

Integrated Country Strategy

For Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions in India

2021/2023



saddhā

sīla

cāga

pañña

Contents

Letter to His Excellency the President by the High Commissioner-designate of Sri Lanka to India	iii
Introduction	iv
Mission Strategic Framework	v-viii
Mission Goals and Objectives; Justification and Key Tasks to be Implemented	ix-xxvii

Note on the cover illustration:

The cover of this document features an illustration of the Girihandu Seya stupa situated in the Eastern coastal village of Thiriyaya in the Trincomalee District of Sri Lanka. Girihandu Seya is believed to be the world's first Buddhist stupa, built by seafaring Indian merchant-brothers Tapassu and Bhalluka, enshrining the sacred hair relics of the Buddha. It is believed that the Buddha gave his hair relics to the two merchants, who were his first lay disciples, and who offered him alms on the fiftieth day after his enlightenment. Chronicles state that soon after, in one of their trade voyages, the two brothers brought the sacred hair relics to Sri Lanka and built the stupa enshrining them. The original stupa was built during the lifetime of the Buddha. The present structure or the ruins of the 'Vatadage' (circular shrine house) consisting of a small stupa encircled by two concentric circles of stone pillars and a retaining wall of stone slabs, is believed to have evolved with time. The stupa, thus, predates the advent of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and stands as an epitome of one of the earliest recorded interactions between Sri Lanka and India.

His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa
President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Presidential Secretariat
Colombo-01

Your Excellency,

I am honoured by the confidence and trust you have placed in me by designating me as your High Commissioner to India, the cornerstone of our foreign policy, especially at a time when geopolitical developments globally and in this region in particular are becoming increasingly complex and challenging.

Prior to formally taking office, I have developed a proposed road map in the form of an integrated country strategy for the Sri Lankan diplomatic missions in India for the period 2021-2023, which I am pleased to present to you. Under my overall guidance and oversight, Niluka Kadurugamuwa, Chargé d' Affaires a.i. and convenor of the country team, led this initiative. His introduction to the strategy document outlines the approach that was taken to put the country strategy together. I would like to thank him for the hard work and dedication he has put into this project. I would like to also thank the other country team members and the group of experts who provided invaluable advice and inputs. However, any omissions or oversights in this document are solely my own.

In my view, Buddhism is the most precious gift that India has bestowed upon our country. The fact that India's greatest emperor, the Buddhist ruler Dharmashoka, saw fit to send both his son and daughter on separate occasions to our country as emissaries to introduce and spread the teachings of the Blessed One, epitomises the strong and unbreakable civilisational bonds that exist between our two nations. In addition, our two countries are bound by circumstances of geography, economics, culture, history, and just as importantly, our democratic values. Against this backdrop, any setbacks to our relationship however intractable they may appear to be at any given point in time, can only be temporary.

In this context, when developing an overarching vision for an integrated country strategy for India, the teachings of the Buddha become especially relevant. The Pali cannon refers to '*satara sampradha*' which comprises 1) *saddhā*, 2) *sīla*, 3) *cāga*, and 4) *paññā*. Interpreted in a modern context, the Buddhist concept of '*satara sampradha*' can be interpreted to mean 'the four accomplishments' of which '*saddhā*,' can be understood as 'having faith or trust'; '*sīla*,' to mean 'virtuous behaviour, proper conduct'; '*cāga*,' 'forsaking, sacrificing'; and '*paññā*,' 'full realisation and thorough understanding'. It is my belief that these principles should underpin the foundations of our diplomacy as well as apply more generally in the conduct of our international relations. This is even more pertinent in building trust and confidence between India and Sri Lanka.

Thank you again, Your Excellency, for providing me with this opportunity to be of service to our nation.

Respectfully,

Milinda Moragoda

July 2021

Introduction

This Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) for Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions in India 2021/2023, which was drafted under the guidance and instructions of the High Commissioner-designate of Sri Lanka to India H.E. Mr. Milinda Moragoda, is envisaged as a road map for the next two years. The ICS aims to assist the three Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions in India in approaching and achieving goals and objectives stipulated herein, as one Country Team.

The concept of a 'Country Team', where officers of all three Diplomatic Missions meet regularly as one team to plan work and review progress of the work of the Missions, was introduced by the High Commissioner-designate in order to strengthen coordination among the three Missions to achieve Sri Lanka's foreign policy objective vis-à-vis India, and to deliver as one.

