



**DELHI POLICY GROUP**

*Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power*

## DPG Report, Vol. 3, Issue 2

**Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation:  
Action Plans and Recommendations for Policymakers**

June, 2018





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## **Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation: ACTION PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS**

**By Biren Nanda, Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group**

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June 2018  
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This Report on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation: Action Plans and Recommendations for Policymakers” is produced by the Delhi Policy Group, an independent and autonomous, not for profit think tank which focuses primarily on strategic issues of critical national interest. In keeping with the growing dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise as a leading power. To support that goal, the DPG undertakes research and organizes policy interactions across a wide canvas, including strategic and geo-political issues, geo-economic issues and defense and security issues.

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## Preface and Acknowledgments

When the Delhi Policy Group commenced its journey to take stock of the ongoing efforts at promoting BBIN sub-regional cooperation in October 2016, we did not anticipate the groundswell of interest particularly in Northeast India and amongst India's neighbors. With SAARC in the doldrums, BBIN began to be perceived as the region's last chance to reap the benefits of regional integration. In each roundtable venue outside New Delhi, local scholars and experts played a crucial role in socializing the event and encouraging local participation. In Northeast-India, the search for enhanced connectivity was the overriding factor, whereas in the other BBIN countries, the desire for greater integration with India and amongst each other in order to benefit from this integration drove the interest in exploring new avenues of cooperation. The last three roundtables brainstormed two-year Action Plans for BBIN leaving behind a lasting outcome of the exercise.

These ten roundtables were the outcome of sustained efforts and interest on part of many colleagues who contributed in putting them together. First and foremost, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of Ambassador H. K. Singh, the Director General of DPG without whose guidance and leadership this project would not have come to fruition.

We owe a debt of gratitude also to Dr. Sagar Prasai, Country Representative, Asia Foundation, India and Ms. Diya Nag, Head Programs Officer, Asia Foundation for their guidance and ideas, which contributed to a continuous improvement in the roundtable process and outcomes. We are grateful to Asia Foundation for funding support for the roundtables without which the project would have not been possible.

We would like to thank Ambassador Sanjay Singh for initiating the BBIN roundtables in 2016 and for his sustained participation as Chair of various sessions. Amongst the academic colleagues, Professor Prabir De of the RIS has played a stellar role both in Chairing and mentoring sessions and in advising on the planning of the roundtables, contributing papers and sharing his insights and deep knowledge on the subject. Dr. Selim Raihan, Professor of Economics, Dhaka University & Executive Director, SANEM played an invaluable role in advising on the participation in the roundtables in Dhaka and other BBIN countries besides chairing and mentoring sessions. Mr. Purushottam Ojha played a vital role in mobilizing participation for the Kathmandu roundtable besides presenting papers in BBIN roundtables in India and other BBIN countries.

Last but not the least we would like to acknowledge the contributions of the BBIN Team in the DPG – our Research Associates Tanzoom Ahmad who was with the project since its inception till her departure for higher studies in the middle of last year, Angana Guha Roy, Shulagna Pal and Mohit Musaddi whose tireless efforts helped steer the project to productive outcomes.





## Introduction

Beginning September 2016, the Delhi Policy Group and the Asia Foundation organized ten Roundtable Discussions on Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation. Participants in the roundtables were drawn from Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, Shillong, Kathmandu, Thimpu and Dhaka and comprised of academics, scholars, experts, civil society representatives and media persons. Though intended as a track 2 exercise, the roundtables had good participation and support from track 1 officials. This series of roundtables concluded in December 2017. The reports on the proceedings of each roundtable may be seen at the website of The Delhi Policy Group at [www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

Discussions at each of the roundtables took place in four thematic areas: Trade and Economic Issues, Transit and Multimodal Connectivity (Roadways, Waterways, Railways and Aviation), Energy-hydropower and Water Resource Management and People to People Connectivity through multi-sectoral Engagement. At the last three roundtables held in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi, the participants were requested to brainstorm and develop concrete two-year Plans of Action for the four thematic areas.

This Report is divided into six sections. The first section describes the prevailing lack of economic integration in the BBIN region and how it has disadvantaged countries in the sub-region. It explains how geopolitical and geo-economic factors have combined to give an impetus and momentum to BBIN cooperation and how the BBIN concept integrates well with India's Act East Policy.

The second section traces the progress of BBIN sub-regional cooperation and lists some significant milestones that have been achieved in recent years including the Motor Vehicle Agreement, the coastal shipping agreement and the renewal of the Protocol for Inland Water Transport with Bangladesh. It describes the ongoing push towards the building of connectivity infrastructure in India's Northeast. It concludes by asserting that for BBIN to be successful it has to be sensitive to national concerns of each member of the grouping.

The third section describes the design of the roundtables. It observes the high level of interest evinced by senior track 1 representatives in participating in the discussions and gives an assessment of what the roundtables have achieved. Apart from contributing to the discourse on BBIN sub-regional cooperation, the three roundtables held in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi developed Two Year Action Plans for the four thematic areas identified in the BBIN sub-regional Cooperation.

The fourth section captures the three Action Plans in a single table – each listing three priorities for each thematic area, the implementation process and the likely challenges.

The fifth section gives the flavor of some significant proposals/recommendations made by scholars at the roundtable discussions

The final section brings together some of the findings and key takeaways from the report.



## I. Why is BBIN Cooperation Acquiring Greater Salience Over Time?

### *Low Level Of Regional Integration in South Asia*

Countries in South Asia share a common civilizational heritage and are linked together by common bonds of history and culture. However, the post-colonial emergence of a number of newly independent states in South Asia have resulted in the disruption of the natural connectivity within the region, leaving South Asia as one of the least integrated regions in the world.

Intra-regional trade as a percentage of total trade is one indicator of regional economic integration. Here too, South Asia performs very poorly with intra-regional trade accounting for less than 5% of the total trade. In contrast the ASEAN's intra-regional trade accounts for 25% of its total trade.

The low level of regional integration has also manifested itself in low levels of intra-regional investment. Existing barriers have hindered the flow of capital and qualified human resources within South Asia.



