



SASEC Events



- [Agenda](#)
- [Mercator Program](#)

Nepal DOC Mid-term Review of the Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan 2013-2017 **28 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The Nepal Department of Customs (DOC) presented the methodology and findings of the mid-term review being conducted on its 4th Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan, including the proposed revision to its targets. Presentations were also delivered on the World Customs Organization Mercator Program and Coordinated Border Management.

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- [UNCTAD](#)

Nepal DOC Stakeholder Consultation on Customs Initiatives in the Relief Consignment Clearance **27 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Following the earthquake of April 2015, the Nepal Department of Customs created a Task Force to study gaps in existing Customs legislation and to draft Customs procedures that allow prompt clearing of Relief Consignments in the event of a disaster. This Consultation discussed amendments to the legal framework, and the proposed way forward in strengthening Nepal Customs disaster response capacity.

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- [SAARC Information Centre](#)
- [SASEC Event](#)

SAARC-ADB Second Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration (Phase-II) **27-28 January 2016: Male, the Maldives**

The SAARC-ADB Second Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study-Phase II (REI-II), discussed progress of implementing the priority recommendations contained in the study. It provided an implementation status update for 7 priority recommendations in each SAARC member state, and discussed the role of Customs in trade facilitation. The Meeting agreed on priority actions and associated timelines for implementation of the 7 recommendations.

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SASEC Calendar

| February 2016 | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| 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

Sri Lanka: Second National Workshop on Customs Valuation
15-19 February 2016
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Nepal DOC: Second National Workshop on Customs Valuation
7-11 March 2016
Kathmandu, Nepal

NBR: Second National Workshop on Customs Valuation
21-25 March 2016
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Nepal DOC World Customs Day: Launch of ASYCUDA World and its Subsystems **26 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The Nepal Department of Customs formally launched the pilot implementation of ASYCUDA World and its subsystems, led by Nepal Minister for Finance Bishnu Paudel, in celebration of the 64th International Customs Day, with the theme 'Digital Customs: Progressive Engagement.' ASYCUDA World is a web-based system for Customs data processing and management.

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- [The Himalayan Times](#)
- [SASEC Project](#)



Nepal DOC Trade Facilitation Stakeholders' Consultation and Seminar on Draft Legal Amendments to Align with RKC Provisions **25 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

This Meeting introduced the structure and terms of reference of the Customs Trade Facilitation Committee, and presented the draft legal amendments to the Customs legislation to ensure compliance with the General Annex of the Revised Kyoto Convention.

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



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

Trainers from the Maldives Customs Service (MCS) organized, led and delivered a 3-day national workshop to 18 MCS field officers deployed in the Customs valuation area. Senior technical experts of the World Customs Organization (WCO) also conducted a training session on the WCO Revenue Package to deepen the technical knowledge and experience on Customs valuation of MCS project core members as national trainers. On 27 January, the new MCS training program and kit delivered under the WCO-Asian Development Bank multiyear initiative was officially launched.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [WCO Revenue Package](#)



ADB-UNESCAP Workshop on Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism Baseline Studies in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal **13-15 January 2016: Bangkok, Thailand**

This workshop officially launched the data collection for baseline studies required to implement the Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal. It reviewed preparations for conducting the Business Process Analysis Plus (BPA+), time release study (TRS) and time-cost-distance (TCD) baseline studies and analyses, to be carried out by country teams in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal in 2016; discussed technical and operational details for the baseline studies on the BPA+, TRS, and TCD; and finalized national work plans for data collection and analysis.

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- [UNESCAP Event](#)



Bhutan Department of Revenue and Customs ICT Training: Phase 3 **11-21 January 2016: New Delhi, India**

Seven 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 Web Application Security, applying both theory and practical approaches. The overall training program included database administration, advanced Java technology, and IT project management.

