development Financing](#) (February 2022)
- [Resource Mobilization for Sustainable LDC Graduation of Nepal in the Context of Emerging Challenges to Development Financing](#) (February 2022)
- [Enhancing Global Market Competitiveness of Textile and Garment Exports of South Asia](#) (March 2022)



IV. COUNTRIES OF SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA AT THE ASIA-PACIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2022



Bangladesh

The honourable delegate of Bangladesh shared that the eighth five-year plan of the Government of Bangladesh has incorporated all targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, with four priority indicators to be implemented at the local level. To overcome the Covid-19 crisis, the Government of Bangladesh has also implemented various steps, such as increasing spending on social production, launching stimulus packages, and widening the coverage of old persons allowance by including all eligible persons. 76 per cent of the population has also been vaccinated. Due to challenges in the education sector, including the continued closure of all educational institutions, the sector has prepared a COVID-19 response and recovery plan. Bangladesh has also developed a climate prosperity plan 2030. The country also requested for more cooperation to accelerate the Goals in various areas, such as trade, connectivity, and investment through private and public partnerships.



India

The honourable delegate of India shared that since the onset of the pandemic two years ago, India has introduced and successfully implemented an array of initiatives to mitigate the spread and impact of the pandemic and protect the health and livelihood of its population, including the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Package. Over 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered so far; with more than 800 million people have received at least two doses; under the Vaccine Maitri initiative, India has also supplied over 162 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to other countries, championing regional cooperation and multilateralism; India has also become the world's second largest producer of PPE kits with over a thousand manufacturers producing close to half a million units daily. With regards to the Sustainable Development Goals, India has adopted the model of cooperative and competitive federalism implemented through a whole-of-society approach to drive SDG achievements. Outcomes from 2016 to 2021 include the access of 331 million more people to improved sanitation, and of 233 million more people to clean cooking fuel. Health coverage programmes covering over 500 million people have also been rolled out leading to almost 10 per cent reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure on health. India also remains deeply committed to climate action, including to become a net zero emissions nation by 2070, of building 50 percent renewable energy capacity by 2030 with 500 GW, and a cut down in carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030. The honourable delegate reiterated India's commitment to accomplishing the SDGs on time, and stated that India will continue to use the SDG framework as its principal development agenda, and to engage with multiple stakeholders for accelerating progress towards achieving the Global Goals.



The honourable delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran spoke of the country's efforts to make significant progress on implementing sustainable development components. The literacy rate of women in Iran is 90 per cent, while 50 per cent of college students, 30 per cent of university faculty and 37 per cent of medical doctors are women. 30 per cent of all decision-makers in the country are also women. Further, 500,000 refugee students have registered at Iranian schools and universities. 99 per cent the urban population and 90 per cent of the rural population have access to safe drinking water.



Maldives

The honourable delegate of Maldives shared that the country has achieved Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4 and 7 while maintaining progress in Goals 6, 11 and 16 throughout the pandemic. While the Covid-19 pandemic had adverse impacts of economy and livelihoods, it has also provided lessons especially in the potential of ICT in the delivery of public services and inclusivity; in response to the impact of the pandemic, efforts have been made to enhance security and training for health and essential workers as well as retraining redundant tourism staff and providing financial support with the focus on SMEs. Maldives is also focusing on its transportation system to facilitate better access to services and economic opportunities, as well as decentralized governance and enhanced investment in education, health and ICT. As the pandemic has created new forms of inequality that has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, the government has created a short-term national resilience recovery plan to revive economic growth and realign the social sector to face these challenges. The government is also strengthening the decentralization process with newly elected local councils that are empowered with more fiscal, developmental and legal autonomy.



Nepal

The honourable delegate of Nepal stated that the country is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the country has mainstreamed the Goals into national plans and programs, including localization at the provincial and local levels. The necessary policy and institutional architecture has been created for SDG implementation to be more systematic, including the creation of various SDG committees to facilitate the process of SDG implementation. Stakeholders, such as the private sector, nongovernmental sector, civil society and communities, development partners, have been mobilized to attain inclusive sustainable development. A review of progress shows that Nepal met significant progress in achieving the SDGs: poverty and inequality has been reduced, and there has been increased women's empowerment and increased access to education, drinking water, roads, energy and health facilities. In the context of LDC graduation, the country is in the process of preparing a robust strategy to ensure smooth sustainable development.



Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The honourable delegate of Pakistan shared that the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) have helped strengthen the national ownership of the 2030 Agenda, improved coordination, participation, and fostered transparency and accountability amongst key stakeholders. Pakistan's second VNR for the 2022 High Level Political Forum will highlight the country's efforts for a more resilient and equal Pakistan and the factors behind the country's success of its COVID-19 responses. Pakistan plans to translate the VNR synopsis into local languages and disseminate it widely, inviting public opinion. Twinning with Sri Lanka for the second VNR has added a powerful dimension to this learning process, enabling the South-South collaboration platform for shared regional trust, the flourishing of local stories, celebration of successes, deliberating on challenges and of exploring together indigenous ways of doing things for achieving higher impact.



The honourable delegate of Sri Lanka shared that there has been steady progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, while noting and the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 as being the greatest challenge that threatens SDG progress. Strategic interventions have been made to address post-COVID revival and sustainable development challenges, including capitalizing on export-oriented growth and increasing investment towards a low carbon and resource efficient economy supported by healthy ecosystems and well-protected and managed oceans and marine coastal ecosystems, that in turn support inclusive and sustainable livelihoods of the people. Yet approximately 70 per cent of the workforce is informally employed, making these populations vulnerable to extreme poverty, particularly during crisis situations; there is therefore a pressing need for the formalization of the labour market in the transition towards becoming a manufacturing hub. As a medium-term target, Sri Lanka hopes to enhance the share of renewable energy in the total energy mix to fulfil 70 per cent of energy demands from renewable sources by 2030; Sri Lanka expects to add 2000 megawatts to the national grid from renewable sources in the next three years. The country is also in the process of developing an SDG investor map to unlock new levels of private capital flows towards the SDGs, and is exploring the introduction of green and blue bonds to sustain and finance projects in the country. Sri Lanka has also invested copious efforts towards increasing access to justice for the people and in reforming the legal sector.



V. NEWS EXCERPTS ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Disclaimer: These Headlines consist of selected excerpts from press articles for information only. The inclusion of headlines does not imply endorsement by ESCAP. ESCAP cannot vouch for the accuracy of these reports and is not responsible for any errors contained therein.



a. Economic Dimension

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban economy conference in Kabul stresses need for funds 19 January 2022. Five months into their rule of Afghanistan, the Taliban have increased revenue, cracked down on corruption and collected a surprising \$1 billion in exports, the U.N. representative for the country said Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

ILO report says Afghan crisis causing massive job losses 19 January 2022. More than a half million people in Afghanistan have lost their jobs since the Taliban takeover in mid-August, the International Labor Organization said in a report released Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

United Nations chief urges major Afghan aid increase, unfreezing assets 27 January 2022. The U.N. chief urged nations Wednesday to greatly boost humanitarian aid for millions of Afghans living in "a frozen hell" and release nearly \$9 billion in frozen assets to pull Afghanistan's economy back from the brink of a collapse that could set off a mass exodus of people fleeing the country. Read more [here](#).

UN envoy: Afghan failing economy heads to 'irreversibility' 3 March 2022. The U.N. special envoy for Afghanistan said the international community hasn't done enough to revive the country's economy as it heads toward "a point of irreversibility," while the U.S. said it is the responsibility of the ruling Taliban to create the conditions for economic stability. Read more [here](#).

BANGLADESH

Resurgence in Bangladesh's business following second wave of Covid 15 January 2022. Bangladesh economy is rebounding thanks to the resurgence of its external trade. The country's

Iran: World Bank predicts 2.6% economic growth in Raisi administration 17 January 2022. According to the report, the average economic growth of the Islamic Republic stood at 1.4 percent within eight years of former president Hassan Rouhani's first and second administrations. Read more [here](#).

Iran's non-oil exports surpass pre-United States Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) exit 18 January 2022. Iran's exports reached more than 35 billion dollars in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021 to December 21, 2021), showing a four-billion-dollar jump in comparison to the same period before the US's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, a report said. Read more [here](#).

Iranian parliament abolish exchange of dollar under official exchange rate 6 March 2022. The Iranian parliament abolished the exchange of dollar under the official exchange rate (where \$1 equals to 42,000 rials) for next Iranian year's budget (March 21, 2022 through March 20, 2023). Read more [here](#).

All kinds of sanctions barring Iran's economic benefits have to be lifted: Spox 13 March 2022. The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry has announced that all sanctions which bar Iran's economic benefits have to be removed. Read more [here](#).

Iran to set out constructing first ever petrorefinery 15 March 2022. Iran is going to start construction of its first ever petrorefinery next Persian year (later in 2022), Oil Minister Javad Owji said on Tuesday. Read more [here](#).

Oil industry should be developed without an eye on Vienna talks 17 March 2022. The development of Iran's oil sector should not be tied to the Vienna talks which are aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal

Bangladesh govt to launch unique ID for e-commerce entities 20 January 2022. The government is set to introduce Unique Business Identification (UBID), which will be mandatory for all e-commerce operating entities in the country. Read more [here](#).

Returns on foreign loans may squeeze as Bangladesh's debt servicing liabilities surge 22 January 2022. Bangladesh's net foreign loans fell as repayments under debt-servicing liabilities surged year on year in the last fiscal, officials say as economists caution about its blowback impact. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit seeks bank account details of Muhammad Yunus 24 January 2022. The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) has asked banks to provide detailed information of accounts and transactions of Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus for the last two years. Read more [here](#).

Technology development is a big challenge for post-Low Developing Country Bangladesh: Japanese Envoy 24 January 2022. Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki has said innovation and technology development will play a key role in coping with new challenges as Bangladesh graduates from LDC status soon. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka Trade Fair ends with \$16 billion export order 31 January 2022. The 26th edition of Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) concluded on Monday fetching \$16 million export orders. Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi on Monday said the country can attain the export target of US\$51 billion by making quality products and their diversification. Read more [here](#).

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to increase investment in Bangladesh, finance minister hopes 2 February 2022. Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has expressed his hope that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) would increase investment in Bangladesh to implement the 8th Five Year Plan, SDGs amid the Covid-19 challenges. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority proposes Sadarghat-Gulistan direct road link 6 February 2022. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has proposed a direct road link between Sadarghat and Gulistan either underground or overhead to ease the commute woes of launch passengers. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh government to start feasibility study on Metrorail in Chattogram: Quader 6 February 2022. The government will conduct a feasibility study of metro-rail in the port city of Chattogram with the help of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh Prime Minister directs ministry to make overseas employment process transparent 8 February 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday directed the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry to make the overseas employment process very transparent and conduct a massive campaign to raise the jobseekers' awareness. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh's economy grows 6.94 per cent in Financial Year 21, surpassing government estimate 8 February 2022. Bangladesh's economy grew 6.94 per cent in fiscal 2020-21, exceeding the government's provisional estimate of 5.43 per cent for the year. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh may reduce rice import duty to 10 per cent to address price volatility: Minister 8 February 2022. Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder said rice import duty may be brought down to 10 per cent in need to prevent the price volatility in the market. Read more [here](#).

No area of economy has negative growth: Bangladesh Finance Minister Finance Minister 10

March 2022. The Islamic Republic of Iran plans to grant visa to foreign innovators active in technological and scientific arenas, an Iranian official said. Read more [here](#).

