

BIMSTEC Newsletter

A Monthly Newsletter from BIMSTEC Centre



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BIMSTEC Event

Thai-India 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations



On 3 August 2007, Mr. Sawanit Kongsiri, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Ms. Latha Reddy, Ambassador of India to Thailand, hosted a reception to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Thailand-India at Vithes Samosorn, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event was well attended by more than 300 diplomatic corps, representatives of International organizations, scholars, businessmen and media.



Other important activities being held on this occasion were a photo exhibition on the history of Thai-India Relations, an Indian Bharat Natyam classical dance recital by Miss Srekala Bharath, a famous Indian artist, and an Indian food Festival.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Photo exhibition on Thai-India Relations will travel to different universities in Bangkok and other regions of Thailand from 1 August 2007 to 1 August 2008 to commemorate this anniversary.

Updates from BIMSTEC Working Group

The latest development from the 72nd BIMSTEC Working Group Meeting are as follows;

Cooperation with ADB : ADB proposed to reschedule the BIMSTEC Transport, Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) Regional Technical Workshop to 18-19 September 2007 in Bangkok to be preceded by the Sub-regional Consultation Meeting with Thailand and Myanmar on 17 September 2007.

Poverty Alleviation Cooperation : At the 9th Ministerial Meeting, Bangladesh had offered to host the First Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation, one of the 13 Sectors of Cooperation among BIMSTEC member countries. The dates for the meeting has been fixed for 9-10 January 2008 at Dhaka.

Updates of Joint Survey of the Project “Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management in the Bay of Bengal” : The Joint Survey Project for Fishery cooperation is set for the period of 25 October–21 December 2007. The Thai Fisheries Department team has made an advanced trip (a pre-survey) to Chittagong Port for preparation of the Joint survey. In this regards, the Government of Bangladesh has offered assistance in this survey such as facilitating in protocol / immigration matters and managing the loading of supply and equipments during the survey etc.



Gai Jatra Festival



Nepal is a land of Festivals. For the Nepalese, festivals are not merely annual spectacles, but also are a living part of their rich cultural heritage. Festivals bind Nepalese people of diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs into one nation.

The *Gai Jatra* or the '*Festival of Cows*' is celebrated for a week in August/September. Following the time-honored tradition, families who have lost a member during the year parade around the city with a decorated cow. A young boy dressed as a cow is also considered a substitute, if a cow is not available. In some villages a cow is replaced by a fake cow or "thaha macha" which are tall wooden towers wrapped with the deceased's articles of clothing. Many kids disguise themselves as cows or ascetics and walk merrily publicly in a procession along the festival route.

According to religious scriptures, '*gai*' or 'the cow' helps departed souls to cross the cosmic ocean in their journey into the after-world. Cows are sacred animals in Hinduism.

Later in the afternoon, nearly everyone takes part in another age-old tradition in which all participants dress up, wear masks and enact jokes, mock play and humor of every kind. There is not only a spiritual but also a humorous aspect to the festival. Humorous and satirical street shows of the people in power are performed in major towns of the country.

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
2 nd Week of Dec 2007	2 nd Ministerial Meeting on Culture	Dhaka

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