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PM Modi meets Sri Lankan President in Nepal, discusses bilateral Cooperation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on the sidelines of the 4th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit that was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 30th August to 02nd September 2018. At the conclusion of the summit, the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC was handed over to Sri Lanka by the current Chair, Nepal. During the meeting Prime Minister Modi said that he is ready to undertake any task allocated to him by President Maithripala Sirisena as the Chairman of BIMSTEC and that it will be a strong organization under the leadership President Maithripala Sirisena.



Multiparty Parliamentary delegation from Sri Lanka visits India

On the invitation of the Lok Sabha of India, a multi-party Sri Lankan delegation headed by Speaker Karu Jayasuriya visited New Delhi from 9th – 14th September on a familiarisation tour. Members of the delegation included the Opposition Leader R. Sampanthan, Minister Nimal Sripala De Silva (Minister of Transport and Civil

Aviation) (SLFP), Gayantha Karunathilake (UNP), Chief Government Whip and Minister of Land and Parliamentary Reforms, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) leader Rauff Hakeem, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) Parliamentarian Vijitha Herath, Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA) leader Mano Ganesan and Eelam Peoples' Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Douglas Devananda, Dhammika Dasanayaka, Secretary General of the Parliament and Mr. Upali Kumarasinghe, Chief of Protocol of the Parliament.

The delegation met with President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India on 10th September 2018. During the meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed on the need for greater people-to-people contacts between India and Sri Lanka to enhance relations between the two nations. He further noted the new initiatives to have the provincial assemblies and local bodies of the two countries interacting that would deepen significantly, the close ties and trust between the two countries. The Speaker and the delegation had a meeting with his counterpart Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of Lok Sabha followed by a Banquet hosted by the Indian Speaker. During the meeting the two parties discussed new areas of cooperation to further strengthen the ties between the two parliaments.

During the visit, the delegation visited the sacred site of Saranath in Varanasi and Bangalore. In Saranath the Speaker also visited Mulaghandha Kuti Viharaya, built by Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala, and had a discussion with Ven. P. Seevali Thero General Secretary of Mahabodhi Society of India and Ven. Medhankara Thero Joint Secretary of MBSI and the officials of the Archaeological Survey of India, Saranath. The Speaker also visited Rajghat and paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi Samadhi. In Bangalore the Speaker visited Infosys; a global leader in technology services & consulting, Indian Space Research Organisation and GKVK Agriculture University of Bangalore.



Sri Lankan Drama at the Indian Theatre Olympiad in Bhubaneswar

A Sri Lankan play by Chawdari Kalutara Group from Sri Lanka enthralled the audience on 7th September at the 26th edition of the Indian Theatre Olympiad in Bhubaneswar. The Olympiad was organised by the Utkal Yuva Sanskrutik Sangh. Written and directed by Tharanga Bandara, the play revolves around a story of a patient, who managed to escape from a mental hospital. The play is produced by Swarnasiri Warnakulasooriya.



Kalinga Lanka Foundation AGM held

Kalinga Lanka Foundation (KLF) held its Annual General meeting on 20th September 2018 at the Sri Lanka High Commission. At the meeting the KLF launched its KLF Organizational Hand Book 2018. The publication was unveiled by Chitrangane Wagiswara, High Commissioner and Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Chairman and D.P. Bagchi, President of the Foundation. It was decided to publish a bi-annual Journal of the Foundation. Gokul Patnaik, Dr P K Pradhan and Sakie Ariyawansa were inducted as new members of the Foundation.

Devotees of Bodhgaya can now experience a green walk

Minister Rauff Hakeem participated at the Mahathma Gandhi Sanitation Convention (MGISC)

Rauff Hakeem, Minister of City planning and Water Supply represented Sri Lanka at the Mahathma Gandhi Sanitation Convention from 29th September to 2nd October 2018 in new Delhi. The 4-day event brought together Sanitation Ministers and sector specialists from around the world. It was organised by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India with the objective to share success stories on sanitation and lessons from the participating countries. MGISC included a field visit, plenary sessions, and technical sessions. A parallel exhibition of sanitation innovations was also held at the venue.



