

October 2021



SOUTH ASIA  
**SDG**  
UPDATE



## I. Key Activities during July - Sep 2021



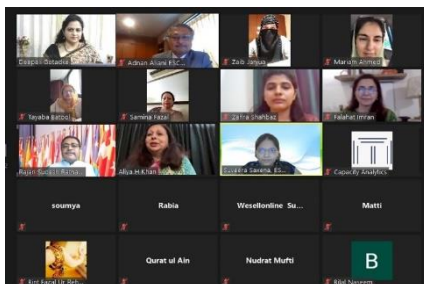
### 1. ESCAP project “E-commerce capacity building program for women-led SMEs in South Asia” presented at the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender



**Geneva, Switzerland, 16 July 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia and the Enhanced Integrated Frameworks, Geneva (EIF) jointly presented and shared their experiences of implementing the project “E-commerce capacity building program for women-led SMEs in South Asia” at the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. During the session, objectives, outputs, results, and impact made so far were presented to the WTO members. The meeting was

informed about the e-commerce project for women-led micro, small and medium enterprises, its training programs conducted for 1000 women entrepreneurs to date, and how they have enhanced their knowledge about e-commerce, successfully registered with the e-commerce platform and used digital media to promote their businesses.

### 2. Online workshop on e-commerce and digital marketing conducted for women led businesses, SMEs and start-ups in Pakistan



**Islamabad, Pakistan, 29 July 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in collaboration with Capacity Analytics, conducted an online training course on e-commerce and digital marketing for women-led businesses, small and medium enterprises and startups from different parts of Pakistan on 29 July 2021. The workshop was conducted with an aim of enhancing the knowledge and capacity of participants to use e-commerce and digital marketing tools to expand their businesses. Joined by about 20 entrepreneurs, the sessions comprised

an introduction on the fundamentals of digital marketing and e-commerce and provided participants with a hands-on training for registering their goods and services at e-market place including at training platform <https://www.unescap.wesellonline.org/>.

### 3. Virtual brainstorming meeting to discuss strategies for making South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals (SANS) more effective and sustainable



**New Delhi, India 4 August 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia Office (SRO-SSWA) organized a virtual brainstorming meeting to discuss how the South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals (SANS)- could be made more effective and sustainable'. The meeting saw representation from all the SANS members, who shared insightful perspectives on strategies for strengthening SANS and increasing its effectiveness and a

sustainability for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in South Asia. Mr. Adnan H. Aliani, Officer-in-Charge, SRO-SSWA, in his opening remarks underlined that the success and sustainability of SANS will be achieved when all the network partners proactively engage in its initiatives and guide the way forward. This was followed by an overview presentation by Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, ESCAP-SSWA and a panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Director, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), India. The panel included distinguished speakers - Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh; Dr. Selim Raihan, Executive Director, South Asia Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), Bangladesh; Ms. Wangmo, Senior Programme Officer, Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan; Dr. Sabyasachi Saha, Assistant Professor, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India ; Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation, India ; Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal ; Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan ; and Dr. Ganga Tilakaratna, Research Fellow and Head of Poverty and Social Welfare Policy Research at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS).

Read more [here](#)

### 4. ESCAP convenes the National Stakeholder Consultation on the Common Country Analysis (CCA) for India on behalf of the United Nations in India



**New Delhi, India 16 August 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (SRO-SSWA) convened a national stakeholder consultation on the Common Country Analysis (CCA) for India virtually on 16 August 2021, on behalf of the United Nations in India. Themed “Leveraging Evidence-Based Policy Research for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India”, the consultation brought together more than 90 experts, academia and development practitioners from leading think tanks, universities, research institutes, foundations, and national non-governmental organizations on a common platform. Ms Deirdre Boyd, United Nations Resident Coordinator, delivered the opening remarks. This was followed by a session on presentation on the Common Country Analysis (CCA) which was moderated by Mr. Adnan Aliani, Officer-in-Charge, SRO-SSWA, and included a presentation by Mr Christopher Garroway, Economist, UN Resident Coordinator's Office. The distinguished panel included Prof Rupa Chanda, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP (Ex Professor of Economics, IIM Bangalore); Dr Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International; Prof Partha Pratim Pal, Professor, IIM Calcutta; Dr Nitya Nanda, Director, Council for Social Development; And Prof Vinoj Abraham, Professor, Centre for Development Studies. There were two parallel panel discussions held on the topics of identifying gaps, national priorities and mapping opportunities for accelerating the SDGs in India, moderated by Dr Nagesh Kumar, Director,

Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID); and leveraging Policy Research for the SDGs, moderated by Prof A.K.Shiva Kumar, Visiting Professor, Ashoka University. The consultation provided a unique opportunity to receive feedback from key players of the economy - to understand the perspective of the development practitioners and researchers on furthering the SDGs in India. The CCA is a critical step for the UN in India as it transitions from the current cooperation framework to one that is more closely aligned with the SDGs. As an independent and collective analysis of the country situation conducted by the UN Country Team in India, the CCA will serve as an essential reference document in designing the forthcoming five-year cooperation framework with India.

Read more [here](#)

## 5. Virtual Expert Group Meeting on Exploring New Value Chains in Textile and Garments in South Asia



**New Delhi, India, 31 August 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (SRO-SSWA) organized a virtual expert group meeting on exploring new value chains in textile and garments in South Asia. The office had commissioned studies on the topic to assist South Asian policymakers and private sector stakeholders in meeting upcoming challenges, exploring emerging opportunities and creating new regional value chains, as the subregion recovers from the COVID-19 crisis. Mr. Adnan Aliani, Officer-in-Charge, SRO-SSWA, delivered the opening remarks which was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Rajan Ratna, Senior

Economic Affairs Officer and Deputy Head, SRO-SSWA. The distinguished panel included Dr. Chanchal C. Sarkar, Director, SAARC Secretariat, Nepal; Dr. Mohammad A. Razzaque, Research Director, PRI, Bangladesh; Mr. Arshad Jamal, Director, BGMA, Bangladesh; Dr. Rupa Chanda, Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, ESCAP (Ex Professor of Economics, IIM Bangalore); Dr. Ajay Sahai, Director General and CEO, FIEO, India; Dr. Puspa Sharma, Executive Director, SAWTEE, Nepal; Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, Pakistan; Mr. Ziad Bashir, CEO, Gul Ahmed, Pakistan; Dr. Janaka Wijayasiri, Trade Policy Expert/Consultant, Sri Lanka; and Mr Yohan Lawrence, Chairman, Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association. Additionally, Dr. Dinesh Kumar, ESCAP SSWA office and Dr. Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue & Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue delivered presentations on the studies. More than 25 experts from South Asian countries discussed the methodology and findings of these studies, and shared insights on how the sector could build back better as the subregion emerges from the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

## 6. ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week: SAARC Member States highlight importance of disaster, climate, and health resilience on Ministerial Panel



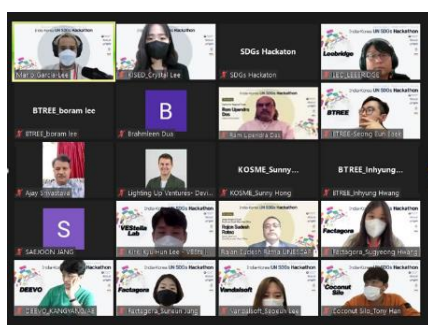
**Bangkok, Thailand, 25 August 2021.** To strengthen post-COVID-19 resilience and disaster preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP held the third Disaster Resilience Week from 23-27 August 2021 under the theme “Building back better after COVID-19: addressing cascading risks and systemic gaps for resilient peoples and economies”. As part of this event, a ministerial panel on disaster, climate and health resilience was convened virtually. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, ESCAP, gave the opening remarks and the

eminent panel of speakers made interventions in the following order: Ms. Khadeeja Naseem, Minister of State for Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives; Mr. Nippon Bunyananee, Deputy Minister of Interior, Thailand; Mr. Nityanand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs (Disaster Management), India; Lt. Gen. Ganip Warsito, Head, National Disaster Mitigation Agency, Indonesia; Mr. Keiichi Ono, Director-General/Assistant Minister for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan and Mr. William Samb, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Papua New Guinea. The session was moderated by Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division, ESCAP. The speakers underlined the importance of disaster management and the capacity of public health systems to respond to issues concerning the disaster-climate-health nexus. They discussed the challenges and opportunities emerging from the integration of health preparedness into disaster resilience strategies, as well as the integration of disaster risk reduction principles into the health sector.

## 7. ESCAP participates in the 15th Roundtable Meeting on Bhutan's Development

**Thimphu, Bhutan, 2 September 2021.** ESCAP was invited to participate in the 15th Roundtable Meeting held in Thimphu on 2 September 2021, where the Royal Government of Bhutan and its partners reviewed the progress of the country's 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan and challenges posed by the pandemic, while deepening their understanding of Bhutan's achievements made in collaboration with its development partners. Mr. Adnan Aliani, Officer-in-Charge, SRO-SSWA, represented ESCAP at the meeting virtually. The participants were briefed about ESCAP's work in Bhutan, including its assistance towards the country's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

## 8. India- Korea UN SDGs Hackathon held to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in India



**New Delhi, India 10 September 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (SRO-SSWA), in collaboration with Korea Institute of Startup & Entrepreneurship Development and the Centre for Regional Trade, India, organized a two-day online hackathon to address UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India. Korean start-ups proposed products and services with use of artificial intelligence and innovation that would help to accelerate Indian SDG progress. Dr. Rajan S. Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, SRO-SSWA, stated in his opening remarks that progress towards SDGs has slowed due to COVID-19 and there is a

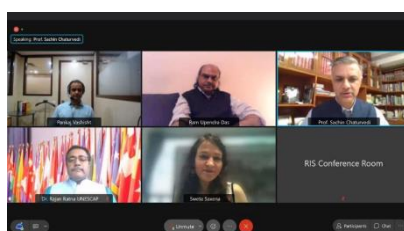
need to build back better in an inclusive and sustainable way, with start-ups being the innovation way forward. Dr. Ram Upendra Das, Head of the Centre for Regional Trade, also gave the opening remarks. The start-ups were encouraged to propose practical ways to operationalize their own proprietary software and services and worked with their mentors to refine their ideas before presenting them to a panel of distinguished judges.



## II. Select Outreach Activities



### 1. Dialogue on Building Post Covid-19 Economic Resilience in Asia and Pacific



**New Delhi, India 29 July 2021.** Dr. Rajan S. Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated in a panel discussion on "Building postCOVID-19 Economic Resilience in Asia and Pacific" organized by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India. In his remarks, he highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on the subregion and how its economies are responding with resilience to building forward

better and in a sustainable manner. The other panelists in the discussion included Dr Sweta Saxena, Chief, Macroeconomics Policy and Analysis, ESCAP and Professor Ram Upendra Das, Head & Professor, Centre for Regional Trade, India.

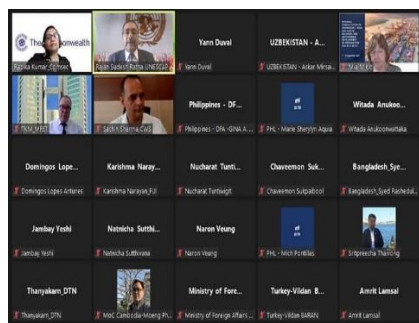
### 2. Webinar on 10 Years of India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement at the India-ASEAN Engineering Partnership Summit



Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi moderated the session and fellow panelists included Professor Amita Batra, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Professor. C Veeramani, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai; and Dr. Piti Srisangnam, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. In his remarks, Dr. Ratna stated his thoughts on various topics, including bilateral agreements, trade deficit and non-tariff barriers.

**New Delhi, India 24 August 2021.** A four-day virtual India-ASEAN Engineering Partnership Summit was organized by Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC). On the opening day, Dr. Rajan S. Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, participated as a panelist in the session “10 Years of India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement: Implications for Engineering Manufacturing – its present Status and the Way Forward”. Professor Prabir De, ASEAN-India Centre at Research and

### 3. ESCAP- SSWA contributes to the Regional Consultation held in preparation for the WTO MC12



**Bangkok, Thailand, 7 September 2021.** The ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (SRO -SSWA) participated in a regional consultation held in preparation for the WTO MC12 titled “Harnessing Trade for Faster Recovery and Sustainable Development”. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, ESCAP, and Ms. Anabel Gonzalez, Deputy Director General, WTO gave the opening remarks. Ms. Alisjahbana stated that “the MC12 outcome will have serious consequences for the future of the multilateral trading system and the ability of its members to rely on the trade in pursuit of sustainable development. This is especially relevant for Asia Pacific economies”. Dr. Rajan S. Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, SRO-SSWA office moderated the session on Fisheries subsidies and

agriculture. The session reflected upon the challenges and progress made in negotiations on both sectors and opportunities which can be utilized.

### 4. Launch of e-learning course on Digital Divide and Digital Learning by the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda



thoughts on the importance of digital infrastructure and the current digital divide in the subregion, along with his experiences on e-commerce capacity building project for women MSMEs in South Asia. It was an informative session and saw participation of more than 35 participants representing various nations.

**London, United Kingdom, 21 September 2021.** The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda launched its first self-paced e-learning course on digital divide and digital learning on 21 September 2021. The webinar presented an insight on the course and discussion were held on the broader issues around digital infrastructure and the digital divide in The Commonwealth. Dr. Rajan S. Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia participated in the webinar panel discussion and shared his



## III. Knowledge products issued by ESCAP- SSWA in the year 2021

- [Working Paper – Steps taken by India to Contain the Second Wave of COVID-19](#) (September 2021)

- [SSWA Development Paper 21-03- Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the SDGs in Sri Lanka and the potential for Regional Cooperation](#) (August 2021)
- [How to Make South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals \(SANS\) More Effective and Sustainable](#) (August 2021)
- [SSWA Development Paper 21-02- Implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh](#) ( April 2021)
- [Flagship – Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post COVID-19 resilient economies](#) (March 2021)
- [Flagship – Beyond the Pandemic: Building Back Better from crises in Asia and the Pacific](#) (March 2021)
- [SSWA Development Paper 21-01- Evolving Indian Strategy on SDGs](#) (March 2021)
- [Policy Brief – Weaving a Stronger Fabric: Managing Cascading Risks for the Climate Resilience](#) (January 2021)
- [Report – Fourth South Asia Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (January 2021)



#### IV. South Asian Leaders Highlight Initiatives Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) At the UN-General Assembly



##### Bangladesh

H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in her address highlighted that this year Bangladesh is celebrating the golden jubilee year of its independence. It was shared that Bangladesh has had a strong economic growth performance and is one of the five fastest growing economies in the world, along with reducing the poverty rate from 31.5% to 20.5% over the last ten years. In her address, Ms. Hasina underlined upon Bangladesh's positive performance amongst other socio-economic indicators over the past decade, including improvements in per capita income, foreign currency reserves, reductions in infant and maternal mortality, and increase in the life expectancy. She also discussed the 'Digital Bangladesh' initiative, which had an enormous impact on socio-economic development, education, disaster risk reduction, women's empowerment, among others. Further, she stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a much lower impact than was initially feared in Bangladesh, due to the strength of the healthcare system at the grassroots level.