The overarching goal of the Diplomatic Representations of Sri Lanka in India should be to contribute towards continuously maintaining the momentum of the existing partnership between the two countries, and to elevate that partnership to the level of a special relationship. While the said over-arching goal is being pursued, it is equally necessary to deepen people-to-people contacts between the two countries. This strategic framework and the Mission Goals & Objectives have factored in these two key aspects.

The ICS contains two parts. Part I, which is the strategic framework, outlines seven Goals, and several objectives under each Goal. In Part II, the Goals and Objectives are further described and justified, and key tasks to achieve their implementation have also been proposed.

The drafting of the ICS saw a process of wide consultations. In preparation of the zero draft of the document, initial inputs were given by the High Commissioner-designate himself and the members of the Country Team, i.e., diplomatic officers of the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi, the Deputy High Commission in Chennai and the Consulate General in Mumbai. The zero draft was further developed with comments and suggestions by the members of the Country Team themselves. Finally, it was shared with an eminent panel consisting of former and serving senior Sri Lanka Foreign Service officers, former High Commissioners of Sri Lanka to India and academics. Their views and suggestions were also taken on board, before finalizing the document.

While this document is expected to provide an indicative framework for the work of the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions in India for the next two years, it should be seen as an evolving framework that could be further fine-tuned and developed in the implementing phase.

I avail myself of this opportunity to thank H.E. Mr. Milinda Moragoda, High Commissioner-designate, for his steadfast guidance in preparing this document and fellow Country Team members for their inputs and cooperation. I would like to especially thank the eminent panel for their invaluable inputs, and for devoting time to comment on the draft, despite their busy schedules.

Niluka Kadurugamuwa
Deputy High Commissioner
High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi
Convener of the India Country Team

July 2021

**Integrated Country Strategy
for Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions in India - 2021/2023**

Part- I

Mission Strategic Framework

Sri Lanka and India enjoy a close bilateral relationship spanning millennia, and across a wide spectrum of areas. Over thousands of years, this relationship has evolved into a partnership in which the strategic interests of both countries play a vital role. Even with the inherently asymmetric nature and despite special and differential treatment regimes, there is no lack of strategic content in the relationship between Sri Lanka and India.

The intervention in the conflict in Sri Lanka where India lost about 1300 soldiers, India's commitment of billions of dollars as development assistance and grant assistance to Sri Lanka, the Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement, cooperation extended through training of Sri Lankan military personnel, undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships to Sri Lankan students, as well as Joint Statements issued on the occasions of state visits of the leaders of the two countries, are but a few examples that amply demonstrate the breadth and depth of the strategic partnership enjoyed by the two countries. India is also among the top five foreign investors in Sri Lanka.

In recent years, the Indo-Sri Lanka bilateral relationship has been increasingly dominated by a transactional approach. This is a consequence of the changes in the geo-political equilibrium in the region, that have resulted in a growing trust deficit.

Although this development might, at times, be perceived as a setback, this transactional aspect can be channelled towards building confidence and, utilized as a means to bridge the trust deficit. If viewed in this way, this process could help reset this vital bilateral relationship and lay the foundation for an even stronger and enduring partnership between the two countries.

Further, as democracies, Sri Lanka and India have much in common. By enacting universal suffrage in 1931, Sri Lanka is Asia's oldest democracy. India adopted universal franchise in 1950 and is the world's largest democracy. Being both essentially multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural countries, Sri Lanka and India have much in common. The sharing of their similar experiences is an ongoing process.

Given this backdrop, the overarching goal of the Diplomatic Representations of Sri Lanka in India should be to contribute to the process of continuously maintaining the momentum of the existing partnership, by creating multi-faceted platforms for strategic level dialogue and cooperation, with the ultimate objective being the elevation of the partnership to a special relationship; one marked by inter-dependence, mutual respect and affection.

While this overarching goal is being pursued, it is equally necessary to deepen people-to-people contacts between the two countries. It is these two key aspects that form the crux of this strategic framework, and, the Mission Goals & Objectives.

While certain key tasks for implementation have been identified under each Mission Objective, further specific key performance indicators will be developed, as the Strategy is implemented.

Mission Goal 1: Elevate the existing close bilateral relationship to a strategic level through increased interactions at political level.

Mission Objective 1.1: Strengthen the bilateral relationship through regular exchange of high-level political visits between the two countries and enhance cooperation with India at multilateral and regional level.

Mission Objective 1.2: Enhance cooperation at parliamentary level; boost parliamentary diplomacy.

Mission Objective 1.3: Expand Sri Lanka's footprint at state level and promote greater interactions between Sri Lanka and the states of the Indian Union considered important, from the Sri Lankan perspective. Enhance exchanges at Provincial Council and local government level, following appropriate protocol.

