

BIMSTEC Newsletter



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Visit of Prime Minister of Bhutan to India



The Prime Minister of Bhutan, H. E. Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay paid an official visit to India from August 30 to Sept 4, 2013. He was accompanied by Aum Tashi Doma, H. E. Lyonpo Rinzin Dorje, Foreign Minister and senior officials from the Royal Government of Bhutan. This was the first overseas visit by PM Tobgay after being elected Prime Minister, following the second democratic elections in Bhutan in July 2013. The visit was in conformity with the tradition of regular exchange of visits at the highest levels between India and Bhutan, and added momentum to time-tested and enduring relations between India and Bhutan.

During his visit, PM Tobgay met with the President, Vice President, and the Prime Minister of India. His programme also included meetings with the Chairperson UPA, Finance Minister, Home Minister, External Affairs Minister, Minister of State for Power and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, besides a joint business meeting with ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CII. The main outcomes of the discussions were: (i) India reiterated its commitment to Bhutan's socio-economic development. The two countries agreed to work together to further strengthen bilateral relations. PM Tobgay thanked India for the support extended for Bhutan's development. (ii) India's Assistance Package for Bhutan's 11th Five Year Plan for the period 2013 to 2018, was agreed upon. At Bhutan's request, India will contribute Rs 4500 Crores towards Bhutan's 11th Plan, as well as Rs. 500 Crores towards an Economic Stimulus Package. (iii) The importance of continued cooperation in developing hydroelectric projects in Bhutan was also agreed upon. India reiterated its commitment to install an additional 10,000 MW of generating capacity. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the progress in the three ongoing projects. (iv) India reassured the Bhutanese PM of its commitment to capacity building in Bhutan. (v) The two sides reaffirmed the trust and confidence between the two countries and their mutual security interests.

PM Tobgay visited an IT Park and Green Business Centre in Hyderabad.

(Source: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India)

Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visits New Delhi



Dr. Dipu Moni, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited New Delhi on 24-25 July 2013. The Foreign Minister gave address at the 4th R. K. Mishra Memorial Speech at the Observer Research Foundation on 24 July 2013. In her speech, the FM said that Bangladesh's relations with India are conducted within a new framework of cooperation which signifies the establishment of a new bilateral order between the government and the peoples of India and Bangladesh.

During the visit, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of India His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh, met Mr. Arun Jaitley, Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha and held meeting with her Indian counterpart His Excellency Mr. Salman Khurshid on 25 July 2013.

Earlier, Dr. Dipu Moni held separate bilateral meetings with her Indian and Chinese counterparts on the sidelines of the 20th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan on 1 July 2013. Salman Khurshid proposed that the two sides should work on developing a long term Vision Plan for power generation and sharing. The two Ministers expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the recent tripartite meeting involving Bangladesh, Bhutan and India on the issue of hydro-power generation and connectivity.

Source: Embassy of Bangladesh, Bangkok

Bangladesh and India agree to cooperate in textile sector



His Excellency Mr. Abdul Latif Siddique, Minister of Textile and Jute of Bangladesh visited New Delhi on 19 August 2013 at the invitation of His Excellency Dr. K. S. Rao, Minister of Textiles of India. During the visit, the two Minis-

ters held extensive talks on various issues relating to the textile and jute sectors of the two countries. A Memorandum of Understanding on textile sector collaboration was also signed during the visit. The MoU stipulates for a Joint Working Group which will act as a trade facilitation mechanism and work on enhancing collaboration between the Textiles Institutions in the two countries.

The two sides also discussed about establishment of a successor organization to the International Jute Study Group in Dhaka through joint efforts at the UNCTAD. India has in principle agreed to support Bangladesh's initiative for a successor multilateral organization in the jute sector for taking forward the initiatives of the International Jute Study Group.

