Lead Article

Transforming the lives of women entrepreneurs through digital technology: ESCAP’s work on women empowerment
(Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna and Ms. Suveera Saxena)

South and South-West has been scoring low for Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment, despite progressing well on economic growth. Women have not benefitted economically and face challenges relating to access to finance and ICT; they are thus not able to expand their businesses and become part of wider regional and global supply chains. The lack of digital skill and knowledge has also been one of the impediments for upscaling of their businesses especially in the case of women-led micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

ESCAP in collaboration with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), Geneva, implemented a project titled “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia” that enhanced the knowledge and capacity of women entrepreneurs in the application of e-commerce platforms to expand their business exports and participate in local, regional, and global supply chains. The COVID-19 pandemic also forced many consumers and suppliers to change their business modalities, paving the way for the project to play an important role in women empowerment in the subregion. Several subregional and national trainings, both online and in person, were conducted in collaboration with women associations, self-help groups and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

From September 2020 to March 2023, more than 3000 women were trained and onboarded onto digital platforms, and a regional network of training participants have been created. The trainings not only improved their knowledge and skills, but also instilled confidence in them that they can do online business. As a result of the project, many women received international orders, including from other women through the network, and diversified their production and supplies.

Here are what some trainees shared:

Ms. Palina Rai carries out her business through “Boju Store” in Nepal (“Boju” is the Rai/Limbu community term for Grandmother). Boju Store is an enterprise that works with farmers from the hills and Himalayas to promote, market and sell unique indigenous products in major cities throughout Nepal and abroad. It also works to provide female inmates and survivors of domestic violence with employment
Nepal in April 2022, which made it possible for her to export her products to India through networks created during the trainings.

Ms. Lasanthi S. Perera from Sri Lanka has a business producing bee honey and honey-related value-added products. She felt that the training opened the doors for small women entrepreneurs like her and provided her a big opportunity to interact with like-minded women entrepreneurs from South Asia. Through the hands-on training on the project’s Wesellonline platform, she received an enquiry for her products and was able to translate it into a bulk order from the USA.

Ms. Tulsi Maya Gurung from Bhutan is co-founder of Life Changers Bhutan, a social enterprise that encourages and empowers women and youth to be socially responsible and economically productive. The social enterprise collects used cloths from households and transforms them into higher value products such as tote bags, pouches and other similar items that are designed and handcrafted by housewives and youths. She believes that the training gave her the knowledge and skills to use e-commerce platforms and enabled her to use social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram more productively to generate a higher income.

The above case studies highlight that woman entrepreneurship is both crucial in laying a successful path towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 and key to economic growth through its positive multiplier effects on society, including job creation, increasing labour force participation, and uplifting families out of poverty.

Notably, the ESCAP workshops served as a regional networking platform for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to showcase their products and services as well as connect and share experiences, thereby facilitating the creation of regional networks. One remarkable instance was a recent collaboration that materialized between two women entrepreneurs from Nepal as a result of these networks.

The project has been recognised as a success story for women-to-women (W2W) business model and South-South Cooperation. Details of the project can be found here.

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

1. Strengthening National and Subnational Capacity for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Maldives
   8 May 2023, Male, Maldives
ESCAP, in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority of Maldives (NDMA) conducted a half-day meeting in Male, Maldives. Chaired by Mr. Umar Fikry, Deputy Director of NDMA, government stakeholders reviewed progress of the two-year SDG Fund UN Joint Project to strengthen the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with national and subnational development planning. Since the project started in October 2022, land use data of the entire country and downscaled climate projection data for Maldives were completed. A capacity building session followed on the prototype of the ESCAP Risk and Resilience Portal using newly updated data for Maldives. Read more.

2. **8th Monsoon Forum**  
10 May 2023, Fonadhoo Island, Laamu Atoll, Maldives

The 8th Monsoon Forum was jointly organized by the Maldives Meteorological Service, ESCAP, and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES). Participants discussed general climate and weather systems, earthquake and tsunami early warning systems, the disaster/hazard impact assessment and reporting mechanism used in Maldives, and the impacts of future climate risks in Maldives. There was also an interactive session on island and sectoral experiences on forecast-based opportunities and risks management. The forum was opened by the President of L. Atoll Council, Mr. Ismail Ali. Read more.