Mission Objective 1.4: Resolve the long-drawn issue of externally displaced persons.

Mission Objective 1.5: Convene the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission as well as other bilateral Joint committees on various sectors on a regular basis with a view to streamlining their work. Look at new areas of cooperation, including through the India-Sri Lanka Foundation, Kalinga Lanka Foundation etc.

Mission Goal 2: Bolster foreign investments as well as earnings from exports. Achieve significant export growth and increase foreign exchange earnings, with the ultimate objective of increasing productivity, employment generation and international competitiveness to uplift the living standards of the people in Sri Lanka, with a view to achieving the macro-economic targets set out for the period 2020- 2025, in the Government Policy framework document, "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour".

Mission Objective 2.1: Increase Indian investments in Sri Lanka and facilitate ongoing large-scale economic development and investment-driven projects.

Mission Objective 2.2: Increase exports from Sri Lanka and expand Sri Lanka's market share in India.

Mission Objectives 2.3: Promote outbound travel and tourism from India to Sri Lanka.

Mission Objective 2.4: Promote technology innovation, capacity-building, product development etc. for inclusive economic growth and development in Sri Lanka.

Mission Goal 3: Expand collaboration in the fields of strategic cooperation, defence and Indian Ocean security between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 3.1: Work toward the development of mechanisms that enhance political level strategic cooperation in the fields of defence and security.

Mission Objective 3.2: Facilitate bilateral joint military exercises, study tours, and increased high-level military exchanges.

Mission Objective 3.3: Secure relevant training berths offered by India's Ministry of Defence and establish and maintain contacts with India's paramilitary and police forces, with a view to securing additional training opportunities for their Sri Lankan counterparts.

Mission Objective 3.4: Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of Indo-Lanka defence cooperation, take steps to further strengthen the Office of the Defence Advisor, in the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi.

Mission Goal 4: Further enhance cooperation between Sri Lanka and India, particularly in the fields of culture, education and science & technology, to promote Sri Lanka's interests.

Mission Objective 4.1: Promote Buddhist ties with India.

Mission Objective 4.2: Promote Hindu exchanges between the two countries.

Mission Objective 4.3: Project Sri Lanka's culture, traditional art and heritage in India through cultural exchanges highlighting shared historical connections between the people of the two countries.

Mission Objective 4.4: Promote exchanges of religious leaders, pilgrims and scholars through the Buddhist circuit, the Ramayana, the Murugan and the Shiva Shakthi trails, as well as the Vailankanni trail in South India.

Mission Objective 4.5: Obtain enhanced training and educational opportunities in India for Sri Lankans, including those from the plantation sector, by increasing the number of scholarships from the Government of India (ICCR) and other private universities of repute.

Mission Objective 4.6: Strengthen technological and scientific cooperation between Sri Lanka and India under the framework of the India – Sri Lanka Joint Science & Technology Committee.

Mission Goal 5: Project a more positive image of Sri Lanka in India through public diplomacy initiatives, with a view to reaching out to the people of India and strengthening people to people contacts.

Mission Objective 5.1: Foster networking between scholars, archaeologists, journalists, writers, filmmakers, dance troupes etc. to promote goodwill between the peoples of the two countries.

Mission Objective 5.2: Engage with prominent Indian media, prominent personalities of influential foreign media outlets based in India, opinion and thought leaders and influencers, to generate enhanced awareness with regard to Sri Lanka. Organize media tours to Sri Lanka.

Mission Objective 5.3: Mark the 80th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between Sri Lanka and India, the centenary of the first visit of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore to Sri Lanka and the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, by organizing appropriate activities.

Mission Objective 5.4: Utilize social media platforms effectively to promote Sri Lanka and project a positive image in India.

Mission Goal 6: Enhance connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 6.1: Facilitate the increase of air connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 6.2: Facilitate the increase of sea connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 6.3: Facilitate electrical grid connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 6.4: Facilitate digital connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Goal 7: Promote Sri Lanka's interests in protecting its ocean resources.

Mission Objective 7.1: Engage with Indian authorities (Central government, relevant state governments and other stakeholders) for a mechanism acceptable to all sides for the resolution of fisheries-related issues.

Mission Objective 7.2: Engage with Indian authorities for setting up a training centre for a marine disaster task force.

Mission Objective 7.3: Promote joint research in fisheries as well as in other marine and mineral resources.

