

**Embassy of India
Bangkok**

Press Release

**100th ANNIVERSARY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN
SURAT, INDIA AND SURAT THANI, THAILAND**

The Governments of India and Thailand are celebrating the 100th anniversary of relations between the city of Surat in Gujarat, India and Surat Thani in southern Thailand by organizing the Southern International Trade Expo in Surat Thani, Thailand from 23 – 26 July 2015.

2. There is a unique historical connection between Surat in India and Surat Thani in Thailand. History has it that in 1915, King Rama VI of Thailand during his visit to India was so impressed with the vibrancy of the erstwhile port city of Surat that he went back to Thailand and renamed Chaiya province in Southern Thailand as Surat Thani (City of Good People) and Phum Duang river as Tapi River, after Surat of India and Tapi river in Surat.

3. Surat, an erstwhile port in the southern province of Gujarat state, has a vibrant trade and cultural history. In early days, Surat was connected with 84 ports across the world and ships from these countries used to arrive in the Tapi River for trade and commerce. Surat Thani, is an important commercial and shipping hub for rubber, marine products and coconut trading.

4. Historic relations between the two cities have been revived with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Surat Thani Chamber of Commerce and the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 24 February 2015 during the visit of the Ministers of Commerce and Tourism & Sports of Thailand to India. A proposal for Sister City association between these two cities is also under consideration.

5. The Southern International Trade Expo is being held to commemorate the Centennial Celebration of relations between Surat Thani and Surat. The Fair will be hosted by the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Tourism & Sports of Thailand in association with the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade of Thailand and Federation of Thai Industry. The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry will co-host the Expo at which approximately 140 Indian businesspersons and exhibitors will take part. The Embassy of India, Bangkok is setting up a stall to promote the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative at the Expo.

6. The commemoration celebrations will include a Surat-Surat Culture and Heritage Show. A 12-member Gujarati folk dance and music troupe 'Halar Lok Kala Kendra' has been sponsored by the Government of India to perform at the celebrations.

7. An official delegation comprising the Mayor and Municipal Commissioner of Surat will be representing the city of Surat along with a 40 member delegation. Exhibitors will showcase products from both India and the South of Thailand, including food products, garments and accessories, health and beauty products, construction materials and houseware, rubber and rubber products, innovative crafts, travel and leisure business and logistics service providers.

8. The trade exhibition, demonstration and show will be held at Central Plaza, Surat Thani while business to business meetings will take place at Diamond Plaza Hotel, Surat Thani. All are welcome to visit the India Pavilion at the Southern International Trade Expo, Surat Thani.

(Bangkok – 22 July 2015)