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SASEC Countries Gear Up for Greater Economic Cooperation

29 SEPTEMBER 2016: DELHI, INDIA

The six member countries of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Program are launching the SASEC Operational Plan for 2016-2025. The plan expands the program’s focus beyond intraregional cooperation to deepening linkages with Southeast and East Asia, and widens the scope of transport, trade facilitation, and energy cooperation to include economic corridor development as a priority initiative. The plan also lists more than 200 potential regional projects for South Asia.

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SASEC VISION
DOCUMENT
NATIONAL WORKSHOP



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Bhutan: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

26 OCTOBER 2016: THIMPHU, BHUTAN

The Bhutan Ministry of Finance hosted the first National Consultation Workshop for the draft SASEC Vision document. The Meeting discussed key elements of the draft SASEC Vision document, obtained inputs from the Government of Bhutan and private sector stakeholders, and discussed comments from stakeholders, to be considered in the revision and finalization of the Vision document.

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CALENDAR

November

Nepal: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

7 November 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal

India: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

10 November 2016: Delhi, India

Maldives: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

15 November 2016: Male, Maldives

Sri Lanka: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

18 November 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Bangladesh: SASEC Vision Document National Workshop

21 November 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

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PROJECT
VCIC RECEIVES MAJOR
SUPPORT FROM ADB



PROJECT
ADB ADVANCES
HARMONIZATION OF
SPS/TBT MEASURES



PROJECT
ADB ADVANCES
HARMONIZATION OF
SPS/TBT MEASURES



PROJECT
SASEC COUNTRIES GEAR
UP FOR GREATER
COOPERATION

VCIC Receives Major Support from ADB

17 OCTOBER 2016: MANILA, PHILIPPINES

The \$631 million loan and grant support from the Asian Development Bank provides a huge boost to the 800-kilometer Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) section of the 2,500-km East Coast Economic Corridor. Approved in September 2016, the VCIC Development Program will help develop India's first coastal industrial corridor and create seamless trade links between South and Southeast Asia.

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ADB Advances Harmonization of SPS/TBT Measures in the SASEC Subregion

4 OCTOBER 2016: THIMPHU, BHUTAN

The Asian Development Bank is helping countries in the SASEC subregion harmonize two technical non-tariff measures, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), to enhance intraregional trade. Under this initiative, a national diagnostic study on SPS and TBT will be conducted in each of the six SASEC member countries, to be led by core committees formed by the six governments, in consultation with trade experts.

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29 SEPTEMBER 2016: MANILA, PHILIPPINES

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DOMESTIC BRANDS TO
REAP BENEFITS



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BILATERAL PROJECTS



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BANGLADESH, NEPAL
TO BUILD JOINT
HYDROPOWER PLANTS



NEWS
SOUTH ASIA
THE CASE FOR
STRONGER TIES

New India-Bhutan Trade, Commerce, and Transit Agreement Approved by Indian Cabinet

27 OCTOBER 2016: NEW DELHI, INDIA

A new Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit between India and Bhutan, enabling a free trade regime between the two countries, and providing for duty-free transit of Bhutanese merchandise for trade with third countries, has been approved by the Cabinet of India, in a meeting chaired by India Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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India-Nepal Panel Formed to Implement Bilateral Projects

23 OCTOBER 2016: KATHMANDU, NEPAL

A high-level panel formed by the Governments of India and Nepal will work to address bottlenecks in infrastructure projects in Nepal funded by the Government of India—including hydropower projects, roads and railways—to ensure their timely completion.

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India's Foreign Secretary Discusses Potential Partnerships with Sri Lanka's President, Prime Minister

23 OCTOBER 2016: COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Mr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India, called on Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena to discuss potential partnerships between India and Sri Lanka in sectors including energy, infrastructure, and transport, and Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to further discuss boosting bilateral trade and investment.

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Power Trade to Help South Asian Countries Save \$9 Billion Annually, Reduce Emissions

21 OCTOBER 2016: DHAKA, BANGLADESH

South Asian countries should engage more in regional energy trade and joint management of resources. By doing so, they could save over \$9 billion annually and reduce carbon emissions by 8%. And since energy drives development, energy cooperation and trade is expected to translate to improved standards of living and poverty reduction. This was the message at “Power and Energy in South Asia: Connectivity through Cooperation,” a training program organized by IPAG, ADBI, and United Power in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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Land Acquisition for the Agartala-Akhaura Rail Project Begins in Bangladesh

20 OCTOBER 2016: TRIPURA, INDIA

The Governments of India and Bangladesh have begun the process of acquiring land in Bangladesh to build the new India-Bangladesh railway project. The 15 kilometer (km) railway will connect Agartala (India) to Akhaura (Bangladesh), and reduce the 1,613-km mountainous distance between Agartala and Kolkata to 514 km.

