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High Commissioner's visit to the State of Maharashtra

Meeting with the Principal Secretary Tourism and Cultural Affairs

Chitrangane Wagiswara, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India made a visit to the commercial capital of Mumbai from 12 – 14 June 2018. Commencing the visit, High Commissioner met with Mr. Vijay Kumar Gautam, Principal Secretary Tourism and Cultural Affairs, of the Government of Maharashtra and discussed ways in which tourism can be promoted between Sri Lanka and Maharashtra.

Interactive Meeting in Mumbai on Trade and Investment Opportunities in Sri Lanka



An Interactive Meeting on Trade and Investment Opportunities in Sri Lanka was organised and coordinated by the Consul General, Chamari Rodrigo in association with (MVIRDC) World Trade Centre Mumbai and All India Association of Industries (AIAI) at WTC Mumbai. In her keynote address the High Commissioner said that time is opportune to explore and focus on ways and means of elevating our bilateral economic relations to a higher level, especially with the State of Maharashtra. Sri Lanka is taking number of measures to strengthen investment milieu; The Board of Investment is moving beyond facilitation to attach higher priority to attract investments". High Commissioner urged Indian companies to take advantage of the Government of Sri Lanka's Vision 2025 programme, which will present ample opportunities and position the country as an export-oriented economic hub at the centre of the Indian Ocean. Under the Vision 2025 agenda, Government of Sri Lanka aims to raise its per capita income to USD 5,000 per year, create one million new jobs, and enhance FDI to USD 5 billion and double exports to USD 20 billion per year. The Consul General made introductory remarks while Upekka Samarathunga, Minister (Commercial) elaborated on the business and investment opportunities, and existing potential for business in Sri Lanka.

On 14 June 2018, High Commissioner called on Dr. Lalit Kanodia, President of Indian Merchant Chamber (IMC). Subsequent to the meeting, a Round Table Business Meeting was held at the IMC, and the High Commissioner said "India is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner with total trade turnover amounting to USD five billion and ranked first in terms of the sources of import and ranked number three in terms of export.

High Commissioner also met with Mr. D. K. Jain, Chief Secretary of the State of Maharashtra. A networking session with Indian businessmen was also organised by the Consul General of Sri Lanka in Mumbai, at the Consulate Office. The Consul General and the High Commissioner emphasized the need to explore and focus on elevating India Sri Lanka bilateral economic and trade relations to a higher level specifically in the State of Maharashtra.

Visit to the South Indian State of Thiruvananthapuram

Revival of the Spice Route Initiative in South Asia



During the visit of the High Commissioner to South India from 15th – 18th June, she participated at the event on the theme “Revival of the Spice Route Initiative” organised by the State Government of Kerala in association with the Netherlands Embassy. This was a continuation of a program initiated in 2016 under the cooperation agreement between the Government of Kerala and the UNESCO. The program from 14th – 15th June in Kochi mainly focused on promoting intercultural dialogue through the revival of the ancient Spice Route, and to identify how each country can be a part of this revival and collaborate with the State Government of Kerala. The event was attended by some of the Spice Route member countries, including Sri Lanka, and was inaugurated by the Minister for Tourism of the State Government of Kerala Shri Kadakampally Surendran. Speaking at the event, Sri Lanka’s High Commissioner to India Chitranganee Wagiswara expounded on the history of the spice industry of Sri Lanka and how it attracted many Western nations due to the variety of rich spices in the island.

High Commissioner’s visit to the Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industry



The Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Indo Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the High Range Development Society of India organised a business interactive session at the Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 16 June. The main objective of the session was to share information on Sri Lanka’s economic and business developments as well as to explore opportunities for expanding trade and investment, specifically between southern states of India and Sri Lanka. The President of the Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Raghuchandran Nair, in his welcome remarks highlighted the long standing trade and economic relations between Sri Lanka and India, and reiterated the importance of exploring business potential in Sri Lanka under the Indo Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement. He stated that Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be signing a MOU with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka to further strengthen trade and investment collaboration between the members of the two Chambers. Delivering the keynote address at the Business Interactive Session, the High Commissioner highlighted the recent economic developments in the country and outlined the initiatives of the Government of Sri Lanka to create an economy, firmly based on foreign and domestic private investment. High Commissioner Wagiswara pointed out that Sri Lanka is one of the competitive business centres in the South Asian Region and there are compelling reasons for the investors from the Southern States of India to locate their business entities in Sri Lanka. She invited a delegation from Trivandrum to participate in the Sri Lanka Investment and Business Conclave to be held from 19-21 June in Colombo to explore investment opportunities in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi organized a series of Road shows in India to promote the Sri Lanka Business and Investment Conclave which was held in Colombo from 19 to 21 June 2018, and over 29

delegates from India were registered to attend the business conclave. The Minister Commercial, Upekka Samarathunga of the Sri Lanka High Commission made a power point presentation on the incentives offered to the interested Businessmen.

