

The India - Sri Lanka Foundation was established by a Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of India and Sri Lanka in 1998 in order to foster India - Sri Lanka relations through the enhancement of economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation and to promote greater understanding between the peoples of the two countries. The Foundation is financed through revenues (interest earned) from a Trust Fund set up with grants made available by the two Governments.

Since its inception in 1998, the India-Sri Lanka Foundation has implemented 352 projects amounting approximately to SLR. 65 million from both countries ranging from exchange programs of academia/scholars, research projects, participation in seminars/workshops, publications of works, exhibitions, training programs and travel assistance for participation in art & cultural events, etc.

Some of the events supported by the Foundation in the recent past include the visit of Ambassador Shyam Saran for the launch of the Public Lecture series of the Foundation, participation of two Indian authors in the Galle Literary Festival 2012, performances of Maya Krishna Rao, renowned Kathakali Dancer and Solo performing artist in Colombo and Jaffna, participation of differently abled children from India accompanied by Ms. Alpana Nayak, famous Odissi Dancer in the 'Very Special Arts Theatre Festival' held at Moratuwa, restaging of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's dance drama 'Shaap Mochan' in many parts of Sri Lanka, organisation of "A Retrospective of Best of South Asia" in Colombo by Film South Asia, Nepal in association with Young Asia Television, inter-university debate involving the University of Colombo and the University of Delhi, etc.

The 28th session of the Board of Directors of the India Sri Lanka Foundation (ISLF) was held in Colombo on the 28th February, 2012. The session was Co-Chaired by the High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka H. E. Ashok K. Kantha and the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India H.E. Prasad Kariyawasam. Board members of the Foundation, Ambassador M. Rasgotra, Prof. P. V. Indiresan, Mr. Sunimal Fernando and Mr. Thirukumar Nadesan were also present.

At this session, 27 project proposals were approved for full or partial funding by the Board of Directors in the field of Education, Culture and Science and Technology. These include, inter-alia:

- Organization of workshops and performances in Jaffna by renowned Carnatic Vocalist T.M. Krishna in association with the Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts and coinciding with the Nallur Festival (his performances at Jaffna, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi in October 2011 were

very well received);

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Organization of a workshop on conservation techniques at the National Museum, Sri Lanka, by experts from National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (NLRC), India;

- Production of a Dance Drama 'Mekala';
- Organization of workshops on creative arts in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka for differently abled children in partnership with Tamana;
- Screening of documentaries on India dubbed in Sinhala and Tamil on Rupavahini channel;
- Organization of a theatre workshop with the support of the National School of Drama, Delhi;
- Support to 'Samhara' – a fusion of Odissi and Kandyan dance forms by the Chitrasena Dance Company and the Nirtyagram Dance Ensemble, Bangalore; and
- Organization of a visit of an archeological expert from India to Sri Lanka.

Under the regular activities of the Foundation, the Board approved educational tour of 20 students from Northern Province, 12 students from Sabaragamuva, Central and Wayamba Province and 7 students from Zahira College, Colombo to India. Prof. Sudharshan Seneviratne would also deliver lectures in India under the auspices of the Annual Public Lecture Series of the ISLF. The inter-university debate would be carried out with the participation of the University of Ruhuna and the University of Mysore. 1200 educational kits will be distributed among deserving students in the Northern Province.

The Board also approved to explore the possibility of organizing exchange of visits of journalists between the two countries.

India-Sri Lanka Foundation has been successful in implementing a large number of projects due to its fast and efficient mechanism of approvals through the regular meetings of the Board of Directors. The India –Sri Lanka Foundation continues to play a catalytic role in supplementing the various initiatives by the Governments of the two countries in strengthening bilateral relationship and people to people contacts.