

WEEKLY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE (BEI)

| Brief Highlights on Current Issues of South Asia |
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BANGLADESH



PM TARIQUE HEADS HOME AFTER FIVE-DAY UNGA VISIT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman returned to Bangladesh after a **five-day visit to New York** to attend the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). During the visit, he delivered his **maiden address to the UNGA** and held a series of bilateral and high-level meetings focusing on Bangladesh's national priorities and international issues. Tarique arrived in New York on September 21 leading a **35-member delegation**, which included his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat, and State Ministers for Foreign Affairs Humaiyun Kobir and

Shama Obaed Islam. He left New York on September 25 aboard an Emirates flight, travelling via Dubai before continuing to Dhaka. Bangladesh's UN and US diplomatic representatives and senior officials saw him off at JFK Airport.

Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/governance/news/pm-tarique-heads-home-after-five-day-unga-visit-4283291>

QATARENERGY SUSPENDS LNG SUPPLY TO BANGLADESH TILL NOVEMBER

QatarEnergy has suspended LNG deliveries to **Bangladesh, Pakistan and several other Asian countries until November**, citing disruptions caused by the closure of the **Strait of Hormuz**. According to the report, Qatar's LNG exports had fallen by **96% by the end of August**, with only 18 cargoes exported between January and August compared with 509 during the same period last year. The disruption comes as Europe prepares for winter, when gas demand typically rises, while European countries are also reducing their reliance on Russian gas and increasing demand for LNG from other suppliers. This could intensify competition between European and Asian buyers and keep international LNG prices elevated. The disruption is particularly significant for Bangladesh, which relies on imported LNG for **power generation and industrial operations**. If the shortage continues, Bangladesh may need to secure supplies from alternative sources and could face greater difficulty competing for LNG during a global supply crunch.



Source: <https://en.prothomalo.com/business/local/875q4qo7qh>



INDIA IMPOSES FRESH ANTI-DUMPING DUTIES ON BANGLADESH JUTE GOODS

India has imposed fresh **anti-dumping duties of up to \$445 per tonne** on jute products imported from Bangladesh, including jute yarn/twine, sacking bags and hessian fabrics. The measure follows a mid-term review by India's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), which concluded that Bangladeshi exporters continued to dump jute products and that this affected India's domestic industry. India's Finance Ministry listed **36 Bangladeshi producers** in its September 24 notification, with duties starting at \$59 per tonne for some companies, while jute yarn/twine from producers outside the listed firms will face a \$445-per-tonne duty. Bangladesh's jute exports to India had already fallen **18% year-on-year to 117,000 tonnes in FY2024-**

25. Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association Chairman Tapash Pramanik criticized the measure, arguing that subsidies considered by India have declined significantly. Overall jute and jute-goods exports from Bangladesh recovered to **\$884 million in FY2026**, up 8% year-on-year. **Source:** <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/india-imposes-fresh-anti-dumping-duties-bangladesh-jute-goods-4285161>



ROHINGYA BEING RETURNED TO MYANMAR MAY FACE SERIOUS RISKS, SAYS UN REFUGEE AGENCY

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has raised concerns over Malaysia's recent return of **1,476 Myanmar nationals**, including Rohingya, amid ongoing conflict and humanitarian and human rights concerns in Myanmar. Malaysia has said the returns are voluntary, but UNHCR questioned whether decisions were genuinely free and informed because those returned had been held in immigration detention and the agency was unable to access them for individual assessments. UNHCR urged Malaysia to ensure robust safeguards, including individual assessments and access to protection procedures before any return. It also highlighted the principle of **non-refoulement**, under which people should not be returned to places where they may face persecution, torture or other serious threats. The agency

said returns should only take place when conditions allow for **safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation**. UNHCR also called for greater international support for refugee-hosting countries and a political solution to the conflict in Myanmar.

