

# CUTS CITEE IN ACTION

JANUARY-MARCH 2022



## EVENTS

### Waterways to Boost India-Bangladesh Ties

CUTS International organised a Multi-stakeholders and Traders' Meeting on "Cross-Border Trade, Tourism and Navigation through Transboundary Inland Waterways between India and Bangladesh" organised at Dhubri, Assam, on March 21, 2022. The meeting was organised under a regional programme 'Transboundary Rivers of South Asia,' supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and managed by Oxfam.

The speakers and moderators of the meeting were Saurabh Kumar, Fellow, CUTS International, Atowar Rahman, President, Dhubri Waterways International Traders Association, Lalit Kumar Chopra, Chattered Accountant and Manager, Bhansali International, Surendar Kumar Choudhury, Trader, Surat Jamal, President, Dhubri Traders Association, Yunus Khan, Boat Operator, Panchu Ghat.

This meeting aimed to build consensus among the private sector, local communities, and government institutions at local, subnational and national levels for Cross-Border Trade, Tourism, and Navigation through Transboundary Inland Waterways between India and Bangladesh.

<https://cuts-citee.org/multi-stakeholders-and-traders-meeting-on-cross-border-trade-tourism-and-navigation/>





## EVENTS

## Enhancing Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region

*National Advocacy Dialogues in Nepal and Bhutan were held as part of the Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region (M-Connect) project.*



### National Advocacy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Unnayan Shamannay, a civil society think tank, in collaboration with CUTS International, organised a National Advocacy Dialogue on “Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) Sub-region” on February 02, 2022. The organisation disseminated its research findings on the challenges and possibilities of multi-modal connectivity in Bangladesh.

The meeting was presided by Atiur Rahman, Chairperson, Unnayan Shamannay. Shaheen ul Alam, a Senior Project Coordinator, moderated the session. Representatives of multi-lateral bodies, private sector, government departments, chambers of commerce/business, and members of business associations participated in the dialogue. M-connect project findings and stakeholders’ opinions were presented during the meeting.

In the discussion followed, the participants advocated for implementing BBIN MVA and a sub-regional multi-modal transport protocol. They agreed that multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region will bring forth new opportunities in trade and accelerate both the national and international economy.

Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International, said that the project has become more important in the upcoming Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit in Sri Lanka, where the BIMSTEC multi-modal connectivity master plan is supposed to be signed.

<https://cuts-citee.org/national-advocacy-meeting-bangladesh/>

### National Advocacy Dialogue, India

CUTS International organised a National Advocacy Dialogue (NAD) under the project entitled, ‘Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal) Sub-region (M-Connect)’ in February 2022. The organisation presented the project’s achievements, findings, and suggestions to relevant stakeholders, including government officials in India and representatives from other development agencies.

This NAD organised virtually over the Zoom Meetings platform was rich with qualitative solution-oriented discussions regarding implementing multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region. Aditya Mishra, the Chairman of the Land Ports Authority of India, was the Chief Guest. The meeting was chaired by Gopal Krishna, former Shipping Secretary, Government of India.

Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International, welcomed all the participants to the virtual meeting. He discussed the importance of ensuring multi-modal transport connectivity in the BBIN sub-region to enhance economic integration. The sub-region is witnessing enhanced political will from the member countries to provide smooth last-mile connectivity.

<https://cuts-citee.org/national-advocacy-meeting-india/>





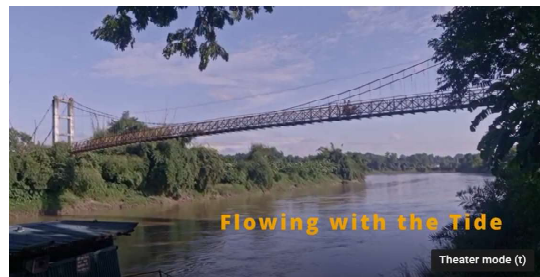
## EVENTS

## Media Briefing

CUTS International organised a “Media Briefing” at the Agartala Press Club on March 23, 2022. The event’s purpose was to brief the local media in Agartala about CUTS’ interventions under the TROSA project and screen the documentary “Flowing with the Tide” and a Digital Story “Voice of Women from the Meghna Basin.” The event was attended by various print and online media in Tripura.

The event was organised under a regional programme “Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA),” managed by Oxfam Novib and supported by the Swedish government. TROSA aims to reduce poverty in marginal and vulnerable river basin communities through increased access and control over water resources in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin of Bangladesh, Nepal, and India, and in the Salween basin of Myanmar.