*With intra-regional trade at less than 5% of total trade, South Asia is the least integrated region in the world, dwarfed by East Asia's 35% and Europe's 60%. Source: World Bank*

## ***LDCs and Landlocked Countries of South Asia are Disadvantaged the Most***

This has adversely affected the economic prospects of the least developed countries of South Asia. They need access to international markets to expand trade and freer movement of investment and capital flows to achieve their economic goals. Similarly, the landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan who depend upon economic and physical connectivity for harnessing economic opportunities in South Asia and the rest of the world have been disadvantaged the most.

## ***India Led the Way by Lowering or Eliminating Tariffs under the SAFTA Process***

Data for 2014-15 show that India accounts for nearly 79% of South Asia's GDP, while South Asia accounts for only 3.09% of India's trade volume.<sup>i</sup> This has led to a perception amongst South Asian countries that India has the primary and overwhelming responsibility to open its markets and walk the extra mile to bring about regional economic integration in South Asia. India has responded by lowering or eliminating tariffs under the SAFTA process.

In addition, India has also granted duty free access to LDCs in August 2008. The scheme was implemented in phases and has been fully operational since 2012, and currently offers zero duties or preferential tariff on more than 98% of India's tariff lines.<sup>ii</sup> The offer benefits all LDCs in BBIN.

However, tariff reductions have not resulted in a quantum jump in intra-regional trade.

## ***NTBs are More Important than Tariffs in Explaining the Low Level of Intra-Regional Trade in South Asia***

Studies indicate that NTBs are more important than tariffs in explaining the low level of intra-regional trade in South Asia.<sup>iii</sup> They also reveal that bilateral trade costs within South Asia are much higher than the trade costs of the countries of the region with Southeast Asia. Trade Facilitation costs are also a major barrier to trade which render exports noncompetitive. These are manifested in delays at Land Custom Stations, travel restrictions and visa issues, poor infrastructure, trans-shipment delays and incompatibility of documentation requirements on either side of the border.

## ***Factors Which Have Given an Impetus to BBIN Cooperation***

First, geopolitical factors and a lack of progress in SAARC has contributed to a heightened interest in BBIN and BIMSTEC. BBIN countries eager to reap the benefits of regional integration are keen to escape from the impasse in SAARC by moving ahead within the framework of sub-regional cooperation in the Eastern corridor of South Asia.

Second, BBIN countries wish to participate in regional value chains in order to benefit from country specific comparative advantages to lower costs and increase competitiveness.

Third, there is an enhanced availability of funding for BBIN connectivity projects. There is greater willingness than ever on part of multilateral financial institutions like the ADB and JICA to prioritize infrastructure development in Northeast India. The Government of India has also stepped up investment in railway, road and waterways connectivity in India's Northeast.

Fourth, India's Act East Policy seeks greater integration and connectivity with the ASEAN. BBIN sub-regional cooperation in connectivity will help extend the process of integration with ASEAN as well.

Fifth, the BBIN initiative has helped tackle the problem of locational disadvantage faced by India's Northeast states, by providing connectivity within the sub-region and with the ASEAN.

Last, but not the least any regional initiative has to be founded on the bedrock of good bilateral relations between its members. Fortunately, in this respect the situation for BBIN nations has, taking the overall picture into account, never been better.

## II. How has BBIN Sub-regional Integration Progressed in Recent Years?

During the recent period, the BBIN has made good progress in enhancing regional integration in the eastern corridor of South Asia. This accelerated progress has been driven by geopolitical developments related to the deteriorating India-Pakistan relations and the consequent impasse within SAARC. On a more positive note, the decisive outcomes within BBIN have been built on the foundation of good bilateral relations between the four countries and their desire to push forward with regional integration initiatives.

### ***BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement***

In June 2015, the four BBIN countries signed the BBIN Motor Vehicle Framework Agreement (MVA), which seeks to greatly reduce cross border restrictions on the movement of people, cargo and vehicles.

The BBIN MVA will eliminate the necessity of cross border trans-shipment of goods thereby eliminating one major source of delay and higher transaction costs. It also has the potential to encourage the growth of containerization in the movement of goods within the BBIN sub-region. For India's north-eastern states it will reduce the distance between these states to Kolkata port by about a thousand kilometres.



*Owing to Bhutan's mountainous landscape, rail connectivity is impossible. In that regard, the BBIN MVA signed in June 2015 was a welcome step for all the BBIN Countries. Bhutan subsequently had reservations on the agreement and has not ratified it to date. Source : PTI*

Bhutan subsequently had reservations on the agreement and has not ratified it to date. However, with the agreement of all four BBIN countries it has been decided that India, Bangladesh and Nepal would go ahead and implement the agreement. This decision of proceeding with the approval of consensus minus one is, in fact, a welcome precedent and bodes well for future.

### ***Progress is made to Lay the Foundations of Multimodal Transport Arrangements in BBIN***

The four countries are also in discussions regarding the Multi-modal Transport Agreement, which will cover cross-border transit by road, rail and inland waterways.

In addition, India and Bangladesh signed the Coastal Shipping Agreement in June 2015, which allows goods to move by sea from Kolkata in West Bengal to Chittagong Port in Bangladesh and have also renewed the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) for five years. They also agreed to seek international financing for development of the entire Bilateral Protocol Routes between the two countries as envisaged in the Bilateral Framework Agreement on Trade and Transit.

Meanwhile, landlocked Bhutan and Nepal have agreements in place with both India and Bangladesh to use the inland waterways (as well as roads, railways, and ports) in these two coastal countries to transport Bhutanese and Nepalese bilateral, international and transit trade.

These historic agreements have paved the way for the development of a regional integrated multimodal transport network with enormous potential to increase trade and people-to-people contact and promote the development of economic corridors.<sup>iv</sup>

India and Bangladesh have stressed upon the importance of improving border infrastructure for trade in goods and energy and improved people to people connectivity. It is heartening to note the progress that is being made on a bilateral basis between India and Bangladesh in this area. Examples are the India Bangladesh Grid Interconnection Project, enhanced waterways and rail connectivity, the inauguration of the Phulbari and Banglabandhu checkpoints which will also facilitate trade for Bhutan and Nepal and improvements in the visa system. To be sure, a lot more needs to be accomplished particularly on the Petrapole-Benapole border where there is a lack of facilities on the Bangladesh side. To finance the improvements in infrastructure including border infrastructure, the Government of India has extended Lines of Credit to Bangladesh amounting to 8 billion US Dollars.

