



**SASEC EVENTS**  
**WORKSHOP FOR SASEC**  
**CUSTOMS REFORM FOR**  
**TRADE FACILITATION**  
**PROGRAM**



**SASEC PROJECTS**  
**BETTER TRADE**  
**FACILITATION TO**  
**REDUCE TRADE COSTS**  
**BY UP TO 9% ANNUALLY**



**SASEC NEWS**  
**BANGLADESH AND**  
**SRI LANKA PORTS**  
**UPGRADING CONTAINER**  
**SCANNERS**



**PUBLICATIONS**  
**WORLD TRADE**  
**REPORT 2017: TRADE,**  
**TECHNOLOGY, AND JOBS**



# SASEC NEWS

THE SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEWSLETTER

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## What Multimodal Parks Can Do for Logistics in India

27 September 2017: Manila, Philippines

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is currently conducting a pre-feasibility study to gauge the suitability of four multi-modal logistics park (MMLP) locations in India, and identify the requisite infrastructure, connectivity, and regulatory reforms. This commentary by Mr. Hoe Yun Jeong, Principal Economist (Regional Cooperation), South Asia Regional Department, ADB, highlights how MMLPs can help realize the country's enormous economic potential.

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# SASEC EVENTS



## EVENT

### KATHMANDU

Nepal: Inception Workshop for SASEC Customs Reform and Modernization for Trade Facilitation Program



## EVENT

### KATHMANDU

Nepal Customs and ADB hold inception workshop for ADB-supported loan for Customs modernization



## EVENT

### KATHMANDU

Inception workshop discusses Nepal Customs program impact and outcomes

## Inception Meeting for Nepal: SASEC Customs Reform and Modernization for Trade Facilitation Program

24-25 September 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

This Inception Meeting formally presented the Program Design and Economic Rationale of Nepal's recently approved SASEC trade facilitation program, and facilitated discussions with the Nepal Department of Customs to formulate the technical assistance implementation work plan.

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## CALENDAR

### October

#### Presentation of the Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor Study

10 October 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

#### Inception Meeting of the Cross-border Power Trade Working Group

12-13 October 2017: Delhi, India

#### SASEC SPS-TBT Diagnostic Study for Sri Lanka: National Validation Meeting

23 October 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Top Tweets

September 2017



@EconDevMv, ADB discuss major findings of the #Maldives National Single Window study & review its key features [Read](#)

ADB to step up renewable #energy funding, incl. transmission networks, Green Energy Corridors [Read](#)

DL: Development Effectiveness Review 2016 to see details of ongoing and newly approved @ADB\_hq in South Asia [Read](#)

@SPGroff blogs @ADB\_HQ: #Connectivity, #competitiveness, community guide Mekong regional cooperation [Read](#)

Digitalization: a great tool to enhance trade facilitation implementation & reduce trade costs [Read](#)



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## Second Meeting of SAARC Council of Experts of Energy Regulators

24-25 October 2017: Islamabad, Pakistan

## SASEC SPS-TBT Diagnostic Study for Bangladesh: National Validation Meeting

26 October 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh

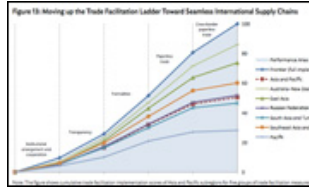
## SASEC SPS-TBT Diagnostic Study for Nepal: National Validation Meeting

31 October 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal

# SASEC PROJECTS



**PROJECT**  
**BETTER TRADE FACILITATION TO REDUCE TRADE COSTS BY UP TO 9% ANNUALLY**



**PROJECT**  
**TRADE FACILITATION INCREASES TRADE FLOWS AND LOWERS TRADE COSTS**



**PROJECT**  
**ADB BLOG: WHAT MULTIMODAL PARKS CAN DO FOR LOGISTICS IN INDIA**



**PROJECT**  
**ADB PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY TO GAUGE SUITABILITY OF FOUR MMLP LOCATIONS**

## ADB Vice President: Regional Cooperation Can Help Bhutan Develop Full Potential

11 September 2017: Thimphu, Bhutan

Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, Asian Development Bank, encouraged the active participation of Bhutan in regional cooperation programs to enhance connectivity with its neighbors, facilitate trade, and boost tourism. Increasing connectivity with other countries in the region will benefit Bhutan's private sector by bringing in more foreign direct investment.

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## Better Trade Facilitation to Reduce Trade Costs by Up to 9% Annually

5 September 2017: Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Better trade facilitation, could reduce trade costs by up to 9% in Asia and the Pacific, according to a report by ADB and UNESCAP. Trade Facilitation and Better Connectivity for an Inclusive Asia and Pacific highlights the benefits of promoting Customs improvement and regional cooperation, as well as efforts to improve trade facilitation by the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation and other subregional cooperation initiatives.

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**NEWS**  
**BANGLADESH AND SRI LANKA PORTS UPGRADING CONTAINER SCANNERS**



**NEWS**  
**VARANASI TRADE FACILITATION CENTER FOR HANDICRAFTS LAUNCHED**



**NEWS**  
**RFID TECHNOLOGY BOOSTS INDIAN PORT PRODUCTIVITY**



**NEWS**  
**BIMSTEC TO FINALIZE MOTORS VEHICLE AND COASTAL SHIPPING DEALS SOON**

## **New ADB Country Partnership Strategy to Accelerate India's Transition to Upper Middle-income Status**

**27 September 2017: Manila, Philippines**

The Asian Development Bank endorsed a new India Country Partnership Strategy 2018-2022 that ramps up annual lending support to a maximum of \$4 billion a year to fast-track India's inclusive economic transition toward upper middle-income status. It focuses on three pillars: enhancing economic competitiveness, improving access to infrastructure and services, and addressing climate change and improving climate resilience.

