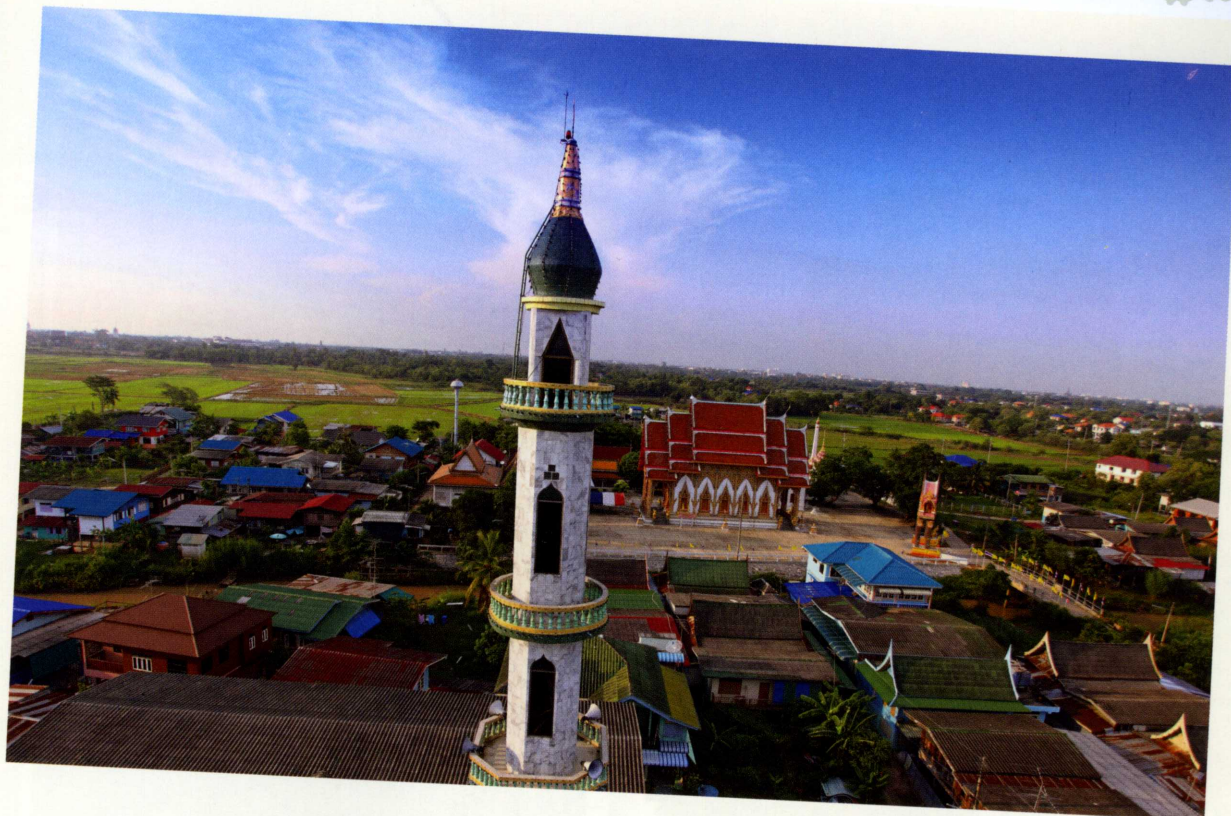


2013 EDITION

Muslims in Southern Thailand



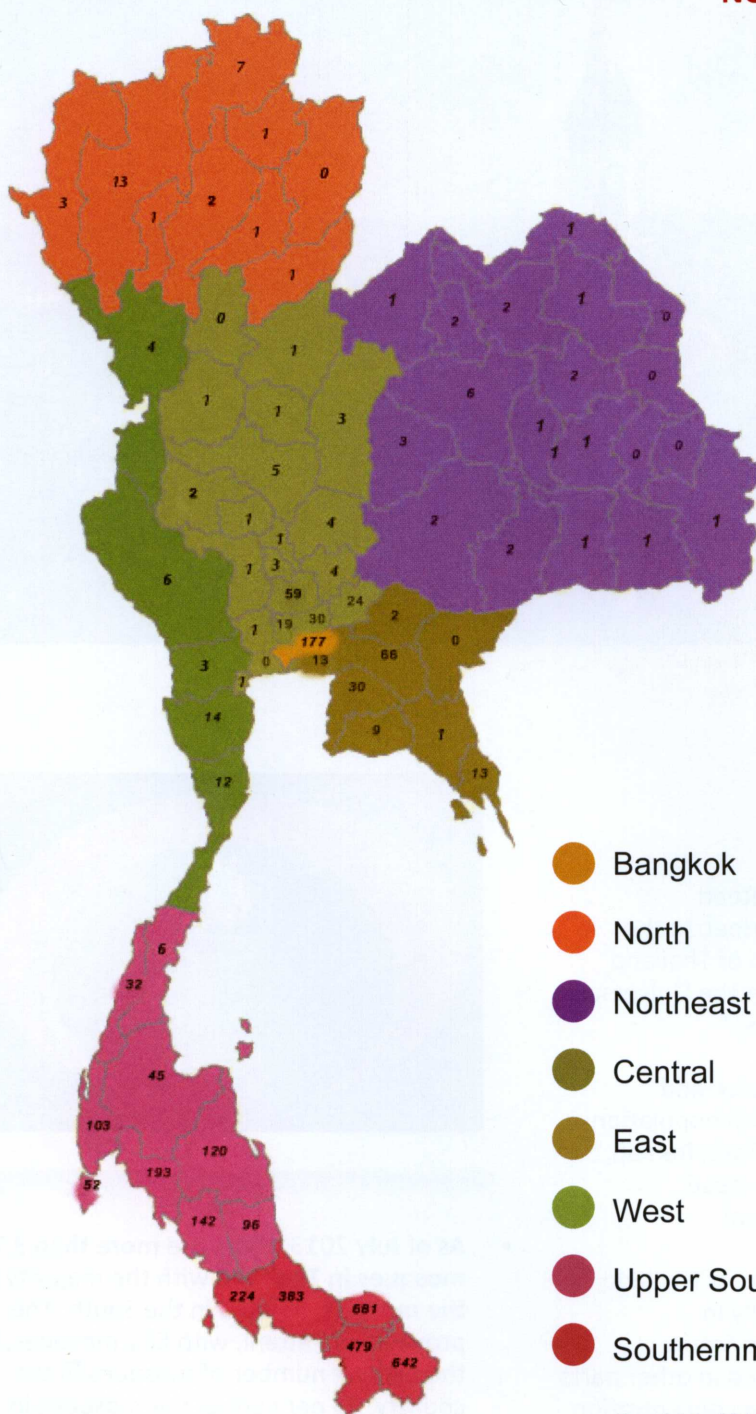


Basic Information

- Thais of all faiths are guaranteed freedom of religion as enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand and pursuant to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Thailand's Muslims are diverse and multicultural** with the Muslim population consisting of ethnic Malay, Arab, Iranian, Pakistani, Tamil, Punjabi, Siamese, Chinese and Cambodian Cham.
- The majority of Thai Muslims in Thailand reside in the South, especially in Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and Satun Provinces. The rest are settled in other parts of the country with the main concentration in the province of Ayutthaya and the outskirts of Bangkok.
- As of July 2013, there are **more than 3,700 mosques in Thailand** with the majority of the mosques located in the South. The province of Pattani, with 681 mosques, has the highest number of mosques in the country. 99 per cent of the mosques in Thailand are Sunni while the remainder are Shia.



NUMBER OF MOSQUES IN THAILAND



(As of July 2013)

