



# Sri Lanka High Commission in India News Bulletin

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### Sacred Buddha Relics from Saranath were taken to Sri Lanka for public veneration



The sacred Buddha relics enshrined at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara at Saranath in India were sent to Sri Lanka for public veneration on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 on a request from the Office of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. Ven. Pelewatte Seewali Thero, General Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Ven. Sumittananda Thero accompanied the relics together with officials from the Archeological Survey of India. The relics were exhibited for the public till 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018. These Buddhist relics were discovered by the British

archaeologists in colonial India in 1913 and handed over to the Maha Bodhi Society of India for custody

### Vesak event in the temple

The Mahabodhi Centre in New Delhi organised a two day programme for the commemoration of the 2562<sup>nd</sup> Vesak Celebrations on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Maha Bodhi Centre was lit up with oil lamps and vivid colour bulbs. The two day programme included a Vipassana Meditation Session, Dhamma Sessions and a Dhamma discussion attended many buddhist Indians living in New Delhi.

### Vesak celebrated by the YMBA in New Delhi

2562<sup>nd</sup> Vesak Celebrations organized by the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), India, was held at the National Museum Auditorium, New Delhi, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017. High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, Chitranganee Wagiswara inaugurated the event. In her speech she emphasized the importance of the Vesak in the buddhist calendar and spoke of buddhism which binds the two countries together.

### Sinhala Tamil New Year celebrated in New Delhi





The Association of Sri Lankans in New Delhi (ASLID) together with the Sri Lanka High Commission celebrated the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on 15th April 2018 at the Sri Lanka High Commission premises. The High Commissioner for Sri Lanka inaugurated the celebrations. Subsequent to the lighting of the traditional oil lamp, Ven. Sumittananda Thero, Bhikku-in-Charge, Mahabodhi Centre in New Delhi invoked blessings on all Sri Lankans who were present. The event included traditional games for the children and families and traditional new year delicacies were enjoyed by the participants.

#### **Sri Lankan students at Short term training Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and Pacific, Dehradun.**

Two Sri Lankan students took up the Short Course on Geospatial Modeling in Forestry and Ecology for Climate Change Response Studies, from 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April in Dehradun, India. The overall objective of the course was to generate awareness among users/researchers a/professional/decision makers and academics on advances in geospatial modeling in forestry and ecology for climate change response studies.

#### **Colombo-Kolkata additional flights from 1<sup>st</sup> May**

From 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, SriLankan Airlines will add another flight to Colombo from Kolkata. This will increase the frequency of the flights to four times a week. The airline has also decided to start a three nights-four-days package for tourists from India. SriLankan Airlines

Manager, in Colombo Lalith Peris noted in an interview with the media that the flight to Kolkata commenced its operations last year and carried nearly 12,000 passengers to Colombo. It is noted that majority of passengers from Kolkata are tourists hence a special package has been introduced to increase the number of passengers.

#### **Agricultural Sector of Sri Lanka to be assisted by India**

In a special ceremony held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018, at Nonagama Cultural Centre in Ambalantota in Hambantota District, Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Taranjit Singh Sandhu expressed his government's readiness to continue to assist Sri Lanka wherever possible and whenever needed while also offering to share expertise and technical assistance in the agricultural sector. At this occasion, together with Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, Mahinda Amaraweera, High Commissioner of India jointly launched a project to provide livelihood support to nearly 70,000 people from the farming and fishing communities in Hambantota District.

#### **India Sri Lanka friendship unconditional – High Commissioner for India in Colombo**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, High Commissioner Taranjith Singh Sandhu delivered the prestigious 14<sup>th</sup> Sujata Jayawardena Memorial Oration on 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas: Together We Progress'- India-Sri Lanka Relations in the light of India's Neighbourhood First Policy'. He said in his remarks "India never believed in setting conditionalities for friendship. Our heart is broad & big. India does not see friendships through transactional lens. India's aid is not to raid or invade. India's partnership blends with SL priorities. India is proud of its Buddhist identity. High Commission of India attaches importance to progressing together with Sri Lanka, as self-interest alone is neither in our culture nor in our behavior".

## **New Sri Lanka Consul General assumes duties in Mumbai**

Chamari Rodrigo, assumed duties on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 as the new Consul General in Mumbai. Ms. Rodrigo is a career diplomat and has served in Canada, UK and Japan. She took over duties from Saroja Sirisena, a career diplomat who assumed duties as the Director General of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombo.

