



# Sri Lanka High Commission in India News Bulletin

February - 2018



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## NO.02/2018

### Sri Lanka participates at the First International Kala Mela 2018, New Delhi

Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art), New Delhi in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) organized the First International Kala Mela 2018 in New Delhi, from 4-18 February 2018. The inauguration was followed by several folk dances of Sri Lanka performed by Karunadasa Olaboduwa Dance Troupe from Colombo. The High Commissioner and the Officials of the High Commission participated in the inauguration.

### Sri Lankan creativity is showcased at Suraj Kund 2018



The vivid art & craft, music and dance, colorful ambiance, ethnic cuisines were on display at the annual Suraj Kund which was inaugurated on 02nd February 2018. The International Mela was held showcasing different cultural ethos of the rich regional and international crafts and traditions. Two teams from the Sri Lanka National Craft Council and the National Arts and Craft Foundation participated at the event to showcase their exquisite pieces of handicrafts. This year the Sri Lankan pavilion included the display of Palmyra, silver handicrafts, batiks, coconut shell and silver and semi precious jewellery, traditional masks, childrens' wooden toys and batik wall hangings. Eleven participants from many districts of the country including Batticaloa and Jaffna, showcased a kaleidoscope of creativity from across the nation.

### Two eminent Sri Lankan architects at the India Arch Dialogue



Two Sri Lankan eminent architects, Palinda Kannangra, Dominic Sansoni represented the India Arch Dialogue 2018 in New Delhi from 09 February – 25th February at the Gallery IAQ, Qutub Minar Complex, Mehrauli, New Delhi. The Arch Dialogue expects to link the Arts, Architecture, Interiors, Fashion, Photography and Visual Arts Communities by using varied fora to stimulate, challenge, facilitate and grow an environment to exchange Expertise. The Dialogue expects to initiate, create and celebrate a festival of design and architecture. The key objective is to bring Architecture to the mainstream of Design so that design enthusiasts from various streams can use Architecture as a main medium to express their creativity. The Architect dialogue included architects in the region who portrayed their

designs, photography workshops, book launches and panel discussions.

### **SriLankan Airlines working towards increasing frequencies from Mumbai and New Delhi**

SriLankan Airlines is looking forward to expand the operations of its New Delhi and Mumbai flights to 13 and 14 flights per week respectively in order to establish a strong market presence in India. New Delhi and Mumbai flights were increased to 11 frequencies from 7 last July. The Airlines hold the widest coverage in India, and ranks India as its number one source of inbound tourist traffic. At present, it operates direct flights to 14 Indian destinations with a total of 135 flights a week. Sri Lankan commenced operations to three new destinations from 2017 namely Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Coimbatore with 4 frequencies a week.

### **Grandeur 70th Independence celebrations in New Delhi, India**



The High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi organized two events to celebrate the 70th anniversary of independence. The morning of 04th February commenced with a "heel dana" to buddhist clergy, followed by the official ceremony. Over 120 Sri Lankans participated in the ceremony. In her address the High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara stated that India is the closest neighbour and India and Sri Lanka's relations span a multitude of areas and that there are resources and capacity to move towards further prosperity. At the end of the formal event two Sri Lankan dance items, were performed by "Olaboduwa dance troupe" from Sri Lanka bringing colour to the event.

On 06 February 2018, a Reception for around 800 guests was held for political dignitaries, Senior Government Officials of India, members of the diplomatic corp, eminent business leaders and members of the Sri Lankan community in India at the Residence of the High Commissioner. The Chief Guest of the event was Hon. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law and Justice and Electronics and Information Technology. Welcoming the

Chief Guest, the High Commissioner said that the leaders of the two countries have brought about a "new momentum" to the "special relationship". This year's programme included cultural performance starting with a human lamp which was lit by the Chief Guest and the Sri Lanka High Commissioner symbolizing the human ability to light the world to bring peace and prosperity. The Olaboduwa dance troupe performed pooja dance, mask dance, folk and fire dances which mesmerized the audience. The High Commission arranged for the guest to savour Indian as well as Sri Lanka cuisine, which was laid out by the Sri Lankan Chefs from the Hotel Blue Waters, Wadduwa, and the Executive Chef Nihal Somasiri was specially flown in from Sri Lanka. A special tea kiosk was available for the visitors to taste Sri Lanka tea by the Dilmah Tea.

