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Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tilak Marapana, at the 4th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference



The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tilak Marapana attended the 4th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference on "State and Social Order in Dharma-Dhamma Traditions" which was held in Rajgir, Bihar in India from 11th – 13th January 2018. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the Conference. Speaking at the Conference Minister Marapana stated that the Buddhist concept of rule of law & good governance are depicted in "Dasa Raja Dharma" in which Lord Buddha preached to Kings to rule in a fair manner and be concerned of the welfare of their communities. He further noted in his speech that, the Ten Virtues according to Buddhist ideals of good governance are; Generosity, morality, liberality, openness, gentleness, self-restraints, no anger, nonviolence, patience and non-competitiveness. The Conference was organized by the Nalanda University, in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Religion and Society, India Foundation, Ministry of External Affairs and

the Vietnam Buddhist University. This Conference was organized as part of the commemorative events to celebrate the Silver Jubilee year of ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership, with the support of the Union Ministry of External Affairs. Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik, CM Nitish Kumar, and Kingdom of Thailand's Minister for Culture Vira Rojpojchanarat, among others, attended the conference.

Visit of Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Finance



Minister of Finance of Sri Lanka, Mangala Samaraweera, called on Hon Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance of India in New Delhi on 13th January 2018. The two Ministers reviewed the present status of the ongoing economic projects between the two countries. During the visit the Minister also called on Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India. The two Ministers discussed issues of development cooperation between the two countries. Sri Lanka is one of the major recipients of development credit generated by India with a total commitment of around USD 2.63 billion, including USD 458 million as grants. A Line of Credit for USD 800 million for track laying and supply of rolling stock to support the construction of railway lines in northern Sri Lanka is already operational.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Vasantha Senanayake attends the Raisina Dialogue 2018 in New Delhi



State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vasantha Senanayake was a panelist at the discussion on 'Towards a Bay of Bengal Community: Development, Growth & Security' on 18th January 2018 at the Raisina Dialogue. The panel was moderated by Baijayant Panda, Member of Parliament of India, and other speakers included Preeti Saran, Secretary, (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and Shankar Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary, Nepal. Opening the Panel Discussion Bhaijant Panda noted that BIMSTEC serves as a bridge between SAARC & ASEAN nations. The growth rate of the BIMSTEC nations is 6% and these nations constitute 2.6% of global trade. In his opening remarks Minister Vasantha Senanayake stated

that the Bay of Bengal region is the least integrated regions in the world and that BIMSTEC has the potential to pool its strengths from both South and Southeast Asia. He further said that as much as we have become competitive in the Asian Century, we need physical connectivity, institutional connectivity, information connectivity and trade and investment facilitators to integrate each group in the bay of Bengal region. He stressed that there are both security and non-security threats in the region has to be addressed through a strategic framework. India can play a vital role to succeed in this task by spearheading its role to take BIMSTEC forward. Freedom of navigation & rule based order is in the long term interest of the region. This can facilitate the stability and security cooperation between BIMSTEC and with IORA & IMO.

Meeting with Mr. K.J.Alphons, Minister of Tourism.

The High Commissioner had a meeting with Sri K.J. Alphons State Minister of Tourism (independent Charge) on 22nd January at the Ministry of Tourism in New Delhi. High Commissioner spoke of the tourism sector in Sri Lanka, and mentioned that at present India sends the highest number of tourists to Sri Lanka. However, it was noted that there is a vast potential to increase the number given the large market and the interest of the Indian tourists to visit Sri Lanka. As regards Sri Lankan tourists the High Commissioner mentioned that around two hundred thousand Sri Lankans visit India for pilgrimage specially to venerate at the sites on the Buddhist circuit. The importance of developing the facilities and infrastructure was highlighted. Minister Alphons suggested that both sides should work together to launch a programme to promote tourism in both countries as a dual destination package. The possibility of adding Sinhala to the emergency helpline was suggested and improving medical services including the Ambulance Service in the Buddhist Circuit will be looked at. This year at the South Asia Travel and Tourism Expo (SATTE) it was noted that 52 travel and tour operators from Sri Lanka participated which was the highest number compared to previous years.

