

# CBGA NEWS DIGEST

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**BANGLADESH | DIPLOMACY | SECURITY | CONFLICT | DEVELOPMENT | ENVIRONMENT | GLOBAL AFFAIRS**



## RABAB FATIMA APPOINTED AS THE UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL BY THE UN CHIEF

Secretary-General António Guterres of the United Nations has appointed Rabab Fatima of Bangladesh to the position of High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). She takes over for the Jamaican national Courtenay Rattray, who was promoted to the position of Chef de Cabinet.



Secretary-General has expressed his gratitude and admiration to Heidi Schroderus-Fox, a Finnish national serving as the Director of UN-OHRLLS and Deputy to the High Representative. Ms. Fatima has more than 30 years of experience in national and international civil service, including diplomacy, policymaking, advocacy, program development, and implementation, all at the bilateral and multilateral levels. She currently serves as Bangladesh's ambassador to the UN in New York. Previously, she served as Bangladesh's Ambassador to Japan (2016-2019), Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangladesh (2015-2016), Regional Representative for South Asia (2007-2011), Regional Adviser for South and South-West Asia, and Regional Adviser for Climate Change and Migration (2012-2015) at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva; and Head of Human Rights at the Commonwealth Secretariat, London (2006-2007). - June 9, [UN News](#)

## BANGLADESH EYES 7.5% GROWTH IN GDP IN FY23

In light of the delayed impacts of Covid-19 and the prolonged crisis stemming from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the GDP growth rate for 2022-2023 fiscal (FY23) has been aimed at 7.5%. This was announced by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on Thursday, when he presented parliament with the proposed national budget for FY23, as reported by BSS.



The government claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic barely stunted economic growth in FY20. According to the new base year, growth peaked at 7.8 percent in FY19 but dropped to 3.4 percent the following year due to the pandemic. - June 9, [Prothom Alo](#)

## NEW DELHI OFFERS RELIEF SUPPORT FOR CHATTOGRAM FIRE

Narendra Modi, prime minister of India, is devastated by the news of the fire at the BM Container Depot in the Sitakunda upazila of Chattogram, which has killed dozens of people and injured countless others.



Our New Delhi reporter writes that in a letter to Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Modi pledged his full support for the Bangladeshi government's attempts to aid the victims' relatives. - June 8, [The Daily Star](#)

## BANGLADESH AND HUNGARY SIGN MOU ON NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION

The governments of Bangladesh and Hungary have agreed to work together to educate and train atomic industry professionals on the safe and responsible use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Press statement says the agreement was signed on Tuesday in Budapest by Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen and Hungary's Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó. Additionally, the two ministers signed an MoU on a diplomatic exchange program between Dhaka and Budapest. Dr. Momen and Szijjártó, who is also Hungary's trade minister, met privately earlier. During the meeting, they committed to further developing their bilateral connections in the areas of economic cooperation, health, climate change, water and waste-water management, trade and investment (especially in post-graduation facilities), nuclear energy, and post-COVID recovery. The Consular Office of Hungary in Dhaka has been upgraded to full consular status, as declared by the Hungarian foreign minister. Both ministers have discussed plans to establish permanent diplomatic representation in Dhaka and Budapest. Dr. Momen has asked his Hungarian colleague to help mobilize additional support for implementing the Paris Climate Agreement, citing Bangladesh's leadership role in global climate discourse as the immediate past Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Moreover, the two ministers have decided to work together in the renewable energy and clean technology industries. Given that both Bangladesh and Hungary will be using the same technology for their new nuclear power facilities, the two countries have considered potential avenues for future cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. They've reached an accord on how to educate and prepare future nuclear energy workers. - June 8, [The Financial Express](#)



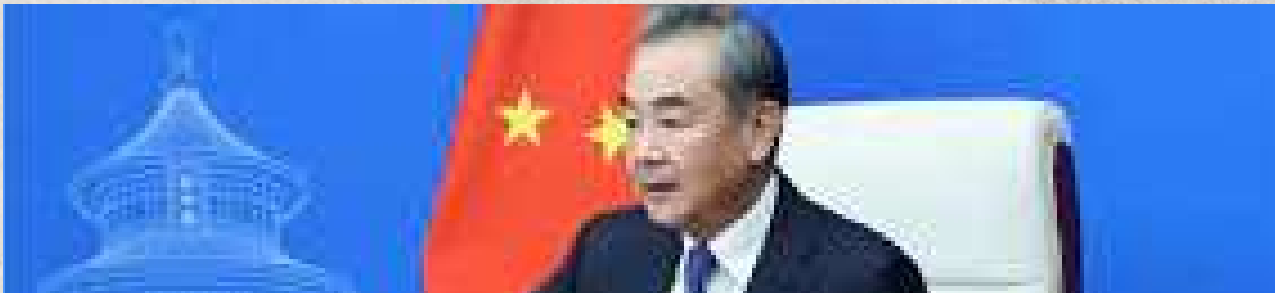
## DHAKA KEEN ON MAKING SAARC ACTIVE BY CONSULTATIONS



