

THAILAND UPDATE

His Majesty the King's health

• Since His Majesty the King was admitted for treatment at Siriraj Hospital on September 19, 2009, the Royal Household Bureau has issued daily bulletins to inform the Thai public of the King's health. This matter was best described by HRH Princess Chulabhorn when she was asked about it on October 15, 2009.

• The Princess said that on September 19, His Majesty the King was taken ill with high fever and was admitted for treatment at Siriraj Hospital as doctors found some infection of the lungs. Since then, His Majesty's health has continuously improved. The fever has lessened, and x-rays show continuous recovery from lung infection. His heart condition is also normal. The Royal Physicians say there is no cause for concern. Be that as it may, His Majesty has to remain in hospital for further physical rehabilitation therapy, which is normal for an older person who has had to stay in bed and not exercised for many days. This will take some more time.

• On October 23, 2009, His Majesty the King appeared in public on the ground floor of the hospital to pay respect to the statues of his late Princess Mother and the memorial of King Chulalongkorn. He raised his arm to greet the public as he was wheeled through the hospital ground.

Friends of Thailand Caucus in the House of Representatives

• The Friends of Thailand Caucus has been officially established in the US House of Representatives on September 24, 2009 with Rep. Donald Manzullo (R-IL) and Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) as co-chairs. Several members of the House have already joined the Caucus. Offices of both Congressmen circulated an invitation to members of the House yesterday. Interested House Members can contact either office. The Caucus aims to promote the 176-year US-Thai relations and US interests in Thailand and Southeast Asia, including the \$32 billion trade volume and growing investment between the two countries. House members can rely on the Caucus for its expertise on key relevant issues that come before Congress.

Thailand provides emergency humanitarian assistance for American Samoa

• On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, Ambassador Don Pramudwinai presented on October 15, 2009 financial assistance for humanitarian relief to the Government of American Samoa to Rep. Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa. The assistance is for the American Samoa Relief Fund, set up for the recent natural disaster such as earthquake and tsunami in American Samoa.

Congressional Staff Delegation to Thailand 2009

• The Royal Thai Embassy organized a Congressional staff delegation for 2009 from August 15-24. The delegation was drawn from several personal offices of House members and key committees, such as Foreign Affairs and Rules. The delegation had a meeting with Thailand's Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya and raised key issues with high ranking government officials such as protection of intellectual property rights, Hmong displaced persons in Thailand, human trafficking, and US-Thailand relations. The delegation also visited Mae La Temporary Shelter for displaced persons from Myanmar in Tak province on the border with Myanmar. Several staff also visited the Grand Palace, Jim Thompson Silk museum, and Jatujak market in Bangkok and various historical sites in Ayuthaya, a former capital of Thailand.

• The Embassy plans to arrange the next Congressional Staff Delegation during the Congressional recess in February 2010. Priority will be given to staff from members of the Friends of Thailand Caucus and senior staff from relevant committees and offices.

A special talk on "Democracy and the Rule of Law in Thailand"

• A special talk will be given on November 5, 2009 from 12.30-2:00PM at Gewirz Building, Georgetown University Law Center, by Prof. Dr. Suchit Bunbongkarn, President of the Political Development Council and Prof. Emeritus of the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Dr. Suchit is a former Justice of the Constitutional Court of Thailand (2000-2004). He also served as a member of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly in 1997 and a member of the National Legislative Assembly. Dr. Suchit will discuss democracy and the current political situation in Thailand. Please RSVP to flag@law.georgetown.edu by November 2nd, 2009.

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