NEPAL

Nepal's Gross Domestic Product projected to limit at 3.9 percent 12 January 2022. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) is predicted to remain around 3.9 per cent in the current fiscal year (2021-22), according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report issued on Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's imports hit Rs1 trillion mark in the first half of the fiscal year 24 January 2022. If inflation reaches double digits and trade deficit keeps rising, the situation may turn from bad to worse. Read more [here](#).

Move to raise internal loans in Nepal may aggravate liquidity crunch 29 January 2022. Government has sought to raise internal debts by Rs20 billion in less than a week. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's finance minister admits lack of development-friendly policy, structures 31 January 2022. Finance Minister Janardan Sharma has admitted the lack of development-friendly policy and structures to make the national economy dynamic. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's electric vehicle imports surge after tax cuts February 22 2022. According to the Department of Customs, 1,103 battery-powered cars worth Rs3.24 billion entered the country between mid-July and mid-January. Read more [here](#).

Kathmandu Metropolitan City recovers Rs 70 million arrears from tax payers 8 February 2022. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City has recovered Rs 70 million arrears from big taxpayers, who had not paid land, house and property tax for the past 28 years. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's Central bank enforces interoperability to promote digital payments 9 February 2022. Interoperability allows users of one digital payment platform to make payments to the users of other such platforms in a convenient, affordable, fast, seamless and secure way. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's Central bank sees capital flight risk in illegal investments in cryptocurrencies 9 February 2022. Nepal faces a high risk of capital flight through investments in cryptocurrencies although the country has barred Nepalis from investing abroad, the Nepal Rastra Bank has said. Read more [here](#).

Nepal's industry and export sector continue to flounder, report says 9 February 2022. Poor coordination, confusing policies and bewildering bureaucracy are the major stumbling blocks. Read more [here](#).

A digital leap: Nepalis can borrow up to Rs500,000 online 14 February 2022. Nepalis can now borrow up to Rs500,000 from their banks over the internet, and save themselves a trip to the banking office. Read more [here](#).

Cash margin on import to address challenges in economy: Finance Minister Sharma 13 March 2022. Minister for Finance Janardan Sharma asserted that the government imposed cash margin on the import to address the challenges seen in Nepal's economy. Read more [here](#).

Power supply to industries in three regions cut off due to reduced imports from India 23 March 2022. Factories in the Birgunj-Pathlaiya industrial corridor clanked to a stop after the Nepal Electricity Authority switched off the power because of a drop in imports from India. Read more [here](#).

PAKISTAN

Pakistani Senate body rejects key proposals of Finance Bill 11 January 2022. The Senate Standing Committee on Finance has rejected some key

Foreign Minister calls upon the expatriate community to invest in Bangladesh 12 February 2022. Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has called upon the Bangladeshi expatriates to invest in Bangladesh for building prosperous Bangladesh. Read more [here](#).

Istisna Sukuk to raise Tk 50b for financing rural infrastructure development in Bangladesh 15 February 2022. The central bank now tosses a new brand of Islamic bond called Istisna Sukuk to raise Tk 50 billion for financing a rural infrastructure-development project, officials say. Read more [here](#).

Call for bringing discipline to Bangladesh's financial sector reiterated 20 February 2022. Bangladesh's graduation from the least-developed country (LDC) status may not sustain without bringing discipline in the financial sector, opines Centre for Policy Dialogue Distinguished Fellow Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya. Read more [here](#).

Less spending yields Bangladesh budget surplus in 1st half 23 February 2022. Bangladesh sees budget surplus in the first half of the current fiscal year as the government spent less than its tax and other revenue receipts, officials say. Read more [here](#).

Bangladeshi banks asked to draw up plan to shun financial shock 24 February 2022. The Bangladesh Bank today asked banks to draw up a recovery plan so that they can take a time-befitting move to resolve any downside risk emanating from default loans, liquidity crisis and some other factors. Read more [here](#).

PM Hasina wants insurance sector under full digital system 1 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the insurance sector would have to be brought under a complete automation and digitised system to render hassle free services and thus encourage the people about insurance. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh has to launch second phase of trade policy reform 1 March 2022. Over the past 50 years, Bangladesh has proved to the world that it can be a highly competitive trading nation. Trade, not aid, is now our motto. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh shares updated info on continental shelf in Bay with UN 2 March 2022. Bangladesh has presented updated information on the country's continental shelf in the Bay of Bengal to the UN. Read more [here](#).

Development budget downsized with cuts in foreign funds 3 March 2022. The government downsized the annual development budget to Tk 2.07 trillion with cuts in foreign assistance by Tk 175 billion, as foreign-aided projects lost gear into lax execution. Read more [here](#).

Ballooning import payments drag Bangladesh's reserves down 7 March 2022. Ballooning import payments amid price rises and a payment to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) dragged Bangladesh's foreign-exchange reserves down US\$44 billion, officials say. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh's huge trade gap entails record current-account deficit 9 March 2022. Bangladesh's overall trade deficit crossed US\$18-billion mark in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, burning a gaping hole in the country's current-account coffer. Read more [here](#).

Government lifts VAT on imports of cooking oil, sugar ahead of Ramadan 10 March 2022. The government will lift VAT on imports of cooking oil, sugar and gram in an effort to lower market prices ahead of Ramadan, says Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh moves to boost dredging capacity 13 March 2022. The government moves to increase dredging capacity aiming to ensure navigability in river routes for smooth movement of goods and passenger vessels, says a high official of shipping ministry. Read more [here](#).

services, 17 percent sales tax on seeds, 17 percent sales tax on locally-manufactured mobile phones, and increase in the rate of withholding tax on purchase of motor vehicles to discharge on money. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan Government bringing tsunami of taxes through mini-budget: Bilawal 12 January 2022. Criticising the government, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that it is bringing a tsunami of taxes through the mini-budget. Read more [here](#).

Finance ministry looks to pacify concerns over mini-budget, State Bank of Pakistan bill 13 January 2022. Muzzammil Aslam says Finance (Supplementary) Bill is a 'reform budget' that would capture the value-chain. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan offers permanent residency to foreign investors 15 January 2022. New policy allows foreigners to get permanent resident status in lieu of investment, says Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry. Read more [here](#).

Investment in Tech sector vital for youth employment, national economy: Pakistan Prime Minister 17 January 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said that the investment in technology sector was vital to create employment for the youth as well as improve the national economy. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan looks to issue United States dollar-denominated Sukuk bonds 18 January 2022. In a bid to generate funds, Pakistan would soon issue US dollar-denominated Sukuk bonds as it looks to shore up its foreign exchange reserves in the face of a rising import bill. Read more [here](#).

Long-awaited Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) policy launched in Pakistan 20 January 2022. PM says there is a great role of the SMEs in wealth creation and the government would go in one direction. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan Prime Minister directs for resolution of issues of special economic zones 24 January 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday instructed that issues of special economic zones should be resolved on priority basis and measures for facilitating the investors should be implemented in the given timeframe. Read more [here](#).

Start ups bringing Pakistan's farming into digital age 30 January 2022. Agriculture entrepreneurs are bringing the digital age to Pakistan's farmers, helping them plan crops better and distribute their produce when the time is right. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan focusing on optimal utilization of geo-economic location: President 31 January 2022. President Dr ArifAlvi Monday said that Pakistan was focusing on the optimal utilization of its geo-economic location to attract foreign investment as well as advance the goals of national economic development. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan's Agreement with International Monetary Fund: More hike in electricity base tariff on the cards 6 February 2022. The Government is all set to increase electricity base tariff under the agreement with International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the name of Annual Rebasings (AR) and power sector subsidies reforms, as the Fund has warned that existing increases in power tariff are insufficient to stem the accumulation of quasi-fiscal losses. Read more [here](#).

Prime Minister Imran approves establishment of Pakistan Cotton Authority 8 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday approved in principle the establishment of the Pakistan Cotton Authority, a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Read more [here](#).

E-banking transactions grow by 30% to \$500 billion in Financial Year21: State Bank of Pakistan Governor 15 February 2022. The e-banking transactions are considerably more than the country's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which currently stands at \$370 billion, Reza Bqir. Read more [here](#).

Airport in order to limit any inconvenience faced by travellers in future. Read more [here](#).

PM opens Payra power plant, says Bangladesh now under 100% power coverage 21 March 2022. After inaugurating the 1320 MW ultra-supercritical coal-fired power plant at Patuakhali's Payra, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Monday declared 100 percent electricity coverage in Bangladesh. Read more [here](#).

INDIA

India considering easing curbs on some Chinese investments: Report 11 January 2022. India is considering easing scrutiny on certain foreign direct investment, according to people familiar with the matter, after rules mainly aimed at China created a bottleneck for inflows. Read more [here](#).

Indian economy to see 9.5% growth this fiscal: former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Virmani 11 January 2022. The Indian economy is likely to register a growth of 9.5 per cent in this financial year, former chief economic adviser Arvind Virmani said on Tuesday.

Indian Budget: Govt plans Rs 1.4-trn fertiliser subsidy for farmers, says report 17 January 2022. The increased spending comes ahead of crucial assembly polls and amid efforts by the ruling BJP to win over farmers after facing massive protests against new laws that have since been scrapped. Read more [here](#).

Indian Prime Minister Modi says India is committed to reforms, calls for global effort on cryptocurrencies 18 January 2022. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to woo investors by promising that the fastest-growing economy in the world was committed to reforms and called for a collective global effort to deal with the problems posed by cryptocurrencies. Read more [here](#).

Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman may propose tax relief for global debt investors in Budget 20 January 2022. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will likely consider a capital gains tax waiver in the Union Budget for overseas debt investors, a move that will set the stage for India's inclusion in the keenly tracked global bond indices of Bloomberg-Barclays and JP Morgan, three people familiar with the matter told ET. Read more [here](#).

Indian Union Budget 2022-23: Phasing out of some tax exemptions likely 20 January 2022. The Centre is considering a gradual phasing out of certain direct tax exemptions meant for corporate and personal taxpayers. This is among the tax proposals being discussed for the upcoming Union Budget 2022-23. Read more [here](#).

Aspirational districts now eliminating barriers to progress: Indian Prime Minister 22 January 2022. Aspirational districts are now eliminating the barriers to the progress of the country and they have become accelerators for growth instead of impediments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday as he interacted with District Magistrates. Read more [here](#).

Economic indicators flash early warning sign for India's rebound 27 January 2022. India's economic momentum remained stable in December even as the first signs of slowing output growth appeared across some industries. Read more [here](#).

India budget: Is it enough to revive the Covid-hit economy? 1 February 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has ramped up spending on infrastructure, and extended credit guarantees to small businesses as Asia's third-largest economy struggles to pull off an equitable post-Covid recovery. Read more [here](#).

India's growth-focused Budget sparks concerns on inflation, tighter rates 2 February 2022. Plan to borrow record Rs 14.95 trn exceeds market estimates; high oil prices, prospect of Fed hikes contribute to worries. Read more [here](#).

Budget 2022: India's job crisis leading to a 'nowhere generation' 3 February 2022. India aims to create six million jobs over the next five years,

now be able to reform gas pricing structure and enhance supplies of imported gas. Read more [here](#).

Govt focusing industrialisation to create jobs, enhance exports: Pakistan's Prime Minister 23 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday said that the government was giving a special attention to promote industrialization for creating employment opportunities as well as enhance country's exports. Read more [here](#).