Source : Department of Provincial Administration



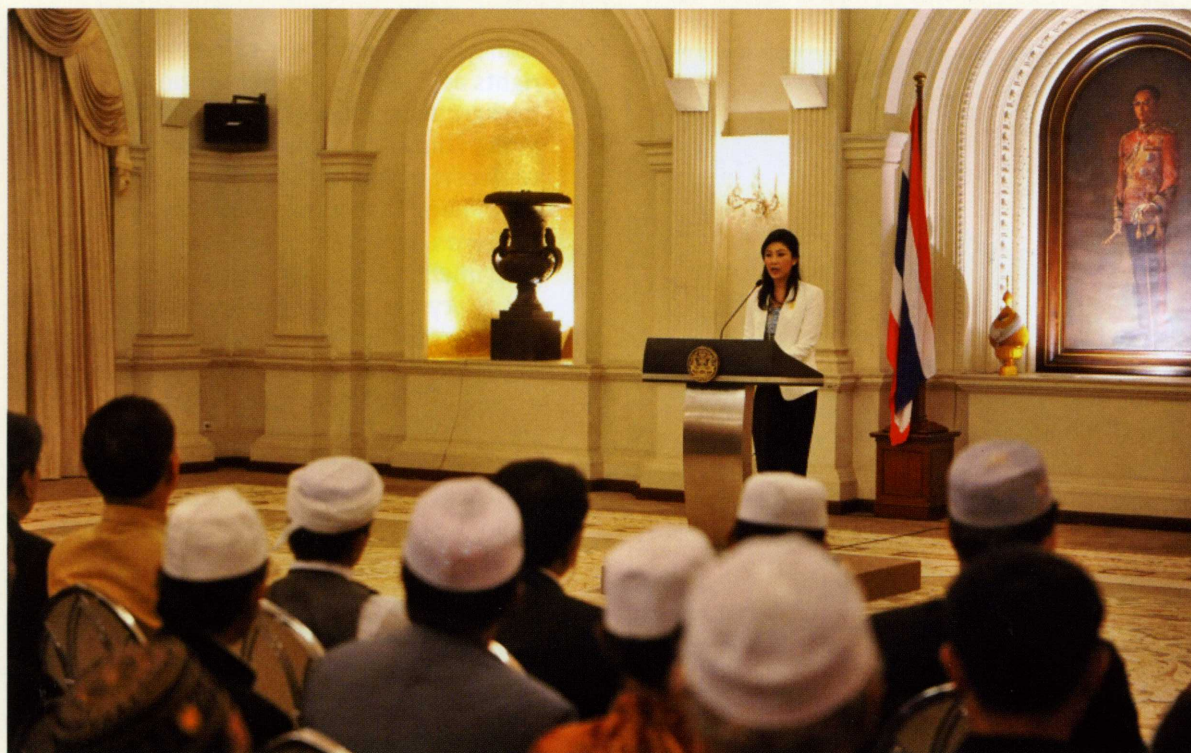
Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Minister of Foreign Affairs



Mr. Aziz Phitakkhumphol, current Sheikhul Islam of Thailand

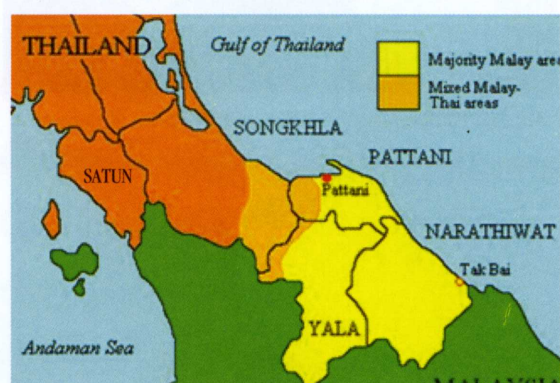
- Thai Muslims enjoy the same political rights as Thais from other religious backgrounds. They actively participate in the country's public affairs and have risen to become high ranking officials. Such prominent Thai Muslims include *Dr. Surin Pitsuwan*, who served as Member of Parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and *Mr. Wan Mohamad Noor Matha*, who served as the first Muslim House Speaker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. Internationally, Mr. Noor Matha served as a Member of the Constituent Council of the Muslim World League (MWL). *General Sonthi Boonyaratkalin* is the first Thai Muslim to become Army Commander-in-Chief.
- The institutionalization of Islamic affairs has a long history in Thai society since the appointment of the first **Sheikhul Islam** of Thailand in the 16th Century. The appointment process of the Sheikhul Islam is transparent, democratic and accountable. The Sheikhul Islam is first selected by the Provincial Islamic Councils. The successful candidate will then be appointed Sheikhul Islam of Thailand by a Royal Decree. The Sheikhul Islam's main responsibilities include, inter alia, promoting Islam in Thailand and abroad and advising the State on matters pertaining to Islamic affairs especially on the Hajj pilgrimage.