On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Masud Bin Momen asked SAARC Secretary General Esala Weerakoon to find creative solutions to the regional organization's current issues by constant dialogue with the member nations. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the phone call was made during a meeting with the visiting secretary general at the State Guesthouse Padma in Dhaka.

The foreign minister reassured his SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) counterpart that Bangladesh would do everything in its power to help the organization achieve its stated goals of fostering regional cooperation and bringing about a more sustainable and integrated development. Masud has asked for the secretary general to be impartial in helping SAARC develop into a useful regional organization. Weerakoon's efforts in coordinating, facilitating, and managing SAARC concerns were greatly appreciated, especially during the challenging period of the Covid-19 outbreak, according to him. - June 7, [The Business Post](#)

## BEIJING KEEN FOR STRENGTHENING TIES WITH DHAKA



According to the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister, Beijing is eager to increase cooperation with Dhaka in the field of emergency response to address various calamities. During a sympathy message to his Bangladeshi colleague, Dr. AK Abdul Momen, he made the comment. The message was sent in response to the fatal fire catastrophe at the Shitakunda container depot. According to the Chinese embassy in Dhaka, on June 7 he wrote, "China is eager to cooperate with Bangladesh to deepen cooperation in the field of emergency response so as to defend the safety and the wellbeing of our two peoples." - June 11, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

## CHINA WILL NOT HESITATE TO START WAR ON TAIWAN

China's defense minister told his American counterpart in their first face-to-face talks that China will "not hesitate to launch a war" and "smash to smithereens" any Taiwan independence ambitions. Defense Minister Wei Fenghe told Lloyd Austin on Friday, "If somebody tries to break Taiwan from China, the Chinese army will surely not hesitate to start a war at any cost." The People's Liberation Army (PLA) would have to fight to protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity if Taiwan declared independence. Wei claimed the conversation with Austin "went smoothly," despite the two being hostile against one another. The conversation lasted about an hour, which was more than twice as long as it was scheduled for, and took place on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore. - June 10, [Al Jazeera](#)

## CHINA VOWS TO FIGHT TILL THE END TO STOP THE INDEPENDENCE OF TAIWAN



China's defense minister said on Sunday that his country would go to "the very limit" to prevent Taiwan's independence, further inflaming tensions with the United States over the island. Beijing considers the democratic self-governing island to be a part of its territory awaiting reunification, and the two nations are engaged in a rising verbal conflict over the issue. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue security meeting on Saturday, accused Beijing of "destabilizing" military activity in relation to China's frequent aerial incursions near Taiwan. Wei Fenghe, China's defense minister, responded angrily at the same occasion, warning that Beijing would have "no choice" but to battle if attempts were made to separate Taiwan from China. He vowed that no matter the cost, they would fight till the finish. One should never doubt the determination and skill of the Chinese military to protect its territory. Those who seek Taiwanese independence to divide China, he continued, "will certainly come to no good end." Wei pleaded on the United States government to "stop smearing and containing China... stop interfering in China's domestic affairs and stop damaging China's interests." - June 12, [France 24](#)

## CHINA-RUSSIA DEEPENS TIES BY OPENING A CROSS-BORDER BRIDGE

Moscow is still reeling from the widespread Western sanctions imposed for its activities in Ukraine, but Russia and China have opened a new cross-border bridge in the Far East in the hopes of significantly strengthening trade. The RIA news agency reported on Friday that the 1 km long, 19 bn rouble (\$342 m) bridge connecting the Russian city of Blagoveshchensk with the Chinese city of Heihe across the Amur River — known in China as the Heilongjiang — had been completed. Footage from the inauguration ceremony shows freight vehicles traveling from both directions across the two-lane bridge, which is decorated with flags in the colors of both countries. Shortly before President Vladimir Putin ordered his soldiers into Ukraine, Russian authorities stated the bridge would bring Moscow and Beijing closer together by promoting trade. - June 10, [Al Jazeera](#)