6% growth rate by 2025 targeted for Pakistan 24 February 2022. Three-year economic growth strategy finalised; envisages per capita income of over \$2,100. Read more [here](#).

Finance ministry says imports have started to rationalise 26 February 2022. Statement comes as Pakistan reports massive current account deficit in January. Read more [here](#).

PM Imran slashes petrol prices by Rs10, power tariff by rs5 as part of relief measures for public 28 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday announced the slashing of petroleum products' price by Rs10 per litre and electricity tariff by Rs5 per unit as part of a series of measures to bring some relief to the masses. Read more [here](#).

PM Imran announces industrial package with eyes on foreign exchange inflow 1 March 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan announced the industrial package on Tuesday, adding that without enhancing the manufacturing base, Pakistan cannot progress, a statement that comes a day after he unveiled a number of measures to tame rising inflation, and boost economic productivity in the country. Read more [here](#).

Record tax collection allowed govt. to provide relief to public, says PM Imran 2 March 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan lauded on Wednesday performance of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for collecting a record Rs443 billion tax this month, saying that this allowed the government to provide relief to the people. Read more [here](#).

Trade deficit stays high at \$32b 3 March 2022. Pakistan's trade deficit remained significantly high at \$32 billion in the first eight months of current fiscal year as the pace of increase in exports stood at nearly half of the surge in imports, making the government's external position vulnerable. Read more [here](#).

Death toll climbs to 63 in deadly Pakistan IS mosque attack 5 March 2022. Officials vowed Saturday to hunt down and arrest the masterminds behind a deadly mosque attack in Pakistan a day earlier claimed by an Islamic State affiliate. The assault killed 63 people and wounded nearly 200. Read more [here](#).

World Bank recommends establishing IWA at federal level 5 March 2022. The World Bank has recommended to Pakistan for establishing an Inland Waterway Authority (IWA) at the federal level for developing, regulating, monitoring, promoting and standardising inland waterways transportation (IWT) through major legislation. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan still a cheaper country to live in compared to others, says PM Imran 7 March 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday claimed that Pakistan was still a cheaper country to live in as compared to many others as he recalled the measures taken by his government to steer the country out of the ongoing inflationary tide. Read more [here](#).

FATF decision 'politically motivated': Tarin 7 March 2022. The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin said that Pakistan would exit from the grey list of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) this year as it has already achieved almost all targets set by the task force. Read more [here](#).

SBP keeps interest rate unchanged at 9.75% 8 March 2022. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has kept the interest rate unchanged at 9.75%, it was announced on Tuesday. Read more [here](#).

on 3Ts 3 February 2022. Foreign secretary Harsh Shringla has written to all mission heads that Indian embassies will function as a team and all officers will be judged on parameters of enhancement of trade, procurement of technology and selling India as a tourism destination. Read more [here](#).

India's digital currency to debut by early 2023 6 February 2022. India's very own official digital currency is likely to debut by early 2023, which will mirror any of the currently available private company-operated electronic wallets, but with a change that it will be a sovereign-backed facility, a top government source said. Read more [here](#).

Warning Indians against cryptocurrencies, Reserve Bank of India chief says tulips have more value 10 February 2022. India's central bank chief delivered a stark warning against investing in cryptocurrencies, saying they lacked the underlying value of even a tulip - in a reference to a speculative bubble that gripped the Netherlands in the 17th Century. Read more [here](#).

Indian economy may witness post-pandemic economic reset by year-end: Finance Ministry 16 February 2022. The Finance Ministry on Wednesday said that current year may as well end with an economic reset manifest of a post pandemic world. It added that commitment in the Union Budget towards asset creation will invigorate the virtuous cycle of investment and crowd in private investment. Read more [here](#).

India likely to propose 18% Goods & Sales Tax (GST) on crypto mining, trading entities 17 February 2022. The Centre will take a proposal to the Goods and Services Tax Council (GST Council) to levy GST on entities that provide a mining platform for cryptocurrency assets and those who use virtual digital assets as a medium of exchange in purchases. Read more [here](#).

India's draft data policy unlocks govt data for all, mulls monetization 22 February 2022. Pricing of datasets will be done by the respective government departments in a transparent manner. Read more [here](#).

Uncertainties remain around India's medium-term debt trajectory: Fitch 24 February 2022. Fitch Ratings said India's economy is rapidly recovering from the pandemic but uncertainties remain around its medium-term debt trajectory. Read more [here](#).

Reserve Bank of India proposes to assess impact of its financial literacy campaigns 27 February 2022. The Reserve Bank of India is proposing to assess the impact of the multi-media awareness campaigns launched by it to promote financial literacy and also safe banking practices. Read more [here](#).

India's GDP growth slows to 5.4% in Q3, estimated to rise 8.9% in FY22 28 February 2022. India's economic growth slowed to 5.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2021-22 but higher than China's GDP expansion of 4 per cent during the same period and the country retained its position as the world's fastest growing major economy. Read more [here](#).

Output of eight core sectors at 3.7% in Jan: Govt data 28 February 2022. Production of eight infrastructure sectors expanded by 3.7 per cent in January against 1.3 per cent in the same month last year on better show by coal, natural gas and cement industries, according to official data released on Monday. Read more [here](#).

PM Modi pushes for 'Aatmanirbhar' tech, cites Biden policy 2 March 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday advocated self-reliance in the technology-related sector and also pointed out how countries like the United States were following a similar policy of 'aatmanirbharta'. Read more [here](#).

India's mfg activities expand in Feb as output, new orders rise amid favourable demand: PMI 2 March 2022. India's manufacturing sector activities expanded in February as output and new orders grew at accelerated rates, supported by favourable demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

first time in history, over Rs4.3 trillion deficit in the current fiscal year, the finance ministry informed the federal cabinet. Read more [here](#).

Surge in power sector capacity payments 'haemorrhaging' government finances: Tarin 17 March 2022. Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin expressed concern over the rising capacity payments in the power sector, which he said has had to pay Rs850 billion this year alone for electricity which "we don't even use". Read more [here](#).

Govt taking steps to encourage growth of IT sector: President 29 March 2022. President Dr. ArifAlvi says the government is taking measures to encourage growth of IT sector, which has potential to increase exports. Read more [here](#).

Militants attack troops in northwestern Pakistan, killing 6 30 March 2022. Militants attacked a headquarters of paramilitary security forces in northwest Pakistan early Wednesday, triggering an intense shootout in which at least four troops and three insurgents were killed, police said. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan's Imran Khan is fighting for his political life 31 March 2022. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is facing arguably the biggest challenge of his political career, as the opposition seeks to remove him from office in a vote of no confidence. Read more [here](#).

Moody's concerned over no-confidence motion, says it increases pressure on economy 31 March 2022. Credit rating agency "The Moody's" has raised concerns over No Confidence Motion tabled by the opposition parties in Pakistan against Prime Minister Imran Khan, saying that it would put significant pressure on the country's economy. Read more [here](#).

SRI LANKA

United Kingdom and Sri Lanka recognise contributions by diaspora 19 January 2022. The United Kingdom (UK) and Sri Lanka have recognised the contributions made by the British Sri Lankan diaspora communities. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka denies claims on purchasing weapons from North Korea 2 February 2022. Sri Lanka has denied claims it purchased weapons from North Korea using black market Dollars. Read more [here](#).

Illicit financial flows from developing countries deplete resources: Pakistani Prime Minister 7 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said that the illicit financial flows from developing countries to the developed countries depleted the resources of developing nations and the phenomenon also manifested itself in creating issues like illegal migration. Read more [here](#).

European Union strongly urges Sri Lanka to lift forthwith import restrictions 9 February 2022. The European Union (EU) strongly urged Sri Lanka to lift forthwith import restrictions preventing many European products from entering its market. Read more [here](#).

Special Goods and Services Tax Bill inconsistent with Constitution 22 February 2022. The Supreme Court has ruled that the Special Goods and Services Tax Bill is inconsistent with the Constitution. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka to pay 20 rupees per dollar incentive to boost remittances 9 March 2022. Sri Lanka will pay an extra 20 rupees for every dollar sent by migrant workers ahead of its new year celebrations next month, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday, as the country seeks to boost remittances to manage its worst financial crisis in years. Read more [here](#).

Govt. debt increased by Rs. 2.3 trillion within 11 months 21 March 2022. Outstanding central government debt increased to Rs. 17,413.7 bn by end November 2021 from Rs. 15,117.2 bn as at end 2020, according to data given by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. During the year up to 18th March 2022, the Sri Lankan rupee depreciated against the US dollar by

India's trade and current account deficits are likely to widen, putting pressure on the rupee, as global oil prices surge and the domestic economy reopens from a third wave of the pandemic, economists and analysts said. Read more [here](#).

Govt may soon allow rupee-ruble trade; arrangement will bypass sanctions 3 March 2022. The government may soon give the green light to bilateral trade between Russia and India in their national currencies to avoid any trade disruptions, multiple people aware of the matter said. Read more [here](#).

Small finance banks seek an urgent extension of time limit for listing 7 March 2022. Small finance banks (SFBs) have sought an urgent extension of the time limit for their listing — after having met some financial conditions — to eight years from six currently. These banks have cited the “accepted recommendations 31 and 27” of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Internal Working Group (IWG) to buttress their request. Read more [here](#).

Modi govt's infrastructure push fuels bond sales by highway builders 8 March 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan for India to build 25,000 kilometers of highway in the fiscal year starting next month is making the local currency bond market busy. Read more [here](#).

India GDP growth forecast cut to 7.9 pc: Morgan Stanley 13 March 2022. As higher oil prices torpedo economic recovery worldwide, Morgan Stanley has cut India's GDP forecast for the fiscal year beginning April 1 by 50 basis points to 7.9 per cent, raised retail inflation projection to 6 per cent and expects current account deficit to widen to 3 per cent of GDP. Read more [here](#).

India's retail inflation rises marginally to 6.07% in Feb 14 March 2022. India's retail inflation rose marginally in February to 6.07%, thus staying above the upper limit of RBI's tolerance band, showed government data on Monday. Read more [here](#).

WPI inflation rises to 13.11% in February 14 March 2022. Data released by the government on Monday showed that wholesale inflation in India rose to 13.11% in February. Read more [here](#).

Will make calibrated interventions to keep fuel prices under control: Govt 15 March 2022. The government on Tuesday said it is keeping a close watch on evolving geopolitical developments and would make 'calibrated interventions' to keep fuel prices under control to safeguard the interest of the common man. Read more [here](#).

Moody's lowers India growth estimate for CY22 to 9.1% on Ukraine conflict 17 March 2022. Rating agency Moody's on Thursday scaled down India's economic growth forecast by 40 basis points to 9.1 per cent in CY2022 due to adverse effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the global economy. Read more [here](#).

Govt working to classify cryptocurrency under GST law, 'remove doubt' 21 March 2022. The government is working on classification of cryptocurrency as goods or services under the GST law, so that tax can be levied on the entire value of transactions. Read more [here](#).

RBI Governor vows ample liquidity to aid India's economy 21 March 2022. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the RBI will continue to ensure adequate liquidity to support the economy, which is facing many headwinds in the form of soaring crude oil and key commodity prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Read more [here](#).

Crypto mining cost not to be allowed as deduction under I-T Act: FinMin 21 March 2022. Infrastructure cost incurred in the mining of cryptocurrencies or any virtual digital assets will not be allowed as deduction under the income tax act, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said. Read more [here](#).

