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**SOUTH ASIA
SDG
UPDATE**



JULY 2019



1. SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE IN THE 75TH COMMISSION SESSION OF UNESCAP



All the South Asian countries participated in the 75th Commission Session of UNESCAP that was held in Bangkok from 27 to 31 May, under the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". This year's Commission Session was opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and attendees included Prime Minister of Cambodia H.E. Samdech Techo Hun Sen and President of Nauru H.E. Baron Divavesi Waqa. Delegates adopted nine resolutions to leave no one behind on critical issues including statistics, innovation, space applications and air pollution. In her policy statement, UNESCAP Executive Secretary Armida Alisjahbana remarked, "We can learn from each other as we strengthen policies, institutions and legislation to empower people and promote equality. This can help accelerate our journey to the transformed and resilient society for which we strive." UNESCAP also signed three Memoranda of Understanding and one Statement of Cooperation on the sidelines of the Commission Session to increase regional cooperation in the areas of disaster resilience, early warning systems, renewable energy, research and evidence-based policymaking.

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"Closing the Gap: Empowerment and Inclusion in Asia and the Pacific".



The Agenda of the Commission included the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries devoted to the challenges faced by countries with the special needs. The Ministers from Bangladesh and Nepal participated in the high level panel on the theme.



Subregional perspectives on “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”

A new feature of the Commission this year was a special session on subregional perspectives held on 30 May 2019. Under this agenda, representatives from subregional organizations and groupings across the region discussed some of the key priorities for inter-regional cooperation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as mechanisms to facilitate and strengthen partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. Facilitated by the South and South-West Asia Office of UNESCAP (UNESCAP-SSWA), the panel provided a forum for cross-learning and experience sharing to promote broader regional cooperation. The conversation was focused on regional, subregional, multi-country and transboundary development issues such as connectivity, trade and investment, disaster risk reduction and environmental cooperation. Officials closely examined what role UNESCAP and the broader United Nations system can play in supporting interregional collaboration across Asia and the Pacific, including South-South and triangular cooperation.

The subregional organizations participating in the discussion included the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the South Asia Association for regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (CSO).

South Asian side events during the 75th Commission Session



1. Bangladesh's experiences in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, 28 May 2019

Organized by the Government of Bangladesh, it showcased the country's successful efforts and progress for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that has kept the country on track towards attaining many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. It also highlighted the need for national and international support measures to achieve the SDGs. It provided an opportunity for UNESCAP members and delegates to share best practices and experiences related to inclusive and sustainable development at the national level, given that developing countries often face similar challenges and have similar experiences in implementing sustainable development.

2. India's experiences in developing a unique monitoring framework, 29 May 2019

Organized by National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) in collaboration with UNESCAP it addressed India's leadership role in SDGs. NITI Aayog in India has developed unique framework, the SDG Index to monitor the advancement of the Agenda 2030, and this initiative could be replicated in other Asian countries. After the welcome remarks of H.E. Ms. Suchitra Durai, Ambassador of India to Thailand, and H.E. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, special addresses were made by H.E. Mr. M A Mannan, Minister of Planning of Bangladesh and H.E. Mr. Fidelis Manuel Magalhaes Leite, Minister of Legislative Reform and Parliament Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste.





3. Graduation of Least Developed Countries, International Support Measures and Leveraging Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, 30 May 2019

The Government of Bangladesh hosted a strategic dialogue co-sponsored by UNESCAP. The goal was to exchange strategies for countries to adopt for a smooth and sustainable graduation to prevent them from falling back into the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) category again. Moderated by Dr Nagesh Kumar, Head of UNESCAP SSWA, the event was addressed by H.E. Mr. Nazmul Quanine Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Dr Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, H.E. Mr. M.A. Mannan, Minister of Planning, Bangladesh, Mr. Anwar Hossain, Joint secretary, Economic Relations Division, Bangladesh and representatives of Nepal, Cambodia, Lao PDR and UN-OHRLS.

4. Solar Energy, a Trillion Dollar Opportunity, 28 May 2019

In a side event, co-organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA), UNESCAP, Embassies of France and of India in Thailand, participants focused on the issues of developing and financing solar energy projects and aligning financial flows, in order to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement, the One Planet Summit and the Delhi Solar Agenda. ISA Member countries and partners engaged in the development and financing of solar energy projects have to be brought together to build and strengthen the mechanisms and initiatives essential for supporting speedily and efficiently solar energy projects and actions on the ground.



5. The International Solar Alliance signs a Memorandum of Understanding with ESCAP, 27 May 2019

ISA and UNESCAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate and enhance efforts to unlock immense potential of solar energy technology in the Asia-Pacific region in the light of attaining SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and the Paris Agreement targets.

ISA and UNESCAP will collaborate to develop research and communication products to deepen the understanding of the benefits of solar energy in the member countries, organize capacity building activities, workshops and conferences to promote solar applications to disseminate knowledge in the field of solar energy.



Dr Upendra Tripathy, Director General of International Solar Alliance, underscores the importance of institutional cooperation to achieve SDG7 targets in the Asia-Pacific region.



2. INCEPTION WORKSHOP AND CONSULTATION ON SDGs AND SUSTAINABLE GRADUATION OF SOUTH ASIAN LDCs

DHAKA, BANGLADESH - 28-30 April 2019

UNESCAP-SSWA, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh organized a capacity building event on 28-30 April 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The workshop was attended by Government officials from various Departments and Ministries of Bangladesh as well as Bhutan and Nepal.

The opening session was addressed by Dr Nagesh Kumar, Head of UNESCAP-SSWA, Dr Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Monowar Ahmed, Secretary, Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Md. Mofizul Islam, Secretary of Commerce, and H.E. Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Chief Coordinator (SDGs) in the Prime Minister's Office, and Chairman of the National Taskforce on Graduation (chief guest).



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3. SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ICT CO-DEPLOYMENT ALONG PASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN SOUTH ASIA



NEW DELHI, INDIA, 27 June 2019

Expanding ICT connectivity has played a strategically significant role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region. Considering the potential opportunities of co-deployment to promote regional infrastructure connectivity for sustainable development in Asia and Pacific, UNESCAP's ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), Transport Division (TD), ESCAP-SSWA and the Asian Institute for Transport Development (AITD) organized a subregional workshop. The objective was to raise awareness and facilitate constructive dialogue. Government officials from six countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka) presented their countries' perspectives on trans-boundary infrastructure co-deployment, as well legal, regulatory and policy harmonization challenges and opportunities.