MOU signed and implementation of E office system and UMANG App video conferencing



During the recent visit by Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, implementation of Umang App was discussed with counterparts about the possibility of using the same system in Sri Lanka. A Video Conference between Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology of India and Mr. Wasantha Deshapriya, Secretary, Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure, along with a Technical team of Sri Lanka was held and during the video conference the need to extend cooperation in the IT sector with Sri Lanka was discussed. A delegation from India also visited Sri Lanka with the Minister of Law and Justice & Electronics & IT of India and inaugurated a pilot project on e-Office in Sri Lanka under the MoU on the ICT Sector to launch a National Knowledge Network (NKN) connectivity to Sri Lanka.

Special Lecture delivered by the Executive Director of the LKIIRS



A special lecture on the "Role of Sri Lanka in South Asia and Beyond: Emerging new Contours" was delivered by Dr. Dinusha Panditaratne, Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of Sri Lanka on 19 January 2018 at the Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The special lecture was organized by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in New Delhi. Dr. Panditharatne reflected on four emerging contours and Sri Lanka's role in South Asia and beyond. She identified contours as; Sri Lanka in the Centre of the Indian Ocean gaining a south asian geographic identity, focusing more on economic diplomacy, strategically follow a non-aligned policy, but cautious and actively engaging with regional powers and while adhering to the regional and international norms.

Fifth India - Sri Lanka Annual Defence Dialogue



The fifth India-Sri Lanka Defence Dialogue was held in New Delhi, India, on the 09th (January 2018). The Sri Lankan delegation was led by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Mr. Kapila Waidyaratne PC and included the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake, and officials from the Defence and from the three armed forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ten member delegation on the Indian side was led by the Indian Defence Secretary, Shri Sanjay Mitra. The annual India-Sri Lanka Defence Dialogue reviews a range of areas within the defence cooperation field.

A Dollar Credit Line of USD 45.27 million from the Government of India for financing the Rehabilitation of Kankesanthuri Harbor

The Government of Sri Lanka signed a Line of Credit amounting to USD 45.27 million for financing the Rehabilitation of KKS Harbor on 10th January 2018. This project will be implemented by the Sri Lanka Port Authority under the supervision of the Ministry of Ports and Shipping. Under this project the Rehabilitation of Breakwater and Additional pier/s for commercial Cargo handling and infrastructure facilities will be developed. The proposed credit line will be provided by the Government of India through Export Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank). During the last few years Indian foreign direct investment in Sri Lanka has expanded exponentially. Presently, Indian development assistance mainly focuses on improvement of economic infrastructural facilities, livelihood development, education, healthcare, capacity building and economic renewal of Sri Lanka. Previously, both governments linked a Line of Credit (LOC) of USD 318 million for the development of the railway sector in Sri Lanka in June 2017.

Fifteen Sri Lankan participants undertake training on Skills Development of Trainers for self-help groups for rural poor

Fifteen participants from Sri Lanka attended the International Training Programme at the Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow from 08th to 11th January 2018. The training programme was on Skills Development of Trainers in the area of promotion and financing of self-help groups and for financial assistance of rural poor.

Sri Lanka Dance Team 'Thurya' at the 8th International Dance Festival

Sri Lankan 'Thurya' Women's' drum and dance ensemble from Sri Lanka performed at the 8th international Dance Festival organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations New Delhi on 13th January 2018. Eight

countries, South Africa, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Germany participated at the festival.

