SASEC
South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation

e-Newsletter Issue No. 26 August 2015 www.sasec.asia

SASEC Events



- Nepal Dept of Customs
- SASEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework

Nepal Department of Customs National Workshop on Customs Valuation

19-21 August 2015: Nagarkot, Nepal

Nepal Department of Customs conducted the first national expert workshop in collaboration with the World Customs Organization Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building, to develop a model training course and training materials to be used in delivering effective and sustainable in-house training to improve Customs valuation control in Nepal.
Read More >>



- SASEC Trade Facilitation Program
- Agenda

RAMIS Technical Training on Automated Customs Module: Priority 2

17-26 August 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan

The Department of Revenue and Customs, Ministry of Finance, Bhutan conducted the second User Acceptance Testing training session for the Revenue Administration and Management System (RAMIS) Customs and Excise module. RAMIS is DRC's upgraded automated system for Customs clearance procedures that will be rolled out in early 2016. RAMIS has been developed under both technical assistance and loan and grant funding from the Asian Development Bank, including the SASEC Trade Facilitation Program.
Read More >>



- SASEC Technical Assistance
- Agenda

Bangladesh National Workshop on the New Customs Act and Related Best Practices

17-20 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The National Board of Revenue of Bangladesh and the Asian Development Bank jointly organized a National Workshop to familiarize Customs and other border officials with provisions of the Customs Act of 2015. Workshop outcomes included increased knowledge and understanding of the new Customs Act, and support and commitment from Government officials toward implementation and achievement of its objectives.
Read More >>

SASEC Calendar



Upcoming SASEC Events

Subregional Workshop on ASYCUDA World
7-11 September 2015
Pokhara, Nepal

Regional Workshops on RAMIS Automated Customs Module: Priority 2
7-18 September 2015
Bhutan (6 locations)

Negotiation of Protocols for the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement
8-9 September 2015
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Negotiation of Protocols for the IMT Motor Vehicles Agreement
16-17 September 2015
Bangkok, Thailand

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- National Board of Revenue
- Agenda

National Seminar for Bangladesh Customs: Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy
2-6 August 2015: Sri Mangal, Moulvi Bazar, Bangladesh

The National Board of Revenue of Bangladesh and the World Customs Organization held a National Seminar on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy to familiarize officials of Bangladesh Customs with global trends and threats in counterfeiting and piracy, and equip them with the necessary legal framework covering intellectual property rights (IPR) at borders. Workshop outcomes included a discussion of global efforts taken to mitigate counterfeiting and piracy, Customs' role in IPR management, and demonstration of mobile communication and detection tools for Customs officers.
Read More >>

SASEC Projects



- The Financial Express
- The News Today
- SASEC Project

Bangladesh Cabinet Approves Proposal to Upgrade Dhaka-Northwest Corridor
6 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Cabinet Committee Meeting on Public Purchase of the Government of Bangladesh approved four proposals for ongoing infrastructure projects, including a contract award to upgrade a 70-kilometer section of the Dhaka-Northwest corridor from two to four lanes. This road enhancement is being financed under the Bangladesh SASEC Road Connectivity Project.
Read More >>

SASEC News



- The Financial Express
- The Daily Star

Bangladesh Prepares to Enact New Customs Law
22 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The National Board of Revenue of Bangladesh is set to present the Customs Act of 2015 for passage in the September parliamentary session. The new Customs Act, which includes international best practices in Customs operations stipulated under the Revised Kyoto Convention and the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, aims to facilitate smooth international trade, reduce time and cost of doing business, and create a better investment climate. It will replace the existing 1969 Customs Act.
Read More >>



- The Kathmandu Post
- The Economic Times

7th SAARC Finance Ministers Meeting in Kathmandu
20 August 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal

Finance Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Program met to discuss closer economic and financial cooperation in the region, emphasizing faster trade liberalization and investment in connectivity. This would help strengthen unification in the region, promote inter-country investment, and remove non-tariff barriers among member countries.
Read More >>



- BdNews24
- BdNews24

Border Markets along Bangladesh-India See Increase in Local Trade
16 August 2015: Agartala, India

A meeting of the commerce ministries of Bangladesh and India to renew the Memorandum of Understanding for Bangladesh-India border markets agreed to double the purchase limit for buyers. This decision comes as the two countries prepare to set up more markets to boost bilateral ties and trade. The two countries are also considering proposal to double the number of sellers from the current allowed number of 25. Border haats were established to encourage local cross-border trade, operating once a week for 7 hours.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express
- The Daily Star

Bangladesh's New Export Policy Emphasizes Trade with Neighbors
13 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

A meeting of Bangladesh's Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the Bangladesh Export Policy 2015-2018. The new export policy highlights increasing trade with Bhutan, India, and Nepal, and targets $60 billion in annual export turnover by 2021. It covers measures to enhance export growth, including promotion of non-traditional export products, to achieve higher export targets.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express
- SASEC Event

