



## SASEC Events



- WCO ROCB A/P
- SASEC TF Strategy

### Sri Lanka Customs Service: National Workshop on Customs Valuation

**26-30 October 2015: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka Customs (SLC) conducted a national expert workshop to develop a model training course with an accompanying set of training materials. The new model training course will support SLC experts in delivering effective and sustainable in-house training to improve Customs valuation control in Sri Lanka, ideally through PCA and risk management. Main Workshop outcomes included identification of areas for potential enhancement and/or improvement in SLC capacity for proper Customs Valuation control, and agreement on the outline for a model training course and training materials to be used by SLC valuation trainers.

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- SCBTM
- UNESCAP

### Finalization Workshop for the Feasibility Study of the Pilot Implementation of the SCBTM between India and Bhutan

**29 October 2015: Cebu, Philippines**

Bhutan and India agreed to adopt the feasibility study report on the use of the Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS) at the Finalization Meeting of the Feasibility Study for the Pilot Implementation of the Secure Cross-Border Transport Model (SCBTM). The Meeting also agreed on further steps for the application of ECTS, which includes pilot implementation of the system along the Kolkata-Phuentsholing route for 6 months on voluntary basis, and constituting the Task Force to oversee piloting and routes to be covered, and scope of services of the service provider.

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### Fourth Meeting of the SASEC Customs Subgroup

**27-28 October 2015: Cebu, Philippines**

The SASEC Customs Subgroup (SCS) held its fourth meeting to review the implementation status of subregional and national projects in the SCS Work Plan 2014-2016, and discuss subregional capacity-building activities. The Meeting noted considerable progress made in SCS projects, including finalization of arrangements for the exchange of export-related data and implementation of national projects on Customs modernization.

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## SASEC Calendar

November 2015						
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					

### Upcoming SASEC Events

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

Bhutan National Single Window Workshop  
23-27 Nov 2015  
Paro, Bhutan

SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Group  
25-26 Nov 2015  
Tokyo, Japan

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### **Bhutan Standards Bureau ISO/IEC 17025 Training** **19-23 October 2015: Singapore**

Four technical officers from Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB) attended training on laboratory management systems and internal audit in relation to the International Organization for Standardization's ISO/IEC 17025. ISO/IEC 17025 is the international laboratory management system standard that provides a framework of good management practices for laboratories performing testing and calibration.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Bhutan Standards Bureau](#)
- [ISO/IEC 17025](#)



### **Bhutan National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee Working Group Orientation Meeting** **19-21 October 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

The Secretariat of Bhutan's National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) conducted a 3-day orientation meeting for the recently-formed NTTFC Working Group. Outcomes of the Meeting included comprehensive familiarization with the background, mandate, and function of the NTTFC, and developed terms of reference for the NTTFC Working Group.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Agenda](#)
- [SASEC Trade Facilitation Program](#)



### **SASEC 2025 Regional Consultation Workshop** **14-15 October 2015: Singapore**

The SASEC 2025 Regional Consultation Workshop presented and discussed the SASEC 2025 framework paper – the basis for a 10-year strategy and road map for the SASEC program. The Workshop gathered inputs, including comments and suggestions on the vision, strategic objectives, and operational priorities from SASEC member countries, to further develop the framework paper.

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- [SASEC Event](#)
- [SASEC Program Strategy](#)



### **Central Board of Excise and Customs: National Expert Mission on Customs Valuation** **28 September-1 October 2015: Faridabad, India**

A total of 36 Customs officials participated in a national workshop on Customs valuation, conducted by India's Central Board of Excise and Customs and supported by the World Customs Organization. Outcomes of the workshop included agreement on the outline and preparation schedule for a model training course and training materials to be used by CBEC Customs valuation trainers.

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

## **SASEC Projects**



### **SASEC Energy Project to Double the Capacity of India-Bangladesh Electricity Network** **1 October 2015: Manila, Philippines**

The Second SASEC Bangladesh-India Electrical Grid Interconnection Project will help boost the import of electricity from India to Bangladesh by doubling the capacity of the existing interconnection system. The Asian Development Bank is providing \$120 million loan financing; the Government of Bangladesh is allocating \$63 million. The project is expected to be completed by June 2018.

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- [SASEC Project](#)
- [BdNews24](#)



- [SASEC Project](#)
- [ADB Project Report](#)

## SASEC News

### **ADB Scales Up Financing for Preparation of Subregional Transport Projects in Bangladesh**

**28 September 2015: Manila, Philippines**

The Asian Development Bank has approved additional financing for a SASEC transport project that supports preparation of high-priority railway and road projects in Bangladesh along the Trans-Asian Railway and the Asian Highway network. These transport projects will enhance cross-border traffic, expanding connectivity in the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal subregion and forming links between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

[Read More >>](#)



- [World Trade Report 2015](#)
- [WTO News Release](#)

### **World Trade Report 2015 Highlights Importance of Speedy, Extensive Implementation of the TFA**

**26 October 2015: Geneva, Switzerland**

The latest World Trade Report launched on 26 October 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland is the first major study to comprehensively examine the benefits and challenges of implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) since its adoption in 2014. It highlights how extensive and speedy implementation of the TFA will lead to bigger gains, particularly for developing countries and least developed countries.