Fitch slashes FY23 India growth forecast to 8.5% on high energy prices 22 March 2022. Rating

The power cuts have been extended to 13 hours Friday with some areas set to experience the outage even between midnight and 5am. Read more [here](#).

TURKEY

Turkey's trade deficit shrinks 7.5% to \$46.13B in 2021 31 January 2022. Turkey's annual foreign trade deficit narrowed 7.5% year-over-year in 2021, official data showed on Monday, but the shortfall deteriorated in December on the back of a surge in costs of energy imports. Read more [here](#).

Turkish Reserve Bank to wrap up \$350 billion stimulus program this month as economy beats forecasts 1 February 2022. The Reserve Bank will end its \$350 billion bond-buying program on February 10, amid much better-than-expected economic data and rising inflation. Read more [here](#).

Turkey pitches new economic model, signals new steps to shore up lira 9 February 2022. Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati outlined Turkey's new economic path to investors in London, pledging to keep the exchange rate stable, bring inflation down to single digits and keep dollarization at bay. Read more [here](#).

Turkey slashes taxes on basic foods to fight inflation 12 February 2022. Turkey announced a significant reduction in taxes on basic food supplies Saturday to counter soaring inflation while also unveiling a new credit guarantee fund package and a new model to bring “under-the-mattress” gold into the economy. Read more [here](#).

Turkey authorizes banks to issue dollar-denominated sukuk 15 February 2022. Turkey's Treasury and Finance Ministry announced Tuesday that it is authorizing banks to issue dollar-denominated sukuk, its first dollar bond sale since September. Read more [here](#).

Turkish budget posts 30 billion liras in surplus 16 February 2022. The central government budget posted 30 billion Turkish Liras of surplus in January, data from the Treasury and Finance Ministry have shown. Read more [here](#).

With weak lira, Turkey woos foreign firms 20 February 2022. There is a silver lining to Turkey's currency crisis and the global supply chain crunch: The country is becoming an attractive alternative at the gates of Europe for foreign firms. Read more [here](#).

Turkish economic growth surges to 11 pct in 2021 1 March 2022. The Turkish economy expanded 11 percent year on year in 2021 in line with market expectations, according to official data revealed. Read more [here](#).

Turkish exports remain strong but Ukraine conflict clouds outlook 2 March 2022. Turkey's exports registered another all-time monthly high in February, but its trade deficit widened mainly due to the surging energy bill, while Russia's invasion of Ukraine is adding to the woes, clouding the outlook. Read more [here](#).

Turkey's defense industry targets more than \$4 billion in exports this year: Official 6 March 2022. Turkey's defense industry aims to generate more than \$4 billion in export revenues in 2022, the head of the Defense Industries Presidency has said, noting that the country is among the top nations in terms of developing drone technologies. Read more [here](#).

Turkish factory activity seen expanding 9.7% in January 9 March 2022. The industrial production in Turkey is expected to have expanded 9.7% annually in January, rising for a 19th consecutive month, according to a survey. Read more [here](#).

Turkey's jobless rate steady at 11.4%, underutilization up slightly 10 March 2022. The number of unemployed people in Turkey remained unchanged in January, official data showed on Thursday. Read more [here](#).

Turkey 'most viable route' for East Med Sea gas

India achieves \$400 billion goods exports target for first time 24 March 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that for the first time, India achieved its target of reaching \$400 billion in exports. Read more [here](#).

3% hike in DA for Central govt. staff, pensioners effective Jan 1, 2022 30 March 2022. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday hiked Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) by 3 per cent to 34 per cent to compensate for the price rise, benefitting over 1.16 crore central government employees and pensioners. Read more [here](#).

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Iran's trade with neighbors up 42% in value 13 January 2022. Alireza Moqaddasi said that expanding political and economic ties with neighbor countries was a key policy in President Ebrahim Raisi's administration that took office in August. Read more [here](#).

said. Read more [here](#).

Inflation top issue, food stocks sufficient amid Ukraine war: Nebati 15 March 2022. Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati on Tuesday said inflation remained the economy's biggest problem, reiterating the government's determination to curb rising prices. Read more [here](#).

Turkish central bank keeps rates steady as govt vows to curb prices 17 March 2022. Turkey's central bank kept its interest rates steady for a third consecutive month on Thursday, in line with market expectations, while the government reiterated its determination to curb rising prices. Read more [here](#).

Turkish president announces 'digital mobilization' 21 March 2022. Turkey's potential is at a level to create its own Silicon Valley when it comes to digital platforms, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said, announcing that the government is launching "digital mobilization." Read more [here](#).

Countries brace for hit to tourism from Russia-Ukraine war 24 March 2022. After losing two years to the COVID-19 pandemic, shopkeepers in the heart of the Turkish Riviera had hoped for a strong tourism season this year to help keep their businesses afloat. But Russia's war in Ukraine is fast dampening their spirits. Read more [here](#).

Turkey's economic confidence down in March for 2nd month in row 30 March 2022. Turkey's economic confidence index decreased for the second consecutive month in March, the country's statistical authority announced Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

b. Social Dimension

AFGHANISTAN

World Food Program director for Afghanistan warns of "tsunami of hunger" 13 January 2022. Afghanistan is facing a "tsunami of hunger" because of a shortage of funds that's needed to keep the supply of food intact as country teeters on the edge of economic run with more than half of the population struggling to eat this winter, a senior official with the United Nations World Food Program said on Thursday. Read more [here](#).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Announces Aid for Afghan Teachers 20 February 2022. UNICEF announced Sunday an emergency cash support effort for all public education teachers in Afghanistan for January and February, saying the move will allow continued access to education for all school-age girls and boys. Read more [here](#).

Afghan students return to Kabul, but with restrictions 26 February 2022. Kabul University, among Afghanistan's oldest and most revered institutions of higher education, reopened Saturday for the first time since the Taliban takeover six months ago. Men and women attended, but now were segregated, with women required to wear Islamic dress. Read more [here](#).

The tragedy of Afghanistan's malnourished children 16 March 2022. Every few seconds a sick child is brought in to the emergency room of the main hospital in Lashkar Gah in a race against time to save the youngest casualties of Afghanistan's hunger crisis. Read more [here](#).

UN's new Afghanistan mandate focuses on equality, inclusion 17 March 2022. The U.N. Security Council on Thursday approved a robust mandate for its political mission in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover last August. The new mandate authorizes the mission to promote gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, human rights of all Afghans and an inclusive and representative government. Read more [here](#).

Taliban breaks promise on higher education for Afghan girls 24 March 2022. Afghanistan's Taliban rulers unexpectedly decided against reopening

Modi govt extends scheme providing free food grain to poor by six months 26 March 2022. The Narendra Modi government on Saturday extended the Pradhanmantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, the scheme to provide free food grains by another six months. The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Modi. Read more [here](#).

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

US sanctions endangering Iranians' health, int'l activities 16 January 2022. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN, informed UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid that 11 countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, have lost their right to vote at the United Nations because of unpaid dues. Read more [here](#).

Envoy lauds Iran's remarkable achievements in women advancement, empowerment 9 March 2022. Iran's Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zahra Ershadi said that despite the US illegal and inhumane sanctions, Iran has remarkable achievements in the field of women advancement and empowerment. Read more [here](#).

Iran VP calls for contribution of women to prevent repercussions of war, sanctions 19 March 2022. Iranian Vice-President on Women, Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali said on Saturday that peace-loving women have to make a more active contribution to preventing the repercussions of war and sanctions. Read more [here](#).

Iran again bans women from football stadium 30 March 2022. Iran has once again denied women entry to a football stadium to watch an international match, leaving hundreds of ticketed fans locked out, Iranian media said Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

MALDIVES

Maldivians urged to visit Sri Lanka with lifting of mandatory PCR tests 9 March 2022. Maldivians have been urged to visit Sri Lanka with the lifting of the mandatory PCR tests for fully vaccinated travellers. Read more [here](#).

Female foreign ministers press Taliban on girls' education 26 March 2022. Female foreign ministers from 16 countries around the world said they are "deeply disappointed" that Afghan girls are being denied access to secondary schools and called on the Taliban to reverse their decision. Diplomats from 10 countries sounded a similar message at the United Nations. Read more [here](#).

Taliban ban Afghan women from flying without male relative 28 March 2022. The Taliban have ordered airlines in Afghanistan to stop women from boarding flights unless accompanied by a male relative, aviation officials told AFP. Read more [here](#).

Taliban bars government employees without beards from work – sources 28 March 2022. Afghanistan's Taliban has instructed all government employees to wear a beard and adhere to a dress code or risk being fired, three sources told Reuters, the latest of several new restrictions imposed by the hardline Islamist administration. Read more [here](#).

UN Security Council asks Taliban to allow Afghan girls to attend school 28 March 2022. The United Nations Security Council has expressed deep concern over a decision by Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to deny girls access to high school education and called on the group to reopen schools for female students without delay. Read more [here](#).

World Bank freezes Afghan projects after Taliban bans girls from high school 30 March 2022. The World Bank has put four projects in Afghanistan worth \$600 million on hold amid concerns over a decision by the country's ruling Islamist leaders to ban girls from returning to public high schools, the bank said. Read more [here](#).

UN seeks record \$4.4B for Afghans struggling under Taliban 31 March 2022. The head of the United Nations said Thursday that nearly all Afghans don't have enough to eat and some have resorted to "selling their children and their body parts" to get money for food. Read more [here](#).

BANGLADESH

Bangladeshi Prime Minister transforming villages into cities eliminating inequality: Palak 29 January 2022. State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak today said that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is transforming villages into cities by eliminating all inequalities. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh to give vaccines to people above 12 and boosters to anyone over 40 30 January 2022. Bangladesh will give COVID-19 vaccine shots to everyone aged 12 or older and booster shots of the vaccine to anyone 40 years and up, says Health Minister Zahid Maleque. Read more [here](#).

Female Freedom Fighters to be honoured at national level tomorrow in Bangladesh 14 February 2022. The government is going to honour valiant women freedom fighters (FFs) at the national level for the first time tomorrow, marking Bangladesh's golden jubilee of independence for their outstanding contribution to the country's Liberation War. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh's Prime Minister stresses simplification of scientific terminologies in Bengali 22 February 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday said simplification of scientific terminologies in Bengali would make science-based education and research attractive for students. Read more [here](#).

Progress on breastfeeding in Bangladesh undermined by aggressive formula milk marketing: World Health Organisation, United Nations Children's Fund 23 February 2022. More than half of parents and pregnant women (51%) surveyed for a new WHO/UNICEF report say they have been targeted with marketing from formula milk companies, much of which is in breach of international standards on infant feeding practices. Read more [here](#).

declined offers from developed countries to dump COVID vaccines with short shelf life upon them, Nepal has followed suit by rejecting an offer from Poland to donate nine million doses of vaccines. Read more [here](#).

New school reform plan set for rollout in Nepal despite two previous flops 20 January 2022. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has adopted an ambitious programme aimed at improving the quality of school education by investing close to one trillion rupees in the next five years. Read more [here](#).

Nepal census: Some highlights from preliminary report 27 January 2022. The Central Bureau of Statistics on Wednesday unveiled the preliminary data of the 12th national census conducted in November last year, putting Nepal's population at 29,192,480, a rise of 10.18 percent from the last population count in 2011. Read more [here](#).

55-point plan for reform in Nepal's education sector: Minister Poudel 6 February 2022. Minister for Education, Science and Technology Devendra Poudel has said he had brought into the implementation the 55-point plan for the reform in education sector. Read more [here](#).

