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# SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL  
 ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
**OPERATIONAL PLAN**  
**2016–2025 UPDATE**

## **ADB's South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Operational Plan 2016-2025 Update**

**11 February 2020: Manila, Philippines**

This report embodies the strategic objectives and updated operational priorities of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Program Operational Plan for 2016–2025. It reflects the changes resulting from a rigorous vetting process and identifies priority projects based on preparedness and their roles in filling network gaps. This Update also defines SASEC transport and energy networks and presents adjusted estimates of funding needs to help meet SASEC's goals of multimodal connectivity, energy market development, and increased intraregional and interregional trade.

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## SASEC CALENDAR

### Stakeholder Workshop on SASEC Routes Initiative Study along the Kolkata to Dhaka Route

12–13 March 2020: Kolkata, India

## SASEC PROJECTS



#### PROJECT

BANGLADESH: TRANSPORT  
CONNECTIVITY  
IMPROVEMENT  
PREPARATORY FACILITY

- **ADB Facility to Boost Transport Connectivity in Bangladesh**

### ADB Facility to Boost Transport Connectivity in Bangladesh

10 February 2020: Manila, Philippines

ADB has approved a \$42 million facility for project readiness financing (PRF) to improve transport connectivity in Bangladesh. The PRF will finance feasibility studies and detailed design of road and railway projects and thus promote multimodal transport. The Government of Bangladesh will provide \$15.2 million of the facility's total \$57.2 million. The PRF is due to be completed in 2024.

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## SASEC NEWS



#### NEWS

BANGLADESH, INDIA, AND  
NEPAL PREPARE TO LAUNCH  
THE BBIN MVA

- **India and Myanmar Reiterate Commitments to Boost Trade and Connectivity**
- **Experts Call for Energy Cooperation among BIMSTEC Countries**
- **Bangladesh, India, and Nepal Move to Finalize Connectivity Network**

## **India and Myanmar Reiterate Commitments to Boost Trade and Connectivity**

**28 February 2020: New Delhi, India**

Mr. Win Myint, President of Myanmar, paid a state visit to India, upon the invitation of Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, President of India. The visit emphasized importance of connectivity. It affirmed their commitments to expedite the completion of various India-funded projects ongoing in Myanmar, and underscored the need to further facilitate the easy movement of passenger and cargo traffic between the two countries.

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## **Bangladesh to Implement Customs Initiatives to Expedite Trade Procedures**

**25 February 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Government of Bangladesh will introduce procedures to fast-track processing of cross-border trade in Bangladesh ports. Submission of import documents will be required from shippers before they depart en route to Bangladesh ports. Pre-arrival processing will give officials more time to check the import documents before consignments arrive, allowing them to decide which consignments need to go through physical checks. This will speed up processing of cargo at customs.

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## **Bangladesh-Nepal Relations Reviewed in Visit of Nepal Foreign Minister**

**19 February 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Nepal, undertook an official visit to Bangladesh. He met with Mr. AK Abdul Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh, and paid a courtesy call to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. His meeting with Mr. Momen reviewed different aspects of bilateral relations. His courtesy call to Prime Minister Hasina emphasized Bangladesh's transit facilities that Nepal could take advantage of and promote regional connectivity.

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## **Mongla Port Capacity Enhancement to Ease Facilitation of Bhutan, India, and Nepal Transit Goods**

**19 February 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, chaired by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, approved the proposal to enhance the capacity of Mongla port. The project is estimated to cost Tk 6,015 crore (around \$710.79 million). Mongla port can be used to facilitate transit of goods to and from Bhutan, India, and Nepal. Increasing its capacity will hopefully encourage the three countries to use it further for transit of goods.

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## **Imphal–Mandalay Bus Service to Start in April**

**18 February 2020: Manipur, India and Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar**

India and Myanmar are launching the Imphal (Manipur, India)–Mandalay (Myanmar) bus service to further promote tourism and people-to-people visits. On 7 April 2020, the new passenger bus route will be inaugurated in Mandalay in a ceremony flagging off a bus bound for Imphal. On 8 April, a bus bound for Mandalay will be flagged off from Imphal. The Shwe Mandalay Express Company Limited from Yangon and Seven Sisters Holidays from Imphal partnered to operate the bus route.

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## **Inland Waterways to Help Channel Economic Activity along the Ganga River**

**14 February 2020: New Delhi, India**

Inland waterways is an important pillar of 'Arth-Ganga,' a project that aims to channelize economic activity along the banks of Ganga River to promote inclusive growth for India and generate enormous employment opportunities. The project is being implemented by the Ministry of Shipping of the Government of India.

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## **Experts Call for Energy Cooperation among BIMSTEC Countries**

**10 February 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Policymakers and experts have begun discussions on the creation of a regional power grid for Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) member countries. Mr. Manmohan Parkash, ADB Country Director in Bangladesh, said BIMSTEC member countries could help ensure energy security and better deal with global energy price fluctuations through regional energy cooperation.

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## **Bangladesh, India, and Nepal Move to Finalize Connectivity Network**

**8 February 2020: New Delhi, India**

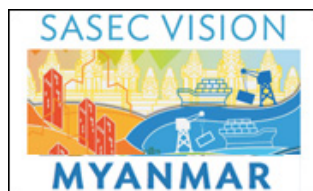
Representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) met to discuss passenger and cargo protocols and push for the finalization of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA). Bangladesh, India, and Nepal plan to launch the BBIN MVA, while Bhutan is working on domestic procedures for the ratification of the agreement. Representatives from Bhutan participated in the meeting as observers.

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# RELATED PUBLICATIONS



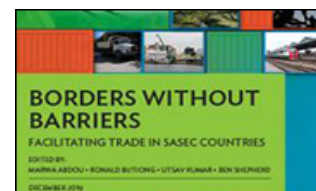
**SASEC VISION**



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**BORDERS WITHOUT  
BARRIERS:  
FACILITATING TRADE  
IN SASEC COUNTRIES**



**Asian Development Outlook (ADO)  
2019 Supplement, December:  
Growth Slows Further in Developing  
Asia's Giants**



**World Bank East Asia and Pacific  
Economic Update, October 2019:  
Weathering Growing Risks**



**Integrated Check-Posts on the India-  
Bangladesh Border: a Field Survey  
and Brief Analysis**



## Top Tweets for February 2020

Conceptual Development Plan for Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor and its four nodes, Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, Donakonda, and Chittoor, readied by ADB. Government of Andhra Pradesh prioritizing Visakhapatnam and Chittoor [Read more](#)

Bangladesh Customs act to be amended to expedite export, import [Read more](#)

The plan to upgrade the 50.58-km road between Ashuganj river port and the Akhaura land port will boost connectivity between India's northeastern region and Bangladesh, and between South Asia and Southeast Asia [Read more](#)

Economic case for South Asian regionalism: Improving infrastructure, strengthening institutions, harnessing the potential of its large youth population and ensuring equitable growth are some of the most critical priorities facing regional economies [Read more](#)

BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement meeting reviewed each country's progress on the protocol for the movement of passengers [Read more](#)

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