3. **Side Event at the 79th Commission Session: Policy Dialogue on Priorities for Subregional Cooperation for Climate Action and the SDGs in South and South-West Asia**  
18 May 2023, Bangkok, Thailand, and online
The side event discussed priority areas for climate action in South and South-West Asia and areas of collaboration among stakeholders, with the aim of identifying new opportunities through regional and subregional cooperation and of exploring the roles of policymakers, parliamentarians, the South and South-West Asia Network on the Sustainable Development Goals and ESCAP in advancing such issues. Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (ESCAP-SSWA), opened and moderated the debate. Four leaders of eminent think tanks in South Asia, Prof. Nagesh Kumar, Dr. Abid Sulieri, Dr. Paras Kharel, and Dr. Mahfuz Kabir, presented at the event. Read more.

4. Training of Trainers Programme for Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka: Enhancing Skills on Digital Marketing and E-commerce
7 June 2023, online

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) are significant drivers of inclusive and sustainable regional development. Given that women entrepreneurs often face barriers in the access to technology, finance, ICT knowledge and are not able to expand their businesses as a result, the ESCAP-SSWA organized a training of trainers programme for women entrepreneurs from Karnataka, India. The online meeting consisted of two sessions led by Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head of ESCAP-SSWA. The first session discussed an online e-learning course on e-commerce and digital marketing, while the second session provided guidance to trainers on how to train participants on using social media platforms for digital marketing. Read more.

5. ESCAP South and South-West Asia Policy Dialogue; Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2023 “Rethinking Public Debt for the Sustainable Development Goals”
8 June 2023, New Delhi, India, and online

ESCAP, in April 2023, launched its annual flagship publication “Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2023: Rethinking Public Debt for the SDGs”, which called for a shift in thinking about leveraging public debt and proposes a new approach to long-term public debt sustainability analysis. During the policy dialogue, experts and stakeholders shared ideas on how Asia-Pacific governments can improve SDG implementation and climate policies while maintaining the sustainability of public debt. Eminent panelists of the dialogue included: Mr. Ashish Vachhani, Additional Secretary (Budget), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India; Mr. Mohsin Chandra, Director General, Debt Sustainability, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan; Ms. Visakha Amaratunga, Additional Director General, Ministry of Finance, Government of Sri Lanka; Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries; Dr. R. Kavita Rao, Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy; and Prof. N.R. Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. B. R.
6. Strengthening National and Subnational Capacity for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Maldives – Introduction to Geographic Information Systems & Getting Started with QGIS
15 June 2023, online

Under the ESCAP-UNDP joint project on strengthening the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, ESCAP organized an online workshop to introduce participants to the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and the QGIS software. The basic knowledge of GIS and related software imparted during the training is expected to facilitate more productive engagement by participants at upcoming capacity-building workshops on developing land use maps of Maldives and climate risk assessments using climate projection data. Read more.

7. Training of Department of Commerce Officials on Negotiations of Multilateral Outcome Documents
21 June 2023, New Delhi, India

ESCAP-SSWA was requested by the Department of Commerce, Government of India, to train its new officials and staff in preparation for their role in supporting the G20 Trade, and Investment Working Group (TIWG) meetings. In this context, ESCAP-SSWA organized a training on how multilateral intergovernmental meetings and textual negotiations in adopting a report or a declaration are held. Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head of ESCAP-SSWA, led the training. Read more.

II. ESCAP-SSWA KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS 2023

- Quick Guide and Compendium on Designing and Retrofitting inclusive Parks (July 2023)
- Sustainable Management of Crop Residues in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan: Challenges and Solutions (May 2023)
- Strategies to promote regional power grid connectivity and Cross-Border Electricity Trade (CBET) in South and South-West Asia (January 2023)

III. THE SEVENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC (ESCAP)

Disclaimer: The following summaries do not represent the full speeches made by the representatives. To obtain more details about the 79th ESCAP session, please visit: https://www.unescap.org/events/commission79
Bangladesh

