

CUTS CITEE in Action

January-March 2017



Events

Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement *Facilitating implementation and stakeholder buy-in in the BBIN sub-region*

CUTS International is implementing a project to facilitate trade and transit among four countries, viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) by enabling the implementation of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) through evidence-based advocacy, facilitative dialogues and capacity building. The launch meeting of the project was held at Kolkata on February 16-17, 2017.

This objectives of the meeting was to deliberate and fine tune the project design and methodology; create awareness on the objectives, scope of work and methodology of the project; and generate ownership from early on among key stakeholders (viz. policymakers, researchers, private players, chambers, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations, media, etc.) in the region.

www.cuts-international.org/bbinmva/index.htm





Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-boundary Water

Promoting Navigational Usage of Inland Waterways in Ganga and Brahmaputra Basins

CUTS International, along with its partners in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal, and with support from The Asia Foundation, is implementing this project with the aim ‘to contribute to improving institutions for inland waterways governance with particular emphasis on transport connectivity and livelihood in the BBIN region’.

It aims to create an alternative policy discourse between policymakers, civil society and communities for enabling reform measures and better governance of inland waterways. It will also share knowledge between governments and civil society on governance of inland waterways.

The purpose of this meeting was to present country diagnostic study from India and initiate a discussion among experts on findings of the diagnostic study. This meeting was organised in New Delhi on March 07, 2017.

www.cuts-citee.org/IW/pdf/Agenda-Expanding_Tradable_Benefits_of_Trans-boundary_Water-Delhi_07Mar2017.pdf





Participation

- Sarbjit Singh participated in a conference on 'Rajasthan Exports: Golden Days are Back' organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Jaipur on March 25, 2017. The main purpose of the conference was to showcase the financial schemes available with banks for exporters and other government schemes which can help entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in the final validation workshop on 'Strengthening the Role of SAARC in the Sustainable Intensification of Agriculture in South Asia' organised by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment together with International Fund for Agricultural Development Asia and the Pacific Region and SAARC Secretariat, at Kathmandu on March 23-24, 2017. The objective of this workshop was to disseminate, discuss and validate the key outputs of the project '*Strengthening the Role of SAARC in the Sustainable Intensification of Agriculture in South Asia*' and to support the SAARC Secretariat in developing, a long-term vision on sustainable intensification of agriculture in the region.
- Surendar Singh participated in a seminar on Trade Facilitation organised by FICCI at Lucknow on March 23, 2017. He delivered a presentation on '*Emerging Issues in Trade Facilitation for the BBIN region*'.
- Akshat Mishra attended a workshop on 'Promoting Water Use Efficiency in the Urban Setup for Domestic and Industrial Use' jointly organised by the World Trade Centre, Jaipur and Hotel and Restaurant Association, Rajasthan on March 22, 2017. The objective of the workshop was to initiate discussion on issues regarding water demand-supply management in the industrial sector, mainly in hotels and restaurants, and to offer focussed solutions to tackle water inefficiency.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in the regional consultation workshop on 'CSO Vision for Cooperative Transboundary Water Resource Management in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) River Basins' organised by International Union for Conservation of Nature at Kathmandu on March 21-23, 2017. This workshop was organised under Building River Dialogue and Governance project and aimed to collaborate with 20 CSOs in GBM countries in developing a regional CSO for trans-boundary cooperation and water resource management.
- Jill Juma participated in a seminar on 'Strengthening India's Preparedness of The Trade Facilitation Agreement' organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at New Delhi on March 08, 2017. The meeting was the final round of a series of seminars on the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in different parts of India, to not only create awareness on the subject but also invite feedback and strengthen India's preparedness.
- Surendar Singh participated in an Executive Training Programme on 'Services and Global Value Chains' organised by European University Institute, Florence, Italy during February 20-23, 2017.
- Rahul Arora attended a workshop on 'Trade Facilitation in Services' organised by Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Department of Commerce (Government of India), and Centre for WTO Studies at FICCI, New Delhi on February 21, 2017. The objective of the workshop was to understand the challenges faced by the Indian industry from restrictions imposed by the developed countries related to trade in services.
- Kyle Cote attended a Talk on 'Superpower in Search of a Strategy: US Collaboration with China and India in the Globalisation of Innovation' organised by the Centre for Policy Research at New Delhi on February 14, 2017. This was a talk by Professor Andy Kennedy who specialises in international politics, with a particular interest in the foreign relations of China, India, and the US.
- Kyle Cote attended a talk by Professor Stephen Golub on 'A Grave New World? The Politics Behind Donald Trump's Presidency and its Potential Implications for the United States, India and the International Community' organised by The Observer Research Foundation at New Delhi on February 14, 2017.
- Bipul Chatterjee participated in UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Business Forum organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Bangladesh Chapter of International Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh at Dhaka, Bangladesh on February 08-09, 2017. He spoke in a session entitled '*Supporting Trade and Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration*'.
- Kyle Cote participated in an event on 'Post-Election India-US Relations' on January 11, 2017. The panel discussion examined recent developments in the bilateral relationship between India and the US following the November US Presidential Election. The event was in association with International Houses Worldwide, Indo-American Friendship Association, UChicago Centre in Delhi and India Habitat Centre.



