



KATHMANDU, OCT 05 - SAWTEE and South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) on Friday launched a book titled 'Regional Economic Integration: Challenges for South Asia during turbulent times'. Commerce Secretary Lal Mani Joshi unveiled the book amid a function.

The book contains contributions from South Asian authors on a range of issues that have far-reaching implications for regional economic cooperation in South Asia. It dwells on problems and challenges of regional economic integration; impediments to goods and services trade liberalization; regional connectivity and trade facilitation; and analysis on the financial flows to South Asia in the form of remittances at a time of global turbulence.

The book also touches the issue of finance required for more effective integration of LDC members of Saarc into the regional economic cooperation framework; the role of civil society and the private sector in expediting regional economic integration; and South Asia's interests in the WTO negotiations on liberalization of environmental goods and services. The lead author of the book Saman Kelegama summarized and highlighted the themes and issues covered in the book. Kelegama, who is also executive director of Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Sri Lanka, stressed on the need, among others, for creating a Least Developed Countries (LDC) Integration Fund in South Asia so as to empower relatively poor countries in the region to take advantage of the regional integration process. Commenting on the book, Economist Bishwambher Pyakuryal urged South Asian policymakers to implement the book's recommendations.

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