The honourable delegate of Bangladesh highlighted the challenges faced by vulnerable countries like Bangladesh due to climate change, despite being a low carbon emitter. Bangladesh has adopted the Bangladesh Delta Plan and SDG targets to combat climate change, aiming for zero carbon emissions by 2050 through the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan. The honourable delegate called for financial support, simplified compliance processes, and user-friendly platforms from ESCAP and the international community. Collaboration and support from developed nations were emphasized in areas like energy, low-carbon mobility, logistics, trade, and investment. Assistance from developed nations in technical, financial, and management aspects is crucial for achieving a net-zero carbon future. The honourable delegate stressed the importance of regional frameworks and partnerships for green power corridors, low-carbon transport, climate-smart transitions, and climate-smart trade and investment. Coordinated climate actions among ESCAP members were encouraged for building a sustainable and resilient future.

Bhutan

The honourable delegate of Bhutan highlighted the importance of reflection and progress in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Bhutan, with its vulnerable ecosystems and reliance on climate-sensitive sectors, emphasized its commitment to conservation and low-emission development. The honourable delegate expressed concern over unsustainable development models in the Asia-Pacific region and called for achieving net-zero emissions and carbon neutrality by mid-century. More ambitious efforts to phase out fossil fuels and adopt cleaner energy sources were deemed necessary. The honourable delegate urged international partners to fulfil climate finance commitments and support technology transfer, capacity building, and adaptation funding. Integrating climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction into national plans, particularly for least developed countries, was stressed. Bhutan pledged to promote a green and sustainable economy guided by Gross National Happiness.

India

The honourable delegate of India discussed India’s perspective on the session’s theme. He emphasized the theme’s relevance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and global economic challenges. India demonstrated its commitment to climate action by highlighting its ambitious nationally determined contribution (NDC) submitted in 2015 and the ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016. The updated NDC targets included a 45 per cent reduction in emissions intensity of GDP by 2030 and achieving 50 per cent of electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. The honourable delegate outlined various programmes and schemes focused on combating climate change, such as initiatives for green fuel, green energy, green mobility, and energy efficiency across sectors. Notable examples mentioned were ethanol blending promotion, the national green hydrogen mission, adoption of electric vehicles, and the Indian Railways’ goal of becoming net-zero carbon emitter by 2030. The honourable delegate also highlighted India’s active participation in international collaborations like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure, as well as initiatives launched at COP26, including the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States and the Green Grids Initiative. The honourable delegate concluded by emphasizing India’s ambition, determination, and commitment to actively contribute to achieving climate action goals.

Islamic Republic of Iran

The honourable delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran highlighted the importance of multilateralism and regional cooperation in achieving sustainable development goals in the Asia-Pacific region. He pointed out post-pandemic challenges such as inadequate development financing and unequal economic recovery, urging for their resolution based on principles of right to development and sustainable financing. The honourable delegate raised concerns about unfulfilled promises in the 2013 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the widening gap between developed and developing countries. Despite facing restrictive measures and unilateral sanctions, Iran’s progress in implementing development components
countries, along with a renewed commitment to global cooperation, were highlighted as essential in resolving development issues.

Maldives

The honourable delegate from the Maldives highlighted the challenges their low-lying country faces due to climate change. He emphasized the minimal contribution of vulnerable countries like the Maldives to global carbon emissions compared to the disproportionate impact the people suffer. The honourable delegate stressed the need for sustainable and adequate climate finance to address action gaps and conduct risk analysis and planning. Developed countries were urged to fulfil their commitment of providing $100 billion annually. The Government of Maldives, led by President Ibrahim Mohamad Solih, passed the Climate Emergency Act with a goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. However, achieving this goal requires international support, partnerships, technical expertise, and political will. The honourable delegate also highlighted the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing countries and called for targeted support. The upcoming International Conference on Small Island Developing States was seen as an opportunity to address challenges and renew commitments. In conclusion, global solidarity and support were deemed crucial to address climate change, and the Maldives expressed willingness to collaborate with others.