Source: Embassy of Bangladesh, Bangkok

“New Legs, New Life for Myanmar Disabled”



On 5 August 2013, the Royal Thai Embassy, Yangon and the Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) jointly concluded their social responsibility initiative “New Legs, New Life for Myanmar Disabled”, by which a sum of 11 million kyats (approx. 11,000 US Dollars) was raised from donation and proportion of sale of CP’s newly launched product “CP Smoked German Sausage” in June 2013.

Mr. Pisanu Suvanajata, Ambassador of Thailand to Myanmar, expressed his appreciation to Mr. Nutthakrit Sivasri, Vice Chairman of CP Group, for their support through CSR activities in collaboration with the Royal Thai Embassy. He also updated on the project, under which some of the fund raised from this joint activity will be used to sponsor 3 Myanmar children to get their new legs at the Prosthesis Foundation of H.R.H the Princess Mother in Chiang Mai in early September 2013, while the remaining fund will be used to support the upgrading of prosthetic services at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Yangon, Myanmar, where these children can get their new legs in the future.

The project “New Legs, New Life for Myanmar Disabled” is part of the commemorative activities to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Myanmar and Thailand diplomatic relations this year. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand also provided budget and technical support for technicians from the National Rehabilitation Hospital to be

trained at the Prostheses Foundation to learn how to make prostheses with Thailand’s internationally recognized prosthetic technology. The Prostheses Unit at the Hospital will also be renovated, and equipment and materials will be provided.

Thailand Shared Its Experience in Social Entrepreneurship with Myanmar

During 13-22 August 2013, the Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon, in cooperation with Payap University, organized the training course on “Social Entrepreneurship” to promote academic collaboration between Thailand and Myanmar. This course is the first in a series of short courses aimed at engaging and supporting Myanmar to face future challenges as it moves towards ASEAN in 2015.

Through the training, resource persons from the University and its international partners shared their knowledge, skills and experiences to help prepared Myanmar participants, most of whom are ladies from non-profit organizations or owners of small businesses, to meet the challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. The course content was designed based on Payap University’s own model of social entrepreneurship.

In the closing and congratulatory remarks, Ambassador Pisanu stressed the concept of “social responsibility” which would help build long-term partnership between Thailand and Myanmar based on mutual interests and caring for society. He encouraged all Thai businesses and non-profit institutions to organize initiatives like this as a means to return the benefits to Myanmar people, while strengthening networks among Thai and Myanmar partners.

Courtesy: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

India Participates in the "PROFOOD PROPACK AND AGBIZ 2013" as a Partner Country

The ProFood, ProPack and Agbiz 2013 was inaugurated on 23 August 2013 by Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development and the High Commissioner of India at a function organized at BMICH, Colombo. India participated in 'ProFood ProPack 2013' as a partner country.

The number of Indian companies participating in the exhibition has grown over the years. This year, about 65 Indian companies participated in the exhibition. The Indian companies are show-

ing a wide range of agro and food products, bakery & kitchen equipment. The food processing industry holds immense potential for small-scale entrepreneurs.

The Indian companies are participating under the banner of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and from Kerala and other individual companies.

(Source: High Commission of India, Colombo)

Visits from Sri Lanka and Nepal to India



The Minister of External Affairs, Sri Lanka, Prof. G.L. Peiris called on PM Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on August 19, 2013 and met Minister of External Affairs during his visit to India from August 18-19, 2013



The President of Nepali Congress, Hon'ble Mr. Sushil Kumar Koirala visited India from 4-9 August 2013. During his visit, Mr. Koirala called on PM Dr. Manmohan Singh. He met with Minister

of External Affairs, Chairperson, UPA, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Chief Minister of Bihar.