Source: <https://www.newagebd.net/post/asia/315982/rohingya-being-returned-to-myanmar-may-face-serious-risks-says-un-refugee-agency>

INDIA SAYS GANGES TREATY TALKS WITH BANGLADESH CONTINUE

India said **technical-level discussions with Bangladesh** on the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty are continuing as the 30-year agreement approaches its expiry in **December 2026**. Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said issues concerning the Ganges and other shared rivers would be addressed through the **Joint Rivers Commission**, the bilateral mechanism for cooperation on transboundary rivers. The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty was signed by Bangladesh and India on **December 12, 1996**, and regulates the sharing of Ganges water at India's Farakka Barrage during the dry season from January to May. Bangladesh has been seeking negotiations with India on renewing the treaty ahead of its expiry. India's latest statement indicates that technical discussions are continuing as both countries address the future framework for sharing the river's water. **Source:** <https://www.newagebd.net/post/foreign-affairs/315898/india-says-ganges-treaty-talks-with-bangladesh-continue>

MALAYSIA SAYS ROHINGYA REPATRIATION TO FOLLOW LAW AMID CRITICISM

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar would be carried out in accordance with **law and humanitarian values**, following criticism from rights groups over the safety of returnees. Malaysia began the process on Tuesday, sending the first **1,476 refugees** aboard three Myanmar Navy ships as part of an agreement to gradually and voluntarily repatriate 5,000 refugees. Anwar said the policy aims to address the security, social and administrative challenges associated with Myanmar refugees while prioritising the safety and interests of Malaysians. Rights groups, however, warned that conditions in Myanmar remain unsafe, citing risks of **violence, persecution and forced conscription**. Malaysia hosted more than **126,000 Rohingya refugees as of February 2026**, while Bangladesh hosts more than 1.2 million. No Rohingya have returned from Bangladesh, with refugees and rights groups citing continued insecurity and insufficient guarantees of citizenship and protection in Myanmar.



Source: <https://www.newagebd.net/post/asia/315971/malaysia-says-rohingya-repatriation-to-follow-law-amid-criticism>

WORLD BANK-FUNDED Tk 13B PROJECT TO REFORM BANKING SECTOR

Bangladesh is planning a five-year, Tk 12.76 billion World Bank-funded project to reform the banking sector, strengthen supervision and improve financial-sector safeguards. Under the Financial Sector Support Project-2 (FSSP-2), the World Bank's International Development Association will provide Tk 12.61 billion, while Bangladesh Bank will contribute Tk 140 million. The project will modernise Bangladesh Bank's ICT infrastructure, support bank restructuring and reforms at state-owned banks, and strengthen depositor protection. About Tk 7.11 billion is allocated for ICT equipment and Tk 3.55 billion for software, while Tk 700 million will fund training for 3,565 officials. The project also includes consultant support, database development and measures to strengthen the Deposit Insurance Trust Fund. Officials cited non-performing loans, governance weaknesses, liquidity and capital shortages, and outdated technology as key challenges. A former Bangladesh Bank chief economist also stressed that technology investment must be accompanied by skilled personnel, transparency and accountability.

Source: <https://en.prothomalo.com/business/local/3xl6rlq2f9>

HEAVY RAIN AND FLOODING KILL AT LEAST 62 IN NORTHERN INDIA

At least 62 people have died after three days of heavy rain and flooding in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, according to state officials. Another 46 people were injured and more than 1,000 houses were damaged, while schools were closed in parts of the state, including Lucknow. Rescue teams evacuated residents from flooded areas, and authorities advised people to avoid unnecessary travel and stay away from fast-flowing waterways. The rainfall was expected to ease as a weather system over the Bay of Bengal weakened, although light rain could continue in parts of Uttar Pradesh. Flooding also affected Odisha, where more than 75,000 people were evacuated. In neighboring Nepal, 21 people died in weather-related incidents, while five remained missing and 194 houses were damaged. Nepal is still recovering from devastating August floods that killed more than 1,400 people and left nearly 6,000 missing.