Nepal

The honourable delegate emphasized the importance of addressing global challenges, particularly climate change, for peace, harmony, and prosperity. The honourable delegate highlighted Nepal's progress in areas such as poverty alleviation, education, gender empowerment, and health, with climate change measures integrated into development plans. Notable achievements include reducing disaster risks and incorporating climate action into national policies and plans, aiming for net-zero carbon neutrality by 2045 and increased forest cover by 2030. Nepal raised important issues related to climate change adaptation, finance, food security, indigenous people, and agriculture. Data and institutional capacity remain challenges, but the honourable delegate stressed the need to prepare for Nepal's graduation from the Least Developed Country category in 2026 with a robust transition strategy. He acknowledged ESCAP's initiatives in promoting environmental sustainability and regional cooperation. The honourable delegate appreciated the 79th session as a platform for collective efforts towards development and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Pakistan

The honourable presented Pakistan’s perspective on the utilization of space-based assets for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan has adopted the Goals through a unanimous resolution and ratified the Paris Climate Agreement. The national space agency, SUPARCO, is committed to utilizing space technology for sustainable development, and has undertaken numerous projects related to disaster risk reduction, natural resource management, and climate change using space applications. Collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Management Fund led to the development of a National Catastrophic Assessment Model, providing space-based information for all phases of natural disasters. Pakistan has also developed a satellite-based crop monitoring system in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Satellite technology is used for monitoring forestry and tracking changes in mangrove forests, contributing to climate action and life on land goals. Pakistan seeks international partnerships and collaborations to enhance its capacities in space technology and contribute to socioeconomic development. The honourable delegate appreciated ESCAP's efforts in promoting regional cooperation and expressed hope for continued collaboration.
Sri Lanka

The honourable delegate of Sri Lanka expressed its approach to financing climate action and highlighted the initiatives in this regard. The country appointed a green finance task force to facilitate the process of sustainable financial tools. Sri Lanka also developed a sustainable finance roadmap and a green finance taxonomy to promote sustainable finance practices. With the technical support of ESCAP, the country is finalizing its green bond framework and exploring options such as debt-for-nature swaps with the assistance of UN agencies. He added that Sri Lanka believes in the importance of climate justice and equity in the global climate negotiation process. He proposed greater debt justice and debt cancellation as essential components to support climate vulnerable nations in their mitigation and adaptation efforts. He suggested the establishment of a climate justice forum for climate vulnerable developing countries prior to COP 28 (Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and sought ESCAP’s support in this endeavour. The speaker emphasized the urgency of taking action and questions whether enough had been done to address the suffering of billions of people and struggling countries. He proposed for writing off debts and reallocating those resources towards climate-related projects.

IV. NEWS EXCERPTS ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

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

A. Economic Dimension

BANGLADESH
President Mohammed Shahabuddin Thursday authenticated the proposed national budget for FY 2023-24 2 June 2023. President Mohammed Shahabuddin Thursday authenticated the proposed national budget for FY 2023-24 and the revised budget for FY 2022-23 for placing before the Jatiya Sangsad by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal. The government is targeting to attain a gross domestic product growth rate of 7.5 percent in the next fiscal year (FY24) since the country is expected to return to the higher growth trajectory. [Read more.]

The per capita income will be at least $12,500 and less than three percent of people will be below the poverty line in a ‘Smart Bangladesh’—targets to be achieved by 2041, said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal. (UNB) As the government unveiled a Tk 7.61 trillion spending plan for the upcoming fiscal year to get the ball rolling on the ‘Smart Bangladesh’ initiative, more than 17 percent of the record budget deficit will have to be offset by loans amid looming fears of recession. [Read more.]

Bangladesh Bank is ready to announce a contractionary monetary policy statement, withdrawing the single-digit interest cap to combat rising inflation, the central bank sources said 19 June 2023. Unveiling a ‘contractionary’ monetary policy statement, Bangladesh Bank has projected domestic credit growth ceiling at 15.3 percent in the fiscal 2023-24 (FY24) accommodating 11 percent credit growth in private sector and 30 percent in public sector. Containing inflation and safeguarding the vulnerable new poor should get priority while implementing the budget for the next fiscal year, economists told a roundtable. Proper implementation of the social safety-net programme, capacity building ahead of LDC graduation, and making the tax regime more efficient are also vital for economy, He said. [Read more.]

NEPAL
The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries has expressed concerns regarding the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 7 June 2023. The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries has expressed concerns regarding the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, stating that it lacks immediate measures to effectively address the ongoing economic slowdown. Nepali Congress leader Bimalendra Nidhi has said that the budget should accord priority for constitution and implementation of federalism. Chairman of the main opposition party CPN, KP Sharma Oli, has claimed that the budget for the upcoming fiscal year brought by the government would not tide over the existing economic crisis. [Read more.]