### ***Enhanced Connectivity within India's Northeast and with the ASEAN***

The availability of enhanced multilateral funding has made significant contributions to the progress within BBIN. The ADB has ambitious plans of trans-Asia road and rail networks, and the BBIN initiative coupled with the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway agreement can fit well into those plans.

The Government of India is also channelling more resources into improving connectivity in India's Northeast. By 2022, all state capitals in the Northeast except Shillong will be linked by railways to Guwahati. Japanese ODA is being utilized to speedup road-building in the region. India's US \$ 8 billion line of credit to Bangladesh is being utilized to enhance rail, overland and coastal connectivity with Bangladesh. By 2020, nine of the eleven railway links between India and Bangladesh severed in 1965 will be restored.

Regulations have been drafted for cross border trade in electricity. India is currently exporting electricity to Bangladesh and Nepal and importing power from Bhutan.

### ***To Achieve Success BBIN must pay heed to National Concerns and Sensitivities***

The BBIN sub-region is characterized by a diversity in geography and heterogeneity in the levels of economic development, and asymmetry of physical and economic size. For the BBIN initiative to achieve success, it must adopt the ASEAN motto of proceeding 'at a pace comfortable to all'. The political objectives and policy priorities of these countries might be very different. Further, national security issues are increasingly becoming an area of major concern. These have the potential of limiting progress in the future. The long-term acceptability and success of BBIN will depend on how well these challenges are addressed.



### **III. Roundtables on Advancing BBIN Sub-Regional Cooperation**

#### ***Design of the Roundtables***

A total of 10 roundtables were organized by the Delhi Policy Group in New Delhi, Guwahati, Kolkata, Kathmandu and Dhaka between October 2016 and December 2017. The discussions in each roundtable were divided into four thematic areas :

#### 1. Trade and Economic Issues

[The session dealt with Non-Tariff barriers/ measures, Customs and Electronic Data Interchange, Banking, Border Trade and Border Infrastructure, BBIN MVA, etc.]

#### 2. Transit and Multimodal Connectivity

[The session dealt with Ports and Shipping, Aviation, Waterways, Road, Railways, Costal Shipping, particularly Container Transportation]

#### 3. Energy-hydropower and Water Resource Management

[The session dealt with Hydropower Power Sharing and Transmission, Non-conventional Energy, and Energy Investment.]

#### 4. People to People Connectivity through multi-sectoral Engagement

[The session dealt with Tourism, Higher Education, Health, Cultural Heritage, Media, Film, Performing Arts, Music and Visual Arts, etc.]

Discussions in last three roundtables in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi focused on outlining two-year Plans of Action for each of the four thematic areas. These Action Plans outlined the implementation process as well as the likely challenges. The idea was to get three distinct and unique national perspectives from participants in the three capitals.

On Day 1, experts from BBIN countries presented papers. The topic of each paper was decided based on their area of expertise and the thematic area of the session they presented the paper in.

On Day 2, the meeting design was in a workshop format focusing on brainstorming sessions, where participants were divided into Groups based on their expertise. Each Group was led by a Group Mentor. Participants engaged themselves in developing concrete two-year Plans of Action for each of the four thematic areas discussed at the roundtable.

### ***How much Traction did the Roundtables get at the Track 1 level?***

The 10 BBIN roundtables had participation from scholars, experts, civil society representatives, media persons and businesspersons amongst others. The roundtables were also able to attract participation from think tanks and other institutions in a range of geographical locations – New Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, Kathmandu and Dhaka.

Though the Roundtables on Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation were intended as a Track 2 exercise, they received good traction at the Track 1 level. In Dhaka the roundtable was inaugurated by Dr. Mashiur Rahman, the Chief Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh; in Kathmandu the roundtable was inaugurated by Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission, Nepal and two other members of the Planning Commission of Nepal were amongst the speakers at the roundtable. From Bhutan Lyongpo Khandu Wangchuk, MLA and former Prime Minister attended the roundtable in November 2016.

Indian participants included the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, the Indian Ambassador to Nepal and the Joint Secretaries in MEA responsible for BBIN countries. Other participants included former Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. The healthy participation from Track 1 and from think tanks in the BBIN countries was a welcome sign of interest in the progress of the BBIN agenda.



*Though the roundtables were envisioned as a Track II Exercise, they received good traction at Track I level too.  
L-R: Hon'ble Dr. Mashiur Rahman (Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh),  
Amb. H.K. Singh (Director-General, Delhi Policy Group) and His Excellency Harsh Vardhan Shringla  
(High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh)*

### ***What have the BBIN Roundtables achieved so far?***

The BBIN Roundtables have conducted an in-depth examination of the present situation and the future potential for regional cooperation in the four thematic areas of Trade and economic issues, Transit and Multimodal Connectivity, Energy, Hydropower and water resource management and People to People Connectivity.

The last three roundtables in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi, have more importantly, focused on outlining and fleshing out details of a two-year action plan in each of the four thematic areas outlined earlier. Each two-year action plan identifies three priority areas and lists out the implementation process and likely challenges.

