



SASEC Events



SASEC Energy Working Group Meeting 5 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

This Meeting discussed the progress and future directions of SASEC energy cooperation, and considered various proposals under several SASEC initiatives on regional transmission and generation projects, as well as energy efficiency initiatives. The Meeting also welcomed the Maldives as the newest member of the Energy Working Group. It was attended by senior officials from the governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

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SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting 4 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

The SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting was held on 4 November 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal, in follow-up to the meeting held in October 2013 in Singapore. Trade facilitation representatives considered future measures under the priority areas of the SASEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework. On the agenda for transport were overall progress and future directions of SASEC transport cooperation, including new initiatives for economic corridor development.

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SASEC Calendar

December 2014						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming SASEC Events

SASEC Trade Facilitation Week: SPS and Technical Barriers to Trade
1-3 December 2014
Bangkok, Thailand

Transport Electronic Cargo Tracking Feasibility Study Finalization Workshop
10-12 December 2014
Hua Hin, Thailand

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SAARC Leaders Adopt 36-Point Kathmandu Declaration **26-27 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The 18th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit concluded on 27 November 2014, adopting the 36-point Kathmandu Declaration, which emphasized enhanced infrastructure connectivity, creation of free trade, implementation of trade facilitation measures, and SAARC project implementation, among others. The Summit launched regional and sub-regional development projects in the agreed areas of cooperation and connectivity to ensure stability and prosperity in South Asia.

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SAARC Development Bank Proposed **24 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) has recommended the establishment of a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Bank that would prioritize financing of regional infrastructure projects among SAARC member nations. Financing remains a critical bottleneck in large-scale infrastructure projects in South Asia due to low rates of return. RIS is an autonomous think tank that specializes in policy research on international economic issues and development cooperation. It is under the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

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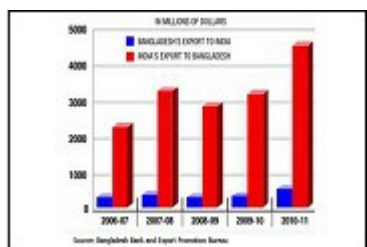


SAARC Moves Toward Multimodal Connectivity in South Asia **21 November 2014: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries are currently working on six Memoranda of Understanding that will link South Asia by rail, road, air and sea, to stimulate greater trade within the region. This includes the SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement and the SAARC Regional Railways Agreement. South Asia remains one of the least integrated regions in the world, with intraregional trade accounting for only about 5% of total trade in the region.

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India-Bangladesh Trade Gap Continues to Widen **19 November 2014: New Delhi, India**

In recent decades, Bangladesh has emerged as one of the largest export markets for India in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation region. From 1988-1989 to 1992-1993, India's total exports increased by 164%, while the increase in imports to Bangladesh was 293%. In 2011-2012, India's total exports to Bangladesh reached about \$5.84 billion. A significant share of imports from India includes cotton, yarn, fabrics and other inputs in Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry. Bangladesh's private sector accounts for the bulk of imports from India.

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Launch of Asian Economic Integration Monitor 2014 **18 November 2014: Manila, Philippines**

The Asian Economic Integration Monitor (AEIM) is a semiannual review of Asia's regional economic cooperation and integration, including the Pacific and its subregions. This issue includes the Theme Chapter: Regional Financial Integration in Asia and Europe – A Comparative Analysis. AEIM highlights developing Asia's resilient growth due to stronger domestic and regional demand with rising GDP growth in South Asia. Asia's regional integration also continues to deepen as regional cooperation between governments continues to strengthen.

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Government of Norway and ADB Co-Financing Agreement for SASEC Power Expansion Project

14 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

A co-financing agreement for the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Power System Expansion Project was signed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 November 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The project will improve access to energy in Nepal by increasing electricity access through expanding domestic renewable energy transmission capacity and establishing mini-grid based renewable energy systems in rural areas. It will also improve cross-border power exchange between Nepal and India—giving Nepal the capacity to export at least 1,200 MW of electricity—by strengthening and expanding distribution networks.

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India, USA Agreement puts TFA Back on Track

13 November 2014: Geneva, Switzerland

The agreement announced by the United States of America and India makes the World Trade Organization (WTO) impasse likely to end and opens the way for implementation of the trade facilitation agreement. This new US-India agreement clarifies and makes open-ended the “peace clause” that was agreed during the Bali Ministerial in December 2013. The new deal clarifies ambiguities regarding India’s food stockpiles. WTO members agreed not to challenge India and other developing countries on WTO rules on stockpiling until 2017—and even beyond if no solution has been reached by then.

