



# Sri Lanka High Commission in India News Bulletin

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### President of Sri Lanka participates at the International Solar Summit 10- 11 March



President Sirisena made an official visit to New Delhi on the joint invitation of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and French President Emanuel Macron to participate in the First Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Founding Members held on 11 March. Around 23 Heads of State and over 500 representatives of several countries attended the inaugural Conference which was co-chaired by French President and Indian Prime Minister. The International Solar Alliance, a treaty based international inter-governmental alliance of 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, was initiated at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris on 30th November 2015. Sri Lanka became a founding member of the International Solar Alliance on 12 February 2018. The conference aimed to create a common platform to meet the growing demand for solar power technology, to accelerate and broaden the technology for solar power, to minimize costs of solar projects and to take decisions relating to the development of solar power.

During the visit President Sirisena called on the President of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and held talks with the Prime Minister of India. The Leaders exchanged views on India Sri Lanka bilateral relations, including development cooperation, and other areas of bilateral interest.



### President meets Eric Solheim, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme

President Maithripala Sirisena at a meeting on the side lines of the International Solar Alliance met with Eric Solheim, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme. The President requested for assistance to introduce alternate technologies for Sri Lanka to eliminate the negative impact of excessive soil and sand mining in the construction industry. Mr. Solheim, a Norwegian diplomat, earlier worked as a facilitator between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE during peace talks. Sri Lanka has plans to increase its forest cover to 32 per cent of the total landmass. The President told Mr. Solheim that surveillance was done by air in order to identify the extent of the damage caused to the forest cover and requested for advice and assistance for Sri Lankan initiatives to protect the environment.

### Visit of the Army Commander to New Delhi

Lieutenant General NUMMW Senanayake, Commander of Sri Lanka Army was on an official visit to New Delhi from 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018. During his visit he called on General Bipin Rawat and discussed bilateral military issues. He also called on the Defence Secretary, Shri Sanjay Mitra and the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal S B Deo at the Air Force head Quarters in New Delhi.

### Sri Lanka Navy Commander's visit to New Delhi

Vice Admiral Sirimevan Ranasinghe, Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) and a four member delegation arrived in New Delhi on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018. On 14<sup>th</sup> March the Commander visited Amar Jawan Jyoti and laid a wreath at the 'Eternal Flame' at War Memorial, the

Commander of the Navy reviewed the Guard of honour presented by the Indian Navy, called on Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Chief of army staff, Director of Air operations of the IAF and State Minister of Defence.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, the Sri Lankan Navy Commander visited Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam from 16 to 18 March 2018. As part of the visit, Vice Admiral Sirimevan Ranasinghe interacted with Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, ENC and held discussions on issues of common interest. The delegation was briefed on the activities of the Command and visited stealth frigate INS Satpura and training establishment INS Vishwakarma. Eastern Region (ER) and was conducted around various NWWA facilities by Mrs Meena Pawar, President NWWA (ER).

### Indo Pacific Regional Dialogue



Three Sri Lankan Maritime Experts participated at the Indo Pacific Regional Dialogue organised by the Indian Navy at the National Maritime Foundation of India, which was held at the Manekshaw centre, Delhi Cantt from 27-28 February 2018. Admiral R C Wijegunartne, Chief of Defence Staff, former Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, Jayanath Colombage and Admiral Jayatha Perera participated as delegates from Sri Lanka.

### OPV Vessels Exercise – MILAN 2018

The Sri Lanka Navy sent two ships, Samudura and Suranimala of Sri Lanka Navy, for the Naval Exercise MILAN held at the Port Blair from 6-13 March. The underlying theme was 'Friendship across the Seas'. This was an initiative of the Indian Navy, aimed to create a forum for the littoral navies of the region to exchange thoughts in the area of maritime cooperation. Senior Naval officers including the Deputy Area Commander Western Naval Area, Commodore Sanath Uthpala were present on this occasion. The two countries exchanged views of the tour events and its progress with the two Commanding Officers of the ships. The naval exercise included by 19 ships from 17 countries. Meanwhile, as part of a number of events lined up in Milan 2018, the ships' crew engaged in a band concert, International Maritime Seminar, musical evening, cultural evening and a food festival.

### Sri Lanka Navy receives 2nd Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel



The 2nd Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) constructed at the Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) for the mission requirements of Sri Lanka Navy, was officially handed over on 22nd March, to the Chief of Staff of Sri Lanka Navy Rear Admiral Neil Rosayro in the presence of the Sri Lankan High Commissioner for India, Chitranganee Wagiswara and Chairman and Managing Director of the GSL, Rear Admiral (Rtd) Sheker Mithal. The construction work of this AOPV commenced at the GSL in 2014. The state of the art vessel is capable of conducting patrols, policing, reconnaissance, surveillance, search and rescue, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and pollution control missions in Sri Lanka's maritime zones.

