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A streetside shrine outside the Bangkok World Trade Center sets the standard for ritual elegance

Lord Ganesha has always awarded assistance to anyone who worships him, even in the most mundane affairs. So when Mahadevan Gengadaram, a Hindu visiting Thailand from Malaysia, encountered his beloved Lord sitting majestically outside the World Trade Center in Bangkok, he found it fitting yet startling. What astonished him was "the honor the Thai's give our beloved Lord Ganesha!" He told Hinduism Today, "Numerous people stop at the shrine to offer prayers, flowers and joss sticks, and then continue their journey." The florid shrine was established by Dr. Virun Techaphaibul and was inaugurated on October 7, 1994. Bangkok history indicates Ganesha should feel right at ease here. The municipal emblem is of God Indra seated upon a white elephant, and the lengthy official Thai name for Bangkok means: "The city of Gods, the great city, the residence of the emerald Buddah, the impregnable city of God Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city abounding in enormous royal palaces resembling the heavenly abode wherein dwell the reincarnated Gods, a city given by Indra and built by Vishvakarma." That sure sounds like a home for a Hindu God.