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/india-uttar-pradesh-floods-bb581ea0f9fde75a5f99a7f0d5d5dd25>



SERIAL PRACTITIONER OF TERRORISM": S JAISHANKAR RIPS INTO PAKISTAN AT UN

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar criticised Pakistan during the **81st UN General Assembly**, accusing it of supporting and attempting to normalise terrorism. Referring to remarks made by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif the previous day, Jaishankar said India's right to defend itself against terrorism would be exercised and argued that normal relations and goodwill could not coexist with terrorism. He also called for accountability for governments involved in what he described as state-sponsored, cross-border terrorism, including action against its financing. Sharif had earlier described India's **Operation Sindoor** as "external aggression" and said Pakistan's response was an

exercise of its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. He also praised Pakistan's armed forces and thanked US President Donald Trump for helping halt the confrontation. India has disputed Trump's account of how the operation was paused, saying it followed a request from Pakistan's military leadership. **Source:** <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/serial-practitioner-of-terrorism-s-jaishankar-rips-into-pakistan-at-un-12103028>

MODI'S INDIA TAKES ON TRUMP MORE OPENLY, FROM 'TERRORISM' TO TARIFFS"

India is adopting a more openly critical tone toward the United States as tensions grow over trade, tariffs, terrorism and Washington's engagement with Pakistan, according to an Al Jazeera analysis. Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said the US had not been sufficiently responsive to India's concerns over terrorism and criticised what he described as self-centred trade policies affecting developing countries. Trade remains a major point of friction, with bilateral goods trade reaching \$149.1 billion in 2025 and India recording a \$58.4 billion surplus, while negotiations on a broader trade agreement remain unresolved. India has also objected to potential US tariffs linked to its purchases of Russian oil. The article notes that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump spoke by phone recently, with Modi describing the conversation as productive. Analysts cited by Al Jazeera said India's more public criticism reflects growing domestic pressure and uncertainty surrounding the bilateral relationship..



Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/1/modis-india-takes-on-trump-more-openly-from-terrorism-to-tariffs>

PAKISTAN



TARAR WARNS INDIA'S UNILATERAL ACTIONS ON IWT MAY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR WATER GOVERNANCE GLOBALLY

Pakistan's Information Minister Ataullah Tarar warned that India's decision to place the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** in abeyance could have wider implications for global transboundary water governance. Speaking in Islamabad, Tarar argued that allowing a country to unilaterally suspend a binding international water treaty could set a precedent for other countries sharing rivers under similar agreements. He said Pakistan would continue to engage with the international community and defend its interests through legal and diplomatic channels. Tarar also referred to an **August ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration**, which, according to the report, found that the IWT remained in force. The 1960 treaty allocates the **eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—to India**, while the **western rivers—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab—are largely**

allocated to Pakistan, and establishes mechanisms for data-sharing and dispute resolution.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/2033713/tarar-warns-indias-unilateral-actions-on-iwt-may-have-implications-for-water-governance-globally>

PAKISTAN VOWS TO DEFEND SAUDI ARABIA AGAINST IRAN-BACKED HOUTHIS BY 'WHATEVER MEANS'

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said Pakistan would use "whatever means are available" to defend Saudi Arabia against Iran-backed Houthi rebels under a new mutual defence pact involving Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Asif did not confirm whether Pakistani forces had already taken part in airstrikes in Yemen or whether Saudi Arabia had formally requested assistance. His comments came days after the army chiefs of Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia met in Riyadh to discuss responses to intensified Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia. According to Asif, the Houthis have expanded their control along Yemen's Red Sea coast, including the strategic port of Mokha and several islands. The developments have raised concerns over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a major maritime route through which about 12% of global trade passes.