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## **Commentary: Boosting Business in the Bangladesh Corridor is Crucial to India's "Act East" Policy**

**26 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

This commentary by Mr. Sanjay Kathuria, Lead Economist and Coordinator, South Asia Regional Integration, World Bank Trade and Competitiveness Global Practice, highlights how the growing cooperation between Bangladesh and India provides a glimpse into a more integrated South Asia.

[Read More](#)

## **Nepal Prime Minister Discusses Connectivity, Trade Enhancement with Bangladesh Prime Minister and Sri Lanka President**

**23 September 2017: New York, USA**

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba met with heads of state of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly Meeting in New York, USA. Prime Minister Deuba highlighted the need to continue deepening regional cooperation and connectivity, and host another SAARC Summit.

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## **Trade Facilitation Center for Handicrafts Inaugurated in Varanasi**

**22 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Deendayal Hastkala Sankul, a trade facilitation center for handicrafts, at the Varanasi region. The Center aims to promote the products of regional artisans and weavers, and help integrate them into the global economy by linking them to domestic and international markets.

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## **Freight Train Service to Run for Dhaka-Kolkata**

**18 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

The Governments of Bangladesh and India will launch a broad-gauge container train service between Dhaka, Bangladesh and Kolkata, India, using a broad-gauge connection, to increase bilateral trade, currently running at about \$6 billion. Trial runs are set to begin in October 2017.

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## **BIMSTEC to Finalize Motor Vehicle and Coastal Shipping Agreements Soon**

**15 September 2017: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Indian Ministry of External Affairs' Joint Secretary, BIMSTEC and SAARC, said BIMSTEC countries are likely to finalize motor vehicle and coastal shipping agreements in the next few months. BIMSTEC member countries are negotiating framework agreements in regional cooperation in 14 areas, including trade, transport, energy, climate change, and poverty alleviation.

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## **India Commerce and Industry Minister and ADB President Discuss Promotion of India's Manufacturing and Export**

**11 September 2017: Manila, Philippines**

Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Commerce and Industry Minister, India, discussed ways to increase competitiveness of India's manufacturing and exports with Mr. Takehiko Nakao, President, Asian Development Bank (ADB). President Nakao emphasized India's potential to integrate with global value chains, with its abundant human resources, and the international growth of Indian businesses.

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## **New Sri Lanka Foreign Affairs Minister Embarks on a 3-day Visit to India**

**9 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

Mr. Tilak Marapana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka, and Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs, India, discussed India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations during Mr. Marapana's three-day visit to India. He also paid a courtesy call to India Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

**[Read More](#)**

## **RFID Technology Boosts Indian Port Productivity**

**9 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

Indian ports handled 273.96 million tons of cargo from April-August 2017 – 3.26% more cargo compared to the same period last year. According to the Government of India's Ministry of Shipping, newly-implemented technology, including radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagging at ports, helped boost the Indian port performance.

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## **Rangpur Chamber Highlights Need for Multimodal Connectivity between Nepal and Bangladesh**

**7 September 2017: Rangpur, Bangladesh**

The Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry emphasized the need for multimodal connectivity between Bangladesh and Nepal while meeting with a delegation from the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka. Recommendations to facilitate smoother import/export included road expansion and port improvement.

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## **Bangladesh Commerce Minister: Bangladesh-Sri Lanka FTA to be Concluded by 2018**

**7 September 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Mr. Tofail Ahmed, Commerce Minister, Bangladesh, called to expedite conclusion of the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to help increase the trade volume between the two countries. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka bilateral trade grew by 43% between 2012 to 2016.

**[Read More](#)**

## **India, Myanmar Pledge to Deepen Bilateral Relations**

**7 September 2017: New Delhi, India**

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook his first bilateral state visit to Myanmar. Both countries agreed to prioritize conclusion of a bilateral agreement enabling motor vehicle traffic across the border, and grow their bilateral trade and investment by improving market access through removal of all trade barriers.

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## **Bangladesh Ports Upgrading with Container Scanners**

**7 September 2017: Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The Bangladesh National Board of Revenue has taken steps to improve security and Customs efficiency in the country through installation of container scanning systems at the country's ports and border points. Scanners will enhance cargo inspection at Bangladesh's land port stations, sea ports, and inland container depots.

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## **Roundtable Urges Increased India-Myanmar Connectivity, Trade**

**2 September 2017: Yangon, Myanmar**

A roundtable discussion held in Myanmar noted the need to substantially increase connectivity, trade and diplomatic relations between Myanmar and India. Officials from the two countries participated in the India-Myanmar Dialogue: Act East Policy and India-Myanmar Relations, held on 2 September 2017 in Yangon, Myanmar. The forum was organized by Parami Roundtable and Mizzima Media Group.

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## **Colombo Port to Install New Container Scanning System**

**28 August 2017: Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka Customs held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new container scanning system at Colombo Port. Four scanners, set to be fully operational within six months, will enable round-the-clock scanning. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, Finance Minister, Sri Lanka, urged modernization of the prevailing Customs legislation to enhance the country's trade facilitation.

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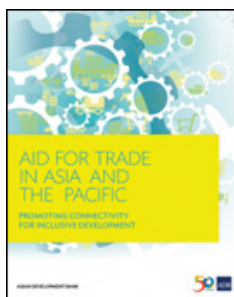
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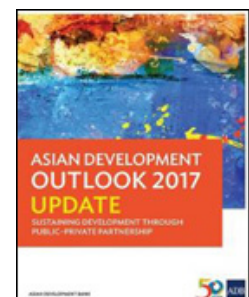
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