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Bangladesh and Nepal Prime Ministers Keen on Hastening South Asian Integration

16 OCTOBER 2016: GOA, INDIA

Bangladesh and Nepal officials have emphasized the need to both hasten and deepen integration among South Asian countries through the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the region must work to finalize BIMSTEC Free Trade Area Framework Agreement deals to boost trade in the region. Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal stated that BIMSTEC can be a dynamic engine for growth and development.

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Nepal Commerce Minister Stresses Implementation of BIMSTEC FTA, BTILS

16 OCTOBER 2016: GOA, INDIA

Mr. Romi Gauchan Thakali, Minister for Commerce, Nepal, emphasized the need to finalize and implement the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Free Trade Area (FTA) Framework Agreement, to help boost growth among least developed and developing nations in South and Southeast Asia. He also highlighted implementation of the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study.

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Bangladesh and Nepal to Undertake Joint Hydropower Investments

16 OCTOBER 2016: DHAKA, BANGLADESH

The Governments of Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed to undertake joint investments in hydropower plants in Nepal, to generate electricity, including energy exports to Bangladesh. The two countries signed a deal to set up two hydropower plants capable of generating 1,500 megawatts.

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Maldives-Thailand Joint Trade Committee Agree to Expand Bilateral Trade and Investment

13 OCTOBER 2016: MALE, MALDIVES

The Second Meeting of Maldives-Thailand Joint Trade Committee agreed to increase bilateral trade and investment between the two countries, and pursue cooperation in tourism, fishing, labor, and health. The Government of Maldives also agreed to lift tariffs on imported goods from Thailand.

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Commentary: The Case for Stronger Ties in South Asia

9 OCTOBER 2016: DHAKA, BANGLADESH

In recent years, countries in South Asia have shown increasing commitment to deepening regional cooperation through bilateral agreements and regional initiatives, including the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement. This commentary by Ms. Nahela Nowshin of the Centre for Policy Dialogue discusses the importance of regional initiatives in South Asia, as well as the need to promote dialogue on matters of regional cooperation and connectivity.

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Simplified Customs Process to Benefit Emerging Domestic Brands

8 OCTOBER 2016: COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

A new Customs inspection and verification procedure is changing how trade is conducted among South Asian countries. Through the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement, cargo and passenger vehicles may now pass through the four countries more smoothly. The simplified process greatly benefits apparel-centric economies, making South Asia more competitive for both global and domestic brands.

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India Expands Scope of ATA Carnet

5 OCTOBER 2016: NEW DELHI, INDIA

India's Central Board of Excise and Customs announced an expansion of scope of India's ATA Carnet facility to include duty-free and tax-free temporary admission of goods for private exhibitions, trade fairs, and meetings. This initiative will contribute effectively to the Government's program to improve the country's 'Ease of Doing Business', and make India a prime destination for international events, conventions, and exhibitions.

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Nepal Trade Portal Launched to Support Nepal Trade and Investment

29 SEPTEMBER 2016: KATHMANDU, NEPAL

The Government of Nepal launched the Nepal Trade Portal, a one-stop shop for official information on trade procedures and requirements for Nepali business. Featuring essential information for traders, the online portal aims to improve the way trade and business is conducted, and to facilitate cross-border trade by providing easy access to legal documents, forms and procedures in both English and Nepali.

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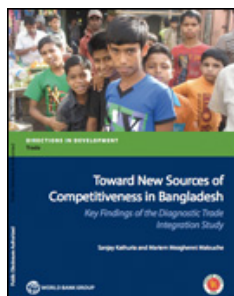
SASEC WEBSITE BROCHURE



SASEC OPERATIONAL PLAN 2016-2025



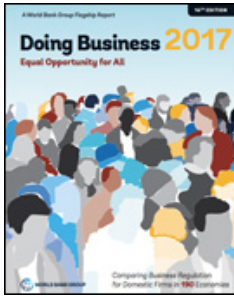
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