



**SASEC EVENTS**  
MEETING OF SASEC  
NODAL OFFICIALS AND  
WORKING GROUPS



**SASEC PROJECTS**  
FOSTER COOPERATION  
BETWEEN SAARC AND  
SASEC -SAARC SG



**SASEC NEWS**  
BBIN DHAKA-  
KATHMANDU TRIAL BUS  
RUN BEGINS



**PUBLICATIONS**  
DIGITAL TRADE  
FACILITATION IN ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC



# SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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## Meeting of the SASEC Nodal Officials and Working Groups

**5-6 March 2018: Singapore**

The Meeting of the SASEC Nodal Officials and Working Groups for Transport and Trade Facilitation was held on 5-6 March 2018 in Singapore to (i) review progress of ongoing SASEC projects in transport and trade facilitation; (ii) review progress of flagship initiatives under the SASEC Vision document; and (iii) discuss the study on integration of Myanmar into SASEC.

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# SASEC EVENTS



## EVENT

### SINGAPORE

Meeting of the SASEC Nodal Officials and Working Groups



## EVENT

### MALÉ

SASEC National Single Window Consultation Workshop



## EVENT

### COLOMBO

Workshop on CTEC—Dissemination of the Draft Final Report

# CALENDAR

## April

**Workshop on Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor—Dissemination of the Draft Final Report**  
6 April 2018: Colombo, Sri Lanka

**SASEC National Single Window Consultation Workshop**  
9 April 2018: Malé, Maldives

**SASEC Subregional Workshop on Sanitary-Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade National and Regional Diagnostic Studies**  
11-13 April 2018: New Delhi, India

**Second ADB-Korea Customs Service**  
24-26 April 2018: Busan, Republic of Korea

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## Top Tweets

March 2018



Why is Asia's trade growth in 2017 so spectacular? ADB economist explains [Read](#)

India calls for introduction of Bangladesh-India container train service to boost cross-border trade [Read](#)

India grants recognition of certificates issued by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute for 21 food items [Read](#)

Nepal could play key role in helping the region face the rising demand for clean, affordable, and reliable energy in the region. -Mashfee Binte Shams, Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal [Read](#)

Bangladesh set to provide railway transit to India, Nepal, and Bhutan [Read](#)

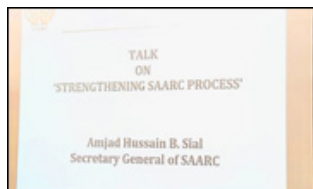


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# SASEC PROJECTS



**PROJECT**  
**FOSTER COOPERATION**  
**BETWEEN SAAARC AND**  
**SASEC -SAARC SG**



**PROJECT**  
**WATCH: ON**  
**STRENGTHENING SAARC**  
**PROCESSES**



**PROJECT**  
**ADB-SAARC SIGN MOU**  
**FOR COOPERATION**



**PROJECT**  
**SAARC, ADB TO DISCUSS**  
**REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

## Foster Cooperation between SAARC and SASEC -SAARC SG

**20 March 2018: Manila, Philippines**

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretary General Amjad Hussain Sial met with ADB President Takehiko Nakao to discuss ways to increase cooperation between SAARC and ADB. Mr. Sial noted the prospects for better cooperation between SAARC and SASEC.

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# SASEC NEWS



**NEWS**  
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**KATHMANDU TRIAL BUS**  
**SERVICE**



**NEWS**  
**LOCOMOTIVES BOOST**  
**INDIA-MYANMAR**  
**COOPERATION**



**NEWS**  
**COMMENTARY: MORE**  
**POWER TO NEPAL-**  
**BANGLADESH TIES**



**NEWS**  
**CONFERENCE LOOKS TO**  
**FUTURE OF BIMSTEC**  
**REGION**

## BBIN Initiative for Boosting Bus Service in the Subregion; Sets Dhaka-Kathmandu Trial Run

**29 March 2018: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Selected commercial and personal vehicles, including a passenger bus service, will join a trial run from Dhaka, Bangladesh to Kathmandu, Nepal starting 27 April 2018. The route will pass through the Banglabandha (Bangladesh)-Phulbari (India) border and through Panitanki (India)-Kakarbhitta (Nepal) border. Senior officials of the governments of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal have agreed to operate more cargo and passenger buses along key routes in the region to enhance connectivity.

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## **Sri Lanka Commerce and Industry Ministry: Stronger Maritime and Air Links can Boost Sri Lanka-Bangladesh Ties**

**27 March 2018: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka emphasized the need for the country to build stronger maritime and air links with Bangladesh to increase bilateral trade and investments. Improving linkages between Sri Lanka's Hambantota/Colombo ports and Bangladesh's Chittagong port will encourage more shipping, tourism, and investments, according to the Ministry.