Part-II

Mission Goals and Objectives; Justification and Key Tasks to be Implemented

Mission Goal 1: Elevate the existing close bilateral relationship to a strategic level through increased interactions at political level.

Overview:

Sri Lanka and India enjoy a close bilateral relationship spanning millennia across a wide spectrum of areas. As was referred to above, in recent years, as a consequence of the changes in the geo-political equilibrium in the region and a resultant growing trust deficit, a transactional approach has increasingly dominated aspects of the Indo-Lanka bilateral relationship. India and Sri Lanka have sought to collaborate on a series of major economic development projects in Sri Lanka, including the West Container Terminal of the Colombo Port, the Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm, projects of cooperation in the power sector, Indian projects that fall under development cooperation and lines of credit, as well as financial cooperation. While these economic development projects are important to foster relations, there is also a need to transcend this transactional approach.

Given this backdrop, the overarching goal of the Diplomatic Representations of Sri Lanka in India should be to contribute to the process of continuously maintaining the momentum of the existing partnership, including that of its strategic content, and of elevating that partnership to the level of a special relationship.

In order to achieve this overarching goal, Sri Lankan Diplomatic Missions in India must foster political relations at all levels, through constant communication and by building trust. This process has to be carried out at the central government level by the High Commission in New Delhi, and by the Deputy High Commission in Chennai and the Consulate- General in Mumbai at the level of states, under their respective consular jurisdictions under supervision of the High Commissioner in New Delhi.

Mission Objective 1.1: Strengthen the bilateral relationship through regular exchange of high-level political visits between the two countries and enhance cooperation with India at multilateral and regional level:

Exchange of at least one high-level political visit, such as the Head of State/ Head of Government from either side each year, and also at Foreign Ministerial levels both ways, since it is imperative to maintain constant communication and to develop mutual trust at political level with India. Additionally, exchanges between line ministers would also be important. These exchanges need not necessarily be physical but could be by virtual means. Coordination with India in multilateral and regional fora would also be of importance to strengthen the bilateral relations.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Visit by H.E. the President to India.
- (2) Visit by Hon. Prime Minister to India.
- (3) Visit by Hon. Foreign Minister to India.
- (4) Visit by Hon. Prime Minister of India to Sri Lanka.
- (5) Visit by Hon. External Affairs Minister of India to Sri Lanka.
- (6) Exchanges by line ministers of both countries (need not necessarily be physical, but could be by virtual means).

- (7) Facilitate Foreign Ministry level coordination for close cooperation in multilateral and regional fora, such as United Nations platforms, SAARC, BIMSTEC and IORA.

Mission Objective 1.2: Enhance cooperation at parliamentary level; boost parliamentary diplomacy:

In addition to strengthening of relations at the highest political level, it is important to foster relations between influential members of parliament of the two countries, as also connectivity between people's representatives of the two democracies. Exchanges between the Parliament of Sri Lanka and the two Houses of the Indian Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) would be imperative to strengthen this relationship. It is noted that ten years ago, an Indo-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group had been constituted in the Indian Parliament, which, however, did not function as per its desired potential. In this context, the re-constitution of a functional and vibrant Indo-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group in India's Parliament, consisting of influential parliamentarians drawn from across the political spectrum of both Houses, would provide the required impetus for the enhancement of political connectivity between the two countries.

Key Tasks for Implementation:

- (1) Visit by the Hon. Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament to India.
- (2) Visit by the Hon. Speaker of either House of the Indian Parliament to Sri Lanka.
- (3) Reconstitution of the Indo-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Indian Parliament, and of a Sri Lanka-India Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Sri Lankan Parliament.
- (4) Facilitate mutual visits by Members of Parliament.

Mission Objective 1.3: Expand Sri Lanka's footprint at state level and promote greater interactions between Sri Lanka and the states of the Indian Union considered important, from the Sri Lankan perspective. Enhance exchanges at Provincial Council and local government level, following appropriate protocol:

While enhancing political relations at both central government and parliamentary level, it is imperative that the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations in India endeavor to foster relations at state level. Taking into account the present geopolitical scenario, it is important that Sri Lanka takes proactive measures to take Indo-Sri Lankan relations beyond the conventional relations with the Centre, which hitherto had been the norm.

Increasing the footprint of Sri Lanka at state level would be an important measure in this direction. Further, establishing a diplomatic representation of Sri Lanka in the eastern part of India would immensely benefit the realization of Sri Lanka's foreign policy objectives vis-à-vis India.

