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Foreign Ministers of Thailand and Myanmar blessed a Friendship School at Groundbreaking Ceremony



On 22 November 2013 , H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, blessed the groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation of No. 15 Basic Education Primary School, Thar Pyay Hla, Pyinmana in Nay Pyi Taw, under the Thailand-Myanmar Friendship School Project. He was joined by H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Dr. San 9Lwin, Deputy Minister for Education. Ambassador Pisanu Suvanajata and other high ranking officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and

Myanmar, and Ministry of Education of Myanmar witnessed this auspicious ceremony.

H.E. Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul also presented to Daw Sabal Khaing, Headmistress, the stationery, learning materials, and sport equipment provided by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, and educational toys sponsored by Thailand-Myanmar Association for Friendship, to support the teaching and learning process at the School. Afterwards, he toured around the classrooms to observe the teaching and learning. The work plan for the School will include the renovation of the old building, the construction of a new childcare centre, and the upgrading of drinking water and sanitation systems, to help improve the quality standard of the School.

The Thailand-Myanmar Friendship School Project is part of the commemorative activities to celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Establishment of Thailand-Myanmar Diplomatic Relations. The Government of Thailand pledged its continued support for the School, both for the improved teaching and learning environment of the School and for the symbol of the close and cordial ties between the two countries and peoples in the years to come.



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

Bangladesh Prime Minister meets the President of Sri Lanka on the sidelines of CHOGM 2013

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a bilateral meeting with the President of Sri Lanka His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa on 15 November 2013 in Colombo on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM).

At the meeting, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka discussed about collaboration in cultivation of jute, rice, vegetables, etc. in unused lands of Sri Lanka under long-term lease basis and in the fisheries sector of Sri Lanka. Both the leaders also discussed various issues related to bilateral interests and ways of strengthening cooperation

in areas of health, culture and education. The Minister of External Affairs of India His Excellency Salman Khurshid paid a courtesy call on the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 15 November 2013 in Colombo on the sidelines of the CHOGM. All bilateral issues including the progress in execution of the decisions and agreement signed between the two countries came up in the discussion. (Source: *The Embassy of People's Republic of Bangladesh, Thailand*)

7th Myanmar-Thailand Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) Held in Nay Pyi Taw

At the invitation of H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Thai delegation led by H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs attended the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Myanmar-Thailand Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) which was held on 22 November 2013 at the Myanmar International Convention Centre (MICC), Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The 7th JCBC was co-chaired by the Union

Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul. They discussed matters relating to further strengthening of the existing friendly relations and cooperation as well as enhancing cooperation in more areas of mutual interests and the 7th JCBC successfully concluded. The 7th JCBC was preceded by the Senior Officials' Meeting.

After the Meeting, H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul handed over the sports equipment, weight training equipment and IT equipment donated by the Sports Authority of Thailand for the 27th SEA Games to Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin. The meeting was also attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other related line Ministries. (Source: *The Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Bangkok*)

Friendship Cultural Show Held in Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the Myanmar-Thai Diplomatic Ties



Friendship cultural show to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Thailand was held at Myanmar International Convention Centre (MICC) in Nay Pyi Taw in the evening of 22 November 2013. Vice-President H. E. U Nyan Tun attended the ceremony and enjoyed the performances of Myanmar and Thai cultural troupes. It was attended by the Union Ministers, the Deputy Ministers, Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, the Thai Ambassador to Myanmar and guests. On the occasion, the Vice-President, Union Foreign Affairs Minister H. E. U Wunna Maung Lwin and the Thai Deputy Prime Minister extended greetings. (Source: *The Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Bangkok*)

His Majesty the King and Thailand-Myanmar Relation



On 26 November 2013, the Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon organized a special talk on "His Majesty the King and Thailand-Myanmar Relations" on the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 86th Birthday Anniversary on 5 December 2013 and to further enhance the existing close and cordial relations between the two countries to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Thailand and Myanmar.

The Embassy was honoured by Prof. Dr. Paothong Thongchua, a famous Thai historian and fashion designer, to share his knowledge and interesting stories, while showing a collection of many historical photos of Their Majesties the King and the Queen during the state visit to Burma (the then country's official name) during 2-5 March 1960. His talk drew a large number of crowds, both Thai and Myanmar, including students from the Thai Department, Yangon University of Foreign Languages, since the talk was conducted in Thai. The audience learned a great deal about the beloved King and Queen and their goodwill mission, which have laid a concrete foundation for the development of Thailand-Myanmar relations until today.

This special talk is one of the series of activities to celebrate both auspicious occasions. Others are (1) Thai Golf Club in Myanmar (TGCM) Golf Championship 2013 on 1 December 2013 at 09.30 hrs. organized jointly with the Royal Thai Embassy to raise a fund for future charity work of the Thai community in Myanmar (2) blood donation on 4 December 2013 from 09.00-12.00 hrs. at the National Blood Centre, and (3) the Thai National Day and His Majesty the King's 86th Birthday Anniversary Celebration on 5 December 2013 which will be a concluding activity in commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Thailand and Myanmar.