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Nepal, UNCTAD to Update Customs Data System

13 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Department of Customs of Nepal and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development have reached an agreement for Nepal's adoption of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World in November 2014. The signed agreement includes provisions on (i) customizing ASYCUDA World in line with Nepal's requirements and policies, (ii) cost of software, and (iii) timeframe for implementation. ASYCUDA World takes advantage of internet connectivity and improves border management by allowing government agencies, including the Inland Revenue Department, Department of Transport Management, Department of Roads, and the Department of Customs to share data electronically.

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BINA Visit Border Crossings Ahead of SAARC Summit

12 November 2014: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bhutanese Ambassador Pema Choden, Indian High Commissioner Pankaj Saran, and Nepalese Ambassador Hari Kumar Shrestha visited the Land Customs Stations of Burimari-Changrabandha (Bangladesh-India), Phuentsholing-Jaigaon (Bhutan-India), Kakarbhitta-Panitanki (Nepal-India) and Phulbari-Banglabandha (India-Bangladesh) on 9-12 November 2014. BINA took the land route used by traders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. BINA further visited other land ports to observe existing trade infrastructures and facilities in action, and held meetings with Customs and Immigration officials.

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India Credit Line to Finance Hydropower Project, Bridges in Nepal

11 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Government of Nepal has allocated portions of the \$1 billion line of credit from India to infrastructure projects boosting energy trade and transport connectivity between the two countries. The 600 MW Budhigandaki Hydroelectric Project—a reservoir-type project in Nepal's central/ western development region estimated to cost around US \$3 billion—will receive around half of the credit. Consulting firm Tractebel Engineering has already submitted design options for the project, and is finalizing the feasibility study.

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Boarding Soon: Direct Flights Between Nepal-Sri Lanka 6 November 2014: Kathmandu, Nepal

Direct flights between Nepal and Sri Lanka—through capital cities Kathmandu and Colombo—are scheduled to resume in early 2015. This move is expected to boost connectivity, further increasing trade and tourism between the two countries. Both Nepal and Sri Lanka are founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. This development in air connectivity will bolster relations between the two countries, allowing them to maximize potential not just in tourism, but also in trade, investment and joint economic cooperation.

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Plan of Action Adopted for LLDCs at Second UN Conference 5 November 2014: Vienna, Austria

The Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Countries on 3-5 November 2014 in Vienna adopted a Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), which includes trade and trade facilitation as one of its six priorities. It recognizes the importance of implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), particularly provisions on technical assistance and capacity-building. Director-General Roberto Azevêdo reiterated that once implemented, the TFA would help LLDCs reduce high transaction costs and delays, hasten cross-border trade, increase market access, and improve competitiveness and integration into world markets.

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Toward a South Asian Economic Union for the Region's Development 5 November 2014: New Delhi, India

Representatives of the eight South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation member countries, including ministers and strategic experts, gathered on 5-7 November 2014 for the 7th South Asia Economic Summit to discuss an economic roadmap for greater integration of the South Asia region. During the Summit, India's Vice President, Mr. Hamid Ansari, expressed support for the creation of a South Asian Economic Union to boost regional cooperation efforts.

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SASEC Program Launches Mobile App 4 November 2014: Thimphu, Bhutan

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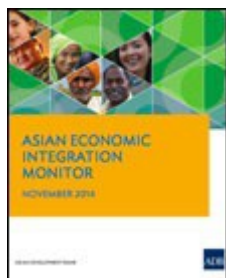
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80-Vehicle Trial Run of ESCAP Secure Cross-Border Transport Model along Bhutan-India Transit Corridor 1 September 2014: India and Bhutan

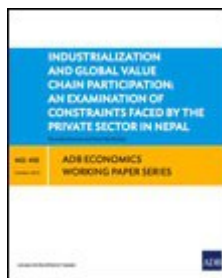
In follow-up to the limited pilot run of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's Secure Cross-border Transport Model held from 30 June to 9 July 2014, officials from India and Bhutan Customs administrations participated in trial runs of 80 vehicles along the Kolkata-Jaigon-Phuentsholing transit corridor between Bhutan and India on 1–5 September 2014. The trial run was conducted to familiarize stakeholders with various processes and procedures needed to implement the system.

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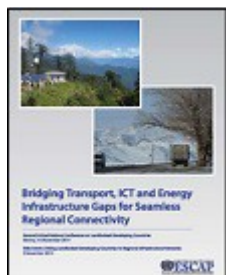
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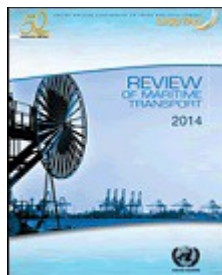
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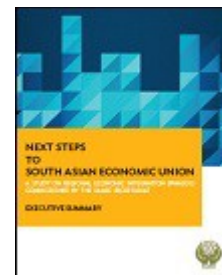
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