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Tshongdrel

Bi-monthly Newsletter

Inside Issue

- BCCI-TPSD and National Council Meet on mineral sector.....2
- Study tour to Malaysia.....2
- Austrian Business Delegation.....3
- BRICS Trade Fair and Business Forum.....3
- Linking demand and supply at the GPP Procurer and Supplier Forum.....4
- Meeting with Exporters and Importers.....5
- Bumthang Consumer Fair.....5
- Seventh RIGSS Policy debate.....5



Honorable Minister Lekey Dorji gracing the 13th SAARC Trade Fair

Thirteenth SAARC Trade Fair

The 13th SAARC Trade Fair held from 8-12 September 2016 saw over 400 exhibitors from the four SAARC member countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) occupying 256 booths and thousands of footfalls during the entire duration of the fair.

The 13th SAARC Trade fair is second of its kind to be hosted in Bhutan, the former being the 9th SAARC Trade Fair held from 11-14 September in 2009.

Honorable Lyonpo Lekey Dorji, Minister, Ministry of Economic Affairs graced the

13th SAARC Trade Fair as the Chief Guest. During the inaugural, Lyonpo highlighted on the economic integration and trade promotion within the SAARC region and thus expressed that such platforms like the SAARC Trade fair would enhance economic cooperation and build business linkages.

Other allied events like “Seminar on promoting Economic Integration in the SAARC Region” supported by the SAARC Development Fund, Business to Business meetings and Cultural events were also

Continued in page 2

Third North-East Connectivity Summit

An eight-member delegation from Bhutan attended the third North East Connectivity Summit comprising of senior officials from government, BCCI and private sectors. The key objectives of the Summit were to build consensus on the connectivity needs of the region and develop a comprehensive connectivity roadmap, and discuss on financing option for such infrastructure development.

The three-day summit highlighted on how to boost border trade with Bangladesh, South East Asia and enhance people-to-people connectivity. The summit presented the untapped resources in the Northeast region that could be explored and utilized using markets of China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal as

Continued in page 2



Thirteenth SAARC Trade Fair *(Continued from Page 1)*

the highlight of the 13th SAARC Trade fair.

Varieties of products were showcased during the fair ranging from local

Bhutanese products, handicrafts, textiles, furniture's, statues and religious items, winter wear and jackets from Nepal, melamine and food items from

Bangladesh and the crockery's and other household items from India.

Compiled for BSD by Sonam Cheki

BCCI-TPSD and National Council Meet on mineral sector



Joint sitting of BCCI-TPSD & National Council

A Taskforce for Private Sector Development (TPSD) convened a meeting with National Council members to present emerging issues of the mineral sector in Bhutan and its ways forward. Nationalization of the mining sector and mineral development policy were focused discussion held in the meeting. This task force was formed with the aim to identify and discuss issues of sector associations & provide recommendations thereof. The members comprises of all the representatives from sector associations. The meeting was attended by 20 public and private sector participants on 9th September 2016 convened in Le Meridien Hotel in Thimphu.

Report by Tshering Lhaden for BCCI-TPSD

On invitation from Lincoln University, Malaysia, 26 private sector business delegation availed eight-day training program on "strategic implementation, planning and monitoring". The delegation was led by one of the senior official from BCCI. Besides training, the delegates were able to attain other sideline programs of networking meeting, busi-

Third North-East Connectivity Summit *(Continued from Page 1)*



Participants fully engaged in the summit

it shares the border with those countries to flourish the economy in the region. Promotion of investment opportunities in the region were also one of the main focus of the summit. Altogether, six countries from South East Asia were part of this summit.

Delegation from Bhutan to the summit was coordinated by BCCI regional of-

fice, Samdrup Jongkhar. The summit was organized by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in collaboration with Tripura Government's Department of Industries and Commerce.

The summit was held from 21-23 September 2016 at Pragna Bhawan in Agartala, Tripura, India.

