



## SASEC Events



### Second BBIN MVA Negotiation Meeting on Protocols 29-30 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The second Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) Negotiation Meeting on Protocols discussed provisions included in the Passenger Protocol, and began discussions on the text for the Protocol for Movement of Cargo Vehicles.

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

The Bangladesh National Board of Revenue (NBR) successfully finalized a gap analysis and action plan to upgrade the current Customs Valuation database for Bangladesh, for effective Customs Valuation control in line with the World Trade Organization Valuation Agreement. Implementation of the action plan will be led by the project core members and project support members.

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- [Bangladesh NBR](#)
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### Nepal DOC: Time Release Study Survey 15-24 March 2016: Mechi, Nepal

The Nepal Department of Customs (DOC) conducted a Time Release Study Survey at Mechi 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. This will serve as a benchmark of Customs clearance processes and will also contribute to an ongoing subregional initiative.

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- [SASEC Technical Assistance](#)
- [SASEC Event](#)



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

Nepal Department of Customs (DOC) conducted its final national workshop activity to deliver a model training course on Customs Valuation and Post Clearance Audit, with an accompanying set of training materials. Project Core Members formally presented the new training program and materials to Director General DOC and successfully delivered the first 3-day in-house training to 24 DOC Customs officers.

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- [Agenda](#)
- [SASEC TF Strategy](#)

## SASEC Calendar

April 2016						
Events	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

### Upcoming SASEC Events

[SASEC Technical Experts' Meeting on Cross-Border Electronic Data Exchange](#)  
7-8 April 2016  
New Delhi, India

[Meeting on the South Asia Electricity Transmission Master Plan for Cross-Border Trade](#)  
8-9 April 2016  
New Delhi, India

[Nepal DOC Workshop on Customs Reform and Modernization Strategy and Action Plan](#)  
April 2016  
Nepal

[Nepal DOC Workshop on the Revised Kyoto Convention](#)  
April 2016  
Nepal

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## SASEC Projects



- SASEC Project
- E-Pao

### **Manipur Chief Minister Flags Off Imphal-Kangchup-Tamenglong Road Project 7 March 2016: Imphal, India**

Construction of a new road from Imphal City to Tamenglong via Kangchup was officially inaugurated by Manipur Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh. The 103-kilometer road improvement is part of a larger program to improve a key strategic thoroughfare on the Asian Highway, integrating South and Southeast Asia, bordering Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Nepal. It is funded by an Asian Development Bank loan, approved in March 2014.

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## SASEC News



- Economic Times
- Deccan Chronicle

### **Integrated Declaration to Streamline Processing of Import Clearances at Indian Customs**

**31 March 2016: New Delhi, India**

India's Central Board of Excise and Customs is implementing an 'Integrated Declaration' under its Single Window Project to facilitate more efficient processing of Customs clearance for imports and exports, and promote ease of doing business in the country. The electronic Integrated Declaration offers a single point where import traders can lodge information required by Customs and the Partner Government Agencies, replacing 9 separate forms previously required.

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- ADB Speech
- Business Standard

### **ADB Vice President Zhang: Broader, Deeper Regional Cooperation and Integration Could Turn Nepal into Land-Connected Country**

**28 March 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice-President, Asian Development Bank (ADB), discussed ways to accelerate Nepal's economic structural transformation with policy makers, scholars, and Government officials in "Envisioning Nepal 2030", an international seminar jointly organized by the National Planning Commission and ADB. In his address, he discussed how regional cooperation and integration could turn Nepal from a landlocked to a land-connected country.

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- Dhaka Tribune
- Telegraph India

### **ICT and Energy Cooperation Take Bangladesh-India Relations to New Heights 23 March 2016: Agartala, India**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and India Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the inauguration of an additional 100 megawatt electricity supply from India's Tripura State to Bangladesh's Comilla State, and the leasing of 10 GBPS of internet bandwidth from Bangladesh to India's Agartala State. Both Prime Ministers lauded Bangladesh-India cooperation.

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### **Bilateral Ties, BBIN MVA Reviewed in Meeting between Bangladesh President and Bhutan Ambassador**

**21 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid, in a meeting with outgoing Bhutan Ambassador to Bangladesh Pema Choden, highlighted how implementation of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) will expand the scope of trade and investment in the subregion. They also discussed how bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Bhutan could be enhanced.

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- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)



### **SAARC Member Countries Urged to Work Together to Achieve Goal of SAEU**

**17 March 2016: Pokhara, Nepal**

India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj called for further consolidation of the South Asian Free Trade Area and the South Asian Trade in Services Agreement to achieve the goal of a South Asian Economic Union, in her address at the 37th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Council of Ministers' Meeting. She said SAARC member countries must work together to harness their economic complementarities and create an environment conducive to rapid growth.

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- [The Himalayan Times](#)
- [Big News Network](#)



### **India Pursues SAARC-wide Initiatives to Promote Goal of Greater Connectivity and Integration**

**16 March 2016: Pokhara, Nepal**

India Foreign Secretary Mr. S. Jaishankar discussed initiatives being pursued by India in line with its 'neighborhood first' policy, in his address at the 42nd Standing Committee Meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). He also emphasized the need to implement the South Asia Economic Union, and sign the SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement and SAARC Railways Agreement.

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- [Business Standard](#)
- [Kathmandu Post](#)



### **Direct Bangladesh-India Cargo Shipments to Enhance Bilateral Trade**

**15 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Direct cargo shipments between Bangladesh-India were launched, with the first vessel sailing from Chittagong Port, Bangladesh to Krishnapatnam Port, India on 17 March 2016, carrying cotton and textiles. The service reduces transport time significantly—from 25 to 4 days to carry goods from Bangladesh to India, with goods no longer having to pass through Colombo, Sri Lanka, or Singapore.