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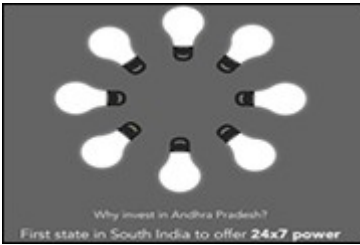
NBR Bangladesh: Expert Mission on Customs Valuation **14-18 December 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Five officials from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) of Bangladesh worked closely with experts from the World Customs Organization Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building on this expert mission and workshop on Customs valuation. The Workshop identified areas for potential enhancement and/or improvement in NBR capacity for proper Customs valuation control ideally through post-clearance audit; and developed a comparative study report on Customs valuation control.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [WCO ROCB A/P](#)

SASEC Projects



Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor to Boost Andhra Pradesh's Industrial Activity **11 January 2016: Andhra Pradesh, India**

A potential Asian Development Bank loan of \$625 million will boost the planned \$840 million Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC). VCIC will form part of India's proposed East Coast Economic Corridor, with 4 industrial nodes expected to double industrial output and improve productivity in Andhra Pradesh by 30% over the next 2 decades.

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



SASEC Information Highway to Enable Bangladesh to Export Bandwidth in BBIN Region **19 December 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The SASEC Information Highway Project will enable Bangladesh to export at least 50 gbps of bandwidth to Bhutan, northeast India, and Nepal, according to an official from Bangladesh's ICT Division. An initial 10 gbps will initially be imported to India's northeast, which could bring in earnings of around \$1.23 million a year to the Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited. Imports will be later increased to 40 gbps. The Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya, and Bhutan, have also expressed interest to import bandwidth.

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- [Dhaka Tribune](#)
- [SASEC Project](#)



ADB Chief Economist Visits Sri City for the Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor Study **17 December 2015: Andhra Pradesh, India**

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Chief Economist and Director General of Economic Research Dr. Shang-Jin Wei and a team of senior officials visited Sri City in India's Andhra Pradesh on 17 December 2015 as part of a study on the Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC). A Special Economic Zone for export-oriented industries will be established in Sri City's Industrial Zone, to support India's manufacturing growth campaign, the 'Make in India' initiative.

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- [ADB Technical Assistance](#)
- [The Hindu](#)



Exchange of Documents at Major SASEC Border-Crossing Points Starts **30 November 2015: Manila, Philippines**

The exchange of export-related data between designated adjacent border crossing points in the SASEC subregion has commenced, in follow-up to the SASEC Customs Subgroup meeting held on 28 October 2015 in Cebu, Philippines, where the implementation arrangements were finalized. This SASEC Customs Subgroup Subregional Project promotes the exchange of documents at five major border-crossing points between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, to promote future electronic exchange of data and build a better risk profile of traders.

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2016 International Customs Day: India Central Board of Excise and Customs 27 January 2016: New Delhi, India

India's Central Board Of Excise and Customs celebrated International Customs Day 2016. In observance of the theme, 'Digital Customs: Progressive Engagement', a presentation on digitization in Indian Customs was delivered, and 3 digital initiatives were launched. Mr. R. Chandra Shekhar, President, NASSCOM, highlighted the strides made by the department in digitization of Customs processes.

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- [India CBEC](#)
- [India Customs App](#)



2016 International Customs Day: Bangladesh National Board of Revenue 26 January 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Bangladesh National Board of Revenue organized a seminar on digital Customs and progressive engagement on the occasion of International Customs Day. In his address, Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith said the proposed Customs Act 2015 will be placed for approval of the national parliament in the next budget session. It will automate and modernize Customs and business procedures for export-import by providing NBR with a broad legal basis for implementation of an electronic Customs administration.

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- [New Age Bangladesh](#)
- [Financial Express](#)



2016 International Customs Day: Bhutan Department of Revenue and Customs 26 January 2016: Samtse, Bhutan

Bhutan's Department of Revenue and Customs observed the International Customs Day at the Regional Revenue and Customs Office, Samtse. Customs officials with outstanding contribution to the organization were awarded World Customs Organization Merit Certificates. Senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, border enforcement agencies and cross-border Customs officials from neighbouring towns of India joined the celebration.

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- [Bhutan DRC](#)
- [WCO International Customs Day 2016](#)



2016 International Customs Day: Nepal Department of Customs 24 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal

International Customs Week is observed in honor of the establishment of the World Customs Organization, an independent intergovernmental body, on 26 January 1952. Nepal Department of Customs shares the events planned in Nepal to mark the occasion.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [Nepal DOC](#)



3rd Meeting of BBIN Joint Working Group on Subregional Cooperation 19 January 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The third meeting of the Joint Working Group on Subregional Cooperation between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) on Connectivity and Transit and Water Resources Management and Power/Hydropower deliberated new initiatives for deepening cooperation. Discussion centered around progress made under the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement and the proposed BBIN Rail Agreement.

