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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள் அமைச்சு  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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## Media Release

### **Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin successfully concludes Official Visit to Sri Lanka, 3-4 February 2024**

The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, Srettha Thavisin concluded a successful two-day Official Visit to Sri Lanka which took place from 3-4 February 2024.

Prime Minister Thavisin was in Sri Lanka on an invitation extended by President Ranil Wickremesinghe, to participate at the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of Sri Lanka's Independence as Guest of Honour and to witness the signing of the Sri Lanka - Thailand Free Trade Agreement (SLTFTA). In addition, both parties renewed the Air Services Agreement which was originally signed in 1950 and entered into a MoU on cooperation in the Gems and Jewellery sector. The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs and other senior dignitaries of the Thai Government and a high-level business delegation.

Upon arrival, the Thai Prime Minister and accompanying high level delegation were warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Tharaka Balasuriya and Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardane. The Prime Minister of Thailand was accorded a Guard of Honour by the Sri Lanka Air Force at the Presidential Secretariat following which bilateral discussions took place.

The Thai Prime Minister and President Wickremesinghe witnessed the signing of the historic Sri Lanka- Thailand Free Trade Agreement by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand Phumtham Wechayachai, and the Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security of Sri Lanka Nalin Fernando. The FTA is expected to provide a strong impetus to boost trade and investment ties between the two countries.

During the bilateral discussion the two sides reviewed the multifaceted Sri Lanka - Thailand relationship and cooperation at regional and multilateral fora. Promoting investment between the two countries especially in targeted sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, renewable energy, green energy, tourism, hospitality and food processing received particular attention.

In order to promote connectivity, the two sides agreed to work towards facilitating visa free travel between the two countries, on reciprocal basis. Prime Minister Thavisin announced that Thai Airways will resume daily commercial flights between Bangkok and Colombo from 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2024. These two key measures are expected to further facilitate people to people exchanges, trade, tourism and investment ties.

Reflecting on the shared historical and cultural connections underpinned by Theravada Buddhist ties it was agreed to further strengthen religious and cultural ties between Sri Lanka and Thailand.

On maritime connectivity, discussions were held on the Thai Landbridge Project and the current port developments in Sri Lanka. Given the respective geostrategic locations of Sri Lanka and Thailand maritime connectivity was considered an important area of future cooperation.

President Wickremesinghe thanked the Government of Thailand for the assistance extended by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) over the years for capacity building, sharing of expertise, and training of Sri Lankan officials.

The importance of augmenting defence sector cooperation between the two sides as well as curbing transnational organized crime was also highlighted at the meeting.

The excellent cooperation between Sri Lanka and Thailand at regional and multilateral fora including in BIMSTEC, IORA and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and within the United Nations is a reflection of the strong ties that Sri Lanka and Thailand continue to share.

On the sideline of the visit, Prime Minister Thavisin and President Wickremesinghe addressed the Sri Lanka- Thailand Business Forum held at the Kingsbury Hotel. A high-level business delegation of 21 companies from Thailand are also in Sri Lanka from the food processing, healthcare, energy, hospitality, tourism, fisheries, agriculture and manufacturing sectors demonstrating the keen interest on building synergies with the Sri Lankan business community.

The Thai Prime Minister's visit highlights the strong intention on the part of both Governments to diversify areas of cooperation with a particular focus on trade, investment, tourism and connectivity.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka M U M Ali Sabry extended a warm farewell to Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin and delegation at the conclusion of the visit.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Colombo

04 February 2024