[Read More >>](#)



- [Indian Express](#)
- [Kathmandu Post](#)

### **Nepal Deputy Prime Minister Calls on India's Top Government Officials**

**19 October 2015: New Delhi, India**

Officials from India assured Nepal Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa of increased supplies of essential goods from India. Minister Thapa went on a 3-day visit to New Delhi, where he met with India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, and Home Minister Rajnath Singh. Minister Thapa and Minister Swaraj also discussed the re-routing of trucks at the Racaal border.

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- [WTO News](#)
- [WTO News](#)

### **WTO Receives 50th Ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement**

**19 October 2015: Geneva, Switzerland**

The Republic of Macedonia became the 50th country to submit its ratification of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement. This submission follows the ratification recently deposited by the EU on behalf of its 28 member states, which gave a huge boost toward efforts to bring the Agreement into force. The WTO reported a sharp rise in ratifications, with the number of acceptance instruments received tripling by June 2015.

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- [BdNews24](#)
- [News Bangladesh](#)

### **Bangladesh Prime Minister and Sri Lanka High Commissioner Discuss Bilateral Cooperation**

**14 October 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lanka High Commissioner Yasoja Gunasekera discussed a possible scope of cooperation during a courtesy call paid by the High Commissioner to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Hasina encouraged more Sri Lankan investments and joint ventures in Bangladesh's 22 special economic zones. Bangladesh is also considering introducing a sea route to Sri Lanka.

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### **WTO and UNCTAD Sign Declaration Increasing Cooperation** **12 October 2015: Geneva, Switzerland**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) signed a Joint Declaration that reaffirms their commitment to strengthen cooperation on promoting trade as a tool for development, and acknowledges trade as an important driver of development. It also reinforces the commitment of WTO and UNCTAD to bolster cooperation in key areas of their work, including trade-related technical assistance and capacity building, and trade facilitation.

[Read More >>](#)

- [WTO News](#)
- [Joint Declaration](#)



### **E-Permit for Indian Visitors to Bhutan under Consideration** **12 October 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

A meeting between Bhutan Tourism Board officials and India's State Tourism Secretary Ajit Ranjan Bardhan discussed ways to improve links between Bhutan and India, including introducing an online entry permit system for Indian visitors and easing immigration checks. Bhutan agreed to consider providing online permits by 2016, said Secretary Bardhan.

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- [Times of India](#)
- [SASEC News](#)



### **SAARC CCI Develops SARCO to Resolve Trade Disputes in the Region** **11 October 2015: Islamabad, Pakistan**

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC-CCI) has developed a comprehensive mechanism to resolve SAARC trade disputes amicably through the SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO). SARCO offers a fair mechanism, and guarantees thorough inquiry in the pursuit of legal solutions to conflicts.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Daily Times](#)
- [SAARC Arbitration Council](#)



### **11th Asia-Europe Meeting of Customs Agrees on Goa Declaration** **8 October 2015: Goa, India**

The 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) of Customs Directors General and Commissioners met on 8-9 October 2015 in Goa, India and agreed on the Goa Declaration – a 2016-2017 action plan of 10 specific measures in the Customs field, including trade facilitation, Authorized Economic Operators, and Paperless Customs for participating administrations. The Goa Meeting saw the participation of 41 countries from Asia and Europe.

[Read More >>](#)

- [ASEM Infoboard](#)
- [News Release](#)



### **Historic Opportunity to Link South and Southeast Asia: ADB Brief** **7 October 2015: Manila, Philippines**

Regional integration between South and Southeast Asia remains relatively limited, hindered by various problems, including bottlenecks in transport infrastructure. Enhancements in road, railways, and port infrastructure, as well as new road and rail links between Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Thailand will lower unit transport costs, reduce shipping times, and increase the quantity of goods, all of which will help increase trade.

[Read More >>](#)

- [ADB Brief](#)
- [ADB News](#)



- [Business Standard](#)
- [Assam Tribune](#)

## **High-Level Meeting in India Stresses Need for Better Connectivity in the North East Region**

**7 October 2015: New Delhi, India**

A Meeting between India's Minister for External Affairs and Governors of the North East region covered key aspects of the 'Act East Policy,' including transport connectivity, border trade, and regional production and value chains. The Meeting stressed the need for better connectivity of the North East to a wider region, including Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand, and discussed ongoing and planned cross-border connectivity projects.

[Read More >>](#)



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

## **Bhutan Prime Minister and West Bengal Chief Minister Revive Talks on Indo-Bhutan Railway**

**5 October 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay renewed their commitment to pursue the Golden Jubilee Railway line from Hasimara, India to Bhutan during the Chief Minister's call to Prime Minister Tobgay on 5 October 2015. Both sides agreed to review the railway project, and examine ways to resolve land-related issues.