Additionally, H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina made six important points for the future response of the global community in reference to some specific issues. Firstly, she talked about ensuring universal and affordable access to vaccines for people across the world. Secondly, she called upon the rich and industrialized countries to "cut emissions, compensate for the loss and damage, and ensure adequate financing and technology transfer for adaptation and resilience building", especially considering that the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on climate vulnerable countries. Thirdly, she called for a plan to prioritize education recovery by investing in digital tools and services, access to internet, and capacity building of teachers. Fourthly, she talked about the risk of lower LDC graduation prospects and aspirations of many countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the provision of more support to these countries. Fifthly, she urged migrant receiving countries to "treat them fairly and protect their job, health, and well-being".

Read more [here](#)



##### Bhutan

His Excellency Dr Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan shared about the 50th anniversary of Bhutan's membership to the UN and used the opportunity to thank everyone involved for the support in this journey. He highlighted that Bhutan would be graduating soon from the LDC status reflected the joint efforts undertaken which paved the way to make it possible. Further, he highlighted the efforts undertaken by the three Bhutanese kings during the 50 years of UN membership in making sustainable development along the SDGs and in accordance with its Gross National Happiness philosophy possible. The current King and Queen helped to limit the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic through varied measures, and it was noted that almost 80% of the Bhutanese population above 18 is fully vaccinated which is in alignment with the royal vision to provide free health and educational care. Additionally, Dr. Tshering stated that various measures such as promoting digital initiatives such as digital ID along with youth engagement programs are the key to recover from the pandemic and for sustainable development.

His Excellency emphasized that the most important lesson learnt from this pandemic is that the world needs to be prepared with a more resilient system for the future as there will be more outbreaks of infectious diseases. One important element that was underlined, next to an affordable and equal healthcare system was a sustainable UN food system that would meet the needs of all in accordance with the SDGs. To come closer to this goal, he stated that Bhutan maintains more than half of its country as protected areas. Tougher climate laws are also needed as a component of the NDCs from all countries worldwide. Additionally, his excellency highlighted its country's support and leadership role to spearhead Common Agenda.

Read more [here](#)



### India

H.E Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, in his address touched upon several pressing global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine equity, the need to combat terrorism, international peace and security, reformed multilateralism and sustainable development. He invited the global community to come and make vaccines in India, and laid emphasis upon the fact that world's first DNA vaccine for COVID-19 for everyone aged above 12 years has been developed in India. Additionally, India will soon resume vaccine supplies to the world. On maritime security, he stated that our oceans are also the lifeline of international trade and we must protect them from the race for expansion. Further, India has a strong record on climate action and has an ambitious vision, including for renewables and green hydrogen. He cautioned against the increasing threat of regressive thinking and extremism, calling on the world to make science-based, rational and progressive thinking a basis for development.

Highlighting the importance of UNGA platform for the country, it was remarked that it is essential to strengthen the United Nations to protect the global order, global laws and global values and stressed upon improving the effectiveness and enhancing the reliability of the Organisation to meet the current challenges.

Read more [here](#)



### Islamic Republic of Iran

H.E Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of Iran, in his address highlighted the plight of Iranians owing to the US sanctions that hindered vaccine imports from reliable international sources, thereby, pushing Iran to sustainably produce vaccines domestically. He stressed that cooperation amongst the countries of the world in the realm of health and vaccines is tantamount to helping the spirit of humanity and the policy based of divinity-humanity in international relations. President Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi reminded the world to pay attention by stating what inattention begets "crises in human societies, such as violence, poverty, unemployment, moral and economic corruption, collapse of family foundations, regional wars, organized terrorism and environmental crises are all the result of inattention to the principles of rationality, justice and freedom".

Further, he asserted that Iran is keen to have "large-scale political and economic cooperation and convergence with the rest of the world," stating that "a new era has begun".

Read more [here](#)



### Republic of Maldives

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of Maldives, called on the world community to be resolute in the face of further challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the adverse effects of climate change, the problems of famine, and the menace of terrorism. He highlighted that that COVID-19 was a particular challenge for the Maldives country, as it relies on tourism for foreign exchange and relies upon imports for nearly all essential commodities. Further, COVID-19 pandemic related lockdowns, resulted in challenges in education and had to upgrade their healthcare system.

Mr. Solih then called upon the international community to provide vaccine equity. He highlighted upon the grave threat faced by small island developing nations such as Maldives due to climate change, considering the report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and outlined that Maldives plans to reach net-zero by the year 2030. Further, he steadfastly condemned terrorism in all its forms and shared the commitment to work with the international community to address this problem along with highlighting the concerns about conflict areas throughout the world. He concluded stating the country's belief that the UN is still the best hope for humanity in solving all its problems and was grateful to the international community for supporting the Maldives' candidature for the Presidency of the General Assembly.

Read more [here](#)



### Nepal

H.E. Dr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal in his address, first underlined the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and highlighted that “in Nepal, saving lives, strengthening the health system, and pursuing economic recovery and transformation” underpinned their efforts to build a sustainable and resilient recovery. He called for peace in conflict areas and the provision of humanitarian aid. He also communicated Nepal’s belief that countries contributing many troops and police officers, such as itself, deserved more senior level positions both at the headquarters and in the field. Dr Khadka also condemned the arms race and terrorism in all its forms. He called upon countries to provide a breakthrough at the Glasgow COP26, and that the “climate ambitions of developing countries must be met with easier access to adequate financial and technological support for adaptation and mitigation”.

It was mentioned that Nepal has mainstreamed the sustainable development goals into its national plans, policies and programmes, and significant progress had been made across major sectors. Further, Nepal plans of seeking to graduate from the LDC category by the year 2026. Dr. Khadka called upon the global community to make a concerted effort to protect minorities and to ensure the safety, security, dignity, and well-being of all migrant workers. He indicated Nepal’s support towards the measures and initiatives aimed at UN reforms, with under-representation of developing countries a priority, especially within the Security Council, while calling for a revitalized General Assembly. He finally called upon the world to find a common ground and asked for an end to the polarization within and among countries.

Read more [here](#)



### Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, in his wide-ranging address that touched upon the impacts of climate change, the ongoing fallout from the pandemic, and the need to achieve sustainable development for all, laid emphasis on a comprehensive strategy that includes: first, vaccine equity, i.e. everyone everywhere should be vaccinated against the virus as soon as possible; second, adequate financing to be made available to developing countries, and lastly, adoption of clear investment strategies that can help alleviate poverty, promote job creation, build sustainable infrastructure, and bridge the digital divide.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also proposed that the Secretary-General convene an SDG summit in 2025 to review and accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Read more [here](#)



### Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

H.E. Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, in his address noted the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and appreciated the rapid advances made by the scientific community. However, he also recognized the need to overcome the challenges surrounding the production, distribution, deployment, and acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine. Mr. Rajapaksa while conveying his gratitude towards the bilateral and multilateral donors for their support to manage the pandemic, underlined that more measures are required to be undertaken as the developing countries have been hit the hardest which has put the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals at considerable risks. More initiatives including development financing and debt relief are needed as responses to the pandemic have limited the fiscal space to implement development programs.

Further, he emphasized that the consequences of climate change will even be more devastating than those of COVID-19 and thus, achievement of the SDGs is vital. As a climate-vulnerable country, Sri Lanka has undertaken sustainability as one of the cornerstones of its national policy framework and hoped that the United Nations Food Summit in October would promote healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems globally. Mr. Rajapaksa noted that the country has undertaken several measures in alignment with SDG targets such as cleaning and restoring rivers, combating river and maritime pollution, banishing of single use plastics, conserving the environment, implementing administrative and educational reforms and increasing the share of renewable energy sources.

Read more [here](#)



### Turkey

His Excellency, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey, in his address spoke about the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted that despite the significant progress made, the negative impacts are still more than visible and thus, the spirit of solidarity must be visible at the international level. In the future, Turkey will offer its national vaccine to other countries.

He expressed his concerns about the irreparable consequences of climate change and shared that it would hinder the goal to reach a prosperous future for the entire human race in accordance with the vision of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Currently, Turkey is already experiencing climate change related disasters which threaten the environment, life and property. Mr. Erdoğan highlighted that the world needs to find solutions to migration related to climate change, conflicts and other disasters as well such as forest fires, rising sea levels and storms as finding solutions to these issues will support the fulfilment of the SDGs. Further, he noted the importance of countries with greater historical responsibility for the emergence of global warming to take the main responsibility to fight climate change. Also, he expressed the continued support of Turkey to the Paris Agreement and its NDCs. Actions such as a harmonization with the European Green Deal are envisioned within the next month. A fairer world is possible through the UN thanks to the common sustainable development agenda despite the difficulties that the world faces today.  
Read more [here](#)



## V. SDGs Implementation Progress

### a) SGD: priorities, actions and means of implementation

**Pakistan's Prime Minister reaffirms Pakistan government's commitment to steer economy towards export-led growth** 1 July 2021 Imran Khan along with reaffirming commitment to take the economy towards export-led growth, adding that initiatives in this regard are being taken in various sectors. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish central bank hikes forex reserve requirement ratios** 1 July 2021 Turkey's central bank said it increased the required reserve ratios on foreign currency deposits by 2 percentage points to improve the monetary transmission mechanism and took steps to increase the share of Turkish lira deposits in the banking system. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh's remittance inflows hit record high of \$24.77 billion** 5 July 2021 Remittance inflows hit a record high of US\$24.77 billion in the just-concluded fiscal year (FY21), thanks to the expatriate Bangladeshis for sending money amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: 26-kilometre transmission line comes into operation at Nepal** 5 July 2021 Successful completion of this project is regarded as a great achievement at a time when lack of transmission line in the country was creating huge challenges in power supply. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal starts operating its largest hydropower station** 6 July 2021 The 456-megawatt Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, reached a milestone with one of its six 76-megawatt units starting power generation in Nepal. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan received \$60billion against export of goods, remittances** 6 July 2021 Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting says despite the Coronavirus pandemic, the country received historic 60 billion dollars against export of goods and services and remittances in financial year 2020-21, under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan targets automobile production of 300,000** 7 July 2021 Minister for Industries and Production said that the government is aiming to increase Pakistan's auto production to 300,000 per year, and policy

initiatives announced in the budget for the ongoing fiscal year will help achieve it. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's eco-friendly roadmap to save future generations from climate change: Prime Minister Imran Khan** 8 July 2021 Imran Khan said the government was working to set out an eco-friendly roadmap for Pakistan to save its future generations from the negative effects of climate change and global warming. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan government to ensure provision of high-quality digital services to people** 8 July 2021 Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the government is working towards providing affordable, reliable, and high-quality digital services to the people. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Contraception rights key to stable population in Bangladesh** 11 July 2021 Bangladesh targets to achieve a 72% contraceptive prevalence rate by 2030. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Government's Billion Tree Tsunami campaign to leave clean and green Pakistan** 11 July 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan said Government's Billion Tree Tsunami campaign is producing incredible results as barren hills of Matta area of Swat are turning green. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka's Directive to collect carbon pens, toothbrushes** 2 July 2021 The ministry recently launched a directive to collect carbon (ball point) pens from schools and from government institutions also toothbrushes from houses as they would take about 400 years to perish. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey's jobless rate falls to 13.2% in May** 12 July 2021 It was down 0.6 percentage points from the previous month and also down by 0.3 percentage points versus the same month last year. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan calls for enhancing green cover to mitigate effects of fast urbanization** 14 July 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan laid emphasis on preparing a new master plan of preserving green cover and forestation in the unutilized lands. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan stresses upon utilization of latest technologies to facilitate masses** 14 July 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan underlined that the government was fully committed E-governance for better performance and delivery system. Read more [here](#)

**India's wholesale inflation eases to 12.07 per cent in June despite spike in fuel prices** 14 July 2021 India's wholesale inflation moderated to 12.07 per cent in June from a record high of 12.94 per cent in May amid a sustainable rise in fuel and commodity prices. Read more [here](#)

**Shibli Faraz, Pakistan's Minister of Science and Technology Vows to make strides towards addressing Pakistan's water related issues** 15 July 2021 The Ministry pointed out that Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources and Capital Development Authority has signed a program of cooperation for artificial groundwater discharge and development of a proof based groundwater regulatory framework for Islamabad. Read more [here](#)

**Bhutan: Five Sustainable Development Goals likely at risk from COVID-19** 17 July 2021 COVID-19 has derailed the progress of Bhutan in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Working to build a service-oriented administration** 18 July 2021 Bangladesh government aims to ensure that at the time of COVID-19 masses do not face suffering in anyway. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Railway Masterplan: Riding on a rail to a prosper future** 18 July 2021 Bangladesh government has taken a massive step towards upgrading the railway network of the country. Steps have been taken to ensure balanced and integrated development of the sector. Read more [here](#)

**Green Output: Turkey to enact green organized industrial zones** 18 July 2021 As parts of its landmark Green Deal Action Plan Turkey aims to establish green industrial zones and generalized industrial region, steps taken to be part of the European Union Green Deal. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey successfully tests hybrid probe rocket for moon mission** 19 July 2021 Turkey completed the flight tests of a probe rocket system successfully that will be used in a crewless spacecraft that will be sent as part of the nation's 2023 moon mission. Read more [here](#)

**Asian Development Bank lowers India's economic growth forecast for the fiscal year 2022 to 10 per cent** 20 July 2021 From the 11 per cent projected in April 2021, Asian Development Bank has downgraded India's growth to 10 per cent on account of the adverse impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan: Satisfaction over amazing results of billion trees plantation drive in just 2.5 years** 20 July 2021 Prime Minister Imran

Khan expresses satisfaction over the plantation of billion trees in two and a half years, stressing greening of Pakistan is meant for the future generations. Read more [here](#)

**India improves scores in ease of cross-border trade** 20 July 2021 A United Nations Survey that tracks 143 economies said that India has made noticeable progress in ease of cross-border trade. Read more [here](#)

**India: Cabinet approves to bring Muslim marriages, divorces under common law** 20 July 2021 The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act includes specific provisions that discriminate against women and various women's organizations belonging to Muslim community and Muslim law scholars have pointed out the need to repeal such provisions from the law. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Guideline for declaring child-friendly zone final** 21 July 2021 The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration has issued Child-friendly Local Governance Implementation Guideline, 2021, to ensure that children's rights are protected and promoted at the grassroots. Read more [here](#)

**Asian Development Bank lists factors behind Pakistan's 3.9 per cent growth estimates** 21 July 2021 Asian Development Bank says that Pakistan's improvement is underpinned by strong growth in industry and services and steady remittance inflows. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka Government suffers major losses as a result of tax irregularities** 21 July 2021 The Government suffered major financial losses as a result of tax irregularities by the Custom Department. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh will continue to attract foreign investments, defying downturns** 22 July 2021 Bangladesh to remain the most resilient and continue to attract foreign direct investments to live up to its image as a favourable place for global investors. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistani expert among 25 appointed to United Nations Tax Committee** 22 July 2021 United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed a distinguished group of 25 tax experts from around the world, including Pakistan, to serve as members of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters for the 2021 to 2026 term. Read more [here](#)

