

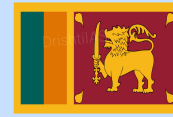


SAARC



SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation



- **Members:** 8
- **Estd. by signing SAARC Charter in Dhaka (Dec 1985)**
- **HQ:** Kathmandu, Nepal
- **9 Permanent Observers to SAARC:** Australia, China, EU, Iran, Japan, S. Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and US
- **Comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% of the global economy**
- **Agreements under SAARC:** SAPTA, SAFTA, SATIS, SAARC University

AFGHANISTAN

- ▣ It is India's gateway to the oil and mineral-rich Central Asian republics.
- ▣ Salma Dam in Afghanistan is aka Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam.
- ▣ From 2002 to 2021, India spent USD 4 bn in development assistance in Afghanistan, building high-visibility projects (highways, hospitals, Parliament building, rural schools, and electricity transmission lines).
- ▣ Afghanistan becoming a safe haven for terrorism is direct threat to India's national security.

NEPAL

- ▣ Shares border with 5 Indian states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar)
- ▣ Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train connecting India's Ayodhya and Nepal's Janakpur
- ▣ Major Issues: Territorial Disputes (Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh)
- ▣ Military Exercise: Surya Kiran (Army)

BHUTAN

- ▣ India is Bhutan's largest trade partner.
- ▣ Mutually Beneficial Hydropower Cooperation: Mangdechhu, Kholongchu, Chukha hydropower Projects.
- ▣ India's grant assistance to Gyalsung Project.
- ▣ Integration of Bhutan's DrukRen with India's National Knowledge Network

PAKISTAN

- ▣ Indo-Pak diplomatic relations are quite limited with periodic attempts to improve relations often failing.
- ▣ India revoked Pakistan's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status following the Pulwama terrorist attack (2019).
- ▣ Indus Water Treaty 1960 is often cited as one of the most successful intl. treaties in South Asia.
- ▣ Major issues: Cross-border terrorism, Kashmir issue, CPEC affecting India's Sovereignty

BANGLADESH

- ▣ Shares the longest border of over 4,096 km with India.
- ▣ Largest trading partner in South Asia.
- ▣ Water Sharing Agreements: Kushiara river (2022), Ganga Water Treaty (1996).
- ▣ Major Issues: Teesta River Water Dispute.
- ▣ Military Exercises: SAMPRITI-X (Military Training), Bongosagar (Naval).

MALDIVES

- ▣ India is Maldives 2nd largest trading partner.
- ▣ Exercises with India - Ekuverin, Dosti, Ekatha and Operation Shield.
- ▣ Greater Male Connectivity Project by an Indian company is the largest-ever infra project in Maldives.
- ▣ Major Issues:
 - ▣ Maldives an important 'pearl' in China's String of Pearls.
 - ▣ Increasingly Maldivian drawn towards Pak-based terrorist groups.
 - ▣ India being projected as the bully and a big brother - 'India Out' Campaign

SRI LANKA

- ▣ India is Sri Lanka's third largest export destination.
- ▣ India is the first country to officially back Sri Lanka's debt restructuring programme at IMF.
- ▣ Major Issue: Fishermen crossing maritime boundary.
- ▣ Important Exercises: Mitra Shakti (Army), SLINEX (Naval)

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