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/pakistan-saudi-arabia-iran-houthis-turkey-alliance-d994eba97ca5524c82554b79b7f5dd17>



PAKISTANI, SAUDI, TURKISH CHIEFS DISCUSS CLOSER MILITARY TIES

Bangladesh has moved closer to joining the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** after trade ministers approved an ad hoc working group to facilitate the accession process for Bangladesh, Chile, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong (China). The decision was endorsed at the **fifth RCEP Ministerial Meeting in Manila on 21 September 2026**, following a recommendation from the RCEP Joint Committee. The working group will conduct formal discussions, technical processes and assess the applicants' progress toward meeting RCEP rules and procedures. According to Bangladesh's Commerce Ministry, joining the bloc could help the country address trade challenges after **LDC graduation**, maintain preferential market access, strengthen global supply-chain links and attract foreign investment. RCEP comprises the **10 ASEAN countries plus China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand**. Bangladesh's accession would require the consent of all existing RCEP members, making diplomatic

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/sep/19/pakistan-saudi-arabia-mecca-pact-joint-defence-agreement-houthis-yemen-conflict>



NEPAL SECURES AIIB VICE-CHAIR ROLE, EYES INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Nepal has been elected Vice-Chair of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for the 2026–27 term, with Finance Minister Dr Swarnim Wagle, Nepal's governor to the bank, taking the position. The election took place during the AIIB Annual Meeting in Doha, Qatar, on September 28–29. Nepal's government said the role could create greater opportunities to attract AIIB investment, technology transfer and international partnerships, particularly for infrastructure development. At the meeting's Governors Business Round Table, Wagle called for increased financing for roads, electricity, communications and information technology, while urging the bank to make its financing mechanisms more responsive to developing countries and support private-sector investment. He also held discussions with officials from Qatar, India, Bangladesh, Armenia and Georgia on economic cooperation, investment opportunities and support for Nepal's post-disaster reconstruction.

Source : <https://thehimalayantimes.com/business/nepal-secures-aiib-vice-chair-role-eyes-infrastructure-investment>

WHY PASSIVE NEUTRALITY WON'T TAKE NEPAL ANYWHERE

Nepal's traditional policy of passive neutrality is insufficient amid growing competition between the United States and China. Instead, Nepal should pursue "resilient neutrality" by strengthening its institutions, diplomatic capacity, governance, and coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and the military. The author highlights defence diplomacy, UN peacekeeping experience, and international partnerships as important tools for protecting Nepal's sovereignty and advancing economic and security interests. Overall, the article calls for a more proactive and coordinated foreign and security policy while maintaining Nepal's non-aligned position.



Source:

https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2026/10/04/why-passive-neutrality-won-t-take-nepal-anywhere?fbclid=IwdGRzaAUujstleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBwZG9mAXNydGMGYXBwX2lkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHmwvPzbmjMVU16M6mW2WVamgRzW283jivTJec7HEXFGS0bs8kGle0_EQhAqs_aem_qUCTG4BeBBd5xVdRZceXvQ&sfnsn=mo#google_vignette

BHUTAN



POWERFUL NEW NEXUS IN JAIGAON THREATENS BHUTANESE EXPORTERS

Bhutan's scrap and waste-recycling trade with India's Jaigaon market has largely halted following reports of an additional Nu 10,000 "Gunda Tax" being demanded from Bhutanese scrap trucks, on top of an existing Nu 4,000 payment to officials. According to The Bhutanese, the added cost has made the trade unprofitable, leaving scrap piled up in Bhutanese scrapyards and affecting waste collectors and recycling businesses. The article reports that around 800–900 people are involved in the waste business across Bhutan, with vulnerable collectors seeing their earnings decline. The reported charges have also expanded to ferrosilicon trucks, with Nu 15,000 reportedly demanded per truck. Bhutan's Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment said scrap exports to India have faced restrictions since 2021 and that the issue has been raised through diplomatic channels. Both Bhutanese and Indian industry representatives have called for formalising the scrap trade.

