



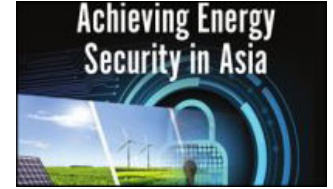
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THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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Bangladesh Signs Deal for SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Road Corridor

15 March 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed on 15 March 2020 a \$400 million loan agreement to upgrade the Dhaka-Northwest international road corridor. The project, under the Second South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, helps connect Bangladesh with Bhutan, India, and Nepal.

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SASEC EVENTS



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

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

12-13 March 2020: Kolkata, India

ADB organized a Stakeholder Workshop to discuss the outcome of the SASEC Trade Facilitation Route Initiative Study along the Kolkata–Dhaka route. The Workshop delivered presentations and discussions on the infrastructure and trade facilitation scenario, covering (i) the situation along the route; (ii) gap analysis; and (iii) proposed recommendations.

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SASEC PROJECTS



- **Grant to Provide Affordable Energy Supply to Remote Nepal Villages through SASEC**
- **SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2-Tranche 2**

SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2-Tranche 2

15 March 2020: Manila, Philippines

This project will improve the road connectivity of the Dhaka-Northwest international trade corridor. This is part of a multitranche financing facility. Tranche 2 will finance the upgrade of a 190-kilometer section of the Dhaka-Northwest international trade corridor and construction of the Hatikamrul Interchange. The project will also construct a road research and training center for the Bangladesh Roads and Highways Department.

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Grant to Provide Affordable Energy Supply to Remote Nepal Villages through SASEC

19 March 2020: Kathmandu, Nepal

A SASEC project is providing affordable energy and improving lives in rural villages through an agreement signed by Nepal's Alternative Energy Promotion Center and the United Nations Development Programme to promote renewable energy in Nepal. The project will support development of nine mini-hydropower subprojects in remote communities around the country.

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SASEC NEWS



- **Bangladesh Approves Revised Protocol on Inland Water, Transit, and Trade**
- **Survey on India–Bhutan Railway Connectivity Commissioned**
- **India and Myanmar Reiterate Commitments to Boost Trade, Connectivity**

Commentary: Asia and the Pacific Can Overcome COVID-19 by Working Together

31 March 2020: Manila, Philippines

Mr. Arjun Goswami of ADB emphasizes that amid the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, “what we need now is not to step back from cross-border cooperation but to redouble such cooperation.” Mr. Goswami underscores that regional cooperation is very much a part of ADB, with various regional cooperation platforms, including the SASEC Program.

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Commentary: SAARC Unites to Handle the Pandemic

23 March 2020: New Delhi, India

South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), one of the most densely populated regions in the world, has so far registered cases on the scale of three figures. SAARC member countries held a Virtual SAARC Emergency meeting on COVID-19 on 15 March to discuss and coordinate a regional response. Mr. Sujit Bharti, a Diplomat at the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India, writes how South Asia is cooperating against the pandemic.

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Bangladesh and India to Finalize Joint Study on Advanced Free Trade Agreement

21 March 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Governments of Bangladesh and India will undertake a joint study on an advanced free trade agreement under the banner of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA). The terms of reference (TOR) for the study have been finalized. Outcomes will be critical to deciding whether the free trade agreement will be inked.

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Nepal Urges India to Expedite Implementation of Power Trade Agreement

11 March 2020: Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr. Barsha Man Pun, Nepal Minister for Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, urged Mr. Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, India Power Secretary, to accelerate power trade between India and Nepal. The Central Electricity Authority of India (CEA) and the Nepal Electricity Authority has an existing power trade agreement. A go ahead from the Power Ministry of India will allow the CEA to carry out measures necessary to accelerate power trade with Nepal.

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Bangladesh Approves Revised Protocol on Inland Water, Transit, and Trade

10 March 2020: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Bangladesh cabinet approved the draft of the second revision of the Protocol on Inland Water, Transit and Trade. This draft amends the existing agreement between Bangladesh and India on raising the number of ports of call between the two countries to deepen trade via waterways.

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Survey on India–Bhutan Railway Connectivity Commissioned

3 March 2020: New Delhi, India

India's Ministry of Railways has commissioned a survey to establish a cross-border railway link between India and Bhutan. The planned route is on Mujnai (India)–Nyoenpaling (Bhutan). Early discussions between both countries have designated Pandu, Jogighopa, and Agartala as rail transit customs stations.

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LPAI Lauded for Infrastructure for Facilitation of Cross-Border Trade

2 March 2020: New Delhi, India

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Mr. Shri Nityanand Rai lauded the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) for work on border infrastructure for facilitation of cross-border trade and travel. He also noted LPAI's work to build the Passenger Terminal Building at Dera Baba Nanak, Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

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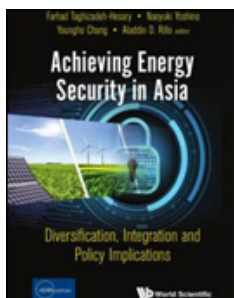
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Top Tweets for March 2020

The proposed regional grid for the BIMSTEC region will smoothen export and import of electricity [Read more](#)

Strengthening Cross-Border Value Chains analyzes value chains of fruits and vegetables, spices, bamboo, and medical tourism. It also provides an assessment of how Bangladesh can benefit from increasing connectivity and growth prospects [Read more](#)

Here's how we can give a boost to the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific [Read more](#)

Integrated Check-Posts on the #India - #Bangladesh Border: a Field Survey and Brief Analysis [Read more](#)

This road project will connect Bangladesh with Bhutan, India, and Nepal. It will further boost regional connectivity and trade along the second busiest road artery in Bangladesh [Read more](#)

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