

Regional connectivity meet to discuss more access

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The regional meeting for transport agreement, envisioned to increase connectivity in South Asia, started in Maldives today.

The two-day meet will discuss on more access to each other's market to boost regional economic growth.

Though SAARC has made significant strides in terms of completing various studies on transport and connectivity

like SAARC multimodal transport study identifying road, rail and inland waterway corridor for better connectivity in the region, South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world, according to trade analyst Dr Ratnakar Adhikari.

Though member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had already agreed in principle to establish road and railway links with each other to bolster regional eco-

nomic cooperation in December 2009, they will discuss on further implementing the suggestions.

Among the suggested SAARC road corridors, corridor-2 connecting Kathmandu to Kolkata/Haldia via Birgunj, corridor-4 connecting Kathmandu to Mongla and Chittagong via Fulbari-Banglabandha, corridor-7 connecting Kathmandu to Karachi via Nepalgunj-New Delhi-Lahore, and corridor-10 connecting Kathmandu-Bhaira-

hawa-Lucknow, will connect Nepal to other countries in South Asia.

Likewise, out of the five railway corridors, two railway corridors, one connecting Birgunj with Kolkata/Haldia, and the other connecting Birgunj with Mongla-Chittagong via Katihar-Rohanpur could provide connectivity for Nepali transit traffic. "Lack of transit transport cooperation is a key bottleneck in regional economic integration in South Asia," he said.