

# South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation



SAARC

# An Intro

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- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the regional **intergovernmental organization** and **geopolitical union** of states in South Asia.
- The idea which led to the formation of SAARC was given by former Bangladesh president **Ziaur Rehman**.
- All neighboring nations are me members, expect **China** and **Myanmar**.
- The **secretariat** is located in **Kathmandu, Nepal**.
- The decisions are made on **consensus**.



# An Intro



- The idea of co-operation among South Asian Countries was discussed in three conferences: the **Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in April 1947**; the **Baguio Conference in the Philippines** in May 1950; and the **Colombo Powers Conference** held in Sri Lanka in April 1954.
- After the USSR's intervention in Afghanistan, the efforts to establish the union was accelerated in 1979 and the resulting rapid deterioration of South Asian security situation.
- The SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985.

1979



USSR

Ab



# The areas of cooperation's

- ✓ Agriculture and rural development
- ✓ Transport and communication
- ✓ Science and technology
- ✓ Culture
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Population control
- ✓ Sports and arts.



# Geography of SAARC

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- The SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population.
- **The river** *Ganga, Indus, Padma, Brahmaputra/Jamuna etc* are some major rivers flowing through SAARC nations.
- **SAARC Disaster Management Centre** has been set up at **Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM)** Campus, **Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India**. The center also facilitates exchange of information and expertise for effective and efficient management of disaster risk.



**8 members**  
**and 9**  
**observers**

## OBSERVERS

Australia

China

European Union

Japan

Iran

6. Mauritius

7. Myanmar

8. S. Korea

9. USA





## Specialized Bodies

Specialized Body	Location	Country	Website
SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO)	Islamabad	Pakistan	<a href="http://www.sarco-sec.org">www.sarco-sec.org</a>
SAARC Development Fund (SDF)	Thimphu	Bhutan	<a href="http://www.sdfsec.org">www.sdfsec.org</a>
South Asian University (SAU)	New Delhi	India	<a href="http://www.sau.int">www.sau.int</a>
South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO)	Dhaka	Bangladesh	<a href="http://www.sarso.org.bd">www.sarso.org.bd</a>

L7 Track

## ~~SAPTA 1995~~



South Asian Preferential  
Trade Agreement

- By the end of cold war the need for further integration was felt among SAARC members.
- In an attempt to carve South Asia free trade area, SAPTA was formed in 1995.
- SAPTA aimed to form an economic union just like EU, but with poor deliverables, it failed to economically integrate the South Asia.
- No tariff reduction targets are made, no timeline was set, no dispute resolution mechanism was established.

# SAFTA

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## South Asian Free Trade Area

- SAFTA was an agreement reached on January 6, 2004, at the 12th SAARC summit in Islamabad, Pakistan.
- It can be said as a **better version of SAPTA**.
- It created a free trade area among 8 members with a target of **zero tariff by 2016**. Therefore, it has **tariff reduction and time targets**.
- It also had a **dispute redressal mechanism** for dispute resolution.
- The **least developed countries** in South Asia (Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and the Maldives) had **an additional three years** to reduce tariffs to zero.
- However, **SAFTA failed to transform South Asia into a free trade area**.
- ASEAN vs SAARC case study.

## WHY TRADE AGREEMENTS FAILED ?

India-Pakistan hostility

Absence of connectivity like the recent BBIN.

Presence of non-tariff barriers.

The ever increasing "sensitive list".

Trade always flourishes in complementary countries (have & have nots). SAARC nations are agricultural dominant nations.

## The last summit in 2014

- The last **summit (18th)** was held in 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The theme of the summit was **Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity**, focused on enhancing connectivity among SAARC nations.
- The summit **took place after an** interval of three years as the previous summit was held in **2011 in Maldives**.
- Foreign Ministers of the eight member states signed an **agreement on energy cooperation** namely 'SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity)'.
- **China**, which holds an observer status in the group, was **represented by Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin** seen actively promoting a more active role for itself in the region including **infrastructure funding through** its proposed 'Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank' (**AIIB**) and extending its ambitious **Maritime Silk Road project** to South Asian nations.
- It was also decided that **Pakistan** will host the next **summit in 2016**.

## SOUTH ASIA SATELLITE

- The South Asia Satellite, formerly known as **SAARC Satellite, is a geostationary communications and meteorology satellite** operated by the **ISRO** for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region.
- During the **18th SAARC summit held in Nepal in 2014**, Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi mooted the idea** of a satellite serving the needs of SAARC member nations **as a part of his neighborhood first policy.**
- The satellite was **launched in 2017.**
- As of **2019 with exception of Pakistan**, the satellite is in service with all SAARC countries.

THE  
SOUTH ASI  
SATELLIT  
India's Gift to South Asia



# Why SAARC not successful ?

- India-Pak rivalry has paralysed the working of SAARC.
- India big brother attitude (trust deficit), coalition of small neighbouring countries.
- Different political systems with different geography.
- Structural asymmetry religious and economic diversity. Large nation like India, medium nations like Pakistan & Afghanistan and small ones like Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and so on.
- Lack of political stability for example in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.
- Identity crises e.g. Sri Lanka confused between South Asia & South- Asia, Pakistan confused between west Asia or whether they are part of South Asia.