Measures such as inviting chief ministers of Indian states to visit Sri Lanka, and, promoting exchanges between the states and Sri Lankan political hierarchies which contribute towards enlarging the footprint of Sri Lanka, could be seamlessly facilitated by the Sri Lanka diplomatic representations in India. Further, visits by Provincial Councilors and Local Government Representatives from Sri Lanka to the states following the appropriate protocol are a means to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Establishment of the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Kolkata, which is to be functional from 2022, in conjunction with the centenary of the first visit of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore to Sri Lanka.
- (2) High Commissioner in New Delhi to meet the Chief Ministers of the states, in particular those of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
- (3) Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai to meet the Chief Ministers of the five states and one Union Territory under Deputy High Commission's consular jurisdiction.
- (4) Consul General in Mumbai to meet the Chief Ministers of the three states under Consulate General's consular jurisdiction.
- (5) Inviting these Chief Ministers to visit Sri Lanka and to arrange visits of Sri Lankan political dignitaries to these states.
- (6) Facilitate visits by Provincial Councilors and Local Government Representatives to meet their Indian counterparts, following appropriate protocol.
- (7) Coordinate trade and cultural exchanges between Sri Lanka and these states.
- (8) Identification of suitable persons to be appointed as Honorary Consuls in key states.

Mission Objective 1.4: Resolve the long-drawn issue of externally displaced persons:

The presence of Tamil externally displaced persons from Sri Lanka in India, particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu gives rise to complications in bilateral relations. Vested interests have exploited the sentiments associated with the externally displaced persons to give credence to their theories for political gains. The voluntary repatriation of these externally displaced persons through the existing mechanism is slow. If a comprehensive plan can be drawn up for their resettlement in Sri Lanka, the High Commissioner in New Delhi can endeavor to take the matter up / to at the highest level of the Government and bureaucracy, to discuss their early return. This comprehensive plan should include the assistance package the Government of Sri Lanka is providing to the returnees, which may include customs duty waivers, settling-in expenses, housing, economic rehabilitation activities etc. Settling the issue of externally displaced persons could prevent fringe elements from dominating the discourse concerning this emotive issue, and thereby help to create a positive image of Sri Lanka. Voluntary repatriation of these externally displaced persons forms a vital part of Sri Lanka's reconciliation process.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) The comprehensive resettlement plan prepared by the GoSL to be formally conveyed to the Ministry of External Affairs of India.
- (2) Engage with the UNHCR and other stakeholders after a positive feedback from the Ministry of External Affairs of India.
- (3) Engagement with the political leadership of Tamil Nadu to encourage and facilitate a smooth return of the externally displaced persons to Sri Lanka.

Mission Objective 1.5: Convene the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission as well as other bilateral Joint committees on various sectors on a regular basis with a view to streamlining their work. Look at new areas of cooperation, including through the India-Sri Lanka Foundation, Kalinga Lanka Foundation etc.:

As the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission and other bilateral Joint Committees are the main policy platforms through which bilateral cooperation is executed, their timely convening is extremely important.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Facilitate the timely convening of the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission.
- (2) Facilitate the timely convening of the other bilateral Joint Committees on various sectors.
- (3) Look for new areas of cooperation, including through the India-Sri Lanka Foundation and Kalinga Lanka Foundation.

Mission Goal 2: Bolster foreign investments as well as earnings from exports. Achieve significant export growth and increase foreign exchange earnings, with the ultimate objective of increasing productivity, employment generation and international competitiveness to uplift the living standards of the people in Sri Lanka, with a view to achieving the macro-economic targets set out for the period 2020- 2025, in the Government Policy framework document, “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour”.

Overview:

India is one of Sri Lanka’s key markets as a trading partner, foreign investor as well as generator of the highest number of outbound tourists to Sri Lanka. With positive economic growth predictions on the Indian economy, the High Commission in New Delhi, in association with the Deputy High Commission in Chennai and the Consulate General in Mumbai as well as relevant Sri Lankan authorities, will engage in dialogue with Indian business partners, with a focus on deepening business ties and to explore opportunities for collaboration, at a time when economic recovery has become a top priority for Sri Lanka following the severe effect of the global pandemic.

To assist the process of achieving Mission Goal 2, an Inter-Agency Committee on Trade, Investment and Tourism is to be formed under the Country Team. Those representatives of SLEDB, BOI, Sri Lanka Tourism, Sri Lanka Tea Board and Sri Lankan Airlines who handle the Indian market would form the Inter-Agency Committee, convened by the officer handling trade and economic matters in the High Commission in New Delhi. The Inter-Agency Committee is envisaged as a coordinated approach towards the achievement of Goal 2.

