



SASEC EVENTS
SASEC TRADE FACILITATION AND TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP MEETING



SASEC PROJECTS
ADB, INDIA INK \$375 MILLION LOAN/GRANT AGREEMENT TO DEVELOP THE VCIC



SASEC NEWS
WTO'S TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO FORCE



PUBLICATIONS
CUSTOMS REFORM AND MODERNIZATION STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN 2017-2021



SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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Myanmar Joins SASEC

21 February 2017: Manila, Philippines

The Government of Myanmar informed the SASEC Secretariat of its desire to formally join the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) partnership as a full member. Myanmar becomes the seventh SASEC member country, following the original four founding partners in 2001 – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal – and Maldives and Sri Lanka in 2014. Myanmar has held Observer status within SASEC for several years and first expressed its interest to join as a full member at the SASEC Nodal Officials Meeting held in May 2016 in Frankfurt. Myanmar's participation in SASEC is expected to further promote and accelerate inter-subregional cooperation between South Asia and Southeast Asia, and is in line with the objectives and thrusts of the recently launched SASEC Operational Plan 2016-2025, the program's first comprehensive long-term strategic plan.

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SASEC EVENTS



EVENT INDIA

Chennai-Kanyakumari
Industrial Corridor
Workshop



EVENT SRI LANKA

SASEC Trade Facilitation
and Transport Working
Group Meeting



EVENT MALDIVES, SRI LANKA

National Consultation on
SPS/TBT Diagnostic Study

Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Workshop

21 February 2017: Chennai, India

The Government of Tamil Nadu and the Asian Development Bank conducted a workshop on the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor (CKIC). CKIC, the second phase of India's East Coast Economic Corridor development, aims to accelerate manufacturing growth in the state of Tamil Nadu. The Workshop discussed and gathered valuable feedback on key findings of the CKIC study.

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Sri Lanka: National Consultation on SPS and TBT Diagnostic Study

9 February 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Government of Sri Lanka conducted a national consultation meeting on Sanitary/Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) in preparation for the launch of a national SPS and TBT diagnostic study. The Meeting agreed on an adjusted terms of reference for the national SPS and TBT diagnostic study, and working arrangements for the SPS and TBT Focal Point and Core Group.

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SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting

7-8 February 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group annual meeting unanimously endorsed the SASEC Vision Document, agreed to strengthen the link between the SASEC Vision Document and the SASEC Operational Plan 2016-2025, and identified a pipeline of new projects in for the next three years.

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Top Tweets

February 2017



Bhutan Prime Minister meets
ADB Bhutan Country Director
and ADB South Asia
Department Director General
[Read](#)

WTO Director General Roberto
Azevêdo speaks at CII event,
highlights need to make trade
better [Read](#)

SASEC TFTWG Annual Meeting
to review progress of initiatives
in transport, cross-border trade
in South Asia [Read](#)

Hydropower in Bhutan: a story
of successful bilateral
cooperation and energy trade
between Bhutan and India [Read](#)

Davos 2017: Accelerating South
Asia's Growth and Development
through Regional Cooperation
[Read](#)



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Maldives: National Consultation on SPS and TBT Diagnostic Study

2 February 2017: Male, Maldives

The Government of Maldives conducted a national consultation meeting on sanitary/phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical barriers to trade (TBT) in preparation for the launch of a national SPS and TBT diagnostic study, under the trade facilitation agenda of the SASEC Program. The Meeting agreed on an adjusted terms of reference for the national SPS and TBT diagnostic study, and working arrangements for the SPS and TBT Focal Point and Core Group.

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CALENDAR

March

Nepal: Electronic Tracking System Workshop

6 March 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

SASEC PROJECTS



PROJECT
ADB, INDIA SIGN
FUNDING ASSISTANCE
TO DEVELOP THE 800-
KM VCIC



PROJECT
ENHANCED
CONNECTIVITY IN
BIHAR CAN IMPROVE
LIVES AND LIVELIHOOD



PROJECT
ASIA'S GROWTH POLES
WILL DRIVE THE
GLOBAL ECONOMY IN
THE COMING YEARS



PROJECT
SYNCHING STRENGTHS
ACROSS ASIAN
SUBREGIONS CAN HELP
ERASE POVERTY

ADB, India Ink \$375 Million Loan/Grant Agreement to Develop the Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor

23 February 2017: New Delhi, India

The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India have signed a \$375 million agreement to develop the 800-kilometer Visakhapatnam (Vizag)-Chennai Industrial Corridor. The agreement includes the first tranche of \$245 million, which will develop high-quality infrastructure in Visakhapatnam and Yerpedu-Srikalahasti, a \$125 million policy-based loan, and a \$5 million grant to build climate change resilient infrastructure.

