



SASEC Events



- [Agenda](#)
- [MoRTH India](#)

Workshop on the Implementation of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement **3-4 December 2015: Kolkata, India**

The Workshop on the Implementation of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA) shared knowledge on important aspects of the protocols for implementing the BBIN MVA, and discussed the way forward on finalizing the protocol on the movement of passenger vehicles. The implementing protocols, which contain specific provisions on Customs and transport, are currently being discussed and finalized by the BBIN countries.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [Revised Kyoto Convention](#)

Bhutan Customs Act 2015: Second Consultation Workshop on Rules and Regulations **30 November-4 December 2015: Phuentsholing, Bhutan**

Bhutan's Customs and Excise Division, under the Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC), held the Second Consultation Workshop on Rules and Regulations, to review and finalize the revised draft Customs Rules and Regulations associated with the Customs Act of Bhutan. Outcomes of the workshop included better understanding of national practices applied in Bhutan, and how the new Customs Act and Rules and Regulations should ensure applicability, consistency and coherence.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [Agenda for NTTFC](#)

WCO National Workshop on Coordinated Border Management and Single Window in Bhutan **23-27 November 2015: Paro, Bhutan**

Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs, in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Asian Development Bank, held a workshop on the National Single Window concept, including coordinated border management, single window and the WCO data model. A one-day seminar was also conducted for members of the National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee of Bhutan, the principal coordinating mechanism of cross-border trade.

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SASEC Calendar

January 2016						
Tuesday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming SASEC Events

NBR Bangladesh: Expert Mission on Customs Valuation
14-18 December 2015
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bhutan DRC ICT Training: Phase 3
11-21 January 2016
New Delhi, India

TTFMM: Baseline Study Meeting
13-15 January 2016
Bangkok, Thailand

The Maldives: Second National Expert Mission on Customs Valuation
24-28 January 2016
Male, the Maldives

SAARC-ADB Second Special Meeting on REI (Phase-II)
27-28 January 2016
Male, the Maldives

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SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group Meeting 25-26 November 2015: Tokyo, Japan

This year's SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport (TFTWG) Working Group Meeting reviewed progress of ongoing SASEC transport cooperation, including the pipeline of priority projects and activities, and SASEC trade facilitation projects and technical assistance. The SASEC Learning Event 'Developing Multimodal Transport and Economic Corridors' acquainted participants with the latest developments in logistics as practiced and applied in Japan, South Asia, and other parts of Asia, to facilitate multimodal transport and promote the development of economic corridors.

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Bhutan Department of Revenue and Customs ICT Training: Phase 2 9-19 November 2015: New Delhi, India

Six core IT specialists from Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC) attended an intensive ICT training course as part of DRC's preparations for the roll-out of its automated Revenue Administration Management Information System. The training focused on Advanced Java Technology, applying both theory and practical approaches. The overall training program included database administration, web security, and IT project management.

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- [Bhutan DRC](#)

SASEC Projects



THyE, Indian Banks Sign Loan Agreement for Nikachhu Hydropower 1 November 2015: Trongsa, Bhutan

Bhutan's Tangsibji Hydro Energy Limited and the State Bank of India and EXIM signed a financial agreement costing around \$53.5 million for the 118 megawatt Nikachhu hydropower plant. Power generated through the project will boost renewable energy generation in Bhutan, and further expand cross-border power trading in the region.

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- [Kuensel Online](#)
- [SASEC News](#)

SASEC News



Celebrating 30 Years of SAARC 8 December 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter was signed by Heads of State/Government of SAARC Member States during the First SAARC Summit held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. SAARC promotes welfare economics, collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia, and accelerated socio-cultural development in the South Asia region.

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- [SAARC Charter](#)



- [Business Standard](#)
- [Tripura Info](#)

4,500-kilometer BBIN MVA Friendship Car Rally Concludes in Kolkata **2 December 2015: Kolkata, India**

The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Friendship Motor Rally which began on 14 November 2015 in India's Bhubaneswar, Odisha, concluded on 2 December 2015 in Kolkata, West Bengal. The 19-day 4,500-kilometer car rally was held to promote the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) and strengthen ties in the BBIN subregion. According to Road Transport and Highways Secretary Vijay Chhibber, the BBIN MVA will drive growth in the right direction for all four participating countries.

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- [Times of India](#)
- [Port Technology](#)

India's Sagar Port to Receive Boost in Connectivity **2 December 2015: Kolkata, India**

Upgrading 2,000 kilometers of India's Diamond Harbor Road (National Highway-117 and NH-35), linking Barasat and Petrapole through an expressway, and constructing a bridge across the Muri Ganga River to connect Sagar Island with the mainland would facilitate better port connectivity and promote greater regional cooperation in India. An ADB loan is anticipated to support this project.