Devotees and tourists visiting the Mahabodhi Mahavihara in Bodhgaya have been provided with a synthetic grass carpet to walk barefoot. The laying of the carpet was donated by a Religious Trust. Arvind Singh, a member of the Shrine Management Committee, who said not only will the carpet give a more serene and beautiful look to the seat of Buddha's enlightenment, but also give a much-needed relief to devotees.

154th Birth Anniversary celebrations Anagarika Dharmapala held in New Delhi

In commemoration of the 154th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala a ceremony was organised by the Maha Bodhi Society in New Delhi. High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara was the Chief Guest at the ceremony. Speaking at the ceremony the High Commissioner highlighted the noble services Anagarika Dharmapala rendered in Ceylon's historical struggle for freedom from the British Raj, and the establishment of a firm educational, religious and economic foundation. High Commissioner also highlighted his contribution towards the preservation of Buddhism in Isipathana, Mulagandhakuti viharaya in Varanasi, Saranath and Bodhgaya.

Sixteen-member Lankan team visits the Deccan College in Pune

A sixteen member undergraduate student group from the University of Sri Jayawadhanapura visited the Deccan College, the most renowned college for archeology in India in Pune Maharashtra. The visit focused on learning scientific techniques used in archaeology. The delegation also visited a range of archaeological sites at Junnar, besides undertaking hands-on training in laboratory techniques used to interpret ancient data. The two institutes, Deccan College and Sri Jayawardhanapura University have entered into a five-year MoU to collaborate in the field of archaeology. The team is currently working at Rajagala in Sri Lanka's Ampara district. After excavations carried out by Indo-Lanka teams from these universities, several vital remains of the pre-historic era and key remains related to the origin of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, were discovered.



Lecture on Cultural heritage of Pondicherry held at the Kelaniya University

As part of the Heritage seminar series conducted by the Heritage Studies Centre at the University of Kelaniya, the Fifth Lecture of the Heritage Lecture Series was held on

September 26, 2018 at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya. The lecture was conducted by Dr. N. K. Kumaresan Raja of the Pondicherry University, Puducherry, India on "Cultural Heritage of Pondicherry".

Visit of a delegation from the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

Twelve elected representatives of the Northern Provincial Council, including the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and members and six government officials and three representatives of The Asia Foundation (TAF) visited The Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) in Hyderabad, India from 18th September on an International familiarization.

The visit of the delegation focused on rural development and decentralized practices in devolved institutions which aim at equipping the delegation with the knowledge and experience that would help them make informed decisions and implement effective policies within their local settings to improve policy formulation and implementation. While this visit contributed to the cross-country exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences, it further helped the participants to have an exposure on the Indian model of decentralization, functioning of the Panchayati Raj system and rural development programmes towards poverty eradication, skilling.

Dr Achyuta Samanta was honoured by the Government of Sri Lanka

Educationist and social activist Dr Achyuta Samanta was honoured with the MGR Ratna Award for Lifetime Contribution to Education for Tribal Children by the Government of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Parliament Speaker Karu Jayasuriya presented the award in the presence of Sri Lanka Minister of Education Akila Viraj Kariyawasam. A well-wisher from KIIT and KISS, Dr K Abdul Ghani, received the award on behalf of Dr. Samanta

Two Sri Lanka Defence Personnel graduate with MPhil

Two Sri Lankan Defence Personnel Brigadier HMJK Gunarathne, WWV, RWP, RSP, USP, ndc, psc of the Sri Lanka Army and Rear Admiral DNS Ulugethanna RSP & Bar, USP, ndc, psc from the Sri Lanka Navy, were conferred with M. Phil award for the successful completion of the Master of Philosophy programme on Defence and Strategic Studies at the National Defence College which they completed in November 2016. The two officials were part of the 56th Master of Philosophy

programme and its graduation ceremony was held in September and they received their certificates at a ceremony held at the National Defence College in Delhi which is affiliated to the University of Madras in India.