PAKISTAN
The government has introduced a number of policy initiatives to bring stability and growth in the economy 1 June 2023. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar says the current government has introduced a number of policy initiatives to bring stability and growth in the economy and improving ease of doing business. [Read more.]

The Federal Board of Revenue missed its collection target by Rs430 billion 2 June 2023. The Federal Board of Revenue missed its collection target by Rs430 billion or Rs8.21 trillion for the first 11 months of the fiscal year 2023 (11MFY23) against the target of Rs6.64 trillion, leaving behind a huge shortfall to plug in the month of June to achieve the annual target. [Read more.]

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said the new elected government should negotiate a fresh deal with the IMF 9 June 2023. Putting to bed once and for all uncertainty over the bailout programme’s future after June, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said the new elected government should negotiate a fresh deal with the IMF. Pakistan has to satisfy the IMF on three
**Chief Economic Adviser V Ananth Nageswaran on Wednesday said India can look for another year of solid economic performance.** Beer谈论 estimates, India's gross domestic product grew by 6.1 per cent in the last quarter of the previous fiscal. Further, the Centre now estimates the overall growth rate of FY23 to be 7.2 per cent, MOSPI data showed. Read more.

A 7.2 per cent growth in GDP in 2022-23 is historic 2 June 2023. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said a 7.2 per cent growth in GDP in 2022-23 is historic, given the current global economic situation, and going forward India would emerge as a developed nation in the next 25 years. Read more.

Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said the government remains deeply committed to the Act East Policy and is working towards enabling its maximum potential for growth and development in the eastern region of the country 6 June 2023. Sonowal emphasized the need for greater cooperation among the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multilateralism countries to unlock the full potential of the maritime sector in the region. Read more.

Union Cabinet gave its approval for the metro connectivity project from HUDA City Centre to Cyber City in Gurugram 8 June 2023. Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave its approval for the metro connectivity project from HUDA City Centre to Cyber City in Gurugram, with a spur to Dwarka Expressway. This project will cover a distance of 28.50 km and include 27 stations along the route. Read more.

India's consumer price index-based inflation fell to 4.25 per cent in May, data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed 13 June 2023. In the month of April, the retail inflation was 4.7 per cent. Read more.

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

The World Bank in its latest report has predicted a 2.2% growth for Iran's economy in 2023 6 June 2023. The World Bank in its latest report has predicted 2.2% growth for Iran's economy in 2023, a figure which is higher than the average growth forecast for the global economy and despite the fact that the country is still under sanctions imposed by the US. Read more.

Iran’s economy expanded by 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 12 June 2023. Iran’s economy expanded by 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 to become 15th fastest-growing economy in the world over the quarter, according to figures by the World Bank. Read more.

**B. Social Dimension**

**AFGHANISTAN**

The Taliban condemned on Sunday a “baseless and biased” report from the UN Security Council highlighting rifts within the group’s ranks 11 June 2023. Read more.

The Doha Agreement between the US and Taliban is less transparent and incomprehensive 23 June 2023. The Doha Agreement between the US and Taliban is less transparent and incomprehensive, and excludes Afghan women from political engagement to a great extent, associate director of the Women’s Rights Division at Human Rights Watch Heather Barr says. Read more.

Over a thousand Afghan civilians were killed in bombings and other violence 28 June 2023. Over a thousand Afghan civilians were killed in bombings and other violence since foreign forces left and the Taliban took over in 2021, according to a report by the UN’s mission to Afghanistan. Read more.

**BANGLADESH**

The UNHCR has stopped providing food assistance to 23 Rohingya people belonging to four families in Cox's Bazar 7 June 2023. Read more.

**PAKISTAN**

Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Dr Qiba Ayaz said universities in Pakistan had failed to produce ‘genuine’ graduates 6 June 2023. He said in developed countries, educational institutions and think-tanks encouraged students to ask questions. Read more.

