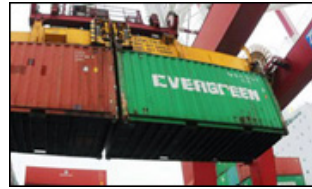




SASEC EVENTS
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS
WORKSHOP: COLOMBO-
TRINCOMANLEE
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR



SASEC PROJECTS
SASEC MINI DRY PORT
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THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #41 JANUARY 2017

WWW.SASEC.ASIA



Nepal Submits Instrument of Acceptance for Trade Facilitation Agreement

24 January 2017: Geneva, Switzerland

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) is getting closer to coming into force after Mr. Deepak Dhital, Nepal's Ambassador to the WTO, submitted his country's instrument of acceptance to WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo on 24 January 2017. Nepal is the 14th least developed country to ratify the TFA, which is expected to help reduce trade costs for WTO member countries.

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SASEC EVENTS



EVENT SRI LANKA

SASEC Analysis Workshop:
Colombo-Trincomalee
Economic Corridor



EVENT BHUTAN

Fourth Meeting of the
SASEC Electricity
Transmission Utility Forum



EVENT NEPAL

Nepal DOC: ASYCUDA
World Implementation in
Birgunj

Nepal DOC: ASYCUDA World Implementation in Birgunj

30 December 2016-17 January 2017: Birgunj, Nepal

The Nepal Department of Customs (DOC) has implemented ASYCUDA World in Birgunj Customs Office, developing and fine-tuning the software for use in this location. The Customs Office also held several trainings to familiarize brokers and Customs officials with the upgraded features of ASYCUDA World.

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Preliminary Analysis Workshop: Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor

15 December 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Asian Development Bank organized a workshop on the Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to present preliminary findings of the conceptual development phase of the Corridor Study.

[Read More](#)

Fourth Meeting of the SASEC Electricity Transmission Utility Forum

12-13 December 2016: Thimphu, Bhutan

The Fourth Meeting of the SASEC Electricity Transmission Utility Forum (SETUF) presented the draft final report of the South Asia Transmission Master Plan study, which aims to ensure well-coordinated cross-border transmission infrastructure planning and implementation in the region.

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January 2017



Photo exhibit celebrates 50 years of ADB-Nepal partnership in development [Read](#)

\$1.5-B multitranche loan Bangladesh for Chittagong-Cox's Bazar line is largest investment in railways by ADB [Read](#)

Nepal, Bangladesh and India should join hands to develop hydropower projects: Nepal Minister for Supplies [Read](#)

Nepal to launch Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan 2017-2021 on International Customs Day [Read](#)

The Power Trade Agreement signed by Nepal & India promises a huge market for Nepal's hydroelectricity [Read](#)



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CALENDAR

February

Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor Workshop

21 February 2017: Chennai, India

Sri Lanka: National Consultation on Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade Diagnostic Study

9 February 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting

7-8 February 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Maldives: National Consultation on SPS and TBT Diagnostic Study

2 February 2017: Male, Maldives

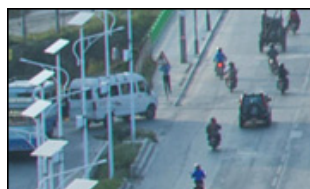
SASEC PROJECTS



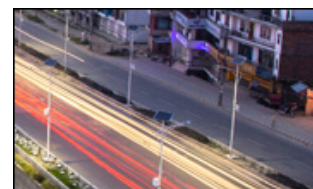
PROJECT
SASEC MINI DRY PORT
PROJECT TO HELP EASE
TRAFFIC IN
PHUENTSHOLING



PROJECT
REGIONAL WORKSHOP
HIGHLIGHTS
ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE
SASEC INFORMATION
HIGHWAY PROJECT



PROJECT
ADB STRATEGIC
CLIMATE FUND BOOSTS
NEPAL SASEC POWER
SYSTEM EXPANSION
PROJECT



PROJECT
MORE PEOPLE TO GAIN
ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY
IN NEPAL THROUGH
RENEWABLE ENERGY
DEVELOPMENT

SASEC Mini Dry Port Project to Help Ease Traffic in Phuentsholing, Bhutan

20 December 2016: Phuentsholing, Bhutan

Two of three South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation project components are seeing progress in Bhutan. A planned mini dry port project aims to provide cargo and other commercial vehicles a route that avoids traffic jams in the border town of Phuentsholing. A 2.66-kilometer bypass will also be built to connect Bau Bazaar in Jaigon and the Phuentsholing-Thimphu highway.

