Assessing the state of BBIN Transport Connectivity

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1. Asian Highway Network: An overview

• Asian Highway (AH) network is a regional transport cooperation initiative by UNESCAP aimed at enhancing the efficiency and development of the road infrastructure in Asia.

• Supports the development of Euro-Asia transport linkages and improving connectivity for landlocked countries.

• AH network comprises over 141,000 km of roads passing through 32 member countries.

• The network extends from Tokyo in the east to Kapikule, Turkey in the west and from Torpynovka, Russian Federation, in the north, to Denpasar, Indonesia in the south.
2. Asian Highway Network in India

1. **AH1** - Moreh (Border of Myanmar) Manipur [via Bangladesh] to Attari (Border of Pakistan) Punjab

2. **AH2** - Phulbari (Border of Bangladesh), West Bengal [via Nepal] to New Delhi, Delhi

3. **AH42** - Raxaul (Border of Nepal), Bihar to Barhi, Jharkhand

4. **AH43** - Agra, Uttar Pradesh to Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu

5. **AH45** - Kolkata, West Bengal to Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu

6. **AH46** - Kharagpur, West Bengal to Dhule, Maharashtra

7. **AH47** - Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh to Bengaluru, Karnataka

8. **AH48** - Phulbari, West Bengal to Jaigaon (Border of Bhutan), West Bengal

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**Significance of AH in Regional Connectivity:**

- **AH1** establishes connectivity among Myanmar, Bangladesh and India, and plays a significant role in providing linkage among India and South-East Asian countries.
- **AH2** enables connectivity among Bangladesh, India and Nepal.
- **AH42** connects Nepal with India
- **AH48** connects Bhutan with India

India's involvement in the AH Network is not just about its internal development but also about strengthening ties with neighbouring countries and contributing to regional economic development.
3. BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement

- The BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) is a sub-regional initiative to boost connectivity and economic cooperation among the four countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

- The agreement was signed in June 2015 and aims to facilitate the seamless flow of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic among the four countries.

- The agreement seeks to remove barriers and streamline processes, thereby fostering trade, tourism, and cultural exchange among the participating nations.
4. Salient Features of BBIN MVA

1. **Simplified Cross-Border Movement:** The agreement envisions a standardised process for issuing permits, harmonisation of customs procedures, and mutual recognition of driving licenses, making it easier for vehicles to cross borders.

2. **Enhanced Trade and Economic Cooperation:** By reducing transit time and transportation costs, the BBIN MVA aims to boost bilateral and multilateral trade opportunities, stimulating economic growth in the region.

3. **Promotion of Tourism and Cultural Exchange:** Improved connectivity is expected to encourage tourism and cultural exchange among the countries, fostering a greater understanding of each other's traditions and heritage.

4. **Environmental Protection and Road Safety:** The BBIN MVA emphasises environmental protection and road safety standards, promoting sustainable transportation practices and ensuring safer journeys for travellers.
5. Status of BBIN MVA implementation

1. Ratification of BBIN MVA: Bangladesh, Nepal and India have ratified the BBIN Agreement, while ratification by Bhutan is pending.

2. 3-country BIN enabling MoU for implementing BBIN MVA: India and Bangladesh have communicated their go-ahead for signing the 3-country BIN enabling MoU for implementing BBIN MVA. The go-ahead from Nepal is pending.

3. Protocol Frameworks for cross-border movement of Passenger and Cargo:
   - **Passenger Protocol under BBIN MVA** – The text of the Passenger Protocol under BBIN MVA has been finalised and agreed upon by India, Bangladesh and Nepal. The Passenger Protocol is pending signing off by the three countries.
   - **Cargo Protocol under BBIN MVA** – The Cargo Protocol under BBIN MVA is currently under deliberation among the three countries – India, Bangladesh and Nepal, and is yet to be finalised.
6. Trial Runs under BBIN MVA

- Cargo Trial Runs were conducted on:
  - Kolkata – Dhaka – Agartala route (~ 600 km) in November 2015
  - Dhaka – Delhi route (1,780 Km) from 29 August to 5 September 2016

- BBIN Car Rally was organized in December 2015

- Passenger Trial Runs and Route Surveys were conducted on:
  - Dhaka – Siliguri – Gangtok route in December 2019
  - Dhaka – Siliguri – Kathmandu route in April 2018
  - Kolkata – Khulna route in September 2016
7. Salient Takeaways from Trial Runs under BBIN MVA

1. Trials demonstrated saving in time and cost for the trade.

2. Experience from Trial runs used in drafting the Passenger and Cargo vehicles Protocols.

3. Workshops held to identify and understand the best practices in implementation of MVAs, use of electronic cargo tracking systems etc.

4. The Cargo trial runs operated with Online Permits issued using India’s offered online permit system.
8. Ongoing Activities under BBIN MVA (1/5)

8.1 Online Permits System under BBIN MVA

• BBIN MVA envisages:
  • Application by operators for grant of permits
  • Cross border movement of motor vehicles based on permits
  • Collection of fees for Permits

• For facilitating smooth movement of vehicles across the border under the BBIN MVA, India is developing a Web Enabled Application for Online Application, Issue, Monitoring and Verification of Permits for Passengers, Personal and Cargo vehicles.

• Portal is Role Based and Completely Secured
8. Ongoing Activities under BBIN MVA (2/5)

8.1 Online Permits System under BBIN MVA – Concept Workflow

- Mother Software designed by NIC
- Software to be distributed along with source codes to Nepal and Bangladesh for hosting in respective countries
- Software can be customized in-situ on need basis.

- Software hosted in each country
- Independent access
- Customizable in-situ as per requirements.

- To host only issued permits (both online and paper permits)
- Validation Rights enabled
- Accessible at BIN level.
8. Ongoing Activities under BBIN MVA (3/5)

8.2 Insurance Regimes under BBIN MVA

- Study conducted by ADB on Insurance Regimes under BBIN MVA in 2023.

- The Study envisages to deep dive into the insurance regimes and legal framework of Bangladesh, India and Nepal and henceforth provides recommendations for compliance with the provisions of BBIN MVA on insurance.

**Key highlights of the Study:**

- The minimum insurance requirements for any cross-border vehicle as per BBIN MVA should supersede the requirements of the individual countries.
- Institutions like Joint Insurance Sub-Group & National Insurance Sub-Groups should be set up for regulating the insurance related processes – purchase, settlement etc. in the three countries.
- There is a requirement of development of robust technology tools like a website and a mobile application to ensure a seamless process.
8. Ongoing Activities under BBIN MVA (4/5)

8.3 Fees and Charges under BBIN MVA

- Study conducted by ADB on Methodology for determination of Fees and Charges under BBIN MVA in 2023.

Components of BBIN Fees and Charges:

(i) Permit Fees to be imposed annually by home countries - as per load carrying categories of the cargo vehicles

(ii) Charges per entry by host countries - as per distance and load carrying categories of vehicles

Key highlights of the Study:

- Hybrid model based on Territory and Distance-based method for levying fees and charges can be considered a rational model framework to further deliberate among the parties.

- Cost-benefit analysis may be conducted along select routes covering India, Nepal and Bangladesh to determine best possible Road User fees and charges.
8. Next Steps in implementing BBIN MVA (5/5)

• Finalisation of Routes and Border Crossing Points (BCPs)

• Type, categories and the size of cargo vehicles to be permitted movement along each route

• Traffic volumes to be allowed along each route

• Permit issue and transmission arrangements and use of online portals

• Finalisation of BBIN Fees and Charges

• Modalities of Insurance Policies and settlement of claims under BBIN MVA
Thank You