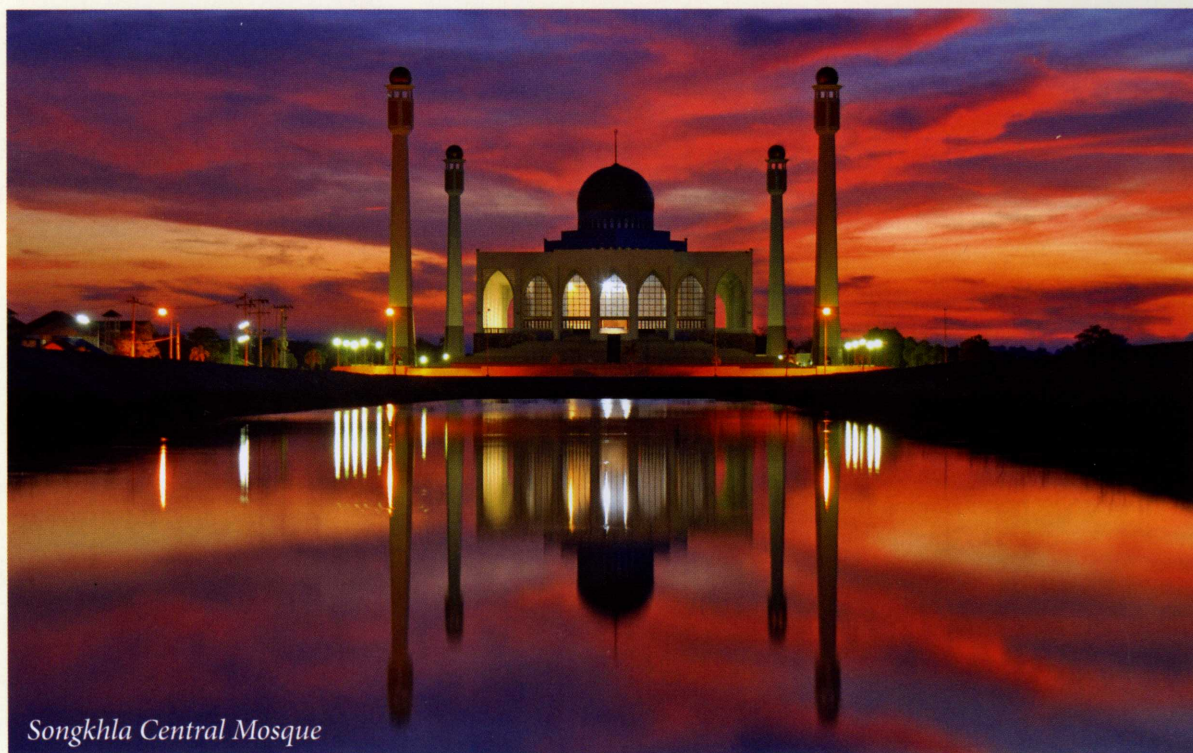
Government Policy on SBPs

- The Royal Thai Government has always given priority to promoting economic development and ensuring security in the SBPs.
- In 2010, the Government established the **Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC)**, located in Yala Province, under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. A Secretary-General is appointed to oversee and coordinate development policies and strategies for the SBPs. The SBPAC receives advice for its work from the Administrative and Development Advisory Council (ADAC), comprising 49 local representatives from various professions and civil society.
- The National Policy on Administration and Development in the SBPs, which is approved by the Parliament, is a guideline



Map of the SBPs

for the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) and the SBPAC to build and maintain peace and prosperity in the SBPs. Its plan for the year 2012-2014 highlights H.M. the King's advice to "**understand, reach out and develop**" as well as the Sufficiency Economy philosophy.



Songkhla Central Mosque



The SBPAC has a plan to renovate the 300-year-old Taloh-manoh mosque in Bacho, Narathiwat Province.

Religious Practice

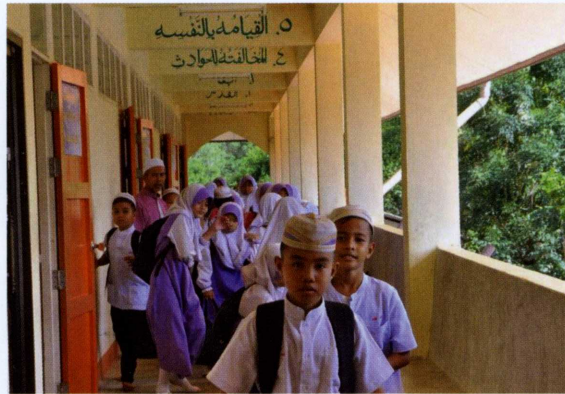
- The Royal Thai Government has a long standing policy of providing financial support for the construction or renovation of mosques in Thailand. For example, the Royal Thai Government allocated

38.5 million baht to build Songkhla Central Mosque, which was completed in 2005. The said mosque is one of the most beautiful and biggest mosques in the country.

