

(As Delivered)

Statement to the Press
by
Her Excellency Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
at a Joint Press Conference
following the Meeting with the Prime Minister of the Republic of India
25 January 2012, Hyderabad House, New Delhi

Thank you very much Your Excellency,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Media,

Today, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and I had a very fruitful discussion.

I congratulated Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the Republic Day which will be celebrated tomorrow. I expressed my deep appreciation for being the first Thai Leader to be invited to join the celebrations with the people of India as Chief Guest.

I thanked the Prime Minister for the Indian Government's assistance during the floods in Thailand last year.

Thailand sees India as playing a major role in the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and other regional forum. We agreed to work closer together on common challenges and enhance our political and economic partnership.

To this end, we agreed to conclude our bilateral Free Trade Agreement by this year, and to work on a BIMSTEC FTA.

I expressed the hope that we can work together to ask our private sectors to set up a CEO Forum as agreed at the Joint Commission meeting in December.

Another priority is to enhance connectivity between India, Thailand, ASEAN and beyond. A new Joint Working Group on Infrastructure and Connectivity will discuss new ways of cooperation in this area.

In addition to this, we agreed that our cooperation should be strengthened by using existing agreements covering areas such as science and technology, agriculture, ICT, renewable energy, education and culture.

I am pleased about the signing of several agreements, including the MOU on Defence Cooperation and the Agreement on the Transfer of Prisoners. We will also speed up other pending agreements, such as an Extradition Treaty.

We agreed on new ideas, such as the setting up of an India - Thailand Foundation to promote people to people exchanges, and to cooperate on water resource management.

I informed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that Thailand will support the Nalanda University project, and we will be making a contribution of 100,000 US Dollars. The Thai business sector will also contribute to this project.

We also place great importance on developing a closer relationship with India through the ASEAN - India Dialogue. Thailand looks forward to actively participating in events to mark this year's 20th anniversary of ASEAN - India relations, including the special ASEAN - India Commemorative Summit in December.

Thailand appreciates India's role in the United Nations and UN reform. On the particular issue of great interest to India, Thailand is of the view that in an expanded UN Security Council, India certainly deserves a permanent seat on the Council.

Finally, I invited the Prime Minister to visit Thailand to continue our dialogue and work on our future partnership.

Thank you very much.