In Media

India's Place in an Uncertain Trump Presidency

The Wire, February 12, 2017
By Pradeep S Mehta and Kyle Cote

With Donald Trump inaugurated as president of the US, the world is contemplating how international relations will play out with the global leader, including for those watching in India. Questions arise on whether to take Trump's nationalist rhetoric seriously or to believe his businessman persona will make him a practical president to deal with, or that the judicial system in the US will not allow him to implement some of his calls, such as the restrictions on the temporary movement of IT workers.

<https://thewire.in/107962/indias-trump-presidency/>

Is America not a free country anymore?

The Indian Economist, February 2, 2017
By Pradeep S Mehta and Kyle Cote

After a year of election rhetoric by President Donald Trump on immigration has quickly put into action by signing executive orders, proving that he'll stand on his controversial election promises. Signed, the executive order makes more than 134 million people temporarily homeless.

<http://theindianeconomist.com/cost-us-executive-order/>



Publications

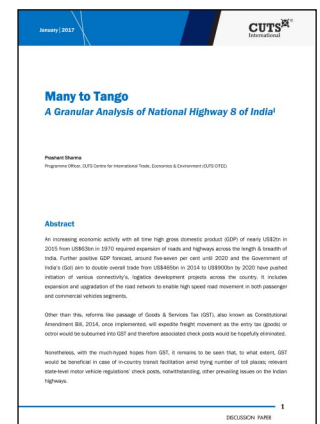
Many to Tango

A Granular Analysis of National Highway 8 of India

An increasing economic activity with all time high gross domestic product (GDP) of nearly US\$2tn in 2015 from US\$63bn in 1970 required expansion of roads and highways across the length & breadth of India. Further positive GDP forecast, around five-seven per cent until 2020 and the Government of India's (GoI) aim to double overall trade from US\$465bn in 2014 to US\$900bn by 2020 have pushed initiation of various connectivity's, logistics development projects across the country. It includes expansion and up gradation of the road network to enable high-speed road movement in both passenger and commercial vehicles segments.

Other than this, reforms like the passage of Goods & Services Tax (GST), also known as Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2014, once implemented, will expedite freight movement as the entry tax (goods) or octroi would be subsumed into GST and therefore associated check posts would be hopefully eliminated.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/A_Granular_Analysis_of_NH-8_of_India.pdf



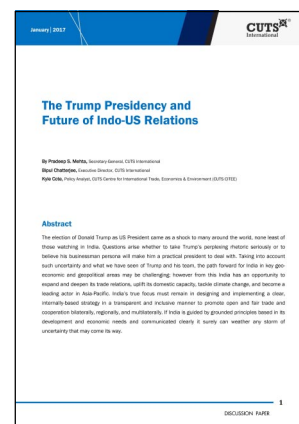


The Trump Presidency and Future of Indo-US Relations

The election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States of America came as a surprise to many around the world, none least of those watching in India. Taking into account high levels of expected uncertainty in what we have seen of Mr Trump and his team, India's true focus must remain in designing and implementing a clear, internally-based strategy in a transparent and inclusive manner to promote open and fair trade, addressing climate change, and boost cooperation bilaterally, regionally, and multilaterally.

This Working Paper provides insights on what to expect from a Trump Presidency, potential geo-economic and geo-political issues between the two nations, and policy direction on what India can do moving forward on trade, climate change, and security.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/CUTS-Working_Paper_Indo-US_relation_in_Trump_Presidency.pdf



Climate Change Impacts on Food Security in India Staple Crops and Food Security Scenarios

Climate change and demographic changes in India have affected key natural resources, such as land and water. One visible aftershock of these effects is changing food production scenarios in India. Numerous General Circulation Models (GCMs) have been designed to quantify the physical impacts of climate change on food production scenarios. The discussions in this paper are based on the International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT) model analysis by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on selected crops in different sub-regions of India and draws from conclusions of the 4th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment report.

This Discussion Paper argues that staple food crops have the potential to be compatible to transitional climate aberrations if supported with technology and policies. Given that the four pillars of food security are directly linked to food production and entitlement mechanisms, the paper also includes suggestions for improving such mechanisms.

www.cuts-citee.org/FOODSEC/pdf/Discussion-Paper_Climate_Change_Impacts_on_Indian_Agriculture_Staple_Crops_and_Food_Security_Scenarios.pdf

Trade as a Tool for LDC Graduation

How can the Multilateral Trading System Deliver on Development?

The essence of this Discussion Paper is to identify the manner in which tools provided by the multilateral trading system have the potential to assist LDCs in graduating, as provided by success stories of the past and specific benefits offered by trade-related programmes. While only four countries having graduated so far, certain LDCs, such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Kiribati provide interesting cases of complicated inter-relationships of graduation criteria within the trading system.

Although difficult to directly correlate, the multilateral trade has the ability to assist more LDCs graduate, and meet the goal of Istanbul Plan of Action (IPoA), by focussing on certain assistance programmes and mechanisms while also amending its functions. Importantly, finding an equitable support structure for developed countries, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and trade-related programmes to remove capacity constraints and building on the unique opportunities of each country lies at the heart of LDC graduation.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Discussion_Paper-Trade_as_a_Tool_for_LDC_Graduation.pdf