[Read More >>](#)



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

## **Business Conclave Promotes Enhanced Connectivity between Bhutan and West Bengal**

**5 October 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee encouraged private sector delegates to explore a business corridor concept for tourism, small industries and joint venture projects at an India-Bhutan Business Conclave, held in Bhutan. Making West Bengal a gateway to the North East will open up further business opportunities for Bhutan.

[Read More >>](#)



- [South Asia Economic Conclave](#)
- [The Daily Star](#)

## **Taskforces to Promote SAARC Connectivity and Trade**

**30 September 2015: New Delhi, India**

Taskforces in energy cooperation, trade facilitation, trade infrastructure, foreign direct investment, and people-to-people contact will be formed to promote connectivity and trade in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region. The taskforces will examine key areas for regional cooperation in greater depth. Mr. Piyush Goyal, India's State Minister for Power, Coal, and New and Renewable Energy, said stronger economic cooperation within SAARC will help the Governments increase inclusiveness, as well as bring about sustained peace and security across the region.

[Read More >>](#)



- [Business Standard](#)
- [BdNews24](#)

## **India Committed to Full Trade Liberalization by 2020**

**29 September 2015: New Delhi, India**

Indian Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman encouraged economies in the region to speedily work toward a free trade area with a defined timeline, preferably 2020, to achieve the joint vision of a South Asian Economic Union. Speaking at the South Asia Economic Conclave, she further highlighted that India is committed to total trade liberalization, and is working to ensure that its South Asian neighbors will be able to export to India on zero tariff.

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### **India's Power Grid Commissions Transmission Express Highway** **29 September 2015: New Delhi, India**

The Power Grid Corporation of India began power transmission along its first 'Power Transmission Express Highway'. With a 6,000-megawatt capacity, this power corridor connects the northern states with the North Eastern Region, and will help both manage the supply of large-scale hydropower and connect power transactions done with Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

[Read More >>](#)

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



### **Bhutan Prime Minister Calls for Partnerships to Help LLDCs** **28 September 2015: New York, United States**

Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay promoted partnerships as a way to help landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) become land-linked to global opportunities, saying with its neighbors' full trust and confidence, it is possible to ensure a country is not landlocked economically. The Prime Minister was attending a high-level forum for landlocked developing countries on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

[Read More >>](#)

- [Kuensel Online](#)
- [UN News Release](#)



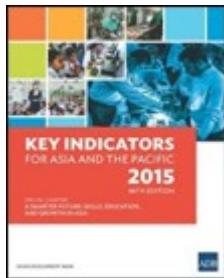
### **Commentary: Regional Cooperation and Integration through SAEU?** **14 September 2015: New Delhi, India**

The Asian Development Bank is supporting efforts of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to boost RCI through the idea of a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU). A commentary on the SAEU is shared.

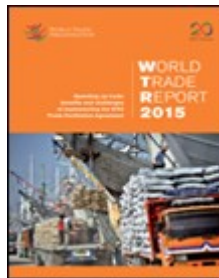
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- [Deccan Herald](#)
- [ADB Speech on SAEU](#)

## **Related Publications**



[Key Indicators for Asia And the Pacific 2015](#)



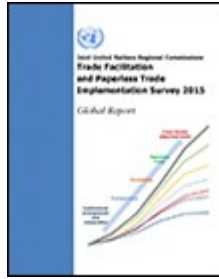
[World Trade Report 2015](#)



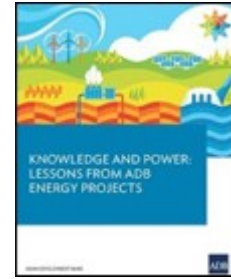
[Doing Business 2016: Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency](#)



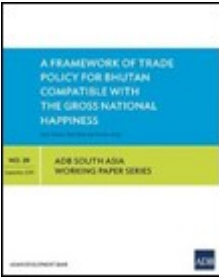
Regional Transport Infrastructure:  
Mapping Projects to Bridge  
South Asia and Southeast Asia



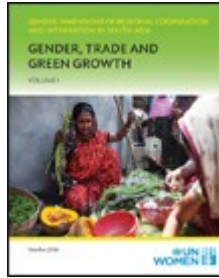
Joint UNRCs Trade Facilitation and  
Paperless Trade Implementation  
Survey 2015: Global Report



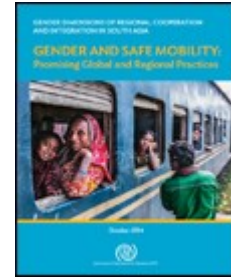
Knowledge and Power:  
Lessons from  
ADB Energy Projects



A Framework of Trade Policy for  
Bhutan: Compatible with the  
Gross National Happiness



Gender, Trade and Green Growth  
(Volumes I and II)



Gender and Safe Mobility:  
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