## CHINESE MOVES ON TAIWAN IS THREATENING THE REGION: US DEFENSE SECRETARY



On Saturday, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III spoke at Asia's top defense symposium, where he reaffirmed the United States' unwavering support for Taiwan and warned that recent Chinese military activity surrounding the self-governing island could alter regional dynamics. Austin, speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, said that there has been a "continuous escalation in provocative and destabilizing military activity near Taiwan," including nearly daily military flights by the People's Republic of China near the island. He remarked, "Our policy hasn't changed, but regrettably it doesn't seem to be true" with respect to China. While recognizing Beijing as the legitimate government of China, the United States nonetheless maintains what Secretary of State James Austin called its "one-China policy," which allows for the maintenance of informal relations and defense links with Taiwan. China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out using military force to recapture the island. Taiwan and China divided during a civil war in 1949. Chinese military actions against democratic Taiwan have increased in recent years in an effort to force Taipei to capitulate to Beijing's demands for formal unification with the communist mainland. In his speech, Austin reaffirmed the United States' commitment to "the status quo" across the Taiwan Strait. In contrast, "[China's] activities threaten to undermine security, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific." - June 11, [Los Angeles Times](#)



# THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE TAKES PLACE AS US AND CHINA DOMINATE THE SECURITY MEETING

Almost every session at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, which wrapped up on Sunday after three days of talks, focused on the war in Ukraine and China's increasingly tense relationship with the United States. One of the keynote speakers on the last day of the meeting was Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, who emphasized that the United States needed to do more to mend its strained relations with China. "We urge the United States to end its campaign to demonize and isolate China. You must end your interference in China's domestic politics.



If the United States cannot achieve that, the bilateral relationship will not improve "Wei, decked out in the garb of a People's Liberation Army general, said officials. This year, 575 participants from 40 countries, including diplomats, defense officials, and weapons manufacturers, gathered at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's top security meeting. Austin, speaking at the summit on Saturday, noted a "alarming" increase in the frequency with which Chinese aircraft and boats have come into contact with those of other countries. He also said that Taiwan could count on American support as an ally. This year, however, Russia's invasion of Ukraine took center stage at the annual summit in Singapore, which had not been conducted since 2019 due to the pandemic. Highlight of the summit was Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's address via video link, in which he warned delegates that the invasion of his country jeopardized the rules-based system and put the entire world in peril of starvation and food crises. Several of the attendees raised concerns about China's ties to Russia. Wei stated that Beijing had not supplied any material to Russia and that China was supportive of peace talks. He said that supplying arms and implementing sanctions would do little to improve the situation. - June 12, [Zawya](#)

## RUSSIA OFFICIALLY CUTS TIES WITH COUNCIL OF EUROPE

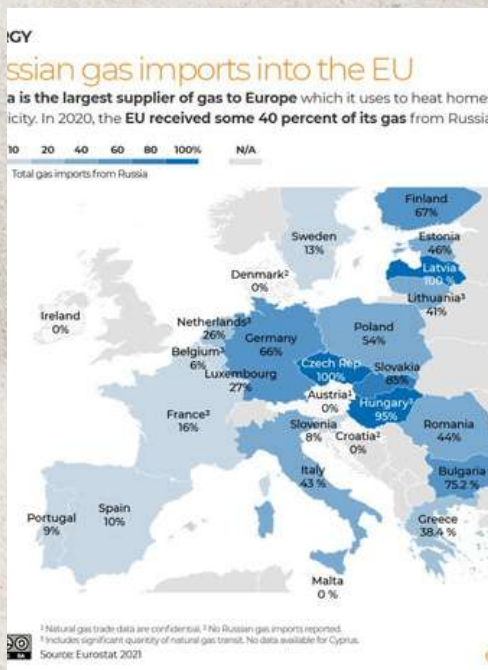
The highest European human rights court has been deemed null and void by the Russian parliament, which has passed a package of rules permitting Moscow to ignore its judgements. Russia officially severed ties with the Council of Europe on Tuesday.



The Council of Europe is the preeminent human rights organization on the European continent. The State Duma, Russia's lower parliament house, recently passed new regulations that exempt Russian authorities from enforcing decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights after March 15. Russia announced its withdrawal from the Council of Europe on that date, and it was officially expelled the next day due to what the Kremlin considers a special military operation in Ukraine. - June 7, [The Daily Star](#)

## RUSSIA EARNED \$98 BN BY EXPORTING OIL AMID THE WAR

New data indicates that in the first 100 days of Russia's conflict in Ukraine, the country earned \$98 billion from the export of fossil fuels, with the European Union being the largest buyer. Russian forces have been making modest but steady progress in their drive to totally control the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, and on Monday, an impartial research group located in Finland released their findings on this topic.



