

CUTS CITEE IN ACTION

JANUARY-MARCH 2023



Regional Meeting on Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Subregion

CUTS International organised Regional Meeting on Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Subregion at New Delhi on March 02, 2023, under a project 'Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Subregion'. The project is supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK under its Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme, and was attended by more than 70 participants representing a diverse group of stakeholders.



"Transport connectivity should be the main building block for intra-regional trade and cooperation in the BBIN subregion and this must cover different modes of transportation. Under our work on multimodal connectivity in BBIN subregion, we have not looked at road connectivity in silos, but gone much beyond that. We have identified that several multimodal connectivity options are already present in this subregion and they need to be nurtured to realise their potential to double intra-regional trade in this subregion from the current level of US\$20bn," said Bipul Chattopadhyay, Executive Director, CUTS International.

"Various outputs prepared under the project such as country-specific policy recommendations are vital to achieving inclusive growth in the BBIN subregion," stated Sutapa Choudhury, Deputy Head, Indo-Pacific Regional Department, India and Indian Ocean Directorate, FCDO, UK.

According to Mikiko Tanaka, Head of Subregional Office for South and South West Asia, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "There is a need to work on facilitating the conversation flow between different organisations, keeping in mind their multi-layered characteristics at the sub-national, both national and regional level."

<https://cuts-citee.org/regional-meeting-multimodal-connectivity-in-the-bbin-subregion/>



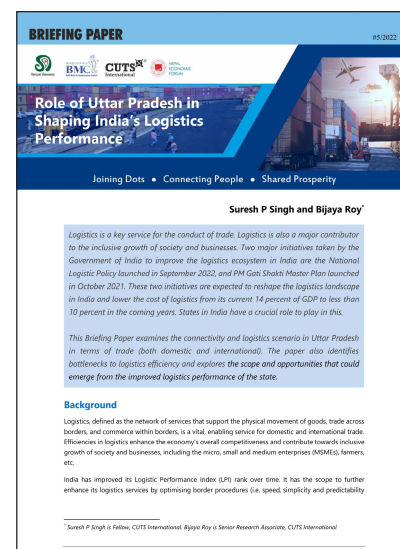
BRIEFING PAPERS

Role of Uttar Pradesh in Shaping India's Logistics Performance

Logistics is a key service for the conduct of trade. Logistics is also a major contributor to the inclusive growth of society and businesses. Two major initiatives taken by the Government of India to improve the logistics ecosystem in India are the National Logistic Policy launched in September 2022, and PM Gati Shakti Master Plan launched in October 2021.

This Briefing Paper examines the connectivity and logistics scenario in Uttar Pradesh in terms of trade (both domestic and international). The paper also identifies bottlenecks to logistics efficiency and explores the scope and opportunities that could emerge from the improved logistics performance of the state.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bp-role-of-up-in-shaping-indias-logistics-performance.pdf>



Understanding Logistics Ecosystem in Bihar and its Scope for Improvement

Two major initiatives taken by the Government of India to improve the logistics ecosystem in India are the National Logistic Policy launched in September 2022 and PM Gati Shakti Master Plan launched in October 2021. These two initiatives are expected to reshape India's logistics landscape and lower logistics costs from its current 14 per cent GDP to less than 10 per cent in the coming years. States in India, including Bihar, have a crucial role in this.

This Briefing Paper examines Bihar's connectivity and logistics scenario regarding the availability of transport infrastructure and ease of movement of freight and people. The paper also identifies bottlenecks to logistics efficiency and explores the scope and opportunities that could emerge from the improved logistics performance of the State.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bp-understanding-logistics-ecosystem-in-bihar-and-its-scope-for-improvement.pdf>



