Bangladesh SASEC Chattogram-Cox’s Bazar Railway Project to Get Tranche 2 Financing

23 May 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement for Tranche 2 financing of the Bangladesh: SASEC Chattogram (Chittagong)-Cox’s Bazar Railway Project, Phase 1. The $400 million loan support from ADB forms the second part of the $1.5 billion ADB railway investment program.

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**ADB-NACIN Workshop on Customs Valuation and Database Systems**
11-12 June 2019: Faridabad, India

**Sri Lanka: National Workshop on Developing a PCA System**
19-20 June 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

**SAARC-ADB Fourth Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase-II)**
24-25 June 2019: Kathmandu, Nepal

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**SASEC PROJECTS**

- ADB approved the proposed financing for SASEC National Single Window Project in Maldives
- Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina Opens SASEC Flyovers, Underpasses, Bridges
- ECTS Reduces Need for Indian Customs Clearance on Nepal's Third Country Imports via Rail

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**ADB to Help Maldives Establish A National Single Window**

31 May 2019: Manila, Philippines

ADB approved the proposed financing for the Maldives: SASEC National Single Window Project worth $11 million. This project will introduce a single electronic platform in Maldives to improve the speed and efficiency of cross-border control procedures by employing the latest technology. This project will improve the trade environment of Maldives, and help expand its trade with partners in the region, including India and Sri Lanka. Establishing a national single window allows traders to fulfill all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements via a single entry point, reducing delays and lowering costs associated with the clearance of goods.

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Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina Opens SASEC Flyovers, Underpasses, Bridges

25 May 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Konabary and Chandra flyovers; the Kaliakair, Deohata, Mirzapur, and Gharinda underpasses; and the Kadda-1 and Bimail bridges on the Joydebpur-Chandra-Tangail-Elenga highway under the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Project.

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ECTS Reduces Need for Indian Customs Clearance on Nepal's Third Country Imports via Rail

7 May 2019: Kolkata and Visakhapatnam, India

Clearance by Indian customs authorities will no longer be required on Nepal's third country imports onboard container rail cargo with the implementation of the electronic cargo tracking system (ECTS) at the ports of Kolkata and Visakhapatnam. Kolkata port authorities are also planning to introduce ECTS for cargo transshipment via roads, in phases.

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Sri Lanka, India, and Japan to Jointly Develop Colombo Port's East Container Terminal

28 May 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Governments of Sri Lanka, India, and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to jointly develop Colombo Port’s East Container Terminal. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority highlights that this project reflects the longstanding good will and cooperation among the three countries. Sri Lanka, India, and Japan pledged to work together for further development of the Colombo Port, and contribute to regional prosperity and stability of global trading networks.

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Bangladesh Foreign Minister Requests ADB Support in Building Regional Infrastructure

23 May 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. Manmohan Parkash, Country Director of Bangladesh Resident Mission of the ADB, called on Mr. AK Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister of the Government of Bangladesh. In the meeting, the Foreign Minister stressed Bangladesh’s appreciation for strengthening regional connectivity through the ADB-supported SASEC program. He further requested the ADB Country Director for continued support in building regional infrastructure. These include projects on hydropower generation and cross-border power transmission and distribution.

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20th Regional Heads of Customs Administration Conference of the WCO Asia Pacific Region Held in Kochi

10 May 2019: Kochi, India

The conference was organized by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs of the Government of India. It reviewed members’ progress in promoting, facilitating, and securing cross-border trade in the region through programs and initiatives of the World Customs Organization. The conference also discussed issues on security, trade facilitation, e-commerce, trusted trader programs, and emerging technological and logistical challenges.

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Sri Lanka Exports to SASEC Countries Up by 8%

9 May 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka’s exports to SASEC member countries have increased from 6% to 8% in the 13-year-period from 2002 to 2015. India is Sri Lanka’s largest trading partners, according to the Potential Exports and Nontariff Barriers to Trade: Sri Lanka National Study done by ADB. The study looks at ways to help Sri Lanka exports by establishing laboratory facilities for testing new products and by developing the country’s regulatory, institutional, and capacity frameworks

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Commentary: Four Border Juncions

8 May 2019: Kathmandu, Nepal

India could play a crucial role in interconnecting regional energy networks. In this commentary, Mr. Mahendra P. Lama outlines what India needs to approach energy security projects in India and its neighboring countries. This commentary by Mr. Lama, co-author of Energising Connectivity between Northeast India and its Neighbours, first appeared on the Kathmandu Post.

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Commentary: Closer Economic Ties with Neighbors Vital

7 May 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

This article makes a case for strengthening of economic ties between India and its neighbors, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal. Currently, India's trade in South Asia is only 3% per cent of its total trade. This commentary, originally published in the Hindu Business Line, explores three emerging avenues of bilateral cooperation that are gaining economic momentum between India and its neighbors: border 'haats' (markets), waterways connectivity, and energy networks.

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Expanding Energy Generation Critical to Bangladesh’s Growth

6 May 2019: Nadi, Fiji

Mr. Hun Kim, Director General, South Asia Regional Department, ADB, expressed high hopes for Bangladesh in a press briefing held on the sidelines of the 52nd Annual Meeting of the ADB Board of Governors. He noted that the country's ability to expand its energy generation would be critical to its growth. Expanding and diversifying the region's energy supply, which will help enhance Bangladesh's energy security, is a key focus of the SASEC Program.

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Three Pharmaceutical Companies in Bangladesh Become Authorized Economic Operators

5 May 2019: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The status of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) was granted by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) of the Government of Bangladesh to three pharmaceutical companies—Square, Beximco, and Incepta Pharmaceuticals. An accreditation ceremony was held, jointly organized by the NBR and USAID Bangladesh under the Bangladesh Trade Facilitation Activity project.

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SDF Governing Council Meeting Reviews Future Strategies and Action Plan

2 May 2019: Nadi, Fiji

The SAARC Finance Ministers held the sixth Governing Council Meeting of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) on the sidelines of the of the 52nd ADB Annual General Meeting in Nadi, Fiji. Mr. Sunil Motiwal, Chief Executive Officer, SDF, presented a report on the current status of SDF and talked about its future action plans, including implementation of its economic and infrastructure windows.

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Thirteenth Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers Held in Fiji

2 May 2019: Nadi, Fiji

The 13th Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers was held on the sidelines of the 52nd ADB Annual General Meeting. Mr. Shixin Chen, Vice President for Operations, ADB, delivered opening remarks. In his speech, he highlighted participation of SAARC member countries in ADB’s regional cooperation and integration programs, SASEC and CAREC. He pressed upon continuing the implementation of the SASEC operational plan through initiatives in transport, energy, and trade facilitation.

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LPG Transshipment Terminal Inaugurated in Sri Lanka

2 May 2019: Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Laugfs LPG Transshipment Terminal was officially inaugurated at Sri Lanka's Hambantota International Port. The 30,000 MT LPG terminal will operate as a central hub for importing and re-exporting LPG and be a source of provision to retailers. It is eyeing $500 million in annual exports, and will facilitate coastal shipping services between Hambantota and Colombo Ports.

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Nepal to Apply the ‘One basin, One hub' Concept in Implementing Transmission Line Projects

2 May 2019: Kathmandu, Nepal

The Government of Nepal will apply the 'one basin, one hub' concept in implementing transmission line projects. Environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and arable land, and threat to human settlements are some of the possible negative outcomes that could arise from allowing every power producer to build separate transmission lines, according to Mr. Netra Gyawali, Chief Executive Officer, National Transmission Grid Company.

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