**India sees significant improvement in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific score on trade facilitation** 23 July 2021 In ESCAP's Global Survey on Digital & Sustainable Trade Facilitation with a 90.32 per cent score India has seen a significant improvement. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Tourism sector facing existential crisis** 24 July 2021 The tourism that hit rock bottom at the height of the pandemic is now facing existential crisis as all the activities of the industry remains halted for about a year and a half. Read more [here](#)

**India: Need to reconfigure education needs to meet Sustainable Development Goals – 2030** 24 July 2021 Eminent space scientist K Kasturirangan on 24 July 2021 stressed the need for reconfiguring the education needs of the future to meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and to create a just and equitable society. Read more [here](#)

**India urges G20 nations to reduce high emissions to leave a better future** 24 July 2021 India has urged the group of 20 nations with per capita greenhouse gas emissions above the world average to take immediate steps to reduce their emissions so that the world can stay on the track to leave a better planet for the future generations. Read more [here](#)

**Half of businesses in Nepal are in informal sector** 25 July 2021 In Nepal half of the business enterprises are unregistered, unmonitored and untaxed, according to the findings of Central Bureau of Statistics. Read more [here](#)

**Maldives' Abdullah Shahid as President of the 76th United Nations General Assembly** 28 July 2021 Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdullah Shahid wins the Presidency of the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 7 June 2021, for the first time in the history of United Nations that Maldives will hold the office of President at the United Nations General Assembly. Read more [here](#)

**India: Depositors to get up to Rs. 5 lakh within 90 days if bank under moratorium** 29 July 2021 Cabinet approves the changes to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, which allows depositors to withdraw up to Rs. 5 lakh in 90 days. Read more [here](#)

**More small businesses in India likely to hire more people amid COVID relaxations** 29 July 2021 The hiring intent among small and medium enterprises for the quarter July –September 2021 has improved significantly in comparison to the previous quarter on the back of relaxations in COVID-related restrictions. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Government provides biggest ever development package to Baluchistan** 29 July 2021 Minister of Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain says socio-economic development of Baluchistan is one of the top priorities of the Pakistani government. Read more [here](#)

**Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey upgrades 2021 inflation forecast** 29 July 2021 Turkey's central bank raised its year-end inflation expectations but predicted consumer prices would drop significantly in the fourth quarter. Read more [here](#)

**India's Other Backward Classes, Economically Weaker Section get quotas in all-India seats of medical, dental colleges** 30 July 2021 The Central Government announced a 27 per cent quota for OBCs and 10 per cent reservation for EWS category in All-India Quota scheme for undergraduate and

postgraduate medical and dental colleges. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh's tax receipt rises 20 per cent in Financial Year 2021** 31 July 2021 Revenue collection rises 20 per cent year-on-year due to increased import duty, value-added tax, and income tax receipts. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladeshis rush back to work as factories reopen despite COVID-19 surge** 31 July 2021 Hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers rushed back to major cities after the government said export factories could reopen despite a deadly coronavirus wave. Read more [here](#)

**Indian government says July Goods and Services Tax revenue marks economic recovery** 1 August 2021 In signs of acceleration in economic activity, India's tax collection on goods sold and services rendered returned to over Rs. 1 lakh crore in July after the second wave of COVID-related restrictions caused a blip in June. Read more [here](#)

**India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to chair debate at United Nations Security Council** 2 August 2021 Prime Minister Narendra Modi to preside over an open debate on maritime security at the United Nations Security Council, India is holding the presidency of the United Nations Security Council for August. Read more [here](#)

**India's jobless rate drops to four month low in July as COVID ebbs** 2 August 2021 Adding to the signs of a nascent recovery in the economy where sales tax collections and demand for some commodities have signalled a rebound. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's economic policies, reforms in Federal Board of Revenue bearing fruits** 2 August 2021 Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said the business community was reaping fruits of reforms carried out in Federal Board of Revenue by the present government. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina Sheikh ensures housing for all** 3 August 2021 Bangladesh's Prime Minister Ms. Hasina Sheikh said no one in Bangladesh will remain without shelter as her government is working to ensure access to affordable housing options for all. Read more [here](#)

**India: Delhi cabinet okays policy to promote medical oxygen production** 3 August 2021 The Delhi cabinet approved a policy to promote medical oxygen production and provide incentives to the private sector for investing in production plants, tankers and storage facilities for medical oxygen. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal government tells electricity authority to work on tariff waver scheme** 3 August 2021 The Ministry of Energy has ordered the Nepal Electricity Authority to make necessary arrangements for providing electricity free of cost to households that consume less than 20 units a month. Read more [here](#)

**United Nations lauds Pakistan's role in fight against Climate Change** 3 August 2021 United Nations has lauded Pakistan's role in fight against climate change and multiple initiatives taken by the present government aimed at safeguarding environment, protecting biodiversity and creating nature based jobs. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey's annual inflation surges to nearly 19 per cent in July** 3 August 2021 Turkey's annual inflation surged above expectations in July on the back of food and energy costs, as per the official data, increasing pressure on the central bank to keep policy tight. Read more [here](#)

**Bhutan's losses on graduation from Least Developed Countries to be minimum** 4 August 2021 Even though Bhutan will lose specific trade benefits and entitlements after graduation from the group of Least Developed Countries in 2023, such losses will be minimum, states Diagnostic Trade Integration Study Update 2020. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal Government committed to press freedom** 4 August 2021 Nepal's Finance Minister Janardan Sharma has said that the government is committed to promoting press freedom and civil rights. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Imran Khan directs to take inspiration from China for waste ban policy** 4 August 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan directed to formulate a comprehensive plan to reduce dependence on imported plastic scrap. The Prime Minister in this regard instructed to take inspiration from the waste import ban of China. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Government organizations doing much better than non-government organizations at disclosing information under Right to Information Act** 5 August 2021 Government organizations are doing better in comparison to non-government organizations in terms of proactive disclosure of information on the basis of Right to Information Act. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh economy suffered due to COVID pandemic** 7 August 2021 Bangladesh's economy suffered a setback with 2.26 million jobs lost due to the COVID pandemic battering the world for over one a half years. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Chittagong awaits a sea of change** 7 August 2021 The present government is working for the development of the country by implementing many mega projects. The Padma Bridge construction is nearing its end with funding from the state coffer and China. Read more [here](#)

**India offers Cairn Energy \$1 billion refund after scrapping retrospective tax** 7 August 2021 India expects to refund \$1 billion to UK based Cairn Energy after it moved to scrap a retrospective tax law that unleashed bitter fights with prominent foreign investors. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Bank will not allow deposit rate below inflation** 8 August 2021 Addressing the decreasing interest rates in banks, a Bangladesh Bank circular said that lots of people are dependent on the interest rate for their deposit in banks. Bangladesh Bank said that they will not allow banks to fix the interest rates for deposits below the inflation. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka to be discussed on first day of the United Nations session** 9 August 2021 Sri Lanka to be discussed on the opening day of the United Nations Human Rights Council Session in September. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approves Taka 2,204 project to expand, modernize Teletalk network** 10 August 2021 The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approves a Taka 2,204 project to expand Teletalk mobile phone network at village level and also to modernize the existing network to provide 5G services. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi announces Rs. 11,000 crore plan to make India self-sufficient in edible oil** 10 August 2021 As India's import dependency on edible oil continues to rise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announces a Rs. 11,000 crore National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) to make India self-sufficient in cooking oils, including palm oil. Read more [here](#)

**India: Ending retrospective tax to boost \$5 trillion Indian economy dream** 10 August 2021 The Finance Ministry said a Bill to end retrospective taxes imposed on indirect transfer of Indian assets will encourage companies to invest in India and help the country become a \$5 trillion economy. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Asian Development Bank to provide Rs. 19.58 billion to Nepal to buy anti-COVID vaccine** 12 August 2021 The Nepal government and the Asian Development Bank have reached an agreement; Asian Development Bank is to provide Rs. 19.58 billion concessional loan to Nepal to buy anti-COVID vaccines. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan to get \$2.77 billion: Global liquidity booster** 13 August 2021 Pakistan to get an additional US\$2.77 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on August 23 in the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) account to boost liquidity for minimising the economic impact of the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Pandemic hits India's prospects to become \$5 trillion economy** 15 August 2021 Highly unlikely that India will become a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 due to the slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, said Professor Vamsi Vakulabharanam professor of University of Massachusetts. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Prime Minister Modi pushes infrastructure, growth on India's 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day** 15 August 2021 India to launch a major infrastructure plan to boost the economy and aim at 100 per cent coverage of development schemes, Modi announced on the 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Imran Khan launches Single National Curriculum phase I** 17 August 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the Single National Curriculum is the first step towards freeing "ourselves from English culture", a statement that follows the launch of a uniform coursework for primary school students. Read more [here](#)

**Indian central bank says inflation is on track to meet projections** 17 August 2021 Inflation is likely to remain within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projected levels for the rest of the year, said the bank highlighting that inflation containment comes at the cost of economic growth. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Government to offer incentives to boost exports notifies Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) rates** 17 August 2021 The government notified the rates for export incentive scheme RoDTEP and its rules with an aim to boost exports. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Hasina asks secretariats to continue country's ongoing development spree** 18 August 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the secretariats of the government to carry out the uplift activities keeping in mind that the existing development trend of the country might continue in future in the same manner. Read more [here](#)

**Indian economy rapidly normalising towards pre-pandemic levels** 18 August 2021 Even as uncertainty exists about coronavirus mutations and repeated infection waves, the Indian economy is quickly normalising towards pre-pandemic levels. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asks to reopen educational institutions as soon as possible** 18 August 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities concerned to reopen schools, colleges and universities as soon as possible. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh unlocks tourism** 19 August 2021 After a gap of nearly five months, tourist places in Bangladesh finally opened. The move comes after the Bangladesh government has eased COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on the movement of the public transport. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh disputes study into alleged forced disappearances** 19 August 2021 Bangladesh disputed a Human Rights Watch investigation into disappearances of government critics and others as built on questionable, uncorroborated allegations that security forces were involved. Read more [here](#)

**Central Bank of Sri Lanka tightens Monetary Policy stance** 19 August 2021 The Central Bank of Sri Lanka has decided to tighten its Monetary Policy stance. The Bank said it has decided to increase the Standing Deposit Facility Rate and the Standing Lending Facility Rate of the Central Bank by 50 basis point each, to 5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's Finance Minister: Better economic policies will pave way for investment** 20 August 2021

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin has said that better economic policies of the government will pave way for more investment in the country, adding that authorities are keen to solve the problems faced by traders. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey launches new unit to prevent irregular migration on Lake Van** 22 August 2021 Turkey has launched a new unit to prevent smuggling activities and ensure security on Lake Van. The Turkish Coast Guard Boat Command will play an active role in preventing irregular migrants from being taken to other provinces by boat, according to the officials. Read more [here](#)

**India: Finance Minister announces Rs. 6 lakh crore asset monetisation pipeline** 23 August 2021 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a Rs. 6 lakh crore National Monetisation Pipeline that will look to unlock value in infrastructure assets across sectors ranging from power to road to railways. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's regional exports increase 20.50 per cent in July 2021** 23 August 2021 Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.50 per cent in first months of current financial year (2021-2022). Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka to introduce laws to protect domesticated elephants** 23 August 2021 Sri Lanka's parliament is set to pass new regulations to protect domesticated elephants amid demands to capture more animals from the wild to be tamed and used for cultural pageants and heavy work. Read more [here](#)

**Iran still self-sufficient in fuel supplies** 23 August 2021 Secretary-General of Iran's Oil Refinery Industry Contractors Association Nasser Ashouri said that Iran became self-sufficient in petrol and fuel supplies in 2018 and continues to do so. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Closure of schools due to pandemic affected 40 million Bangladeshi students** 24 August 2021 Prolonged closure of educational institutions throughout the pandemic has affected over 40 million Bangladeshi students from pre-primary to higher education level, UNICEF said in a news analysis released. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh's capital Dhaka ranks 54<sup>th</sup> among 60 in safe cities index** 24 August 2021 Bangladesh capital Dhaka still remains near the bottom of the global list of safe cities, emerging 54<sup>th</sup> out of 60 cities in the Safe Cities Index 2021. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Security of life, property first priority** 24 August 2021 Minister of Home Affairs Bal Krishna Khand has said that the security of citizen's life and property was the first priority of the government. Read more [here](#)

**State Bank of Pakistan says it has received \$2.75 billion from the International Monetary Fund** 24 August 2021 The State of Pakistan has received \$2.7 billion from the International Monetary Fund as part of the newly-allocated Special Drawing Rights,

announced the Central Bank on 24 August. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka receives \$780 million from the International Monetary Fund** 24 August 2021 As part of the Special Drawing Rights from the International Monetary Fund, Sri Lanka received \$780 million. Read more [here](#)

**Next Step of digital Bangladesh is cashless society** 24 August 2021 Prime Minister's Information and Communication Technology Affairs advisor Sajeed Wazed Joy said that the next step of digital Bangladesh is building a cashless society to ensure transparency, accountability and mobility in financial transactions. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Government taking steps to build information highways, improve digital financial system** 24 August 2021 President Dr. Arif Alvi said the government was taking the steps to build information highways and extend reach of the people to new fourth generation technologies. Read more [here](#)

**India's Gross Domestic Product likely to grow at 18.5 per cent** 25 August 2021 The country's gross domestic product is expected to grow at around 18.5 per cent with an upward bias in the first quarter of the current financial year, according to the State Bank of India's research report Ecowrap. Read more [here](#)

**India: Finance Minister: Won't exit fully, but will ensure minimum government presence in insurance** 25 August 2021 Reiterating the fact that the union government will have a minimum presence in the strategically important sectors, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks, financial institutions, and insurance have been identified as strategic sectors, hence the government will not completely exit these sectors. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: House panel directs government to conduct grade 12 exams in person** 25 August 2021 Two weeks after the government's decision to postpone the grade 12 exams over COVID-19 fears, a parliamentary committee directed the government of Nepal to conduct the exams in person without delay. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Stimulus measures to expedite economic recovery** 25 August 2021 Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin underlined the need for providing industrial inputs such as cement and steel at affordable prices to carry forward the momentum of economic recovery amid COVID-19 as well as in post-COVID scenario. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan: Eco-friendly Ravi Urban project to generate \$40 billion revenue** 25 August 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the Ravi River Urban Projects, besides its environmental benefits, was expected to generate \$40 billion revenue for the country. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Prime Minister Modi says India remains firmly committed to move forward with goal of clean, modern mobility** 25 August 2021 Prime