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- [Benar News](#)
- [The Hindu Business Line](#)



### **Industrial Park, Connectivity on SAARC CCI Agenda**

**15 March 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The development of a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Industrial Park is one of the top priorities of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), and will enable the sharing of technical knowledge for industries and services among SAARC countries, and promote intra-SAARC trade and investment, according to new SAARC CCI President Suraj Vaidya. SAARC CCI will also work toward boosting connectivity in the region.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Kathmandu Post](#)
- [Himalayan Times](#)



- [The Financial Express-Bd](#)

### **Bangladesh Prime Minister, Bhutan Queen Mother Discuss Growing Bilateral Ties**

**15 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed satisfaction over the growing engagement between Bangladesh and Bhutan. The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal initiative, according to the Prime Minister, further widens the scope of cooperation between the two countries. The Queen of Bhutan likewise expressed the hope that bilateral relations between the two countries will continue to strengthen.

[Read More >>](#)



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

### **Bangladesh Seeks to Widen Scope of Cross-Border Energy Transmission**

**13 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Mr. Nasrul Hamid, Bangladesh State Minister for Power and Energy, discussed the possibility of enhancing the scope of Bangladesh-India cross-border energy transmission to include Bhutan in a meeting with Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Harsh Vardhan Shringla. Bangladesh is mulling a \$1 billion investment in Bhutan's hydropower industry, and is reviewing a draft MoU for possible electricity imports from Bhutan.

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- [Economy Next](#)
- [Lanka Business Online](#)

### **Thailand Proposes FTA with Sri Lanka**

**10 March 2016: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Thailand is proposing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Sri Lanka, according to Thailand Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak. The two countries have signed 3 memorandums of understanding and letters of intent to triple bilateral trade by 2020, bringing it from \$500 million to \$1.5 million in 5 years.

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- [Economic Times](#)

### **Cabinet Secretary to Chair India's National Committee on Trade Facilitation**

**9 March 2016: New Delhi, India**

The Government of India is set to appoint its Cabinet Secretary as Head of the National Committee on Trade Facilitation, which will facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement. The terms of reference for the national committee will be drafted once suggestions from industry associations and border states have been received.

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- [India Press Information Bureau News Release](#)

### **LPAI Foundation Day Reaffirms India's Commitment to Boosting Land Borders**

**8 March 2016: New Delhi, India**

The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) commemorated its 4th Foundation Day, headed by Mr. Kiren Rijju, Minister of State for Home Affairs, who launched the LPAI logo and website. In his address, Mr. Rijju reaffirmed the Government's commitment to enhance land borders that will increase trade with neighboring countries. He remarked on the need to explore new trade routes, particularly in the North East region.

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## **Joint Exercise to Reduce Delays in Export/Import Clearances to be Conducted in India**

**8 March 2016: New Delhi, India**

A Meeting of high-level officials from the Government of India's Ministry of Finance, Central Board of Excise and Customs, Railway Board, Shipping and Airport Authority has discussed ways to expedite the country's clearance process for exports and imports, deciding to conduct a joint exercise to identify and address delays at every stage.

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- [Zee News](#)
- [DNA India](#)



## **Trade Portal Enhances Predictability and Transparency in Bangladesh Trade**

**6 March 2016: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Government of Bangladesh has launched the Bangladesh Trade Portal, a one-stop shop for information on conducting trade with Bangladesh. The website offers useful information on exporting goods from, and importing commercial goods into Bangladesh, to promote the country's trade sector. Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said the portal marks a milestone for business and traders. It also brings the country closer to the goal of enhancing predictability and transparency in trade processes.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Bangladesh Trade Portal](#)
- [BdNews24](#)



## **Bangladesh Minister for Information Discusses Energy Cooperation between Bangladesh and Nepal**

**4 March 2016: Kathmandu, Nepal**

The need to ramp up cooperation in energy between Bangladesh and Nepal was discussed by Bangladesh Minister for Information Hasanul Haq Inu at an interaction organized by the Nepal Reporters' Club. According to the Minister, Bangladesh has already forwarded a proposal for transmission of energy from Nepal.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Himalayan Times](#)
- [My Republica](#)



## **WTO Developing, LDC Members Encouraged to Start Preparing for Entry into Force of the TFA**

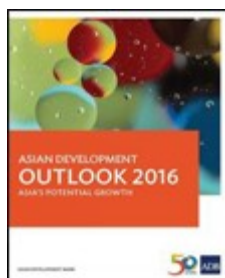
**3 March 2016: Geneva, Switzerland**

WTO members were advised to notify the WTO about their technical assistance and capacity-building needs, including the timeframe to ensure effective implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation has received 81 "Category A" notifications and an increasing number of "Category B" and "Category C" notifications.

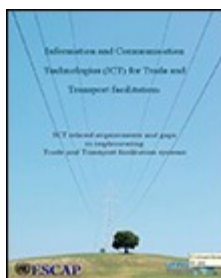
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- [WTO News](#)

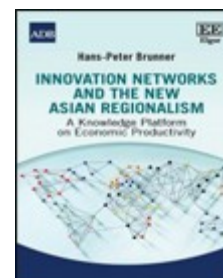
## Related Publications



Asian Development Outlook 2016



Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Trade and Transport Facilitation



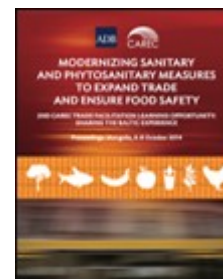
Innovation Networks and the New Asian Regionalism



Making the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Work for SMEs



Double Trouble? Meeting the Export Target for Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Modernizing Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures to Expand Trade and Ensure Food Safety

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