### **The 8th Round of Negotiations under ETCA**

The 8th Round of Negotiations for the proposed India- Sri Lanka Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement was held in New Delhi from 21-23rd February 2018. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Bhupinder S Bhalla, Chief Negotiator and Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry of the Government of India and Sri Lankan delegation was led by Mr K.J. Weerasinghe, Chief Negotiator of Sri Lanka. The discussions were centered on the progress on the action points arising out of the 7th Round of Negotiations, NTM's, early harvest measures, etc.

### **RIDDI - dance performance based on Rabindranath Tagore's writings**



A team of dancers from the Department of Performing Arts, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka staged a play titled 'Riddi' based on the writings of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, on 12 January 2018 at Satyajit Ray Auditorium, ICCR Kolkata at the 12th Rabindra Utsav 2018 festival organized by Calcutta Promotions. While drawing inspiration from Tagore, the play tries to outline the stresses and strains a woman has to face and how she has to overcome the challenges, since social injustice against women was the main area of concern for Tagore.

The India-Sri Lanka Foundation, which provided travel support for the participants from Sri Lanka in the Rabindra Utsav 2018, while Calcutta Promotions, Kolkata organized the event in association with other sponsors.

### **Global Shanti-Amaravati Buddhist Conclave**

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority celebrated the first-of-its-kind festival of Buddhist Heritage – Global Shanti on 3rd to 5th February 2018. Andhra Pradesh has more than 200 important Buddhist sites dating back to the 3rd Century B.C. and is an important center for pilgrimage and study. The state is home to The Great Buddhist Stupa in Amaravati which is the largest in India. Close by is the Nagarjunakonda Island, an ancient center of Buddhist learning, which houses 2000-year old Relic Caskets and beautiful sculptural Buddhist Art. To emphasize and raise awareness of this rich and ethnic culture, revolving around the universal message of peace, this festival built around the essence of Buddhism through a unique blend of chanting, meditation, exhibition, performances and philosophical talks by popular scholars and practitioners. Eminent Sri Lankan dignitaries, Buddhika Sanjeewa, Chief Editor of the Mettavalokanaya Magazine in Sri Lanka, Ven. Dr. Bhikkuni Kusuma, First Buddhist Nun of Sri Lanka, Dr. Dilrukshi Wickremesinghe, Attorney General's Department participated at the Festival as Speakers.



### **Sri Lanka becomes a founding member of the Framework Agreement on the International Solar Alliance**

The Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was signed by the High Commissioner and subsequently ratified by Sri Lanka. The documents were handed over to Mr. Nagaraj Naidu, Joint Secretary (Investments, Technology Promotion and Energy Security Division) of the Ministry of External Affairs of India. The ISA which is a programme focused on solar resources rich countries, lying fully or partially between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, with an unprecedented opportunity to bring prosperity, energy security and sustainable development to the people will focus on building cooperation among developing countries and mobilization of financial resources for new and renewable resources of energy. The ISA will facilitate to reduce the cost of finance and the cost of technology and to mobilize more than USD \$ 1000 billion

investments required by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy and pave the way for future technologies as well.

### **Sri Lanka targets 440,000 Indian tourists' arrivals in 2018**

The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau told the media that understanding the unique offerings for Indian travelers, destination Sri Lanka now targets for 4,40,000 Indian arrivals, this year. The growing number of tourists from India allures Sri Lanka as a destination for all seasons. Last year records indicate that 384,628 tourists arrived from India. In support of this campaign Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts recently launched a package for Indian tourists namely; 'Cinnamon Island Weddings', a specially-curated luxury wedding experiences for destination weddings in Sri Lanka. As a part of the campaign, Cinnamon Hotels and resorts have also launched a contest with Sri Lankan Airlines where the winning couple will get an all expense paid dream wedding for 50 people in Sri Lanka organised by Cinnamon Island Weddings.

### **Nitin Gokale lecture in Colombo**

Nitin Gokhle, Indian Defense Analyst and author of 'Securing India the Modi Way' made the inaugural Oration of the Afro-Asian Century Series on 01st February 2018 at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies on the topic 'India's New Security Posture'.

### **ACCREDITED MISSIONS**

#### **Bilateral Consultations between Poland and Sri Lanka**

The State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vasantha Senanayake visited Poland from February 15 to 16 at the invitation of the Government of Poland for bilateral consultations. He held discussions to explore ways and means to promote political and economic relations. The meeting covered 15 areas for collaboration. The State Minister emphasised that the two countries should cash in on the conducive economic conditions prevailing in Sri Lanka and Poland to intensify the economic cooperation for the benefit of their people. During the visit he signed a bilateral agreement on Air Transport and a Memorandum of Understanding on Sports. The State Minister met Jan Widera, Deputy Minister of Sports and Tourism and Tadeusz Kosciński, Deputy Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology in order to explore the possibility of establishing cooperation in tourism for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The business delegation that accompanied the Minister participated in a Business

Forum organised by the Polish Chamber of Commerce and engaged in B2B meetings.