Mission Objective 2.1: Increase Indian investments in Sri Lanka and facilitate ongoing large-scale economic development and investment-driven projects:

As per the BOI data, India is among the top five overall investors in Sri Lanka. In seeking further Indian investments, it is imperative to target both large-scale conglomerates and individual high net-worth investors.

Sri Lanka Missions in India will make efforts to reach the following FDI targets from India.

Year	Value	Remarks
2021	US\$ 300 mn	Set by BOI
2022	US\$ 256.1mn (Avg. Investment figure 2016-2020 X 50%)	Set by SL Missions in India

The sectors that have been identified to encourage foreign investment from India are auto components, electrical and electronics, food processing, the hospitality industry, Information Technology-enabled services, infrastructure, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy and textiles.

Further, it would be imperative to follow up on the existing proposed investments by India in Sri Lanka, namely, the West Container Terminal of Colombo Port, the Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm, projects of cooperation in the power sector, Indian projects under development cooperation, and lines of credit as well as financial cooperation.

Key Tasks for implementation

- (1) Create a list of high-net-worth investors and leading corporates and invite them to invest in Sri Lanka through a targeted and focused investment promotion strategy.
- (2) Virtual/ physical business meetings with potential investors.
- (3) Virtual seminars/ networking sessions for members of industry associations, trade chambers in India.
- (4) Participation at business forums/ summits/ discussions/ conclaves hosted by Indian industry associations, and the projection of investment opportunities in Sri Lanka.
- (5) Inward and outward investment delegations.

Mission Objective 2.2: Increase exports from Sri Lanka and expand Sri Lanka's market share in India:

Overview:

For a large and fast-growing economy such as India, Sri Lanka appears to be a considerably important market, although this trend is more biased towards Sri Lanka's imports, rather than exports with India. Trade-related matters affecting Sri Lankan exports to India include increasing protectionism, limited market access, a challenging and unpredictable regulatory environment as well as the *Make in India* Initiative, which prioritizes local business and sourcing of local raw materials and products over imports. Against this backdrop, the following targets have been set for India by all three diplomatic missions.

Year	Value	Remarks
2021	US\$ 621.9 mn	Set by EDB
2022	US\$ 674.15mn (Based on 2016-2020 Avg export value from SL to India)	Set by SL Missions in India

Sri Lanka Missions in India have listed the following potential products from Sri Lanka, to identify potential buyers:

Spices & Concentrates	Pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg.
Processed Food	Vegan and vegetarian food, sausages, processed meat and fish products, confectionary, fruit juices, beverages.
Printing & Packaging	Coated and uncoated paper, packaging materials, scrap paper.
Coconut related products	Desiccated coconut (and related products virgin coconut oil, coconut flour, coconut cream, coconut sugar, activated carbon, charcoal, mats & rugs, coconut <i>ekels</i> , coconut arrack).
Ceramic & porcelain items	Floor and wall tiles, tableware, bathroom ware, kitchenware.
Electrical machinery and equipment and parts	Ignition and other wiring sets for vehicles, electric conductors, switch boards and panels.
Tea	Black tea, flavoured and herbal tea, organic tea.
Apparel	Men's trousers, shirts, skirts, undergarments.

Key Tasks for Implementation:

- (1) To participate in leading international trade fairs held in India.
- (2) To arrange B2B meetings with potential importers.
- (3) To organize business networking sessions in association with trade chambers and industry associations in Sri Lanka and India.
- (4) To organize B2B matchmaking programs.
- (5) Secure greater market access for exports from Sri Lanka, including allocation of quantity quotas for export without delay of Vanaspati, bakery-shortening margarine, pepper and desiccated coconut under the bilateral FTA, through engagement in dialogue with Indian policy/ decision makers.
- (6) Organize inward and outward business delegations.
- (7) Set up business councils in Mumbai and Chennai, in addition to reviving and expanding operations of the existing Indo-Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry in New Delhi.
- (8) Recognition of Sri Lankan food testing laboratories by India.

Mission Objectives 2.3: Promote outbound travel and tourism from India to Sri Lanka:

India is a very important travel market for Sri Lanka. For many consecutive years and until the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, a steady growth in the number of Indian travellers to Sri Lanka has been noted. Sri Lanka Tourism has set the following targets for outbound travel from India.