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- [The Daily Star](#)
- [Bhutan MEA News Release](#)

Customs Cooperation, Bilateral Transport Agreement Discussed at Bangladesh-Bhutan Meeting

1 December 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

A 2-day meeting between Bangladesh and Bhutan headed by Commerce Secretaries discussed several bilateral concerns, including increasing products on the duty-free import/export list of both countries, potential hydropower imports from Bhutan to Bangladesh, Customs cooperation, and road and water transport agreement.

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- [DCCI News Release](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)

DCCI Seminar Highlights Need to Implement Trade Facilitation Measures in Bangladesh

1 December 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

A seminar organized by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) discussed 'Trade Facilitation: Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Growth' in Bangladesh. Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr. Mashiur Rahman emphasized that trade facilitation measures should boost trade and promote investments. Dr. Khairuzzaman Mozumder, Deputy Chief of USAID, identified remaining key challenges in implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in the country, including the need to improve Customs clearance time.

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- [Kuensel Online](#)
- [Kuensel Online](#)

Seminar on BBIN MVA Calls on Bhutanese Parliament to Endorse the Agreement **22 November 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

A seminar organized by Kalinga Motor Sports, with support from the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, and India and funding from the Asian Development Bank, discussed the importance of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement for regional connectivity and the recent decision of the Parliament of Bhutan to defer its endorsement. The Ambassadors of Bangladesh and India spoke on the occasion, calling on Bhutan's Parliament to endorse and ratify the agreement.

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Bhutan's Accession to the WTO Discussed **17 November 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

Accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was discussed during a workshop on Bhutan's graduation from least developed country status. The Workshop clarified how membership to the WTO will benefit Bhutan, including enjoying the benefits of a multilateral trading system with WTO member countries, and discussed wider implications of WTO membership.

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- [Kuensel Online](#)
- [UNDP](#)



Bangladesh Development Forum 2015 Discusses Need to Upgrade Regional Connectivity **17 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh's development partner representatives participated in deliberations held at the Bangladesh Development Forum 2015, which shared the country's needs for infrastructure development. Recommendations to help facilitate growth include good regional connectivity, quality infrastructure development, and increasing participation from the private sector.

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- [Financial Express](#)
- [News Next Bd](#)



Bhutan and Sri Lanka Hold First Annual Bilateral Consultation **16 November 2015: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The first annual bilateral consultation between the Government of Bhutan and the Government of Sri Lanka discussed cooperation in regional and multilateral forums and air connectivity. Membership of regional organizations and frameworks, including SAARC and BIMSTEC, was emphasized by the two countries as one way to strengthen links and enhance trade and economic cooperation.

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- [MoFA Sri Lanka News Release](#)
- [MoFA Bhutan News Release](#)



North East Regional Connectivity Summit 2015 Discusses Roadmap for Connectivity **16 November 2015: Shillong, India**

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry organized the Second North East Regional Connectivity Summit to review progress made since its first Summit held in 2014, and discuss a way forward for the region's development, to maximize its proximity to South and Southeast Asia. The Summit also launched the knowledge paper 'Emerging North-East India: Economically and Socially Inclusive Development Strategies.'

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- [Times of India](#)
- [Telegraph India](#)



Bangladesh and India Sign SOP on Coastal Shipping **15 November 2015: New Delhi, India**

Bangladesh and India signed the Standard Operating Procedure to operationalize the 'Agreement on Coastal Shipping' formalized in June 2015. This Agreement will provide huge savings in logistics costs for cargo transport between the two countries, improving bilateral trade. The two parties have also agreed to sign an agreement on passenger and cruise vessels.

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- [Economic Times](#)
- [Economic Times](#)



BBIN MVA Transit Fees for Goods and Passenger Vehicles to be Finalized **14 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

A Meeting for the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement (BBIN MVA) on 3-4 December 2015 will finalize the transit fees for goods and passenger vehicles, and discuss other issues, said Bangladesh Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader. Transport of passengers and goods under the BBIN MVA will formally start in January 2016, with initial restrictions in place.

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- [Daily Sun](#)
- [BdNews24](#)



SAARC CCI's Colombo Declaration Proposes Boosting South Asian Air Links **14 November 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) proposed direct flight operations among capitals and commercial cities of South Asia in its 'Colombo Declaration on Tourism' presented by SAARC CCI Secretary General Muhammad Iqbal Tabish to SAARC Secretary General Arjun Thapa. The statement underscored the immediate need to improve air, sea and road links among the SAARC member states to deepen economic cooperation in South Asia.

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- [The News](#)
- [Nation](#)



ADB Pledges Support for Bangladesh's Transformational Infrastructure Development **14 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President Wencai Zhang pledged ADB's continuous support for Bangladesh's efforts on regional cooperation and integration in a meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He highlighted concrete results of Bangladesh's participation in regional cooperation, and discussed ADB plans to support Bangladesh's transformational infrastructure development, which will strengthen foundations for economic corridor development, anchoring it to regional connectivity and placing Bangladesh at the core of regional and global supply chains.