## DEFENCE

Major General Shavendra Silva, WWV, RWP, RSP, USP, psc, CR, who is presently the current Adjutant General (AG) of Sri Lankan Army, who was the former Director of Operations of the Sri Lanka Army and the General Officer Commanding, 58 Division during the Sri Lankan conflict was awarded Master of Philosophy at the National Defence College in New Delhi. Recently he was in New Delhi for his convocation ceremony.

### Army Staff talks

The India- Sri Lanka Army to Army Staff Talks (AAST) was held in New Delhi on 26th to 28 February 2018. The delegation was led by Major General Shavendra Silva whilst Brigadier Devindha Perera and Brigadier Nishantha Wadugodapitiya were the other members .

### 7th Indo- Lanka Naval Staff Talks in Colombo

The 7th round of the Sri Lanka India Navy Staff Talks was held on 07th February 2018. The Sri Lankan delegation was led by Director General Operations Rear Admiral Piyal de Silva and the Indian Naval delegation was led by Rear Admiral Diren Vig. The Talk were a productive platform for the staff of the Navy to interact and exchange views on a range of defence matters that intersects with the bilateral relations and the foreign policy. Representatives of both sides expressed interest in exchanging views on mutual cooperation in maritime affairs. The visiting head of the Indian delegation Rear Admiral Diren Vig paid a courtesy call on the Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Navy Rear Admiral Neil Rosayro at the Naval Headquarters in Colombo.

### Indo –Pacific Regional Dialogue

Three Sri Lankan Maritime Experts participated at the Indo –Pacific Regional Dialogue organised by the Indian Navy and the National Maritime Foundation of India, which was held at the Manekshaw Centre, Delhi, from 27-28 February. Admiral Jayanath Colombage and Admiral Jayantha Perera former Commanders of the Sri Lanka Navy and the Former Navy Commander, Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne who is the present Chief of Defence Staff participated as speakers. Several officials from the Sri Lanka Navy were part of the delegation. At the end of the conference High Commissioner hosted a dinner for the delegation.

## National Maritime Foundation hosts first dialogue on India- Sri Lanka Maritime Security Cooperation

The first bi-lateral conference between the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) and Pathfinder Foundation (PF) focused on developing a platform for analytical and innovative discussion, specifically on Maritime Security and Maritime Domain Awareness covering the Indian Ocean, which would favorably impact countries in the Indian Ocean Region. The dialogue was held on February 8th at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo. Admiral R.K. Dhowan with Directors of NMF, Admiral Jayanath Colombage, Director, Centre for Indo-Lanka Initiatives at Path Finders with Chairman Bernard Goonetilleke and Directors were key resource personalities of the conference.

### Journalists from Sri Lanka in Karnataka

A delegation of 18 journalists from Sri Lanka, representing television channels, radio stations and print media were invited for a programme including to witness the festivities at the Vindhyagiri hills. They had been invited to the event by the Jain Mutt authorities. The 10-day long festivities began with anointment of the Bahubali statue perched atop Vindhyagiri hillock.

### Sri Lankan students participate at the 45<sup>th</sup> & 46<sup>th</sup> Know India programme



Forty Indian diaspora students from Fiji, Israel, Malaysia, Mauritius, The Netherlands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago participated at the Know India Programme organised by the Ministry of External Affairs of India. Among the forty there were three Sri Lankan students at the 45<sup>th</sup> Programme and three Sri Lankan undergraduate students Princey Virginia Roch,

Madushalini Gunasekara and Suganthan Suganthan participated at the 46<sup>th</sup> Programme. These students were met by the Sri Lankan Tamil students studying at the South Asian University in New Delhi. The objective of the programme was to acquaint the diaspora youth with various facets of Indian society and culture.

### Media Dialogue between India and Pakistan held in Colombo

Editors and News Directors from 16 major news organizations in Indian and Pakistan met for a two-day dialogue in Colombo from 25-27 February 2018. The dialogue looked at shared challenges and new directions in their newsrooms, cross-border media coverage between their countries, stories that are most interesting to their audiences, issues that can be covered region-wide, and building information networks to cover cross-border stories. Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance and Mass Media Mangala Samaraweera met with the group. The dialogue is part of a bigger media initiative that include cross-border reporting trips and dialogue among Indian and Pakistani journalists starting in 2015.