Nepal to use ivermectin to stamp out filariasis 28 February 2022. With all its efforts failing to control lymphatic filariasis or elephantiasis in some districts, the Ministry of Health and Population has decided to administer ivermectin along with diethylcarbamazine and albendazole. Read more [here](#).

All Covid restrictions lifted in Valley 5 March 2022. All Covid-19 related restrictions in the Kathmandu Valley have been lifted, effective from Saturday, following a large drop in coronavirus cases, officials said last Friday. Read more [here](#).

Greater investment in care needed to create jobs 8 March 2022. Persistent and significant gaps in care services and policies have left hundreds of millions of workers with family responsibilities without adequate protection and support, yet meeting these needs could create almost 300 million jobs by 2035, according to a new International Labour Organisation (ILO) report. Read more [here](#).

Vice-President Pun calls for coordinated measures to fight VAW 15 March 2022. Vice-President Nanda Bahadur Pun has said climate change impact and COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a further rise in the exploitation and violence against women. Read more [here](#).

Omicron 'stealth' variant no cause for alarm yet, but concerns remain 21 March 2022. Nepal's Covid-19 cases have significantly declined over the last few days. Things have almost returned to normal and measures enforced to curb the spread of the virus have been lifted. Read more [here](#).

Children suffer from severe malnutrition in Muktikot; govt apathetic to woes of Bajura village 21 March 2022. The overwhelming number of the children of Muktikot village, SwamikartikKhapar Rural Municipality -1, Bajura are suffering from severe malnutrition. Read more [here](#).

Nearly half of the pregnancies in Nepal are unintended, UN agency says 31 March 2022. Nearly half of the pregnancies in Nepal are unintended and close to two-thirds of them ended in abortion, according to a recent report by the UNFPA. Read more [here](#).

PAKISTAN

Pakistan's first female Supreme Court judge sworn in 24 January 2022. Pakistan's first female Supreme Court judge has been sworn in in the capital Islamabad. Ayesha Malik, 55, now sits on a bench with 16 other male colleagues in the Muslim-majority country's top court. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan launches anti-polio drive as COVID-19 cases rise 24 January 2022. Pakistani authorities on Monday launched a nationwide anti-polio campaign

Cabinet on Monday cleared a proposal for ratifying the ILO Convention-138. Read more [here](#).

Govt launches insurance for people with disabilities 1 March 2022. For the first time in the country, people with disabilities are being brought under health insurance. Read more [here](#).

Suitable place outside Dhaka necessary to accommodate stranded Biharis, says PM 6 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said the government has a plan to ensure a better life for the stranded Bihari community by accommodating them in a convenient place outside of Dhaka. Read more [here](#).

Int'l Women Day 2022: Gender Equality Prerequisite for Sustainable Tomorrow 6 March 2022. Speakers at a webinar on Sunday said despite challenges women in Bangladesh have demonstrated enormous capacity to respond to emergencies efficiently through increased women empowerment and decision-making ability of women. Read more [here](#).

Omicron helped Bangladesh rapidly reach herd immunity, say experts 8 March 2022. Covid-19 may no longer be a serious health threat to Bangladesh as the country has already achieved herd immunity against the virus with the widespread infections of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, say experts. Read more [here](#).

70% of female-led Facebook businesses in Bangladesh set up since pandemic: Meta 8 March 2022. According to Meta, more than 70% of female-led businesses in Bangladesh were set up on Facebook since the pandemic began and there has been an increase of more than 65% in Instagram businesses owned by women. Read more [here](#).

Educational institutions return to regular class routines across Bangladesh 15 March 2022. Bangladesh resumed regular in-person academic classes at all of its educational institutions after 726 days of combating the coronavirus pandemic. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh makes good progress despite Covid pandemic: PM 24 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday said that Bangladesh's development forged ahead despite the Covid pandemic that affected the global economy and created food shortage even in many developed countries. Read more [here](#).

Nine in 10 children below 14 in Bangladesh suffer violent disciplining 29 March 2022. Nine in ten children - accounting for 45 million boys and girls - below the age of 14 are subjected to violent disciplining in their homes regularly, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said. Read more [here](#).

45% of Bangladesh population don't use MFS: survey 30 March 2022. The country's 45 per cent people do not use mobile financial service (MFS) and 32 per cent of them refrain from using the service for fear being victim of fraudulent activity, found a survey. Read more [here](#).

INDIA

India starts booster shots for vulnerable amid omicron surge 10 January 2022. Healthcare and front-line workers along with people above age 60 with health problems lined up Monday at vaccination centers across India to receive a third dose as infections linked to the omicron variant surge. Read more [here](#).

Once in a lifetime COVID pandemic has reaffirmed importance of health sector: Indian Prime Minister 13 January 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated 11 government medical colleges in Tamil Nadu and said the future will belong to societies that invest in healthcare. Read more [here](#).

India's Republic Day parade curtailed amid COVID-19 26 January 2022. Thousands of people braved a morning chill Wednesday on a ceremonial boulevard in India's capital to watch a display of the

icon of real empowerment: Pakistan's President 14 February 2022. President Dr ArifAlvi on Monday said financial empowerment of women in Pakistan with their equal access to education and health services was vital in ensuring gender equality. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan's government unveils roadmap for 7th digital population and housing census 22 February 2022. Unveiling the roadmap for the 7th digital population and housing census, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Tuesday said the final results of the 7th digital population and housing census would be announced by December 2022 and the new elections would be based on the fresh census results. Read more [here](#).

Prioritizing health & education most effective way to improve socio-economic status: Pakistan President 24 February 2022. President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said the involvement of various segments of a community including mosques, academia and health workers was important for the effective implementation of social development initiatives, particularly health and education. Read more [here](#).

World Bank calls for more reforms to improve legal equality for women in Pakistan 3 March 2022. A new World Bank report, published ahead of International Women's Day, has suggested that Pakistan should bring more reforms to improve legal equality for women in the country. Read more [here](#).

Women empowerment vital to ensure contribution in national development: President 15 March 2022. President Dr. ArifAlvi says women empowerment is of vital importance to ensure their contribution in the national development. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan to lift all Covid-19 related restrictions 16 March 2022. Pakistan has decided to lift all coronavirus restrictions for fully vaccinated citizens, as the country continued to witness a decline in its daily cases, National Command and Operation Centre head Asad Umar announced at a press conference on Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka vaccinates children as doctors warn of COVID surge 7 January 2022. Sri Lankan health authorities on Friday began vaccinating children aged 12 to 15, as the island nation's top medical specialists warned of a wave of COVID-19 infections in the coming weeks driven by the omicron variant. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka completes its vaccine requirement 9 January 2022. Sri Lanka has received the complete quota of COVID vaccines required in the country, including the booster vaccines, State Pharmaceutical Corporation Chairman Dr. Prasanna Gunasena said. Read more [here](#).

Shiranthi Rajapaksa says women's empowerment requires collective effort 10 March 2022. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's wife Shiranthi Rajapaksa says women's empowerment requires a collective effort. Read more [here](#).

UN accuses Sri Lanka of violating rights of LGBTI activist 24 March 2022. Sri Lanka violated the rights of a lesbian and leading LGBTI activist who was subjected to discrimination, threats and abuses due to the country's Penal Code that criminalises same-sex sexual activity, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has found. Read more [here](#).

Public to be urged to obtain COVID 19 booster vaccine 29 March 2022. The public will continue to be urged to obtain the COVID 19 booster vaccine despite concerns being raised by some groups. Read more [here](#).

TURKEY

Turkish scientist discovers rare genetic disease 3 February 2022. A Turkish doctor has recently discovered a rare genetic disease that targets the skeletal system and may shed light on the negative

New Delhi's homeless shiver through harsh cold snap 30 January 2022. India's capital New Delhi is shivering through an unusually harsh bout of harsh winter cold, blamed for killing scores of homeless people and leaving other hard-up residents struggling to keep warm. Read more [here](#).

Focus of Budget on providing basic amenities to poor, middle class, youth: Indian Prime Minister 3 February 2022. The focus of the Union Budget is on providing basic amenities to the poor, middle class and youth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday, and asserted that it is imperative that India becomes self-reliant. Read more [here](#).

Budget will be of great help in implementing National Education Policy: India's Prime Minister 22 February 2022. Asserting that the digital connectivity is what kept the education system running in this time of global pandemic, Modi noted that the digital divide is rapidly shrinking in India. Read more [here](#).

In India's Budget, clear roadmap given by govt to achieve saturation of basic facilities: Prime Minister Modi 23 February 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said it is now time that 100 per cent saturation is achieved in providing basic facilities such as water, electricity, gas connections, toilets and roads to people, as he asserted that the Union budget 2022-23 has laid out a clear roadmap for achieving this. Read more [here](#).

Encouraging women entrepreneurs could be the key to spurring India's economy onward 8 March 2022. The Indian economy has grown gradually over the last decade. However, the number of startups has surged. Even though many of these startups have been founded by men, some of the most popular and path-breaking names in the payment ecosystem, travel, beauty, clothing and ecommerce verticals have women at their helm. Read more [here](#).

Tax saving FD rates for senior citizens: These banks offer up to 7% 9 March 2022. Tax-saving bank fixed deposits (FDs) come with a fixed tenure of 5 years. Tax-saving bank FDs have a fixed interest rate and guaranteed returns throughout the term. For senior citizens, the bank FD is one of the most popular financial tools to invest their money. Read more [here](#).

India's Covid vaccination drive science-driven, people-powered: PM Modi 16 March 2022. Asserting that India's Covid vaccination drive is science-driven and people-powered, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the country is in a much better position to fight this deadly pandemic but people must keep following all precautions. Read more [here](#).

Indians tighten belts as Ukraine war drives up prices of necessities 23 March 2022. Many Indians are cutting down on fried food and even vegetables as the Ukraine war inflates the prices of items from edible oils to fuel, threatening a sputtering recovery in the consumption-based economy after two years battling COVID-19. Read more [here](#).

Delhi to close vax centres at schools for general public, run camps for students 24 March 2022. The Delhi government has decided to close all fixed vaccination centres in schools, with Covid-19 vaccinations in the capital seeing a dip after reaching saturation in the adult population. However, vaccines will continue to be administered to children between the ages of 12 and 17 years in temporary camps at their schools. Read more [here](#).

c. Environmental dimension

AFGHANISTAN

United Nations: Afghan quake death toll reaches 26, including children 19 January 2022. The United Nations on Tuesday raised the death toll from twin earthquakes in western Afghanistan the day before to

reverts to rise 4 February 2022. Turkey's population grew but got older while Istanbul, the most populated city, held on to the title after a rare drop in 2020, according to the latest population figures released on Friday by country's statistics agency. Read more [here](#).

Turkey to amend laws for gig couriers as protests continue 7 February 2022. Turkey's Information Technologies and Communication Authority (BTK) is set to take action regarding the companies employing delivery app couriers, hundreds of whom have been protesting in Istanbul in recent days over working conditions and a low pay raise proposal amid record-high inflation. Read more [here](#).

Turkey scraps mask requirement as COVID-19 pandemic eases 2 March 2022. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca revealed that Turkey is scrapping the outdoor mask requirement as the COVID-19 pandemic eases thanks to the country's vaccination efforts. Read more [here](#).

Ratio of female academics in Turkey surpasses 45% 6 March 2022. The ratio of female academics in Turkish universities has surpassed 45%, Council of Higher Education data showed on Sunday. Read more [here](#).