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Regional Workshop Highlights Achievements of the SASEC Information Highway Project

15 December 2016: Bangkok, Thailand

A Regional Workshop on the SASEC Research and Training Network was held to assess the results and achievements of the SASEC Information Highway Project. The Meeting reviewed project implementation, discussed knowledge products, and summarized project benefits to rural communities. It also proposed ways to facilitate sustainable ICT cooperation among the four countries.

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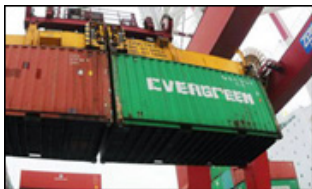
ADB Strategic Climate Fund Boosts the Nepal SASEC Power System Expansion Project Fund

13 December 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved an additional \$20 million for the SASEC Power System Expansion Project in Nepal, to be provided by the ADB Strategic Climate Fund. This additional financing will support installation of utility-scale solar photovoltaic systems by 2018. The Government of Nepal is also providing complementary funding of \$24.5 million.

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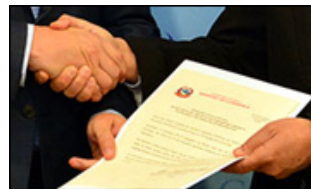
NEWS

SRI LANKA SEEKS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT, BOOST EXPORTS



NEWS

INDIA IDENTIFIES POTENTIAL LOCATION FOR SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN BANGLADESH



NEWS

NEPAL SUBMITS INSTRUMENT OF ACCEPTANCE FOR TFA



NEWS

BHUTAN AND NEPAL: TWO LDCs THAT COULD CHANGE FACE OF ASIA

SASEC Country Pages on the SASEC Website

25 January 2017: Manila, Philippines

Individual country pages for SASEC Members [Bangladesh](#), [Bhutan](#), [India](#), [Maldives](#), [Nepal](#), and [Sri Lanka](#) have been added to the website. These subpages provide details and hyperlinks to Asian Development Bank (ADB)-supported loans, grants, and technical assistance in each country; a snapshot of current trade data, including the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) direction of intra-regional trade, the World Bank/International Finance Corporation's Doing Business, and the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index rankings; and economic outlook, based on ADB's Asian Development Outlook and IMF publications. Links to the ADB website, national development plans, and respective trade data and agreements are also accessible through the quick links.

Railway Network Linking India and its Neighbors Under Consideration

20 January 2017: Darjeeling, India

A railway network linking India and its neighboring countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal, is being considered by the Government of India, according to India Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu. Developing railway connectivity will increase employment, interaction, trade, and tourism.

[Read More](#)

Report Highlights How Cross-Border Electricity Trade Will Benefit India and Nepal

20 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Integrated Research and Action for Development initiative has launched the analytical study “Economic Benefits from Nepal-India Electricity Trade,” confirming that a large economically feasible electricity export potential exists. Electricity trade can help boost Nepal's economy and improve the well-being of its people, and offers India an affordable and convenient renewable resource to meet demand.

[Read More](#)

Davos 2017: Accelerating South Asia's Growth and Development through Regional Cooperation

17 January 2017: Davos, Switzerland

The interactive session “Harnessing Regional Cooperation in South Asia” held at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum discussed how regional economic cooperation is helping accelerate growth and development. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina emphasized continuous initiatives, in economic cooperation in South Asia, including SAFTA and SASEC. India Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman lauded initiatives to boost connectivity.

[Read More](#)

India to Sign Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods

16 January 2017: Hyderabad, India

India is set to join the Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR), or International Road Transport Convention, in its bid to establish seamless trade connectivity with Southeast Asia and Eurasian countries. Through the TIR Convention, India could access Eurasia via the International North-South Transport Corridor. TIR would also give India an advantage in trade with fellow signatories of the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement.