Year	Forecasted Arrivals from India	Remarks
2021	63,733	Target set by Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau
2022	169,955	Target set by Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau

Sri Lanka Missions in India have identified tremendous opportunity to increase the numbers, given the size of the Indian travel market and the interest of Indian tourists to visit Sri Lanka. The promotion of sectors such as MICE, weddings, films, the Ramayana Trail in Sri Lanka, etc. has much potential in India.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Sri Lanka's participation in leading international travel and tourism fairs in India, including at state level.
- (2) Sri Lanka's participation in leading MICE events in India, including at state level.
- (3) Organize media conferences in India.
- (4) FAM tours to Sri Lanka for travel agents and journalists.
- (5) Host celebrities and religious leaders from India, in order to encourage their fans/followers to visit Sri Lanka.
- (6) Recommendations to allow fully vaccinated tourists from India to travel to Sri Lanka.

Mission Objective 2.4: Promote technology innovation, capacity-building, product development etc. for inclusive economic growth and development in Sri Lanka:

For a rapid leap forward in economic terms, it has been recognized that Sri Lankan products must be diversified. In future, Sri Lanka must continue its international export business with the introduction of more value-added products supported by new technologies. Accordingly, Sri Lanka Missions in India recognize the following areas for collaboration with India under technical cooperation programs or entrepreneurship for capacity-building, product development, technology transfer, skill development etc.: agro and food processing industry, auto industry, biotechnology, craft industry, dairy industry, gems and jewellery industry (e.g.,: automation of the gem and jewellery industry), IT, pharmaceutical manufacturing industry.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Engagement in dialogue with Indian policy/ decision makers about Sri Lanka's proposals.

Mission Goal 3: Expand collaboration in the fields of strategic cooperation, defence and Indian Ocean security between Sri Lanka and India.

Overview:

Both Sri Lanka and India have always enjoyed very strong and close defence and security cooperation. Enhancing this cooperation would be of significance for Sri Lanka in safeguarding its strategic interests. It is noted that the level of cooperation is such that the largest share of training berths provided by the Government of India in the military segment, is offered to Sri Lankan defence personnel. Further, India is a partner in most joint military exercises carried out by Sri Lanka. In 2019, India had announced a USD 50 million special Line of Credit for counter-terrorism activities, which Sri Lanka is yet to utilize. Seeking useful ways to utilize this special Line of Credit would be important. It is understood that more Lines of Credit in the defence sector are in the pipeline.

Mission Objective 3.1: Work toward the development of mechanisms that enhance political level strategic cooperation in the fields of defence and security:

Drawing on the experience of the ‘troika’ arrangement between the two countries during the last stages of the conflict and in addition to the existing dialogues, working towards mechanisms that enhance political level strategic cooperation in the fields of defence and security, would be vital.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Look for the existence of similar mechanisms between India and other countries through diplomatic channels, upon which the envisaged mechanisms could be modelled.

Mission Objective 3.2: Facilitate bilateral joint military exercises, study tours, and increased high-level military exchanges:

Proper coordination is required on the part of the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations in India, for the facilitation of bilateral joint military exercises, study tours to and from Sri Lanka, and more frequent high-level military exchanges. These exchanges play a pivotal role in enhancing and further strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Facilitation of Sri Lanka’s participation in four (04) bilateral and multilateral military exercises per year.
- (2) Visits from Sri Lanka to India by the Secretary Defence, Chief of Defence Staff, Commander of the Army, Commander of the Navy, Commander of the Air Force and Director General Coast Guard: one per year.
- (3) Three (03) visits to Sri Lanka by defence delegations from India.

Mission Objective 3.3: Secure relevant training berths offered by India’s Ministry of Defence and establish and maintain contacts with India’s paramilitary and police forces, with a view to securing additional training opportunities for their Sri Lankan counterparts:

Full utilization of the relevant berths offered by the Ministry of Defence of India to Sri Lanka would be imperative. While availing the berths offered by India, it would also be important to offer training opportunities in Sri Lankan military establishments to Indian military personnel.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) The securing and full utilization of all relevant berths offered by the Ministry of Defence of India.
- (2) Seeking new training opportunities available at Indian paramilitary and police establishments.
- (3) Facilitating the participation of Sri Lankan defence officials/personnel in defence-related seminars and conferences in India.

Mission Objective 3.4: Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of Indo-Lanka defence cooperation, take steps to further strengthen the Office of the Defence Advisor, in the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi:

Keeping in mind the scope of the work of the Office of the Defence Advisor, increasing its staff strength to assist the incumbent would be useful.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Pursue the already submitted proposal to appoint an Assistant to the Defence Advisor.

