



## SASEC Events



- [BIMSTEC](#)
- [ADB Technical Assistance](#)

### **BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group Inception Meeting** **30-31 August 2016: Bangkok, Thailand**

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Transport Connectivity Working Group—a key recommendation of the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study—held an Inception Meeting to consider proposed tasks for promotion of transport connectivity among BIMSTEC Member States. The Meeting adopted a revised Terms of Reference for the Working Group.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [WCO Harmonized System](#)

### **Bhutan Workshop on Harmonized System** **22-26 August 2016: Gelephu, Bhutan**

The training aimed to enhance understanding of the World Customs Organization Harmonized System (WCO HS) and how it can best be implemented in the context of Bhutan's modernizing trade facilitation environment. Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs is working to amend the Bhutan Trade Classification (BTC) system to bring it in line with HS 2017 in a timely manner. The Workshop included an overview of HS 2017 Amendments, BTC 2017 layout and way forward for implementation of amendments.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [Terms of Reference](#)

### **Bhutan National Consultation on Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade Diagnostic Study** **12 August 2016: Thimphu, Bhutan**

The Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, together with the Department of Trade, Ministry of Economic Affairs conducted a national consultation on sanitary/phytosanitary (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT). This meeting agreed on adjusted terms of reference for the national SPS/TBT diagnostic study in Bhutan, and confirmed next steps for launching the national SPS/TBT diagnostic study.

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## SASEC Calendar

September 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

### Upcoming SASEC Events

**Nepal DOC ASYCUDA World Intensive Training**  
13-23 September 2016  
Pokhara, Nepal

**Workshop on International Standards And Conventions**  
21-22 September 2016  
New Delhi, India

**Bangladesh National Consultation on SPS/TBT Diagnostic Study**  
28 September 2016  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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- [Agenda](#)
- [ADB-UNESCAP Publication](#)

### **Bhutan Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism National Validation Workshop**

**3-4 August 2016: Thimphu, Bhutan**

The Bhutan Department of Revenue and Customs held a workshop to present to stakeholders preliminary results and findings from studies conducted under the Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM). The Workshop reviewed trade processes along 3 key trade routes, using key TTFMM methodologies – business process analysis, time release studies, and time-cost-distance. The findings confirmed usefulness of carrying out these methodologies to identify bottlenecks along the supply chains

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- [Agenda](#)
- [CRMSAP 2013-2017 MTR](#)

### **Nepal Time Release Study Survey**

**24 July-2 August 2016: Biratnagar, Nepal**

The Nepal Department of Customs conducted a Time Release Study (TRS) survey in Biratnagar Customs, to determine the average time taken to clear consignments, from entry to exit in the Customs area, and to prescribe possible corrective measures to allow prompt clearance of cargoes. Data collected from the Survey will be fed into the World Customs Organization TRS software for analysis.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [WCO Time Release Study](#)

### **Bangladesh Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism National Validation Workshop**

**31 July-1 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Bangladesh National Board of Revenue held a National Validation Workshop to present to stakeholders preliminary results and findings from studies conducted under the Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM) in Bangladesh. The Workshop reviewed trade processes along the Bangladesh-Bhutan export and Nepal-Bangladesh import trade routes, as analyzed under the main TTFMM methodologies.

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## **SASEC News**



- [Indian Express](#)

### **SAARC Finance Ministers Meeting Focuses on Trade, Taxation**

**26 August 2016: Islamabad, Pakistan**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Finance Ministers' Meeting focused on improving trade relations among member nations. Discussions revolved around economic issues, Customs unions, avoidance of double taxation, improving connectivity, increasing trade volume, and developing supply chain linkages.

