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SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering Visits Bangladesh

15 April 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering paid a State Visit to Bangladesh on the invitation of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The two Prime Ministers agreed to allow duty free, quote free access to 26 additional items; finalized the pact on the Movement of Goods in Transit; and signed the SOP for the operationalization of the MoU on Use of Inland Waterways for Transportation of Bilateral Trade and Transit Cargoes.

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SASEC CALENDAR

June

ADB-NACIN Workshop on Customs Valuation and Database Systems

11-12 June 2019: Faridabad, India

Sri Lanka: National Workshop on Developing a PCA System

19-20 June 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

SASEC PROJECTS



- **New Bridge in Omchhu to Complement SASEC Road Project**

New Bridge in Omchhu to Complement SASEC Road Project

19 April 2019: Phuentsholing, Bhutan

A 46.8-meter bridge over the Omchhu River in Phuentsholing, Bhutan, is now open to motor vehicle traffic. The bridge will ease congestion in Phuentsholing and complement the SASEC bypass road project, which aims to promote regional connectivity and cross-border trade through investment in road construction and land ports.

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- **21st ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting Agrees to Pursue Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity**
- **Sri Lanka Customs Prepares Launch of Paperless Documentation**
- **Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering Visits Bangladesh**

Indian Envoy Reviews Bilateral Trade and Connectivity with Bangladesh Ministers

30 April 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ms. Riva Ganguly Das, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, paid courtesy calls to Mr. AK Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, Mr. Salman F. Rahman, Private Industries and Investment Adviser to the Prime Minister, and Mr. Md Shahriar Alam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh in April 2019. Matters of mutual interest on bilateral cooperation, trade, energy, and transport connectivity were discussed in her visits.

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India Formalizes Assistance for the Government of Bhutan's 12th Plan

27 April 2019: Thimphu, Bhutan

The Government of India formalized its assistance to the Government of Bhutan's 12th Plan at the first development talk for the 12th Plan between the two countries. India committed around \$706.9 million (Nu49 billion) in support of the 12th Plan – with around \$649.2 million (Nu45 billion) for development assistance and around \$57.7 million (Nu4 billion) for Bhutan's trade support facility. The bilateral meeting also discussed its implementation.

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Traders Urge Simplification of Trade Processes at Benapole

17 April 2019: Benapole, Bangladesh

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Benapole Custom House jointly organized a meeting urging simplification of the export-import processes at the Benapole Land Port. The meeting recommended capacity enhancement, infrastructure development, and a shift to a 24-hour operating schedule to facilitate smoother trade.

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Sri Lanka Customs Prepares Launch of Paperless Documentation

16 April 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Customs is preparing to launch its paperless documentation platform on 1 June 2019. The system, which is currently on trial run, will enable traders to file customs declarations online and use e-signatures. Sri Lanka Customs is also in talks with port operators to streamline their document processing and link up with Sri Lanka Customs. This could help bring down the average container clearance time by 12 hours.

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21st ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting Agrees to Pursue Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity

12 April 2019: New Delhi, India

The 21st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India Senior Officials' Meeting reviewed the strategic partnership between ASEAN and India, and assessed its future direction. The Meeting agreed to deepen Maritime Cooperation, and pursue ASEAN-India connectivity, including through the Trilateral Highway and its extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam.

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Brief: Achieving Prosperity by Developing Sri Lanka's Connectivity

12 April 2019: 12 April 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka aims to become the center of connectivity in South Asia. Leveraging on its strategic location, Sri Lanka is working toward becoming the region's hub port—the Indian Ocean's logistic, shipping, distribution, and maritime hub. In his column, Mr. Sugeeswara Senadhira discussed Sri Lanka's plans to boost its transport infrastructure to complement this aim.

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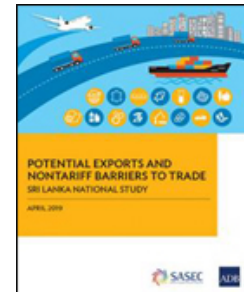
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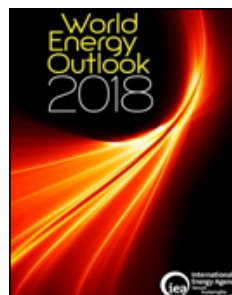
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