The U.S. and EU have given arms and money to Ukraine to assist them fight off Russian aggression, and they have also imposed unprecedented economic penalties on Russia. In the wake of the February 24 invasion, however, Kyiv has urged Western countries to shut off all trade with Moscow. Before the conflict, Russia provided 40% of the European Union's natural gas and 27% of its foreign oil. Earlier this month, the bloc reached an agreement to cease the majority of its imports of Russian oil, and this year it plans to cut gas supplies from Russia by around two-thirds. For the time being, an embargo is not planned. In the first 100 days of the conflict, the EU purchased 61% of Russia's fossil fuel exports, valued at almost \$60bn, according to an analysis by the CREA. China imported goods worth \$13.2 billion, Germany \$12.7 billion, Italy \$8.2 billion, the Netherlands \$8.4 billion, Turkey \$7 billion, Poland \$4.6 billion, France \$4.5 billion, and India \$3.6 billion. Of Russia's fossil fuel exports, crude oil (\$48.2bn), oil products (\$13.6bn), liquefied natural gas, or LNG (\$5.3bn), and coal (\$4.8bn) account for the largest share of the country's total earnings. - June 13, [Al Jazeera](#)

## UN EXPERTS CONDEMN MYANMAR OVER DIGITAL DICTATORSHIP

The military junta in Myanmar has been widely criticized by UN human rights experts\* for its attempts to construct a "digital dictatorship" through the imposition of new limits on internet use, shutdowns, censorship, surveillance, and other measures. The experts warned that "the international community must not stand silently by" as "basic rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy" were routinely violated in Myanmar. Many people in Myanmar, especially those fleeing the government's indiscriminate attacks and the millions trying to make their way through the country's economic and humanitarian catastrophe, consider access to the internet a matter of life and death. To bolster its attacks on the people of Myanmar, the junta has been deploying internet shutdowns and invasive surveillance. - June 7, [OHCHR News](#)

## SRI LANKA TO BUY RUSSIAN OIL AMID THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: PM

The prime minister of Sri Lanka warned the Associated Press that the country may be forced to increase its purchases of oil from Russia due to shortages caused by the unprecedented economic crisis the country is experiencing. In an interview published on Saturday, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he will explore other options before considering purchasing additional crude from Moscow. The country is experiencing its greatest economic crisis in seven decades, leaving it unable to import even the most basic necessities like as food, fuel, and medication. - June 12, [Reuters](#)

## SRI LANKA TO FACE A DIRE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS: UN

Money-strapped Sri Lanka is experiencing an unparalleled economic crisis, and the United Nations warned Tuesday that it might quickly escalate into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. UN OCHA spokesman Jens Laerke told reporters, "We are concerned that this might evolve into a full-blown humanitarian situation and we are taking action to address that risk." He noted that the United Nations and its partners require \$47 million to meet the immediate needs of the 1.7 million most vulnerable and afflicted individuals. The 22 million people who call this South Asian island home have had their lives turned a living hell by months of daily blackouts, huge lines for gas, and record inflation. As a result of the government's default on its \$51 billion in foreign debt, traders are unable to import sufficient quantities of food, fuel, and other necessities. He emphasized the serious impact on agriculture and livelihoods caused by Sri Lanka's greatest economic crisis since independence in 1948. Laerke warned that "families' access to health care, protection, and children's education is at jeopardy" because many people are "going without basic food." - May 18, [Dhaka Tribune](#)



## MOMEN CLAIMS INCREASED PURCHASE PRICE OF OIL, LNG PUTTING NEGATIVE IMPACT ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVE



The higher cost of oil and LNG has a negative impact on foreign exchange reserves, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said parliament today. According to the foreign minister, the price of a barrel of Brent crude oil on the international market was USD 56 in January and is currently above USD 120. The spot market price of LNG has also increased. The foreign minister remarked in response to an inquiry from Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan, "The amount of government subsidy is being increased so that people are not disadvantaged owing to increase in fuel and LPG costs which is placing strain on the overall budget."