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4. LAUNCH AND POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE “ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVEY OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2019: AMBITIONS BEYOND GROWTH”



The Survey 2019 reveals that an additional annual investment of \$1.5 trillion, equivalent to a dollar per person per day, would allow countries in the Asia and Pacific region to achieve SDGs by 2030. Presenting the Survey 2019 to the media on 4 April 2019 at the UN House in New Delhi, Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Head of UNESCAP-SSWA said the Survey finds the overall economic outlook in Asia and the Pacific to be largely stable with relatively low level of inflation.



Following its launch, the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) along with UNESCAP-SSWA organized a policy dialogue on 18 April 2019 on the outcomes of the Survey. In their opening remarks, Dr. Nagesh Kumar, and Dr. Rathin Roy, Director of NIPFP highlighted the upcoming challenges in terms of financial needs to implement SDGs and the lack of subregional cooperation in South Asia. Mr. Jeong-Dae Lee, Economic Affairs Officer at UNESCAP presented the outcomes of the Survey that followed by a panel discussion on SDG costing methodology and policy issues during which Indian experts shared their perspectives and feedback.

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5. BANGLADESH WORKSHOP SUPPORTS SMOOTH LDC GRADUATION AND ACHIEVING THE SDGs



NEW DELHI, INDIA & BANGKOK, THAILAND – 20-25 June 2019

UNESCAP-SSWA and the Government of Bangladesh co-hosted a workshop investigating the challenges associated with Bangladesh's graduation from LDC status and the prospects for smooth graduation and achieving the SDGs for a group of senior officials from the Government of Bangladesh visiting UNESCAP-SSWA and the UNESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok. Through interactive sessions, participants discussed current trade patterns of Bangladesh, the expected impacts of graduation and policy priorities for accelerating SDG achievement, financing needs and resource mobilization. Participants also explored how Bangladesh can leverage partnerships for smooth graduation and assessing needs and gaps in terms of data collection.

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6. WORKSHOP ON “SYSTEMS THINKING AND INTEGRATION OF THE SDGS IN NATIONAL PLANNING”

NEW DELHI, INDIA – 17-18 April 2019

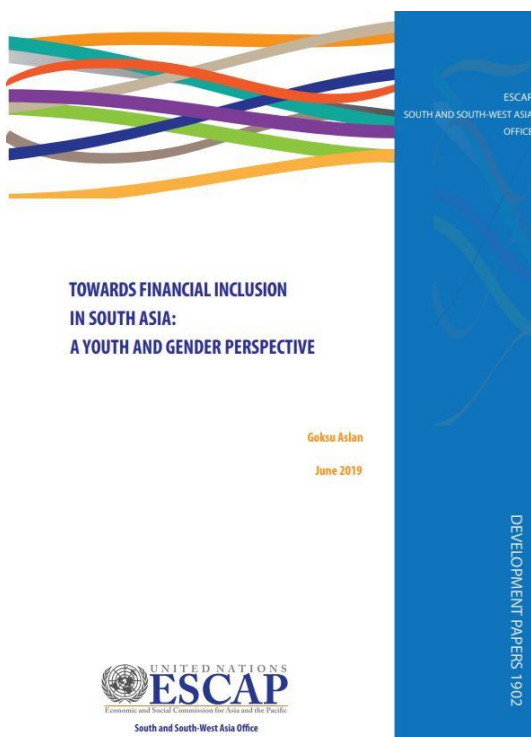
On 16 and 17 of April 2019, the Environment and Development division of UNESCAP together with UNESCAP-SSWA organized a workshop for Government officials and UN representatives to give an introduction on tools and methodologies of the SDGs framework. It was an occasion for participants to learn from each other by sharing related challenges. During the opening session, Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Head of UNESCAP-SSWA, Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF Representative & Resident Coordinator a.i. for India and Mr. Pravin Srivastava, Secretary and Chief Statistician of India highlighted that SDGs are integrated and indivisible, thus, vertical thinking has to be replaced by systems thinking. Regional cooperation can play a key role in capacity building and sharing best practices in collecting data and creating a holistic and interconnected network is key to achieve the 2030 Agenda.



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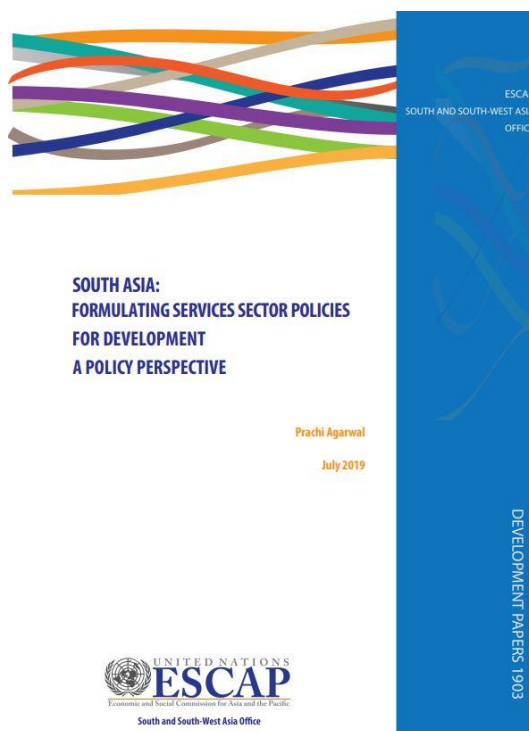


7. NEW UNESCAP-SSWA DEVELOPMENT PAPERS



#1902 – Towards Financial Inclusion in South Asia: A Youth and Gender Perspective

The youthful population of South Asia seems to have a great share in the future alongside the risk of being NEET with a persisting gender gap, which makes important for South Asian countries to put a gender-responsive policy framework for the youth empowerment at the heart of their efforts towards the 2030 Agenda. Increasing youth's financial inclusion at the individual level would also provide development benefits especially for developing and least developed countries. This paper shows evidence on how to increase the formal financial inclusion among the South Asian youth considering also gendered effects and it provides policy recommendations accordingly.



#1903 – South Asia: Formulating Services Sector Policies For Development A Policy Perspective

Countries in South Asia have formulated aggressive policies to promote the development of trade in services, with a focus on Information Technology and Communication, Professional services, Tourism and Travel, and Healthcare services. This study divides the general policy themes under specific categories: (i) Skill development programs, (ii) nation-wide connectivity and digitization plans, (iii) initiatives to boost technology and entrepreneurship, with a focus on start-ups and intellectual property rights (IPRs), (iv) and export and brand promotion policies. This paper then highlights the best practices in the region and provides recommendations to develop a more competitive services sector.