The government has decided to introduce a ‘budgeted’ subsidy in the form of a Rs 151 billion to provide relief to customers across the country 14 June 2023. In a bid to offset the burden shouldered by power consumers due to the line losses of distribution companies, the government has decided to introduce a ‘budgeted’ subsidy to the tune of Rs151 billion to provide relief to customers across the country, except Karachi. Read more.

**SRI LANKA**

Hundreds of members of LGBT+ community paraded for the Pride month 5 June 2023. Hundreds of members of Sri Lanka’s LGBT+ community paraded through the streets of the capital Colombo on Sunday to mark the Pride month and demand an end to discrimination. Read more.

Food safety goes beyond individual well-being; it...
immediately suspend a pilot repatriation project for Rohingya refugees to return to Myanmar, where he "face serious risks" to their lives and liberty, a UN expert said on Thursday. Read more.

Child mortality rate in Bangladesh increased significantly last year compared to 2021 14 June 2023. Child mortality rate in Bangladesh increased significantly last year compared to 2021, according to the Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2022 launched Tuesday by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Read more.

Bangladesh has ranked 1st among South Asian countries in terms of gender parity, according to the latest Global Gender Gap Report 2023 by the World Economic Forum 23 June 2023. Read more.

INDIA

India does not consist of binary rural and urban areas anymore and the country needs to look at taking manufacturing to its villages to fill the India gap and achieve its development goals, experts said 8 June 2023. At a conference on re-imagining rural India, organised by the Union Rural Development Ministry in collaboration with the World Bank and the Bills and Melinda Gates Foundation, NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said a major portion of resources allocated for rural development were on social schemes and stressed on the need for investment for overall development. Read more.

India has set a target of eradicating tuberculosis by 2025 19 June 2023. India has set a target of eradicating tuberculosis by 2025 and 'Ni-kshay Mitra' has taken charge of this movement against the disease, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his monthly radio programme 'Mann ki Baat'. Read more.

NEPAL

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City has warned of action if found illegally providing custody to children or employing them in precarious work 6 June 2023. Read more.

The 'measles-rubella vaccination campaign is being administered for children from six months to less than 15 years of age in Kanchanpur from Thursday onward 9 June 2023. Read more.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said on Saturday that he is discharging his duty with a firm commitment to work for the sake of the country and people 12 June 2023. Inaugurating the administrative building of Panchakanya Rural Municipality in Nuwakot district, the PM said that the government is providing services to the people in an accessible manner with cooperation from the private and public institutions. Read more.

Rights activists have demanded that the government amend torture laws 28 June 2023. Rights activists have demanded that the government amend torture laws, set up an independent mechanism to investigate torture cases and create a national fund for awarding compensation to torture victims. Read more.

C. Environmental Dimension

BANGLADESH

Dhaka's air quality continued to be unhealthy for sensitive groups on Monday morning 6 June 2023. With an air quality index score of 121 at 9:10am, Dhaka ranked 8th on the list of cities around the world with the worst air quality. Read more.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister said the government has taken steps to implement circular economy model and extended producer responsibility 9 June 2023. Minister Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin Thursday said the government has taken steps to implement circular economy model and extended producer responsibility to prevent plastic pollution in the country. Read more.

Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Aleksandr

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The main goal of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran in its nuclear is to commercialize its nuclear industry 13 June 2023. The main goal of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in its nuclear research (including uranium enrichment, etc.) is to commercialize its nuclear industry by producing various types of products, Spokesman of the AEOI, Behrouz Kamalvandi said. Read more.

The overview of nuclear technology into the medical sector has led to significant progress in the use of radiopharmaceuticals for diagnostic purposes 14 June 2023. A senior researcher with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has hailed the country's self-sufficiency in the field of nuclear industry, saying the overview of nuclear technology into the medical sector has led to significant progress
India's Adani Group is looking to complete the renewable energy project in Sri Lanka by December 2024. Read more.

TURKIYE

Sales of electric vehicles in Turkey skyrocketed in the year through May 6 June 2023. Sales of electric vehicles in Turkey skyrocketed in the year through May, propelled by the launch of the country's first indigenous car and arrival of new brands. Some 7,526 battery-power cars exchanged hands during the January-May period, according to the Automotive Distributors and Mobility Association data that showed overall vehicle sales in Turkey achieved their best May and five-month figures ever. Read more.

