

**Remarks by**  
**Mr. Nattaphong SITTHICHAJ**  
**Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Royal Thai Embassy**  
**On the occasion of**  
**H.M. the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great's Birthday,**  
**National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Thailand's Father Day**  
**Tuesday 3 December 2024 at Mittra Samakhom Ballroom**  
**Royal Thai Embassy, London**

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Minister Catherine West,  
Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons Judith Cummins,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my honour to welcome you to the National Day Reception of Thailand. This special day marks not only the birthday of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, but also Thailand's Father Day. On behalf of the Royal Thai Embassy in London, I would like to express our warm gratitude to all of you for joining us tonight to celebrate the close bond between Thailand and the UK.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

2024 has been quite a remarkable year for our relations, as several key developments have unfolded.

Thailand and the UK have formally elevated our relations to '**Strategic Partnership**' and concluded '*Thailand-UK Strategic Partnership Roadmap*,' reaffirming our shared commitment to promoting comprehensive cooperation in 8 key areas, encompassing our bilateral, regional, and multilateral relations.

On the economic side, Thailand and the UK have signed the **Memorandum of Understanding for an Enhanced Trade Partnership (or ETP)**, to boost trade and investment between the two countries. It reaffirms the commitment of both sides to collaborate closer in 20 priority areas such as automotive, digital, environment, and clean growth. This represents an important step toward potential FTA negotiations between Thailand and the UK.

This year also sees several high-level visits on both sides, starting from the top level.

HRH Princess Sirivannavari visited London to attend the rehearsal of the Trooping the Colour at the Horse Guard Parade, and met with the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, to see how such parades were organised and conducted by the Household Division. This was applied elegantly to the Thai Royal Guards Parade, held today in Bangkok.

Her Royal Highness Princess Ubol Ratana Rajakanya also visited the UK and attended World Travel Market to support Thailand's effort to promote tourism among the British people and bring our peoples closer.

There were also several ministerial and high-level exchanges from both sides. From the Thai side, our Minister of Justice, Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, and Minister of Commerce visited the UK.

From the UK's side, there were visits to Thailand by the Right Honourable Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, the former Foreign Secretary, the Right Honourable Douglas Alexander, Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security and Minister Catherine West herself.

At the ASEAN level, we are delighted that Secretary David Lammy attended the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in July in Lao PDR, shortly after he became the Foreign Secretary. This bolsters the UK's active role as the Dialogue Partner and shows her long-term commitment to the region.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The vibrancy of our relations this year is only a prelude to our relationship next year when we celebrate the 170<sup>th</sup> of the signing of the Bowring Treaty.

Although our relationship dates back over four hundred years with trade links beginning in the seventeenth century during the reign of King James I and King Songtham of Ayutthaya, the signing of the Bowring Treaty marked the beginning of our diplomatic relations.

To celebrate this special year, the Royal Thai Embassy planned to organise a series of activities. To name but a few are :

- the Logo Design Competition on the Anniversary. I am happy to inform you that the winner will be announced this evening,
- the publication of a Commemorative Book on Thailand and the UK's relations

- the Photo Exhibition titled ‘*Siam Through the Lens of John Thomson,*’ at the Royal Geographical Society,
- and a Diplomatic Reception to commemorate the Anniversary with the hope of bringing the original Bowring Treaty to be displayed at the reception.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to say few words to our **IMO colleagues** here. Since becoming a member of the International Maritime Organization or IMO in 1970, Thailand has demonstrated its commitment to advancing global maritime safety, security, and sustainability. Today, I am pleased to announce that the Royal Thai Government has decided to present **its candidature for election to the IMO Council, Category 'C,' for the 2026-2027 term.**

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our friends of Thailand here in the UK - to our partners in the government, to members of the business community, and to the British people. You have been instrumental in nurturing the friendship between our nations.

It is the people-to-people ties that serve as the foundation of our relations and add warmth to our partnership - whether through the vibrant Thai community and Thai students in the UK or almost a million British visitors who travel to Thailand each year. Those living in the UK can also enjoy Thai food with over thousands of Thai restaurants here. Talking about Thai food, I am happy to inform you that *Tom Yam Koong*, one of the famous Thai dishes, is expected to be listed as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is our shared values and the people-to-people partnership with hopes and dreams for a better world that serve as the foundation of our relations. We look forward to working hand-in-hand with you at all levels for years to come.

Thank you. ขอขอบคุณครับ

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