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- [India MEA](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)



Proposed SAARC Meeting to Discuss Regional Transport Agreements **13 January 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

A proposed meeting of SAARC Transport Ministers in Kathmandu, Nepal aims to discuss the SAARC Motor Vehicle Agreement and SAARC Regional Railway Agreement, ahead of the 19th SAARC Summit to be held in the latter part of 2016 in Pakistan. The proposed regional transit agreements aim to promote transport connectivity in the region, and to enhance regional economic cooperation and integration.

[Read More >>](#)

- Dhaka Tribune
- The Himalayan Times



Sri Lanka Customs Implements Single Window System **13 January 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka Customs launched its Single Window System, paving the way for smoother and more efficient cross-border trade transactions. According to Sri Lanka Customs Director General Chulananda Perera, the Single Window benefits traders by lessening delays and cutting down on cumbersome procedures. Mr. Dinesh De Silva, Chairman, Import Section, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce sees the Single Window System driving down costs for businesses.

[Read More >>](#)

- Daily News
- News First



SARSO Agrees Standards on 6 Products **13 January 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

A set of regionally agreed standards for 6 products, including sugar and cotton, in South Asia has been finalized by the South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO), in response to the need to ease regional trade by harmonizing standards on key goods. SARSO aims to complete issuing formal notifications on these 6 products by March, to will allow goods marked 'compliant' to SARSO's standard and testing regulations to be exported to any SAARC county without need for laboratory testing.

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- SARSO
- Prothom Alo



Bangladesh-India Railway Links Top Priority for the Government of India **12 January 2016: Tripura, India**

Indian Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha led a two-day visit to the northeastern state of Tripura to inaugurate its trial broad gauge passenger train, and review progress of ongoing railway projects, including the Agartala-Akhaura railway project, which connects the rail networks of Bangladesh and India, and Agartala-Sabroom, a future connecting point for Chittagong port in Bangladesh.

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- Business Standard
- Economic Times



Transmission Lines Ready to Supply Power from Tripura to Bangladesh **11 January 2016: Kolkata, India**

Construction was completed in December 2015 of the 47-kilometer transmission line from India's western Tripura to Bangladesh's southern Comilla and is ready to start supplying 100 megawatt of power from India to Bangladesh. In January 2016, a meeting between Bangladesh and India fixed the tariff for the electricity supply and formal approval will start the flow of power.

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- SASEC Project
- Times of India



ADB to Continue Supporting RCI Projects in Bangladesh **9 January 2016: Manila, Philippines**

Strengthening of regional cooperation and integration (RCI) remains a priority of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), according to its Bangladesh Country Operations Business Plan for 2016–2018. In the energy sector, ADB will continue to expand access to and make Bangladesh's power supply more reliable. In the transport sector, ADB will further promote safe, reliable, and fully integrated transport systems that move people and goods more efficiently within the country and across the region.

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- [The Financial Express](#)
- [ADB Bangladesh COBP](#)



Sri Lanka Prepares to Ratify the WTO TFA **7 January 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's Cabinet of Ministers has given its approval to ratify the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), following a proposal made by Sri Lanka's Minister of Industries and Commerce, Mr. Rishad Bathiudeen. The TFA will maintain the country's competitiveness in global and naval trade.

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- [Colombo Page](#)
- [TFA Facility](#)



Friendship Bus Service Re-launched between India-Nepal **4 January 2016: New Delhi, India**

A friendship bus service between India and Nepal was re-launched on 4 January 2016, after a gap of 27 years. No special documents are necessary to travel in these buses. Locals with family and trade ties in both countries, who regularly travel this route on a daily basis met the news with much enthusiasm.