## IV. The BBIN Action Plans Developed in the Roundtables held in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi

The following table summarizes the three two-year Plans of Action developed in the final three roundtables held in Kathmandu, Dhaka and New Delhi:

**TABLE: SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED ON THE BBIN PLANS OF ACTION IN KATHMANDU, DHAKA AND NEW DELHI**

<b>TRADE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES</b>			
	<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS</b>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>
<b>DHAKA ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Mutual Recognition of Standards</p> <p>CEPA amongst BBIN countries</p> <p>Creation of BBIN Development Fund</p> <p>Creation of a functioning BBIN Secretariat</p>	<p>Develop and harmonize standards for BBIN, organize meetings of BBIN Standards Organizations, conclude Mutual Recognition Agreements</p> <p>Establish testing and certification facilities</p> <p>Form Joint Study Groups, establish inter-governmental Joint Working Groups and conclude BBIN MRAs and the BBIN CEPA</p> <p>Call for a meeting of BBIN Finance Ministers, Central Bank Governors and Finance Secretaries, create a seed fund, convene a BBIN Summit and conclude an inter-governmental agreement for establishing a BBIN Development Bank.</p> <p>Establish a BBIN Secretariat, give sufficient authority to the Secretary General of the BBIN Secretariat.</p>	<p>Political will and commitment</p> <p>Funding from government</p> <p>Getting a consensus regarding the authority delegated to the BBIN Secretary General</p>
	<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS</b>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>
<b>KATHMANDU ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Cooperation amongst NSOs</p> <p>Trade Facilitation</p> <p>Quadra-regional Investments</p>	<p>Capacity building in NSOs,</p> <p>Negotiation of MOUs among NSOs, MRAs and BBIN Dispute Settlement Mechanism</p> <p>Establishment of National Single Window for Customs, electronic document exchange and improved border infrastructure.</p> <p>Establishment of an inter-governmental BBIN committee to lead the process.</p> <p>Resource Management and mobilization</p> <p>Remove legal and procedural barriers for investment.</p> <p>Negotiate BBIN investment Treaty</p> <p>Establish BBIN SEZ.</p> <p>Establish BBIN Bank</p>	<p>Political commitment</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>National Coordination amongst stakeholders</p> <p>Bureaucratic and procedural hassles.</p>

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DELHI ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Signing of BBIN CEPA</p> <p>Dealing with NTMs</p> <p>Building Value Chains</p>	<p>Formation of Joint Study Groups and Joint Working Groups.</p> <p>Mobilisation of funds, stakeholders consultations</p> <p>Dispute Settlement mechanism</p> <p>BBIN MRAs</p> <p>BBIN Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>BBIN Trade Fairs</p> <p>BBIN Trade Portals</p> <p>BBIN Business Travellers Card</p>	<p>Lack of Political Will</p> <p>Existence of Special and Differential Treatments.</p> <p>Funding and Technical Constraints</p> <p>Skills Development</p> <p>Infrastructure Issues</p> <p>Harmonization of Trade Facilitation measures</p> <p>Reform of the Visa regime</p>

### TRANSIT AND MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DHAKA ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Capacity building of ports, IWT and Rail networks</p> <p>Efficient road transport</p> <p>Improving Air Connectivity</p>	<p>Push containerization and bring in private players.</p> <p>Improve existing port facilities and add new seaports on India's east coast for BBIN use. Encourage private players.</p> <p>Allow BBIN ports for third country trade needs.</p> <p>Add new river ports in India and Bangladesh for BBIN use. Reduce turnaround time.</p> <p>Establish direct rail connectivity with these ports. Run scheduled freight trains.</p> <p>For efficient road transportation promote containerization, harmonization of axel load, establish transshipment hubs, build trans-shipment hub in Siliguri. Connect southern Nepal, Bangladesh and Northeast India with a BBIN air network. Prioritize low cost carriers.</p> <p>Air connectivity: Connect Birgunj, Biratnagar and Bhairawa in Nepal; Syedpur and Jessore in Bangladesh; Bhutan; Kolkata, Siliguri, Patna, Lucknow, Varanasi, Guwahati and other Northeastern airports in India.</p>	<p>High freight costs due to one-way traffic.</p> <p>Creating a critical mass for the viability of IWT and rail cargo.</p> <p>Non-availability of containers.</p> <p>Resistance from existing stakeholders including truckers.</p> <p>Resistance to harmonization of axle load in Bangladesh.</p> <p>Non-availability of container trucks.</p> <p>Lack of common regulatory framework.</p>

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>KATHMANDU ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Mapping the network of roads, railways, navigable rivers, inland water channels and facilities along these arteries</p> <p>Ratification and Operationalization of the MVA while addressing concerns of Bhutan</p> <p>BBIN Railway Agreement based on the SAARC Regional agreement template</p>	<p>Mapping of Connectivity networks especially at the borders, including current procedural and regulatory aspects for using them along with the current state of utilization.</p> <p>Digital mapping, physical verification of status, capacities and facilities and type of traffic using the routes.</p> <p>Ratification and operationalisation of MVA ( Try to get Bhutan in by meeting Bhutan's concerns)</p> <p>Improve visa processing systems.</p> <p>Bring third party, third country within the ambit of the MVA</p> <p>Explore common regional number plate for vehicles.</p> <p>Allow operators in BBIN to buy and register vehicles in any country</p> <p>Harmonization of BBIN MVA with ICEGATE and ASYCODA.</p> <p>Negotiate BBIN Railway Agreement based on the SAARC Railway Agreement.</p> <p>Focus on multimodal aspects of rail connectivity including seaports; expert group to identify issues.</p> <p>Have a special focus on container movement and its rationalisation; an expert group to identify issues.</p>	<p>Identification and collation of data</p> <p>Time bound implementation within approved budgetary outlays.</p> <p>Surmounting security challenges</p> <p>Dealing with the opacity of government regulations.</p> <p>Dealing with competing demands of individual BBIN countries</p> <p>Status capacity and standardization of Axle load</p> <p>Capacity building of border authorities and facilities at the border</p> <p>How to deal with the issue of different gauges in the railways of individual BBIN countries.</p> <p>Identify missing links in railway network</p> <p>Speed up immigration issues related to regional railway travel</p>
	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DELHI ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Multimodal Transit and Transport Agreement</p> <p>Mapping multimodal connectivity network</p> <p>Connectivity Master Plan</p>	<p>Study various Agreement models before finalising agreement</p> <p>Joint Study Groups, country level consultations followed by negotiations</p> <p>Identify elements of mapping, stakeholders, sources of information and financing options</p> <p>Study Transit + transport agreement, mapping report.</p> <p>Set up intergovernmental study group to finalize masterplan and secure financing</p> <p>Connectivity to support trade and P2P requirements.</p> <p>Support BBIN Community</p> <p>Identify Software and hardware to support BBIN Masterplan</p> <p>Address environmental concerns</p>	<p>Access to information, agreement on location of hubs</p> <p>Security related and law and order concerns</p> <p>National vs regional interests and interests of extra regional powers.</p>