8. SOUTH ASIAN PRIORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNTRY STATEMENTS AT THE 75TH COMMISSION SESSION



Afghanistan:

The Afghan Government has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda outlined under the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) which was presented to the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016.

The Government has also developed number of National Priority Programs (NPPs) which cover important areas such as infrastructure development, agriculture development, rural and urban development, human capital development, private sector development and women's economic empowerment, all capable of contributing to the goal of achieving a self-reliant economy and closing gaps including in education, employment and income.

Regional economic cooperation remains a key driver of economic development in Afghanistan and the wider region and can significantly contribute to the realization of development objectives as reflected under the global development agendas including with respect to job creation, income generation and poverty reduction.

Afghanistan is making intensive efforts to utilize its central location as a regional land-bridge in support of increased growth in Afghanistan and greater connectivity and trade in the wider region which has resulted in promising progress over the past few years. The Government of Afghanistan has pursued this vision under two major Afghanistan-centered regional cooperation platforms: Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) for which the next ministerial meetings will take place in the second half of this year in Tashkent and Istanbul respectively.

Despite the challenges related to security and development, the government of Afghanistan is determined to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development agendas. However, continued international assistance, shared responsibility and coordinated efforts including under UNESCAP remain essential in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the wider Asia and Pacific region.



Bangladesh:

Bangladesh's Vision 2021 to turn the country into a digitized, middle income economy coincides with the celebration of 50th anniversary of its independence. It would also be an important year when Bangladesh is going to be qualified for consecutive second time by the UN-CDP for its graduation from the LDC status. These all historic events are happening at a time when Bangladesh spearheading towards magic figure of double digits growth crossing 8% in the fiscal year 2019.

Bangladesh has been achieving a robust and consistent high GDP growth over the last decade. Over the last decade, the country has gained commendable success in achieving gender parity in education with the introduction of the gender budget in 2009 for example. Increasing access to mobile financial services and the agent banking scheme for the unbanked and marginal rural people significantly contributed to the financial inclusion and empowerment. Education is the most crucial instrument for empowering the people and creating an inclusive knowledge-based society. Keeping that in mind, education sector has received the highest national priority and the largest allocation in the budget.

Bangladesh is a nation of 160 million people with a common dream of transforming the country into a developed nation by 2041. However, it is unfortunate that Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change--although its contribution to the global carbon emission is almost zero. Climate change induced disasters are causing millions of lives and creating extreme poverty in the country posing great threat to the peoples' empowerment and equitable society. It is also leading to massive migration of our rural people to urban area- challenging the sustainable urbanization and creating "Climate Refugee" within the country.

Therefore, the country would appeal to the whole international community through ESCAP for collective action without any delay to save the people and the planet. Otherwise, all its development effort would be meaningless.



Bhutan:

Bhutan presented its Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2018. Bhutan is well on track to achieve most of the SDGs. Bhutan has achieved considerable socio-economic progress, including significant reduction in the incidences of poverty.

However, the country is mindful of the growing income inequality. Under the overarching goal of "narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor", the Royal Government is committed to reducing all forms of inequalities including income. It is working towards creation of an equitable and inclusive society through targeted interventions such as provision of "one job for one household", undertaking tax reform, increasing the minimum wage, building more affordable housing among others. The Royal Government is also initiating reforms in health and education sector to enhance greater access to quality services for all.

Bhutan will be graduating from the category of LDC by December 2023 and it will be the first land-locked country to graduate. The process of Bhutan's transition to a lower middle-income country is taking place against the backdrop of severe geographic and structural impediments. Climate change and resulting natural disasters pose the biggest challenge to small developing economies like Bhutan. Therefore, strengthening the fundamentals of its economy and enhancing the resilience of vulnerable countries to climate change for a sustainable graduation is imperative.



India:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the call to "leave no one behind" resonates with the motto of the Government of India which calls for – "Collective efforts for inclusive development" (sabka saath sabka vikas). India has launched a number of important flagship schemes which address its national concerns on health, education, environment, irrigation, urban & rural development, employment and other sectors. This is also in line with the Indian government's commitment to sustainable economic and social development.

Government of India has introduced several significant initiatives to strengthen gender equality. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (save the girl child, educate the girl child) scheme has been effective in protecting the girl child and supporting her welfare. Through conditional cash transfers, women have been provided partial wage compensation for wage loss during child birth and child care.

The employment and skill development programs have resulted in greater skill development and generation of gainful employment.

Empowerment through digitization has been the driving force behind transformative initiatives: India's biometric-based unique identification system enhancing access to vital social services. Rural sanitation coverage is now over 98%. India has a well-established primary healthcare system. Government of India is willing to support the work done by ESCAP in assisting other member States in achieving SDGs, one such area relates to the SDG Index.

India has been a pioneer country in disasters risk mitigation. India has won global praise for the speed and scale of its response to Cyclone Fani, which struck the east coastal state of Odisha.

India has launched Skill India Missions and the Make in India Programs coupled by enhancing the Ease of Doing Business to provide an enabling framework for manufacturing, innovation and entrepreneurship for productive job creation for India's youth population.

India remains firmly committed to promoting international peace and stability. India strongly condemns the dastardly acts of violence that have affected nations across the World. India urges all members to work together to fight the divisive forces of terror, which is essential for promoting free harmony and development. The Government of India believes in global partnerships and has made consistent efforts to build networks within the region and around the world. At the multilateral level, India has established the India-UN Development Partnership Fund in its efforts to foster South-South cooperation. India, Brazil and South Africa with the active partnership with UNDP also assist developing countries through the IBSA Trust Fund. India has also made voluntary contribution to UN Tax Trust Fund for two consecutive years to help developing countries actively participate in the discussion of tax issues.

India recently hosted the Mini-ministerial meeting of developing countries on 13-14 May, 2019 in New Delhi for deliberating on the recent developments at the WTO and to explore ways for working with all Members to strengthen the multilateral trading system. India is concerned about the multiple challenges confronting the rules-based multilateral trading system and is proactively engaged with all WTO Members to strengthen the WTO to make it more effective and relevant to the diverse needs of its Members.



Maldives :

Ensuring quality and equitable education is a key priority of the Government of Maldives. It has been successful in providing universal access to education, with indicators showing an absolute parity between boys and girls. The government aims to decentralize with regional hubs for education. Interventions in this regard include the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education. Affordable education will be available to students from low income families and scholarships will be provided in social and economic priority areas. The government has already announced the provision of free undergraduate education.

The Maldives is committed to the principle of gender equality: the Government is developing a number of strategies to increase the role of women in social, economic and political decision making with increased budget allocations for local Women's Development Committees throughout the country. The government will also strive to ensure that more women occupy executive level positions and aims to eliminate barriers to women's employment in high growth sectors and support community efforts in promoting women's employment. The government is committed to ensure the implementation of current laws and regulations designed to mitigate Gender-Based Violence.