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## **SAARC Member Countries Pledge to Set a Common Standard for Chemicals and Chemical Products**

**27 March 2018: Lahore, Pakistan**

SAARC held a meeting on 26-27 March 2018 to discuss development of regional standards for chemicals and chemical products. Participants expressed a commitment to develop a common standard for the region and remove standards-related barriers hindering growth of trade among SAARC countries.

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## **BIMSTEC Conference Looks to the Future of the Bay of Bengal Region**

**20 March 2018: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) conference, "BIMSTEC at its 20: Towards a Bay of Bengal Community," convened scholars, think-tanks, government officials, diplomats, business leaders, and other stakeholders from BIMSTEC member countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand—to take stock of the organization's achievements and milestones, and aimed to chart a new direction for the future.

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## **Locomotives Boost India-Myanmar Cooperation**

**19 March 2018: New Delhi, India**

Providing a boon to relations between India and Myanmar, Indian Railways delivered 18 AC/DC 1350 horsepower diesel electric locomotives to Myanmar Railways six months ahead of schedule. Funded with an Indian line of credit, the fuel-efficient locomotives are fitted with micro-processor control-based systems, equipped with the latest technology, and runs at a maximum speed of 100 kilometers per hour.

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## **6th SAARC Business Leaders' Conclave Notes the Need to Prioritize the Economic Agenda**

**18 March 2018, Kathmandu, Nepal**

The 6th SAARC Business Leaders' Conclave stressed the importance of prioritizing the economic agenda in the SAARC region. Mr. Shekhar Golcha, Senior Vice President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, underscored the need to make the economic agenda the guiding force among relationships within SAARC.

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## **India Keen to Tap Pangaon River Terminal for Trade with Bangladesh**

**18 March 2018: Kolkata, India**

The Ministry of Shipping of the Government of India will propose to add the Pangaon river terminal into the India-Bangladesh protocol for inland water trade at the upcoming secretary-level talks between the two countries. Located 20 kilometers away from Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Pangaon container terminal can provide a cost-effective means to transport goods between Kolkata and Dhaka.

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## **Nepal to Propose Finalization of Transshipment Modality with India in Upcoming IGC Meeting**

**18 March 2018: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The Government of Nepal is aiming to finalize the transshipment modality with the Government of India for its third country trade. It will be part of the agenda in the upcoming Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) meeting in April in Pokhara, Nepal, headed by India and Nepal commerce secretaries.

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## **Bangladesh, Thailand Discuss Bilateral Cooperation in Shipping, Trade, and Energy**

**15 March 2018: Bangkok, Thailand**

Bangladesh's 'Look East Policy' and Thailand's 'Look West Policy' could be synchronized to create new trade and economic connectivity corridors, according to Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-chaon during a meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali.

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# Expansion Work Underway to Increase Kolkata Port Capacity

**10 March 2018: Kolkata India**

The Kolkata Port Trust is working to increase the port's capacity, ease congestion, and reduce paperwork requirements for traders. The port, which handles most of Nepal's third-country trade, is improving its physical infrastructure and cargo handling system.

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## ICP Construction in Nepalunj Begins

**7 March 2018: Nepalgunj, Nepal**

The Government of India has appointed a contractor to build the integrated check post (ICP) in Nepalgunj, Nepal, on the India-Nepal border. Timeline set for building and completion is two years. The ICP on the Nepalgunj-Rupaidiha (India) border would facilitate improved cross-border connectivity.

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## Commentary: More Power to Nepal-Bangladesh Ties

**4 March 2018: Kathmandu, Nepal**

As Bangladesh's economy expands, its demand for energy also increases. The Bangladesh National Conservation Strategy forecasts that by 2030, the country's electricity demand will reach around 34,000 megawatts. In this commentary, economist Promod Rijal explains how transboundary energy trade between Bangladesh and Nepal through India will help Bangladesh meet its energy needs.

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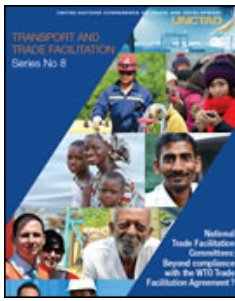
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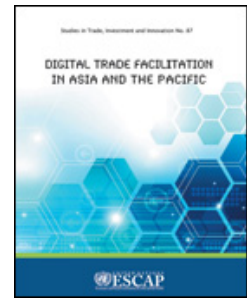
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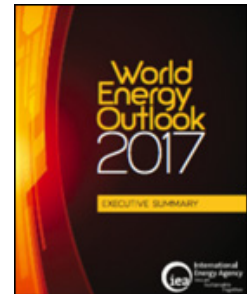
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