Minister Narendra Modi said holistic steps are being taken for the value chain associated with automobile manufacturing so that the industry becomes more productive and sustainable. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Economy showing signs of recovery** 26 August 2021 Despite some challenges, the economy has been showing some signs of recovery in the fourth quarter of 2021, according to a quarterly analysis of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Finance Minister Tarin concerned over inflation risks amid Pakistan rupee depreciation** 26 August 2021 Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin has said that there is a risk of imported inflation amid Pakistani rupee's depreciation against the US dollar. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Businesses more confident now about economic recovery** 28 August 2021 Bangladesh businesses are more confident about recovery in the current July-September 2021 period than the previous quarter owing to the relaxation of countrywide lockdown, according to the Business Confidence Survey of the South Asian Network for Economic Model. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh to be turned into a global aviation hub** 29 August 2021 Highlighting the potential of Cox's Bazar, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government wants to turn Bangladesh into a global aviation hub that will help accelerate the country's current economic march forward. Read more [here](#)

**India's macroeconomy more healthy, ready for faster growth** 29 August 2021 Notwithstanding the pandemic severe shock, India's macroeconomy is more healthy and ready for faster growth, eminent economist Ashima Goyal said, observing that recovery from both the first and second waves was faster than expected points towards inherent strengths of the economy. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: International Monetary Fund wants to work closely for betterment of readymade garment sector** 30 August 2021 A high level delegation of the International Monetary Fund to visit Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association in December to hold discussions and explore avenues of how the growth and development of Bangladesh's readymade garment sector can be supported. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh government approves import of Rs. 17 lakh tonnes of rice** 30 August 2021 The Bangladesh government has permitted 428 businesspeople and firms to import 17.2 lakh metric tonnes of rice at a lower duty rate, aiming to keep rice market stable in Bangladesh. Read more [here](#)

**India: Economist's project Gross Domestic Product growth at 14 per cent – 23 per cent in the first quarter of the financial year 2022** 30 August 2021 Economists have pegged economic growth in the range

of 14 per cent to 23 per cent for the first quarter of the financial year 2022. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Imran Khan: Early finalization of policy to uplift small and medium enterprises sector** 30 August 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan while calling the Small and Medium Enterprises the most crucial component of national economy, called for early finalization of a proposed policy for the sector's uplift. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal government, World Bank complete annual review of portfolio performance** 31 August 2021 The joint portfolio review of the government of Nepal and the World Bank concluded recently covering 27 ongoing World Bank financed projects with a net commitment of \$3.27 billion. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan: Higher education on lines of modern sciences key to progress** 31 August 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan said at the level of higher education teaching youth the contemporary modern sciences was key to progress and development. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh seeks strong policy, support for Least Developing Countries** 1 September 2021 Bangladesh urged the global communities for stronger policies, measures and new support for the Least Developing Countries as well as the graduating Least Developing Countries. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Air pollution cuts Dhaka dwellers' life expectancy by 7.7 years** 1 September 2021 Air pollution is reducing the life expectancy of the residents of Dhaka, one of the most polluted cities in the world, by 7.7 years, says a new study. Read more [here](#)

**India: Air pollution may reduce life expectancy of Indians by nine years, says study** 1 September 2021 The study says 480 million people in northern India face the "most extreme levels of air pollution in the world" and, over time, these high levels have expanded to cover other parts too. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan launches Ehsaas Education Stipends programme** 1 September 2021 Prime Minister Khan launched the Ehsaas Education Stipends programme for "deserving" families so that they could send their children for education. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan government insists no shortage of essential food items** 2 September 2021 The government has insisted that there is no shortage of essential food items in the market. Director General of the Government Information Department, Mohan Samaranayaka said that the government has sufficient stocks to meet the demand. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka's New National Policy on environmentally sensitive areas** 2 September 2021 The National Policy on Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Sri Lanka was spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment, with the development and formulation of the policy supported by the United Nations Development Programme in Sri

Lanka with funding from the Global Environment Facility. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey registers best August exports ever as sales surge 52 per cent** 2 September 2021 Turkish exports managed to achieve their best August sales to date, while the nation's 12-month rolling foreign sales also reached a new all-time high, Trade Minister Mehmet Mus announced. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Dhaka urges world to help bridge wealth divide** 3 September 2021 Dhaka urged the developed and developing nations to extend their mutual and sincere cooperation in bridging wealth divide among the nations, as lifting poorer countries out of Least Developing Countries status slows. Read more [here](#)

**India: Companies can incorporate rewards, incentives to achieve environmental, social and governance goals** 5 September 2021 Companies in India are increasingly focusing on the importance of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues following the coronavirus pandemic, and their compensation committees can play a crucial role in raking this agenda further, to global advisory firm Wills Towers Watson. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey sees 9 per cent growth in 2021, inflation to ease by end 2022** 6 September 2021 Turkey sees its economy expanding 9 per cent this year and is optimistic that inflation will ease by the end of 2021, according to the country's newly unveiled three-year economic program in which it sets out its outlook for the economy. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh seeks global support to address climate challenges** 7 September 2021 Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen has sought global support in climate financing, rehabilitating climate migrants, and transferring green technology to address the challenges of climate change. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Government mulls policy on food delivery** 8 September 2021 With the demand for food delivery through online purchase growing fast, the government is planning to frame a policy in order to streamline the business and protect interests of all the actors in the chain, including customers and supplies. Read more [here](#)

**India to give \$3.5 billion in revised clean tech scheme for automakers** 8 September 2021 India to give about \$3.5 billion in incentives to auto companies over a five-year period under a revised scheme to boost the manufacturing and export of clean technology vehicles. Read more [here](#)

**India's economic growth will remain strong in coming quarters** 8 September 2021 While inflation in Asia's third largest economy is likely to remain at elevated levels, the analysts at Standard and Poor's said India's economy to remain strong in coming quarters. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Large number of children deprived of virtual learning** 8 September 2021 Despite tall claims by the government to have increased students' access to virtual learning platforms, an overwhelming number of students still remain deprived of virtual learning opportunities. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Energy sector circular debt, Pakistani Government irked by 'twisted' facts, figures** 8 September 2021 The government is reportedly disturbed due to dissimilar energy sector' circular debt figures being reported in the media. According to figures presented before the Cabinet Committee on Energy, circular debt reached Rs. 2,280 trillion, which is a 6 per cent growth in its flow. Read more [here](#)

**European Union to help Bangladesh fight climate adversities** 9 September 2021 European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh Rensje Teerink said the European Union countries will help Bangladesh fight the adverse impacts of the climate change. Read more [here](#)

**Reserve Bank of India optimistic about 9.5 per cent GDP growth estimate for Financial Year 22 being met** 9 September 2021 Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said many fast indicators are showing an uptick in economic activity and the Reserve Bank is quite optimistic about its 9.5 per cent GDP growth estimate for Financial Year 2021-2022 at present. Read more [here](#)

**Nepali Government committed to creating appropriate environment to bring in Foreign Direct Investment** 9 September 2021 Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that the government was ready to create appropriate environment to bring in foreign investment. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistani Government to provide all possible assistance for production of quality vehicles at reasonable prices** 9 September 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan says government will provide all possible assistance for the production of quality vehicles at reasonable prices. Read more [here](#)

**India: 13 airports get approval for privatisation through clubbing model** 10 September 2021 The board of Airport Authority of India has given approval to privatise 13 airports-the first major asset monetisation exercise by the government as part of the National Monetisation Pipeline. The government aims to generate Rs. 3,660 crore of private investment into the airports by Financial Year 24. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan reiterates resolve to play rightful role in fight against terrorism** 11 September 2021 Pakistan has reiterated to continue to play its rightful role in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and maintenance of peace and security in the region and beyond. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina: Development projects must not harm environment** 12 September 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the importance of keeping the environment in

mind while taking any development project. Read more [here](#)

**India: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) manufacturers seek speedy policy implementation, lower interest rates to boost recovery: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry** 12 September 2021 Manufacturers across multiple sectors have sought support for their micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) among measures proposed to revive and accelerating growth. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh saw record budget deficit of Taka 1.87 trillion last fiscal year** 12 September 2021 Bangladesh's budget deficit amounted to a record Taka 1.87 trillion in the past financial year as stimulus packages and emergency health pay-outs bloated public spending against revenue shrinkage for pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Finance Minister Sitharaman urges full vaccination for economy, industry to work normally** 13 September 2021 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman batted for complete vaccination to bring the economy back on track and for the industry to work normally. The Minister also urged more private sector participation in extending the reach of government schemes to rural India. Read more [here](#)

**Prime minister Sheikh Hasina for further modernization of national education framework** 13 September 2021 Prime minister Sheikh Hasina underscored the need for modernizing the national education framework further to cope with the technology-driven competitive world. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Experts focus on redefining small and medium enterprises** 13 September 2021 Experts at a virtual dialogue emphasized the need for redefining small and medium enterprises and star-ups in the proposed National Industrial Policy to ensure adequate financing – to have a vibrant private sector in the country and to get ready to face challenges of post-Least Developing Countries era. Read more [here](#)

**India's retail inflation eases further to 5.3 per cent in August** 13 September 2021 India's retail inflation in August marginally eased to 5.3 per cent, staying within Reserve Bank of India's comfort zone for a second month, government data showed on 13 September. Read more [here](#)

**Number of concerns on Sri Lanka raised at the United Nations Human Rights Council** 13 September 2021 The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet raised a number of concerns on Sri Lanka, including on the recent State of Emergency, in an oral update to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. Read more [here](#)

**India's plans for palm oil spark ecological concerns, controversy** 13 September 2021 India, the world's largest palm oil importer, has unveiled an ambitious plan to promote the cultivation of the crop at

home that has environmentalists and politicians concerned about deforestation, ecological damage and human rights violations. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh government to provide houses for all climate change affected people** 14 September 2021 Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister, Md Shahbad Uddin, said that the government is sincerely working to accommodate all the people affected by climate change by providing the required number of houses for them. Read more [here](#)

**India: Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai asks departments to prepare action plan by September 2021** 14 September 2021 Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai said the city government has asked departments concerned to prepare their action plan by September 2021 based on which the national capital's "Winter Action Plan" will be made to tackle air pollution. Read more [here](#)

**India: Delhi school teachers fight attendance application over privacy fears** 14 September 2021 As Covid-19 shuttered India's schools and overwhelmed its hospitals, teachers in Delhi were roped in for emergency duties – from handling out food rations to staffing vaccinations centres, often at great risk to themselves. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Public debt on declining trend** 14 September 2021 Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin said that the country's net public debt was on declining trend and reduced to 81.8 per cent of debt-to-GDP ratio during the fiscal year 2020-21, expecting that it would come further down during the current fiscal year. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka tells the United Nations Human Rights Commission it will not accept external initiatives** 14 September 2021 Sri Lanka informed the United Nations Human Rights Commission it will not accept external initiatives established by Resolution 46/1. Read more [here](#)

**Government of Sri Lanka insists no threat to freedom of speech** 14 September 2021 Cabinet co-spokesman Dr. Ramesh Pathirana said that the Government has ensured freedom of speech and democracy in the country. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh plans Earth observation satellite, second outpost in space** 15 September 2021 Bangladesh is going ahead with its plan to have a second outpost in space after finalizing that it will be an Earth observation satellite. Imagery from the satellite will enable the authorities to get a clear picture of floods or crops, and monitor large parts of the sea. Read more [here](#)

**India government spending Rs. 14,500 crore on airports before 'privatizing' them** 15 September 2021 The government had earlier stated that it would be spending Rs. 25,000 crore on all airports across India. With six airports handed over to the Adani group for 50

years, the government is now all set to hand over another 25 airports to private players in a bid to 'monetize' them. Read more [here](#)

**World Bank to provide additional financing to improve Nepal's education, health sectors** 15 September 2021 The World Bank has agreed to provide additional financial assistance of \$50 million each to enhance education and health sectors in Nepal. Read more [here](#)

**The United Nations Sri Lanka condemns any ill treatment of prisoners** 15 September 2021 The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Hanaa Singer-Hamdy said that it is the duty of the State, as per the Mandela Rules, to protect the rights of prisoners. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey hikes required reserves ratios for forex liabilities** 15 September 2021 Turkey's central bank raised the required reserves ratio for foreign currency and precious metal deposits by 200 basis points, according to a decision published in the Official Gazette. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal government yet to identify beneficiaries for its cash scheme for pandemic-hit poor** 15 September 2021 The Nepal government has announced its plan to spend Rs. 5 billion in the name of the poor people but it is still unclear who the beneficiaries are. Read more [here](#)

**Firming Iran's position in Shanghai, sign of Raisi's balanced foreign policy** 15 September 2021 Presence of President Ebrahim Raisi, heading a high-ranking delegation, at the 21<sup>st</sup> Summit Meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization can be regarded as a part of 13<sup>th</sup> government's balanced, dynamic and intelligent foreign policy. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Reallocation of transfer to the poorest can bring down Bangladesh's poverty 12 per cent** 16 September 2021 Social Protection Programmes remain central to Bangladesh' s sustainable development policy and are progressively benefitting the poorer households, says the World Bank. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan President stresses financial inclusion of women; disabled** 16 September 2021 President Dr. Arif Alvi urged businessmen and industrialists to take steps for the financial inclusion and empowerment of women and persons with disabilities by employing them in their respective organizations. Read more [here](#)

**India may corner nearly half of global rice trade as exports soar to record** 17 September 2021 India could account for as much as 45 per cent of global rice exports in 2021 as expanded port-handling capacity allows the world's second largest rice grower after China to ship record volumes to buyers across Africa and Asia. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Tarin briefs United ESCAP official about macro-economic challenges** 17 September 2021 Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin held a

virtual meeting with the Executive Secretariat, ESCAP. The finance minister briefed the Executive Secretary about the macro-economic challenges faced by Pakistan and underlined economic and fiscal policies being undertaken to place the economy on a growth trajectory. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh plans to collect, store personal records of all citizens** 19 September 2021 Bangladesh is planning to create a comprehensive database containing a wide range of information, including demographic and biometric records, on citizens of all ages in the country. A unique identification number will be assigned to each citizen under which their personal data will be stored, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka reaffirms active commitment to engagement with Commonwealth** 19 September 2021 Sri Lanka reaffirmed its active commitment to dialogue and engagement with the Commonwealth, at a virtual meeting with Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland in New York. Read more [here](#)

**India: Food inflation spectre will haunt us in 2022, says Nestle India chief** 20 September 2021 Rising food inflation may have severely crimped household budgets in the past few quarters, but the inflation bogey still lurks. Suresh Narayanan, chairman and managing director of food and beverage major Nestlé India, expects further rise in food prices next year. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: United Nations chief tells Sri Lankan President to protect minority rights** 20 September 2021 UN Secretary-General António Guterres has told President Gotabaya Rajapaksa about the need to protect minority rights in Sri Lanka. Read more [here](#)

