Second Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge to Stimulate Cross-border Trade

Second Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge linking Mae Sot, Thailand with Myawaddy, Myanmar. Photo: Lerdusuwa via Wikimedia, shared under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Governments of Thailand and Myanmar officially opened the second Thailand-
Myanmar Friendship Bridge to traffic on 30 October 2019 in Tak province, Mae Sot district, Thailand. The bridge crosses over the Moei river, and connects the Mae Sot District of Thailand with Myawaddy in Myanmar.

The second Friendship Bridge is part of the East-West Economic Corridor, which links Myanmar, Thailand, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam. The bridge will allow trucks to bypass urban areas, noted a report, further promoting seamless transit logistics in the region.

An estimated 230,000 vehicles cross the Mae Sot border each year. The number of border-crossing vehicles could increase by 10% with the opening of the new bridge. News release from the National News Bureau of Thailand also highlights that the new bridge promises to boost the border trade value at the Mae Sot crossing point to 100 billion baht (around $3.3 billion) annually.

Mr. Saksayam Chidchob, Minister of Transport, Thailand, and Mr. Han Zaw, Minister of Construction, Myanmar, presided over the official opening ceremony. The Government of Thailand handed over the border checkpoint building, bridge structures, roads, facilities, and office equipment to the Government of Myanmar.

The Transport Minister noted that the first Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge helped increase the value of Thailand-Myanmar border trade in 2018 to 190 billion baht (around $6.3 billion). The Mae Sot border reached 78 billion baht (around $2.6 billion).

Mr. Niyom Wairatpanij, Vice Chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, estimates that the new bridge will lift the value of border trade exports to 100 billion baht.

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