## ENERGY AND WATER ISSUES

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DHAKA ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Navigation, Flood and Erosion</p> <p>Sustainable Energy Security</p> <p>Environmental Protection and People centricity</p>	<p>Strengthen Knowledge and data sharing and Increase formal institutional linkages</p> <p>Ascertain differential seasonal energy requirements and energy commitments at a regional level. Develop a fully integrated energy market.</p> <p>Move to life cycle impact assessments of projects. Understand trans-boundary impact of projects. Regionalize water quality commitments.</p> <p>Incorporate BBIN projects in national budgets, articulate domestic commitments in BBIN countries and engage the private sector in regional forums.</p> <p>To promote sustainability and environmental protection contextualize environment protocols, conventions and best practices for policy development, increase regional investments in environmental research, encourage joint management of resources and biodiversity and harmonize regulations.</p>	<p>Bilateral imperatives</p> <p>Lack of G2G platforms and multilateral Joint Commissions.</p> <p>Weak domestic political commitment.</p> <p>Need for reconciling domestic energy security concerns with regional concerns.</p> <p>Regional and country-wise pressures and stresses.</p> <p>Under-invested institutions in all countries.</p>
	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>KATHMANDU ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Enabling Policies for Investment and Energy Trade</p> <p>Integrated Multipurpose Water Resources Management</p> <p>Mitigating adverse impacts of Global warming and Climate Change.</p>	<p>Address ambiguities in India's CBTE vis a vis bilateral/ regional understanding</p> <p>Assess quantum of energy trade under BBIN Grid requirements</p> <p>Develop Rational Price Mechanism under different Energy mixes and prioritize clean energy and market-based pricing.</p> <p>Develop Benefit Adjusted investment/ pricing mechanism to support multipurpose reservoirs/pumped storage schemes.</p> <p>Constitute mechanism to address environmental, social, hydrological and metrological issues.</p> <p>Establish Data Information Access amongst BBIN countries – create Common Data Information Bank.</p> <p>Conduct assessment of multiple benefits of reservoirs, pumped storage and the allocation of costs.</p> <p>Establish BBIN-GBM Rivers Committee Initiate BBIN C-W/CC group and coordinate with expert organizations within and outside BBIN.</p>	<p>Diversity of rigid opinions based on national priorities and strategic considerations.</p> <p>Lack of transparency, political will and common understanding.</p> <p>Lack of funds.</p> <p>Implementation and understandings gap.</p> <p>Willingness of India to facilitate access to energy market.</p>

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DELHI ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>BBIN power sharing Agreement/ arrangement</p> <p>Integrated water management strategy</p> <p>Sustainability, Climate change and bio-diversity</p>	<p>Harmonization of pricing policies</p> <p>Opening of the BBIN Power Market</p> <p>Common guidelines for cross border electricity trade</p> <p>Conduct feasibility study on energy banking institutions and markets</p> <p>Develop Grid Masterplan</p> <p>Consult civil society and develop vision document for regional institutions in line with international practices</p> <p>Create regional R &amp; D platforms for energy efficiency and demand.</p> <p>Joint management of transboundary ecological landscapes like the Sunderbans.</p>	<p>Synchronization of demand and production</p> <p>Absence of energy banking entities</p> <p>Pricing of power and source of generation.</p> <p>Fragmentation of agencies and institutions</p> <p>Ecology/ morphology of Himalayan rivers not accommodated with adverse implications for climate change.</p> <p>Absence of social accounting practices</p> <p>Absence of data and knowledge sharing platforms</p> <p>Need for adaption strategies / practices to be mainstreamed at all levels</p> <p>Development of community based / decentralized energy security models.</p> <p>Absence of transboundary strategy/ practices of biodiversity and wildlife conservation</p>

### PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONNECTIVITY

	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DHAKA ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Happiness and Wellbeing</p> <p>Cross border</p> <p>Linkages</p> <p>Tourism Packages</p>	<p>Establish common parameters of wellbeing and happiness. BBIN to discuss and develop a BBIN Happiness Index using IT technology- Bhutan to take the lead.</p> <p>Develop BBIN website and social media pages for information and data sharing.</p> <p>Establish BBIN Centres of Excellence across sectors with special emphasis on culture and education.</p> <p>Develop tourism packages on common themes; connect tour operators on region wide basis.</p> <p>For enhanced cross border linkages identify institutional partners, rope in the private sector, create multi-layered institutions and connect government and non-government actors.</p> <p>Organise BBIN Travel and Tourism Fairs, create platform for travel writers, media and potential investors, conclude BBIN Tour Operators MOU and introduce e-visa and visa on arrival facilities.</p>	<p>BBIN Happiness Index: Challenge of the creation of awareness, sensitization and conviction, Harmonization of socio-economic parameters.</p> <p>For enhanced cross border linkages: need political will, and need to move the process from the non-government sector to the government sector.</p> <p>For Tourism :How to improve physical connectivity, establish Quality tourism Standards, incentivise tourism for example through roots tourism and low cost packages.</p>