Meeting with the Governor of Trivandrum

The High Commissioner called on Kerala Governor P Sathasivam at the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvanthapuram on 16th June. The High Commissioner held discussions on improving cooperation between Sri Lanka and Kerala in tourism and higher education sectors. The High Commissioner was accompanied by the Hony. Consul for Sri Lanka in Trivandrum, Mr. Joseph Edattala.

Tourism sector in Sri Lanka is growing exponentially

During the visit to Trivandrum the High Commissioner in an exclusive interview to the Mathrubhumi News, said, that after the war-torn years, the tourism sector in Sri Lanka is growing exponentially. Many Indian tourists are flocking to the island nation. Geographical proximity which makes for convenient travel, the full interview can be accessed from;

<http://english.mathrubhumi.com/features/infrastructure/discussions-with-india-enter-final-phase-says-sri-lanka-high-commissioner-tourism-in-kerala-and-sri-lanka-1.2897174>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRBLAiZVs6g>

International Yoga Day

The Sri Lanka High Commission Officials participated in the event organized by the External Affairs Ministry to celebrate the International Yoga Day Which was Presided by the State Minister of External Affairs V K Singh.

The International Day of Yoga was also celebrated in Sri Lanka, organised by the Indian High Commission in Colombo on 21st June. Many Yoga Sessions were conducted in an out of Colombo. The Main Session of the 4th International Yoga Day was conducted on 23rd June 2018 at the Independence Square in Colombo which was inaugurated by the President Maithripala Sirisena. The Hindu Ladies College in Colombo performed yoga while out of Colombo Debaraweva National School, Tissamaharama in deep South of Sri Lanka conducted a session of Yoga with the assistance of Euphonic Yoga Team. In the District Secretariat Office in Hambantota, the Office staff, the staff of the Mattala International Airport in Hambantota, participated at the Yoga Sessions. The Main event at Matara Beach Park was attended by children from 4 schools joined the

celebrations along with Mr. Manoj Sirisena, Minister of Sports, Culture & Youth Affairs, Southern Prov. Govt. and Mr. Senaka P, Municipal Commissioner of Matara. At the main event in Galle in the iconic Galle Fort and government officials and Yoga enthusiasts joined the celebrations.

World Environment Day celebrated in Delhi

This year, India being the global host of the World Environment Day, which is a UN Environment-led global initiative, the largest celebration of its kind was held country-wide in India. The theme of the celebration was "Beat Plastic Pollution", with nations pledging to combat the pollution caused by single-use plastics. Dia Mirza, a famous Bollywood actress, being the UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, for India took the centre stage with Erik Solheim, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for celebration of World Environment Day in Delhi at the Constitution Club of India. The High Commission of Sri Lanka in India was associated with the event together with other eminent personalities and diplomats from Bhutan, Taiwan, Syria, China, Myanmar, Iran and Zambia.

Kolkata cyclist to pedal from Ladakh to Sri Lanka

A mountaineer and trekker from Kolkata, enthralled by his passion has embarked on a mega cycling expedition of 5,500km - from Nubra Valley near Ladakh to Kanyakumari and onward to Sri Lanka. Three months ago, he completed a 3,000km solo cycling journey from Gangotri in Uttarakhand to Kuakata in Bangladesh, traversing the entire length of the Ganga as it meandered through five states before entering Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka Army Dance Troupe to adopt Kathak dance style



Imbibing the sensuousness of the kathak dancing style from India, the Sri Lankan army dance troupe, made up of men and women soldiers, performed an extensive repertoire, of the North Indian classical dance form

"Kathak" at the Kaliashwaram Hindu temple in Maradana in Central Colombo. These 26 dancers were trained by Major Veronica Dassanayake, herself an acclaimed Kathak dancer who had studied at the Bhatkhande Music and Dance University in Lucknow, the birthplace of Kathak. As an initiative by the Commander of the Army, Gen. Senanayake proposed this idea of including Kathak in the repertoire of the army dance troupe, and recruited Veronica Dassanayake to train the Army Troupe. Maj.Gen. Shavendra Silva, Adjutant General, and Brigadier Fariz Yousaf, Director, Directorate of Army Band and Drama Art Performances, were involved in bringing the idea to fruition.