Furthermore, under "Blue Economy" vision of development, increasing national productivity is a priority for the Maldives. This is envisaged to trickle its benefits nationwide, especially to those people whose livelihoods depend entirely on fishing and related industries.

The government is also deeply committed to the principles of good governance and democracy. The Government of Maldives will make every effort to work together with the international community. In fact, it has recently opened an Embassy in Thailand with the aim of not just enhancing bilateral cooperation, but also multilateral engagements with organizations such as ESCAP.



Nepal:

Nepal has taken steps forward, in the national context, by guaranteeing fundamental civic rights and justice in the constitution. On the area of norms and institutions, the country has put into place various policy reforms and initiatives for institutional arrangements. The Government of Nepal has formulated 25 years long term vision and 15th plan to address the issues including inclusion as well as empowerment. Likewise, Nepal has already published the SDG-Roadmap and Costing Report which takes stock of Nepal's present development and financial status and provides a roadmap to 2030.

The government is seeking for a broader engagement of all stakeholders and communities for the effective implementation of the 15th periodic plan.

Nepal has made landmark achievements towards gender equality by provisioning Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion (GESI) and introducing gender coding and budgeting system. The country is investing on social development sector to capacitate quality human resources. Government of Nepal is dedicated towards girl's school enrollment, decent work for women, basic medicine and equal opportunity for all. The share of women in politics is also gaining momentum.

Nepal has envisioned "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali". Therein, we aim to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and ensure social justice. This 15th Plan will be a first stage towards building a prosperous nation. In addition, the country is also working towards bringing every citizen into a broader social security framework for greater equality. It has already started contribution based social security scheme and our government is working towards providing minimum employment opportunities to all working age population as guaranteed by the Constitution.



Pakistan:

Pakistan has aligned SDGs with its national policies, plans and the long-term development framework "Vision 2025". Primary focus of the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is on development, social justice, empowerment, and inclusion. A number of steps have been taken to foster social and financial inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for the marginalized and disempowered, provision of educational opportunities, and access to livelihood and social safety nets. Concerted efforts are being made at national and provincial levels to address gender inequality and foster women economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.

The Government is committed to boosting trade, promote economic growth, and safeguard a decent standard of living for all. More jobs are to be created through structural transformation, industry orientation, skills building of youth and focus on SMEs, IT, Tourism and Agriculture sectors, as well as major infrastructure programs. It is a priority of the Government to ensure universal social protection and financial inclusion for all. A Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Division has been established for aligning and integrating various poverty alleviation and social protection initiatives.

Benazir Income Support Programme remains the flagship initiative with a vision to elevate the status of marginalized and underprivileged sections of society, especially women, through the establishment of comprehensive social protection net. The Government has also recently launched a targeted poverty alleviation programme called "Ehsas" or feeling.

The Prime Minister's Youth Programme entails a broad canvas of schemes aimed at enabling youth and the underprivileged to access employment opportunities through skills development, higher education, and Information Technology. Investment is being made in physical infrastructure, upgradation of educational institutions and opening of new facilities, especially for technical and vocational education.

In China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Pakistan is entering the next phase with greater emphasis on socio-economic uplift, poverty alleviation, agricultural cooperation and industrial development.



Sri Lanka:

With the objective of having greater skills and opportunities, Sri Lanka has introduced a number of policies and strategies which include 13 years education being compulsory, together with expanding and promoting vocational training facilities to provide more capacity to our youth in order to be able to better secure employment domestically and globally. These initiatives have played a significant role in mitigating the barriers to access basic services and economic opportunities by the people living in the different regions and poverty pockets of the country.

Further, with the programme for inclusive settlements, the government has introduced to ensure access to affordable housing facilities for every family and a number of affordable incentives covering various segment of the population. Sri Lanka has achieved universal coverage in the supply of electricity and now focusing on diversifying our energy sources particularly to enable higher electricity production from renewable sources. Safe water for drinking and enhanced sanitation facilities for all are also nearing achievement.

The impacts of climate change are a major obstacle for sustained economic growth and development. Therefore, the government has incorporated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach into the country's development plan, while focusing to develop adaptive social protection schemes. In addition, fiscal measures especially in terms of taxation were introduced to promote fuel-efficient vehicles, in keeping with EURO 4 standards.

Sri Lanka has made significant steps towards lifting people out of poverty. Additionally, while facilitating investments in large-scale industries, "Enterprise Sri Lanka" a loan scheme is in progress to develop small and medium entrepreneurs island wide, based on available resources and capabilities of the people. The government has announced its intension to improve the ratio of direct/indirect taxes to 40/60 level from the existing level of approximately 16/84 in 2017. The government is also in the process of introducing new technologies to the management of the court system. The enforcement of existing legislation to avoid violence against women, girls and children has been further strengthened. In addition, all forms of child labour have been prohibited and child rights are well protected by law.



9. SDGs IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

a. SGDs: priorities, actions and means of implementation

Bangladesh: Poverty rate to be brought down to a level less than in the United States (Source: *Daily Sun*) 24 June 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government's target is to bring down the country's poverty rate to a level less than what the USA has. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh fastest economy in Asia-Pacific (Source: *Daily Star*) 21 June 2019: Bangladesh has achieved the fastest growth in the Asia-Pacific economies comprised of 45 countries, according to ADB. The country attained 7.9 percent growth which was the fastest expansion since 1974 in the outgoing fiscal year of 2018-19, according to the Manila-based donor. Read more: [Here](#)

Budgetary allocation for disabled not adequate (Source: *Daily Star*) 18 June 2019: A group of non-government organisations have called upon the government to reconsider the budgetary allocation for people with disabilities. Read more: [Here](#)

Tax, fiscal policies in Bangladesh: not inclusive enough (Source: *Daily Star*) 14 June 2019: Tax and fiscal policies framed and applied by the government are not progressive enough to reduce inequality in the society, said analysts. Various exemptions and rebates, tax privileges given to different influential quarters, high dependence on indirect taxes and inadequate public investment in health, education as well as other social sectors never help the government achieve inclusive economic growth, five noted economists told the newspaper. Read more: [Here](#)

Government of Bangladesh plans to widen social safety net (Source: *Daily Star*) 14 June 2019: Bangladesh government is aiming to widen the social safety net further, aiming to include more of the marginalised and vulnerable population under protection. Read more: [Here](#)

