

BIMSTEC Newsletter

A Monthly Newsletter from BIMSTEC Centre



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BIMSTEC Cooperation Report 2008

“BIMSTEC as a regional bloc can be an effective tool in addressing poverty and energy shortage...and that peace and stability are promoted.”

BIMSTEC Cooperation Report 2008



The Centre for Studies in International Relations and Development (CSIRD) and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Kolkata had jointly published the Report which extensively reviewed economic and trade performances of BIMSTEC and the prospects of cooperation among member countries in various sectors, including transportation, energy, tourism and fisheries.

The BIMSTEC Cooperation Report 2008 pointed out that at the macroeconomic level BIMSTEC has grown faster than the world average in output in recent years. The region’s share in world output in PPP term has increased from 4.78 percent in 1996 to 5.86 percent in 2006.

It was an outstanding achievement considering the fact that the region accounted for nearly one-fifth of world population. But the Report cautioned that the ongoing global financial crisis could slowdown its growth prospects unless a comprehensive international response would be in place to address the problem in financial markets and to restore market confidence.

The Report emphasized that high growth rate was due in large part to acceleration of international trade in goods and services of the group, particularly India and Thailand. BIMSTEC’s share in global trade in goods has increased from 3 percent annually in 1990s to about 5 percent in the first half of the current decade. Intra-BIMSTEC trade has increased from 2.81 percent in 1997 to 5.46 percent in 2007. The volume of intra-regional trade in BIMSTEC was about US\$ 18.14 billion in 2007.

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Deeper economic integration in BIMSTEC is viewed as beneficial to all member countries. The Report suggested that at the current stage, member countries should exploit its full potential of regional economic integration by expediting the FTA implementation schedule and expanding its scope by improving connectivity and addressing non-tariff measures. Moving towards a customs union was also envisaged by the Report as the next step for BIMSTEC.

BIMSTEC Centre, a not-for-profit organization, wishes to thank CSIRD and ICC for the permission to quote and report this useful 2008 Report to the public.

Sources: BIMSTEC Cooperation Report 2008 and CSIRD website, <http://www.csird.org.in>

The Auspicious Occasion of HM the King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 81st Birthday Anniversary



On 2 December 2008, His Majesty the King addressed to soldiers from the Royal Guard battalions, who gathered at the Royal Plaza for the annual trooping of the colour parade and ceremony of taking an oath of allegiance to mark the 81st birthday anniversary of His Majesty the King.

The Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King 81st Birthday Anniversary was held nationwide. On 4 December 2008 at the Dusitalai Hall, representatives of senior government officials and other groups, gathered to express their royalties to His Majesty the King. This year His Majesty assigned HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn and HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to represent him to grant an audience to top government leaders and other dignitaries to his subjects.

On 2 December, members of the three armed forces, namely the Royal Thai Army, the Royal Thai Navy, and the Royal Thai Air Force,

hold the annual oath-taking ceremony and the Trooping of the Royal Guards, often referred to as the Trooping of the Colours Parade, in honour of His Majesty the King.

The fifth of December is a public holiday celebrated nationwide as National Day and Father's Day. In Thailand, buildings are covered up with Royal symbols and portraits of His Majesty by individuals and organizations. All public buildings and houses in Thailand are elaborately bedecked with flags and lights, predominantly of yellow color, especially the Grand Palace and the Ratchadamnoen Avenue, Bangkok.



Alms-giving ceremony in the morning and candle lighting in the evening are the celebrations held at Sanam Luang outside the Royal Palace, Bangkok.

Government agencies held many activities to celebrate the royal occasion. Thai citizens gathered on the National day to wish His Majesty the King a good health. In this ceremony they convened a lighting ceremony and took the oaths for the righteousness and loyalty. The celebrated festivities were also held by the royal Thai consulates around the world.

Sources :

Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, <http://www.ohmpps.go.th>

Pictures: Reuter, accessed via www.daylife.com/reuter-pictures

Honorary Consul of Thailand to Bhutan, co-hosted a reception on the auspicious occasions of the 81st Birthday Anniversary of HM King of Thailand.



Thai classical dances were performed by a cultural troupe from Department of Dramatic Art, Ministry of Culture



The Classical dances were also brought to general public in Thimphu and Phunaka on 22 and 23 Nov 2008.

Mr. Chalernpol Thanchitt, Ambassador of Thailand to Bhutan, and Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Honorary Consul of Thailand to Bhutan, co-hosted a reception on 21 November 2008 on the auspicious occasions of the 81st Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, the 53rd Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, and the Coronation of His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo.

Members of the Bhutanese Royal Family, Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, high ranking officials, and many others, attended the function. In this occasion, Dr. Chitriya Pinthong, Director-General of Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), Mr. Pisanu Chanvitan, Director-General of South Asia, Middle East and African Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as officials from TAT and the Thai private sector also participated in the activities, which included discussions with various Bhutanese counterparts on bilateral cooperation and other issues.

Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, www.mfa.go.th

Bhutan Celebrated the National Day on 17 December 2008



His Majesty the King addressed to the nation on 17 December 2008

Bhutan celebrated the National Day on 17 December 2008. National day is celebrated on 17th of December in commemoration of the accession of Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuk, the first king of Bhutan to the throne, at Punakha Dzong.

His Majesty the King and the statue of Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck were escorted to the celebration ground in an elaborate chipdrel procession. His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Their Majesties the Queen Mothers and the members of the royal family, cabinet ministers, representatives of the clergy, the armed forces, parliamentarians, students and the international community joined the celebrations. After His Majesty's arrival at the celebrations ground, the national flag was hoisted and a guard of honour was presented. His Majesty the King addressed to the nation, followed by the Jibi Pao and a Marchhang Ceremony. At the Changlimethang ground, where Bhutanese came to celebrate the historic Centenary National Day, many were blessed by the privilege of an audience with His Majesty the King.

Bhutan National Emblem: The national emblem, contained in a circle, is composed of a double diamond thunderbolt placed above a lotus, surmounted by a jewel and framed by two dragons. The double diamond thunderbolt represents the harmony between secular and religious power; which results from the Buddhist religion on its Vajrayana form. The lotus symbolizes purity; the jewel sovereign power; and the two dragons, male and female, stand for the name of the country-the thunder.



The National Flag of Bhutan: The flag is divided diagonally into equal yellow and orange halves. The division starts from the lower corner of the flag where it is hoisted and runs along the diagonally opposite corner. The yellow portion lies on the upper part of the diagonal division and it represents the yellow scarf worn by His Majesty, which in turn represents the being of His Majesty, the King. The orange portion lies on the lower part of the flag and it represents the orange scarf worn by the Je Khenpo, the religious head of the country. The National Flag has a white dragon which spreads equally along the diagonal division towards the upper end.

Source : National Portal of Bhutan, www.bhutan.gov.bt

BIMSTEC Upcoming Activities

Date	Activity	Venue
21 January 2009	87 th BWG Meeting	Bangkok
Dates to be Identified		
18 th TNC Meeting		
5 th STEOM/7 th TEMM		Bangladesh
2 nd BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Conference		Thailand
2 nd Ministerial Meeting on Culture		Bangladesh
2 nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Conference on Poverty Alleviation		Nepal
Expert Group Meeting on the establishment of a BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Exchange Facility		Colombo

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