	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>KATHMANDU ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Re-enforcing People to People Bonds</p> <p>Academic &amp; Media exchanges</p> <p>Tourism</p>	<p>Set up HAAT Bazaars at the Indo Nepal border at Kakkarbita and the India Bhutan border at Jaigaon.</p> <p>Organise melas, medical camps, film shows, food festivals, exhibitions of folk art, folk music and theatre at the Haat Bazaars.</p> <p>Set up tourism circuits – Religious tourism – Hindu circuit, Buddhist circuit, adventure tourism, wild life tourism and mice tourism.</p> <p>Enable BBIN Smart cards for regular travellers within region.</p> <p>BBIN Beauty Pageants can be organized to boost regional tourism.</p> <p>Establish a BBIN certification for select travel agents.</p> <p>Encourage Academic and Media Exchanges by establishing a:</p> <p>BBIN Media Forum, BBIN Think Tank Forum, BBIN Social Science Forum, BBIN Institute of Consultants, BBIN Quality Assurance and Accreditation Institute and the BBIN Vice Chancellor's Meeting.</p> <p>Create a regional database of Academic Institutions,</p> <p>The implementers will be CSOs and NGOs, Local Chambers, professional bodies, and Government bodies like the Border Security Forces, Customs, Visa Authorities, Tourism boards, religious trusts and travel agent associations.</p> <p>Private sector should come in for producing BBIN programming.</p> <p>Lease transponder for BBIN TV channels on SAARC Satellite.</p>	<p>The challenges include: land acquisition, Logistics, security, pricing, finance, visas and permits</p> <p>Enabling government agency for pre approvals for BBIN smart cards for intra-regional travel.</p> <p>Other challenges for promoting tourism include accommodation, logistics, multimodal transport, local currency payments and Insurance.</p> <p>High entry costs for BBIN channels on cable television.</p> <p>Sustainability of initiatives to promote P2P connectivity within BBIN</p>
	PRIORITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS	CHALLENGES
<b>DELHI ACTION PLAN</b>	<p>Policy Dialogue on Quality of Development</p> <p>BBIN Master Tourism Framework</p> <p>BBIN exchange network</p>	<p>Consultations with stakeholders in each BBIN country and BBIN wide quality development consultations / conference</p> <p>Develop BBIN quality development policy document</p> <p>Identify champions and funding</p> <p>Develop Buddhist and Tea Tourism circuits.</p> <p>Encourage sports exchanges Organize BBIN Cultural Festivals.</p> <p>Encourage exchanges between academic, CSO, cultural, media, social entrepreneurs and youth organizations.</p> <p>Encourage BBIN institutions to develop partnerships; coordination could be done through a virtual secretariat.</p>	<p>Short term political and economic compulsions.</p> <p>Identify right stakeholders and engage local communities</p> <p>Identifying resources, dissemination of outcomes and programming.</p>

## V. Some Significant Proposals made at the BBIN Roundtables

### Trade and Economic Cooperation

*Dr. Selim Raihan*, Professor of Economics, Dhaka University & Executive Director, SANEM argued that much larger welfare gains are possible for BBIN countries from a reduction of transaction costs through reducing NTBs, rather than from a reduction in tariffs.<sup>v</sup> Streamlining of NTMs and lowering of transaction costs is likely to intensify further market integration in the sub-region. He recommended (1) improvement of capacities of exporters from BBIN countries (2) creation of integrated check-posts (3) and agreements on mutual recognition of standards between national NSOs would give an impetus to trade with the BBIN sub-region.

Non-tariff barriers continue to be a major impediment to the growth of intra-BBIN trade. *Mr. Purushottam Ojha*, former Commerce Secretary, Government of Nepal quotes an ADB-UNCTAD study which identified three main barriers to trade:<sup>vi</sup> First there were the NTBs- SPS and TBT measures (86%), Tariff rate quotas (7.4%), licensing requirements (5.3%) and anti-dumping measures (7.4%). Second, there were governance issues including a weak bureaucracy, corruption, a low ranking on the ease of doing business and the logistics performance index. Third, there was the infrastructural deficiency in maritime ports, causing port inefficiency and delays, lack of border infrastructure, an outdated domestic transportation system and a lack of IT infrastructure. Mr. Ojha made three recommendations: (1) Enhance the capacity of LDCs in meeting SPS and technical standards (2) Enhance the negotiating capacity of these countries and (3) Create strong institutional dialogue mechanisms to enhance cooperation in promoting trade.

*Professor Prabir De* of the RIS proposed that BBIN countries enter into a Paperless Trade Agreement (BBIN PTA).<sup>vii</sup> This would allow the mutual recognition of trade and related data and documents in electronic form. This would facilitate interoperability of national and sub-regional single windows making trade transactions more efficient, improve trade facilitation and regulatory compliance.

*Professor Indrani Chakraborty* of the Institute of Development Studies in Kolkata<sup>viii</sup> proposed BBIN monetary cooperation to mitigate risks associated with short term capital flows, speculative currency attacks, the bursting of speculative bubbles, large scale capital outflows, currency depreciation and the consequent balance sheet disequilibrium for Banks and indebted firms. BBIN monetary integration would help maintain monetary stability in the region. This she felt could be accomplished by pooling of Foreign Exchange reserves and integration of stock-markets in the sub-region.

*Dr. Selim Raihan* further proposed the setting up of a BBIN Economic Community.<sup>ix</sup> The Four Pillars of the BBIN Economic Community would be (1) Trade, investment and value chain integration (2) a competitive and innovative BBIN with greater integration with the rest of Asia, (3) enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation and (4) an inclusive and people centered BBIN. The elements of a BBIN Economic Community would be a BBIN FTA, a BBIN Services trade agreement, BBIN investment zones, greater connectivity and energy cooperation.

**4 Pillars of  
BBIN  
Economic  
Community**

**SANEM**  
RESEARCH | KNOWLEDGE | DEVELOPMENT



*Dr. Selim Raihan's presentation proposed the setting up of a BBIN Economic Community. Source: DPG Roundtable Reports Vol. 2, Issue 8*

*Dr. Paras Kharel* PhD, Research Director SAWTEE,<sup>x</sup> presented a paper on issues and challenges for concluding a Mutual Recognition Agreement for BBIN. He asserted that there are three major sets of problems, i.e., (1) weak or absent institutions (2) differences in standards and technical regulations and (3) procedural obstacles. He recommended separate independent bodies for standardization, certification, accreditation and monitoring.

**Transit and Multimodal Connectivity**

*Mr. A Didar Singh*, then Secretary General, FICCI and presently Senior Fellow, DPG made a number of suggestions to overcome constraints faced by BBIN countries.<sup>xi</sup> He urged improving existing infrastructure at border entry/exit points, exploring common infrastructure, acceding to conventions like the TIR convention, encouraging third party logistic services, the formulation of appropriate customs policies needed to enable small players to benefit from



*The BBIN pact allows vehicles to enter each other's territory and does away with the trans-shipment of goods from one country's truck to another at the border. Credit: PTI*

enhancement in trade and connectivity as possible solutions. He also urged more cooperation between state, national and trans-boundary regulatory authorities to achieve harmonization of relevant regulations in transport(traffic, vehicle, pollution norms etc.) food safety, healthcare and the financial sector. To address the issue of a lack of institutional and regulatory connectivity and harmonization, he made the following proposals:acceding to internal conventions like the convention on road traffic 1968, the customs convention on the international transport of goods under cover of TIR Carnets, align domestic standards with international norms, build capacity of institutions, prioritize conclusion of MRAs, promote stakeholder awareness on standards and regulations, undertake mapping of all relevant policies rules.

and regulations and make them available to all stakeholders through a single web portal and help BBIN countries in developing capacity for trade negotiations.

