



Mv agreement can be a game changer for South Asian countries: Experts

RAJU DAS

SHILLONG, Aug 31 - The Motor Vehicle agreement signed between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) has the potential to substantially boost up the meagre five per cent inter-regional trade and change living conditions of the people in these countries, experts here said today.

Presenting a report of its findings here in the presence of senior Government officials and exporters, CUTS International, an NGO said, BBIN's trade with ASEAN stands at 25 per cent, East Asia at 35 per cent and Europe at a whopping 60 per cent.

"But the inter-regional trade of these countries is just five per cent. BBIN has the potential to grow substantially once the Motor Vehicles agreement is fully implemented. South Asia remains the least integrated region of the world," Arnab Ganguly, Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International said.

He pointed out there are several issues that need to be addressed before this agreement is implemented and on top of the list is the "hard infrastructure" like roads and amenities on the highways, which has to be developed.

The Motor Vehicle agreement was signed between these four SAARC Nations in 2015. However, last year Bhutan pulled out temporarily from the agreement as its Upper House of Parliament didn't ratify the agreement.

Once implemented, the agreement would allow the smooth transport of goods from one country to the other without much hindrance. There are at present ten identified corridors for the smooth movement of vehicles from these countries.

Ganguly said that apart from the hard infrastructure, fine tuning is being done on the policy matters such as reducing time at the custom checks and similar other issues.

"There are also discussions being held to include Myanmar in this agreement and if that is done then the whole South East Asian market opens up," he said.

Lending support to the agreement, Meghalaya Commissioner, Department of Transport, Israel Ingty said that the Meghalaya Government is serious about international trade and is doing everything possible to boost it.

One of the corridors under this agreement passes through Dawki Land Custom Station in Meghalaya to Bangladesh. In this regard, secretary, Meghalaya International Chamber of Commerce and an exporter, Doly Khonglah urged the Meghalaya Government to improve road infrastructure in the State.

She said that trucks cannot move through East Khasi Hills district to Dawki as the "Dawki Bridge" can support just nine tonne. Though an approval has been given to construct a new bridge in the area, nothing has been done so far.

Khonglah further said that even without the agreement the State and the Central Governments can help trade to a great extent. "The roads in Bangladeshi side are much better than at our end of the border. The roads are narrow here and unrepaired in several areas," she said.

She further urged the Government to issue uniforms for the truckers from India and also negotiate with Bangladesh to allow a helper with them while they enter Bangladesh. "Now only a truck driver is allowed to enter into Bangladesh to deliver the goods. This is a security concern," she stated.



Stakeholders hail trade through BBIN corridor

GUARDIAN NEWS BUREAU

SHILLONG, AUG 31: CUTS International with the support of US Department of State and in collaboration with the Federation of Industry and Commerce for North East Region (FINER) organised a stakeholder consultation at Shillong aimed at initiating a dialogue with key stakeholders viz. Exporters, Importers, Government Officials, Transport Associations on what needs to be done to facilitate effective implementation of the Motor Vehicles Agreement between India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Bratindra Bhattacharya, Director, CUTS International, Stakeholders who participated at the consultation pointed out that if the motor vehicles agreement is implemented effectively and cargo and passenger transit through Bangladesh becomes a reality then it would not only bring the North East India closer to the mainland but should be able to reduce the time and cost of cargo movement.

This will be beneficial to the entire economy of North East India, especially Meghalaya, since the Dawki - Tamabil border lies on the BBIN corridor.

He further added that the logistic cost in India, which is estimated to

be 13-15 percent of the GDP can drastically come down with better roads and increased connectivity.

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Chamber of Commerce, stressed on improving the condition of roads at the Dawki - Tamabil border and timely completion of the Integrat-



port, Government of Meghalaya stressed on the need for implementation of the MVA and mentioned that the Government of Meghalaya is seriously looking into the issue and to that end is organising a workshop in New Delhi soon.

Dolly Khonglah, secretary, Meghalaya International Exporters

ed Check Post (ICP) at Dawki.

She further emphasised the need to create awareness among the drivers who often illegally park trucks making life miserable or vulnerable road users viz. women and children.

SA Rynjah, SP (City) highlighted the need for increasing manpower and introducing new technolo-

gies for better traffic management.

Rajeev Goswami, Deputy Director General, FINER, mentioned that the time is ripe to start the necessary actions to better implement MVA in the BBIN sub-region.

Sunil Agarwal, director, FINER, emphasised the need to think beyond just road connectivity and also consider the option of multi-modal (i.e. railroad-waterway) connectivity to exploit the opportunities in creating regional value chains. Enrico D Pasi, president, The Association of Meghalaya Traders and Transporters, while welcoming the MVA mentioned that there is immense scope for the meat processing industry in Meghalaya, but to exploit that one needs good connectivity with the markets in India and Bangladesh.

Ratul Baruah, news editor, *The Meghalaya Guardian* underlined the need for translating plans into actions.

Kmen Myrchiang, working president, Meghalaya International Exporters Chamber of Commerce, mentioned that the governments should consider the option of allowing Indian trucks to carry consignments while returning from the other country, otherwise it will not be profitable for the private sector to invest.



CUTS International moots Motor Vehicles Agreement as game changer for NE

Written by Meghalaya Times. Posted in [Front Page](#)

Staff Reporter

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Bhattacharya argues that this will be beneficial to the entire economy of North East India, especially Meghalaya, since the Dawki – Tamabil border lies on the BBIN corridor. He further added that the logistic cost in India, which is estimated to be 13-15 percent of the GDP can drastically come down with better roads and increased connectivity.

I W Ingty, Commissioner, Transport, Government of Meghalaya stressed on the need for implementation of the MVA and mentioned that The Government of Meghalaya is seriously looking into the issue and to that end is organising a workshop in New Delhi soon.

Dolly Khonglah, Secretary, Meghalaya International Exporters Chamber of Commerce stressed on improving the condition of roads at the Dawki - Tamabil border and timely completion of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Dawki. She further emphasised the need to create awareness among the drivers who often illegally park trucks making life miserable or vulnerable road users viz. women and children.

S A Rynjah, SP (City) highlighted the need for increasing manpower and introducing new technologies for better traffic management. Rajeev Goswami, Deputy Director General, FINER, mentioned that the time is ripe to start the necessary actions to better implement MVA in the BBIN sub-region.

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Senior journalist, Ratul Baruah underlined the need for translating plans into actions. Kmen Myrchiang, Working President, Meghalaya International Exporters Chamber of Commerce, mentioned that the Governments should consider the option of allowing Indian Trucks to carry consignments while returning from the other country, otherwise it will not be profitable for the private sector to invest.



The Shillong Times

FINER holds consultation on implementation of motor vehicles agreement in North East

By Our Reporter

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Staff Correspondent

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