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- [Financial Express](#)
- [BdNews24](#)



Bangladesh to Complete Needed Links for an Inter-Connected Region **13 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Several initiatives to improve Bangladesh's connectivity with India's North East region are in the pipeline, to increase people-to-people contact and cross-border business. These include revamping trade infrastructures to connect border points, and expanding Bangladesh's diplomatic and consular presence in India's North East region.

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- [BdNews24](#)
- [MoFA Bangladesh Speech](#)



Look Beyond Traditional Economic Thinking to Expand Economic Ties: Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Dhaka **12 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Dhaka, Ms. Yasoja Gunasekera said Sri Lanka is working toward expanding economic ties with Bangladesh for their mutual benefit, at an event organized by the Diplomatic Correspondents' Association-Bangladesh. She encouraged both countries to look beyond traditional economic thinking and explore initiatives to promote economic cooperation.

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- [Financial Express](#)
- [Colombo Gazette](#)



- [Kuensel Online](#)

Bhutan Moves to Modernize Customs Administration through New Customs Bill **5 November 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

Bhutan Finance Minister Namgay Dorji presented the Customs Bill 2015 at the country's National Assembly. The Bill aims to modernize Bhutan's Customs administration and was drafted in accordance with standards of the Revised Kyoto Convention. Aligning Bhutan with international standards and practices will lead to economic and non-economic gains, such as increased transparency and predictability of Customs actions, as well as added revenue.

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- [Economic Times](#)
- [SASEC Event](#)

Trial Runs for the IMT Motor Vehicle Agreement Begin in December **1 November 2015: Kolkata, India**

Trial runs to test the effectiveness of the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Motor Vehicle Agreement and identify implementation-related issues will begin by December 2015, according to India's Union Road Transport and Highway Secretary Vijay Chibber. Protocols for the IMT MVA are currently being finalized, to be signed by early April 2016.

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- [Business Standard](#)
- [The Hindu Business Line](#)

Cargo Transport Trial Run Starts under BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement **1 November 2015: Kolkata, India**

The Government of India flagged off the first cargo truck under the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA) for a trial run from Kolkata, West Bengal to Agartala, Tripura, passing through Dhaka, Bangladesh. The cargo vehicle traveled a distance of only around 640 kilometers, compared to its longer traditional route of 1,550 km.

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- [Financial Express](#)
- [BdNews24](#)

Bhutan Economic Affairs Minister and Bangladesh Prime Minister Discuss Hydropower Exports **1 November 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bhutan Economic Affairs Minister Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina discussed the possibility of exporting hydropower from Bhutan to Bangladesh. According to Minister Wangchuk, Bhutan is interested to supply hydropower to Bangladesh at the lowest possible cost to help meet the country's growing demand for electricity.

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- [SciDev South Asia](#)

Commentary: South Asian Collaboration can End Energy Poverty **31 October 2015: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Many people in South Asia still lack access to modern energy services. When these 'energy poor' turn to solid fuel alternatives, they are exposed to high levels of pollution. A commentary on how member countries of SAARC can combat energy poverty and mitigate climate change is shared.

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**Conference in Dhaka Stresses Importance of SAARC Energy Cooperation
28 October 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

A 2-day international conference on energy organized by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies emphasized the need for regional and subregional cooperation to fulfill growing energy needs in South Asia and promote energy security. Former Power Secretary of India, Mr. RV Shahi, underscored how recent efforts in energy cooperation have already started yielding results in the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal subregion.

[Read More >>](#)

- Dhaka Tribune
- Institute of Policy Studies



**Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to Sign Free Trade Agreement
27 October 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bilateral discussions between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to sign a Free Trade Agreement enhancing trade and investment cooperation are at the final stage. According to Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, the two countries are working together to boost trade and increase connectivity. Bangladesh has proposed removal of all non-tariff barriers on exports, including pharmaceutical goods.

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- Dhaka Tribune
- Daily News Lanka

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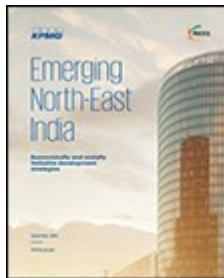
Asian Development Outlook 2015 Supplement: Growth Holds Its Own In Developing Asia



ASEAN-India Development and Cooperation Report 2015



Reducing Non-Tariff Barriers to Food Trade between India And South Asia: Eliminating Phyto-Sanitary and Sanitary Issues



Emerging North-East India: Economically and Socially Inclusive Development Strategies



CPD Working Paper 110: Trade and Transport Facilitation In Bangladesh



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