Bangladesh and Bhutan Customs Begin Sharing Trade Data
12 August 2015: Thimphu, Bhutan

A Meeting of the Joint Group of Customs of Bangladesh and Bhutan held in Thimphu, Bhutan agreed to share export-import data from Phuentsholing and Burimari Customs stations, in follow-up to the endorsed study proposal on the electronic exchange of trade-related information among SASEC member countries in the Third SASEC Customs Subgroup Meeting, held in March 2015 in Goa, India. The Meeting also decided to consider opening Bangladesh's Chilmari and Roumari river routes to increase access between the two countries.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express
- SASEC Event

Commentary on the BBIN MVA as Positive Development for Subregional Cooperation
10 August 2015: New Delhi, India

Read a commentary on the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) as positive development for the BBIN subregional grouping. The BBIN MVA is a landmark framework agreement that aims to facilitate a seamless flow of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic between and among the BBIN countries.
Read More >>



- Daily News
- ADB Project Data Sheet

Sri Lanka Customs to be Fully Automated in 2016
10 August 2015: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is in the final stages of its Customs automation process to ensure trade facilitation. Customs operations will be electronically processed and computer-based for a paperless environment that allows more interaction between trade and Customs. Automation equipment orders have been placed and delivered to Sri Lanka -- and the system is expected to be fully operational by March 2016.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express
- The Financial Express

Bangladesh as New Investment Destination for Indian Investors
7 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is seen as the new investment destination for Indian investors, particularly with the series of bilateral agreements signed between the two countries in June 2015. Trading and exporting appears lucrative for Indian businessmen due to Bangladesh's weak manufacturing base, tariff-free access to developed markets, geographical proximity, and resilient economy.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express

Bangladesh's First Trade Surplus with Nepal in 10 Years
7 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh recorded a trade surplus with Nepal in 2014-2015 for the first time in 10 years, due to a decrease in lentil imports. Nepal Transit and Warehousing Company figures show Nepal exported goods worth about $10.8 million, against imports of about $23.9 million last fiscal year.
Read More >>



- BdNews24

Bangladesh Special Economic Zones Considered Under India's Line of Credit
6 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Government is set to approve in principle the establishment of a special economic zone for Indian investors in Mongla and Bheramara under India's $2 billion line of credit. A Development Project Proposal is under consideration by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council.
Read More >>



- The Financial Express
- ADB Project Data Sheet

Dhaka-Sylhet Highway to be Widened into Four-Lane Road
4 August 2015: Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Government will take steps to widen the Dhaka-Sylhet highway to four lanes to facilitate the flow of traffic, following completion of a feasibility study and detailed design of this national highway. Conducted by the Road and Highways Department, Bangladesh, with funding from the Asian Development Bank technical assistance, the study proposed constructing a four lane 286-kilometer road section, up to the regional corridor in Shillong in the Indian state of Meghalaya.
Read More >>



- My Republica
- ADB News Release

Koshi Bridge Restores Connectivity in Nepal's Eastern Development Region
3 August 2015: Kathmandu, Nepal

The newly-constructed Koshi Bridge, inaugurated by Nepal Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, improves road connectivity and restores economic activities in the eastern region of Nepal. Constructed with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank at a cost of $11 million, the bridge provides an alternate route and improves mobility, creating new opportunities for growth.
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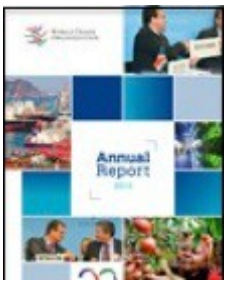


- My Republica
- Indian Embassy News Release

India-Nepal Joint Working Group Move Forward with Vehicle Permits, New Bus Routes
17 July 2015: New Delhi, India

The India-Nepal Cross Border Transport Facilitation Joint Working Group under the bilateral Motor Vehicle Agreement discussed measures to facilitate movement of passenger vehicles across the India-Nepal border on its first meeting held in New Delhi on 16-17 July 2015. Key recommendations include a web-based solution to issue, monitor, and verify permits, and four new bus routes between India and Nepal.
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Related Publications



World Trade Organization Annual Report 2015



UNCTAD Transport and Trade Facilitation Newsletter No. 66 – Second Quarter 2015



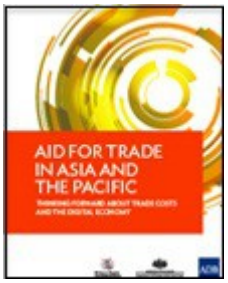
Building Firm-level Trade Competitiveness in Emerging Economies



SAARC: The Way Ahead



Maldives: Overcoming the Challenges of a Small Island State – Country Diagnostic Study



Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific: Thinking Forward About Trade Costs and the Digital Economy

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