### Two Sri Lankan Education Service Officers begin training at the NIEUPA

Two Sri Lankan Educational Service Officers from the Central Province and Southern Province began the 34<sup>th</sup> International Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration (IDEPA) in New Delhi on Educational Planning and Administration for a three months period under the ITEC scholarship scheme offered by the Government of India.

### International Day at the Student Hostels of the University of Delhi



High Commissioner was the Chief Guest of the two Annual Days that were held at the Girls & Boys International Hostels in the Delhi University.

### Book on Sri Lanka : Connected Art Histories



Marg is a Mumbai-based not-for-profit publisher whose mission is to augment interest in Indian art and culture, has published a book titled "Sri Lanka: Connected Art Histories". The book showcases island's diverse artistic traditions ranging from the ancient city of Anuradhapura to the contemporary art scene in Jaffna. It further gives multiple voices and mediums to locate the island within its larger geographical space, giving Sri Lanka a unique voice in the global artistic community. It further brings attention to Sri Lanka's contacts with the European world. This book will be of interest to students and enthusiasts of Asian art and intersecting cultures. The book is authored and edited by Sujatha Arundathi Meegama, Assistant Professor at the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

### Indian Education Fair 2018 held at BMICH on 14-15 Feb'18

The two day India Education Fair Colombo was inaugurated on 14<sup>th</sup> February at the BMICH. This event showcases the scope of study in Indian universities. Leading universities from all over India participated in the event. Minister of Vocational Training, Education State Minister V. Radhakrishnan, Deputy High Commissioner of India Sri Arindam Bagchi were also present. Local students were seen enthusiastically attending the Fair at the BMICH. This year's fair, supported by the Indian High Commission in Colombo, was under the theme "World class Education at affordable cost", and attracted a large number of students, especially Advanced Level students and school leavers.

### Chandigarh University scholarships

The Chandigarh University (CU) of Punjab will offer full and partial scholarships to Sri Lankan students for the year 2018 to undertake Undergraduate courses in India through the Ministry of Higher Education and Highways, Sri Lanka. The proposal contains 5 seats under full tuition fee waivers and 10 seats under 50% Tuition fee waiver

for the regular duration of the program. Please contact Mr. Karanjeet Singh, Manager (International Admissions), (karanjeet.singh@cumail.in / +91 8146651669) for further details regarding applications. CU is the 1st University in North India to forge 150+ partnerships with best International Universities. Chandigarh University, www.cuchd.in/international

### **India International Textiles Expo begins in Colombo**

A three –day India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) of India was held in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018. It was organized by Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL) with the support of Union Ministry of Textiles & Ministry of Commerce & Industry. Inaugurating the event, Sri Lankan Minister for Special Assignments Dr. Sarath Amunugama said that Sri Lanka sourcing of textile material from India and transforming it into apparel and garments for rest of the world, could lead to a win-win situation for both the countries. Arindam Bagchi, Acting High Commissioner of India noted that India would encourage Sri Lankan companies to be part of the supply and value chains of large Indian companies. He also urged Sri Lanka to make use of fully-funded training opportunities in India, under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, in which a number of slots is earmarked for textile related subjects. At the event, about 45 exhibitors from various textile clusters of India displayed a variety of fabrics, home textiles, traditional items etc. suitable for apparel, industrial, technical application and general consumers.

### **28th India-Sri Lanka DG Level Talks on Anti-Smuggling**



The 28th India-Sri Lanka DG Level Talks on Anti-Smuggling and related matters was held on 22-23 February, 2018 in New Delhi between Director General/DRl and Director General/Customs, Sri Lanka. Both sides resolved to strengthen co-operation in

preventing the smuggling of gold, drugs, fake Indian currency notes (FICN) and, wildlife, and other contraband, and to address trade-related issues such as 'Country of Origin' frauds that impact the revenue of both nations.

### **International Training Programme on the Laboratory Quality Management System for Developing Countries**

Two Sri Lankan nationals Mrs. Anoma Priyadarshani Herath Mudiyaeselage and Mr. ADJD Dharmadasa participated at the International Training programme on Laboratory Quality Management System for development Countries from 5<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February in New Delhi. The Training Programme is a part of the series of International Training Programs conducted by Bureau of Indian Standards under the scholarship schemes of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India namely ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) .

### **Ambassador's Gala Evening for Charities in India**

Sri Lanka partnered in organizing the First Ambassador's Gala Evening which was held at the Residence of the Spanish Ambassador in New Delhi. The diplomatic corps based in Delhi participated in the event and the funds raised will go towards 5 charity projects.