Proper Agriculture Census for attaining Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh (Source: *Dhaka Tribune*) 12 June 2019: Under management of the Statistics and Information Management Division of Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics will conduct the census Officials at a discussion in Rangpur stressed on conducting the Agriculture Census-2019 properly to develop agriculture sector, make farm activities more profitable and speed up uplift to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Read more: [Here](#)

Asia can dominate world if all work together (Source: *Daily Star*) 31 May 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Thursday said that Asia can dominate the world if all countries of this continent can work together. "There are developed, developing and least developed countries in Asia. If all the countries in Asia can work together then it can dominate the world...we've got that prospect," she said. Read more: [Here](#)

Government working to improve people's living standard (Source: *Daily Star*) 28 May 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the aim of her government is to improve the living standards of people and free the country from poverty. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh: Implementation capacity the main hindrance to growth ambitions (Source: *Daily Star*) 2 May 2019: Bangladesh's capacity to implement large volumes of infrastructure projects will be the main stumbling block to realising the country's growth ambitions, said a top official of the Asian Development Bank. Read more: [Here](#)

Assess social costs of large infrastructure projects in Bangladesh (Source: *Daily Star*) 30 April 2019: Fixing priorities and assessing the social costs and economic benefits of large infrastructure projects have become important for Bangladesh as many of them are funded by costly suppliers' credit, said Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh: The importance of making people aware about balanced diet (Source: *Daily Star*) 17 April 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for a greater campaign to make people aware about taking nutritious and balanced diet for preventing diseases. Read more: [Here](#)

Reforms needed to sustain growth in Bangladesh (Source: *Daily Star*) 5 April 2019: Bangladesh needs to come up with reforms at the earliest to sustain the growth momentum which has landed it among the five fastest growing economies in the world, the World Bank said. Read more: [Here](#)

Sustainable Development Fee on regional tourists recommended in Bhutan (Source: *SouthAsianMonitor*) 9 May 2019: A recently released fourth pay commission report of Bhutan has recommended the government to introduce sustainable development fee (SDF) on regional tourists which refer those tourists from India, Bangladesh and Maldives. Read more: [Here](#)

Modi Calls for Houses and Toilets for All Citizens in 'New India' (Source: *Bloomberg*) 21 June 2019: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set ambitious targets to raise the living standards of all citizens and boost the country's economic growth during his second five-year term in his pursuit of a "New India." His goal was reflected in President Ram Nath Kovind's speech to lawmakers in New Delhi on Thursday that sets out the policies of the new government. Read more: [Here](#)

India to be most populous by 2027 (Source: *The Hindu*) 19 June 2019: India is set to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027 and will have almost 1.64 billion inhabitants by 2050, says a United Nations report, adding that South Asia's opportunity to reap the "demographic dividend" will peak by 2047. Read more: [Here](#)

NITI Aayog Want to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 (Source: *The Hindu*) 17 June 2019: Each State must aim to at least double its economy if the country is to achieve the target of a \$5 trillion economy by 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the Chief Ministers gathered for the NITI Aayog's fifth Governing Council meeting on Saturday. Read more: [Here](#)

Modi should improve Pakistan ties to realize regional goals (Source: *Global Times*) 11 June 2019: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi should take pragmatic actions to recover the bilateral dialogue process, promote better relations with Pakistan and work to establish peace in the region. Read more: [Here](#)

Grameen, Acumen raise funding through Sustainable Development Goals bonds for social firms (Source: *Live Mint*) 6 June 2019: Grameen Impact Investments India and Acumen have raised ₹10 crore by selling bonds to on-lend to five social enterprises involved in training and skill development to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Read more: [Here](#)

World Bank retains projections for India's economic growth at 7.5 per cent (Source: *Deccan Chronicle*) 6 June 2019: The World Bank retained its forecast of India's growth rate at 7.5 per cent for the current financial year. In its Global Economic Prospects report, the World Bank also said growth rate is expected to remain the same for the next two fiscals. Read more: [Here](#)

Modi Increases Cash Support Program for Farmers to \$12.5 Billion (Source: *Bloomberg*) 3 June 2019: Prime Minister Narendra Modi began his second term by expanding an income support program for India's small farmers, increasing the initiative's annual cost to \$12.5 billion for the new government that's facing an economic slowdown. Read more: [Here](#)

Number of people below the poverty line in Chennai set to increase (Source: *The Hindu*) 14 May 2019: The number of people below the poverty line in the city is likely to increase, as more than 28 lakh residents of notified and non-notified slums are expected to be included in the BPL list. Read more: [Here](#)

'State planning boards to be roped in for Sustainable Development Goals' (Source: *The Hindu*) 26 April 2019: NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said the State Planning Boards and the district level administration will be engaged in achieving the country's Sustainable Development Goals. Speaking at the Administrative Staff College of India on the experience in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, Kumar said the implementation needs a concerted effort from the Central government, States and down to the grassroot level as the larger goal is to eliminate inequality among people. Read more: [Here](#)

India: Need for Policy On Safe Road Transportation (Source: *APN News*) 23 April 2019: About 200 Eminent road safety experts and stake holders from Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, state transport departments, CBSE, NCERT, Ministry of Human resources, Schools and Fleet Operators, Research Organisations, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Asia and the Pacific and WHO will take part in the Two day conference on 'Formulation of Draft Policy for the Safety of Transporting School Children' to be held in the national capital Delhi on April 29-30, 2019 at India Habitat centre. Read more: [Here](#)

Unemployment Rate Doubles in World's Fastest Growing Economy (Source: *Bloomberg*) 18 April 2019: India's unemployment rate has doubled in the eight years to 2018 with the higher educated and younger population accounting for the most without jobs, a new research by a privately run university shows. Read more: [Here](#)

India: Arun Jaitley says extreme poverty falling, to end by 2031 (Source: *Reuters*) 16 April 2019: India's finance minister said on Monday fast economic growth and rapid urbanization would slash the number of people in extreme poverty by 2021 and end it completely in the decade after that. Read more: [Here](#)

Nepal: Annual financing gap of Rs. 585 billion to meet Sustainable Developments Goals (Source: *Himalayan Times*) 25 June 2019: The National Planning Commission has projected that the country will face a financing gap of Rs 585 billion per year to meet Sustainable Development Goals. Read more: [Here](#)

Nepal must invest Rs 5.5 bn a day to meet Sustainable Development Goals (Source: *Himalayan Times*) 17 June 2019: Nepal needs to invest at least Rs 5.5 billion per day, on average, in areas ranging from poverty reduction, education, health and environment to clean energy, industrialisation, urban development, information technology and governance to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Read more: [Here](#)