Turkish medical workers strike for better pay, safer work 14 March 2022. Thousands of Turkish doctors and other medical workers began a two-day nationwide strike on Monday to demand better protection, improved work conditions and higher pay as Turkey suffers soaring inflation. Read more [here](#).

Turkish president announces package to improve conditions of health workers 14 March 2022. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has announced a new package to improve the personal rights of health care workers in Turkey. Read more [here](#).

Turkey recognizes COVID-19 fighters on Medicine Day 14 March 2022. Three Turkish scientists received the "Special Award for the Fight Against the COVID-19 Global Pandemic" on Monday, which is marked as Medicine Day in the country. Read more [here](#).

Turkey is aging faster, new figures show 18 March 2022. Turkey's elderly population has increased by 24% in the past five years, with people aged 65 and above constituting 9.7% of the total population in 2021, official statistics indicated. Read more [here](#).

Turkey steps up efforts to end violence against women 23 March 2022. Three ministers and the head of Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) met on Wednesday in the Turkish capital Ankara to introduce a new action plan for 2022 to tackle violence against women, a complex issue highlighted by domestic violence and femicide committed by their former or current spouses or other family members. Read more [here](#).

Education will meet with metaverse, says minister 26 March 2022. Turkey will embark upon models to integrate the metaverse and augmented reality with education, especially in vocational schools, Education Minister Mahmut Özer has said, adding that the work is underway. Read more [here](#).

Railways rides climate wave with green point ratings to garner more freight 21 March 2022. Close on the heels of other companies pushing for greater awareness on climate change, the Indian Railways is introducing a rating system, allotting rail green points (RGPs) to companies that choose

Bangladesh bets big on wind energy to curb climate change 8 January 2022. Bangladesh aims to significantly expand renewable energy sources in its total energy mix in its relentless pursuit of a net-zero carbon footprint. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka is world's second most polluted city 11 January 2022. The densely populated metropolis continues to dominate the list of cities with the worst air quality in the world. On Tuesday, Dhaka was ranked the world's second-most polluted city, as its air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 200, which is considered 'unhealthy'. Read more [here](#).

Energy: Vital utility for Bangladesh's economic development and achieving SDGs 12 January 2022. Bangladesh has an impressive track record of growth and poverty reduction. It has been among the fastest-growing economies in the world over the past decade, supported by a demographic dividend, strong ready-made garment (RMG) exports, and stable macroeconomic conditions. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka (Bangladesh) is world's second most polluted City 20 January 2022. The densely populated capital of Bangladesh continues to gasp for fresh air. On Thursday, Dhaka was ranked the world's second-most polluted city, as its air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 258 at 9.42am, considered 'poor' or 'very unhealthy'. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh shifting its main focus towards addressing climate change 27 January 2022. Being the seventh most climate-vulnerable country in the world, Bangladesh is considering adapting its main focus towards addressing climate effects, according to the environment ministry. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh government launches digital platform for risk-informed development 2 February 2022. The government has launched a web-based platform under the Planning Commission on Wednesday (February 2) to integrate disaster risk information into development planning and budgeting, policies, and programmes, with the assistance of the National Resilience Programme (NRP). Read more [here](#).

Climate change to cause 2-9pc GDP loss for Bangladesh: IPCC report 28 February 2022. Bangladesh is at the risk of a loss of 2.0 per cent to 9.0 per cent of annual GDP by the mid and end of the century due to climate change, according to the predictions by the latest IPCC report. Read more [here](#).

Growth dividend of greening the economy is there 16 March 2022. Bangladesh is a rapidly developing economy facing the challenge of Climate Change. Climate experts have assessed that Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable countries due to Climate Change. Read more [here](#).

Incorporate climate change issues into development projects: Mannan 20 March 2022. Planning Minister MA Mannan Sunday asked the officials concerned to incorporate climate change issues into the detailed plan of all development projects. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka's air quality still 'unhealthy' 20 March 2022. Dhaka's air quality continues to be 'unhealthy', but the densely populated capital of Bangladesh is no longer the world's most polluted city. Read more [here](#).

Natural disasters cost Bangladesh \$15b in 27 years, Japanese expert says 22 March 2022. Bangladesh's economic loss due to various disasters amounted to US\$ 15 billion in the last 27 years, noted Japanese disaster expert Dr Kozo Nagami. Read more [here](#).

INDIA

Forest, tree cover in India up by 2,261 square kilometre in two years 13 January 2022. Forest and tree cover in the country had increased by 2,261 square kilometres since the last assessment in 2019, according to the India State of Forest Report-2021 released on Thursday. Read more [here](#).

railways. Read more [here](#).

'Gargantuan task': Why India's renewable push will be hard 25 March 2022. Plans to build a sprawling solar park on land cultivated for generations by indigenous farmers in India's Himalayan foothills erupted in violent clashes with police last year after their crops were bulldozed for the development. Read more [here](#).

Delhi among 31 non-attainment cities with increased PM10 levels in 2020-21, govt. tells RS 31 March 2022. Delhi is among the 31 of the 132 non-attainment cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) which have shown an increase in the level of PM10 pollutant concentration in 2020-21, the government told Parliament on Thursday. Read more [here](#).

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Iran first in combating desertification, dust 3 March 2022. The head of Department of Environment of Iran said that Iran was in the first place in containing desertification and dust in the global scale. Read more [here](#).

NEPAL

Three villages facing displacement by landslides 3 March 2022. Continuous landslides for the past 17 years have displaced around 56 families in three villages of Kedarsyu Rural Municipality in Bajhang. More than 100 families in the rural municipality are currently facing displacement due to the landslides. Read more [here](#).

PAKISTAN

Kalabagh dam to benefit Sindh, says Pakistan Prime Minister 14 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday there were problems between the provinces because of the water issues but stressed that the people of Sindh would have to be convinced about the usefulness of the Kalabagh dam project, otherwise, anti-Pakistan forces would play up the water issue. Read more [here](#).

Karachi world's fourth largest polluted city: report 28 February 2022. Karachi has turned out to be the world's fourth largest polluted city as its air quality index has surged to an unhealthy level of 193, showing utter negligence of the federal and Sindh governments towards environmental reforms, according to a new investigative report. Read more [here](#).

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka to conduct rapid assessment of coastal climate risks 13 January 2022. The Stimson Center, Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Government of Sri Lanka, announced a new partnership in Sri Lanka to conduct a rapid assessment of coastal climate risks and options. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka seeks public participation to achieve SDGs 16 January 2022. Sri Lanka has sought public participation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) formulated by the United Nations system. Read more [here](#).

Policy decision taken by Sri Lanka to decarbonise by year 2050 1 February 2022. The government has taken a policy decision to achieve the goal of decarbonization by the year 2050 while taking action to minimize gas emissions in the industries where electricity and transport sectors as well as thermal power utilization. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka imported US \$ 611.53 worth plastics by 2020: Amaraweera 8 February 2022. The United Nations COMTRADE Database has revealed that Sri Lanka had imported plastic goods worth US \$ 611.53 million by 2020, Environment Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lankan Cabinet Ministers to consider travelling on bicycles 15 February 2022. Cabinet Ministers are to consider travelling on bicycles to work

"The current throwaway culture and consumerism have made climate challenge more serious." Read more [here](#).

India's annual Budget again goes green, cuts down on printing to bare minimum 27 January 2022. India's annual Budget will go green this year too, cutting down on the vast printing of documents that was associated with the presentation of tax proposals and financial statement of Asia's third largest economy. Read more [here](#).

New policy to cut green hydrogen cost by 40-50 percent in India: Indian Oil Corporation 20 February 2022. India's largest oil firm IOC will set up 'green hydrogen' plants at its Mathura and Panipat refineries by 2024 to replace carbon-emitting units as it sees the just announced green hydrogen policy as a watershed moment in the country's energy transition that will help cut costs. Read more [here](#).

India could export \$500-bn green energy over 20 years: Mukesh Ambani 23 February 2022. RIL chairman said technological progress will make energy affordable on the basis of commercial viability. Read more [here](#).

Months after pledge, India yet to submit emissions targets 4 March 2022. Four months after India announced its "net-zero" target at the United Nations climate conference in Glasgow, the country has yet to submit its targets for cutting greenhouse emissions, underscoring the difficulty of overhauling energy policy amid a growing population. Read more [here](#).

d. Governance, Institutions and Security

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban talks in Norway raise new debate about recognition 24 January 2022. A Taliban delegation led by acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Sunday started three days of talks in Oslo with Western officials and Afghan civil society representatives amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Read more [here](#).

Six months of Taliban: Afghans safer, poorer, less hopeful 15 February 2022. Afghanistan has undergone a dramatic transformation in half a year of Taliban rule. The country feels safer, less violent than it has in decades, but the once aid-fueled economy is barreling toward collapse. Tens of thousands of Afghans have fled or have been evacuated, including large numbers of the educated elites. Read more [here](#).

Taliban ban Afghans from evacuating amid massive security sweep 28 February 2022. The Taliban have clamped down on Afghans leaving the country as, separately, their forces continue a massive security sweep, going house-to-house across the capital on Monday in a "clearing operation". Read more [here](#).

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh President Hamid calls for vigilance against militancy and terrorism 16 January 2022. President Md Abdul Hamid says Bangladesh must remain vigilant against militancy and terrorism, which threaten the peace of the nation and create an obstacle to development. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh Cabinet approves draft of Election Commission formation law 17 January 2022. The government has approved the draft of a new law for the formation of the election commission, which includes a provision regarding a search panel for appointments. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh Prime Minister asks Deputy Commissioners to perform duties overcoming fear, greed 18 January 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the deputy commissioners (DCs) in the country to perform their duties for the welfare of the people, overcoming fear and greed. Read more

Solar power excels in Turkey's rapid shift to green energy sources 17 January 2022. Turkey's rapid shift to greener sources of energy has led to a sharp rise in its installed solar power over the last decade, with renewable investments expected to accelerate in the period ahead. Read more [here](#).

Turkey taps artificial intelligence in its fight against wildfires 2 February 2022. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry plans to implement artificial intelligence (AI) technology to tackle forest fires, which destroyed large swaths of land last year. Read more [here](#).

Renewables to provide cheap power, Turkish energy minister says 23 February 2022. Turkey aims to counter rising global energy prices by developing more renewable energy projects, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Dönmez said on February. 22. Read more [here](#).

Turkey shuts down Bosphorus amid low visibility 28 March 2022. The Bosphorus was closed to maritime traffic on Monday morning due to adverse weather conditions. Authorities announced that visibility dropped below a kilometer (half a mile) on a section of the Bosphorus which necessitated closing the waterway to vessels seeking to enter or leave. Read more [here](#).

No voting rights for Nepalis abroad 21 March 2022. Even four years after the Supreme Court issued a directive order to the government to ensure voting rights for Nepalis living abroad, the government has not done anything. Read more [here](#).

Court stays rule of resignation by local representatives seeking re-election 23 March 2022. The Supreme Court has issued an interlocutory interim order to the Election Commission not to implement a rule that requires local government officials seeking re-election to resign their posts before filing candidacy. Read more [here](#).

PAKISTAN

Civil, criminal law reforms to ensure speedy justice: Pakistan Prime Minister 26 January 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said the government was making reforms in the civil and criminal laws system so as to ensure effective and speedy justice to the citizens. Read more [here](#).