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

### **Joint Trade Commission Initiates Boosting Bhutan-Thailand Economic Relations**

**25 August 2016: Thimphu, Bhutan**

The Bhutan-Thailand Joint Trade Commission held its first meeting to discuss ways to increase bilateral trade and improve economic cooperation. Ms. Apiradi Tantrapon, Minister for Commerce, Thailand, emphasized that implementing the 2013 bilateral trade and economic cooperation agreement is key to strengthening economic relations.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)

### **Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry Signs MoUs with Bangladesh Private Sector** **25 August 2016: Chittagong, Bangladesh**

The Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) undertook a 6-day visit to Bangladesh, and met with the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), to look into economic opportunities India and Bangladesh could tap. SGCCI signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with DCCI and CCCI, to explore new areas of cooperation and boost bilateral trade relations.

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- [The Hindu Business Line](#)

### **BBIN MVA to Boost Infrastructure Development in the Subregion** **21 August 2016: Kolkata, India**

The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) is set to boost infrastructure development in the BBIN subregion. Bangladesh will see significant increase in cargo movement, enabling India to access its Northeast region, and helping facilitate third-country trade of landlocked Bhutan and Nepal. However, major investments in infrastructure are needed to maximize Bangladesh's potential to become a transport and transshipment hub.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)

### **Bangladesh to Develop Rail Corridors to Facilitate BBIN Trade** **18 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is pushing for the development of railway corridors with India to facilitate trade and investment among BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) countries. To help boost regional trade, Bangladesh Railway is looking to revive five routes to India, and build railway links to connect with Bhutan and Nepal.

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- [Kathmandu Post](#)

### **Nepal Energy Ministry Advances Preparation for Nepal-Bangladesh Energy Cooperation** **17 August 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Preparations to sign a power trade agreement between the Governments of Nepal and Bangladesh are underway, with the Energy Ministry of Nepal finalizing a draft memorandum of understanding on Nepal-Bangladesh energy cooperation. The draft outlines protocols for conducting energy trade between the two countries, in line with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)

### **Banglabandha Land Port Improvement to Support Rising Bangladesh-Nepal Trade** **13 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Ministry of Shipping, Government of Bangladesh, has ordered upgrading of the Banglabandha Land Port to better facilitate Bangladesh's rising trade with Nepal. This includes improving and building new loading and unloading sheds, and other needed infrastructure, such as warehouses, vehicle parking, and the road leading to the port.

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### **Government of India Forms National Committee on Trade Facilitation** **12 August 2016: New Delhi, India**

The Government of India has established a National Committee on Trade Facilitation, in line with a provision contained in the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. The Committee will be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, and will lead development of a pan-India road map for trade facilitation.

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- [GOI PIB News Release](#)
- [WTO Event](#)



### **India Begins Operations on the Varanasi-Haldia River Route** **12 August 2016: Uttar Pradesh, India**

Mr. Nitin Gadkari, Road Transport and Shipping Minister, India, led the inauguration of the Varanasi-Haldia inland waterway route, laying the foundation stone for an inland waterway terminal, and flagging off a trial run of two cargo vessels from Varanasi to Haldia Port near Kolkata, a route that touches Nepal's two major rivers—Koshi and Gandaki.

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- [Kathmandu Post](#)
- [Times of India](#)



### **ASEAN India Business Council for Trade Expansion, Greater Connectivity with India** **12 August 2016: Vientiane, Laos**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) India Business Council (AIBC) called for opening of trade between India's northeastern states and the ASEAN region, in a meeting with India Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. AIBC also sought to finalize the ASEAN-India Transit Transport Agreement before completion of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway.

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- [Northeast Today](#)



### **Bhomra, Sheola, Thegamukh Ports under BBIN to Benefit Region** **11 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Development of infrastructure at Sheola, Thegamukh, and Bhomra land ports under the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative for regional connectivity will increase economic activity, according to a feasibility study report jointly undertaken by India and the People's Republic of China. The report was presented at a National Public Consultation Workshop in Bangladesh.

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- [The Independent](#)
- [News Next](#)



### **India Proposes a National Industrial Corridor Development Authority** **10 August 2016: New Delhi, India**

The Government of India has proposed formation of a National Industrial Corridor Development Authority to facilitate integrated development of industrial corridors across the country. Two corridors, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor, are currently under different stages of development.