- **Thai Muslims have the freedom to practice and dress** in accordance with their religious beliefs in public places, including schools and government office buildings.
- The Government annually facilitates 13,000 Thai Muslims in undertaking the religious Hajj pilgrimage by creating a one-stop-service to provide necessary documents and medical examinations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand has also appointed the **Hajj Consulate** at the Royal Thai Consulate General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to facilitate and assist Thai pilgrims facing problems throughout the Hajj pilgrimage. In 2012, the SBPAC gave out annual Hajj financial support for 200 Thai Muslims to make their pilgrimage to Mecca.

Educational Development

- Since 2007, the Royal Thai Government has introduced a **Thai - Malayu bilingual education programme** in schools in 4 Southern Border Provinces of Thailand, namely Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The programme's main objective is to preserve the cultural and linguistic identities of local Thai Muslims, create a positive attitude through a favorable studying environment as well as promote a peaceful multicultural society. Currently, the programme is available to students at 15 primary schools, and will be extended to more schools in the near future.
- Financial support from the public and private sectors has been granted to various social and academic development projects in the 3 Southern Border Provinces. Some important milestones are the establishment of **Yala Islamic University** in 1998 and the establishment





Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) in Yala Province



Islamic Schools

Type	No.
Madrasas (Secular / Religious)	387
Pondoks (Religious)	399
Community Colleges	5
Universities*	2
Total	793

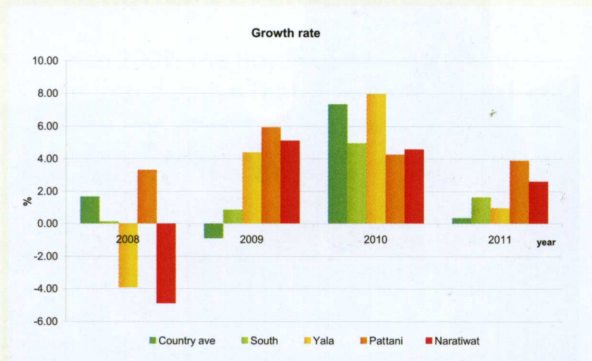
**Yala Islamic University and College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University
Source: SBPAC (as of 2012)*

of the Princess of Naradhiwas University in 2005. The Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) which is a modern library equipped with IT services has also opened its service in Yala Province since 2005. The TK Park in the southern province is its first regional branch after launching the pioneer project in Bangkok.

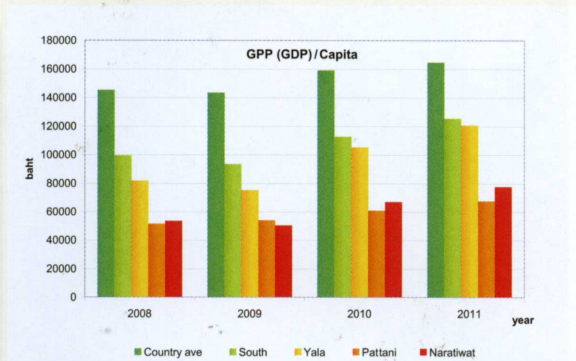
- There are almost **800 Islamic schools** in the country, ranging from madrasas, pondoks to universities, most of which are concentrated in the SBPs. Currently, there are approximately 1,200 academic institutions located in the 3 Southern Border Provinces which include Islamic schools, primary schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities. Moreover, around 400 Pondoks and 1,600 Tadikas (a nursery or a kindergarten located in a mosque) are available as an alternative educational option for students who wish to pursue religious studies.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand plays an important role in supporting and looking after 6,000 Thai Muslim students living abroad, most of whom are from the SBPs. In 2013, the Ministry has allocated 33 million baht (3.3 million USD) to support the students' activities and 6.5 million baht (216,000 USD) in the form of scholarships to Muslim students from the SBPs.