**India: Annual salary increments expected to touch 8.6% in 2022: Deloitte survey** 21 September 2021 More than two-thirds of India Inc recruiters believe they have returned to the pre-pandemic level of hiring. In the latest edition of the Workforce and Increments Trends Survey by Deloitte, almost 78 per cent of companies said they had started recruiting at the same pace that they had experienced before Covid struck. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister of Bangladesh seeks Sustainable Development Goals roadmap for countries lagging behind due to pandemic** 21 September 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has underscored the need for charting out a bold and ambitious global roadmap to put the world back on the Sustainable Development Goals track so that no one is left behind as pandemic has pushed many countries way behind from the goals. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conferred with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Progress Award** 21 September 2021 United Nations-sponsored Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has conferred Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with "Sustainable Development Goals Progress Award" for Bangladesh's steady course in responding to the universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all. Read more [here](#)

**India plan for tighter e-commerce rules faces internal government dissent: Report** 21 September 2021 India's plan to tighten rules on its fast-growing e-commerce market has run into internal government dissent, memos reviewed by Reuters show, with the Ministry of Finance describing some proposals as "excessive" and "without economic rationale". Read more [here](#)

**Nepal Government told not to arrest anyone for negative remarks** 21 September 2021 The Supreme Court of Nepal issued a stay order against the government asking it not to arrest anyone for making negative statements against projects run by friendly countries, their project staff, foreign nationals, or their properties. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Asian Development Bank approves power project loan in Nepal** 21 September 2021 The Asian Development Bank has approved a \$60 million loan as additional support for the ongoing Electricity Grid Modernisation Project that is upgrading power transmission and distribution systems in Nepal. Read more [here](#)

**Iran, Turkmenistan reach agreement on solving gas dispute** 21 September 2021 Iranian and Turkmen presidents have agreed to solve gas dispute; the agreement has been reached between the two countries on the sidelines of the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tajikistan. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey ready to ratify Paris climate deal, Erdoğan tells United Nations** 21 September 2021 "In line with constructive steps and declarations of contributions, Turkey plans to submit the Paris climate pact to Parliament in October," President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told the United Nations General Assembly. Read more [here](#)

**Asian Development Bank pegs Bangladesh's Gross Domestic Product at 6.8 per cent this fiscal** 22 September 2021 The Asian Development Bank has revised Bangladesh's growth forecast for the current fiscal amid fears of a third wave of the Covid pandemic. In its latest report, the regional lender has pegged Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 6.8 percent in the current fiscal. Read more [here](#)

**India must work towards sustainable growth in post-pandemic era** 22 September 2021 India must seek sustainable growth through medium-term investments and sound financial and structural reforms once the global pandemic is over, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Cabinet decides to obtain \$100 million loan from World Bank to get vaccines** 22 September 2021 Minister of Health Keheliya Rambukwella had proposed that Sri Lanka obtain the additional loan grant of United States \$100 million under the programme of strategic preparation and response to COVID-19. Read more [here](#)

**President of Sri Lanka tells United Nations to treat sovereign states with due respect** 22 September 2021 President Gotabaya Rajapaksa called on the United Nations to treat all sovereign states, irrespective

of size or strength, equitably, and with due respect for their institutions and their heritage. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina: Global inaction over Rohingya repatriation shocks Bangladesh** 23 September 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has demanded intensified global actions with "real urgency" to repatriate Rohingyas, saying major international powers inaction over the crisis shocked Bangladesh as it extended them makeshift refuge on humanitarian grounds, straining the country's resources. Read more [here](#)

**State Bank of Pakistan governor: Stronger than expected demand growth led to policy rate hike** 23 September 2021 State Bank of Pakistan Governor Dr Reza Baqir has said that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided that the time had come to begin tapering, after Pakistan's stronger-than-expected demand growth and a sense that the government had been successful in controlling the delta variant of the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Iran determined to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination** 23 September 2021 Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said in the meeting to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) that Iran's willpower is dedicated to the total elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish central bank surprises as it cuts key policy rate to 18 per cent** 23 September 2021 The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT) was widely expected to hold interest rates steady at 19 per cent, where they had been since March, given increasing inflation. Read more [here](#)

**India: New simulator policy seeks to cut defence training costs, preserve military gear** 24 September 2021 The Defense ministry on 23 September came out with a policy for enhanced utilization of simulators by the armed forces to impart safe and cost-effective realistic training while preserving expensive equipment. Read more [here](#)

**Afghanistan: Girls' education must be a given, urges deputy United Nations chief** 24 September 2021 Ensuring all Afghan girls can be educated must be "a zero condition" for the Taliban, before international recognition of their de facto authority, UN DSG Amina Mohammed said. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey will strive to be a leader in climate change fight** 24 September 2021 Turkey will continue to contribute to efforts addressing the climate crisis and clean energy transformation, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on September 24, as he highlighted that global warming and climate change have become one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Ranil suspects tourism-based economic recovery lead to uncertainty** 25 September 2021 United National Party Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe says that economic recovery based on a resurgence of the tourism industry will lead to uncertainty. He said until air fares are reduced, it is unlikely that tourist numbers will recover as Sri Lanka is a budget tourism market. Read more [here](#)

**India's United Nations General Assembly address: 'When India reforms, world transforms,' says Prime Minister Modi** 25 September 2021 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 25 said that when Indians make progress, it also gives an impetus to the development of the world as its growth is linked with the globe. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Prime Minister calls for renewed global partnership to build greener world** 26 September 2021 Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has highlighted the need to build robust and renewed global partnership in a bid to build a greener, safer and more sustainable world. He also called for ensuring easier and direct access to financing and modern technologies for countries in special situations. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan government to intervene in market to reduce food prices** 26 September 2021 At a time when inflation is hitting all segments of society, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin says the government has decided to intervene in the market to partially reduce prices of essential food items, including sugar, flour and pulses. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Government wants e-commerce sector to run in a more disciplined way** 26 September 2021 Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said the government wants the e-commerce sector to run in a more disciplined way shrugging off recent anomalies by some companies. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Imran Khan terms Karachi coastal zone inclusion into China Pakistan Economic Corridor as a game changer** 26 September 2021 Prime Minister Imran Khan while lauding efforts of the ministry of Maritime Affairs, termed inclusion of Karachi Comprehensive Coastal Development Zone in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a 'game changer'. Read more [here](#)

**Maldives: Small islands caught between tourism economy, climate change** 27 September 2021 Come visit the Maldives, its president entreated the world at this year's United Nations General Assembly, moments before switching to an impassioned plea for help combating climate change. The adjacent appeals illustrated a central dilemma for many small island developing states: their livelihoods, or their lives? Read more [here](#)

**Climate change: Children urge action as report highlights heat-waves, droughts, flooding** 27 September 2021 Teenagers from Nepal to Australia are urging leaders not to turn a blind eye after a report showing a sharp jump in heat-waves, floods and droughts in their lifetimes. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh, six other Least Developing Countries are 'catching up' global average growth** 28 September 2021 Bangladesh is one of the seven Least Developed Countries (LDCs) 'catching up' in last 50 years, since the establishment of the category by the United Nations (UN) in 1971, according to the UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report 2021. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Need to step up efforts to tackle climate change impact on agriculture, entire ecosystem** 28 September 2021

Stating that climate change is a big challenge for agriculture and the entire ecosystem, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 28 stressed on the need to step up efforts to fight it as he launched 35 crop varieties which are climate resilient and have high nutrition content. Read more [here](#)

**India: Centre starts talks with Reserve Bank of India to kick off bank privatization process** 28 September 2021 The government is set to initiate consultations with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to devise a new security clearance framework for screening potential bidders of public sector banks as it kick-starts the privatisation process, beginning with the strategic divestment of Industrial Development Bank of India Bank. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Finance Minister Sharma stresses fully proportional election** 28 September 2021 Finance Minister Janardan Sharma said the fully proportional electoral system is necessary to eliminate unhealthy competition and malpractices in the election. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistani government fully committed to programme, International Monetary Fund officials said** 28 September 2021 Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said he assured the new resident representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the government is committed to the fund programme, and hopes to successfully complete the upcoming review as well as Article IV consultations. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistani Government pronounces "50 percent plus benefits" policy for women under Ehsaas** 28 September 2021 Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar said Pakistan's government pronounced the "50 percent Plus Benefits" policy for women in the framework of Ehsaas to empower them. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey's Power from renewables much cheaper than imported coal** 28 September 2021 The rising price of coal means that power generated from imported hard coal plants is now more expensive in Turkey than new local wind and solar-powered generation, an analysis from London-based think tank, Ember, found on September 28. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan President for businessmen's role to aware women, Public Work Departments on government's welfare initiatives** 28 September 2021 President Dr Arif Alvi urged the business community to create awareness and provide guidance to the women, youth as well as differently abled persons on government's welfare initiatives to help achieve the desired objectives. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: European Union delegation reviewing Generalized System of Preferences holds crucial talks with Justice Minister of Sri Lanka** 28 September 2021 A delegation from the European Union (EU) currently in Sri Lanka to review the Generalized System of Preferences plus trade concession, had crucial talks with Justice Minister Ali Sabry. Read more [here](#)

**Shahriar, Bangladesh' State Minister for Foreign Affairs: Wealthier nations should provide more trade access to poorer countries** 29 September 2021 Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md

Shahriar Alam has called on wealthier nations to provide more trade access to poorer countries so as to stimulate their economic growth. Read more [here](#)

**Iran calls for total elimination of nuclear weapons** 29 September 2021 The Islamic Republic of Iran's representative in the United Nations General Assembly called on the world for total elimination of nuclear weapons, rejecting retention, stockpiling, development, use, and proliferation of such weapons at regional and global levels. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish military begins to use unmanned ground vehicles** 29 September 2021 The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) have started using unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs), a statement from the Ministry of National Defense said. Read more [here](#)

**President of Iran says many countries ready to cooperate with Iran** 29 September 2021 Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that there is good readiness and desire in various countries to bolster cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Amnesty urges probe into Rohingya activist Mohib Ullah's killing** 30 September 2021 Amnesty International has called on Bangladesh to launch an investigation into the killing of leading Rohingya activist Mohib Ullah. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh has worst mobile internet speed among 110 countries** 30 September 2021 Bangladesh has the worst mobile internet speed among 110 countries of the world, according to the recently published 2021 Digital Quality of Life index. The overall ranking of Bangladesh is now 103rd among the 110 countries. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: 813 girls raped in last 8 months** 30 September 2021 Even though rape laws were amended last year to allow for the death penalty, a total of 813 girl children were subjected to rape, of whom 110 were subjected to gang rape in the first eight months of this year, revealed a report. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Prime Minister Modi: Indian Government focused on preventive healthcare** 30 September 2021 The government is making efforts to ensure there is one medical college or an institution for post-graduate medical education in each district of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on September 28. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: United Nations Secretary General documents allegations of reprisals in Sri Lanka** 30 September 2021 United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has documented allegations of reprisals and intimidation against some 240 individual members of civil society, activists and journalists in 45 countries, including Sri Lanka, for cooperating with the United Nations. Read more [here](#)

## **b) Regional cooperation and other means of implementation**

**Revised railway service deal with India to facilitate Nepal's trade** 4 July 2021 The revision of the 17-year-old Railway Service Agreement has removed

bottlenecks that Nepal has been facing for long, particularly in the import and export of goods through the Indian railway freight services. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan, Iran agree to boost existing cooperation particularly in its economic dimension** 5 July 2021 The consensus to this effect was expressed during a telephonic conversation between Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and Iranian President-elect Syed Ebrahim Raisi. Read more [here](#)

**US awards \$75 Million to help Small and Medium Enterprises in Sri Lanka** 6 July 2021 The US International Development Finance Corporation is awarding \$75 Million funding line to NDB Bank to support its work in expanding and strengthening the Small and Medium Enterprise sector, particularly among women business owners. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan reiterates resolve to foment ties with Tajikistan in diverse sectors** 13 July 2021 Pakistan's Foreign Minister has reiterated Pakistan's resolved to enhance bilateral trade, promote regional connectivity and strengthen people-to-people linkages with Tajikistan. Read more [here](#)

**Co-production of Vaccine: Dhaka Beijing sign deal** 16 August 2021 In a major development towards vaccine cooperation, Beijing and Dhaka formally signed a deal for co-producing Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine in Bangladesh. Read more [here](#)

**India and Sri Lanka agreed to seek pragmatic solution for fishing issue** 23 August 2021 Both sides also highlighted the pivotal importance of relations between India and Sri Lanka which have stood the test of time as close neighbors. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh-India: Better cooperation to ensure more trade benefits** 27 August 2021 Bangladesh and India can reap more mutual trade benefits through better collaboration - namely, in the apparel and textile industry – Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, President Faruque Hassan said. Read more [here](#)

**Iran, Turkey discuss settlement of water disputes** 1 September 2021 Iran and Turkey reviewed ways of resolving their water disputes along the two countries' shared borders. Read more [here](#)

**Experts say Iran Shanghai Cooperation Organization membership strengthened Asian cooperation** 19 September 2021 An expert believes that changing Iran's membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization from an observer to a permanent one has reinforced the prospect of Iran's cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its bilateral and multilateral ties with its member states. Read more [here](#)

**Iran can use energy card after attaining Shanghai Cooperation Organization full membership** 20 September 2021 Despite the fact that Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is not merely an economic union, its recent acceptance of Iran as a permanent member can provide the Islamic country with economic interests and privileges especially in energy sector. Read more [here](#)

## c) Gender equality and empowerment

**Iran: Big step taken in leveraging capacities of women in Iran** 31 July 2021 Iran's Vice President for Women and Family affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar said that the administration has taken a big step leveraging capacities of women, noting that over 25 per cent of officials in high, middle, and basic levels have been chosen from among women. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Pledge to reduce child marriage** 22 August 2021 Religious gurus and seniors of various ethnic communities pledge to reduce child marriage in Siraha. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Government not to make any compromises on safety, dignity of women** 9 September 2021 Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said that an awareness campaign will be launched in universities of province about torture and sexual harassment against women. Read more [here](#)

## d) Environmental sustainability and disaster resilience

**Energy crisis haunts Pakistan once again** 18 July 2021 Pakistan is again in the grip of energy crisis, gas and fuel, due to which loadshedding duration has been increased across the nation. Read more [here](#)

**India: On the frontline of Climate Change** 25 July 2021 Swathes of India battling deadly floods and landslides after heavy monsoon rains which is the latest example of how the vast country is on the frontline of climate change. Read more [here](#)

**India Monsoon death toll climbs to 159, dozens missing** 25 July 2021 The death toll from days of landslides and flooding triggered by heavy monsoon rains reaches 159 with rescuers searching for dozens missing. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan says it's high time for Pakistan to reverse environmental damage through plantation** 26 July 2021 Pakistan facing the impending challenge of climate change, massive plantation is the solution to reverse the negative impacts of environmental degradation said Prime Minister Imran Khan. Read more [here](#)

**Iran's President Hassan Rouhani inaugurates several environmental projects** 26 July 2021 President Hassan Rouhani ordered the inauguration of several national projects pertaining to the Department of Environment and free trade zones. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Deadly flooding, landslides devastate Rohingya refugees** 28 July 2021 Strong winds and heavy monsoon rains wreak havoc and destruction on refugee sites in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazaar. Read more [here](#)