Sri Lanka Tourism at the SATTE 2018

Sri Lanka was one of the Partner Nations to the 25th South Asia Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE), South Asia's leading travel trade show held in New Delhi from 31st January to 02nd February 2018. This event is India's biggest and South Asia's largest Travel and Tourism extravaganza. The Sri Lanka Pavilion at the Exhibition was inaugurated by High Commissioner of Sri Lanka together with the Managing Director of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Manager Sri Lankan Airlines in New Delhi. This year, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and UAE were country partners of the SATTE. Fifty two Sri Lankan companies participated in the SATTE 2018 this year. The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and Sri Lankan Airlines, Aitken Spence Travel Ltd., Hilton Colombo, Jetwing Travels Pvt. Ltd. Riu Hotels & Resorts, Tangerine Tours (Pvt) Ltd., NKAR Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd., Cinnamon Resorts Sri Lanka, Pegasus Hotels of Ceylon PLC, Amaya resorts and Spas and Hayleys Tours, were among the companies that participated in the Exhibition.

Sri Lanka has special place in Indians' hearts'



India's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu said at a largely attended function in India House to mark India's Republic Day that Sri Lanka has a "special place" in the hearts of Indians and congratulated the Government of Sri Lanka on the completion of three

years in office. High Commissioner Sandhu recalled the exceptionally high level of bilateral visits, including the landmark visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Sri Lanka in May 2017 and enumerated the many landmarks in bilateral relations witnessed over the last year.

Former Indian Foreign Secretary reads her work at the Fairway Galle Literary festival



A familiar figure in Sri Lanka, former High Commissioner Nirupama Menon Rao, who is also a former Foreign Secretary of India participated at the Galle Literary festival. She spoke of her new book on Sino-Indian relations, entitled “The Politics of History: India and China, 1949 to 1962”.

Visit to Sri Lanka by the Union Minister for Law and Justice and Electronics and IT Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad to Sri Lanka



The Union Minister for Law and Justice and Electronics and IT Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad was on an official visit to Sri Lanka from 14-16 January 2018. On the first day of his visit, he inaugurated the gigabit connectivity between the National Knowledge Network of India and LEARN network of Sri Lanka. This dedicated high speed internet connectivity will boost the collaboration among the academic institutions of India and Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Minister for Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructure, Harin Fernando was present on this occasion. During the visit both countries signed a MoU for enhancing cooperation between India and Sri Lanka in the IT sector, cyber security and e-Governance. On this occasion, the Minister also inaugurated the use of e-Office software developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC) by the government of Sri Lanka. Later Minister Prasad called on the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister. He shared the success of UMANG app launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently in India in the presence of Sri Lankan Prime Minister Wickremesinghe a few months ago during the inaugural ceremony of Global Conference on Cyber Space in New Delhi. Minister Prasad briefed the Sri Lankan Prime Minister about the success of BPOs in small towns of India under the India BPO Promotion Scheme and North East BPO Promotion Scheme.

The Lakshman Kadirgamar Memorial Lecture 2017 was delivered by the visiting Indian Minister, Hon. Ravi Shankar Prasad



The Lakshman Kadirgamar Memorial Lecture 2017 was held at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Colombo on January 15. The lecture was delivered by Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Law and Justice and Electronics and IT, Government of India on the theme 'The Evolution of India's Constitutional and Democratic Polity'. Minister Prasad recognized the judiciary as an important institution which contributes to the evolution of the Indian Constitutional and political journey. Judiciary plays a pivotal role in upholding the fundamental rights of the common citizens. Late Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was remembered by Tilak Marapana, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute as a true gentleman whose intellect and qualities made him a respected and recognized individual across the world. Ms. Sugandi Kadirgamar spoke of Minister Kadirgamar's firm belief of democracy and resolving differences by way of constitutional reform, and referred to India as the greatest democracy in the world. As much as the theme of the lecture was in remembrance of his opinions and beliefs, there was much from it that the polity of Sri Lanka can learn.

Indian Cultural event held in Colombo to commemorate India @70

The Indian cultural centre in Colombo celebrated freedom at 70 together with a mega cultural event organised by the HC of India, Colombo with the performance by Bollywood melody queen and violin wizard Kavitha Krishnamoorthy and L Subramaniam.