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Commentary: India Infrastructure: Connecting Bihar

6 February 2017: Manila, Philippines

The Ganges flows through the middle of Bihar, India, physically dividing it into north and south. Enhanced connectivity can improve lives and livelihoods, especially if the infrastructure is climate-sensitive. Ms. Saleha Waseem, Operations Communications Specialist, Asian Development Bank's South Asia Regional Department, shows how improving transport links would make a huge difference to millions of people.

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Commentary: Connecting Asia's Growth Poles

1 February 2017: Manila, Philippines

Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, Asian Development Bank, discusses in this commentary how Asia's growth poles will drive the global economy in the coming years, if South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia can dynamically integrate their economies. He emphasized the urgent need to synch strengths across subregions—by removing non-tariff barriers, strengthening connectivity, and building economic corridors—to help erase poverty in the region.

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SASEC NEWS



NEWS
WTO'S TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO FORCE



NEWS
BHUTAN PRIME MINISTER MEETS INCOMING ADB BHUTAN COUNTRY DIRECTOR



NEWS
BIMSTEC SENIOR OFFICIALS FINALIZE ENERGY GRID MOU



NEWS
INDIA AND NEPAL DISCUSS HOW TO BRING TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECTS INTO OPERATION

Speech: Making Trade More Inclusive

28 February 2017: Geneva, Switzerland

Amidst the rising debate against trade and globalization, World Trade Organization Director General Roberto Azevêdo argues against increasing protectionism, and emphasizes how trade has proven its worth in development benefits. He remarks how trade can become more inclusive, with gains shared across society.

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India Files Proposal for Trade Deal on Services

23 February 2017: New Delhi, India

India filed a draft Trade Facilitation Agreement on Services at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The proposal aims to increase transparency, reduce costs and facilitate cross-border flows of services. India is looking to promote the proposal at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December.

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WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement Enters into Force

22 February 2017: Geneva, Switzerland

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement came into force after Rwanda, Oman, Chad, and Jordan submitted their instruments of acceptance to WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo. The submissions bring the total number of ratifications over the 110 required for activation. Members' trade costs are forecast to lower by 14.3%, with developing countries having the most to gain.

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Bhutan Prime Minister Meets Incoming ADB Country Director

20 February 2017: Thimphu, Bhutan

Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay met Ms. Kanokpan Lao-Araya, incoming Country Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB) Bhutan Resident Mission, and Mr. Hun Kim, Director General, ADB South Asia Department in Thimphu, Bhutan, after presentation of Ms. Lao-Araya's credentials to Bhutan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Damcho Dorji. ADB is upgrading Bhutan from a representative office to full-country operations.

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ADB to Increase Support to Nepal to \$1.2 Billion

20 February 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

ADB has allocated \$843.8 million for Nepal for 2017-2019. An additional \$356 million can be made available over the period for projects contributing to regional cooperation and integration and reduction of disaster risks, provided that Nepal continues to improve performance of its ongoing projects, according to Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, ADB. Mr. Zhang was in Nepal to meet with the country's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara and other senior officials.

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ADB to Back Bangladesh Road Connectivity and Energy Trade

17 February 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is ready to assist Bangladesh in its efforts to improve transport and energy connectivity. Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, ADB, affirmed that ADB will continue to support Bangladesh in its goal of becoming a developed country by 2041, as well as in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and minimizing climate change impact.

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India, Nepal Meeting Discusses New Transmission Lines

15 February 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Governments of India and Nepal discussed how to bring transmission line projects into operation, including the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line, Raxaul-Parwanipur transmission line, and Kataiya-Kushaha transmission line. They agreed to increase the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line to 220 kilo-volt-ampere capacity in May 2017, and begin importing electricity through the Raxaul-Parwanipur and Kataiya-Kushaha transmission line.

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Bangladesh, Sri Lanka to Sign a Free Trade Agreement

12 February 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. Tofail Ahmed, Bangladesh Commerce Minister, reported that Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have reached consensus to sign a free trade agreement. The FTA will give Bangladesh access to Colombo Port, and allow exports of pharmaceuticals, paper, and cement at low import duties.