Justice Umar Ata Bandial sworn in as 28th Chief Justice of Pakistan 2 February 2022. Justice Umar Ata Bandial took oath as the 28th Chief Justice of Pakistan at a ceremony at Aiwan-i-Sadr in Islamabad on Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

President Alvi promulgates ordinance amending Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 20 February 2022. New ordinance makes 'fake news' a non-bailable offence with jail term going up to five years, says federal law minister Dr Farogh Naseem. Read more [here](#).

PM expresses resolve, unwavering commitment to country's security 27 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday reiterating resolve and unwavering commitment to the security of country and nation, said that the armed forces of the country, backed by nation, would respond to any military aggression in a befitting manner. Read more [here](#).

SRI LANKA

Human rights groups condemn death penalty on prison official in Sri Lanka 18 January 2022. Human Rights Watch and other organisations have condemned Sri Lanka's ongoing use of the death

2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the police personnel to perform their duties with professionalism to protect the country's hard-earned independence along with maintaining the law and order situation and upholding the democracy in the country. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh considering setting up human rights cell: Foreign Secretary 31 January 2022. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considering setting up a human rights cell under the supervision of the United Nations to better analyse the country's human rights situation and rightly present it to the international community, said Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen Monday. Read more [here](#).

90 per cent Bangladesh cabinet decisions implemented in 3 years 7 February 2022. Some 90 percent decisions, taken by the Cabinet in three years from January 2019 to December 2021, have been implemented, while the implementation of remaining 10 percent decisions is underway. Read more [here](#).

INDIA

Top Indian court intervenes in hate speeches against Muslims 12 January 2022. India's top court on Wednesday said it will take up a petition seeking prosecution of several saffron-robed Hindu religious leaders for allegedly making highly provocative speeches against Muslims at a closed-door meeting last month. Read more [here](#).

Focus on fundamental rights makes India stronger, not weaker 24 January 2022. Yielding to rights-based politics makes democracy more stable. It furthers its legitimisation with the masses and situates its actions in the context of constitutionality. Read more [here](#).

Indian Prime Minister Modi calls for higher polling, discussion on 'one nation, one election' 25 January 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed concern over low voting percentage, especially in urban areas considered educated and prosperous, and said this should change in a vibrant democracy like India. Read more [here](#).

PM Modi chairs meeting to review security preparedness amid Ukraine crisis 14 March 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review India's security preparedness and the prevailing global scenario in the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Read more [here](#).

NEPAL

Plan to amend law to delay local polls in Nepal faces criticism 25 January 2022. If it goes according to the plan agreed at the top level of the ruling alliance, the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government is all set to defer local elections by eight to twelve months. Read more [here](#).

Government announces local level elections in Nepal for May 13 7 February 2022. The government has announced local level elections for May 13 in one phase as per the recommendation of the Election Commission. Read more [here](#).

Poll expenditure cap 'unrealistic' 16 March 2022. The Election Commission's decision to put a ceiling on poll expenditure for candidates vying for top posts in municipalities and rural municipalities has drawn flak from civil society members. Read more [here](#).

If chief justice impeachment delayed, parties charging him will be in dock 17 March 2022. By lingering the impeachment process against Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana, the ruling coalition has created an unprecedented situation where the head of the judiciary may get stuck in a state of limbo, which experts say could pose serious moral questions to the ruling parties. Read more [here](#).

amendments to Prevention of Terrorism Act 8 February 2022. The Government has defended the proposed amendments to the present Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) saying it is a progressive step towards securing, advancing and protecting fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution. Read more [here](#).

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka wants Prevention of Terrorism Act abolished 16 February 2022. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) wants the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) completely abolished. Read more [here](#).

Bachelet seeks targeted sanctions on Sri Lankan rights abusers 26 February 2022. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has called on the international community to continue to explore possible targeted sanctions against credibly alleged Sri Lankan perpetrators of grave human rights violations and abuses. Read more [here](#).

UNHRC 49th Session begins with Sri Lanka on the agenda 1 March 2022. The 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) began Tuesday with Sri Lanka on the agenda. Read more [here](#).

OHCHR evidence gathering mechanism on Sri Lanka seen as unproductive 2 March 2022. The evidence gathering mechanism on Sri Lanka established by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been seen as unproductive by the Sri Lankan Government. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka notes serious anomalies in Bachelet's report 5 March 2022. Sri Lanka has noted serious anomalies in the report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet. Read more [here](#).

UN rights chief seeks foreign prosecutions for Sri Lanka 6 March 2022. The UN rights chief called last Friday for sanctions and international prosecutions of Sri Lankan war criminals, saying Colombo had repeatedly failed to ensure accountability for wartime atrocities. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka cardinal seeks UN probe into Easter massacre 7 March 2022. The head of Sri Lanka's Roman Catholic Church on Monday urged the United Nations to investigate the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed 279 people, calling the massacre a "political plot". Read more [here](#).

Protesters blame Sri Lanka leader for severe economic crisis 15 March 2022. Anti-government protests roiled Sri Lanka's capital on Tuesday amid demands that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign, as the country suffers its worst economic crisis within memory. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka deploys troops as fuel shortage sparks protests 22 March 2022. Sri Lanka ordered troops to petrol stations Tuesday as sporadic protests erupted among the thousands of motorists queueing up daily for scarce fuel. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka reforms anti-terror law as EU reviews trade scheme 23 March 2022. Sri Lankan lawmakers on Tuesday approved reforms to a harsh anti-terror law that rights groups have long criticized, as the country looks to shore up its trade relations with the European Union amid its worst economic crisis in memory. Read more [here](#).

TURKEY

Nationalist Movement Party submits social media regulations bill to Turkish Parliament 8 February 2022. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) submitted a new bill, including a series of social media regulations, to the Turkish Parliament, a lawmaker confirmed Tuesday. Read more [here](#).

Turkey lowers national threshold to 7% with new election law 31 March 2022. Turkish deputies approved Wednesday a proposal to change the country's election laws with its provisions including lowering the national election threshold to 7% in addition to a number of changes in requirements for

e) International Cooperation

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan: UN launches largest single country aid appeal ever 11 January 2022. The UN and partners launched a more than \$5 billion funding appeal for Afghanistan on Tuesday, in the hope of shoring up collapsing basic services there, which have left 22 million in need of assistance inside the country, and 5.7 million people requiring help beyond its borders. Read more [here](#).

BANGLADESH

Dhaka seeks role of Hanoi and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for repatriation of Rohingyas 13 January 2022. Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has called upon Vietnam and ASEAN to play a more proactive role in bringing about a sustainable solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis by helping in a speedy, safe and dignified repatriation of the forcibly displaced people back to their motherland Myanmar. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka expects no impact on Bangladesh's joining peace missions as United Nations works with scrutiny 25 January 2022. Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen on Tuesday hoped that there will be no impact on Bangladeshis' joining peacekeeping missions as the UN takes peacekeepers with much scrutiny. Read more [here](#).

World Bank to push limping projects in Bangladesh 25 January 2022. Negotiators are doing hectic homework as the World Bank sits shortly with government side to clear bottlenecks to slow-going projects it has financed in Bangladesh, sources say. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka seeks United Nation's effective role in resolving Rohingya crisis 26 January 2022. Bangladesh has urged the United Nations (UN) to play an effective role in a durable solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis. Read more [here](#).

Ambassador Rabab Fatima elected Chair of UN Peacebuilding Commission from Bangladesh 1 February 2022. Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, has been unanimously elected as the Chair of the United Nations Peace building Commission (PBC). Read more [here](#).

Asian Development Bank, Bangladesh launch climate, disaster risk atlas 17 February 2022. The ADB, together with the Planning Commission of Bangladesh, Thursday launched the Bangladesh Climate and Disaster Risk Atlas. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka, Delhi eye greater engagements ahead of Hasina's possible visit 22 February 2022. In an effort to give further impetus to Dhaka-Delhi relations, the two neighbouring countries are now planning to have enhanced engagements, including preparation for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India at a convenient time this year, officials said. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh, UAE sign 4 MoUs to strengthen bilateral ties 9 March 2022. Bangladesh and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to boost cooperation between the two countries. Read more [here](#).

PM stresses enhanced collaboration among Asia-Pacific countries for food security 10 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday emphasised enhancing collaboration among the Asia-Pacific countries in agricultural research and education for ensuring food security alongside transferring and sharing of cutting-edge technologies. Read more [here](#).

PM proposes FAO to establish International Seed Bank 13 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Sunday proposed the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to set up an International Seed Bank. Read more [here](#).

Iran grants scholarship to young scientists from OIC 20 February 2022. Mustafa Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF) and the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (COMSTECH) have agreed to launch a joint young scientists scholarship program. Read more [here](#).

Our hands are extended towards neighbours: Iran Finance Minister 22 February 2022. Iran's foreign minister said that consolidating ties with neighboring countries, Arab states in particular, is a fundamental priority in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Read more [here](#).

Iran, IAEA vow to expand cooperation, dialogue 5 March 2022. Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have pledged to expand and speed up future dialogue and cooperation. Read more [here](#).

Iranian Parliament obliges gov't to draw comprehensive nuclear roadmap 7 March 2022. Iranian Parliament – known as Majlis – obliged the Iranian government to set out a fifty-year comprehensive roadmap for the country's nuclear development. Read more [here](#).

Iran offers mixed signals as nuclear talks deadline looms 10 March 2022. Iran offered mixed signals Thursday as a deadline loomed in talks over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers, with its president defending the negotiations while a top security official blamed America for the deadlock. Read more [here](#).

Good, sustainable agreement to be finalized if US sees realities: FM 16 March 2022. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has underlined that a good and sustainable agreement having the support of all sides will be finalized in Vienna when Washington starts to be realistic. Read more [here](#).

EU's Borrell says nuclear agreement with Iran 'very close' 26 March 2022. Top EU diplomat Josep Borrell said on Saturday Iran and world powers were "very close" to agreement on reviving their 2015 nuclear deal, which would curb Tehran's nuclear programme in exchange for lifting tough sanctions. Read more [here](#).

NEPAL

Nepal sends over 14 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan 16 January 2022. The Government of Nepal has sent over 14 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan today. Read more [here](#).

Parliamentary ratification of \$500m compact acknowledged by MCC HQ 2 March 2022. The Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact Headquarters has acknowledged and appreciated ratification of the compact by Nepal's Federal Parliament. Read more [here](#).

Government decides to allow Bhutanese refugees to do business 6 March 2022. A soon to be implemented government decision is going to allow the remaining refugees from Bhutan to obtain permanent account number cards, to do small-scale businesses and pursue higher education in Nepal. Read more [here](#).

Development partners urged to support provinces too 7 March 2022. Development partners, who are providing development support only at the federal and local levels, have been urged to support the provinces as well. Read more [here](#).

Nepal, USAID set to sign \$659 million deal for five years 9 March 2022. Weeks after parliamentary ratification of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Nepal Compact, a \$500 million US grant to Nepal, the two countries are all set to sign a new five-year agreement to continue regular US aid to Nepal. Read more [here](#).

to Bangladesh. Achim Troster has advised Bangladeshi companies to get ready for the challenges that may come as Germany enforces a new law that will scrutinise human rights in supply chain from 2023. Read more [here](#).

WB keen to invest \$5.0-8.0b for rural development 15 March 2022. The World Bank has expressed interest in providing US\$5.0-8.0 billion dollars in the development of rural infrastructure in Bangladesh, said Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tajul Islam on Tuesday. Read more [here](#).