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- [Business Standard](#)
- [The Financial Express](#)



**Speech: Increasing Sri Lanka's Export Competitiveness**  
**9 August 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Ongoing negotiations for the proposed Sri Lanka-India Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) are addressing many of the existing procedural barriers and delays Sri Lankan exporters face in Indian ports of entry. In this speech, Mr. Malik Samarawickrama, Sri Lanka Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade, discusses measures included in the Government's economic reform agenda, including ETCA.

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- [Sri Lanka Guardian](#)
- [Daily News](#)



**Commentary: Is Regional Product Standard at All Feasible?**  
**9 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Absence of a harmonized system of standards among South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) members is one reason for the increase of technical barriers to trade, giving rise to non-tariff barriers that hamper SAARC intra-regional trade. A commentary by Mr. Wasi Ahmed, a former senior trade diplomat, discusses the growing recognition of importance of harmonized regional standards within SAARC.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)



**Commentary: Basin-wide River Management for South Asia's Prosperity**  
**8 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

River management provides opportunities to release regenerative capacities of the people and environment of basin-wide areas. The following article suggests South Asian countries cooperate to fulfill a promise of greater sustainability. Cooperation in water resource management can serve as a catalyst for broader regional cooperation, economic integration, and development.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)



**Bangladesh Seeks to Deepen Ties with ASEAN**  
**8 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is seeking to become a dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to deepen Bangladesh-ASEAN economic, political, and cultural connectivity. Formalization of ties will promote trade flow, investment, and cultural exchanges between South and Southeast Asia, emphasized Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali.

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- [MoFA Bangladesh](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)



**Connectivity with Bangladesh Integral to India's Act East Policy**  
**8 August 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

India is upbeat on India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, particularly on connectivity and bilateral trade. Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, emphasized at a Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry meeting, that Bangladesh is integral to India's Act East Policy and noted the many efforts to link the two countries.

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- [BdNews24](#)



### **Visakhapatnam Port Getting Ready for Nepal's Third Country Trade** **5 August 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Nepal private sector representatives, including members of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Nepal Freight Forwarders' Association, and India port authorities from Kolkata and Visakhapatnam, met to discuss measures needed to bring India's Visakhapatnam Port into full-fledged operation for Nepal's third country trade, and simplifying clearing processes for Nepal-bound cargoes.

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- My Republica
- Kathmandu Post



### **India to Develop a Special Economic Zone in Myanmar** **2 August 2016: Vientiane, Laos**

The Government of India is planning to develop an economic hub in the port city of Sittwe, Myanmar, that will help boost India's connectivity to Southeast Asia. Mr. VK Singh, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, extended an invitation for Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries to participate in the planned special economic zone.

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- Economic Times



### **India Promoting Product Access to Boost Exports** **1 August 2016: New Delhi, India**

The Government of India is taking steps to boost the country's exports by promoting access to new products, and expanding market access initiatives and market development schemes. India is promoting product standards, providing a facility for duty-free import of machinery for production of goods for export, and helping in the packaging and branding of Indian-made products.

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- Economic Times



### **India Improving Relations with SAARC States** **30 July 2016: Lahore, Pakistan**

The Indian Prime Minister is prioritizing stronger relations with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries. Deputy High Commissioner of India JP Singh said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking steps to improve trade relations with SAARC member states, citing the liberalization of India's visa regime for the business community.

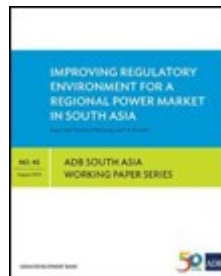
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- The Nation
- The Express Tribune

## **Related Publications**



[Removing Obstacles to Low Value Consignments Trade for Asia-Pacific Small and Medium-sized Enterprises](#)



[Improving Regulatory Environment for a Regional Power Market in South Asia](#)



[SARSO News: Volume 2, Issue 2](#)



Regional Organizations Cooperation  
Mechanism for Trade Facilitation  
Newsletter: Issue X, August 2016



The Little Data Book 2016



ICC Recommendations on  
Authorized Economic Operators

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