

# BIMSTEC Newsletter

A Monthly Newsletter from BIMSTEC Centre



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## BIMSTEC Outlook

### Eid-ul-Adha Festival

Muslims celebrate two great festivals annually - Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. The first is the great festival that follows the month of Ramadan when the fast is broken. The second occurs about two months later during the month of Zil-Hajj when an animal is sacrificed in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of his son. This festival is incorporated in the great pilgrimage to Mecca which should properly be made during this month, but it is also observed all over the Muslim world at the same time. The underlying importance of this festival is the spirit of sacrifice (qurbani) in memory of Abraham's great act of faith many centuries ago.

Eid-ul-Adha is, according to Islamic teaching, a time for Muslims to learn the value of self-denial by making a sacrifice of something living to God. It is stringently denied by most Muslim theologians that the sacrifice has any further significance, and it is especially denied that religious sacrifice has any atoning or propitiatory value. Abraham's great act of submission is thus regarded solely as an example of genuine surrender to the will of God and is to be followed as such.

Eid- Ul- Adha is one of the special festivals of Muslim. Eid- Ul -Adha is also known as Bakr- Eid and festival of sacrifice. On this festival Muslims sacrifice their domestic animals like goat (Bakr- Eid), sheep, cow, camel etc. This sacrifice made by Muslims is a symbol of sacrifice made by Prophet Abraham.

Eid- Ul -Adha celebrations start after the Hajj. The first day of Eid- Ul -Adha is celebrated on the tenth day of Duhl -Hijja, which is the last month of the Islamic year. In some areas, Eid- Ul -Adha is celebrated for several days by Muslims. This year Eid- Ul- Adha took place on 28th November 2009.

Muslims celebrate the festival of Eid- Ul -Adha with lots of enthusiasm, enjoying each and every moment. On this day Muslims dress themselves in new clothes. Early in the morning prayers are recited by them to remember God and then the day begins with the breakfast of Sheer Korma.

Soon after the breakfast, the animal is forfeited and then the meat of the slaughtered animal is distributed among the neighbors, friends, family and poor people. It is believed that the meat of the sacrificed animal must be distributed in three equal parts among neighbors and friends, family members and poor people.

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Muslims greet each other with well wishes for the festival along with the meat of the slaughtered animal. Muslims spend time with their near and dear ones to spread love and happiness all around.

In the evening they visit to the places of their near and dear ones and celebrate the festival. Delicious food and drinks are served to those who visit Muslim places on this festival.

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## Eid-ul-Adha Festival (cont'd)

To celebrate Eid- Ul -Adha in a creative way, kids can make handmade Eid- Ul -Adha greetings and present them to all their near and dear ones. For those who have no time to visit markets to buy Eid- Ul -Adha greetings and have no free time to make handmade Eid- Ul -Adha greetings, for them online Eid- Ul -Adha greetings would be the best option.

The markets also remain open and decorated on the occasion of Eid for all the Muslims to do their shoppings. Children also enjoy this festival by wearing new clothes and playing games. Eid is the festival when all the children have a real fun time as they get gifts, clothes, sweets, perks and love from their family members. Children also make special handmade Eid Greetings for all their Friends and notice all the Eid traditions followed by their parents and are excited to follow the same when they grow up. Send Eid Ul Adha Cards, Eid Greeting Cards, Eid Mubarak Cards to your loved ones.

So, Eid-Ul-Adha is a day of remembrance and a time when Muslims pray for forgiveness from God and strength of faith. They, in turn, forgive others, releasing any feelings of enmity or ill feeling towards others. Many Muslims exchange greeting cards at this time.

Source: [www.theindependent-bd.com/details.php?nid=151574](http://www.theindependent-bd.com/details.php?nid=151574)

## Loy Krathong Festival, Thailand



Festivals play an important role in the social and cultural life of Thai people. The Thais look forward to and celebrate festivals through the collective efforts of the community for merit and fun, which are typical Thai values. One of the famous traditional festivals handed down since the Sukhothai period is **Loy Krathong**, festival of floating lights in the vessels. It is merely a matter of rejoicing in which all the people take part and is not only for royalty.