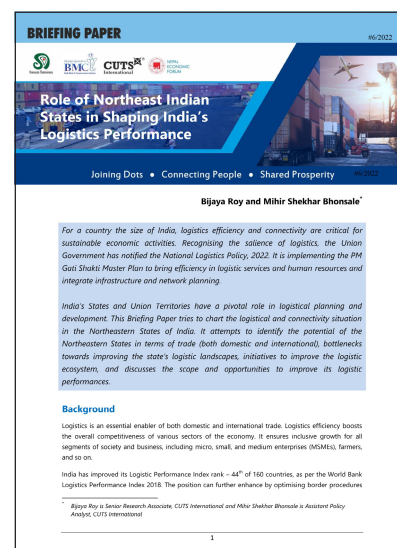


Role of Northeast Indian States in Shaping India's Logistics Performance

Recognising the salience of logistics, the Union Government has notified the National Logistics Policy, 2022. It is implementing the PM Gati Shakti Master Plan to bring efficiency in logistic services and human resources and integrate infrastructure and network planning. India's States and Union Territories have a pivotal role in logistical planning and development.

This Briefing Paper tries to chart the logistical and connectivity situation in the Northeastern States of India. It attempts to identify the potential of the Northeastern States in terms of trade (both domestic and international), bottlenecks towards improving the state's logistic landscapes, initiatives to improve the logistic ecosystem, and discusses the scope and opportunities to improve its logistic performances.

<https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bp-role-of-northeast-indian-states-in-shaping-indias-logistics-performance.pdf>



Scope and Potential for Multimodal ICPs in the Northeast Region of India

One major development that has significantly contributed to increased trade among the BBIN countries is the establishment of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at several border check posts, replacing the Land Customs Stations (LCS).

This Briefing Paper attempts to explore the possibility of connecting operational ICPs in the Northeast Region (NER) of India with multimodal transportation –railways, waterways, and airways. It identifies two ICPs at Sutarkandi in Assam and Sabroom in Tripura, which has the potential to be connected with other modes of transportation in addition to roadways.

Further, the paper also argues for making Dhubri river port in Assam a multimodal ICP based on its strategic location and its proximity to different modes of transportation.

https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/bp-scope_and_potential_for_multimodal_icps_in_the_northeast_region_of_india.pdf





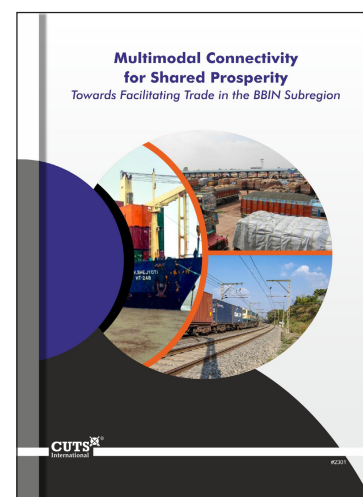
RESEARCH REPORT

Multimodal Connectivity for Shared Prosperity Towards Facilitating Trade in the BBIN Subregion

The ever-transitional dynamics of South Asia have always been responsive to multifarious geopolitical demands, in congruence with its ambitions of coping with the emerging global order. Over the past few decades, several cooperative mechanisms and theories have been formulated to strengthen the region's trade and economic integration pursuit. A remarkable instance of such mechanisms is BBIN collegial framework.

To benefit from the immense potential and shared prosperity through improved cooperation and economic integration, there is an urgent need to have a clear understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of infrastructure, policy, and regulatory gaps; and undertake a concerted initiative towards implementing seamless multimodal transport connectivity in the subregion.

https://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/report_multimodal_connectivity_for_shared_prosperity.pdf



DIGITAL STORY

Gender Inclusivity in Trade and Connectivity A Collage of Stories from the BBIN Subregion

CUTS International produced a digital story 'Gender Inclusivity in Trade and Connectivity A collage of stories from the BBIN sub-region' that captures women's needs and priorities concerning transport connectivity, under the project "Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multi-modal Connectivity in the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan India, Nepal) Sub-region" (M-Connect),

The story highlights the need for gender-inclusive road transportation and suggests measures to be adopted while planning, designing and implementing infrastructure projects.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ek0AFVQRpY>