**Floods, landslides hit Rohingya camps hard in Bangladesh** 29 July 2021 More than 12,000 Rohingya refugees have been affected, while an estimated 2,500 shelters have been damaged or destroyed by heavy downpours. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's President urges young generation to take part in reversing global warming** 31 July 2021 Pakistan's President Dr. Arif Alvi urged the young generations to play their dynamic role in the government's on-going massive Ten Billion Tree Tsunami campaign and reverse the degenerating effects of the global warming and environmental pollution. Read more [here](#)

**Floods in Melamchi, Nepal caused significant infrastructure damage** 1 August 2021 Floods caused by incessant rainfall have caused further damage to the riverbank areas of Helambu Rural Municipality, Melamchi. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal's new policy allows social organizations to divert up to 15 per cent budget to disaster response** 1 August 2021 The Social Welfare Council has adopted a policy allowing non-governmental organizations to divert up to 15 per cent of their annual budgets to disaster response. Read more [here](#)

**Death toll hits 17 in Bangladesh's C'nawabganj lightning strike** 4 August 2021 At least 17 people killed in lightning strike at Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj district. Read more [here](#)

**India may see more heat waves, droughts, cyclones** 10 August 2021 Increasing heat waves and droughts, increased rainfall events and more cyclonic activity are likely to occur across India and the subcontinent over the next few decades stated the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish wildfires finally under control as nation assesses damage** 10 August 2021 Two weeks after the outbreak of the worst fires in Turkey for more than a decade, nearly all blazes finally appeared to be under control on 10 August. Read more [here](#)

**Rescuers forced to suspend search at site of India landslide** 12 August 2021 Falling rocks forced rescuers to suspend their search for victims of a large landslide that swept across a highway in the mountains of northern India, killing at least 14 people. Read more [here](#)

**At least 71 dead in recent floods in Turkey** 16 August 2021 At least 71 people have died so far in the floods that have been plaguing northern Turkey. Rescue work continues in the affected regions. Read more [here](#)

**India to set up 100 earthquake observatories in 5 years** 22 August 2021 The Union Minister of State Jitendra Singh on 21 August said that India is going to have 35 more earthquake observatories by the end of the year and 100 more such observatories in the next five years. Read more [here](#)

**Climate Change melts glaciers on Turkey's highest peak Mount Ararat** 24 August 2021 Higher global temperatures are melting glaciers on Mount Ararat in

eastern Turkey, causing landslides in the region. Read more [here](#)

**India's Prime Minister Modi speaks to Assam Chief Minister to take stock of flood situation** 31 August 2021 With several parts of Assam hit hard by floods, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Chief Minister Biswa Sharma to take stock of the situation and assured the state of all possible help from the Centre. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan Environment Ministry: Red Data Book completed after 10 years** 31 August 2021 The Environment Ministry has completed the preparation of a new edition of the Red Data Book on Endangered Fauna and Flora in Sri Lanka, which is compiled every five years. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asks to remain prepared to face flood** 6 September 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked all concerned to remain prepared to tackle the flood as the water of the rivers is on rising trend. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Torrential rains kill 17, destroy homes in northern Pakistan** 12 September 2021 Torrential monsoon rains and mudslides hit areas in north-western Pakistan early on 12 September 2021, destroying homes and killing at least 17 people, said police. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Cyclone 'Gulab': Warning signal 2 issued for maritime ports** 26 September 2021 The maritime ports of the country have been advised to hoist distant warning signal number two as cyclonic storm 'Gulab' over Northwest Bay and adjoining West-Central Bay moved westwards and now lies over the same area. Read more [here](#)

**India Meteorological Department forecasts cyclonic storm off Gujarat, asks fishermen not to venture into sea till October 2** 29 September 2021 The India Meteorological Department warned fishermen not to venture into the north Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast from September 29 to August 2 and suggested total suspension of fishing activities there during the period. Read more [here](#)

**India's monsoon to withdraw from October 6 after September downpour, says India Meteorological Department** 30 September 2021 India's June-September monsoon rains are likely to start withdrawing from the northwest region from Oct. 6, marking one of the most delayed retreats of the seasonal rainfall, the Indian Meteorological Department said on September 28. Read more [here](#)

## e) Health & Covid-19 Related

**Bangladesh enters total lockdown** 1 July 2021 The residents of Dhaka woke up to deserted roads as Bangladesh entered a stringent lockdown with patrol teams out there to convince people to stay off the streets. Read more [here](#)

**Inter-province travel ban to remain till 19th July in Sri Lanka** 4 July 2021 According to the amended health guidelines the inter-province travel ban will remain in force for another 14 days. Read more [here](#)

**Restaurants, spas allowed to resume in Sri Lanka** 4 July 2021 Restaurants and spas of Sri Lanka have been permitted to resume operations by following the health guidelines. Read more [here](#)

**Iran reimposes virus restrictions** 4 July 2021 Iran announced it was reimposing coronavirus restrictions on major cities, as the spread of the highly contagious delta variant spurs fears of another devastating surge in the nation. Read more [here](#)

**Prohibitory orders extended by 10 days in Nepal** 5 July 2021 The prohibitory orders in place in the three districts of Kathmandu Valley since April 29 have been extended by another 10 days with Odd-even rule for public vehicles removed in the Valley. Read more [here](#)

**First consignment of Pfizer vaccines arrive in Sri Lanka** 5 July 2021 State Minister of Production, Supply, and Regulation of Pharmaceuticals said that 26,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine purchased by Sri Lanka had arrived. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka begins mixing Covid vaccines** 7 July 2021 Sri Lanka today began mixing Covid vaccines by administering Pfizer as the second jab on those who got the Covishield AstraZeneca vaccine as the first dose. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey's domestic Virus-Like Particle (VLP) vaccine to protect against delta variant** 7 July 2021 The VLP vaccine started its Phase 2 trials with more than 200 volunteers, and it stands out as a vaccine that can be modified easily against every mutation of the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal cautiously reopens international flights** 8 July 2021 Nepal cautiously reopens international flights while allowing domestic services to operate at full throttle, following a drop in Covid-19 cases in the country. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Government to purchase 15 million Sinopharm vaccine doses at lower rate** 14 July 2021 Bangladesh to purchase 15 million doses of Sinopharm COVID vaccines from China at a rate lower than that was set earlier. Read more [here](#)

**Newly appointed Finance Minister Sharma of Nepal approves Rs. 5 billion to purchase vaccines** 14 July 2021 The Government of Nepal has granted permission to the Ministry of Health and Population to spend Rs. 5 billion for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines. Read more [here](#)

**Prohibitory period in Kathmandu Valley extended till July 25** 15 July 2021 District Administration Offices of three districts in Kathmandu Valley have extended ongoing Covid-19 prohibitory period that was to expire tonight, till July 25. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh must win fight against COVID-19** 20 July 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina requested all to abide by the health protocols to tackle further transmission of COVID-19. Read more [here](#)

**India's COVID deaths 10 times higher than reported** 20 July 2021 India's death toll likely to be 10 times higher than reported by authorities, making it the

country's worst humanitarian crisis since independence. Read more [here](#)

**Iran's daily new coronavirus infections hit another high** 20 July 2021 Iran on 21 July 2021 broke another record in the country's daily new coronavirus cases even as Tehran and its surrounding went into lockdown. Read more [here](#)

**Health Ministry insists Sri Lanka not facing a fourth wave** 21 July 2021 The Health Ministry on 21 July 2021 insisted that Sri Lanka not facing a fourth wave of the coronavirus. Health Promotion Bureau Director, Dr. Ranjith Batuwanthudawa said that the country is still in the third wave. Read more [here](#)

**India reports first human death from bird flu** 21 July 2021 An 11 year old boy died from bird flu of the H5N1 strain, the first such fatality in India, highlighting a potential new risk for the world's second-most populous country battling the coronavirus pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**India records more than 45,000 cases of black fungus** 21 July 2021 Over the months of May and June India has recorded more than 45,000 cases of black fungus as a nationwide outbreak sweeps through COVID-19 patients. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh to go into strict lockdown again from 23 July 2021** 22 July 2021 In response to the spread of devastating Delta Variant, Bangladesh is upping its guard and announced the resumption of the nationwide strict lockdown from 23 July 2021. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka's health system exhausted as Delta goes out of control** 24 July 2021 Almost all hospitals have run out of beds to treat the rising number of patients infected with the Delta variant of the COVID-19. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish tourism industry surpasses pre-COVID-19 figures** 25 July 2021 The dynamism seen in Turkey's domestic tourism during the Islamic holiday Eid-al-Adha gave hope to the industry that had a troubled season last year due to the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid asked armed forces to work for tackling Corona situation** 26 July 2021 Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid called upon all, including every member of the Armed Forces Division, to work from their respected positions to deal with Coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's COVID -19 cases, positivity rate soar to the highest levels since May** 26 July 2021 Pakistan's national positivity rate raised to a whopping 7.51 per cent as the country battles a fourth wave of the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Another 90,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine arrives in Sri Lanka** 26 July 2021 Another consignment of 90,000 doses of Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine arrives in Sri Lanka. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: State Minister warns of a teacher COVID-19 cluster** 26 July 2021 Professor Channa Jayasumana, State Minister of Production, Supply, and Regulation of Pharmaceuticals warns of an emerging

COVID-19 cluster among teachers who demonstrated regardless of health guidelines. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish businesses call for mandatory vaccinations** 26 July 2021 Turkey businesses call for an implementation of a practice that would make it mandatory for visitors to show proof of vaccination for an array of activities, a preemptive move to curb the surge. Read more [here](#)

**Cambodia seizes virus-contaminated meat imported from India** 27 July 2021 Cambodian authorities stop five large containers of water buffalo meat imported from India after determining the shipment was tainted with coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Iran hits new COVID infection record second straight day** 27 July 2021 Iran recorded over 34, 900 new coronavirus infections, setting Iran's single-day record for cases as vaccination lags, public complacency deepens and the nation's outbreak spirals further out of control. Read more [here](#)

**Bhutan fully vaccinates 90% of eligible adults within a week** 28 July 2021 The Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan fully vaccinates 90% of its eligible adult population with seven days. Read more [here](#)

**Indians turn to crowdfunding to pay COVID bills** 28 July 2021 Hospitalization soared in India during the deadly second COVID wave. Hobbled by patchy insurance, Indians turn to crowdfunding to pay the steep medical bills. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka has enough Oxygen in hand, says Health Ministry** 28 July 2021 According to the Health Ministry of Sri Lanka despite the dependency on oxygen over COVID-19 patients has fairly gone up, there is no shortage of Oxygen required to provide treatment. Read more [here](#)

**Health Ministry insists vaccine used in Sri Lanka effective against Delta** 28 July 2021 The Health Ministry of Sri Lanka on 28 July 2021 that all the COVID vaccines being used in Sri Lanka are effective against the Delta Variant. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh lowers age-limit to 25 years old for COVID-19 vaccination** 29 July 2021 The Government of Bangladesh has decided to lower the minimum age for COVID-19 vaccination to 25 years. Read more [here](#)

**Research in Sri Lanka finds Covishield single dose effectiveness dropped at 16 weeks** 29 July 2021 Research conducted in Sri Lanka has found that the effectiveness of a single dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covishield vaccine dropped at 16 weeks for those above the age of 60. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh Government sets target to vaccinate 10 million people** 30 July 2021 The Bangladesh Government has set a target to vaccinate around one crore people through its weeklong countrywide vaccination campaign. Read more [here](#)

**Experts warn of new wave in Turkey's COVID-19 pandemic** 30 July 2021 The number of COVID-19 cases in Turkey is currently hovering around 22,000

and it will likely reach somewhere around 30,000 in the coming weeks. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan bans domestic air travel for unvaccinated people** 1 August 2021 Pakistan banned air travel for unvaccinated people as the country recorded its highest daily coronavirus infections in more than three months amid a fourth wave of the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**World Health Organization says Sri Lanka on track to fully vaccinate population** 2 August 2021 The World Health Organization says Sri Lanka is on track to fully vaccinate 10 per cent of its population ahead of the vaccine equity September target. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka government assures no shortage of AstraZeneca doses** 2 August 2021 The Government is in possession of enough AstraZeneca vaccine doses to provide the second dose for all those who have obtained the first dose. Read more [here](#)

**Iran records highest number of daily COVID cases in pandemic** 2 August 2021 Iran reports more than 37,000 new coronavirus infections, the country's single-day new record so far in the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**India's worst-hit Maharashtra eases COVID curbs as infections abate** 3 August 2021 India's industrial hub of Maharashtra state eased COVID-19 restrictions in most districts, including in the financial capital of Mumbai, after a steady decline in new cases. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan achieves target of one million vaccinations in a day** 3 August 2021 Pakistan Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar has said that the target of one million vaccinations in a day has been achieved. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka digitalizes Polymerase Chain Test, antigen testing process** 3 August 2021 The full process of COVID-19 related Polymerase Chain Test (PCR), antigen and antibody testing in Sri Lanka has been digitalized. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh records 241 more deaths, 13, 817 new cases** 4 August 2021 Infection rate 27.91 per cent in 24 hours. Bangladesh tallied another 241 COVID-19 deaths and 13,871 new cases as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc in the country. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka heading for worst medical tsunami in coming weeks from Delta Variant** 4 August 2021 There is a risk that the Delta variant is spreading beyond control as per the leading medical experts. Read more [here](#)

**Amid onset of third wave in Kerala, India, Naveen Patnaik warns of complete lockdown in Odisha** 5 August 2021 India registered a mega jump of 30.5 per cent in the daily coronavirus cases. Read more [here](#)

**Delta variant COVID patients account for 98 per cent in Bangladesh** 5 August 2021 98 per cent of the COVID patients recently detected in Bangladesh are of the highly contagious Delta variant while just 1 per cent are of the South African Beta variant. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh's mass vaccination plan changed for shortage of vaccine, manpower** 5 August 2021 The Bangladesh government changed its plans for mass COVID-19 vaccination campaign due to manpower and vaccine shortage. Read more [here](#)

**Threats of cell phone blocks, work bans boost Pakistan's vaccination rate** 5 August 2021 Tens of thousands of Pakistanis are thronging coronavirus vaccination centres daily after officials announced penalties for the unvaccinated, including blocked cell phones and barred access to offices, restaurants, shopping malls, and transport. Read more [here](#)

**Over 45, 000 children infected by COVID in Sri Lanka** 5 August 2021 Sri Lanka Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi told parliament that over 45,000 children have been affected by the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Johnson & Johnson's single dose COVID-19 vaccine gets approval for emergency use in India** 7 August 2021 India approved US major Johnson & Johnson's single dose COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use on 7 August 2021. The country now has five approved COVID vaccines. Read more [here](#)