*Professor Dr. Mahalaya Chatterjee* from the Centre for Urban Studies in Calcutta University<sup>xii</sup> advocated the negotiation of a BBIN Transit Agreement to make multimodal transportation a viable proposition. Such an Agreement would include the standardization of national entry-exit requirements for people and vehicles.

## Energy and Water Issues

*Mr. Chhewang Rinzin*, Managing Director Druk Green Power Corporation<sup>xiii</sup> made a number of very pertinent observations that underline the continuing importance of hydropower as a source of energy in BBIN countries: (1) While thermal power will continue to be dominant, hydropower can be used to meet peak demand and bring about grid stability that can manage fluctuations of power generation from wind and solar energy. (2) Bangladesh is keen to access hydro-power from Bhutan and India will have to lead the way and provide an enabling environment for Energy trade at a sub-regional level. (3) While cost plus tariff mechanisms provide confidence to investors, an energy market is already emerging within India and India is trading some of its power through energy exchanges. BBIN energy cooperation could therefore usher in competitive pricing that does not differentiate the source of power. This could impact investments in hydro-power in the future. (4) Finally, in the future, investments and pricing mechanisms could emerge in BBIN for more reservoir and pumped storage schemes that could act as batteries for electricity grids and ensure optimal and sustainable use of water resources.

*Prof. Chandan Mahanta* from IIT Guwahati, Assam<sup>xiv</sup> in his presentation highlighted the four Dublin principles for water management: (1) Water must be managed in a holistic way taking interactions among users and environmental impacts into account (2) Water must be valued as an economic good (3) Stakeholders must be fully involved in policy formulation and implementation and (4) Women must play a central part in the management of water. Discussing the way forward, Prof Mahanta proposed that opening discussions on a mutual benefit approach beyond national governments to include institutions, local governments and NGOs can lead to new possibilities with far reaching implications for the region.

## People to People Connectivity

*Mr. Sabyasachi Dutta*, Founder-Director, Asian Confluence, Shillong<sup>xv</sup> in his paper on “Fostering People to People Connectivity” proposed the setting up of “Smart Co-Prosperity Zones” in the BBIN region. The SCZs would incorporate border areas between BBIN countries and integrate border towns to create a model of cooperation between BBIN countries. The SCZs would

### SCZ – Example



*Sabyasachi Dutta proposed the setting up of “Smart Co-Prosperity Zones” (SCZs). DPG Roundtable Reports Vol. 2, Issue 5.*

have three types of knowledge Institutions (1) Those which promote P2P interactions, (2) Create trans-boundary value chains and (3) Those which facilitate trade. These would include a BBIN university, a museum of ecology, history and culture, a performing arts theater complex, a media hub, a common marketplace and a tourism facilitation center.

*Professor Kusum Shakya*, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University<sup>xvi</sup> proposed the setting up of (1) A BBIN Center of Excellence to promote contacts between diplomats and bureaucrats in order to promote understanding of the region's nuances, (2) A BBIN Center for Skill Development for the creation of common skills standards across the BBIN region. (3) A quality assurance and accreditation network across the BBIN region and (4) A BBIN Community Building Program.

*Mr. Needrup Zangpo*, Executive Director of the Journalists Association of Bhutan<sup>xvii</sup>, in his presentation on the Bhutanese concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) described the Four Pillars of the concept as (1) Sustainable and equitable economic development (2) Preservation of culture (3) Conservation of the environment and (4) Good governance. The GNH index is based on nine domains – living standards, psychological wellbeing, health, time use, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality and ecological diversity and resilience. These nine domains are further subdivided into 33 indicators and 124 variables. *Mr. Gopilal Acharya* an independent journalist and consultant from Bhutan underlined the government's duty to create happiness for the people and proposed the development of a BBIN Happiness Index.

### **BBIN Secretariat**

*Professor Prabir De* of the RIS has written a paper on the setting up of a BBIN Secretariat.<sup>xviii</sup> He avers that with an increase in BBIN related activities, a permanent Secretariat would help in the coordination and implementation of projects and activities. It could also help set up rules and regulations, conduct meetings, assist in the follow up monitoring and evaluation of projects and help formulate policies for the region. It would also be helpful in conducting day-to-day activities for the sub-regional bloc. The BBIN Secretariat would be headed by a Secretary General, usually a diplomat nominated by member countries in rotation for a three-year term. He would be assisted by a team of professionals. The Secretary General would perform duties as directed by the Council of Ministers, the SOM or the Standing Committee. The host country would grant to the Secretary General and his staff privileges and immunities in accordance with international norms.

## **VI. Conclusions and Key Takeaways**

As was to be expected, there were variations in the priorities identified for each of the four thematic areas in each state capital. But taken as basket of priorities they do point to a holistic Plan of Action for the four BBIN governments. For example, while interlocutors in Dhaka and Delhi favored a CEPA, those in Kathmandu were in favor of focusing on trade facilitation reflecting perhaps, differing levels of confidence about competing in the regional markets and differing perceptions of vulnerability.

The Action Plans prioritized dialogue between the National Standards Organizations for the harmonization of standards, the negotiation of Mutual Recognition Agreements, the establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism and measures to encourage cross border investment. While the view in Kathmandu was in favor of changes that facilitated the smooth flow of trade and investment through measures like a single window in customs and the removal of legal and procedural barriers for investment, the view in Dhaka was in favor of setting up a BBIN Development Bank. Experts in Delhi stressed more modest measures focusing on building value chains and dealing with NTMs and didn't focus very much on investment perse.