Economic Development

Economic Growth



Gross Provincial Product / Capita



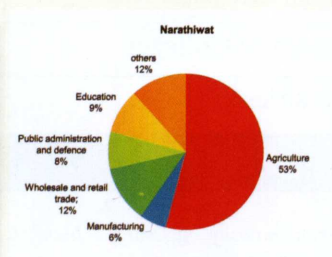
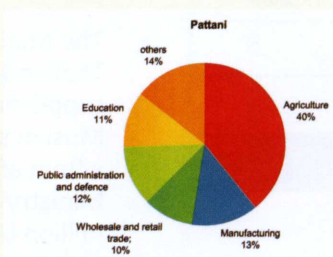
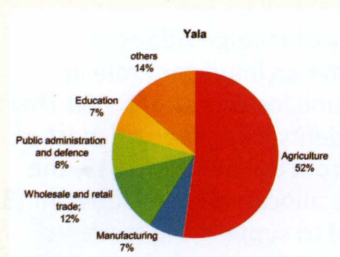
Source: Gross Regional and Provincial Product (GPP), Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)

- The Royal Thai Government has continuously attached importance to economic development in the SBPs. In 2013, the Government has **allocated 21.13 billion baht** (approximately 704 million USD) to implement various projects in line with the National Policy on Administration and Development in the Southern Border Provinces 2012-2014.
- Between 2009 and 2011, economic growth in the SBPs grew continuously and performed better than the average economic growth rate in the southern region of Thailand. However, more work is still needed to improve the per capita income in the SBPs, especially in Pattani and Narathiwat Provinces.



- The agricultural sector is an integral part of the local economies in the 3 SBPs, namely, Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala provinces, contributing to over half of the GPP. As a result, the Government implements several measures to help the agricultural sector, such as price guarantees for rubber and palm oil, as well as promoting agricultural products in domestic and international markets.

Component of Gross Provincial Product (GPP)



Source: Gross Regional and Provincial Product (GPP), Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)



Expansion of customs checkpoint in Ban Prakob, Songkhla Province



The Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)

- There are several on-going infrastructure development projects in the SBPs funded by the Government, such as the construction of the 2nd phase highway at Ban Prakob, Na Thawi District, Songkhla Province, and a highway connecting Mueang Yala District and Betong District in Yala Province.
- The SBPAC has introduced many projects aimed at boosting employment opportunities and promoting income security and self-reliance, such as (i) allocating a budget of 423 million baht (approximately 14 million USD) to improve the quality of life, promoting employment, drug rehabilitation, and education in 1,970 villages, (ii) promoting cooperative networks and knowledge on Islamic economics and finance to cooperatives and the local people in preparation for the ASEAN Economic Community, and (iii) extending the period of providing assistance measures to investors, entrepreneurs and locals in the special economic zones in the SBPs.
- To improve the livelihood and economic development in the SBPs, Thailand has close cooperation with Malaysia and Indonesia under the framework of the **Joint Development Strategy (JDS)** and the **Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)**.



Islamic Bank of Thailand

- Major projects under the JDS include:
 - construction of two bridges across the Golok River linking Tak Bai District, Narathiwat, with Pengkalan Kubor, Kelantan State, Malaysia, and Sugai Golok District, Narathiwat, with Rantau Panjang, Kelantan State, Malaysia;
 - integration of the economic development plans in the SBPs with the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) and the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) of Malaysia;
 - expansion of 2 customs checkpoints between Sadao District, Songkhla, and Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kedah State, Malaysia, and Ban Prakob, Songkhla, with Durian Burung, Kedah State, Malaysia.
- Many initiatives have also been made in the banking sector. The **Islamic Bank of Thailand** was established in 2002 as a state enterprise administered by a board of governors, operating as an Islamic bank in accordance with Sharia law on transactions and assisting business opportunities for Thai Muslims. Currently, there are over 26 branches of the Islamic Bank of Thailand scattered throughout the country.
- The Islamic Bank of Thailand in cooperation with the SBPAC also provides loans to workers and entrepreneurs in Tom Yam (Thai cuisine) restaurants in Malaysia to pay for work permit fees and cover business operation costs.