(Source: MEA, New Delhi)

External Affairs Minister of India visits Nepal



H. E. Mr. Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India's visited Kathmandu, Nepal on July 09, 2013. During his visit EAM met with the President of Nepal Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Mr. Khil Raj Regmi - Chief of Interim Council of Ministers, Government of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Ghimire -

Foreign Minister, Government of Nepal and other political leaders and dignitaries. Minister Khurshid asserted on behalf of the Government of India's commitment to the success of Nepal's peace process and institutionalization of democracy in Nepal in a constitutional and multi-party framework. India has agreed to provide all the logistical support for the security agencies and Election Commission of Nepal as requested by the Government of Nepal.

(Source: MEA, New Delhi)

Direct Flights between Bangkok and Nay Pyi Taw



Bangkok Airways, announced its latest expansion to Myanmar by offering non-stop flights from Bangkok to Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Commencing on 30 September 2013, the airline will be the first scheduled foreign air carrier to service this route and the only Thai airline that serves all three main cities of Myanmar: Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. Bangkok Airways will offer 3 non-stop flights per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from Bangkok (Suvarnabhumi) – Nay Pyi Taw with 70-seater ATR72 aircraft. The out-bound flight PG721 will depart Bangkok at 17.00hrs and arrive Nay Pyi Taw Airport at 19.00hrs. The inbound flight PG722 will depart Nay Pyi Taw Airport at 19.30hrs and arrive Bangkok at 22.30hrs.

Thai AirAsia from 28 October 2013 will also launch its 3rd route to Myanmar, with Bangkok (Don Mueang) – Nay Pyi Taw daily service, on board Airbus A320 aircraft at the starting fare of only 1,290 THB per trip. Connectivity to Nay Pyi Taw continues to become an increasingly important destination for the region. With the 27th SEA Games approaching in December 2013, Myanmar's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014, and the ASEAN Economic Community taking place in 2015, there will be tremendous demand to connect the capital city to the rest of the world, and Bangkok is a perfect place to start.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand)

Incredible India Week in Bangkok



The Embassy of India in Bangkok in collaboration with Siam Paragon shopping mall organized "Incredible India Week" from 15-18 August 2013. The event showcased the finest traditions of Indian arts, handicrafts, textiles, jewellery and accessories. A special 'Royal Fables' exhibition from the Royal families of Rajasthan was also displayed. The 'Tawang Snow Lions' dance and Bharatanatyam performance by noted exponent Meenakshi Srinivasan, as well as fashion show by leading Indian designers Vikram Phadnis and Joy Mitra were main attraction of the week. A number of organizations under Ministry of Textiles of India, representatives of State Tourism departments and Tea and Coffee boards participated in the week.

(Source: Embassy of India, Bangkok)



H.E. Mr. Anand Sharma, Commerce and Industry Minister of India met H.E. Mr. U Thein Sein, President of Myanmar on 7 June 2013 in Nay Pyi Taw. India has offered US\$ 150 million of credit for project exports for establishing SEZ at Sittwe in Myanmar. India is involved in improving road connectivity with ASEAN countries which will create new opportunities for India's North-eastern region.



The Deputy Minister of Commerce, Thailand, Mr. Yan Yong PhoungRach meeting the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Dr. (Smt.) D. Purandeswari, in New Delhi on August 08, 2013.

BIMSTEC Tourism Working Group Meeting

Ministry of Tourism of India hosted the BIMSTEC Tourism Working Group Meeting on 23 September 2013 in New Delhi. The meeting discussed issues related to the BIMSTEC Information Centre and contribution to the BIMSTEC Tourism Fund.

(Source: MEA, New Delhi)

BIMSTEC Upcoming Activities

Date	Activity	Venue
October 2013	Field visit of ADB Team	
15 Oct-13 Nov 2013	BIMSTEC Training International Program on Advance Aquatic Plant Tissue Culture	Thailand
8-9 December 2013	BIMSTEC Expert Working Group on Railway Development, and Finalization Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study Updating	Bangladesh
19-20 Dec 2013	The 4 th Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation	Nepal
December 2013	BIMSTEC Expert Working Group on Maritime Transport Development, and Interim Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study (BTILS) Updating	Thailand