Connectivity, transport and transit were major priorities in all the three capitals. Scholars in Dhaka wanted greater investment in transportation infrastructure and connectivity – air ports, sea ports, river ports, transshipment hubs and road and rail links between ports and the hinterland. There was a major emphasis on the need for containerization. Experts in Kathmandu wanted a major emphasis on the mapping of connectivity in the BBIN region, the operationalization of the BBIN MVA with enhancements like a common regional number plate for vehicles, the signing of a BBIN railway agreement and a focus on multimodal aspects of connectivity. Experts in Delhi wanted to develop a BBIN connectivity master-plan to support trade and people to people links with the eventual goal of creating a BBIN Community.

Navigation, floods and erosion were major concerns articulated at the Dhaka roundtable. The stress here was on the need for data sharing. Other priorities included moving towards sustainable energy security by creating integrated energy markets. In Kathmandu, the focus was on prioritizing clean energy and market-based pricing and in developing benefits adjusted investment/pricing mechanism to support multipurpose reservoirs/pumped storage schemes. There was also a proposal to set up a BBIN-GBM Rivers Committee. The Delhi Action Plan proposed a BBIN power sharing Agreement, the adoption of an integrated water management strategy and a stress on sustainability in order to tackle climate change and the preservation of biodiversity. Specific suggestions included the establishment of the BBIN power market, harmonization of pricing policies, common guidelines for cross border electricity trade, the conduct of a feasibility study on energy banking institutions and markets and the development of a Grid Masterplan.

Interestingly there was also a proposal for the joint management trans-boundary ecological landscapes like the Sunderbans.

Enhancing People to People Connectivity through tourism was a major priority in all three Action Plans. Travel and tourism fairs and tourism packages on common themes were mooted to promote tourism traffic between BBIN countries. Participants in Dhaka proposed the establishment of 'BBIN Centers of Excellence' with a focus on culture and education. They also emphasized the importance of setting up cross border institutional linkages, roping the private sector and linking up government and non-government entities on both sides of the borders. Experts in Kathmandu gave a range of ideas including the setting up Haat Bazaars on the India Nepal border, the organization of cultural and sports events, BBIN smart cards for travelers, a BBIN certification for travel agents, the encouragement of academic and media exchanges through the creation of institutional platforms and the Lease of a transponder on the SAAC satellite for BBIN TV channels. The Delhi Action Plan proposed a BBIN Quality Development Conference to develop a quality development policy document, tourism, sports exchanges and cultural festivals, encouraging partnerships between BBIN institutions and academic and media exchanges.

The enhanced interest in BBIN regional cooperation also manifested itself in a strong desire for creating an institutional platform – a BBIN Secretariat with an empowered Secretary General. Professor Prabir De of the RIS New Delhi, was requested to submit a paper fleshing out the proposal for a BBIN Secretariat. The gist of the proposal has been described in the previous section.



*View of Paro from Dzong. Source: Flickr/hewy CC 2.0*

## End Notes

- i. International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2015. And Export-Import Database, Ministry of Commerce India.
- ii. India Trade Center,  
<http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/IndiaDutyFreeTariff.pdf>
- iii. Paper presented by Dr. Raihan Selim at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu, on July 27-28, 2017.
- iv. Goods can now move by sea or coastal route from Kolkata Port in West Bengal, India to Chittagong Port in Bangladesh, where bilateral and transit goods to Northeast India would travel by inland waterways from Chittagong Port to Dhaka and onwards to Ashuganj Port. At Ashuganj, the goods would be trans-shipped by road or rail to the border crossing at Akhaura-Agartala to Tripura State in Northeast India. Alternatively, the goods that arrive at Chittagong Port, can take the road route to the Ramgarh-Sabroom border crossing, also on the border with Tripura State, Northeast India. The third route would be from Chittagong Port to Thegamukh-Kawrpucchuah on the border with Mizoram State, Northeast India. Goods headed from or for Bhutan can also use these same routes from Chittagong Port through Northeast India.
- v. Paper presented by Dr. Raihan Selim at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu, on July 27-28, 2017.
- vi. Mr. Ojha Purushottam, “*Managing Non-Tariff Issues as measures of Enhancing BBIN Trade,*” Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on October 15-16, 2016.
- vii. Prof. De Prabir, “*Facilitating Cross Border Paperless Trade in BBIN: A Proposal*”. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on October 15-16, 2016.
- viii. Prof. Chakraborty Indrani, “*South-South Monetary Cooperation: a proposal for BBIN*” Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kolkata on March 16- 17, 2017.
- ix. Dr. Raihan Selim, “*The BBIN Economic Community?*” Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on December 13-14, 2017.
- x. Dr. Kharel Paras, “*Mutual Recognition Agreement in BBIN: a Brief Note on Issues and Challenges.*” Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on December 13-14, 2017.



- xi. Mr. Singh A. Didar, *“Advancing BBIN Trade Coop: BBIN Trade Connectivity – Recent Developments, burdles and possible solutions.”* Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on October 4-5,2016.
- xii. Prof. Chatterjee Mahalaya, *“Regional Cooperation in the BBIN Region- Issues regarding Transportation and Infrastructure”*. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu on July 27-28, 2017.
- xiii. Mr. Rinzin Chhewang, *“Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation in Energy,”* Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu on July 27-28, 2017.
- xiv. Prof. Mahanta Chandan, *“India's Perspective on Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal (BBIN) Cooperation in Water Resources.”* Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu on July 27-28, 2017.
- xv. Mr. Dutta Sabyasachi , *“Fostering People to People Connectivity”* proposed the setting up of ‘Smart Co-Prosperity Zones in the BBIN Region’. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu on July 27-28, 2017.
- xvi. Professor Shakya Kusum, *“Enhancing People to People Connectivity on Tourism and Higher Education in BBIN with reference to Nepal”*. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at Kathmandu on July 27-28, 2017.
- xvii. Mr. Zangpo Needrup, *“Gross National Happiness (GNH)”*. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on December 13-14, 2017.
- xviii Prof. De Prabir, *“Setting up the BBIN Secretariat: A Proposal”*. Paper presented at the DPG roundtable on “Advancing BBIN Sub-regional Cooperation” at New Delhi on December 13-14, 2017.



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