



Opinion in Lead

Trade and industrial policies in a time of climate action

The South Asia region (SAR) is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change-induced disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and rising sea levels, which have led to severe human, economic and social losses. In response, as an outcome of the Paris agreement, countries in the SAR have committed to ambitious national climate goals, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Achieving these NDCs requires a major overhaul in national trade and industrial policies to reconcile economic development goals with environmental priorities. This includes the integration of climate-responsive strategies into policy frameworks, the promotion of innovation in low-carbon technologies, active engagement in regional and international collaborations etc.

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Commentary

South Asia greets another Trump presidency

As Donald Trump made his appearance on the world stage yet again as the president of the United States, he has kept the world on its toes with a flurry of executive decisions.

Within the first two weeks of assuming office, he suspended all refugee admissions and sought to redefine birthright citizenship, claiming that children born in the U.S. to non-permanent residents may not be granted citizenship. He also withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement. Trump directed federal agencies to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives within the U.S. government. He suspended all international aid programs for 90 days for reassessment. At the start of February 2025, he imposed tariffs on key U.S. trade partners—Canada, Mexico, and China—escalating tensions and making a trade war imminent.

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News



South Korean automaker withdraws investment plans in Nepal

South Korea's Motrex has decided to halt its plans to establish a vehicle assembly plant in Nepal. The company had signed a preliminary investment agreement (PIA) with the Investment Board Nepal (IBN) on December 11, 2019.

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Arakan Army disrupts Bangladesh-Myanmar trade

Cross-border trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar through Teknaf Land Port is in disarray as the Arakan Army, a Myanmar-based rebel group, disrupted ship movement along the Naf river estuary.

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Bangladesh may lose 4.8% of working hours to heat stress by 2030

Bangladesh is projected to lose 4.8 percent of its working hours due to heat stress by 2030 if adequate and timely adaptation measures are not taken. Besides, rising sea levels are expected to submerge about 17 percent of the country's land and displace about 20 million people by 2050.

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Tesla and BMW sue EU

BMW and Tesla Shanghai have announced that they are suing the European Commission due to tariffs implemented by the EU on imports of electric vehicles from China. The two companies are the latest to join a growing number of Chinese car makers, including Geely, SAIC and BYD, who are also against these tariffs.

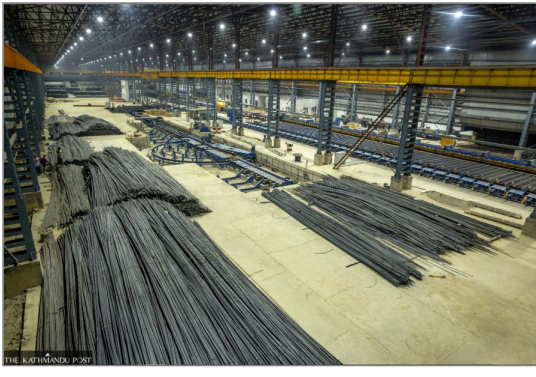
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India's rice exports defy restrictions, hold steady in 2024

India's rice exports in 2024 remained steady despite earlier export curbs, with high basmati rice shipments compensating for a decline in non-basmati rice sales. The country's total exports reached 17.8 million metric tons, down slightly from the previous year.

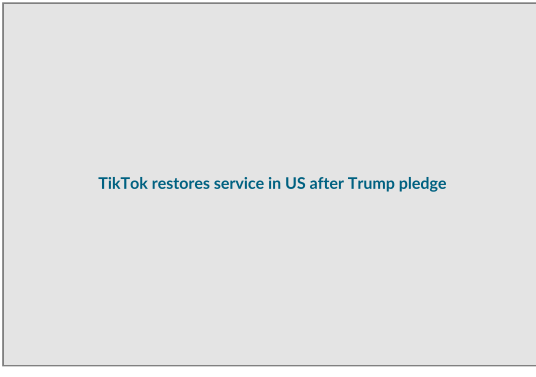
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India opens Nepali goods exports a crack

India has briefly reopened the export of footwear, sanitary pads, and diapers, granting manufacturers an extended deadline to obtain or renew Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certificates.

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TikTok restores service in US after Trump pledge

TikTok is resuming services to its 170 million users in US after President-elect Donald Trump said he would issue an executive order to give the app a reprieve when he takes office on Monday.

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China strikes with export curbs

Indian firms in the electronics, solar, and electric vehicle (EV) sectors are experiencing delays and disruptions due to China's restrictions on export of key inputs and machinery. the curbs could be China's response to India's restrictions on Chinese investments and visas.

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Indian refiners shift diesel supplies to Africa and Asia

India's diesel exports to Europe - its largest and most lucrative market - is declining, forcing exporters to shift supplies to Africa and Asia.

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India to lift weight restrictions on cargo trucks on Asian Highway

India has agreed to lift weight restrictions on cargo trucks in the Kakarhiitta-Fulbari-Banglabandha corridor, allowing Nepali freight movement to be treated on par with Indian freight.

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Events

Validation workshop on exports

South Asia Watch on Trade Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organized a validation workshop titled "Tapping Nepal's Export Potential" on 28 January 2025, as part of its ongoing efforts to examine and enhance Nepal's export potential. The workshop focused on validating the preliminary findings of SAWTEE's study on the export sector, which explores the constraints to exporting, enabling factors, and growth opportunities for goods and services exports, particularly in the IT and tourism sectors. The analysis of the goods sector is based on a firm-level survey.

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