

Remarks by
His Excellency Mr. Weerasak Kowsurat
Minister of Tourism and Sports
at “The International Indian Film Academy Weekend and Awards 2008”
on Friday, 6 June 2008, at 11.30 hrs.
at Dusit Thani Hotel, Bangkok

Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here with you and join you in the International Indian Film Academy Weekend and Awards 2008. On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, it is an honour for Thailand to be chosen as a venue for the IIFA 2008, one of the most respected South Asian Film Academy. I am also delighted that Bangkok was selected to be part of the journey that IIFA has celebrated Indian Cinema across the world during the past 8 years.

The IIFA Weekend 2008 in the amazing city of Bangkok will provide a great opportunity for Thailand to present its unique and exotic aspects to the rest of the world, either its stunning natural beauty, ancient temples or hospitality. Bangkok has been recognized as one of the Southeast Asia’s premier location, drawing over 12 million visitors a year. It is a modern city with traditional roots and has much to offer. It is an economic and financial centre with a

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wealth of cultural sites, making it one of the world's most popular tourist destinations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This prestigious event will not only provide industry a dynamic global platform to discuss diverse spread of business, bilateral economic and investment issues, but also invite thousands of movie fans, producers and directors to Thailand.

In addition to that, with the IIFA Awards being the most-watched entertainment event with a viewership of almost 600 million, I am strongly confident that the event will boost tourism and attract more visitors from all over the world to Thailand.

Last year, there were 92 Indian productions, including documentaries, advertising, feature films, TV series and music video have been filmed in Thailand, contributing about 2 million US dollars (79.4 million bath) or about 9.3 per cent of the total revenue of 26.8 million US dollars (1,072 million bath) generated by foreign productions. (อัตราแลกเปลี่ยน 1 เหรียญ สหรัฐ. = 40 บาท)

With this regard, Thailand has positioned herself as the film-making capital of Asia by making it more convenient for interested film-makers from abroad to both shoot their films and documentaries here and do postproduction work.

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I am very pleased to announce to you that the Royal Thai Government has just passed a new legislation to completely facilitate foreign film companies wanting to shoot in Thailand. Under the new legislation, the Thai Film Office will be established as a one-stop service center in which the foreign film crews and film-makers can enjoy its services, for instance, the issuance of working permits and other necessary documentation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In being the host for the IIFA Weekend, I strongly hope that it will further strengthen a closer relationship between Thailand and the vibrant Indian film industry as well as to encourage Thai people to associate with and learn more about Indian arts, culture, and the ways of life through the Indian cinematic arts. I personally have been an Indian films lover from a very young age, and though I do not remember the names of the movies and the stars, I can still certainly remember some of them. And for sure, I will take the opportunity to catch up on some of those being shown this weekend.

Last but not least, allow me to conclude by once again welcome you all to Thailand. I wish you every success in your deliberations as well as an enjoyable and memorable stay in Thailand.

Thank you for your attention.
