

**Bangladesh High Commission
Colombo**

Press Release

Colombo, 27 February 2017

Bangladesh High Commissioner pays courtesy call on Sri Lankan Prime Minister

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, M Riaz Hamidullah, paid a courtesy call on the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe at the Prime Minister's House in Colombo on 27 February 2017.

During the meeting, the Bangladesh High Commissioner conveyed the greetings of the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Prime Minister Wickremesinghe. The High Commissioner underscored the possibilities within the existing relations to principally focus on economic and trade fronts. He apprised the Prime Minister that, in areas like merchandised trade, finance, investment, shipping, agriculture, fisheries, tourism etc., considerable potential could be tapped. On the proposed FTA, the High Commissioner requested for early initiation of talks to facilitate greater economic engagements, including further trade liberalization to yield benefit for both countries. In that context, he referred to the presence of the growing number of Sri Lankan enterprises and nationals in Bangladesh who were gainfully employed in numerous service sectors. Highlighting the immense potential of maritime connectivity in the Bay of Bengal region, the High Commissioner emphasized on more engagements in shipping and deep sea fishing.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that the bilateral relation merits to be focused on further expansion of economic and trade cooperation. He said that, following conclusion of the ongoing trade negotiations with India, China and Singapore, discussions would commence with Bangladesh on priority basis. He further emphasized on more collaboration to effectively reap multifarious advantages in the Bay of Bengal region and convert the Bay into a "growth zone".

Referring to the upcoming VVIP visit to Bangladesh, both recognized the importance of the high level exchanges to identify more areas of cooperation for mutual benefit. The Prime Minister also expressed his hope to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time in future.