PARTICIPATION

- Suresh P Singh attended a meeting on 'Deconstructing the Himalayan Dilemma & Forging Partnerships' organised by the Integrated Mountain Initiative' in New Delhi on March 24, 2023.
- Swati Verma participated in the Ganges sustainable energy transition workshop organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Kathmandu, Nepal on February 21-23, 2023.
- Veena Vidyadharan and Sumanta Biswas participated in the Inception Workshop of the regional programme TROSA (Transboundary Rivers of South Asia) in Bangkok from February 27-March 01, 2023.
- Advaiyot Sharma participated in the Stakeholder Consultation alongside the Special Negotiating Round of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) jointly organised by the Department of Commerce, Government of India and the U.S. Department of Commerce in New Delhi on February 09, 2023.
- Indranil Bose presented a paper on 'Border Haats between India and Bangladesh' at a conference on 'Sub-Regional Cooperation for Trade, Investment, and Employment' organised by the Department of Economics, Tripura University on March 23-24, 2023.
- Mihir Shekhar Bhonsale attended the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics in New Delhi on March 03-04, 2023. He also attended the G20 T20 Youth Engagement- Macroeconomic Policy Coherence, Global Trade, and Livelihoods organised by the Observer Research Foundation in association with St. Xaviers College, Kolkata on March 27, 2023.
- Arnab Ganguly and Bijaya Roy attended the conference organised by The World Bank in Guwahati to discuss what needs to be done by India's Northeastern states to facilitate effective implementation of the BBIN MVA; and how the states could benefit in the process on January 20, 2023.
- Arnab Ganguly spoke at a conference titled 'Indo-Bhutan Relation in Present Times' organised by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata on January 14, 2023.
- Arnab Gnguly attended the 11th Foundation Day of the Land Ports Authority of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India organised at Dawki, Meghalaya" on March 21, 2023.



India-led G20 and the ensuing troika: A test of time in the Global South

Economic Times, March 12, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta and Aratrika Deb

While it may be purely coincidental, the next troika of G20 will comprise India, the current chair, Brazil, the successor, and South Africa, the next in line. Each of them is situated on three different continents, comprising the Global South. Expectedly, the Troika will enable the countries to continue to coordinate their plans.

As they say, 'every cloud has a silver lining'. Even in the crevices of the recent global order, a geopolitical fragmentation alongside multifaceted diplomacies, against the backdrop of a pandemic, a ray of hope still prevails for some countries, especially the emerging ones. It is time for them to be proactive and initiate action if not readily implemented, as 2023 happens to be an eventful beginning of G20 presidencies for India, Brazil and South Africa.

<https://cuts-citee.org/india-led-g20-and-the-ensuing-troika-a-test-of-time-in-the-global-south/>

Energizing the India-Bangladesh Partnership

Northeast News, March 24, 2023 • By Mihir Shekhar Bhonsale

Cooperation in the energy sector has emerged as a hallmark of cooperation between India and Bangladesh. At a time when the world is staring at an energy crisis given the supply chain disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine war, the synergy that Dhaka and India have shown in the energy sector is exemplary.

India pursuant to its Neighbourhood First Policy has stood by its neighbour in difficult times. On March 18, 2023, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFP) making it the first cross-border energy pipeline transporting high-speed diesel.

<https://nenews.in/opinion/energizing-the-india-bangladesh-partnership/1231/>

India needs a reimagination of trade policy discourse in the country

The Economic Times, March 27, 2023 • By Pradeep S Mehta and Gopal K Agarwal

At the 2023 ET Global Business Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about the nation passing through an 'era of reimagination' - how India has been reimagining and reinventing each aspect of governance. This reimagining process must now be extended to India's outlook on international trade.

Any country's trade policy is an intricate blend of priorities and concerns in the realms of domestic and international, economic and political, and producer and consumer interests. Trade policy is shaped by the economic path pursued by a country. Given the scale and complexity of India with so many different interests pulling in different directions, all the various moving parts of the economic and trade policies, as well as these systems as a whole, need to tread a fine balance in the pursuit of effective and equitable economic growth.

<https://bit.ly/40gLMOD>