Source: [https://thebhutanese.bt/powerful-new-nexus-in-jaigaon-threatens-](https://thebhutanese.bt/powerful-new-nexus-in-jaigaon-threatens-bhutanese-exporters/)

[bhutanese-exporters/](#)

SRI LANKA



INDIA WILL ALWAYS SUPPORT SRI LANKA'S PROGRESS, PROSPERITY: JAISHANKAR TELLS TILVIN

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) General Secretary Tilvin Silva and a five-member Sri Lankan delegation during their five-day visit to India. Jaishankar said the discussions focused on strengthening the longstanding friendship between India and Sri Lanka and described India as a trusted partner that would support Sri Lanka's progress and prosperity. The delegation's visit, from September 27 to October 1, was part of efforts to strengthen engagement between India's BJP and Sri Lanka's JVP, including exchanges of organisational experiences and deeper ties between the two parties. The delegation also included JVP central committee member Chandrika Adikari, MP Aboobucker Athambawa and other party representatives. This was Tilvin Silva's second visit to India, following an earlier visit in February.

Source: [https://www.lankanewspapers.com/2026/09/24/china-pledges-unwavering-](https://www.lankanewspapers.com/2026/09/24/china-pledges-unwavering-support-for-sri-lanka-vows-island-nation-will-never-face-challenges-alone)

[support-for-sri-lanka-vows-island-nation-will-never-face-challenges-alone](#)

AFGHANISTAN



TAJIK FM: AFGHANISTAN NEEDS PEACE, STABILITY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin, speaking at the 81st UN General Assembly, said Afghanistan needs peace, stability, and economic opportunities. He emphasized Tajikistan's continued support for the Afghan people and called for regional cooperation on peace, sustainable development, counterterrorism, and water. Muhriddin noted that stability in Afghanistan is closely linked to security and development across the region, while a university lecturer said Tajikistan's growing economic and security engagement with Afghanistan reflects the opportunities available through stronger regional ties.

Source: <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan-200987>

Sept 16



Engages Chattogram Stakeholders on Bangladesh's Emerging Foreign Policy. As part of its research project “Shaping Creative Diplomacy in Bangladesh,” the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) convened a consultation in Chattogram on 16 September 2026, bringing together civil society representatives, journalists, and other distinguished stakeholders to reflect on the study's emerging findings and recommendations.

Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir (Retd.), President of BEI, delivered the welcome remarks, while Md. Alif Ifteker Seaum, Research Officer, led presentations on the study's key findings. The ensuing discussion offered

valuable perspectives on advancing a more people-informed and responsive approach to Bangladesh's foreign policy

ABOUT BEI

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute is a non-profit, non-political research center. Established in October 2000, the Institute has established for itself a reputation for excellence in its research and advocacy work focusing on the growth of private enterprise in Bangladesh. The Institute promotes issues of importance to the private sector and seeks to initiate essential measures and influence policy for the development of a market-oriented economy. Through the promotion of sustainable growth in domestic trade, commerce and industry, BEI hopes to address the enormous challenge for Bangladesh in securing a fair share of the global market.

BEI has a particular interest in the support and growth of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), which have the potential to be the engine of economic growth in Bangladesh. BEI also undertakes research and policy advocacy work focusing on the issues of foreign policy and security, particularly those of terrorism impacting Bangladesh and South Asia.

Being conscious of the enormous challenge to securing a fair share for Bangladesh in the global market as well as to address issues of trade and investment promotion, the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) was established under the initiative of some leading business personalities of the country.

M Humayun Kabir, former Ambassador, has been working as the President and Chief Executive of the institute.

The institute is registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Bangladesh, under the Societies Registration Act.

DISCLAIMER

In compiling this weekly news update, BEI has attempted to include the most relevant news accounts from the past week concerning South Asian Region. From time to time, news beyond South Asia has also been included if it finds relevance on any issues to the region. We recognize that some developments may have been overlooked, and that some sources may not be viewed by all as credible or balanced. Inclusion of a news story and its summary does not constitute any kind of endorsement or position taken by BEI, and the text and positions included in the above are solely extracted from various news articles published in the print media in various countries in South Asia and beyond. If you have any comments or feedback for us regarding this digest, please email at bei@bol-online.com. For more information about BEI and our work, please visit <https://www.bei-bd.org/>]

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