The energy demands of some 2,200 households in Turkey's southeastern Bitlis are being met through the utilization of the waste 15 June 2023. The energy demands of some 2,200 households in Turkey's southeastern Bitlis are being met through the utilization of the waste being processed at the local solid waste site, a public officer of the association in charge of the process noted on Tuesday. Read more.

Construction of Turkey's first nuclear power plant, the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in southern Mersin province, is progressing at an impressive pace 27 June 2023. Denis Sezemin, the production and construction organization director of the power plant, has confirmed that the first unit is on track to be completed this year. Read more.

About SANS

The South & South-West Asia Network on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been developed by ESCAP to foster subregional cooperation by sharing good practices towards achievement of the SDGs amongst the government agencies, think-tanks, CSOs and other stakeholders in South Asia to build back better.

For details on SANS, click here.

For details on SANS membership, click here.

D. International Cooperation

BANGLADESH

The government of Japan has decided to provide the IOM with USD 0.5 million assistance in response to the super Cyclone Mocha 7 June 2023. The government of Japan has decided to provide the IOM with USD 0.5 million assistance in response to the super Cyclone Mocha which made landfall on 14 May and hit Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar. Read more.

About $1 billion in budget support is set to arrive in the next few days from three development partners to help the government meet its deficit financing for this fiscal year 15 June 2023. Of the sum, $400 million is coming from the Asian Development Bank, another $400 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and $216 million from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Read more.

The ADB and the government of Bangladesh Sunday signed a loan agreement for $400 million to build a dual-gauge railway connecting Chattogram and Cox's Bazar to promote trade, investment, and tourism in Bangladesh 26 June 2023. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam Sunday said the government is still determined to go for a "small trial," in terms of Rohingya

NEPAL

An agreement to construct a dry port at Dodhara Chandani in Kanchanpur has sent waves of happiness to the locals 5 June 2023. The agreement to this effect was reached between Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi during the former's official visit to India recently. Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies Madhu Kumar Marasini on behalf of Nepal, and Ambassador of India to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava exchanged a memorandum of understanding in this regard. Read more.

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal and Qatar on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate on protecting the rights of migrant workers 8 June 2023. Read more.

SRI LANKA

The State Bank of India had extended the tenure of the USD 1 billion Credit Facility 1 June 2023. The Indian High Commission said that following a request from Sri Lanka, the State Bank of India had extended the tenure of the USD 1 billion Credit Facility, provided in March 2022, for the procurement
INDIA

The World Bank has approved a USD 255.5 million loan for improving the quality of technical education in government-run institutions in India 26 June 2023. Over the next five years, the project will support around 275 government-run technical institutions in selected states across the country, benefiting more than 350,000 students each year. Read more.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Iran’s permanent representative at the UN has urged the European governments to refrain from “provocative and unconstructive attitudes” 9 June 2023. Iran’s permanent representative at the UN office in Vienna has urged the European governments to refrain from “provocative and unconstructive attitudes” and instead work with the Islamic Republic to resolve the “shared concerns.” Read more.

TÜRKIYE

Erdoğan has called on his top EU counterparts to intensify the bilateral dialogue between Ankara and Brussels to promote positive agenda 9 June 2023. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has called on his top EU counterparts to intensify the bilateral dialogue between Ankara and Brussels to further promote positive agenda that includes visa liberalization and modernization of the customs union. Read more.

Disclaimer: ESCAP does not guarantee the truthfulness, accuracy, or validity of any of the news items linked to in the above message. All news items are provided for informational purposes only and all copyrights remain those of the respective copyright holders. The views represented therein reflect those of the authors and not that of ESCAP or any of its member States.

Your valuable feedback is welcome and greatly appreciated. Please send your comments or suggestions to: sswa.escap@un.org.

If you have missed them, here are the links to previous newsletter editions!

April 2023

May 2022
January 2023

January 2022

April 2021

October 2021

CONTACT US
ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia
C-2, Qutab Institutional Area, Post Box No. 4575, 110016 New Delhi, India
Telephone: +91 11 3097 3700 / Fax: +91 11 2685 6274
Website: https://www.unescap.org/subregional-office/south-south-west-asia
E-mail: sswa.escap@un.org