

Congratulatory Message
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I would like to warmly congratulate the 25th anniversary of the Mae Fah Luang University, and wish better days and a more prosperous future for this esteemed institute of higher education.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciations to all the organizers of this event for their kind efforts and hospitality.

I am very glad to have this opportunity to talk about Iran-Thailand relations in various fields. Due to the time constraint, I will try to briefly explain each part.

Political relations:

If we want to trace relations between Iran and Thailand in old times, we will find out that Iranian and Siamese merchants were involved in selling and buying goods in the distant past. These two pacifist nations have always had a very friendly record.

However, we usually refer to a turning point in bilateral ties, which is the coming of Sheikh Ahmad Qomi, the Iranian trader and clergyman, to Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam, in 1605.

Sheikh Ahmad reached high positions at the Siam court and finally became the prime minister. He was also appointed as Sheikh-al-Islam or the leader of Muslim community in Siam.

He died in 1631 and was buried in Ayutthaya. His descendants, who form two famous families of Chula and Bunnag, have served in high-ranking positions in the Thai government to this date and his death anniversary is still commemorated each year.

If we want to talk about official diplomatic relations between Iran and Thailand, it should be said that the formal relations were established in 1955. Then, Iranian ambassador to India was appointed as the first accredited ambassador to Thailand.

In recent years, exchange of political delegations and signing a number of MoUs are signs of the two countries' willingness to develop their relations.

So bilateral ties, which date back to over four hundred years ago, have always been warm and friendly.

Economic relations:

The two countries' economies are somehow complimentary, which means that they can secure each other's needs. As an example, Iran is a big importer of rice with over one million tons of rice imports each year, while Thailand is a big exporter. In the past decades, Thailand has been one of the biggest sources of rice for Iran.

The volume of bilateral trade reached about nine hundred million dollars last year, but because of huge potentials of the two sides, it can be increased more.

Cultural relations:

Iran and Thailand are both civilized countries with old histories. Iran has a written history of seven thousand years. The two nations also share lots of cultural commonalities. The peaceful coexistence of followers of different religions in the two countries is a sign of moderation and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity among people.

In the field of tourism, over one hundred fifty thousand Iranian tourists visited Thailand each year before the pandemic. In recent months and after the reopening of borders, the number is increasing again.

On the other hand, several thousand Thai people travel to Iran every year.

The embassy is trying to make the Thai nation more familiar with Iran and pave the ground for their visit to this beautiful treasure of the planet.

Iran-related news items are regularly compiled, translated and sent to Thai TV channels, newspapers and news agencies. A great number of these items have been broadcast on Thai media.

Iran's embassy has a cultural center in Bangkok. The center seeks to boost bilateral cultural relations in many aspects and to provide Persian language and traditional Persian painting courses.

Some Iranian filmmakers, like their foreign counterparts, use Thailand as their location of shooting. The exchange of sports teams is very common and the embassy hosts various teams almost every week.

Scientific relations:

Despite many obstacles, Iran is moving forward toward new sciences and technologies to be used in favor of the prosperity of the great Iranian nation.

It is an honor for me to mention that in spite of cruel sanctions against my nation, Iran is standing number five in biotechnology, number six in nanotechnology, and number nine in nuclear industry in the world. Iran is also one of the few countries producing and exporting robosurgeons.

We have previously signed a number of agreements with Thailand in these fields, willing to develop our mutually-beneficial cooperation.

Academic relations:

Iran enjoys a number of prestigious universities, where millions of Iranians, most of them women, study different majors. Iranian universities also host over 100,000 foreign students from some 120 countries.

Since many years ago, a number of MoUs have been signed between Iranian and Thai universities.

To promote academic ties, I've had separate meetings with international affairs departments in prestigious Thai universities and explained potential areas for cooperation.

In addition, our cultural center has held several Iranology workshops, movie screening, handicrafts, books and photo exhibitions at different Thai universities to make students familiar with Iran's rich history and culture.

Some one hundred Thai students are studying in Iran now and Tehran has expressed readiness to offer scholarships to qualified Thai students in different majors.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I would like to gladly say that there is no limitation for the expansion of ties in various fields between the two friendly countries and nations, and the embassy is completely ready to reinforce relations at all levels.

We are hopeful that by the strong will and support of the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Thailand, we will witness further development of already flourishing bilateral relations.

We would be more than happy and grateful to use valuable experiences of Thailand in such fields as tourism and hotel management.

The embassy encourages Iranian universities to hold joint courses and webinars with Thai counterparts, which have kindly expressed their readiness to do so.

I, once again, appreciate all those who organized this event.