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Nepal Prepares to Implement the Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan 2017-2021

13 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal's Department of Customs is set to present the Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan (CRMSAP) 2017-2021 on 26 January 2017, International Customs Day. The CRMSAP 2017-2021 aims to implement provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention, the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, and the Single Window System.

[Read More](#)

Nepal Parliament Ratifies WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

13 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal's Parliament ratified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 13 January 2017, drawing up the instrument of acceptance for the WTO TFA, whose implementation will help expand trade and attract foreign direct investment in Nepal by increasing transparency and effectiveness of the trading process.

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Nepal Customs Officers Undergo Training at NACEN

13 January 2017: Faridabad, India

The National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics (NACEN) held a capacity-building program for 35 Customs Officers from Nepal. The 5-day program discussed various Customs-related topics, including Customs valuation; World Trade Organization provisions; Customs reform; and use of risk management.

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Commentary: Hydro-powering Regional Development in India and Nepal

13 January 2017: Singapore, Singapore

Transboundary rivers between India and Nepal have huge hydropower and irrigation potential. Developing these rivers can become an engine for regional development, alleviating poverty for millions of people within a reasonable timeframe. With improved relations between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, formulating and implementing sustainable plans to manage these rivers presents a significant win-win opportunity for the subregion.

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APTA Member Countries Move to Boost Trade in the Region

13 January 2017: Bangkok, Thailand

Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, South Korea, and Sri Lanka, member countries of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), moved to expand trade and boost growth in the region by agreeing to increase the number of products under preferential tariff treatment to 10,677 items from 4,270 at the 4th session of the APTA Ministerial Council.

[Read More](#)

India Identifies Potential Location for SEZ in Bangladesh

12 January 2017: Khulna, Bangladesh

India is set to undertake a number of projects in the city of Khulna, Bangladesh, including a planned Mongla Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for Indian companies. India is also offering to undertake joint projects with Bangladesh to modernize the Mongla sea port and to construct the Khan Jahan Ali Airport. Trade between India and Bangladesh has seen a substantial increase in the last few years.

[**Read More**](#)

Nepal Upgrades Hydropower Plant with India's Help

11 January 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal has upgraded the Thame Khola Small Hydropower Plant in Namche VDC, Solukhumbu District, raising the plant's capacity from 630 kilowatts (kW) to 930 kW. India provided assistance of \$54,500 for the upgrade. The facility supplies power to the upper Khumbu valley, including 18 villages of Khumjung and Namche VDC.

[**Read More**](#)

Second India-Bhutan Joint Working Group on Customs Held in Thimphu

10 January 2017: Thimpu, Bhutan

The Second India-Bhutan Joint Working Group on Customs highlighted the possibility of facilitating bilateral trade in select land Customs stations along Bhutan-India borders; and discussed streamlining Customs procedures and document requirements at entry and exit points. It also agreed to open three more trading points between Bhutan and India, and discussed issues including development of Goods and Service Tax in India.

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Sri Lanka Seeks to Attract Foreign Investment, Boost Exports

10 January 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Government of Sri Lanka aims to attract \$50 billion in foreign investment in the next 5-10 years to help develop infrastructure, and boost exports to \$20 billion by 2020. This year, Sri Lanka expects to sign free-trade deals with India, Singapore, and China.

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Bangladesh, Sri Lanka Discuss Bilateral Free Trade Deal

9 January 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The new Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Mr. Riaz Hamidullah, called on Sri Lanka Finance Minister, Mr. Ravi Karunanayake, to discuss a potential Bangladesh-Sri Lanka free trade agreement. The Meeting emphasized benefits to be gained by both countries from this type of agreement.

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Northeast Region Could Be India's New Growth Engine

9 January 2017: Guwahati, India

Through infrastructure improvements and policy reforms, Assam is becoming more investment friendly, prompting the possibility of Assam and the entire northeast India becoming the country's new growth engine, according to Assam's Chief Minister. The State is connected to all of India's major cities through the East-West Corridor and is also set to improve connectivity with ASEAN and BIMSTEC countries through proposed road and rail projects.

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Greetings from SASEC

1 January 2017: Manila, Philippines

The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Program wishes everyone peace, prosperity, and good health.