US decides to continue discussion on RAB sanction issue with Bangladesh 20 March 2022. Sanction on RAB by the US was discussed at the Eighth US-Bangladesh partnership dialogue with both sides deciding to continue the discussion on this issue. Read more [here](#).

PM seeks stronger diplomatic ties with three Nordic countries 23 March 2022. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed elevating bondage to a strategic level through cooperation in new areas between Bangladesh and three Nordic countries. Read more [here](#).

IFC intends to double its investments in Bangladesh over the next five years 24 March 2022. The International Finance Corporation aims to double its investments in Bangladesh within the next five years, with a focus on creating new jobs, with new investments to help accelerate the country's resilient recovery and to spur green growth, a top-ranking official of the development organisation has said. Read more [here](#).

Dhaka, Moscow working out modalities to keep transactions, trade uninterrupted: Russian envoy 24 March 2022. Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander Mantyskiy on Thursday said his country and Bangladesh are working out modalities to keep transactions and trade uninterrupted, avoiding SWIFT system following the Ukraine crisis. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lanka offers Bangladesh greater use of Colombo port 30 March 2022. President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa has offered greater use of Colombo port by Bangladesh for transportation of Bangladeshi goods. Read more [here](#).

Bangladesh is an example of how a country should be approaching its dev and growth, says UNGA President 30 March 2022. Lauding Bangladesh's economic and social development, President of the UN General Assembly Abdullah Shahid has said Bangladesh is an example of how a country should be approaching its development and sustaining high economic growth. Read more [here](#).

ADB approves \$143m loan support to Bangladesh for cross-border trade 31 March 2022. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$143 million loan package to support the government of Bangladesh's efforts to accelerate growth by improving the efficiency, predictability, and security of cross-border trade. Read more [here](#).

INDIA

India, China hold 14th round of military talks to resolve eastern Ladakh standoff 12 January 2022. After a gap of over three months, India and China on Wednesday are holding another round of high-level military talks to resolve the 20-month-long military standoff in the remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh, sources in the security establishment said. Read more [here](#).

China, Afghanistan top of mind as Indian Prime Minister Modi holds 1st summit with Central Asian leaders on 27 January 20 January 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be holding the first-ever summit meeting with the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan virtually on 27 January. It comes at a time when Chinese influence is growing in the Central Asian countries and their significance has increased with the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. Read more [here](#).

March 2022. ADB Director General for South Asia Kenichi Yokoyama concluded his four-day visit to Nepal Sunday. During his visit, Yokoyama reaffirmed ADB's continued strong support to the government of Nepal's development agenda. Read more [here](#).

PAKISTAN

Pakistan to get \$3b from International Monetary Fund in next 7 months 6 February 2022. Pakistan is scheduled to receive the remaining \$3 billion under the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) \$6 billion loan programme over the next seven months, which will help stabilise its foreign exchange reserves and strengthen the rupee. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan strengthened ties with major powers using various diplomatic tools: Finance Minister 10 February 2022. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Thursday said that using various diplomatic tools, Pakistan consolidated friendships and strengthened bilateral relations with major powers and key partners across all regions. Read more [here](#).

World Bank briefs Pakistani ministry about projects being funded by it 12 February 2022. Out of 54 projects, 23 projects worth \$7.8bn are being implemented by the federal government against which \$3.4 bn has been disbursed so far. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan urges United Nations chief to 'do much more' towards resolving inter-state disputes to promote peace 21 February 2022. Pakistan has called for addressing the root-causes of conflicts, including the use of force, foreign intervention, occupation, xenophobia, Islamophobia and hate speech as well as poverty, inequality, and exploitation, while commenting on United Nations Secretary General's "New Agenda for Peace" in a UN panel. Read more [here](#).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) acknowledges Pakistan's efforts towards child rights, SDGs 21 February 2022. FM Qureshi meets UNICEF executive director; appreciates vital work being carried out by organisation. Read more [here](#).

Pakistan prefers trade ties over joining regional blocs: Prime Minister 22 February 2022. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday said Pakistan did not want to become part of a particular bloc in the region but instead desired trading relations with all countries including Russia. Read more [here](#).

Australia and United Nations Population Fund helps Sri Lanka deal with Sexual and Gender Based Violence 25 February 2022. Australia and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have come forward to help Sri Lanka deal with Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Read more [here](#).

IMF says having 'constructive' talks with Pakistan as part of program review 17 March 2022. The International Monetary Fund on Thursday said it was having constructive, ongoing discussions with Pakistan as part of a seventh program review of a \$6 billion rescue package. Read more [here](#).

IMF asks govt how it will fund subsidy package 21 March 2022. Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said the IMF has sought more details of financing of petroleum levy and electrify prices reduced under Prime Minister Relief Package in response to explanations provided to them and now a response is expected from them Monday. Read more [here](#).

ADB approves \$300mn loan for Pakistan's capital market development 22 March 2022. The ADB on Tuesday approved a \$300-million loan to further develop Pakistan's capital markets, and promote private investment in the country. Read more [here](#).

FM urges world not to see Afghanistan through regional prism, but a 'shared responsibility' 28 March 2022. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday said Afghanistan must not be seen through a regional prism, but as a "shared and collective responsibility". Read more [here](#).

SRI LANKA

tackle the humanitarian crisis and the issue of recognition of the Taliban, an Indian official said. Read more [here](#).

India must maintain a consistent presence in Central Asia 29 January 2022. The first India-Central Asia summit that took place on January 27 not only solidified the partnership between both sides, but also broadened the scope of their collaboration. Read more [here](#).

International Finance Corporation will continue to raise annual India investments: South Asia Director 9 February 2022. International Finance Corporation (IFC) calls itself the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector in developing countries. India is the biggest investment destination for the World Bank's investment arm. Read more [here](#).

India briefs high-level UN team on concerns over terrorism in South Asia 10 March 2022. India has briefed a high-level UN team about its concerns over terrorism in the South Asian region, especially the possible threats from misuse of new and emerging technologies and unmanned aerial systems. Read more [here](#).

Japan to invest \$42B in India to strengthen economic ties 19 March 2022. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday said his country will invest \$42 billion in India over the next five years in a deal that is expected to boost bilateral trade. Read more [here](#).

Our collaboration reflects commitment to free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific: PM Modi during virtual meet with Morrison 21 March 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday held a virtual summit with his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison, during which he said that the cooperation between India and Australia is increasing at a rapid pace in areas of critical minerals, water management and renewable energy. Read more [here](#).

Foreign minister Wang to push for normalisation of ties with India 22 March 2022. Chinese foreign minister and state councilor Wang Yi is arriving on a two-day visit to India on March 24-25 as part of an effort to put bilateral ties back on rails after the PLA aggression in East Ladakh in May 2020. Read more [here](#).

Bank of Russia, RBI to ready framework for trade, banking 30 March 2022. Russian central bank officials are expected to meet their counterparts from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to create a regulatory framework that will help sustain bilateral trade and banking operations despite the global sanctions against Moscow, four people familiar with the developments told ET. They are also likely to work on the creation of a dedicated payment mechanism to facilitate India's energy purchases from Russia. Read more [here](#).

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Iran seeks 'maximum interaction' with world, allies: President Raisi in Duma 20 January 2022. The President referred to Iran and Russia's strong determination to expand ties and said that the capacities in both countries have laid the foundation for expanding cooperation and that Iran is determined to expand the ties with Russia in political, economic, business, scientific, and cultural areas. Read more [here](#).

Iran, United Arab Emirates Finance Ministers discuss bilateral, regional issues 3 February 2022. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in a phone conversation, discussed bilateral and regional issues and emphasized the importance of improving bilateral ties. Read more [here](#).

Iran prioritizing trade with neighbouring countries 9 February 2022. The Islamic Republic of Iran's new administration has attached importance to expansion of trade exchanges with neighbouring countries to activate great potential of cooperation among

International Finance Corporation to boost investments in Sri Lanka 7 March 2022. The International Finance Corporation is to boost its investments in Sri Lanka, with a focus on supporting private sector job creation, paving the way for robust investments to help spur the country's recovery and future growth. Read more [here](#).

Sri Lankan leader seeks IMF help as economic crisis deepens 16 March 2022. Sri Lanka's president said Wednesday that his government was in discussions with the International Monetary Fund, other agencies and countries on deferring loan repayments and requested people's support by limiting electricity and fuel consumption to cope with the worst economic crisis in memory. Read more [here](#).

After India, SL turns to China for more financial support 19 March 2022. In the wake of the foreign exchange crisis, Sri Lanka has sought further financial assistance from China including the deferment of loan payments and a credit arrangement to import essentials and raw materials. Read more [here](#).

IMF to begin talks with Lanka 20 March 2022. The International Monetary Fund intends to begin discussions with Sri Lanka on a program to support the country, spokesman Gerry Rice said as the island is facing steep currency depreciation and inflation after an unusual bout of money printing to keep interest rates low. Read more [here](#).

TURKEY

Erdoğan slams European Union but says accession remains Turkey's priority 13 January 2022. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized the European Union for "injustices" while highlighting that Turkey's accession continues to be Ankara's priority as he called on the bloc to take a more courageous stance on efforts to improve bilateral ties. Read more [here](#).

'Turkey, EU ties must be strengthened in new period' 14 January 2022. Relations between the European Union and Turkey must be strengthened in the new period amid the COVID-19 pandemic and structural problems in the international system, Economic Development Foundation (IKV) Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoglu said Friday. Read more [here](#).

Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE) central banks ink \$4.7B currency swap deal 19 January 2022. The central banks of Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have inked a swap agreement with a nominal size of 18 billion UAE dirhams and TL 64 billion (\$4.7 billion), the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) announced Wednesday. Read more [here](#).

Food and Agriculture Organisation kickstarts project in Turkey to monitor agrifood costs, prices 26 January 2022. The United Nations' food agency on Tuesday said it had started a new project in Turkey to improve costs and price monitoring in agricultural food supply chains. Read more [here](#).

Turkey will not send any refugees back: Turkish president 15 March 2022. Ankara will not send any refugees taking shelter in Turkey back to their countries, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said. Read more [here](#).

Turkey's Turkish Cooperation & Coordination Agency (TIKA) provides health care to 12M people in Afghanistan 16 February 2022. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has provided health care services to over 12 million people in Afghanistan in the past 17 years as part of an agreement with the country's health ministry. Read more [here](#).

UN, Turkey project empowers justice against domestic violence 2 March 2022. United Nations Women and Turkey's Justice Ministry unveiled a new project to ensure more access to judiciary services for women exposed to domestic violence and violence toward women. The project involves workshops for prosecutors specialized on both issues, as well as

Ravanchi: Iran ready to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations 15 February 2022. Iran's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi here on Tuesday announced the Islamic Republic of Iran's readiness to participate in United Nations' peacekeeping operations around the globe. Read more [here](#).

developments in Ukraine war 26 March 2022. The presidents of Turkey and Ukraine discussed the situation on the ground in the Russia-Ukraine war, as well as "the stage reached" in talks to end the conflict, according to a statement by the Turkish communications directorate last Friday. Read more [here](#).

World Bank approves \$341M loan to boost Turkey's 'green' agriculture 31 March 2022. The World Bank said it had approved a loan of \$341.27 million (TL 5 billion) as part of a project to support a more sustainable and competitive agricultural sector in Turkey and encourage using "climate-smart technologies." Read more [here](#).

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January 2022



October 2021

practices towards achievement of the SDGs amongst the government agencies, think-tanks, CSOs and other stakeholders in South Asia to build back better.

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