Report from RO, BCCI, Samdrup Jongkhar

Study tour to Malaysia

On strategic implementation, planning and monitoring



Private Sector participants who were part of study tour

ness to business meet and field visits in various companies in Malaysia. To promote business ties and co-operation for future collaborations between Bhutan and Malaysia from private sector perspectives, the delegates had a meeting with Kuala Lumpur Selangor Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They also had a meeting with the Tourism Council of Ma-

laysia and Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) for similar goal. The delegates were fortunate to visit Smart Reader Worldwide, the worldwide franchise in early child care as they were exploring market in other countries including Bhutan, and had a fruitful meeting for tie-ups. Similarly, the delegates had a visit to Construction Industry De-

Continued in Page 3

Austrian Business Delegation



Business Delegates meeting with hoteliers

The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI) received a business delegation led by Mrs. Petra Nocker-Schwarzenbacher, President of the Tourism and Leisure Industry in the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber to explore the Bhutanese market and to seek vital contacts with the Bhutanese government organizations and business community from 24th to 29th October 2016. The delegation also includes Mr. Christoph Meyenburg, Minister Counsellor of the Austrian Embassy, and Mr. Oskar Andesner, Austrian Commercial Counsellor for Bhutan accompanied by 22 Austrian business delegations. A sixteen (16) member business delegation from Austria was also visited Bhutan in 2013 to discuss with business partnership with the Bhutanese private sectors.

The 22 Austria Business delegations attended the Bhutan - Austria Economic Forum on 26th October, 2016 at Hotel Le Meridien Thimphu followed by the B2B meetings where more than 100 local businesses attended the forum. The visiting delegation also met with the hotel managers and the Bhutan International School of Hospitality and Tourism in Thimphu on 25th October 2016.

The cooperation between the two countries is now expanding to business relations ever since Austria - Bhutan partnership has been established diplomatic relations in 1989. We are hopeful that such forum will deepen business relations between the two countries and provide platform to the Austrian and the Bhutanese firms to explore concrete business partnerships in due course. The economic forum was jointly organized by the Austrian Development Agency and the Commercial Section of the Austrian Embassy/ Advantage Austria in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Report by Deki Chhoden, BSD, BCCI

BRICS Trade Fair and Business Forum

On invitation by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Vice President Dasho Tashi Dorji, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), attended the BRICS Trade Fair, Business Forum and Business Council held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, India from 12 - 14 October 2016. It was organized by Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Economic Affairs, GoI and FICCI.

The Trade Fair was themed around the concept "Building BRICS - Innovation for Collaboration" to provide an impetus to Intra-Bricks economic engagement and foster connect amongst member of the business community. The Trade Fair including the focused seminars and workshops presented a wide array of state-of-the-art technologies - provided an opportunity for companies both from the public and private sectors to showcase their varied goods, services and technologies.

The business leaders from BIMSTEC member countries participated to witness the maiden BRICS Trade Fair and the Business Forum. This was apparently organized in an effort for business fraternity of BIMSTEC partners, allow them ride on the wave affluence of BRICS, create a common link between the two; and to eventuate for mutual cooperation and benefits. It gave individual participants

of both the member countries to find a platform for an opportunity to discuss, understand and learn ones current business challenges from others. It helped to think at problems from different perspectives to assist for an innovation in coming-up with creative and innovative approaches to challenges. The business discussions, apart from happening at B-B contact facilitating lounge (BRICS and BIMSTEC) at Pragati Maidan, an opportunity was taken to discuss and exchange views during reception and dinners hosted by FICCI; and at other business avenues. It was indeed facilitating and useful in the dissemination and assimilation of business information.

Most definitely, the areas of interest for a small country like Bhutan, among many others that may be considered useful and relevant to learn were on Green & Renewable Energy, Healthcare, Infrastructure, IT, Art & Skill Development, Waste Management, Urbanization, Tourism, SME Agribusiness, for business communities and innovator's mutually beneficial partnerships. It may be imperative to keep in mind (our context) the principles and objectives of the 2030 Economic Development Agenda consistent with Bhutan's National Development framework of the Gross National Happiness (GNH).

Compiled by Dasho Tashi Dorji, Vice President

Study Tour to Malaysia *(Continued from Page 2)*

development Board (CIDB) and Royal Selangor, state of art Pewter factory during the eight-day period.

The training program was partially sponsored by the University and partially by participants.

It was held from 5th to 12th October 2016.
Report by Sonam Dorji

Linking demand and supply at the GPP Procurer and Supplier Forum



Mr. Kesang Wangdi, Project Manager, GPP, gave opening remarks during the forum.

The Green Public Procurement project, Bhutan (GPP Bhutan) organized a half-day forum that brought together the public procurers and local suppliers of green products especially Cottage, Small and Medium Industries (CSMI).

The forum witnessed series of presentations by SABAH Bhutan, APIC, Association of Wood-Based Industries and Department of Cottage and Small Industries (DCSI), imparting awareness on environment and social benefits of procuring the local products. Some of these local suppliers also showcased their products at the forum.