Economic crises over, future is bright for Pakistan(Source: *Business Recorder*) 19 June 2019: Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Reza Baqar assured that the country has come out of the economic crises as it has achieved economic stability including financial one, which has created investors' confidence that is very positive signal. Read more: [Here](#)

20% Pakistanis lack access to affordable electricity (Source: *Daily Times*) 13 June 2019: Climate Change and Energy Section, Planning Commission Chief Arshad Ali Chaudhary said on Wednesday that around 20 percent of the population was not connected with the national grid. Read more: [Here](#)

Pakistani Government misses all key economic targets (Source: *Dawn*) 10 June 2019: Pakistan's economic growth in the financial year ending in June is expected to hit 3.3 per cent, well below the target of 6.3pc set by the previous government, as the government has failed to meet targets in nearly all sectors, according to the Economic Survey. Read more: [Here](#)

Government of Pakistan unveils roadmap to stabilize economy, put it on growth trajectory(Source: *Business*

Recorder) 27 May 2019: Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh Saturday unveiled government's short and long term economic roadmaps, focusing on fiscal consolidation and revenue mobilization, to put the economy on growth trajectory after steering it through the stabilization phase of one year. Read more: [Here](#)

Decision to float currency linked to IMF programme in Pakistan (Source: *Dawn*) 23 May 2019: The decision to float the currency on Thursday, May 16, has been linked to the forthcoming IMF programme. With media reports about a further 200 bps increase in interest rates as a possible prior action, we thought the State Bank would move first on interest rates. The change in policy priority is to save face. Read more: [Here](#)

Prime Minister Imran appoints Dr Sania Nishtar special assistant with status of federal minister (Source: *Dawn*) 16 May 2019: Prime Minister Imran Khan has appointed Dr Sania Nishtar, a renowned health expert and activist to the post of special assistant to the prime minister on social protection and poverty alleviation with the status of federal minister. Read more: [Here](#)

The International Monetary Fund agrees on three-year loan plan for Pakistan (Source: *The Nation, Pakistan*) 17 April 2019: Finance Minister Asad Umar said that Pakistan and IMF had agreed in principle on a three-year loan programme that would also pave way to receive loans from other multilateral institutions like World Bank and ADB. Read more: [Here](#)

135,000 apartments to be built in first phase of Naya Pakistan Housing project (Source: *Dawn*) 10 April 2019: The federal cabinet has decided to kick start the Naya Pakistan Housing Authority project with the construction of 135,000 apartments, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Tuesday. Read more: [Here](#)

Asad Umar defends government's economic policy, acknowledges painful impact (Source: *Dawn*) 4 April 2019: Finance Minister Asad Umar on Wednesday addressed a live Question and Answer session on the state of the country's economy. Umar identified the primary reasons why the economy is in a bad shape but assured that there will be light at the end of the tunnel. Read more: [Here](#)

Asian Development Bank loans Sri Lanka \$50 million to provide credit to micro and small rural entrepreneurs (Source: *Colombo Page*) 17 June 2019: ADB, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Regional Development Bank signed Loan and Guarantee Agreements to further assist Sri Lanka to provide affordable and accessible credit to rural micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in the country. Read more: [Here](#)

Sri Lanka briefs UN on steps taken to safeguard rights of children (Source: *Colombo Gazette*) 29 May 2019: A Sri Lanka delegation, presenting the country's first report under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, briefed the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the panoply of laws and executive and policy measures adopted by Sri Lanka to safeguard the rights of children and to ensure the wellbeing of children. Read more: [Here](#)

Institute of Policy Studies asserts Sri Lanka to advance focus on implementing action plans before jumping to another (Source: *Daily Mirror*) 11 April 2019: Sri Lanka's prominent economic think-tank, the Institute of Policy Studies, asserted that the island nation should invest much of its focus on the implementing action plans, so that it fulfills the aspired goals and get on par with its fast growing regional peers in terms of economic growth realization. Read more: [Here](#)

b. Regional cooperation and other means of implementation

Bangladesh and Japan explore new areas for investment (Source: *Daily Star*) 30 May 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called upon the Japanese business community to explore newer areas for investment in export-oriented sectors of Bangladesh to unlock the full potentials of business and trade relations between the two friendly nations. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh: Asian Development Bank approves \$400 million for Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Railway (Source: *Daily Star*) 24 May 2019: ADB and the Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement for \$400 million in loan to help build a dual-gauge railway connecting Chattogram and Cox's Bazar to promote trade, investment and tourism in Bangladesh. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh now depends less on India for cotton (Source: *Daily Star*) 15 May 2019: African nations have surpassed India to become the largest source of cotton for Bangladesh as local spinners and millers look to cut down their dependence on a single source for their vital raw material. Last year, Bangladesh, the largest importer of cotton in the world, met 37.06 percent of its requirement for the white fibre from East and West African countries. Read more: [Here](#)

Asian Development Bank may provide \$4.62 billion loan for road, rail projects to Bangladesh in four years (Source: *Financial Express*) 8 May 2019: ADB is likely to provide US\$ 4.62 billion to develop the road and rail infrastructure for ensuring the sub-regional connectivity in next four years up to 2022. The fact-finding mission visited Bangladesh from April 4-10 and confirmed a loan amounting to \$ 1.6 billion for eight projects till 2020. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh eyes bilateral free-trade areas before graduating from Least Developed Countries (Source: *Financial Express*) 16 April 2019: The government is interested in striking a number of bilateral free-trade area deals before the country leaves the club of poor countries, officials said. Bangladesh is expected to graduate from its present position of a least developed country to the status of a developing country by 2024. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh 3rd in South Asia, 11th globally(Source: *Daily Star*) 11 April 2019: Bangladesh received \$15.5 billion in remittance last year, up more than 15 percent year-on-year, according to the World Bank. Read more: [Here](#)

In Bangladesh, exports continue good run in March (Source: *Daily Star*) 9 April 2019: Exports continued its good run in March, fetching 9.51 percent more than a year earlier and getting into a comfortable position to hit this fiscal year's target of \$39 billion. Read more: [Here](#)

Government-private cooperation needed for SDGs(Source: *Daily Star*) 4 April 2019: Speakers at a seminar in Tangail emphasized the need for private sector finance, foreign investment and support from the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to achieve the government's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bangladesh has achieved laudable success in different fields but there is need to admit the failures and find solution to overcome those, they said. Read more: [Here](#)

Bhutan and Bangladesh sign five bilateral instruments (Source: *Kuensef*) 19 April 2019: Bangladesh and Bhutan signed five bilateral instruments to augment cooperation on inland waterways, health, agriculture, tourism and public administration training during the prime minister's four day state visit to Bangladesh. Read more: [Here](#)