Southern curry pastes

Promoting the identity of the locals

- On 3 January 2013, the SBPAC, in cooperation with the local civil society, launched “**Television & Radio Bahasa Malayu, Thailand**” or TRMT, the first 24-hour radio and television program broadcasting in the local Malay language. This project aims to promote understanding and encourage interaction between the government and the local communities as well as participation from the civil society and those with different views from the government.
- On cultural promotion, concerned government agencies continue to strengthen their efforts to promote folk plays and local culture, such as batik making, kolae boat making and tehtarik making.



Peace and Security

- Despite the Government's effort to improve the livelihood and promote local identity in the SBPs, continued attempts have been made by the perpetrators of violence to stir unrest which has led to the loss of lives of innocent civilians. The Government therefore needs to apply appropriate measures in order to protect the livelihood of the people and ensure peace and security in the areas.
- There are 3 security laws [the Emergency Decree B.E. 2548 (2005), the Internal Security Act B.E. 2551 (2008), and the Martial Law B.E. 2457 (1914)] being implemented in the SBPs in order to equip security officers with the necessary means to provide security protection to civilians. The respective laws have been enforced in different areas according to the gravity of the situation on the ground. The Government is ready to relax and subsequently repeal the enforcement of the laws in any area whenever the situation warrants.



- Since 2007, the **Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC)** has continuously reduced the number of military personnel by replacing them with police and civilian officers in areas where the situation is stable.
- In providing security coverage to the public and in countering the attempts of the perpetrators of violence, the security personnel are trained to ensure full respect of human rights principles while any form of mistreatment will not be tolerated.



Developments regarding the administration of justice

- Concerted efforts have been made to improve **the efficiency of the administration of justice** by focusing on the rights of the suspects by applying forensic science methods to investigate criminal cases, applying Islamic law in the consideration of cases involving locals, improving the application of Islamic laws in the conduct of cases related to family matters and heritage, and improving the legal arbitration system by involving the participation of both present and new generations of Imams, which have helped to build trust and confidence between the Government and the locals.
- Islamic lawyers are assigned on a regular basis at the Islamic Committee of Songkhla, Satun, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, to provide legal advice and consultations to local citizens.
- Thailand has no separate Shariah Court. However, the Thai judicial system has mechanisms in place since 1946 for the application of Islamic law in 4 southern provinces, namely the Islamic Law Practice in the Provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala and Satun Act B.E. 2489 (1946). The **Dato Yuthitham** or Dato Kadi, an official who adjudicates Shariah matters in Thailand, will assist the civil court judges on family matters concerning Thai Muslims. In addition, there are Malay language interpreters available without cost to assist the people in every court in the SBPs.
- Office of the Attorney General published and handed out an operation handbook on judicial proceeding on Thai Muslims as a guideline for provincial attorneys to take the cases properly in the SBPs. Moreover, the provincial courts in the SBPs have extended working hours, including working on Saturday, in order to expedite any pending cases.

Rehabilitation of people affected by violence in the SBPs

- In April 2012, the Cabinet approved a budget of 2,080 million baht (around 70 million USD) to rehabilitate people who were affected by the violence in the SBPs regardless of ethnics and religious beliefs. Special attention is also given to psychiatric rehabilitation.
- More than 8,000 people, comprising both ordinary citizens and government officials who have been mistreated or affected by acts of violence in the SBPs, have been identified and made eligible for the rehabilitation plan. Assistance and occupational training are also provided to those who were not directly affected by the violence, such as spouses of the imprisoned and widows.

Human Rights

- Government officials are trained to be conscious of human rights standards when enforcing security laws. Nevertheless, the Government provides appropriate regular training and distributes handbooks on the International Human Rights Principles to security officials assigned to serve in the SBPs.
- Furthermore, the fundamental human rights of those arrested or suspected have been fully respected in accordance with the Thai Constitution and within the parameters of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other relevant international human rights instruments to which Thailand is a party.



Those who were affected by the violence in the SBPs received financial assistance.



As part of a rehabilitation process, the Government supports and facilitates Hajj pilgrims from the SBPs. In 2013, the SBPAC gave out annual Hajj financial support for Thai Muslims to make their pilgrimage to Mecca.

- Among other human rights practices, the police makes public a list of detainees who are charged with violating security laws, specifying details of their whereabouts and contact details of the respective case officers in order to ensure transparency of the proceedings.