**Plea from Sri Lanka Government to general public** 7 August 2021 The government urged the general public to get themselves vaccinated as early as they can, as the highly contagious Delta variant spreads like wildfire in Sri Lanka. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka health experts call for ban on large indoor gatherings** 7 August 2021 Sri Lanka health experts are calling for a temporary ban on large indoor gatherings to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Iran sees highest daily virus case, death counts in pandemic** 8 August 2021 Iran, grappling with its most severe surge of the coronavirus to date, reported more new infections and deaths across the country on 8 August 2021 than any other single day since the pandemic began. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Restrictions on public gatherings, recreation centres remain** 9 August 2021 Bangladesh set to lift most virus restrictions on 11 August 2021 has not lifted curbs on public gatherings and recreation centres as part of its move to phase out the virus restrictions. Read more [here](#)

**Issuing warnings about third wave in Nepal not enough** 9 August 2021 A third wave of COVID-19 wave is imminent and unavoidable, Nepali health experts, epidemiologists, virologists as well as the Ministry of Health and Population all agree. Read more [here](#)

**Active coronavirus cases in Pakistan jump to over 83,000 as fourth wave continues** 9 August 2021 Pakistan's coronavirus case jumped in over three months after the country reported another 4,040 positive infections. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka's war on Delta only to worsen** 9 August 2021 Sri Lanka's war against the Delta variant still in its

formative stages and is only expected to worsen in the coming three weeks. Read more [here](#)

**Police hunt for people not vaccinated in Colombo** 9 August 2021 The police have begun hunting for people in Colombo who have not obtained a single dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Read more [here](#)

**Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi directs all existing capacities to contain coronavirus** 9 August 2021 Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi orders the health minister to leverage all existing capacities in the country to contain the recent surge in the coronavirus spread. Read more [here](#)

**India: Signs of a third COVID-19 wave in at least 10 Indian states** 10 August 2021 Signs of a third COVID-19 wave has emerged in India, with at least ten states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka in the south, reporting a rise in R-value which means that each infected person is transmitting the coronavirus to many more people than in the past three months. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Prohibitory orders extended in the Kathmandu valley** 10 August 2021 Authorities of Kathmandu Valley have restricted the movement of all types of vehicles except the ones in emergency services after 8 pm in a bid to prevent the spread of the coronavirus as the third COVID-19 wave looms large. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Unvaccinated people face train travel ban from October 1 in Pakistan** 10 August 2021 The Pakistan National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) decided to prohibit unvaccinated people from travelling on trains from October 1 and called on the provinces to ensure that standard operating procedures were followed during Muharram. Read more [here](#)

**In Iran, slow vaccinations fuel anger in unending pandemic** 11 August 2021 Iranians are suffering through yet another surge in the coronavirus pandemic, their country's worst yet and anger is growing at images of vaccinated westerners without face masks on the internet or on TV while they remain unable to get the shots. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh's Health Minister says the entire population cannot be vaccinated at once** 12 August 2021 Health Minister Zahid Maleque says that Bangladesh cannot vaccinate its entire population at once, and asks people to be patient. Read more [here](#)

**Fully vaccinated Sri Lankans can arrive without prior approval** 12 August 2021 The Civil Aviation Authority said that fully vaccinated Sri Lankans can arrive in the country without approval from the Foreign Ministry. Read more [here](#)

**Vaccination card mandatory in public places in Sri Lanka** 13 August 2021 The vaccination card (fully vaccinated) has been made mandatory in Sri Lanka when entering public places from 15 September. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka government to purchase 100 metric tonnes of oxygen from India** 14 August 2021 The

Ministry of Health said that if there is a requirement more oxygen will be purchased. Read more [here](#)

**Iran to impose 6 day general lockdown over coronavirus** 14 August 2021 6 day long general lockdown to come into effect across the country after being hit by what Iran describes as its fifth wave of the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Half of the population already exposed to the virus, new study says** 16 August 2021 Over 50 per cent of the country's population has already been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19, according to a preliminary report of a large-scale seroprevalence study carried out by the Nepali Ministry of Health and Population. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's active COVID-19 cases jump to 88,588 as virus spreads** 16 August 2021 The active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan increased to 88,588, the highest reported in over three months as the country continued to battle the fourth wave. Read more [here](#)

**India's cumulative vaccination coverage crosses 56 crore** 17 August 2021 India reports little over 30,000 new coronavirus cases. At 32,937, there was a minor dip in new coronavirus cases in comparison to the previous numbers. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh imposes restrictions on passenger flights from 11 countries** 17 August 2021 Bangladesh's civil aviation regulator has imposed restrictions on international passenger flights from 11 countries as the highly contagious delta continues to devastate several countries across the world. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh reports 198 more COVID deaths, 7,535 fresh cases** 17 August 2021 Amid concern over the spread of Delta variant Bangladesh reports 198 more coronavirus related deaths and 7,535 fresh infections in the last 24 hours. Read more [here](#)

**India hits record 8.8 million daily vaccinations, five month low in cases** 17 August 2021 India administered more than 8.8 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the past 24 hours, the highest ever number of vaccinations achieved on a single day, said the federal Health Ministry. Read more [here](#)

**Delta variant mutates into three different variants and spreading in Sri Lanka** 17 August 2021 The Delta variant of COVID-19 which has mutated into three different variants is spreading all over the nation, Sri Lankan State Minister Channa Jaysumana told the Parliament. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: 172 COVID-19 deaths recorded in 24 hours, positivity rate 17.67 per cent** 18 August 2021 One hundred seventy-two people died from COVID-19 in 24 hours, as per the press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services of Bangladesh. Read more [here](#)

**Covishield: The World Health Organisation flags fake jabs in India, Africa** 18 August 2021 The World Health Organization has identified counterfeit versions of India's primary COVID vaccine, Covishield. The

doses were seized by authorities in India and Africa between July and August. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan reports another 3,974 new cases** 18 August 2021 Pakistan reported 3,974 new cases during the past 24 hours, taking the COVID-19 tally to 1,109,274 as the country continues to struggle to curb the spread of the virus. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka probing implications of new identified delta mutations and what lies ahead** 18 August 2021 Sri Lanka's health experts have launched a probe to identify the implications of the three new mutations of the Delta variant found mainly in Colombo and if it is more contagious than the original Delta variant. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: COVID guidelines amended imposing more restrictions** 18 August 2021 The coronavirus health guidelines have been amended imposing more restrictions. Only one person can leave the house, unless it's for work or medical reasons. Read more [here](#)

**The World Health Organisation expresses concern over COVID-19 spread in Iran** 18 August 2021 The Representative and Head of Mission to the Islamic Republic of Iran of the World Health Organisation Jaffar Hussain has expressed deep concern over the spread of COVID-19 virus in Iran.

**Worker's safety remains top priority of Bangladesh government** 19 August 2021 Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi has said that the vaccination of the workers is the top priority of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government. Read more [here](#)

**India vaccination drive picks up pace amid fears of third wave** 19 August 2021 India is ramping up its coronavirus vaccination drive as it races to stave off a third wave of infections. Read more [here](#)

**Over 38 million people didn't get 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine dose within stipulated time: Indian government** 19 August 2021 Over 38 million people did not get their second dose of anti-COVID vaccine, Covishield and Covaxin, within the stipulated period of time. Read more [here](#)

**Pandemic may leave Nepal's poor more deprived** 19 August 2021 Although Nepal made significant progress in reducing multidimensional poverty for five years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic could disrupt the past gains, a new report on Multidimensional Poverty in Nepal has warned. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan government reiterates lockdown still remains on the table** 19 August 2021 The Sri Lanka government has reiterated a lockdown still remains on the table and has not been firmly ruled out. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh lowers COVID vaccine age limit to 18 for students** 20 August 2021 The government is now allowing students aged 18 and above to register for a vaccine shot against COVID-19. Read more [here](#)

**India approves world's first DNA COVID vaccine** 21 August 2021 India's drug regulator has approved the world's first DNA vaccine against COVID-19 for emergency use. The three dose ZyCoV-D vaccine

prevented symptomatic disease in 66 per cent of those vaccinated, according to an interim study quoted by the vaccine maker Cadila Healthcare. Read more [here](#)

**Directorate General of Health Services Chief: Tough action if directorate found involved in selling COVID vaccine** 22 August 2021 The Bangladesh chief of Directorate General of Health Services has warned of strict consequences if any employee of the directorate is found involved in selling COVID-19 vaccines to outsiders. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal Government to purchase additional 6 million doses of Vero Cell vaccine** 22 August 2021 The Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal said that it has been working to purchase an additional 6 million doses of the Vero Cell vaccine from China. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan Government increases corona vaccination jabs to cover maximum population** 22 August 2021 Pakistan Parliamentary Health Secretary Dr. Nausheen Hamid said that around 30 per cent of door-to-door corona vaccine inoculation was being increased in various parts of the country to cover maximum target adult population till end of the year 2021. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan Government declares vaccination week for elderly people** 22 August 2021 The government of Sri Lanka has declared the week from Monday as a special 'vaccination week' for the unvaccinated people above 60 years of age, State Minister Channa Jayasumana said. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: No more COVID vaccination drive as supply is low** 23 August 2021 Bangladesh will not conduct any new mass COVID inoculation drive as the supply of vaccine doses is much lower than the demand. Read more [here](#)

**Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina orders speeding up vaccination of industrial workers, families** 23 August 2021 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities concerned to design a separate programme to bring the industrial workers and their families under the COVID-19 vaccination coverage soon. Read more [here](#)

**6 Dhaka hospitals declared dedicated for dengue treatment** 23 August 2021 Amid the rise in dengue cases, the Directorate General of the Health Services announced six hospitals in Dhaka dedicated to treating dengue patients. Read more [here](#)

**Delhi coronavirus update: Reports 24 new COVID-19 cases, no fatalities** 23 August 2021 The national capital recorded 17 COVID-19 cases, the lowest since march 28 last year, and zero death was reported for the fourth day on the trot, according to data shared by the health department of India. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Cabinet to donate August salary to COVID fund** 23 August 2021 Sri Lanka's cabinet has decided to donate its August salary to the COVID fund. Read more [here](#)

**India: COVID vaccine trial participants to be issued digital certificates** 23 August 2021 People who participated in COVID-19 vaccine trials will be issued digital certificates through the Co-WIN portal, said the Union Health Ministry. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh to receive 10 lakh Pfizer vaccine jabs on August 30** 24 August 2021 Another 10 lakh doses of Pfizer vaccine from COVAX facility will reach Bangladesh on August 30, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Full vaccination mandatory for all international, domestic air travel from September 30** 24 August 2021 The Pakistan National Command and Operation Centre announced that all air passengers, including those on incoming and outgoing international flights, would need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by September 30. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Full vaccination mandatory for entering school by October 15** 24 August 2021 Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar called upon the parents of all school going children of 17 years old and above to ensure their complete vaccination by October 15, to protect them from COVID-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka on alert for possible COVID 'super strain'** 24 August 2021 Sri Lanka is on alert for a possible COVID 'Super Strain' which could combine the existing strains. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh extends shutdown of schools, colleges to September 11** 26 August 2021 The Bangladesh government has extended the shutdown of schools and colleges to September 11 in the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Mass vaccination in Bangladesh: Administering 2<sup>nd</sup> dose to start on September 7** 26 August 2021 The government will start administering the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine under its mass vaccination campaign in Bangladesh on September 7, according to the chief of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Government urged to extend lockdown** 26 August 2021 Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe urged Sri Lanka government to extend the lockdown in accordance with the health expert advice. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Booster shots likely from October** 30 August 2021 The Sri Lankan Government is to consider administering booster shots from October, especially for the vulnerable groups. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: COVID-19 antibodies in large chunk of population may not mean immunity** 31 August 2021 Preliminary findings of a new nationwide seroprevalence study by the Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal show that 68.6 per cent of the population has already developed antibodies against COVID-19. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Sinopharm, Sinovac and Pfizer to be administered as COVID-19 booster shots** 31 August 2021 The Pakistan National Command and Operation Centre said that Sinopharm, Sinovac and Pfizer coronavirus vaccine booster doses will be administered to expatriates and Umrah pilgrims. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan government to provide indigenous medicines to all families** 31 August 2021 The government has planned to implement a program to provide indigenous immune strengthening medicines and immune strengthening porridge to all families in Sri Lanka with the aim of controlling the current Covid 19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey: First graders set to return to school amid pandemic in Turkey** 31 August 2021 When they step into the schoolyards, the first graders will be the first to return to school in an educational landscape reshaped by the coronavirus pandemic in Turkey. Along with pre-schoolers, they will be the first students of a 'new normal' for in-person education. Read more [here](#)

**India: The mystery fever killing children in India** 1 September 2021 Children in some districts in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh have been waking up with a high fever and drenched in sweat. Many of them complained of joint pains, headaches, dehydration and nausea. In some cases, they reported rashes spreading across legs and arms. Read more [here](#)

**India: Vaccinations in rural India increase amid supply concerns** 1 September 2021 India has dramatically increased COVID-19 vaccination rates in its vast rural hinterland, where around 65 per cent of the country's nearly 1.4 billion people live. But supply constraints remain for the world's largest maker of vaccines and experts say its unlikely India will reach its target of vaccinating all adults by the end of the year. Read more [here](#)

**Covid: Sri Lanka in economic emergency as food prices soar** 1 September 2021 Sri Lanka has declared an economic emergency, after a steep fall in the value of the South Asian country's currency caused a spike in food prices. Authorities say they will take control of the supply of basic food items, including rice and sugar, and set prices in an attempt to control rising inflation. Read more [here](#)

**India: Full vaccination should be pre-requisite to attend mass gatherings says Centre** 2 September 2021 Mass gatherings in India should be discouraged but if attending it is essential then full vaccination should be a pre-requisite, the Union government said and urged people to get jabs and follow Covid-appropriate behaviour, especially during the festive season. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Patient inflow at hospitals highest since start of pandemic** 2 September 2021 Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar has warned that patient inflow at hospitals as well as the occupancy of critical care patients is the highest in Pakistan since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Quarantine curfew extended till 13<sup>th</sup> September** 3 September 2021 The Government of Sri Lanka has decided to extend the quarantine curfew till 13<sup>th</sup> September. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey revises measures for arrivals from abroad to curb Covid-19** 3 September 2021 Turkey has amended its entry guidance for passengers in line with steps to curb the spread of Covid-19, the Interior Ministry said in a circular set to go into effect. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Covid-19 deaths in decline** 6 September 2021 65 people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours on 6 September 2021 as per a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services of Bangladesh. Read more [here](#)

**India plans 50 per cent increase in oxygen production before third Covid wave** 6 September 2021 India aims to ramp up its medical oxygen production capacity to 15,000 tonnes per day before a potential third wave of coronavirus infections that is expected to hit the country as soon as mid-September, an industry executive said. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey launches Covid-19 test scheme for the unvaccinated** 6 September 2021 Travellers, filmgoers, and people attending crowded events in Turkey are required to show negative polymerase chain reaction test results if they are not vaccinated against the coronavirus. Read more [here](#)