Source: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand*

Official Visit of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the Kingdom of Thailand



Marking the 24th anniversary of Bhutan-Thailand diplomatic ties, the two nations signed a trade and economic cooperation agreement yesterday to further strengthen the friendship.

Following a closed-door meeting, the agreement was signed between Thailand's Commerce Minister Niwattumrong Boonsongpaisan and Economic Affairs Minister Norbu Wangchuk in presence of prime ministers of the two nations.

At a luncheon, welcoming Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay on his first official visit to Thailand, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said Bhutan and Thailand enjoyed close relations at all levels, from the ties between the Royal families to relations between the two governments and its peoples.

"The growing potential in trade, investment and tourism between the two countries and our cultural links through Buddhism, provide a strong foundation for enhancement of our relations," she said, adding both countries attached importance to multilateralism.

"Thailand will continue to support human resource development in Bhutan through Thailand-Bhutan Development Cooperation program and Friends from Thailand Program," Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said.

The trade agreement states the two countries, on basis of mutual benefits, would explore and where applicable undertake cooperation projects, for instance in areas of tourism, construction, small and medium enterprises, health and medical care, education, energy and logistic services among others.

A joint trade committee will be formed from the two ministries to implement the agreement.

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay said the agreement would further cement the friendly relations between the two nations amid steady growth in economic cooperation and trade.

"We must build on the existing goodwill and friendship to foster greater commercial ties in areas such as tourism, education and investments in business," he said.

Bound by common values, culture and interests, Thailand, Lyonchhoen said held a very special place in the hearts of the Bhutanese.

Source: The Royal Bhutanese Embassy, Bangkok

Union Foreign Minister Receives U.S. State Department Officials and Indian Chief of the Army Staff

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs H. E. U Wunna Maung Lwin received a goodwill delegation led by General Bikram Singh, Chief of the Army Staff of the Republic of India at his office in Nay Pyi Taw on 30 October 2013. At the meeting, they exchanged views on promoting the existing relations and cooperation between two countries.

Source: Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Bangkok

Symposium Held on ASEAN-India Connectivity in Bangkok



On 27 November 2013, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with the governments of Japan and India, organized a symposium titled “Towards Realization of ASEAN Connectivity Plus: Moving Forward with ASEAN-India Connectivity” at the Dusit Thani Hotel, Bangkok. The opening remarks were given by Mr. Le Luong Minh, ASEAN Secretary-General, Mr. Pradap Pibulsonggram, Thailand’s Representative in the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, and Mr. Anil Wadhwa, Ambassador of India to Thailand. The

purpose of the symposium was to raise awareness and understanding of opportunities arising from ASEAN-India Connectivity and to share ideas on cooperation to enhance physical connectivity in the region, especially the economic corridors that connect ASEAN and South Asia, such as the Thailand-Myanmar-India Trilateral Highway, Mekong-India Economic Corridor (Ho Chi Minh City – Phnom Penh – Bangkok – Dawei – Chennai) and Southern Economic Corridor, which would enhance supply chains, trade and investment, as well as future cooperation between the two regions. The meeting was attended by 180 participants from related public and private agencies from ASEAN, India, and Japan, along with Ambassadors and permanent representatives of ASEAN member countries, ASEAN dialogue partners, ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), and major financial organization for development, such as the Asia Development Bank (ADB), Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The outcome of the symposium will be summarized and submitted as input to ASEAN meetings and forums on connectivity, to help fine-tune policies related to strengthening connectivity between ASEAN member countries and dialogue partners.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Government.

Minister Peiris meets the new External Affairs Minister of India



Minister of External Affairs G. L. Peiris who is in New Delhi for the 12th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) that is currently chaired by India, met the Minister of External Affairs of India, Salman Khurshid, on 2 November. This was the first meeting between the two ministers since Minister Khurshid’s appointment as the External Affairs Minister of India. The Ministers used the opportunity to discuss briefly, key issues of importance to the two countries and agreed that the 8th Session of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission chaired by the

Ministers of External Affairs would be convened in New Delhi in January 2013. The Joint Commission between the two countries is a structured mechanism that discusses all areas of bilateral relevance for cooperation between India and Sri Lanka including trade, services and investment, development cooperation, science and technology, and culture and education. The last meeting of the Joint Commission was held in Colombo in November 2010.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs Sri Lanka

135th BWG Meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

The 135th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG) (Ambassadorial Level) was held on 7 November 2013 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. The Meeting was attended by all BIMSTEC member countries. The meeting takes place monthly at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to follow up and push forward progress in each cooperation sector. H.E. U Tin Win, Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar chaired the Meeting. Some discussions of the meeting include:

BIMSTEC Sub Group on Financing Terrorism Meeting

India has informed that BIMSTEC Sub Group on Financing Terrorism Meeting would be held on 6-7 March 2014 in New Delhi.