Besides creating awareness, the event highlighted on the need for public procurers to procure local and/or green products to build the market for such products in Bhutan, as well as the need for local suppliers and industries to pioneer the supply of quality and environmentally-friendly products to contribute towards green growth in Bhutan.

One of the officials from DCSI informed the forum that the department will soon establish showroom to display local products to provide market accessibility and visibility for such products.

BCCI's component on GPP project is to maximize the public procurement of goods produced by CSIMs and also to implement the existing margin of preference that is allowed to local suppliers. This component is mainly aimed to facilitate dialogue between CSIMs and potential buyers in the public sector.

The forum was attended by 44 participants including 21 suppliers and 23 procurers held on 25th October 2016.

Report by Damcho Tshering, GPP Bhutan, BCCI



Participants having interaction after the forum

Meeting with Exporters and Importers

The Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) Desk under BCCI met with mandarin exporters and garments importers of Bhutan from Bangladesh. NTM Desk work towards identifying the challenges faced due to NTMs resulting to Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) which changes with time and varies between the markets.



NTM Desk with Mandarin Exporters

Various challenges faced by them were expressed, some being custom clearance at Changrabandha, land customs port causing traffic congestion at Changrabandha that have adverse impact on rotation of vehicles and huge detention charges. Frequent challenges mentioned

repeatedly in the meeting were problems caused by Assam strikes that delay the goods in transit. At present, Bhutan's second largest trading partner is with Bangladesh after India and there has been increasing trade between the two countries. But with increase in trade, several challenges are encountered by Bhutanese importers and exporters that need interventions. These issues mentioned above will be tackled in consultation with the relevant government agencies by the NTM Desk. The meeting was held on 13th October 2016 in Gelephu.



NTM Desk with Garment Importers

Report by Tshering Lhaden, NTM Desk, BCCI

Seventh RIGSS Policy debate

BCCI and private sectors from Phuentsholing business community were invited to the seventh RIGSS Policy debate. The debate was themed "This House believes that the Economic Development Policy 2016 is inadequate to meet the economic challenges facing our country".

About ten industrialists representing various industries from Phuentsholing attended the program from private sector. They were given opportunity to submit their views and suggestions on Economic Development Policy 2016 during the question and answer session in the program.

This debate was held on 22nd October 2016 at RIGSS conference hall in Phuentsholing.

Bumthang Consumer Fair



Opening Ceremony of the Fair

The consumer fair was organized for the first time in Bumthang to promote regional trade and opportunities. Various local products were displayed during the fair ranging from cane & bamboo, local handicrafts, and furniture to herbal tea, local made statues during the six-day fair. Besides that other products from Nepal and India were also showcased in the fair.

Dasho Drangpon inaugurated the fair in presence of other dignitaries from government, corporate and private sector.

The fair also witnessed entertainment programs by local dancers and arranged a free lottery draw with the prizes sponsored by the exhibitors.

Forty-eight exhibitors from Bhutan, India and Nepal took part in the six-day fair. It was held from 30th September to 5th October 2016 at Ugyen Wangchuck Stadium in Chamkhar, Bumthang.

Report by Jigme Wangchuk for RO Bumthang

About Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The BCCI was established as a non-government and non-profit service oriented organization in 1980 under the Royal Command of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo with a traditional role of augmenting and supplementing the efforts of the Royal Government towards development of a formal private sector. The BCCI now function as the apex body of the private sector and represents business communities of Bhutan. The organization is managed by a team of honorary members elected for a fixed term and a salaried Secretary General overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the organization. The honorary members comprising of President, Vice Presidents, and the Executive Committee Members are elected for the term of three years.

The BCCI have a vision to embark on developing private sectors with organization's slogan of "Towards Private Sector Development" and is guided by the mission statement as below:

- Act as the pro-active body, inspiring economic growth development in the country by promoting a dynamic and competitive business in Bhutan.
- Advocate for vibrant business sector that promote sustainable economic development through promotion of trade and investment by facilitating competitiveness and growth for increased investment, productivity and trade.
- Connect businesses and expand member opportunities by providing outstanding member services, with an aim to contribute to Bhutan Sustainable Economic development through expansion and institutional linkages and networks in the regional and global market.
- Safeguard the overall rights and benefits of members and provide leadership and quality services to foster an enabling business sector environment generate gainful employment and create wealth for the country.
- Facilitate entrepreneurship through Human Resource Development of the Private Sector.



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