India-Sri Lanka Youth Rugby Friendship Match in Odisha between JICA Volunteer led Teams

A two day Youth Rugby Friendship Match was held from 16th – 17th June at the cricket stadium of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Odisha, organised by the India Rugby-Football Union (IRFU) together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and The Kids Sports Exchange (TKSE), supported by Japan Rugby Football Union (JRFU) and Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union (SLRFU). The teams were coached by the JICA Volunteers, widely known as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in India and Sri Lanka. There was a presentation session by JOCV on their activities, together with a workshop by the representatives of Rugby Football Unions of India, Sri Lanka, Japan, and JICA.

Manipal Global Education to set up a 135-acre university in Sri Lanka

Manipal Global Education Services (MaGE), a unit of the Manipal Group, is expected to set up a 135-acre university in Sri Lanka. The proposed campus will be located in Kalutara, and would be completed in three years and the courses are expected to begin by the end of this year on its temporary campus in Colombo, said Ravi Panchanadan, Chief Executive officer of MaGE. MaGE had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sri Lankan government one and a half years ago, Panchanadan said. "The Sri Lankan government in its vision 2025 envisages itself to be a hub for digital and technology industries. It has also expressed its desire to be a centre for international students," he said. Manipal Global Education Services is already running varsities in Nepal, Malaysia, Dubai and Antigua. Annually, 500 international students graduate from the medicine courses and around 800 graduate from the non-medicine courses are offered by MaGE at its different universities. Manipal Group set up its first global college in 1994 in

Nepal; the Manipal College of Medical Sciences in Pokhara. Later in 1997, the Melaka Manipal Medical College was set up as the first Indo-Malaysian joint venture in private medical education. It later established the GlobalNxt University in Malaysia which delivers online graduate programmes.

High Commissioner's Interview with the Uday India Magazine

In an exclusive interview with the Uday India Magazine High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara said that "Sri Lanka will never allow Hambantota to be used for any military purposes". "Sri Lanka strongly supports regional cooperation and integration and wish to see SAARC member states working together for our common prosperity. Full interview can be accessed from:

<http://udayindia.in/2018/05/30/sri-lanka-will-never-allow-hambantota-for-any-military-purposes/>

Indian seafood producer willing to invest in Lanka's aquaculture sector

An Indian seafood producer Coastal Corporation Limited (India) has proposed to invest in Sri Lanka's aquaculture sector to boost cultivation of aquatic plants that are needed for the high demand in the shrimp farming sector.

Coastal Corp is one of the leading producers and exporters of high-quality aquaculture seafood products across the globe. According to Colombo Page, the company's representative, D Titus Fernando said they are willing to invest USD 5 million in the cultivation of aquatic plants. The deal was proposed when Fernando met with the State Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, Dilip Wedaarachchi. The company is also ready to expand mud crab aquaculture.

Second phase of the emergency ambulance service in Sri Lanka

The Indian Government made a grant of \$22.8 million for running free emergency ambulance service in Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka thanked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the grant. India had given a grant of \$7.6 million in the first phase in 2016 and in the second installment, \$15.2 million in early 2018. The idea of the free ambulance services was mooted during the visit of Prime Minister Modi in 2015. Subsequently, the Sri Lanka's State Minister of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Harsha de Silva had formally requested for this facility which the Prime Minister Modi agreed to and announced the grant during his visit to Sri Lanka .

Indo-Sri Lanka defence ties takes a religious slant



On 24th June 2018, a group of 160 military personnel and their families departed for Bodh Gaya on a chartered flight arranged by the Indian government. The trip was organised following Sri Lankan Army Commander Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake's request to the Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat, who was recently in Sri Lanka on a goodwill visit. The three day-visit, was initiated under the India-Sri Lanka Exchange Programme, in cooperation with the High Commission of India in Colombo. The military staff and their families travelled by a specially arranged Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft. As the key religious site for the Buddhists, the group paid homage at the Mahabodhi Temple. The visit is yet another manifestation of the shared Buddhist heritage of India and Sri Lanka.