He read from a prepared statement, "Additionally, the purchase of oil and LNG at an increasing price is putting a negative influence on foreign exchange reserves." The minister also stated that Bangladesh, like the rest of the globe, has been affected by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. He continued, "Just as the detrimental effects of this war on the world economy are multifaceted, so too are the effects of this war on Bangladesh. The foreign minister assured everyone that the government could limit the war's negative impact. - June 12, [The Daily Star](#)

## MOMEN STATES THAT BANGLADESH IS LOOKING CLOSELY INTO THE INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Dr. AK Abdul Momen, Bangladesh's foreign minister, stated today that his government is examining the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) to see if it would be good for Bangladesh to join. When asked about Bangladesh's position on the new economic framework, he told reporters in his office, "We are studying on it (IPEF)." Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam joined the United States and President Joe Biden in launching the International Partnership for Economic Financing (IPEF) on May 23 in Tokyo. The United States has indicated that additional nations will have possibilities to participate in IPEF, and the government of the United States anticipates that Bangladesh will closely follow its progress. When asked about China's position on IPEF, the foreign minister stated, "we will only do that preserves our national interest," meaning that Dhaka would only join IPEF if it served Bangladesh's national interests. He cited the Padma Bridge as evidence that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina takes a hard stance in favor of national interest and never backs down from a fight for the country's advancement. In light of this strong leadership, he continued, "we will do whatever we can for the good of our country." However, "there is no harm in hearing" other people's opinions, as Dr. Momen put it. - June 12, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

## BANGLADESH CALLS FOR STOPPING OF SUDDEN EXPORT BAN ON FOOD



The government of Bangladesh has issued a call to the international community to end the unexpected restriction on food exports. Many nations are currently experiencing food crises amid the global volatile situation, the Bangladeshi government said on the first day of the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition, the unexpected prohibition on exporting such products has had far-reaching consequences, impacting a great number of countries. In light of the increased urgency of the survival issue in the current international setting, the Bangladeshi government has emphasized the importance of giving advance notice to nations that buy Bangladeshi food and agricultural products in the event of a suspension of exports. - June 12, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

## BANGLADESH DIASPORA SUBMITS STATEMENT TO UNHRC TO RECOGNIZE 1971 GENOCIDE

The Bangladeshi diaspora group Stichting Basug (Bangladesh Support group) has published a statement for the United Nations General Assembly in which they reiterate their call for international recognition of the 1971 genocide committed against the Bengali population during the Liberation War. Stichting Basug is an NGO with ECOSOC Special Consultative Status whose statement will be distributed at the United Nations General Assembly's 50th session of the Human Rights Council, taking place from June 13 to July 8. This was disclosed today during a meeting convened in the official residence of Dhaka University's vice chancellors. - June 12, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

## US SENATORS COME UP WITH A STRICT GUN LAW PROPOSAL

Senate negotiators from both parties claim they have settled on a set of safety and gun-related measures designed to avoid mass shootings like the one in Uvalde, Texas, that took the lives of 19 students and 2 teachers. Not yet codified into law, the proposal would provide funding for school safety and mental health resources, expand background checks for gun purchases for people between the ages of 18 and 21, and penalize illegal straw purchases by convicted criminals. At least 20 senators have signed on to the deal after spending weeks negotiating to find enough common ground to get it through the Senate. As there are 10 Republicans in the group, the final law may have enough support to pass the Senate with 60 votes, despite a possible filibuster. The negotiators saw it as a "commonsense" plan that would lessen the risk of violence across the country. - Jun 12, [NPR](#)

## UKRAINE SEEKS TO BUY ISRAEL'S IRON DOME



On Tuesday, the Ukrainian ambassador to Israel criticized Israel for its refusal to offer military aid to Ukraine and pushed Israel to sell its Iron Dome air defense system to Kyiv. Yevgen Korniyuchuk told reporters in Tel Aviv that they want Israel to greenlight the sale of Germany's Spike SR anti-tank guided missile system to Ukraine. They need Israel's help, he said, so "I encourage the Israeli government to step out from its comfort zone and go back to reality." Korniyuchuk recalled that Israel had vetoed the proposed transfer of anti-spike missiles from Germany to Ukraine, despite the fact that the United States had approved the move. "Help from Israel is imperative... To protect our civilian women and children from the Russian missile attacks on our soil, we require military-technical assistance; we need Iron Dome "As an afterthought, he remarked. The Iron Dome system, Korniyuchuk argued, is not a weapon but a tool that will save lives, and he accused Israel of being reluctant to offer Kyiv with any military support at all, even of a defensive character. "Donations are not required. Want to buy it very much "He emphasized the point, which he then reinforced. - June 8, [Anadolu Agency](#)

**Note: By clicking on the source, readers will be taken directly to the original news story for additional information.**





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