**Indian state battered by COVID now on alert for Nipah virus** 7 September 2021 The southern Indian state of Kerala is quickly ramping up efforts to stop a potential outbreak of the deadly Nipah virus, even as the state continues to battle the highest number of coronavirus cases in the country. Read more [here](#)

**India: Government partnering pharma industry to develop multi-variant Covid-19 vaccine** 7 September 2021 India is working to develop an umbrella Covid-19 vaccine, just like the multi-variant flu shots in the market. Read more [here](#)

**Iran welcomes private sector's cooperation to provide vaccine** 7 September 2021 Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said that his ministry prioritizes provision of Covid-19 vaccine and welcomes private sector's cooperation in the field. Read more [here](#)

**Turkey reports first mu variant cases of covid-19** 7 September 2021 Health Minister Fahrettin Koca announced that two cases of the mu variant of the coronavirus were reported in the country. The delta variant makes up the majority of daily cases in Turkey. Read more [here](#)

58 per cent of India's adult population got at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccines, says government 9 September 2021 India witnesses a sharp single day in a spike in the new coronavirus cases with the daily caseload soaring to 37,875. Of the total cases, over 25,000 infections were reported from Kerala. Read more [here](#)

**Iran's President Raisi says Iran has taken 4 transitional steps in Covid fight** 9 September 2021 Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the country has taken four transitional steps in the fight against the new surge in the coronavirus spread. Read more [here](#)

**Turkish health ministry urges public to get Covid-19 booster jabs** 9 September 2021 As Turkey seeks to boost the number in its Covid-19 vaccination program, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca urged the public to get their third dose of vaccine. Read more [here](#)

**Indian Government: First dose of Covid vaccine is 96.6 per cent effective in preventing death** 10 September 2021 A single dose of Covid vaccine is 96.6 per cent effective in preventing death and two Covid shots are 97.5 per cent effective, the Indian Health Ministry said. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka asks women to delay pregnancy over Covid risks** 10 September 2021 Sri Lankan women were urged to delay getting pregnant after more than 40 expectant mothers died of Covid-19 in four months, said the country's Health Ministry. Read more [here](#)

**Schools reopen in Bangladesh after 543 days of closure** 12 September 2021 Bangladesh reopened schools and other educational institutions after 543 days of closure as its virus situation eases and more people are vaccinated. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan's capital Islamabad becomes first city to hit 50 per cent vaccination target** 12 September 2021 Sustaining its rapid vaccination rate, Islamabad became Pakistan's first city to fully vaccinate 50 per cent of its eligible population against Covid-19, said the chief of the National Command and Operation Centre. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan government explains plans on re-opening schools and vaccinating students** 12 September 2021 Making a statement on re-opening of schools in Sri Lanka, State Minister Channa Jayasumana said priority will be given to schools in rural areas where there are students numbering below 100 when reopening schools. Read more [here](#)

**Dengue suspected of killing dozens as Indian state suffers worst outbreak in years** 13 September 2021 An outbreak of dengue fever is suspected of killing dozens of people in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh since the start of September, and authorities have launched a campaign to destroy mosquito breeding grounds. Read more [here](#)

**World Health Organization for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin likely this week** 13 September 2021 The World Health Organization is likely to grant approval to India's indigenously manufactured Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin, for an emergency use listing, this week. Read more [here](#)

**India worried about complacency over second dose of Covid vaccine** 13 September 2021 India is worried that growing complacency as Covid-19 infection rates and deaths decline could lead to people skipping their second vaccine shots, leaving communities vulnerable

to the coronavirus, said two health experts briefed on the matter. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal's Covid-19 response fail international law, Supreme Court orders protecting right to health** 13 September 2021 Nepal's authorities have largely failed to comply with their obligations under international law as well as the country's constitution to guarantee the right to health of all people facing the continued threat of the Covid-19 pandemic, said the International Commission of Jurist in a briefing paper. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka Health ministry: Covid situation has not yet reached satisfactory level** 13 September 2021 Despite a slight decrease in the number of Covid-19 infections and fatalities, the Health ministry said the situation is not yet favourable to embrace normalcy. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Rapid tests for passengers arriving in Sri Lanka to be considered** 13 September 2021 Deputy Director General of Health Services, Dr. Hemantha Herath said that a number of concerns had been raised over the tie taken to issue test results to passengers arriving in the country. Read more [here](#)

**Iran starts third phase of 'Fakhra' vaccine clinical trial** 13 September 2021 The third phase of clinical trial for domestically made Covid-19 vaccine 'Fakhra' started in the presence of Iranian Health Minister Bahram Eynollahi and Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Qaraei Ashtani. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Covid death toll crosses 27,000 mark** 14 September 2021 Thirty-five people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours, said a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services of Bangladesh. The total number of Covid-19 deaths in the country now stands at 27,007 and the death rate stands at 1.76 per cent. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Unvaccinated citizens to face stricter restrictions from September 30** 14 September 2021 As Pakistan inches closer to its ambitious target of administering Covid-19 vaccination to 70 per cent of the eligible population by year-end, the government warned that people who are not vaccinated will not be allowed to work from offices from October. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka will reopen after 20 September** 14 September 2021 Claiming that the Covid mortality and infections have reduced during the lockdown period, State Minister Sudarshani Fernadopulle said that the Government of Sri Lanka will take steps to reopen the country. Read more [here](#)

**Despite declines in new Covid-19 cases in Nepal, risk of cluster infections remains, experts say** 14 September 2021 Public health experts have warned that even if the number of new Covid-19 cases is declining of late, cluster outbreaks in Nepal are still possible in the coming days as public health measures have been compromised. Read more [here](#)

**Iran set to import 40 million more doses of Covid-19 vaccines in one month** 14 September 2021 Iranian

Minister of Health Bahram Einollahi said that Iran is scheduled to import 40 million more doses of Covid-19 vaccines in the next Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 23-October 22). Read more [here](#)

**India considers resuming vaccine exports soon, focus on Africa, says source** 15 September 2021 India is considering resuming exports of Covid-19 vaccines soon, mainly to Africa, as it has partly immunised a majority of its adults and supplies have surged, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan: Sindh eases Covid-19 restrictions as fourth wave weakens** 15 September 2021 As the fourth wave of coronavirus weakens in Pakistan, the Sindh government announces its decision to ease some of the Covid-19 restrictions. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh logs 51 more Covid-19 deaths in 24 hours** 16 September 2021 Bangladesh registered 51 more deaths from the coronavirus or Covid-19 deaths in the past 24 hours. Besides, some 1,862 new cases of infection were recorded during the period. Read more [here](#)

**India: Covid vulnerability may increase in October-November, Centre indicates** 16 September 2021 Local administration should start preparing for increase in capacity to handle any increase in the future, the Centre said. Without mentioning the third wave, the threats of which are looming large in India, Centre said that the country's Covid vulnerability may increase in October, November. Read more [here](#)

**Quarantine procedure for Sri Lankan returnees Revised** 16 September 2021 Polymerase Chain Reaction tests at the lowest prices at the Katunayake Airport for Sri Lankans arriving in the country from abroad, Aviation and Export Zones State Minister D.V. Chanaka said. Read more [here](#)

**Iran: Children, young adults' vaccination in Iran to start in a fortnight** 16 September 2021 Iranian Deputy Health Minister and head of Health Ministry's Management Center Dr. Jaafar Sadeq Tabrizi that the vaccination of children and young adults aged six to eighteen will start as of two weeks from now, and will be pursued seriously. Read more [here](#)

**Indian government hikes domestic airline capacity to 85 per cent** 18 September 2021 Domestic airlines will now be able to operate at 85 per cent of their pre-Covid capacity and set their own fares for tickets beyond fifteen days of the booking date. Read more [here](#)

**India: Vaccination crosses 800 million milestone** 19 September 2021 India has so far administered 794,287,699 vaccine doses. That is 2376.86 per cent of its total caseload, and 56.92 per cent of its population. Read more [here](#)

**Festival season returns to Nepal amid declining Covid cases** 19 September 2021 Tens of thousands of devotees packed the old palace courtyard in the heart of Nepal's capital on 21 September to celebrate the feast of Indra Jata, marking the return of the festival

season in the Himalayan nation after it was scaled down because of the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka has long surpassed World Health Organization vaccination targets** 19 September 2021 Sri Lanka has long surpassed the vaccination target of the World Health Organization with over 50 per cent of the population now been fully vaccinated, the world body said. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lankan Health officials: Major decline in COVID cases, hospitalization** 19 September 2021 There is a sharp decrease in COVID-19 cases being reported daily and also the number of hospitalization has also vastly gone down in Sri Lanka, Health officials pointed out. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh: Declining trend in Covid cases continues** 20 September 2021 The number of Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh continues to fall, said the Directorate General of Health Services. Read more [here](#)

**India to resume export of surplus Covid-19 vaccines next month** 20 September 2021 India will resume export of vaccines against Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) under the government's 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative from October 2021, the Union health ministry announced on 20 September. Read more [here](#)

**India administers lowest number of COVID-19 tests in a month** 20 September 2021 India conducted the lowest number of daily COVID-19 tests since mid-August, but the health ministry urged local governments not to let their guard down during the September to November festival season. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistani official: 10 per cent population fully vaccinated against Covid-19** 20 September 2021 People who were fully vaccinated against coronavirus now accounted for just over 10 percent of Pakistan's total eligible population, whereas 40 percent of them have been administered at least one dose, an official said. Read more [here](#)

**India won't buy Pfizer, Moderna vaccines amid jump in local output: Report** 21 September 2021 India's government will not buy COVID-19 shots from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna, three government sources told Reuters, mainly because domestic output of more affordable and easier-to-store vaccines has jumped. Read more [here](#)

**India calls new United Kingdom COVID-19 vaccine rules 'discriminatory'** 21 September 2021 India on 21 September criticized the British government's decision not to recognize coronavirus vaccine certificates issued by Indian authorities, calling it a "discriminatory policy" that will impact its citizens who want to travel to that country. Read more [here](#)

**President of Pakistan: Awareness, family care helpful to ease sufferings of elderly with Alzheimer's disease** 21 September 2021 President Dr Arif Alvi on 21 September said awareness about the needs of elderly population and understanding their age-related diseases, such as Alzheimer's and dementia, was important to make a difference in their quality of life. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Vaccination centres drying up as youngsters refuse vaccines** 21 September 2021 Sri Lankan health authorities raised serious concerns over the lack of interest among the 20 to 29 age group to get themselves vaccinated against COVID-19 with many having fears that it may lead to infertility while some preferred unproven natural remedies. Read more [here](#)

**Bangladesh to get 71 lakh Pfizer, 18 lakh Moderna jabs** 22 September 2021 Bangladesh will get 71 lakh doses of Pfizer and 18 lakh of Moderna vaccines as part of United States donation and regular supply under the COVAX facility. Read more [here](#)

**India's decision to resume COVID-19 vaccine shipments important development: World Health Organization chief** 22 September 2021 World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has hailed India's decision to resume COVID-19 vaccine exports as an "important development" in support of the goal to reach 40 per cent vaccination in all countries by end of the year. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: As the season changes, influenza cases are rising** 23 September 2021 With the winter season approaching, there are concerns about possible outbreaks of seasonal flu, which could put further pressure on Nepal's health care system that is already strained due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**President of Pakistan stresses making 'preventive healthcare a national priority'** 23 September 2021 President Dr Arif Alvi on 23 September said preventive healthcare was the best approach to control diseases and stressed on making the practice a national priority. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: New guidelines to be introduced when curfew is lifted** 25 September 2021 New guidelines will be introduced when the quarantine curfew is lifted, the National Operations Centre for the Prevention of the COVID-19 Outbreak of Sri Lanka said. Read more [here](#)

**Iran: President Raisi says 70 per cent of people to be vaccinated in next few days** 25 September 2021 Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi announced on Saturday that 70 percent of people in Iran will be vaccinated against the coronavirus within next few days. Read more [here](#)

**Article 19 slams violation of right to express in Bangladesh during pandemic** 27 September 2021 Article 19 on September 27 expressed grave concern over an 'unprecedented trend of the continuous violation of citizens' right to express and to know' in Bangladesh during the Covid-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Dhulikhel Hospital starts trial of Covid-19 vaccine candidate** 27 September 2021 Dhulikhel Hospital in Banepa, Nepal has started the country's first-ever trial of a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Sanofi Pasteur, a French multinational company, in partnership with GlaxoSmithKline, a British pharma company. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka: Guidelines being prepared to enforce once curfew is lifted** 27 September 2021 Guidelines are being prepared to enforce once the quarantine curfew is lifted, Sri Lanka Army Commander, General

Shavendra Silva said on September 27. Read more [here](#)

**UNICEF announces life-saving support to Sri Lanka's response to COVID-19** 27 September 2021 UNICEF on September 27 announced that the United Kingdom is providing lifesaving medical equipment for high-risk pregnant mothers and infants identified with COVID-19 to 11 public maternal hospitals across the island. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: COVID vaccination reaching targeted population** 28 September 2021 The targeted groups will get fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as per the government's goal. The government of Nepal has set the target of immunising one-third of the targeted groups by October 17. Read more [here](#)

**Pakistan to begin vaccinating children 12 and up** 28 September 2021 Pakistan's planning minister says the government will begin a drive to vaccinate children aged 12 or above to protect them from coronavirus. The announcement on September 28 by Asad Umar comes amid a steady decline in fatalities from coronavirus across the country. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka's Health Ministry: Don't let healthy children above 12 get vaccinated** 28 September 2021 The Sri Lanka Health Ministry Tuesday requested the parents not to direct their healthy children above 12 years of age for vaccination because there was no such a decision as of yet. Read more [here](#)

**India's Home Ministry extends COVID-19 norms till October 31** 28 September 2021 The Ministry of Home Affairs of India issued fresh guidelines on September 28 States for prompt and effective containment measures and to accelerate the pace of vaccination to prevent the rise in number of COVID-19 cases due to the coming festival season. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal Government to support tourism sector, says Prime Minister Deuba** 28 September 2021 Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that the government is committed to support country's tourism sector which has been hit hard by the COVID -19 pandemic. Read more [here](#)

**Nepal: Around 50 per cent targeted population vaccinated against COVID-19 in Kathmandu Valley** 29 September 2021 Nearly 50 per cent of the targeted population in Kathmandu Valley has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Population said. Read more [here](#)

**25 per cent of India's eligible population fully vaccinated against Covid-19, says health minister Mandaviya** 30 September 2021 As many as 237 million (23.7 crore) people or one-fourth of the eligible beneficiaries have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in India, Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on September 28, lauding the country's Covid-19 vaccination drive. Read more [here](#)

**Sri Lanka Government decides not to lift inter-province travel ban** 30 September 2021 The quarantine curfew is to be lifted at 4am tomorrow (1st October), Army Commander General Shavendra Silva announced on September 29. Read more [here](#)

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## South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals (SANS)

The South Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals (SANS) has been developed by ESCAP to foster subregional cooperation by sharing good 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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