



EVENTS
**SASEC CAPACITY-
 BUILDING WORKSHOP
 ON TRADE
 FACILITATION FOR
 CROSS-BORDER E-
 COMMERCE**



PROJECTS
**BANGLADESH, ADB SIGN
 TRANCHE 3 OF THE
 SASEC DHAKA-
 NORTHWEST CORRIDOR
 ROAD PROJECT, PHASE 2**



NEWS
**GELEPHU SMART CITY
 PROJECT TO BOOST
 FOREIGN INVESTMENTS
 IN BHUTAN,
 STRENGTHEN REGIONAL
 CONNECTIVITY**



PUBLICATIONS
**TRANSFORMING
 BANGLADESH'S
 PARTICIPATION IN
 TRADE AND GLOBAL
 VALUE CHAINS**




SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER


ISSUE #115 JANUARY 2024

WWW.SASEC.ASIA



 **South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation
 Transport Working Group Meetings**
 20-21 November 2023, New Delhi, India



 **South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation
 Energy Working Group Meetings**
 23-24 November 2023, New Delhi, India



 **South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation
 Trade Facilitation Working Group Meetings**
 21-22 November 2023, New Delhi, India



 **South Asian Subregional Economic Cooperation
 Senior Officials Meeting**
 4-5 December 2023, New Delhi, India

SASEC Countries Discuss Measures to Enhance Connectivity and Trade Facilitation

20-24 November and 4-5 December 2023: New Delhi, India

The Government of India hosted the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Working Group meetings on 20-24 November 2023 in New Delhi, India, in coordination with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The [SASEC Transport Working Group Meeting](#) discussed enhancing regional connectivity across road, rail, maritime, and inland waterways transport in the SASEC region. The [SASEC Trade Facilitation Working Group Meeting](#) discussed facilitating regional integration via intercountry trade and tourist corridors, coordination of food regulators for food trade, and regional tourism in the South Asia region. The [SASEC Energy Working Group Meeting](#) discussed energy cooperation, power market development in the region, low-cost financing for energy projects and interconnections, capacity building of power sector stakeholders, and development of resilient regional supply and value chains for energy systems. The

Senior Officials' Meeting on 4–5 December further discussed, reviewed, and endorsed the outcomes of the Working Group meetings.

SASEC EVENTS



EVENTS

ADB AND NACIN CONDUCT
TRAINING FOR SASEC
CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

- **SASEC Capacity-building Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Cross-border E-commerce**

SASEC Capacity-Building Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Cross-border E-commerce

12–13 December 2023: Faridabad, India

ADB, in partnership with the Government of India's National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), conducted a capacity building program on Trade Facilitation for Cross-border E-commerce on 12–13 December 2023 in Faridabad, India. NACIN senior officials participated in the discussions and shared emerging challenges and opportunities along e-commerce supply chains, potential solutions, and international best practices for facilitating e-commerce with 22 other customs officials from SASEC member countries.

[Read More](#)

SASEC PROJECTS



PROJECTS

BANGLADESH, ADB SIGN
TRANCHE 3 OF THE SASEC
DHAKA-NORTHWEST
CORRIDOR ROAD PROJECT,
PHASE 2

- **Nepal Begins Operation of Transmission Line**
- **Bangladesh, ADB Sign Tranche 3 of the SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2, and Support to Establish Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity**
- **Bangladesh Inaugurates SASEC Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail**

Nepal Begins Operation of Transmission Line

11 December 2023: Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Nepal Minister for Energy, inaugurated the Kushma-Butwal power transmission line along the Kaligandaki corridor. The 90-kilometer, 220-kilovolt transmission line is expected to facilitate stable power supply for the districts of Nawalparasi and Rupandehi in Nepal. It was funded by an investment from the Government of Nepal, the Nepal Electricity Authority, and ADB under the SASEC program.