Following the screening of the digital story, a discussion about the challenges faced by the riverine communities and the TROSA interventions was facilitated by Sumanta Biswas, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS International. Various English and vernacular media covered the documentary’s highlights and the digital story in Tripura.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxAQtehvhy4>



## WEBINAR

## Cross-border Trade and Navigation between India and Bangladesh

This webinar, “Cross-Border Trade and Navigation through Transboundary Inland Waterways between India and Bangladesh,” was held on the Zoom platform on February 28, 2022. Around 35 participants from India and Bangladesh participated in the webinar.

This virtual meeting was held with relevant stakeholders, particularly traders of India and Bangladesh, to address the issues faced by traders regarding the developments happening in the inland waterways that require prioritisation for cross-border trade and navigation between India and Bangladesh.

The speakers and moderators of the webinar were Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International, Jyotiraj Patra, Project Manager, Trans-boundary Rivers of South Asia, Oxfam, Jayant Singh, Vice Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, Commodore Golam Sadeq, Chairman, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Syed Monowar Hussain, Former Director, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), Bangladesh, Deborishi Bhattacharjee, Trader in Karimganj, India, Atowar Rahman, President, Dhubri Waterways International Traders Association, Veena Vidyadharan, Fellow, CUTS International.



The meeting was organised under a regional project entitled “Transboundary Rivers of South Asia” (TROSA), which is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and managed by Oxfam. The project aims to reduce the poverty of marginalised and vulnerable river basin communities through increased access to and control over water resources over which their livelihoods depend.

<https://cuts-citee.org/webinar-on-cross-border-trade-and-navigation-through-trans-boundary-inland-waterways-between-india-and-bangladesh/>



## PUBLICATIONS

## RESEARCH REPORT

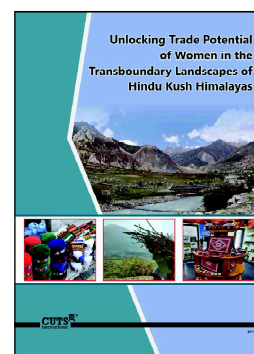
## Unlocking Trade Potential of Women in the Transboundary Landscapes of Hindu Kush Himalayas

The Transboundary landscapes (TBLs) of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) shares ecological, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics across the transcending international borders of the member countries. People living in these fragile ecosystems mainly depend on farming, fishing, nature-based products, handicrafts, and tourism for their livelihoods. They are constantly exposed to disasters, calamities, and geopolitical tensions that enhance the vulnerability of marginalised people, particularly women.

However, their involvement in trade is usually limited to the informal sector. Women's workloads have heightened in the past without any equal increments in access to development, decision making, or land rights. The vulnerabilities of mountain women have been further aggravated due to COVID-19, which led to the closure of international borders, shutting down production units. A slash in the income has affected the business and the household expenses, which is of utmost importance.

In this context, CUTS International undertook an explorative study in partnership with the ICIMOD in the four TBLs of the HKH, namely Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape (HKPL), Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL), Kangchenjunga Landscape (KL) and Far East Himalayan Landscape (HI-LIFE), to understand the nature of women's engagement in trade at local, national and cross-border levels. The study also aimed at assessing the COVID19 impact on women entrepreneurs.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/research-report-unlocking-trade-potential-of-women.pdf>



## COMPENDIUM

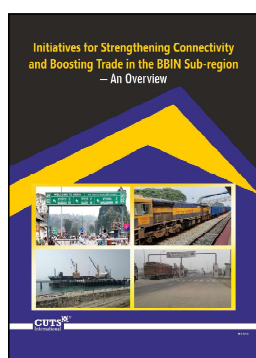
## Initiatives for Strengthening Connectivity and Boosting Trade in the BBIN Sub-region: An Overview

Countries in the South Asian region like Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal share not only a common history and rich heritage but also numerous socio-economic endowments along with other complementarities that can cater to the common benefit of the people in this sub-region.

Under the project titled 'Enabling a political economy discourse for multi-modal connectivity in the BBIN sub-region (M-Connect),' CUTS International, together with its project partners, Unnayan Shamannay in Bangladesh, Nepal Economic Forum (NEF) in Nepal and Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) in Bhutan - had visited the identified trade corridors in an attempt to capture granular details of the problems and prospects of connectivity in the sub-region.

