



The New Geopolitics and South Asia's Trade Architecture

Objective:

To organise a roundtable discussion to present policy-oriented proposals on South Asia Trade Architecture, given the rapidly transforming global and regional trade scenario.

Background:

South Asia today is the world's most populated region and its fastest growing in a sluggish global economy beset by multiple conflicts. This economic reality has turned the international spotlight on the region, and there are parallels between the current economic uncertainties and protectionism of the 1930s. This paper provides a critical analysis of South Asia's existing trade architecture and makes recommendations for closer regional economic integration. The recommendations provide the hope for the necessary political will to implement the proactive national and regional agenda outlined, which can change the lives of billions of South Asians.

The paper analyses the challenges and provides recommendations for the following four dimensions of South Asia's trade pattern and architecture:

1. Complex geopolitical developments like the Russia-Ukraine conflict; Middle East crises and tensions in the Taiwan Strait; the intense great-power rivalry between the U.S. and China; and India's bilateral relations with its smaller neighbours
2. Shift in China-centric global supply chains to South Asia which has led to a rethinking of the rules of engagement in international relations, bilateral economic ties and business.
3. Critical importance of regional energy connectivity and cooperation prompted by the dual threat of the climate change crisis and rising oil prices.
4. Effectiveness of regional institutions in supporting South Asia's trade and regionalism as the global economy witnesses a rise in protectionist tendencies, and growing worries about a trade war between major economies.

Format: Panel discussion. Closed-door event (Chatham House rules apply)



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organized by
Centre for Trade and Investment Law
and
Gateway House

12th February 2025

Room No. 22, Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi

Time	Session
16:00 – 16:05	Welcome Remarks by Dr. James J. Nedumpara Professor & Head, Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL)
16:05 – 16:10	Opening Remarks by Mr. Paul Linnarz (TBC) Head, Regional Economic Programme Asia (SOPAS), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
16:10 – 16:20	Keynote Address by Shri. Sunil Barthwal Commerce Secretary, Government of India
	Tea/Coffee (16:20 – 16:30)
16:30 – 16:50	Presentation on findings and recommendations of Paper titled "The New Geopolitics and South Asia's Trade Architecture – What's Next"? Presenters Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja , Professorial Fellow in Trade and Economics, Gateway House Mr. Amit Bhandari , Senior Fellow for Energy, Investment and Connectivity, Gateway House Mr. Aliasger Bootwalla , Manager – Research, Media and Partnerships, Gateway House
16:50 – 17:20	Panel Discussion Moderator Dr. James Nedumpara , Professor & Head, CTIL Panellists Dr. Surjit Bhalla , Former Executive Director for India at International Monetary Fund Dr. Palitha Kohana , Former Foreign Secretary, Sri Lanka Dr. Mustafizur Rahman , Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh



	<p>Dr. Pritam Banerjee, Professor and Head, Centre for WTO Studies</p> <p>Dr. Achyut Wagle, Professor, Kathmandu University School of Management, Nepal</p> <p>Dr. Prabir De, Professor, Research and Information System for Developing Countries</p> <p>Dr. Archana Negi, Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University</p>
Audience Q & A (17:20 – 17:30)	
17:30 – 17:33	Closing Remarks by Dr. Ganesh Wignaraja Professorial Fellow in Trade and Economics, Gateway House
17:33 – 17:43	Valedictory Address by Shri. P. S. Gangadhar (TBC) Joint Secretary (ED Division), Government of India
17:43 – 17:45	Vote of Thanks by Shri Rajiv Bhatia Distinguished Fellow for Foreign Policy Studies, Gateway House
High Tea (17:45 onwards)	