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Speech: Advancing Global Trade and the Role of the WTO

9 February 2017: Geneva, Switzerland

The outlook for trade growth has weakened and we are seeing an uncertain period in the global economy. In this speech delivered before the Confederation of Indian Industry, World Trade Organization Director General Roberto Azevêdo asserts that instead of raising barriers, the opening up of trade will ensure more opportunities for more people.

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Indian Business Leaders Look to Trade to Drive Job Creation

9 February 2017: New Delhi, India

Indian business leaders met with World Trade Organization Director General Roberto Azevêdo to discuss the future of the global trading system. The roundtable meeting, hosted by the International Chamber of Commerce and attended by over 50 senior representatives from various sectors, focused on trade reforms to strengthen inclusive growth and other world trade developments.

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Sri Lanka's Private Sector Promotes E-Payment System

9 February 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Mr. Dinesh de Silva, Chairman, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) Import Section, and representative of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, urged the implementation of electronic payment (e-payment) system at Customs in an article written for CCC's Trade Intelligence for the Private Sector initiative. Private sector stakeholders are advocating for a single window system.

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BIMSTEC Senior Officials Finalize Energy Grid MoU, Discuss Transport Connectivity

7 February 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

The 17th Session of BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting concluded with an agreement to build a common power grid interconnection and facilitate energy trade among BIMSTEC member countries. The Meeting also discussed the need to boost transport connectivity through the proposed BIMSTEC Motor Vehicles Agreement. The Meeting marked an important step toward revitalizing the BIMSTEC process.

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Cooperation the Best Option for South Asia's Growing Power Needs

2 February 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Hydropower cooperation among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal could be a viable option for addressing growing power needs in the region, said Mr. Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research, Brac University, Bangladesh. Nepal's hydropower potential stands at 83,000 megawatts (MW), while Bhutan's is at 40,000 MW and northeast India's at 60,000 MW.

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Hydropower Could Help Bhutan Economy Grow by 10.2%

2 February 2017: Thimphu, Bhutan

Bhutan's economy could grow by about 10.2% should the construction of planned hydropower projects proceed as scheduled. The projects are expected to create 6,500 jobs by 2020. The country has an estimated 24,00 MW hydropower potential and the Government of Bhutan has committed to developing hydropower in an environmentally responsible way.

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Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism Agrees to Expedite Project Implementation

30 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

The second meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism reviewed progress of India-funded economic and development projects in Nepal, and agreed to expedite implementation of these projects for timely completion. Projects discussed included cross-border railways, integrated check posts, and cross-border transmission lines.

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Commentary: Need for Re-imagining Regional Cooperation

27 January 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Limited cooperation and economic integration in South Asia continue to hinder its growth potential, despite being one of the fastest-growing regions in the world. In this commentary, Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary), General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, argues for the need to think of pragmatic approaches and re-imagine regional cooperation in South Asia. He highlights the increasing commitment toward deepening regional ties, citing initiatives including the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement.

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Export-Import Code, Latest Customs Reform and Modernization Action Plan to Help Boost Nepal Trade

26 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

On International Customs Day, the Nepal Department of Customs introduced the Export-Import code to enable electronic data interchange between Nepal Customs and India Customs, and presented the next phase of its Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan 2017-2021, which will implement measures expected to boost Nepal's foreign trade, and benefit Government and private-sector stakeholders.

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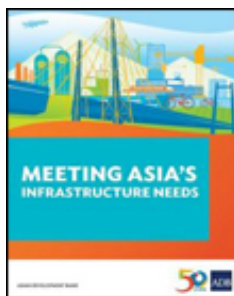
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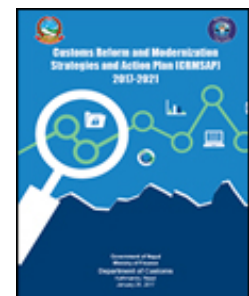
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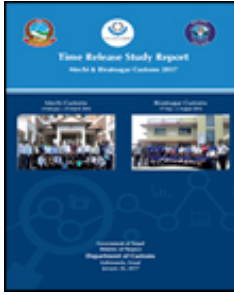
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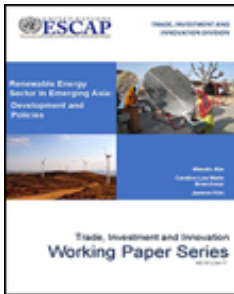
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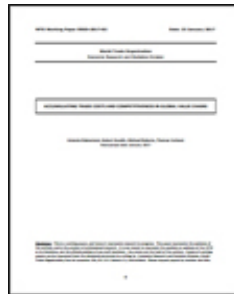
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