## **Dr. Saman Kelegama awarded ICCR Distinguished Alumni Award**

Dr. Saman Kelegama was posthumously conferred with ICCR Distinguished Alumni Award by the Govt of India at a function in New Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018. The Award was received by Eranthika Kelegama, wife of Dr. Kelegama, from Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs, at a special ceremony held in New Delhi.

## **Roadshow in New Delhi to promote Sri Lanka investment and business conclave 2018**



The Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi organized a Roadshow followed by a business interactive session for the members of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry under the theme "SRI LANKA PARTNERING WITH INDIA FOR PROSPERITY", at the High Commission premises on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The main focus of the Roadshow was to promote the Sri Lanka Investment and Business Conclave 2018 to be held from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 in Colombo. Speaking at the Business Interactive Session High Commissioner Chitrangane Wagiswara welcomed the members of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry and highlighted the recent economic developments in the country and outlined the initiatives of the Sri Lanka government to create an economy, firmly based on foreign and domestic private investment. The Minister, Commercial, Upekka Samarathunga made a presentation on the incentives and the opportunities provided to enhance trade and investments in Sri Lanka.

## **Interactive Session on Investment Opportunities in West Bengal**

The High Commission for Sri Lanka in India participated at the interactive session organized by the Government of West Bengal in partnership with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at ITC Maurya. High Commissioners/ Ambassadors from 35 countries based in India attended the event. The focus of the interactive session was to share information on trade and investment opportunities in the State of West Bengal and aim to further strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation. Dr Amit Mitra, Minister in Charge, Finance Department, Industry, Commerce & Enterprises Department & Micro Small & Medium Enterprises and Textile Department, Govt of West presided the interactive session. Speaking at the interactive session, High Commissioner Wagiswara said that Sri Lankan entrepreneurs have strong business ties with India especially with the Southern States of India and the interactive session organized by the Government of West Bengal was an eye opener and Sri Lanka will focus on

West Bengal to expand business relations. Further she invited the company representatives in West Bengal to visit Sri Lanka to explore business opportunities.

### **Presentation of Credentials**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018, several new Ambassadors and High Commissioners who are accredited from New Delhi i.e. Ambassadors of Morocco, Austria and Poland, and the new High Commissioner of Tanzania, presented credentials to the President of Sri Lanka at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.

### **Sri Lanka wants to bridge trade deficit with NZ**



A group of 20 delegates representing 13 innovative New Zealand companies visited Sri Lanka from 2nd April 2018 for a 3-day visit to forge business and trade links with Sri Lanka. John Amararatunga, Minister of Tourism welcomed the delegation, along with Sri Lanka's Honorary Consul for New Zealand in Sri Lanka, Senaka Silva. The delegation was led by New Zealand Trade Commissioner for Sri Lanka, Ralph Hays. During the visit the delegation expressed the New Zealand's willingness to share expertise in the areas of sustainable tourism development and environmental conservation. Minister Amarathunga welcomed the New Zealand's initiative to open a High Commission in Colombo in 2019 and underscored that the visit would further cement ties between the two countries.

### **Chief Justice of Sri Lanka attends SAARC Law Conclave**

The Chief Justice of Sri Lanka attended the SAARC Law Conclave which was organised by the Indian Institute of Legal Studies from 28th to 29th April, 2018 at Indian

Institute of Legal Scientific tests, Dagapur, Darjeeling. The theme of this year's conference was 'Transboundary Water Conflicts in South Asia-Towards Water for Peace'. Indian Institute of Legal Studies aims to frame an international covenant to tackle the troubles of water conflict underneath the aegis of 'Comity of Nations'. The Institute seeks to inculcate and build an educational and intellectual discourse on issues which require our pivotal awareness. The sensitive issues on water was discussed and the conference was able to construct a basis to initiate a regional and international discourse.

### **16th International Energy Forum 10th -12th April 2018**

Ajith P. Perera, Minister of Power and Renewable Energy together with two Senior officials from the Ministry participated at the meetings. The Government of India hosted 90+ delegations including 50 Energy Ministers, 30 CEOs, 12 Heads of international organisations and over 500 guests. On behalf of the IEF16 host country, Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India inaugurated the IEF16 Ministerial Meeting. In his inaugural speech Prime Minister Modi emphasized his energy vision for India as comprising of four pillars – energy access, energy efficiency, energy sustainability and energy security. The Forum revolved around the dialogue among Ministers and industry leaders on how global shifts, new policies and technologies change investment and trade patterns can influence energy market security, facilitate orderly transitions, and accelerate the achievement of shared goals.