3rd BIMSTEC Summit and related meetings

Myanmar informed that it has proposed to hold 3rd BIMSTEC Summit and related meetings from 1-4 March 2014. Myanmar informed that it has so far received the confirmation from Nepal on the proposed dates. Myanmar has requested remaining member countries to follow up with their respective capitals. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Htin Lynn, Deputy Director General, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar. Mr. Lynn informed that since Myanmar assumed the chairmanship of BIMSTEC in 2010, Myanmar was making concerted efforts to convene the third BIMSTEC Summit and its related meetings as early as possible. He highlighted that as the host country, Myanmar needs three-month preparatory time for a smooth, effective and efficient execution of its chairmanship responsibility in both logistic and substance.

4th Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation

Nepal mentioned that the 4th Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation was proposed to hold in Nepal from 19-20 December 2013. Nepal requested the member countries to follow up with respective line agencies so as to avoid frequent postponement. Thailand informed that the proposed dates were convenient to the Ministry of Agriculture of Thailand.

3rd Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation

Sri Lanka informed that the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation would be held in the first half of 2014 in Sri Lanka.

20th TNC Meeting

Regarding the 20th TNC Meeting, Thailand mentioned that once received the Tariff Schedule of Commitments from all member countries, it would propose the date of the meeting to BIMSTEC member countries. **Continue...**

135th BWG Meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand (Cont. from page No. 6)**BIMSTEC Expert Working Group on Maritime Transport Development, and Interim Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study (BTILS) Updating**

Thailand informed that the BIMSTEC Expert Working Group on Maritime Transport Development and Interim Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study (BTILS) Updating had been postponed to January 2014 due to the delay in recruitment of national consultants and in drafting the interim report. (Photo:134th BWG Meeting)

Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh calls on Prime Minister of Bangladesh Shiekh Hasina during her maiden official visit to Dhaka

Foreign Secretary of India, Mrs. Sujatha Singh visited Bangladesh on December 4, 2013. She had a very fruitful set of meetings and called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister AH Mahmud Ali. She also called on the Leader of the

Opposition and Chairperson of the BNP Begum Khaleda Zia and Chairperson of the Jatiya Party General Ershad and her counterpart, Foreign Secretary M. Shahidul Haque. India and Bangladesh have made concrete progress in the areas of political understanding, security, trade and economic relations, economic development, energy and people to people exchanges. Substantial progress has been made in the following areas: (i) Energy (500 MW inter grid connectivity and commencement of work on a 1320 MW power plant in Rampal); (ii) Sub-regional cooperation in power and water and trade and connectivity; (iii) Development assistance (US\$ 800 million credit line well on its way to implementation and US\$ 200 million untied grants-in-aid); (iv) Trade (Unilateral zero duty quota free access to all Bangladeshi products except 25 tariff lines that has led to significant increases in Bangladesh's exports to India, particularly in garments); (v) Border Management; and Border infrastructure (ICP at Akhaura-Agartala) *Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*



Minister for Commerce & Industry of India, Shri Anand Sharma with Minister of Finance, Industry & Commerce and Supplies of Nepal, Mr. Shanker Prasad Koirala, on the sidelines of the 9th WTO Ministerial, at Bali on December 03, 2013.

Constituent Assembly election ends peacefully in Nepal

BIMSTEC Upcoming Activities



The historic second Constituent Assembly election was held peacefully. Election Commission (EC) said that there was around 70 per cent voter turnout, which is the highest in the country's poll history. Addressing a press meet held immediately after the end of the voting, Chief Election Commissioner Neel Kantha Uprety said that the voters took part by defying the call of anti-poll parties. "The election by and large remained peaceful except some reports of minor incident amid tight security arrangements." said Uprety, stating that the election was held in a free, fair and peaceful manner except a very few unpleasant incidents. Describing the turnout as historic and unprecedented, the EC chief said that the credit for this went to parties, civil servants, social activists, international community, international/national poll observers, and the media. The voting that began at 7 in the morning in almost all of a total 18,438 polling centers across the country concluded at 5 in the evening. There were 12,147,865 voters in this CA election. (Source: *The Rising Nepal, Kathmandu*)

Country	Activities	Remarks
Bangladesh	STEOM & Economic Forum	2014
	Trade/ Economic Ministers' Meeting	2014
	Finalization Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study (BTILS)	April 2014
India	6 th BIMSTEC Sub-Group Meeting on Combating the Financing of Terrorism	5-7 February 2014
Myanmar	Preparatory Meeting for 3 rd BIMSTEC Summit	27-28 January 2014
	3 rd BIMSTEC Summit and related meetings	1-4 March 2014
Nepal	3 rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Ministers on Energy	2014
	4 th Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation	2014
Sri Lanka	International Research Conference and Symposium in Ayurveda	2014
	3 rd Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation	First half of 2014
Thailand	20 th TNC Meeting	2014
	BIMSTEC Expert Working Group on Maritime Transport Development, and Interim Workshop on the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure Logistics Study (BTILS) Updating	January 2014

The Embassy of Nepal in Bangkok has compiled this issue on behalf of BIMSTEC Working Group