[Read More](#)

Bangladesh, ADB Sign Tranche 3 of the SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2

28 November 2023: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh and ADB signed an agreement for the SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2, Tranche 3 on 28 November 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Tranche 3 is worth around \$300 million and is set to be completed by June 2026.

[Read More](#)

Bangladesh Receives ADB Support to Establish Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity

28 November 2023: Dhaka, Bangladesh

ADB has approved \$336.5 million loan financing under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) to establish vaccine, therapeutic, and diagnostic (VTD) manufacturing capacity and strengthen VTD regulatory capacity in Bangladesh. This will help boost the country's resilience against future pandemics, improve vaccine supply security, and reduce the incidence and severity of vaccine-preventable diseases. Furthermore, it will contribute to regional health security and provide jobs and employment.

[Read More](#)

Bangladesh Inaugurates SASEC Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail

11 November 2023: Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the SASEC Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Railway Project on 11 November 2023. The 102-kilometer dual-gauge, single-line railway incorporates climate-resilient and biodiversity-friendly features and connects the southernmost part of Bangladesh with the rest of the country. The railway project is supported by ADB and is part of the trans-Asia railway network.

[Read More](#)

ADB, Government of West Bengal, India, to Undertake Economic Corridor Study

14 October 2023: Kolkata, India

ADB and the Government of West Bengal, India, are undertaking a study for the development of economic corridors across the nodes of Andal-Panagarh, Kharagapur-Goaltore-Salboni and growth centers including Siliguri, Dankuni, and Kalyani with urban-industrial logistics-skills-energy-social sector convergence.

[Read More](#)

Kali Gandaki Corridor Transmission Lines Completed

10 October 2023: Kathmandu, Nepal

Construction of transmission lines along the Kali Gandaki Corridor was successfully completed. The 220-kV double circuit transmission line is expected to contribute to improving Nepal's national electricity grid system. The project was financed by ADB, under the SASEC Power System Expansion Project.

[Read More](#)



NEWS

GELEPHU SMART CITY
PROJECT TO BOOST FOREIGN
INVESTMENTS IN BHUTAN

- **Bangladesh to Roll Out First Phase of National Single Window Services in Early 2024**
- **Gelephu Smart City Project to Boost Foreign Investments in Bhutan, Strengthen Regional Connectivity**
- **New Akhaura-Agartala Railway Link to Reduce Travel Time, Spur Commerce**

Bangladesh to Roll Out First Phase of National Single Window Services in Early 2024

18 December 2023: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) of the Government of Bangladesh is set to open the first phase of its National Single Window (NSW) services to expedite export-import trade. NBR plans to roll out the Users Acceptance Test of select certificate-licensing and permit-issuing agencies for NSW in January 2024.

[Read More](#)

Gelephu Smart City Project to Boost Foreign Investments in Bhutan, Strengthen Regional Connectivity

17 December 2023: Thimphu, Bhutan

Bhutan will build the Gelephu Smart City Project in the Gelephu Special Administrative Region to facilitate more foreign investment for the country. The project will be developed in a mega international city covering more than 1,000 square kilometers near Bhutan's border with India.

[Read More](#)

Energy Cooperation within BIMSTEC: a Boon for the Region

17 December 2023: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The article, "BIMSTEC's energy landscape: Present achievements and future aspirations," published in the Financial Express, examines why the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a formidable option for bolstering energy cooperation and addressing the energy needs of its member states. It puts forth that regional energy cooperation within BIMSTEC is characterized by a collaborative vision within the BIMSTEC region, one that aims to leverage shared energy resources and promote sustainable development.

[Read More](#)

Commentary: Significance of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link for India and Bangladesh

22 November 2023: New Delhi, India

The Akhaura-Agartala rail link marks an important milestone that promotes trade and people-to-people contact between India and Bangladesh. This is an excerpt of an article that appears on the ORF website.

[Read More](#)

Commentary: BBIN Economic Corridor Has Potential to Transform Trade and Development in East and Northeast India

21 November 2023: New Delhi, India

ADB under the SASEC program has invested more than \$15 billion in the priority sectors of transport, energy, trade facilitation, economic corridor development, and ICT as of 2020. To fully realize BBIN's potential, countries must also invest in regulatory reform in logistics services.

