

Dhaka, Bangkok sign five bilateral documents

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Online Desk : Bangladesh and Thailand on Friday struck five bilateral documents for visa exemption, cooperation on energy, tourism and custom matters and negotiation of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries, reports BSS. The documents — an agreement, three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and a Letter of Intent (LoI)— were inked in presence of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Thailand Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin in Bangkok following a bilateral meeting between the two leaders at Government House (Thai Prime Minister’s Office) in Bangkok.

The documents are agreement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Official Passports, MoUs on Energy Cooperation, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters and Cooperation in the field of tourism and LOI to commence negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the year 2024.

Two MoUs on energy cooperation and tourism cooperation were signed by Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud from the Bangladesh side while agreement on Visa Exemption by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, LoI by State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu and another MoU on Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters signed by National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Abu Hena Md. Rahmatul Muneem. Talking about signing the bilateral documents at a joint press conference, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the two sides agreed to commence negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the year 2024 and the two countries have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) on the issue.

She said the two countries signed an agreement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Official Passports to facilitate smooth contact between Thai and Bangladeshi officials.

MoU on energy cooperation was inked to explore the potential of energy cooperation, the Premier said, adding: “MoUs on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters was signed to benefit from Thai knowledge, experiences and the final MoU in the field of tourism was inked to benefit from the best tourism practices.” The Thai Prime Minister, at the joint press conference, said Thailand and Bangladesh are committed to working together towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and expressed optimism that the Letter of Intent would help to expedite

the negotiation process. He said the Agreement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Official Passports will facilitate more travel between Thai and Bangladeshi officials while the MoU on Energy Cooperation will help materialize the two countries’ true potential from energy cooperation.

Besides, the MoU on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters will lead to effective border control and anti-smuggling operations while the MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism will allow the two countries to exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices in the areas, he added.

On her arrival at the Government House, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accorded a warm welcome at the front lawn of Thai Kooh Fah Building there as red carpet was rolled out. She inspected the Guard of Honor given by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Thai armed forces. Srettha Thavisin introduced his cabinet members to Sheikh Hasina before she signed the guest book of the Government House. The premier also joined an official luncheon there before leaving the House.

Before joining the luncheon, Sheikh Hasina visited a Thai handicrafts exhibition at the Government House. She was accompanied by her younger sister Sheikh Rehana and Bangabandhu’s grandson Radwan Mujib Siddiq. On April 24, the Bangladesh premier arrived here on a six-day official visit at the invitation of her Thai counterpart.