### **70th World Health Day in Colombo**



The 70th World Health Day of the World Health Organization (WHO) was celebrated under the patronage of President Maithripala Sirisena, in Colombo on 7th April 2018. The theme of this year's World Health Day is: "Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere". A first day cover and a commemorative stamp was issued to mark the celebrations of the World Health Day in Sri Lanka and the Post Master General, Rohana Abeyratne presented the commemorative stamp to the President Maithripala Sirisena. The President also symbolically launched the e-Health card and the National Health the Life TV channel. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine Dr. Rajitha Senaratne, Deputy Minister Faizal Casim, Director General of the World Health Organization Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia (based in New Delhi) Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh and representatives of the WHO participated in this event.

### **8<sup>th</sup> 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific, Indore, Madhya Pradesh**

Vijith Wijayamuni Soysa, Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Management, together with a delegation from Sri Lanka participated at the 8th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific, 9-12 April 2018, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India. It was co-organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) of Government of India, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) / UN DESA, under the overall theme of "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency- A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities". Mayors of more than 45 countries of Asia and Pacific region signed the Indore 3R Declaration of achieving Clean Land, Clean Water and Clean Air in cities. The members of the 3R Forum also pledged to adopt the recommendations of Indore to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda. The Forum provided a

strategic platform for sharing best practices in 3R areas, including new and emerging issues of concern in waste management. The UNCRD was established in 1971 and is based on agreement between the Government of Japan and the United Nations.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Working Group for BIMSTEC Framework Agreement on Transit, Transshipment and movement of Vehicular traffic held in New Delhi**

Two Sri Lankan delegates participated at the above meeting which was held on 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018. Sri Lanka was represented by the Legal officer from the Ministry of Transport and a Technical Officer from the Department of Motor Traffic in Sri Lanka. Matters critical to achieving regional connectivity in the region was discussed at the meeting.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> South Asian Youth Summit**

On 5th April 2018, Dr. KK Singh, Chairman of the International Youth Council handed over the Proposal regarding the 2nd South Asian Youth Summit 2018 to High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara. The Summit is scheduled to be held from 17th - 20th September 2018 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

### **Prime Minister commissions 2nd AOPV of Sri Lanka Navy**

The second Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) to be given to the Sri Lanka Navy was handed over to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe at the Eastern Container Terminal of the port of Colombo on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018. This AOPV was built at the Indian ship building facility - Goa Shipyard Ltd.

Prime Minister unveiled the crest of the ship, the name board, and designated the new AOPV as Sri Lanka Navy Ship (SLNS) Sindurala. This AOPV which is the second vessel of its kind will be administered by the Sri Lanka Navy and will be manned by 18 officers and 100 sailors.

### **Indian Vice Chief of the Naval Staff visits Eastern Naval Command**

The Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) of the Indian Navy Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar made an official tour to Sri Lanka and visited the Eastern Naval Command on 18th April 2018. The Indian VCNS paid a courtesy call on the Commander Eastern Naval Area Rear Admiral Niraja Attygalle. They held cordial discussion on matters of mutual interest and mementos were also exchanged to mark the event. Vice Admiral Kumar also paid a visit inside the Naval Dockyard and Naval & Maritime Academy premises. Director General Personnel Rear Admiral Meril Sudarshana, Commandant Naval & Maritime Academy Commodore Kalana Jinadasa and Defence Advisor of the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka Captain Asok Rao also attended the occasion.

### **Defence Expo 2018**

A group from the Sri Lankan Army, Navy, Air Force participated at the inauguration ceremony of the Defence Expo 2018 that was held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018 by way of live video conferencing. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### **Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS Shoor in Sri Lanka on a goodwill visit**



The Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Shoor was on a goodwill visit to Sri Lanka from 30th March to 3rd April. The ICGS Shoor was instrumental in dousing the fire on MSC Daniela on 4th April 2017, last year off the Sri Lankan coast. At this dramatic moment, Sri Lanka requested assistance from the Indian High Commission, as there was a Coast Guard vessel (ICGS 'Shoor') that

was on a goodwill visit berthed at the Colombo harbour. The Indian High Commission promptly replied to the request made by the Sri Lanka Navy, dispatching ICGS 'Shoor'. Captain of ICGS Shoor M. Murugan told media, that the visit was in remembrance of the incident intended to strengthen bilateral ties enjoyed by two countries in the naval sphere.