[Read More](#)

Energy Cooperation, Connectivity Expansion Highlighted during His Majesty the King of Bhutan's Visit to India

10 November 2023: Thimphu, Bhutan

The King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, paid an official visit to India in November 2023. His visit emphasized bilateral cooperation on energy and hydropower, an important pillar of Bhutan-India partnership. His trip to Assam covered a wide range of issues, including expanding rail connectivity and cross-border trade infrastructure.

[Read More](#)

New Akhaura-Agartala Railway Link to Reduce Travel Time, Spur Commerce

9 November 2023: Chennai, India

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and India Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Akhaura-Agartala railway link during an online ceremony held virtually held on 1 November 2023. The rail link connects Bangladesh and the northeastern region of India through Tripura.

[Read More](#)

India and Sri Lanka Hold Negotiations on Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement

1 November 2023: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The 12th Round of Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) negotiations between India and Sri Lanka was held on 30 October – 1 November 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The agreement is envisaged to open new avenues for trade and investment and bring prosperity to both nations.

[Read More](#)

Nepal Hydropower Export to India Reaches \$72.2 Million

19 October 2023: Kathmandu, Nepal

From mid-July to mid-October 2023, Nepal's electricity export to India reached NPR9.64 billion (approximately \$72.2 million). Electricity export has helped reduce Nepal's trade deficit with India and increased the country's foreign exchange reserves, according to the Nepal Electricity Authority.

[Read More](#)

Ferry Service between India and Sri Lanka Inaugurated

14 October 2023: Chennai, India

The passenger ferry service from Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, India, to Kankesanthurai, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, was inaugurated on 14 October 2023. It is expected to bring the two nations closer together and benefit local traders of both countries, boost tourism, and increase people-to-people relations.

[Read More](#)

15th Bangladesh-India Joint Working Group on Trade Meeting

3 October 2023: Dhaka, Bangladesh

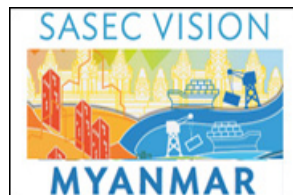
The 15th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade between Bangladesh and India discussed several bilateral matters, including removal of port restrictions, harmonization and mutual recognition of standards, development of road and rail infrastructure, and regional connectivity through multimodal transportation.

[Read More](#)

RELATED PUBLICATIONS



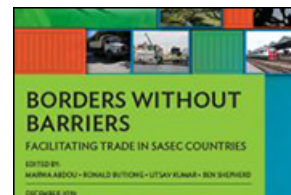
SASEC VISION



SASEC VISION
MYANMAR



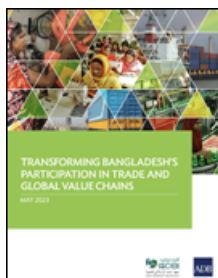
SASEC OPERATIONAL
PLAN 2016-2025 UPDATE



BORDERS WITHOUT
BARRIERS:
FACILITATING TRADE IN
SASEC COUNTRIES



Energy Trade in South Asia



Transforming Bangladesh's Participation
in Trade and Global Value Chains

 @sasecprogram

Top Tweets for November–December 2023

BIMSTEC and IORA will boost regional cooperation – Bangladesh Speaker [Read more](#)

Government initiates framework discussions for construction and financial management of Budhi Gandaki hydropower project [Read more](#)

Nepal could be a source of clean energy for Bangladesh: FBCCI [Read more](#)

Six National Single Window services opening up for faster trade in Bangladesh [Read more](#)

Data Analytics in Indian Railways: Status and Prospects [Read more](#)

Follow  @SASECprogram |  Like us on Facebook facebook.com/SASECprogram

ABOUT THIS EMAIL

You received this message because you signed up for the SASEC Newsletter.

[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#)

© South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation 2012