India, China do not pose 'threats' to each other(Source: *Times of India*) 17 June 2019: Chinese President Xi Jinping told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India and China "do not pose threats" to each other as he expressed Beijing's willingness to join New Delhi in pushing forward a closer development partnership between the two sides. Read more: [Here](#)

Kazakhstan seeks investments from Gujarat ahead of Modi's Central Asia trip (Source: *Economic Times*) 13 June 2019: Central Asia's biggest and resource rich state Kazakhstan is keen to explore trade and investment opportunities in Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat ahead of PM's visit to Kyrgyzstan for SCO Summit. A Kazakh-Indian Investment Forum was held last week in Ahmedabad to attract investments. Read more: [Here](#)

BIMSTEC leaders are invited to Modi's swearing-in (Source: *The Indian Express*) 11 June 2019: By inviting leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation member states for Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi on May 30, India has signalled the priority it plans to accord to this regional grouping in its foreign policy in the coming years. Read more: [Here](#)

India plans to return to negotiating table after Trump trade move (Source: *Hindustan Times*) 6 June 2019: India plans to return to the negotiating table after President Donald Trump terminated a trade concession, which allowed the country to export almost 2,000 products to the US duty-free, people with knowledge of the matter said. Read more: [Here](#)

5 big projects under Modi government for India Railways (Source: *Financial Express*) 29 May 2019: With PM Narendra Modi-led BJP government returning to the office, Indian Railways and its passengers can look forward to continuity in policy making- focus on safety, infrastructure upgradation, increasing speed of trains and enhancing passenger amenities. Read more: [Here](#)

Asian Development Bank to provide \$750 million loan to India for railway track electrification project (Source: *Live Mint*) 24 May 2019: Multilateral funding agency ADB said it has signed an agreement to provide \$750 million equivalent in Indian rupee long-term financing to electrify railway tracks in India. Read more: [Here](#)

India, China agree to resolve market access issue 'expeditiously' (Source: *Reuters*) 10 May 2019: India and China have agreed to resolve market access issues "expeditiously" to promote a more balanced trade, the Indian government said in a statement on Thursday. Read more: [Here](#)

Stage set for India-Central Asia Summit in Kyrgyzstan in June (Source: *Economic Times*) 3 May 2019: India Defence Minister's visit to Bishkek this month and subsequent visit by Foreign Minister in May to take part in SCO meetings notwithstanding poll schedule could set the stage for an informal summit between the Indian PM and five Central Asian leaders on the side lines of the SCO Summit on June 14-15 in Kyrgyzstan as part of Delhi's reinvigorated Central Asia policy. Read more: [Here](#)

Sushma asks United States for Iran oil import waiver (Source: *The Hindu*) 2 May 2019: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the weekend and asked for a waiver for continued import of Iranian crude after the May 2 deadline imposed by the U.S. administration, a source has confirmed. Read more: [Here](#)

Maldives' security, stability in India's interest(Source: *The Indian Express*) 11 June 2019: Addressing the Maldivian Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "neighbourhood first" is his government's policy to realise the vision for inclusive and sustainable development in the South Asian region. Read more: [Here](#)

Pakistan's Interests In Central Asia And Its Afghan Strategy (Source: *Eurasia Review*) 21 June 2019: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi recently addressing the Pakistani community and students in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, not only spoke about the need for Islamabad's market access to the Central Asian region for Pakistani commodities, he emphasized on the need for enhanced trade and increased connectivity between the two which he believed could only be possible after the restoration of peace in war-ravaged Afghanistan. Read more: [Here](#)

Uzbek deputy Prime Minister briefs Imran on railway corridor project (Source: *Dawn*) 30 May 2019: Uzbekistan shared with Pakistan its plan for an international railway route connecting the two countries via Afghanistan. Visiting Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Elyor Ganiev briefed Prime Minister Imran Khan on the project. Read more: [Here](#)

Pakistan: Concerns over declining of foreign investment (Source: *Business Recorder*) 31 May 2019: Engineer Daroo Khan Achakzai, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry has shown his serious concern over the declining of Foreign Direct Investment in Pakistan which stood at US\$ 1.3 billion in the first ten month of FY19 compared to US 2.8 billion last year same period. Read more: [Here](#)

Pakistan: Billions of rupees earmarked for roads in rural areas (Source: *Dawn*) 22 April 2019: Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar says roads in the rural areas will be constructed and repaired under "Naya Pakistan Manzeln Asan" programme and billions of rupees have been earmarked for the purpose. Read more: [Here](#)

c. Gender equality and empowerment

Angelina Jolie says women must be included in Afghan talks (Source: *AFP*) 12 April 2019: American actor and UN special envoy Angelina Jolie has called for women to have a central role in ongoing Afghanistan peace talks, warning their exclusion would hamper any chance of lasting stability. Read more: [Here](#)

Maternal causes behind 13% deaths in Bangladesh (Source: *Daily Star*) 19 June 2019: Thirteen percent of the deaths of females aged between 15 and 49 occur due to maternal causes, including haemorrhage and abortion-related complications, says a government survey released recently. Read more: [Here](#)

In Bangladesh, Women entrepreneurs need easy funds, policy support (Source: *Daily Star*) 1 April 2019: Women entrepreneurs have come a long way despite facing social and economic barriers, speakers said. Now female entrepreneurs need policy support and more budgetary allocation, which will lead to the development of entrepreneurship in Bangladesh, they said. Read more: [Here](#)

New Delhi vows free transport for improving women's safety (Source: *Reuters*) 4 June 2019: India's capital city plans to make its state-run bus and metro network free for women commuters, hoping that higher use of public transport will improve women's safety. Read more: [Here](#)

Supreme Court admits for consideration plea for lifting ban on Muslim women's entry into mosques (Source: *The Hindu*) 17 April 2019: The Indian Supreme Court on Tuesday admitted a plea of a couple to lift the prohibition on entry of Muslim women into mosques across the country. Read more: [Here](#)

Indian girls have higher school enrolment rate than boys (Source: *Indian Express*) 16 April 2019: The enrolment rate of girls is higher than that of boys in Indian schools at both primary and secondary levels. Worldwide, the rate of enrolment of girls is lower than that of boys at primary school, and equal at secondary level. This emerges out of the newly released State of World Population 2019 report of the UNFPA. Read more: [Here](#)