Major observations and experiences from these visits have been documented and summarised in the compendium.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/initiatives-for-strengthening-connectivity-and-boosting-trade-in-the-bbin-mconnect-an-overview.pdf>



## CONSOLIDATED REPORT

## Nadi Baithaks in India and Bangladesh

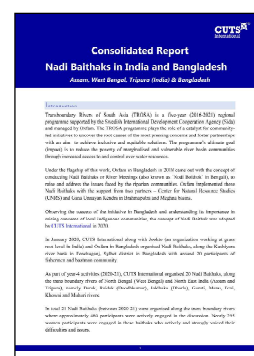
**Assam, West Bengal, Tripura (India) & Bangladesh**

Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) is a five-year (2016-2021) regional programme supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and managed by Oxfam. The TROSA programme plays the role of a catalyst for community-led initiatives to uncover the root causes of the most pressing concerns and foster partnerships with an aim to achieve inclusive and equitable solutions. The programme's ultimate goal (impact) is to reduce the poverty of marginalised and vulnerable river basin communities through increased access to and control over water resources.

Under the flagship of this work, Oxfam in Bangladesh in 2018 came out with the concept of conducting Nadi Baithaks or River Meetings (also known as 'Nodi Boithok' in Bengali), to raise and address the issues faced by the riparian communities.

Oxfam implemented these Nadi Baithaks with the support from two partners – Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) and Gana Unnayan Kendra in Brahmaputra and Meghna basins. Observing the success of the initiative in Bangladesh and understanding its importance in raising concerns of local indigenous communities, the concept of Nadi Baithak was adopted by CUTS International in 2020.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/nadi-baithaks-in-india-and-bangladesh.pdf>





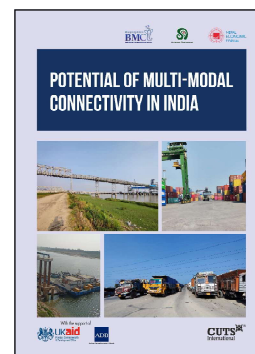
## Potential of Multi-modal Connectivity in India

The research team of CUTS International, under the “Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan India, Nepal) Sub-region” (M-Connect) project, supported by the United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office under its Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme, has visited India’s major transport and connectivity hubs. These include land custom stations, integrated check posts, river ports and railway links which helped to understand the opportunities and challenges of establishing an efficient multi-modal transport network in this sub-region.

Good physical connectivity in the urban and rural areas is essential for economic growth. Since the early 1990s, India’s growing economy has witnessed a rise in demand for transport infrastructure and services. However, this sector has not been able to keep pace with the rising demand and is proving to be a drag on the economy. Major improvements in the sector are therefore required to support the country’s continued economic growth and to reduce poverty. In this context, the multi-modal transport system offers itself as a potential model to enhance connectivity in India and in the BBIN sub-region.

This Policy Brief gives a glance at general and location-specific findings of this survey and our recommendations.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/india-potential-of-multimodal-connectivity.pdf>



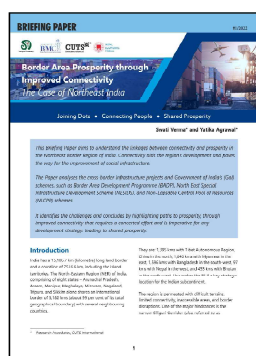
## Border Area Prosperity through Improved Connectivity The Case of Northeast India

This Briefing Paper aims to understand the linkages between connectivity and prosperity in the Northeast Border Region of India. Connectivity aids the region’s development and paves the way for the improvement of social infrastructure.

The Paper analyses the cross-border infrastructure projects and Government of India’s (GoI) schemes, such as Border Area Development Programme (BADP), North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS), and Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) schemes.

It identifies the challenges and concludes by highlighting paths to prosperity, through improved connectivity that requires a concerted effort and is imperative for any development strategy, leading to shared prosperity.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bp-border-area-prosperity-through-improved-connectivity.pdf>



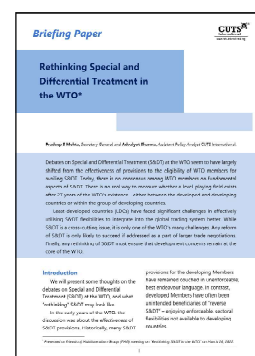
## Rethinking Special and Differential Treatment in the WTO

Debates on Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) at the WTO seem to have largely shifted from the effectiveness of provisions to the eligibility of WTO members for availing S&DT. Today, there is no consensus among WTO members on fundamental aspects of S&DT.