Peace Dialogue

- The Royal Thai Government had continuously pursued a dialogue with those who have different opinions and ideologies from the state.
- On 28 February 2013, the Secretary-General of the **National Security Council (NSC)** and high-level representatives of the **Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)** signed a General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process, marking the beginning of an **inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders** with an aim to address the root causes of the problem in the SBPs. The dialogue is a step-by-step process with an immediate goal of reducing violence in the SBPs and to further bring about sustainable peace to the SBPs.
- Thailand takes full ownership of the process, with Malaysia acting as a facilitator. The peace dialogue is widely supported both within and outside the region.

- As part of the government's efforts to ensure and encourage public participation, the Government has held several public forums in the SBPs to listen to people's concerns and expectations on the dialogue process. The gathered information and opinion will be used in streamlining the process to ensure that it best serves the nation and people's interests.

Thailand's interaction with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- With a view to increasing its interaction with the Muslim World and following the resolution at the OIC Annual Coordination Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in New York, Thailand has become an Observer of the OIC since the 1st of October 1998.
- In joining the OIC, Thailand has taken the opportunity to enhance its cooperation



Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, led a mission of ambassadors and diplomats from the OIC member countries on a visit to the SBPs.

with the Muslim World, create better understanding towards the Royal Thai Government's policy towards Thai Muslims as well as exchange views related to the Muslim community in Thailand.

- In view of the interest of the OIC on the SBPs issue, Thailand **organized a number of visits for representatives from the OIC General Secretariat** and OIC ambassadors residing in Thailand to witness the positive developments in the area and discuss matters with the local authorities and people. After the visit in 2007 of the OIC Secretary-General, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the OIC recognized that the problem is not a religious issue and strongly condemned the violence against innocent civilians at all levels.
- The OIC also welcomed efforts being taken by the Government and encouraged the use of peaceful means to resolve the issue.
- In its Final Communiqué of the 12th Islamic Summit of the OIC in Cairo in February 2013, the OIC indicated that it was encouraged by the Royal Thai



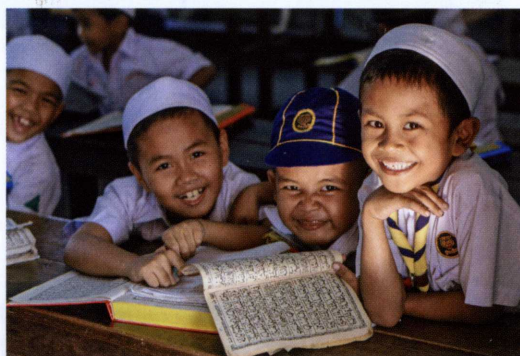
The Foreign Minister met with Mr. Sayed Kassem El-Masry, Adviser of the OIC Secretary General and Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General on Thailand.

Government's continued efforts to overcome the obstacles in the implementation of the commitments included in the Joint Statement issued on the eve of the official visit to Thailand of the OIC Secretary-General in 2007. The Member States expressed the hope that the Royal Thai Government will take further constructive steps and requested the Secretary-General to cooperate with the Royal Thai Government and pursue constructive dialogue in the interest of Muslims in southern Thailand toward the achievement of peace and stability there.



Thailand's Cooperation with the OIC

- Educational Development for Thai Muslims:** The Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which is a specialized organization under the OIC, has, so far, extended financial assistance and loans for the establishment of many private Muslim schools in Thailand, as well as scholarships for Thai Muslims.
- Education, Science and Culture Cooperation:** Thailand is an Observer Member of the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) since March 2007. Draft Cooperation Protocol between Thailand and the ISESCO is currently under negotiation.
- Business and Trade:** The Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association is a member of the OIC Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) which recently signed an agreement with the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion of Thailand (OSMEP) in 2007 to promote business cooperation and industry amongst SMEs, particularly in the areas of Halal food, jewelry, accessories and fashion apparel.
- Humanitarian Assistance:** The Islamic Development Bank (ISDB), via the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), donated 180,000 USD for humanitarian relief efforts to victims and Muslim communities from the southern provinces of Thailand which were affected by the Tsunami disaster in 2004.
- Technical and Academic Cooperation:** In 2007, Thailand co-hosted a project and workshops in Bangkok and Cairo with the OIC to provide technical assistance to OIC member states for the prevention of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).





Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Thailand

