

BIMSTEC Newsletter

A Monthly Newsletter from BIMSTEC Centre



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BIMSTEC Event

15th TNC Meeting

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The 15th Meeting of Trade Negotiating Committee and its Working Group was held on 24-26 September 2007 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Trade negotiators from seven BIMSTEC member countries have agreed on value addition conditions and downsizing of the negative list in Dhaka, bringing the free trade agreement on trade in goods close to conclusion. Officials said that they were optimistic of the next TNC Meeting to be held on 12-15 November 2007 in New Delhi to finalizing the accord and forwarding it to the higher body for its official endorsement in the Summit scheduled for February 2008.

ADB Regional Technical Workshop



The Regional Technical Workshop of BIMSTEC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) under the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) was held on 18-19 September 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand, preceded by the Subregional Consultation Meeting between Thailand and Myanmar on 17 September 2007.

The secretaries and senior officials from the respective Transport/Foreign Affairs Ministries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand; the Chairperson and representatives of the BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG); members of the Technical Assistance (TA) Team from the Asian Development Bank (ADB); BTILS Consultant Team members; and representatives from the BIMSTEC Center attended the meeting.

The Meeting was held to discuss the findings and conclusions of the BTILS draft Interim Report; to solicit preliminary comments on the draft BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Policies and Strategies; and to deliberate on the draft Logistics Action Plan. TAC members agreed to hold the 2nd TAC Meeting on 27-28 November 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand.



Thimphu Tshechu



The annual Buddhist festivals known as *Tshechus* are held in almost every district in Bhutan at different times of the year coinciding with the auspicious days and months of the Bhutanese calendar. The Thimphu *Tshechu* in the capital city was held from 21 - 23 September 2007.

These festivals are held in honour of *Guru Rinpoche*, the saint who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th Century. The *Tshechus* are rich form of the oral history tradition where a Bhutanese pass on values, mythology and spiritual beliefs through the highly stylized mask dance rituals.

The *Tshechus* offer the Bhutanese an opportunity for concentrated immersion in their religion and ultimately to gain personal merit. For Bhutanese it is an important annual affair where they consider it a blessing to be able to watch the mask dances.

It also offers an opportunity to join thousands of other Bhutanese taking part in the important religious and social occasion than often exudes a carnival atmosphere. People bring out their finest clothes and their most prized jewelry and families gather to enjoy elaborate meals or picnics.

BIMSTEC upcoming Activities

Date	Activity	Venue
17 Sep 2007	BTILS Sub-regional Consultation Meeting with Thailand and Myanmar Transport Officials	Bangkok
18-19 Sep 2007	BTILS Regional Workshop for Technical Advisory Committee	ADB Thailand Resident Mission
24-26 Sep 2007	15 th Trade Negotiating Committee Meeting	Dhaka
25 Oct - 21 Dec 2007	Joint Survey of the Project "Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management in the Bay of Bengal"	Thailand
12-16 November 2007	Workshop on Geoinformatics Applications in Disaster Management for BIMSTEC countries	Dehradun
2 nd Week of Dec 2007	2 nd Ministerial Meeting on Culture	Dhaka

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