There is no real way to measure whether a level-playing field exists after 27 years of the WTO’s existence - either between the developed and developing countries or within the group of developing countries.

Any reform of S&DT is only likely to succeed if addressed as a part of larger trade negotiations. Finally, any rethinking of S&DT must ensure that development concerns remain at the core of the WTO.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/briefing-paper-rethinking-special-and-differential-treatment-in-the-wto.pdf>





## DISCUSSION PAPER

## A New Negotiating Agenda

## How India Could Address Issues of Sustainable Development in Trade Negotiations

India and many developing nations have maintained opposition to the development of enforceable norms on trade and sustainable development at the bilateral/regional or multilateral fora (WTO). However, new economic and political realities require India to reevaluate her stance.

This paper will first discuss why India may have to address the linkage of trade and sustainable development in Free Trade Agreement negotiations and how such an engagement could prove to be a winning proposition. Consequently, this paper will broach how India could negotiate TSD clauses that serve multiple purposes.

First, enable India to reach its ambitious sustainability objectives. Second, safeguard existing and future market access from protectionism. Third and finally, buffer the inevitable short-term losses that will be incurred during the period of adjustment.

[https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/a\\_new\\_negotiating\\_agenda-how\\_india\\_could\\_address\\_issues\\_of\\_sustainable\\_development\\_in\\_trade\\_negotiations.pdf](https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/a_new_negotiating_agenda-how_india_could_address_issues_of_sustainable_development_in_trade_negotiations.pdf)



## Promoting Inclusive Cross-border Trade and Sustainable River Cruise Tourism in Transboundary Rivers

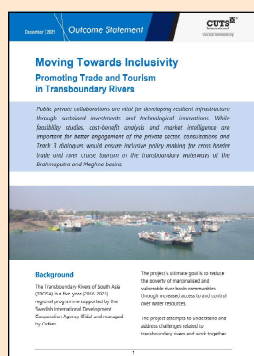
*With adequate investments, infrastructure and regulations, river cruise tourism will provide a win-win situation for the public and private sectors and the communities ensuring the sustainability of the economy and environment in the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basins. While feasibility studies, cost-benefit analysis and market intelligence are important for better engagement of the private sector, consultations and Track 3 dialogues would ensure inclusive policy-making for cross-border trade and river cruise tourism in the transboundary waterways.*

Capturing key messages from the multi-stakeholder dialogues and public-private dialogues organised under the regional programme 'Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA)', CUTS International has prepared two documents- an Outcome Statement with suggestions to promote cross-border trade and tourism in transboundary rivers and a Guiding Statement that proposes measures for sustainable river cruise tourism between India and Bangladesh.

These statements underline the significance of public-private collaborations for developing resilient infrastructure through sustained investments and technological innovations to promote trade and tourism through transboundary waterways.

## Moving Towards Inclusivity

## Promoting Trade and Tourism in Transboundary Rivers



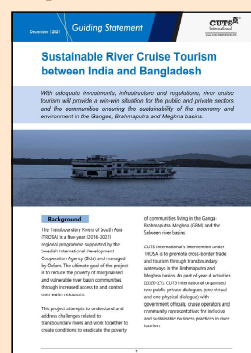
Public-private collaborations are vital for developing resilient infrastructure through sustained investments and technological innovations. While feasibility studies, cost-benefit analysis and market intelligence are important for better engagement of the private sector, consultations and Track 3 dialogues would ensure inclusive policy-making for

cross-border trade and river cruise tourism in the transboundary waterways of the Brahmaputra and Meghna basins.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/outcome-statement-trosa.pdf>

## Sustainable River Cruise Tourism between India and Bangladesh

With adequate investments, infrastructure and regulations, river cruise tourism will provide a win-win situation for the public and private sectors and the communities ensuring the sustainability of the economy and environment in the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna basins.



<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/guiding-statement-trosa.pdf>



## Making Trade Policy Inclusive

Advaiyot Sharma and Sudip Kumar Paul took part in an online professional development course on Making Trade Policy Inclusive. It was delivered by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), InterAnalysis and the UK Trade Policy Observatory at the University of Sussex. The objective of the course was to advance the understanding of inclusion in international trade and trade policy – covering poverty, gender, human rights, sustainability and power asymmetries.