### 6th Meeting of the Governing Board of South Asian Regional Standards Organisation SARSO New Delhi 08-09 March 2018

The Sixth Meeting of the Governing Board of South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) was held in New Delhi, India from 08 – 09 March 2018 under the Chairpersonship of Smt. Surina Rajan IAS, Director-General, and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The meeting contributed to the role of SARSO in promoting trade within the SAARC region. Matters pertaining to removal technical barriers of trade by harmonization of national Standards of SAARC Member States were discussed. The Board underscored that, South Asian region has the potential to be the front-runner of growth on prosperity and is one of the fastest growing regions of the world. Director General of the Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI) Mrs Nayana Satharasinghe and Ms. Nirmala Paranavitana, Minister of the High Commission participated at the meeting.

### Yowunpura Youth Festival, International Youth Camp – 28<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April

6 Indian students from the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development in Chennai participated at the Yowun Puraya Youth Festival 2018 held from 28 March to 01 April 2018. The Festival was aimed at developing leadership skills through a series of capacity building programmes to prepare young people to face the future

job market in many professions who could contribute to the National Development process in the future.

### **WHO South-East Asia countries commit to intensify efforts, and have concrete progress to End TB**

The Minister of Health and Indigenous Medicine, Rajitha Senarathne visited New Delhi 13-14 March 2018 to attend the High Level leadership meeting on ending TB in South East Asia Region. Dr. Anil Jasinghe, Director General of the Health Services, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine was also a member of the delegation. The member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region are committed to further intensifying efforts to ensure rapid and concrete progress to End TB by 2030. In a statement adopted at the Delhi End TB Summit, member countries unanimously agreed to intensifying essential action and agreed to implement the Delhi Call to Action, which was adopted in March last year, to accelerate efforts to end TB in the Region that affects one fourth of the global population but a disproportionate 46% of the global TB burden. "Progress against TB in this Region will have a major impact on the progress globally.

### **Sri Lanka to become hub of Indian Ocean in partnership with Asia - Accepts Japanese, Indian, Chinese, initiatives – PM**

Sri Lanka - the new growth story playing out in the Indian Ocean, would forge ahead in partnership with countries such as Japan, India, China and Singapore, said Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Delivering the key note address at "Invest Sri Lanka" Forum in Singapore on 9<sup>th</sup> March. The Prime Minister said that ongoing global economic power re-balancing had resulted in the Indian Ocean becoming a center of economic gravity, which in turn had enabled Sri Lanka to leverage on its strategic location, to become the hub of the Indian Ocean, by building on good relations with the key economies.

### **PURBASA Conference in Odisha**



PURBASA: East meets East: Synergizing the North-East and Eastern India with the Indo-Pacific Conference was held in Odisha, Bhubaneswar from 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018 celebrating shared values & common destiny among Indo-Pacific nations. Amb. Lalit Mansingh as the Chairman of the Kalinga International Foundation

announced in his speech that this is the second major international conference, focusing on enhancing synergies amongst Indo-Pacific countries. Since time immemorial India had cultural & trade contacts with the outside world. Odisha interactions with the Indo-Pacific region include a shared heritage, mythologies, languages & architecture which find their expressions in strands of everyday life of people. Odisha also known as Utkal & Kalinga, has many shared cultural heritage with the Indo-Pacific region. The geo-political climate of today has unleashed on us new perils as well as opportunities. The Conference stressed the need to come together and intensify our economic, cultural, & trade imprints in the Indo-Pacific region to combat the current uncertainties.

The Sri Lanka delegation comprised Gamini Jayawickrama Perera, Minister of Buddha Sasana, Chitranganee Wagiswara, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India. Ms. Nirmala Paranavitana, Minister of the Sri Lanka High Commission and several Sri Lankan academics; Prof Nimal De Silva, Advisor to Hon. Minister of Buddhasasana and former Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, Admiral Jayanath Colombage and former Secretary Foreign Affairs, Dr Palitha Kohona. They noted the roots & teachings of Buddhism and culture that binds Indo-Pacific, and also expressed views on maritime issues and trade interactions and enhancing tourism that will allow the regional population to connect. Chitranganee Wagiswara, presented Sri Lanka's perspectives on linking with the eastern region in India as well as countries in the East. She affirmed Sri Lanka's stand on maintaining peace and security in the region and support towards the promotion of cultural ties, economic growth and development of the countries in the East.