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- [Economic Times](#)



Chittagong Seaport Records Milestone 2 Million TEU of Containers Handled **3 January 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Chittagong Seaport attained its 2016 target of handling 2 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) of containers one year early. This announcement was made by the Chittagong Port Authority. According to Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, Chittagong Port's container holding capacity increased to 40,000 TEU, owing to a rise in container handling demand, which grew by 700,000 TEU in the last 3 years.

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- [Dhaka Tribune](#)
- [SASEC Project](#)

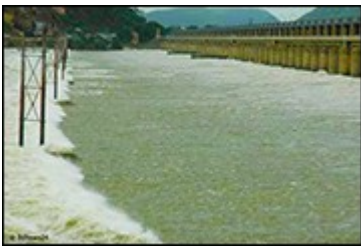


69 Bridges to be Built on Major Section of the IMT Trilateral Highway **30 December 2015: New Delhi, India**

A total of 69 bridges will be built by the Government of India along a major road link of the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway in Myanmar. These bridges will be part of the route for a proposed bus service linking Imphal, capital of the Indian state of Manipur, with Mandalay City in Myanmar. The project is estimated to cost around \$56 million, and is due for completion in mid-2019.

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



First Funding Tranche Released for New India-Bangladesh Waterway Link **29 December 2015: Tripura, India**

The Government of India has released the first tranche of funding worth around \$299,000 to construct a new waterway link between its northeast region and Bangladesh. With total allocation of \$1.87 million, the project will link the Gomati and Howrah rivers in Tripura with the Meghna river in Bangladesh, to boost bilateral trade and the movement of people.

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- [BdNews24](#)



SASEC in 2015 **28 December 2015: Manila, Philippines**

Several key SASEC events during 2015 helped the six member countries promote regional prosperity by improving cross-border connectivity, boosting trade among member countries, and strengthening regional economic cooperation. A review of some of the major events of the past 12 months is presented.

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- [SASEC Timeline](#)



Mutual Recognition Agreement on Standards on India-Sri Lanka Agenda **21 December 2015: New Delhi, India**

The 4th India-Sri Lanka Commerce Secretary meeting agreed to include the signing of a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on Standards in the agenda of an upcoming meeting in February 2016. This MRA aims to boost Sri Lankan exports to India by automatically allowing products certified by the Sri Lanka Standards Institution to enter India. A study by Verite Research found that non-recognition of Sri Lanka's standards certificates in India affects growth of Sri Lankan exports in India, despite the existing Free Trade Agreement.

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- [New Indian Express](#)
- [Daily News Lanka](#)



Bangladesh and Nepal Agree to Enhance Bilateral Trade **16 December 2015: Nairobi, Kenya**

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and Nepal Minister for Commerce and Supplies Ganeshman Pun discussed Bangladesh-Nepal trade and other trade-related agreements currently being negotiated on the sidelines of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Nairobi, Kenya. The two ministers agreed to complete all bilateral trade agreements and fast-track negotiations to promote bilateral trade ties.

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- [The Himalayan Times](#)
- [Nepal Permanent Mission in Geneva](#)



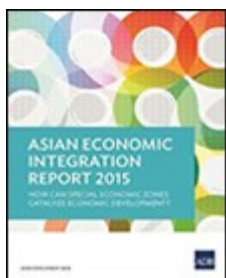
WTO Nairobi Package Delivers Commitments to LDCs **19 December 2015: Nairobi, Kenya**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) 10th Ministerial Conference agreed on a series of trade initiatives and decisions to benefit its least developed country (LDC) members, including re-affirmation of public stockholding for food security purposes; preferential rules of origin which calls on preference-granting members to simplify documentary and procedural requirements related to origin; and 15-year extension of preferential treatment for LDCs in the area of services to increase LDC capacity.

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- [The Himalayan Times](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)

Related Publications



Asian Economic Integration Report 2015: How Can Special Economic Zones Catalyze Economic Development?



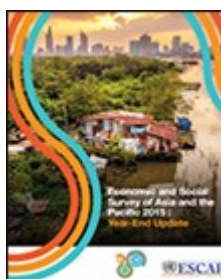
South Asia Economic Journal: Supplement Issue: Papers of the Seventh South Asia Economic Summit



Improving Trade with India: Mutual Recognition in Conformity Assessment



Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation, Issue IX



Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2015: Year-end Update



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