## PARTICIPATION

- Bipul Chatterjee participated in an event entitled 'Enhancing BIMSTEC Connectivity in the New Era,' organised by the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling and the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies on March 30-31, 2022. He spoke in a session on '*BIMSTEC Charter, BIMSTEC Fund and Institution.*'

He also participated in an event titled 'Prospects for North Bengal - Investments in Sustainability,' organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry on January 25, 2022. He spoke on '*Avenues through which North Bengal's cross-border trade and investment can be accelerated with the neighbouring countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.*'

- Pradeep S Mehta was a panellist in a Brainstorming session on "Rethinking Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) in the WTO" on March 28, 2022, organised by the Friends of Multilateralism Group (FMG). He spoke on the state of play in terms of S&DT debates involving developing countries at the WTO.
  - Veena Vidyadharan spoke as a panellist in the side session '*Promoting business and human rights in South Asia's Small-Scale Fisheries (SSFs): Opportunities for sub-regional, multi-stakeholder cooperation as part of the UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights*' on March 23, 2022. Oxfam Novib organised this session under the regional programme Transboundary Rivers of South Asia.
  - Swati Verma attended 'UNESCAP-ICAO-ICC-ADB Webinar on Challenges and Trends in Digitalising Multimodal Supply Chains,' organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on March 23, 2022. The webinar looked at air cargo as one of the critical transport modes, including the need for its closer interaction with other modes of transport.
  - Sandra George attended the webinar on 'Making India a Supply Chain Leader in the Indo Pacific' organised by US-India Importers Council (USIIC) and the US Consulate in Mumbai on March 22, 2022.
  - Sneha Singh attended the session on 'TRIPs Waiver & State of Play' organised by Health Gap, International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, Our World is Not For Sale, People's Health Movement,' on March 11, 2022. She also attended the session on "Negotiations on Investment Facilitation for Development at the WTO" organised by the US-Asia Law Institute (USALI), New York University School of Law, in conjunction with the APEC Study Centre, Columbia University, on March 09, 2022.
- She also attended a brainstorming session on Pandemic Response organised by the Friends of Multilateralism Group on January 11, 2022. This session was based on the article '*Arriving at an equitable response to the pandemic,*' authored by Pradeep S Mehta and Sneha Singh of CUTS International.
- Yatika Agrawal attended the Asian Confluence India Japan Web Dialogue entitled 'Development of North Eastern Indian Region and Neighbourhood: India-Japan Collaboration for Fostering Entrepreneurship and People Connectivity,' on March 03, 2022.
  - Md. Quaisar Ali attended a webinar on 'Women Microentrepreneurs in the Informal Economy: Resilience and Growth' on February 09, 2022. He also attended a webinar on 'Evolving Strategic Architecture in Indo-Pacific Perspectives from India and ASEAN' on February 18, 2022.



## PM Gati Shakti to unlock the trade potential of Northeast India

*Northeast Now, January 17, 2022 • By Suresh P Singh and Md Quaisar Ali*

The large-scale absence of coordination and collaboration among agencies has been a significant challenge to India's time-bound infrastructure project implementation. These projects often have faced time overruns, leading to significant cost escalations.

As per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the Government of India, at the beginning of 2021, 1,687 Union Government projects under implementation, valued more than Rs 21.45 lakh crore, had run into cost overrun of nearly 20 percent, mainly because of their delays.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pm-gati-shakti-to-unlock-trade-potential-of-northeast-india/>

## Transforming Uttar Pradesh: An Upcoming Multi-modal Connectivity Hub

*India Narrative, January 21, 2022 • By Swati Verma and Yatika Agrawal*

Infrastructure and connectivity are essential parameters that decide the economic weight of any state. Infrastructure initiatives in productive capacity building by bridging connectivity gaps and reducing logistics costs ensure a seamless flow of goods and services.

Uttar Pradesh is positioning itself as a multi-modal logistics and transportation hub in northern India. The sheer number of infrastructure projects that have been recently completed and are ongoing in the state is evidence of this fact.

<https://cuts-citee.org/transforming-uttar-pradesh-an-upcoming-multi-modal-connectivity-hub/>

## A new negotiating agenda: How India could address issues of sustainable development in trade negotiations

*Economic Times, February 19, 2022 • By Pradeep S. Mehta and Sneha Singh*

Creativity and pragmatism must guide India's endeavour in negotiating a full array of tools to shape sustainable trade outcomes. An appropriately tailored Trade and Sustainable Development chapter in India's Free Trade Agreements could be a force for good and should not be opposed without due consideration.

