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SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #124

JULY 2026

WWW.SASEC.ASIA



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SASEC Workshops Advance Digital Transformation, Food Systems, and Tourism

May 2026: Online

In May 2026, South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) partner countries held three virtual workshops to advance the program's long-term priorities. On 20 May, officials discussed [digital transformation](#) needed across the four operational areas—transport, trade facilitation, energy, and economic corridor development. On 14 May, country delegates refined the draft [SASEC Food Systems Development Framework 2035](#), which addresses food security, food safety, and food trade. On 12 May, officials reviewed the approach paper for the [SASEC Tourism Development Framework 2035](#), supported by the SASEC Secretariat and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as a key component for strengthening tourism within SASEC economic corridor development.



- **SASEC Countries Refine Framework for Food Systems Development**

SASEC Countries Discuss Digital Transformation for the SASEC Program

20 May 2026: Virtual

Government Officials of SASEC partner countries participated in a virtual workshop held on 20 May 2026 to discuss digital transformation for the SASEC Program focusing on digital transformations needed in the four operational priorities, i.e. transport, trade facilitation, energy, and economic corridor development.

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SASEC Countries Refine Framework for Food Systems Development

14 May 2026: Virtual

The SASEC countries deliberated, in a virtual workshop on 14 May 2026, the refinements to the draft SASEC Food Systems Development Framework 2035 that covers food security, food safety, and food trade. The workshop brought together government officials from all SASEC countries.

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SASEC Countries Advance Tourism Development Framework 2035

12 May 2026: Virtual

Government officials from SASEC countries participated in a virtual workshop on 12 May 2026 to review the approach paper for the SASEC Tourism Development Framework 2035. The workshop was organized by the SASEC Secretariat, with support from ADB. The framework is envisioned as a key building block for advancing tourism within SASEC economic corridor development.

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SASEC CALENDAR

August

SASEC Customs Subgroup Meeting
18-20 August 2026, Male Maldives



- **Elenga-Jamuna Bridge Highway under SASEC Project Ensures Speedier Travel on Eid-ul-Azha**

Elenga-Jamuna Bridge Highway under SASEC Project Ensures Speedier Travel on Eid-ul-Azha

25 May 2026: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The SASEC Road Development Project 2 has helped ease transport, with the Elenga–Jamuna Bridge stretch providing smooth, uncongested traffic flow from Elenga to the bridge's eastern roundabout. The bridge highway project is implemented by the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA).

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Cloverleaf Interchange under SASEC Highway Nears Completion

24 May 2026: Sirajganj, Bangladesh

Construction of Bangladesh's largest modified cloverleaf interchange in Hatikumrul in Sirajganj, being built under the SASEC Road Development Project 2, is nearing completion and is expected to transform transport connectivity in northern Bangladesh.

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- **Bangladesh Reaffirms Commitment to Regional Cooperation among BIMSTEC States**
- **ADB Scaling Up Energy Infrastructure through Regional Cooperation**
- **India, Nepal Review Overall Railway Cooperation**

Land Ports Authority of India Looks to Build New International Land Ports to Boost Trade with Bangladesh and Nepal

22 June 2026: Kolkata, Nepal

The Land Ports Authority of India eyes constructing seven to eight new international land ports in Bengal to streamline the movement of cargo and people across the Bangladesh and Nepal borders. This regional expansion is part of a larger national initiative to build 74 additional land ports across India. This infrastructure boost could significantly enhance regional trade, with the potential to unlock over ₹4.4 lakh crore in untapped trade potential.

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India, Nepal Explore Opportunities for AI Collaboration

13 June 2026: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Embassy of India in Kathmandu and the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) hosted a seminar to explore bilateral opportunities for artificial intelligence collaboration. Potential areas for cooperation include joint research initiatives, targeted training programs, domestic talent cultivation, and the development of specialized speech-to-text models designed to support underserved populations.

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India, Nepal Review Overall Railway Cooperation

12 June 2026: Mumbai, India

The Governments of India and Nepal held the 10th Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the 8th Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings on 11-12 June 2026 in Kathmandu, Nepal, to review the implementation of ongoing cross-border railway links.

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Bangladesh Reaffirms Commitment to Regional Cooperation among BIMSTEC States

10 June 2026: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh reaffirmed its commitment to fostering regional cooperation among Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) member states, as the country currently chairs the bloc. Speaking at a Dhaka reception marking BIMSTEC's 29th anniversary on 8 June 2026, Ms. Shama Obaed Islam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, said that BIMSTEC is a "unique bridge" linking South and Southeast Asia and said regional cooperation is a cornerstone of Bangladesh's foreign policy.

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Tata Power and Druk Green Power Corporation Expands Cooperation with Nyera Amari Hydropower Project

8 May 2026: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Tata Power and Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) have expanded their clean energy partnership by adding the 404-megawatt (MW) Nyera Amari I & II Integrated Hydropower Project, bringing their total identified hydropower capacity to 5,033 MW.

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Bhutan's Dorjilung Hydropower Project Secures \$515 Million World Bank Support

5 May 2026: Noida, India

The signing of the \$515 million financing agreement between the Government of Bhutan and the World Bank for the 1,125 MW Dorjilung Hydroelectric Power Project advances the region's clean energy generation and is set to boost renewable energy trade with roughly 80% of its output destined for India.

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ADB Scaling Up Energy and Digital Infrastructure through Regional Cooperation

3 May 2026: Samarkand, Uzbekistan

ADB is scaling up energy and digital infrastructure across Asia and the Pacific. Regional cooperation is central to this strategy, building on existing subregional initiatives such as the SASEC program, the BIMSTEC grid interconnection planning, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Power Grid, and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Energy Strategy 2030.

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Bangladesh and Bhutan Discuss Strengthening Cooperation in Energy and Trade

28 April 2026: Dhaka, Bangladesh

H.E. Karma Hamu Dorji, Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call to Bangladesh Commerce Minister Khandaker Abdul Muktadir on 28 April 2026 to discuss deepening bilateral ties. The meeting highlighted optimism on cooperation in renewable energy and trade.

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Bhutan and India Strengthen Customs Ties at 7th JGC Meeting

21 April 2026: Kerala, India

The Governments of Bhutan and India reaffirmed their commitment to seamless cross-border trade and modernized border management at the two-day customs dialogue held in April 2026, in Munnar, Kerala, India. Discussions at the 7th Joint Group of Customs (JGC) Meeting included Coordinated Border Management, a proposed Memorandum of Understanding on pre-arrival exchange of customs data, digital customs processes, and updates on the Electronic Cargo Tracking System.

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The SASEC Subgroup on Customs held a field visit to the Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone in the Province of Pampanga, Philippines, to study integrated customs operations and economic zone management [Read more](#)

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