[Read More](#)

Commentary: Bhutan and Nepal: Two "Least Developed Nations" that Could Change Face of Asia

22 December 2016: Singapore, Singapore

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) comprise around 880 million people yet account for less than 2% of the world GDP. South Asian countries can graduate from the LDC category by working with each other. The economic future of their people could change radically through collaboration between the countries and lift millions of people out of poverty.

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Commentary: Bangladesh Inching towards Paperless Trade

20 December 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is implementing paperless trade through an electronic system. The country has launched an online trade portal; the Central Bank is successfully conducting electronic transactions; and the National Board of Revenue has also enhanced its paperless capacity. Asjadul Kibria, Bangladeshi economic journalist, provides a commentary.

[Read More](#)

Commentary: Nepal Hydropower to Bring Economic, Social, and Environmental Benefits

15 December 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal's hydropower potential could be realized with a coordinated power trading approach and sustained investment commitment. Hydropower development would bring economic, social, and environmental benefits in Nepal and the rest of the region. In this speech delivered at the Power Summit 2016, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal vowed to support domestic and foreign investors through a policy encouraging investment.

[Read More](#)

ADB to Fund Bangladesh 129-kilometer Dohazari-Gundum Railway Line

10 December 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh Railway has set out a 20-year plan in a bid to increase the transport body's market share. The plan includes 235 railway projects at a cost of \$30 billion. The country currently has 2,877 kilometers of railroads and has made plans to add another 375 kilometers. ADB will be funding the 129-kilometer Dohazari-Gundum railway line at a cost of \$1.5 billion. Such projects are expected to boost economic growth in Bangladesh.

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4th Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting

10 December 2016: New Delhi, India

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence under the Central Board of Excise and Customs organized the 4th Regional Customs Enforcement Meeting in New Delhi, India, as part of its Founding Day celebrations. The Heads of Customs Enforcement from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Mauritius and Maldives were invited to participate in the said Meeting, which discussed issues of mutual concern, noted the need to share information and activate channels of coordination.

[Read More](#)

India Ministry of Power Issues Guidelines on Cross-Border Trade of Electricity

13 December 2016: New Delhi, India

India's Ministry of Power has issued Guidelines on Cross-Border Trade of Electricity, with the aim of facilitating cross-border trade of electricity between India and its neighboring countries; promoting transparency, consistency and predictability in regulatory approaches across jurisdictions and minimizing perceptions of regulatory risk; and developing reliable grid operation and transmission of electricity across borders.

[Read More](#)

Ferry Services between Colombo and Tuticorin Being Planned

2 December 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Colombo Shipping Corporation is planning to re-establish ferry linkages under public-private partnership. A SAARC Meeting of Experts from India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, recommended resumption of ferry services between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

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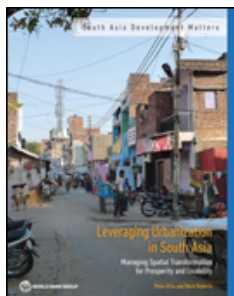
SASEC TRADE FACILITATION STRATEGY



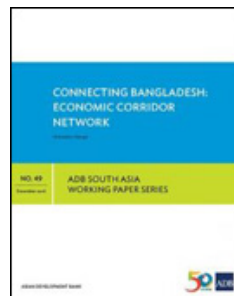
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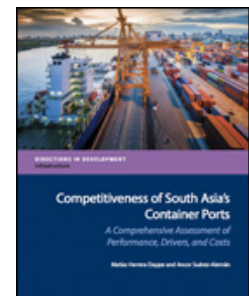
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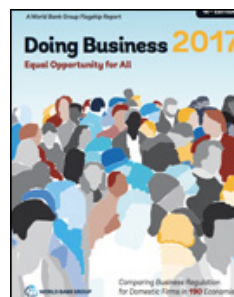
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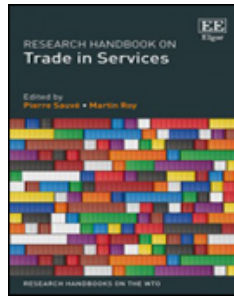
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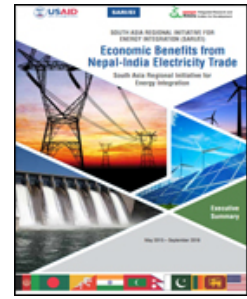
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