ISAS-ESI PANEL DISCUSSION (WEBINAR)
ENERGY COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA
3 July 2020, Friday | 3.00pm – 4.30pm

Programme

3.00pm  Introductory Remarks

Panel Discussion (Webinar)
Moderator
Dr Christopher Len
Senior Research Fellow
Energy Studies Institute, NUS

Speakers
Dr Mirza Sadaqat Huda
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Dr Mohammad Masudur Rahman
Department of Economics
The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Dr S Narayan
Senior Visiting Research Fellow
Institute of South Asian Studies, NUS; and
Former Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of India

Discussion Session

Closing Remarks

4.30pm  End of Session
Event Synopsis
Regional cooperation has been substantiated by academics and multilateral development banks as one of the most viable solutions to South Asia’s crippling energy crisis. However, three decades of national and regional efforts have failed to complete a single multilateral energy project or foster high levels of bilateral cooperation. While political challenges have been identified within existing studies as the primary impediment to energy cooperation, there is a lack of analysis on the specific dimensions of these challenges beyond simplistic references to territorial conflicts in South Asia.

The panel discussion will examine the various challenges to energy cooperation in South Asia, including domestic politics and the failure of leadership at multiple levels. It will also evaluate how these political challenges determine regional interactions on energy securitisation, environmental cooperation and human rights. At the same time, it will propose possible areas of energy cooperation among the South Asian countries, which has the potential to increase integration and peacebuilding.

About the Speakers
Dr Mirza Sadaqat Huda
Dr Mirza Sadaqat Huda is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. He is also a Non-Resident Fellow at Energy Peace Partners in California and an Asia EDGE Fellow at the National Bureau of Asian Research in Washington. Currently his research focuses on the Belt and Road Initiative, the politics of renewable energy in Asia and global climate governance. He has over eight years of experience in undertaking policy relevant research on natural resource governance and conflict resolution at the University of Queensland, Nanyang Technological University and Griffith University. Dr Huda’s analysis has been published in Energy Policy, Geoforum, Water International and Energy Research and Social Science. He regularly contributes op-eds to the Policy Forum, the East Asia Forum and the Australian Institute of International Affairs. He is the author of ‘Energy Cooperation in South Asia: Utilizing Natural Resources for Peace and Sustainable Development’, published by Routledge in April 2020. He earned his PhD from the Sustainable Minerals Institute of the University of Queensland and his Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees from Macquarie University and the University of Canberra respectively.

Dr Masudur Rahman
Dr Masudur Rahman is currently working as a Professional Teaching Fellow at School of Accounting, Finance and Economics, The University of Waikato, New Zealand. He has more than 15 years of work experience in different national and international organisations and think tanks in New Zealand, China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Switzerland and Bangladesh as an academic, researcher and consultant. Recently, he has developed Bangladesh and Vietnam Trade Portal supported by the International Finance Corporation. Dr Rahman has consulted numerous projects of ADB, RIS, UNESCAP, Korea University of Foreign Studies, Inha University and KIEP. His main research interests are in international trade, trade facilitation, non-tariff measures and regional integration in South Asia.

Dr S Narayan
Dr S Narayan (IAS, 1965 batch), with nearly four decades (1965 to 2004) in Public Service in the State and Central Governments, in Development Administration, was the Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister during 2003-04. Prior to this assignment, Dr Narayan served the Government of India as Finance and Economic Affairs Secretary, Secretary in the Departments of Revenue,
Petroleum and Industrial Development. As Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas, he was responsible for policy formulation and implementation in the hydrocarbon sector. Between 2000 and 2003, in the Ministry of Finance, his responsibilities included formulation of macroeconomic policy for the Government, tariff and taxation policies as well as initiatives for modernizing the capital markets. His special interests include public finance, energy policy, governance issues and international trade.

Dr Narayan obtained his PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi. He has an MPhil (Development Economics) from Cambridge University and Master of Business Management (Finance) from the University of Adelaide. He graduated with an MSc (Physics) from the University of Madras (Madras Christian College). Dr Narayan has single authored one book, edited two books and written numerous policy papers, reports and book chapters. He also writes regularly in newspapers, both locally and internationally on issues relating to Public Policy, Governance, Public Finance, Trade and Energy. Dr Narayan has been a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore since 2005. After nine successful years as Head of Research at ISAS, Dr Narayan handed over the portfolio in mid-2014. He is a chair professor at the India Gandhi Open National University, New Delhi. The Center for Asia Studies a think tank based in Chennai, and Athena Infonomics Ltd, a Chennai-based research and consulting firm, are his other initiatives.

About the Moderator

Dr Christopher Len

Dr Christopher Len is a Senior Research Fellow and Head of Publications at the Energy Studies Institute (ESI), National University of Singapore (NUS). His research focuses on Asian energy and maritime security issues, regional infrastructure connectivity, energy transition in Asia, Chinese energy interests overseas, the growing political and economic linkages between the various Asian sub-regions, as well as Arctic energy security and sustainable development issues. His most recent publication is a co-edited volume, S Narayan, Christopher Len and Roshni Kapur (eds), Sustainable Energy Transition in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities (Singapore: World Scientific, 2019). He is also an Associate Fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. He was previously a Research Fellow at the Stockholm-based Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) where he was responsible for the Energy and Security in Asia Project. There he also served as Executive Editor of the China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly journal published by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Programme, which is a Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center affiliated with the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University and ISDP.