Women entrepreneurship is way forward for Pakistan's prosperity (Source: *Business Recorder*) 19 April 2019: Former State Bank of Pakistan governor and Karandaaz Board Chairperson Dr. Shamshad Akhtar Thursday said women entrepreneurship is the way forward for reducing poverty and bringing prosperity in the country. She said Pakistani women today are more likely to participate in the labour force and decision-making and access health and education services, than their mothers and grandmothers. Read more: [Here](#)

Sri Lanka Muslim women uncover out of fear (Source: *AFP*) 1 May 2019: Religious tensions and a government ban on covering the face since the Easter Sunday suicide attacks have forced conservative Muslim women in Sri Lanka to shun veils, head scarves and long robes in public. Read more: [Here](#)

d. Environmental sustainability and disaster resilience

Asian Development Bank Private Sector Deal to Promote Solar Power in Afghanistan (Source: *ADB*) 23 May 2019: ADB has signed a \$4 million loan with a special purpose vehicle and subsidiaries owned by the 77 Construction, Contracting, and Trading Group (77 Group), an international civil works contracting firm headquartered in Turkey, to help build a 15.1 megawatt solar power plant and promote the development of renewable energy in Afghanistan. Read more: [Here](#)

Over 42,000 Displaced By Flood In Afghanistan (Source: *Urdu Point*) 5 April 2019: More than 42,000 Afghans have been displaced following flooding in the country within the past one month and most needs supplies, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported. Read more: [Here](#)

Ban Ki-moon to visit Dhaka (Source: *Daily Star*) 24 June 2019: Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is coming to Bangladesh on a three-day visit starting from July 8. "He will attend an international conference on climate change adaptation in Dhaka during the three-day visit," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh among countries with highest antibiotic river pollution (Source: *Daily Star*) 29 May 2019: Bangladesh is among the countries with the highest levels of antibiotic river pollution along with Kenya, Ghana, Pakistan and Nigeria, a study revealed. Read more: [Here](#)

65-day ban on sea fishing (Source: *Daily Star*) 21 May 2019: The government, for the first time, has imposed a 65-day

ban on fishing in the sea across the country, but apparently without taking any rehabilitation measures for the vulnerable fishermen. Read more: [Here](#)

City corporation negligent in curbing pollution(Source: *Daily Star*) 16 May 2019: Dhaka city corporation authorities are negligent in curbing pollution and mosquito menace, the High Court said today in an observation. It expressed dissatisfaction on the two halves of city corporation for not taking effective steps in this regard and ordered them to take steps to this end. Read more: [Here](#)

Air pollution: High Court summons Dhaka city CEOs (Source: *Daily Star*) 7 May 2019: The High Court today summoned chief executive officers of Dhaka north and south city corporations to appear before it on May 15 to explain their steps about complying with its directive to curb air pollution in Dhaka. Read more: [Here](#)

Prime Minister asks to take precautionary measures for cyclonic storm Fani (Source: *Daily Star*) 3 May 2019: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in London on an official visit, asked the authorities concerned to take all precautionary measures against the backdrop of cyclonic storm 'Fani' that could hit the coastal belts of Bangladesh on Friday afternoon. "The prime minister has instructed all departments concerned to take all kinds of precautionary steps and remain alert to minimize the losses of lives and property during the cyclonic storm 'Fani'," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told. Read more: [Here](#)

Bangladesh not on track to achieve 3 SDGs(Source: *Daily Star*) 29 April 2019: Rising inequality, increasing effects of natural disasters and high level of bribery and crimes are pushing SDG indicators in the wrong direction and will obstruct Bangladesh from achieving at least three sustainable development goals by 2030. Read more: [Here](#)

India's permanent mission to UN inaugurates giant mural (Source: *Economic Times*) 12 April 2019: In an "innovative outreach", an imposing mural on the premises of India's Permanent Mission to the UN depicts a multi-pronged theme of environmentally sustainable green jobs, Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the ILO's centenary celebration and India leading the global greening effort as documented recently by NASA. Read more: [Here](#)

Need to change development paradigm, aim for climate resilient development (Source: *Business-Standard*) 17 April 2019: There is a need to change the development paradigm and aim for a climate resilient development, moving away from traditional metrics, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said. Read more: [Here](#)

World's Worst Air Pollution Finally Emerges as an Election Issue in India (Source: *Bloomberg*) 30 April 2019: Promises to fight the world's most toxic air have made it to the manifestos of major political parties for the first time in Indian elections. Read more: [Here](#)

India Cyclonic Storm Fani is the biggest to hit India in 20 years, prompting evacuations of 800,000 people (Source: *South China Morning Post*) 3 May 2019: Nearly 800,000 people in India's eastern coastal districts have been evacuated ahead of the expected arrival of a major cyclone packing winds of up to 200km/h per hour, officials said on Thursday. Read more: [Here](#)

India creates new ministry to tackle growing water crisis (Source: *AP*) 21 June 2019: India's government has created a new ministry to respond to a growing water crisis, with more than 60% of the country's 1.3 billion people dependent on farming and favorable monsoon rains. Read more: [Here](#)

India won't to bow down to international pressure on climate change (Source: *Times of India*) 28 June 2019: India will not bow down to any international pressure on climate change and safeguard its own interest first, environment minister Prakash Javadekar said in response to a calling attention notice on climate change in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Read more: [Here](#)

India wins United States solar case at World Trade Organization but impact disputed (Source: *Reuters*) 28 June 2019: India won a World Trade Organization challenge to solar industry incentives in eight US states on Thursday, although the United States told the panel the ruling would have little or no impact. Read more: [Here](#)

Clean energy with minimal environmental impact stressed (Source: *The News International*) 18 June 2019: Arshad Ali Chaudhary, Chief, Climate Change and Energy Section, Planning Commission, has said that we need to achieve the clean and green energy mix with negligible environmental impact and more economic dividends. Read more: [Here](#)

Sri Lanka recognizes the importance of risk-sensitive economic planning for post-disaster revival (Source: *Colombo Page*) 20 May 2019: Sri Lanka has recognized the importance of risk-sensitive economic planning and coherence building between climate and disaster risk reduction policies to better achieve Sustainable Development Goals and is taking a number of initiatives towards this end, Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Ambassador A.L.A. Azeez stated. Read more: [Here](#)

Sri Lanka: Nearly 49 Percent Of Colombo's Water Wasted (Source: *Eurasia Review*) 1 April 2019: Nearly 49 percent of water supplied to Colombo is lost due to leakages in the distribution pipe system, incurring a considerable loss to the National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Deputy General Manager of the Colombo Water Supply Service Project Eng. Abdul Rasheed said. He also added that the projected funded by the Asian Development Bank will ensure that 60 percent of all pipes in Colombo are replaced. Read more: [Here](#)

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