### **Meetings with the Governor of Odisha and the Chief Minister of Odisha**



On the sidelines of the visit, High Commissioner, Chitranganee Wagiswara met with Dr. S C Jamri, Governor of Odisha and discussed the close cultural and religious links between Sri Lanka and Odisha and the need to promote more tourism and people to people contacts between the two destinations.

The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka also met with the Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik and discussed the revival of rich & vibrant past by strengthening cultural, trade & tourism ties with Odisha. They also discussed

on the need to have an awareness campaign to encourage Sri Lanka pilgrims to visit buddhist sites in Odisha.

### **Board Meeting of the Kalinga Lanka Foundation**

The Board meeting of the Kalinga Lanka Foundation was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the Sri Lanka High Commission. Kalinga Lanka Foundation (KLF) is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation, striving to strengthen the common heritage and historical relationship between peoples of India with particular reference to Odisha and peoples of Sri Lanka through multi-dimensional initiatives. The Foundation was formed by Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Former Foreign Secretary of India and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam, the present Foreign Secretary of Sri Lanka in May, 2014 with an objective to foster Indo-Lanka bilateral relations through the common Kalinga legacy. The meeting discussed a future work programme for the Kalinga Lanka Foundation. One main item was to induct more Sri Lankan Professionals to the Foundation and form a Students' Wing.

### **Announcement of the Presidential scholarship scheme**

The Government of Sri Lanka has called for applications for "Government of Sri Lanka Presidential Scholarships for Foreign Students for the academic year 2017/2018". Interested applicants can download the application form and the scholarship notice and other related information pertaining to respective courses from the website [www.mohe.gov.lk](http://www.mohe.gov.lk). The deadline for receiving the application by the Ministry of Higher Education & Highways of Sri Lanka is **16th April 2018**.

### **Informal WTO Ministerial gathering in New Delhi**

Representatives from 50 countries invited by India gathered in New Delhi for a WTO Mini-Ministerial meeting on 19-20th March 2018. This was the second WTO Mini-Ministerial meeting that was hosted by India, after 2009. The Sri Lanka delegation was represented by the Sri Lanka High Commissioner and Minister (Commerce). The informal gathering of Ministers held on 20th March in New Delhi mainly focused on issues pertaining to providing political guidance for further work in the WTO and the way forward on development, which is a horizontal issue and is being perceived by some member countries as a hurdle in many areas of the negotiations. Speaking at the meeting, High Commissioner said that "Sri Lanka places the highest importance to the WTO led multilateral trading system and the Doha Development Agenda as the way forward for the country's sustainable integration into the global trade". She further stated that "Sri Lanka looks forward to a pragmatic approach to addressing the issues based on non-discriminatory rule based system with adequate and meaningful policy space to facilitate the process". During the meeting, some countries spoke of initiating discussions on issues such as investment facilitation, micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) and e-commerce within the WTO ambit.

### **One on One Meetings in New Delhi by Sri Lanka Convention Bureau**

Sri Lanka Convention Bureau in association with the Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi and the Sri Lankan Airlines organized a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Events) promotion in New Delhi from 19-20th March 2018, to promote Sri Lanka as a MICE destination. Chairman Mr Kumar De Silva together with Officials of the Sri Lanka High Commission and Sri Lankan Airlines held One on One meetings with the leading travel and tour agents, MICE companies and wedding planners at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Gurgaon to project new MICE offers of Sri Lanka i.e Colombo, Kandy, Galle & Bentota. India emerged as the leading country that sends the highest number of tourist to Sri Lanka. In 2017, tourist arrivals from India were 384,628, which is 18% of total number of tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka.

### **Commonwealth "Big Lunch" Organized by the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)**



Sri Lanka was represented by the Counsellor Ms. Achini Perera, at the "Common Wealth big lunch" organised by the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences and the British Council- India held on 23rd of March 2018 at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Commonwealth Big Lunches are part of the official celebrations of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which will be held in London in April 2018. CHOGM will see leaders from across 53 Commonwealth countries come together to address shared global challenge and discuss how the Commonwealth can help create a better future for the 2.4 billion people who are citizens of Commonwealth countries. The British Council and the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences have been working together with the British Council of India to create the biggest Commonwealth Big Lunch bringing Commonwealth High Commission together with the 27,000 tribal students of KISS. While the British High Commissioner for India was the Chief Guest of the event, High Commissioners from, Tanzania, Nigeria, Brunei, Malta and diplomats from Zambia, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Lesotho were also present at the event.