Loy Krathong has some connection with the floating of lanterns as observed by Thai kings when Sukhothai became the capital in the thirteenth century. The floating of lanterns is a Brahmanical ceremony to worship the divine trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver) and Shiva (the Destroyer). Later on, the ceremony is observed in accordance with the Buddhist concept of floating lanterns to worship a pagoda containing Lord Buddha's top-knot cut off at his self-ordination situated in Tavatimsa, the second level of heaven as well as the legendary footprint of Lord Buddha left on the sand shore of Nammada river of India. Nang Noppamas, the chief consort of King Phra Ruang of Sukhothai described that, in the twelfth month, the country was normally flooded. The King and his court went for a picnic on the river to witness the people enjoying themselves during the water festival at night. On this occasion, Nang Noppamas introduced a new kind of Krathong or vessel in the shape of a lotus blossom for the King to float in the running stream. She further adorned it with fresh flowers, incense sticks and a lighted candle. The King was so delighted with Krathong that he ordered to have Krathong floated to worship Lord Buddha's footprint on the bank of Nammada river on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month eternally.

Loy Krathong festival is currently celebrated all over the country both in cities and in the most remote rural villages in its true spirit of merriment. It is the most favoured, festive and romantic festival of Thailand especially in modern times. In the morning after making merit by offering food to monks, observing five Buddhist precepts, listening to sermons, people group together cleaning rivers and canals making them clean enough for all to float Krathong in gratitude of the Goddess of water. In the evening, they gather under the full moon along rivers and canals, as well as beaches and even around ponds and swimming pools, to enjoy assorted amusements and let Krathong float away with the current. As such, every stretch of water glitters with the bobbing lights of thousands of candles inside the beautiful little banana leaf baskets. Fireworks display roar on throughout the night while costume parades and dances and music presentations are everywhere.

## Loy Krathong Festival, Thailand (cont'd)

From dawn to midnight, the radio plays Loy Krathong song with the joyous tune-ful Thai melody. It proves that the festival of Loy Krathong with the true characteristics of music, dance and merry making is an integral part of Thai life. The Ramwong dance with an infectious beat, joined by young and old alike adds to general high spirits of Loy Krathong



Loy Krathong festival undoubtedly reflects the gratitude the Thais pay to water as a precious resource of life in an agricultural society. Some people believe that Loy Krathong is to honour Phra Mae Khongkha.(Goddess of water). Elaborate lotus - shaped creations bearing traditional offerings of flowers, incense sticks, candles and a coin floated in countless numbers on streams, lakes, ponds and even the open sea are to pay homage to the Goddess of water. Others say that Loy Krathong is to pay gratitude to Lord Buddha as Krathong are floated to worship His footprint and His topknot. It is also believed that Krathong are floated to worship the ancestors spirits as a manifestation of paying gratitude to the ancestors. No matter how different the beliefs are, the common value of Loy Krathong is gratitude.

Undoubtedly, Loy Krathong festival plays the role of transmitting Thai custom and tradition to the young generation. Loy Krathong festival represents the time when all the children and youth ought to appreciate traditional Thai values and choose what they consider the best way to uphold and maintain Loy Krathong festival as the Thai cultural heritage.

Source: <http://webhost.m-culture.go.th/en/index.php/articles/traditional-festival/19-loy-krathong-festival.html>

### BIMSTEC Upcoming Activities

Date	Activity	Venue
2-3 December 2009	Workshop on Experience Sharing in Certification of Energy Managers and Energy Auditors	Sri Lanka
8-11 December 2009	12 <sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and 14 <sup>th</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting	Myanmar
14 January 2010	96th BWG Meeting	Bangkok

### Dates to be Identified

19 <sup>th</sup> Trade Negotiation Committee Meeting	India
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Think Tanks	India
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of Tourism Working Group	India
2 <sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation	Nepal
5 <sup>th</sup> JWG on Counter-Terrorism and Transactional Crimes	Nepal
2 <sup>nd</sup> BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Conference	Thailand
3 <sup>rd</sup> Expert Group Meeting on Agricultural Cooperation	-

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