Developed countries have a growing trend to incorporate provisions linking Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Nearly all the recently concluded FTAs by the US and EU include provisions on TSD.

<https://cuts-citee.org/a-new-negotiating-agenda/>

## Gati Shakti to leverage data mining for infrastructure development

*India Narrative, February 27, 2022 • By Swati Verma and Yatika Agrawal*

"When we have all the data online, it will be great for humanity. It is a prerequisite to solving many problems that humankind faces." – Robert Cailliau, Belgian informatics engineer and computer scientist who, together with Tim Berners-Lee, developed the World Wide Web. The importance of data in information gathering, analytics, and insights cannot be measured easily.

Data has revolutionised the world and is now a crucial part of informed decision-making. However, access to data is often hindered by no real-time information, a variety of resources for the same data, and the high price of data collected by private stakeholders.

<https://cuts-citee.org/gati-shakti-to-leverage-data-mining-for-infrastructure-development/>

## After Bangladesh, river meetings in India address riparian challenges

*Third Pole, March 03, 2022 • By Deepmala Ghosh, Saurabh Kumar, Zobaidur Rahman*

Rajrajeshwar, a tiny river island (locally called char) in the Meghna River in Bangladesh's Chandpur district, is home to around 43,000 people. The island is highly vulnerable to intense river erosion during floods, forcing families to sleep under the open sky when the flood hits.

Chandpur is located near the confluence of Bangladesh's two mighty river systems: the Padma and the Meghna. Every year, floodwaters from the northern region flow into the Bay of Bengal via the Padma and Meghna rivers in Chandpur, driving erosion.

<https://cuts-citee.org/after-bangladesh-river-meetings-in-india-address-riparian-challenges/>





### India-Aus CECA and the dairy saga

*The Pioneer, March 10, 2022 • By Veena Vidyadharan and Swati Verma*

The rise in disposable income and preference for high-protein diets have created a consumer base for such niche dairy products. The India visit of the Australian trade minister in February 2022 has expedited the early harvest trade deal between both countries. An interim agreement would be a significant leap towards signing a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and Australia later this year.

In 2020, India was Australia's seventh-largest trading partner and sixth largest export destination. The two-way goods and services traded between the countries were worth US\$24.4bn.

<https://cuts-citee.org/india-aus-ceca-and-the-dairy-saga/>

### Cage fish farming has the potential to maximise profit for Assam's fisherfolk

*Northeast Now, March 20, 2022 • By Saurabh Kumar and Deepmala Ghosh*

In the wake of the struggle to make a sustainable living due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions and hardship, cage fishing can be proved to be a boon for the 25 lakh fish farmers of Assam.

Among them, around 36 per cent are women. Assam has around 2.86 lakh water resources, with Brahmaputra and Barak as the primary river system. With around 53 tributaries, 430 registered and 767 unregistered beels/Oxbow lakes, 369304 individual ponds, 6328 community tanks, and around 3882 derelict water bodies/swamps.

<https://cuts-citee.org/cage-fish-farming-has-potential-to-maximize-profit-for-assams-fisher-folk/>

### New wine in new bottles

*World Commerce Review, Spring 2022 • Bipul Chatterjee and Sneha Singh*

The running consensus in trade policy discourse in India is that Indian Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have been at best, a mixed bag and at worst, the cause behind stagnancy in the Indian manufacturing sector. The preference utilisation rate of Indian FTAs is among the lowest in Asia.

Additionally, increasing import demand and trade deficit with most FTA partners has added to the ire. However, it is another matter that the deficits would have occurred regardless of FTAs being in place.

[https://www.worldcommercereview.com/publications/article\\_pdf/2124](https://www.worldcommercereview.com/publications/article_pdf/2124)

### Can trade in the northeast boom with Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)?

*India Narrative, March 30, 2022 • By Suresh Prasad Singh and Deepmala Ghosh*

Efficient cross-border transport connectivity and logistics are building blocks for optimising trade potentiality. The initiative to establish Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along India's borders is one such building block for efficient connectivity and logistics. Some of them can be converted into multi-modal ICPs for more cross-border trade with further efficiency.

ICPs, along with well-established transport connectivity up to the border check posts, resembles a single window infrastructure for all import-export activities. These include all necessary support services to ensure smooth operation of cross-border trade.

<https://cuts-citee.org/can-trade-in-the-northeast-boom-with-integrated-check-posts-icps/>