Suwa Seriya Free Emergency Ambulance Service implemented

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe launched an island wide expansion of the free 1990 Suwa Seriya pre-hospital care ambulance services on 3rd January 2018. According to the government news portal the free emergency ambulance service implemented in the Western and Southern provinces in the first stage will be expanded to other seven provinces as well. A

Memorandum of Understanding to expand the service was signed by Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Sri Lankan Deputy Minister for National Policies and Economic Planning Harsha De Silva in Colombo at the Temple Trees. The service is expanded with a USD 15.2 million grant from India and also another USD 4 million grant for the construction of a state of the art command control and training and research facility, the Prime Minister said. Since the inception, the "1990 Suvaseriya" Ambulance Service has provided emergency service to 57,159 people and 51,795 of them have been hospitalized. Of these, 13% were patients suffering from a heart attack and 18% were those injured due to accidents.



National Policies and Economic Affairs Deputy Minister Dr. Harsha De Silva and Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu exchange the agreement signed yesterday as Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Health Minister Dr. Rajitha Weeraratne and Law and Order Minister Sugata Hatzigeorgidis look on - Pic by Upul Abayasekara

Shangri-la New Delhi grab the crab week

A pop-up menu by famed Lankan chef Dharshan Munidasa has Delhiites queuing up for reservations and slots at Shangri-La from 16th to 21st January 2018. Chef Dharshan Munidasa, of the seafood fame, played magician with two star ingredients — tuna and crab. Chef Dharshan's hands-on involvement and his meticulous attention to detail has ensured the consistently high standards of his restaurants. "My belief is if you believe in something, you need to serve it. You will be nowhere if you keep changing the menu to accommodate everyone," says chef Dharshan. Touted as the father of Sri Lankan fine dining scene, Munidasa has been featured on the prestigious Asia's Top 50 list on two of his Colombo restaurants, Nihonbashi and Ministry of Crab.

Sri Lanka's Kandyan dancers meet Nrityagram's Odissi ensemble for a rhythmic dialogue

Samhara, the dance collaboration between Bangalore's Nrityagram and Chitrasena, a Sri Lankan dance company, resulted in a ballet that was a unique rhythmic dialogue between the graceful Odissi and Sri Lanka's traditional dance form, Kandyan. The production began with Arpan, which was both a prayer to invoke the Mother Goddess and an offering to the five elements. set to moving music by Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi, played live at the venue. The dancers had the audience captivated with their performance that seemed to melt into each other, effortlessly.

Sri Lankan artist Senaka Senanayake's " Diminishing Rainforests" exhibited



Over the years, Sri Lankan artist Senaka Senanayake's works have travelled the world over — a 1965 work hangs at The White House, another is at the UN conference hall. In India, the exhibition was at Saffronart at the Claridges, from January 12 to 24. When he was 10 years old, Senaka Senanayake held his first exhibition at New York's Asia Society Gallery. While he remembers dressing the walls with his works "inspired by life of the people of Sri Lanka", little did he know that he would turn his passion for art into his profession.

IndiGo commences Colombo operations



IndiGo, India's largest and fastest growing carrier on 20th January 2018 commenced its operations in Colombo, with the Chennai – Colombo Sector. This flight is the 8th international and 49th overall destination on IndiGo's ever growing network.

Two Sri Lankan Ayurveda (Unani) physicians begin DPhil at the National Institute of Unani Medicine, Bangalore

Two Sri Lankan doctors commenced MD/MS postgraduate studies in Unani medicine at the National Institute of Unani Medicine, Kottigepalya, Magadi Main Road, Bangalore which is affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. Dr. Seyed Mohamed Noorul Ameen from Department of Ayurveda of Sri Lanka and the National Ayurvedic Teaching Hospital commenced studies in the Department of Tahaffuzi was Samaji Tib (Preventive and Social Medicine) 'Prevalence of smoking in adolescents in schools'. Dr. Zainab Zubair, at the Department of Ayurveda commenced postgraduate studies at the Department of Amraze Niswan Wa Ilmul Qabalat (Gynaecology and Obstetrics) on 'Effect of a herbal drugs in Poly Cystic Ovarian Disease'.