



Opinion in Lead

South Asia in choppy waters with multilateral trade regime under threat

As US President Donald Trump launched his long-threatened tariff war to tackle his country's widening trade deficit, countries in South Asia are dreading the possibility that they could also be in the firing line of the next salvo. Amidst a looming threat to the multilateral trading regime that has shaped modern trade, the heightened trade tensions will expose South Asia to an uncertain trading future.

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Commentary

Developing green value chains in South Asia: An agenda for cooperation

South Asia, with its considerable untapped potential, is expected to remain the fastest-growing among emerging market and developing economies. However, intra-regional trade and economic cooperation have been far from promising. Intra-regional trade between countries from Southern Asia is just 6.58 percent of their total trade, significantly lower than intra-regional trade between countries from East Asia, which is 30.01 percent of their total trade (See Figure 1). This stark disparity reflects the region's failure to implement essential reforms needed to foster and strengthen regional economic integration.

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News



India weighs tariff cuts on cars, chemicals as Trump duties loom

Indian officials are considering lowering tariffs on imports such as cars and chemicals to avoid US President Trump's reciprocal levies with the aim to finalize a trade deal with the US by fall.

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Pakistan, UAE sign five accords to enhance ties

Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed five agreements to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields, including banking, railways, mining and infrastructural investment.

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China, Pakistan sign cooperation agreement for EV development

Shanghai Launch Automotive Technology Co., Ltd. (LAUNCH) and Yousuf Dewan Companies (YDC), pioneers in electric vehicles assembly in Pakistan, officially signed an MoU, bringing advanced electric vehicle (EV) technology to Pakistan and promoting sustainable mobility solutions in the region.

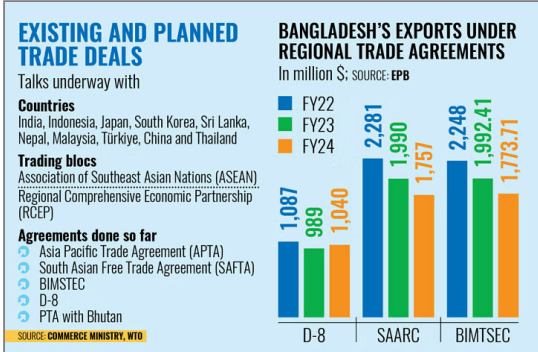
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Bangladesh resumes direct trade with Pakistan for first time since 1971

Bangladesh has resumed direct trade with Pakistan for the first time since its independence in 1971, with the first shipment of 50,000 tonnes of rice leaving Port Qasim under a government-to-government deal, officials said.

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Bangladesh's talk on trade deals show no major progress

Talks on preferential trade deals with a dozen countries have stalled since the political changeover in August last year, potentially adding to the challenges related to Bangladesh's graduation from the club of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in 2026.

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Solo ban fails to deter trekkers from Annapurna Circuit

The number of trekkers on the world-renowned Annapurna Circuit hit an all-time high last year, as they all hired guides as required under Nepal's 2023 ban on solo trekking except in the Everest region.

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Nepal, India endorse investment plan for two 400 kV transmission lines

A meeting of energy secretaries of Nepal and India has agreed the investment modality for two 400 kv cross-border transmission lines and decided to conduct the feasibility study for more such lines.

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Canada, Mexico, China and the EU respond to Trump's tariffs

US President Donald Trump on Saturday imposed long-threatened tariffs on imports from Canada, Mexico and China — and it didn't take long for the countries to respond.

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Events

Project Sambaad: Bhaag II

The event is free to attend, but registration is mandatory for in-person sessions.
Time and Date: March 11-12, 2025 | Moksh, Jhamsikhel
Scan the QR code to secure your spot and be part of critical conversations and collaborations or click the link below



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Publications

A study on Nepal-Australia economic ties

SAWTEE's latest study delves into the evolving economic relationship between Nepal and Australia—covering trade, services, migration, remittances, and investment. This paper, authored by Dr. Paras Kharel and Mr. Aayush Poudel, examines the economic ties between Australia and Nepal; the economic significance of the ties for the two countries; and the prospects and challenges in advancing the relationship. It dissects the Nepal-Australia economic relationship, covering goods, services, migration and remittances, and investment. It describes the trends and patterns in these areas and identifies broad potential and opportunities as well as challenges and constraints.

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Trade Insight: Digital Economy's Footprint

Digital transformation is happening against the backdrop of global environmental crises, such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. While digital technologies are important tools to address these challenges, such technologies have the potential of leaving—and are already leaving—a deep and detrimental environmental footprint. Developing and least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the negative environmental impacts of digitalization just as they bear outsized effects of climate change despite historically contributing the least to global warming. This issue of Trade Insight delves into these issues to examine South Asia's immense potential to harness the benefits of digital trade by taking coordinated and strategic actions.

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