High Commissioner addresses the students of the NDC Course

The High Commissioner addressed the Prestigious National Defence College (NDC) on 14 August 2018 on "Framework of India – Sri Lanka Relationship – Opportunities and Challenges ". Sri Lanka was invited to speak in the Session dealing with the theme "India's Strategic Neighborhood". The address was followed by a question and answer session, during which the High Commissioner emphasized that a very healthy and strong relationship is maintained with India in a range of areas viz. socio – political, economic, foreign policy and security.

Visit of the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) from Kolkata to explore business Opportunities in Sri Lanka.

The Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) from Kolkata, West Bengal in association with the Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi organized an eighteen member business delegation from textiles and hosiery to real estate, tea, information technology, pig iron and logistics to visit Sri Lanka from 19th to 23rd September 2018 for business meetings with the Trade Chambers in Sri Lanka.

The main focus of the business delegation from Kolkata was to explore trade and investment opportunities mainly in manufacturing and services. The MCCI delegation was led by Mr Ramesh Agarwal, President of the MCCI. The programme in Sri Lanka included B2B meetings with the trade Chambers followed by factory visits and networking forums in Colombo and Kandy, organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), was signed between the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) with the aim of promoting dialogue and coordination, exchanging trade inquiries of mutual interest, strengthening the communication between both organizations, mutual business delegations and events, and holding business meetings.

The Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an old chamber from Kolkata with 23,000 direct and indirect members and 16 affiliated associations.

Visit of the JAAF Delegation to New Delhi for business interactive with Indian Apparel Industry

Following the discussions held between Minister of Development Strategies & International Trade, Malik Samarawickrama, and the Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu in July 2018, on the options available to the apparel sector of the two countries for greater value chain development, that primarily focused on Sri Lanka's request for removal/relaxation of the ISFTA apparel quota.

An eight member apparel industry delegation led by the Deputy Chairman, Mr Saif Jafferjee of the Joint Apparel Association Forum of Sri Lanka visited Delhi on 26th September 2018, for an interactive meeting with the agencies of the Indian apparel industry held at the Apparel House in Haryana. The Apparel Industry interactive meeting was organized by the Ministry of Textile in association with the Ministry of Industry & Commerce, New Delhi. The prime focus of the discussion was on removal of apparel quota under ISFTA and possibility of further enhancing trade in textile & clothing industry, for the two countries to benefit.

The eighteen member Indian delegation led by Mr Magu, Chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council of India comprised of representatives from the Cotton Manufacturers Association of India, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry and the Textile Promotion Council of India. The senior Officials from the Textile and the Industry and Commerce Ministry of India together with officials from the Commerce Department in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka High Commission were present as observers in the meeting held on 27th September 2018.

Workshop on Archeology held at the Ruhuna University

As part of our outreach & enhancing people to people connectivity, the Indian Consulate in Hambantota collaborated with the University of Ruhuna, Matara, in organizing a "Lecture Series & Workshop on Recent Advances in Indian History & Archaeology and Sri Lanka-South India Relations" on 5th September 2018.

Ship Visit and Interaction between IN and SLN Personnel during SLINEX18

Indian Naval Ships Kirch, Sumitra and Cora Divh arrived in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka and participated in the sixth edition of SLINEX 2018, a bi-lateral Naval Exercise between India and Sri Lanka which was held from 07th - 13th September 2018. In addition to the three IN Ships, one ship-borne integral helicopter and two Maritime Patrol Aircraft Dornier participated from Indian side, while

Sri Lankan Navy was represented by SLN Ships Sayurala, Samudra and Suranimala



Envoys from Guatemala and Zambia presents credentials

Four new Ambassadors and High Commissioners presented credentials to President Maithripala Sirisena on 6th September 2018. Amongst them were Ambassador of the Republic of Guatemala, Giovanni Rene Castillo Polanc, High Commissioner of the Republic of Zambia, Judith Kang'oma Kapijimpanga. Zambia and Guatemala are accredited to Sri Lanka from New Delhi.