

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasantha Senanayake was on a working visit to New Delhi from 02 – 04 October 2017.

The Minister visited the Sri Lanka Buddhist Pilgrims Rest (SLBPR) in New Delhi and met with the Chief Priest with officials of the Sri Lanka High Commission and discussed issues pertaining to the facilities provided and the other needs of the increasing number of Sri Lanka Buddhist pilgrims visiting India. The Minister also visited the Maha Bodhi Temple, and paid homage to the sacred Kapilavastu Relics at the National Museum.

During the visit the State Minister had separate meetings with Heads of Missions of Spain, Israel, Brunei and Chargé d' Affaires of Luxemburg.

At the Meeting with Ambassador of Spain the Minister spoke of developing closer links between Sri Lanka and Spain. The issues discussed were the possibility of establishing a Spanish Language Centre in Sri Lanka, obtaining Spanish expertise on water management and cooperation in the field of Agriculture. The State Minister and the Ambassador spoke of Sri Lanka pursuing greater links with Latin American countries.

At the Meeting with the Israeli Ambassador, the State Minister and the Ambassador exchanged views on increasing employment opportunities for Sri Lankans in Israel, on sharing expertise in the Agricultural Sector and, Israel's water management Scheme, as well as a greater collaboration in the Tourism Sector. The Israeli Agency for Development Cooperation could work together with Sri Lanka on sharing expertise under the development assistance scheme.

At the meeting with Ambassador of Brunei the discussion centred on the historical links with countries in Asia and the importance of pursuing closer relations with ASEAN and Brunei's role within the organization.

The Chargé d' Affaires of Luxemburg at the meeting with the State Minister stated that Luxemburg was happy to have the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka visiting Luxemburg recently, as it was the first visit by a Sri Lankan Foreign Minister since the establishment of Diplomatic relations in 1972. The Chargé d' Affaires thanked Sri Lanka for the step taken to appoint a

Honorary Consul in Luxemburg and it was suggested that Luxemburg work towards identifying a Honorary Consul in Sri Lanka. It was agreed that the two countries work closer on promoting trade and investments.

At the Meetings with the Heads of Missions the State Minister spoke of the current developments in Sri Lanka the need to focus on developing economic and trade relations. In the political sphere, the State Minister elaborated on the ongoing new reforms including the constitutional reform process.

Sri Lanka High Commission

New Delhi

09th October 2017