Mission Goal 4: Further enhance cooperation between Sri Lanka and India, particularly in the fields of culture, education and science & technology, to promote Sri Lanka's interests.

Overview:

Sri Lanka and India share a common legacy of cultural, religious, linguistic and intellectual interactions, sustained and developed for centuries. The Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed by the two countries on 29 November 1977 institutionalizes the bilateral framework for periodic cultural exchanges between the two countries. In Sri Lanka, the Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo actively promotes awareness of Indian culture by offering classes in Indian music, dance, Hindi language and yoga. Similarly, Sri Lanka Missions in India have to actively promote Sri Lankan culture in India. Enhancing and promoting Sri Lankan culture in India is essential for fostering bilateral relations and enhancing people-to-people contacts. Establishing a Sri Lankan Cultural Centre in India would be an important goal to pursue in this regard.

At any given time, approximately one thousand (1000) Sri Lankan students undergo undergraduate and postgraduate studies in India. These include both scholarship- holders and self- financing students. A total of 195 scholarships were provided to Sri Lankan students by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in the year 2020-2021. Securing more higher education opportunities in India for Sri Lankan students, including those from the plantation sector, would be beneficial for the students of Sri Lanka.

Science and technology cooperation between the two countries is another important area of bilateral relations. At present, the two countries cooperate through the India-Sri Lanka Joint Science & Technology Committee.

Mission Objective 4.1: Promote Buddhist ties with India:

Buddhism has been the lynchpin of the age-old relations between the two countries. Therefore, promoting Buddhist ties with India is of paramount importance. The Missions are already working very closely with Sri Lankan Buddhist temples across India, including the Mahabodhi Society of India and the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka. Continuation of this close relationship is essential. Additionally, attempts must be made to reach out to the larger Buddhist community in India.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Provide opportunities to Indian scholars and students to study Buddhist philosophy in Sri Lanka, and seek possibilities for Sri Lankan scholars and students to undergo Buddhist and Pali language studies in India.
- (2) Facilitate *bhikkhu* ordination and education in *Pirivenas* for Indian Buddhists in Sri Lanka.
- (3) Facilitate the organization of joint seminars, workshops etc. to counter misinformation with regard to the birthplace of the Buddha.

Mission Objective 4.2: Promote Hindu exchanges between the two countries:

Both India and Sri Lanka share a common heritage of Hinduism.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Ceremonial handing over of the sacred stone from the Sita Amman temple in Sri Lanka to the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

- (2) Seek opportunities for Sri Lankan Hindu religious leaders and scholars to visit India, and interact with their Indian counterparts.
- (3) Active participation by Sri Lankan Diplomatic Missions in major local religious ceremonies.

Mission Objective 4.3: Project Sri Lanka's culture, traditional art and heritage in India through cultural exchanges highlighting shared historical connections between the people of the two countries:

Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations in India should endeavour to actively project Sri Lankan culture, art and heritage beyond the usual art circuits of the major metropolises of India. The most practical way to organize cultural shows and performances is for them to coincide with major events like the National Day celebrations, Vesak etc. Moreover, the Diplomatic Representations may actively support and facilitate the participation of Sri Lankan artists in events organized by the Government of India and other important cultural entities in India. The focus should be on projecting our common roots. Organizations like the Kalinga Lanka Foundation would be useful means to achieve these objectives.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Celebrate major Sri Lankan cultural and religious festivals such as New Year and Vesak with the participation of Indian nationals, through/ at the Diplomatic Representations.
- (2) Organize two cultural events per year in the cities where Sri Lanka Missions are located, or, in other major cities, with the participation of Sri Lankan artists and performers (they could coincide with major events like the National Day celebrations).
- (3) Facilitate participation of Sri Lankan artists including from Provinces in cultural events, art exhibitions etc. organized by entities in India.
- (4) Encourage and facilitate cultural events organized by the Sri Lankan student community in various cities across India.

Mission Objective 4.4: Promote exchanges of religious leaders, pilgrims and scholars through the Buddhist circuit, the Ramayana, the Murugan and the Shiva Shakthi trails, as well as the Vailankanni trail in South India:

Apart from the tourist or pilgrimage aspects of the Buddhist circuit, the Ramayana, the Murugan and the Shiva Shakthi trails as well as the Vailankanni trail could be utilized to foster exchanges at the level of religious leaders and scholars.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Facilitate visits by Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders and scholars to the Buddhist circuit, including that of Odisha, in India.
- (2) Facilitate visits by Indian religious leaders and scholars to the Ramayana, Murugan and Shiva Shakthi trails in Sri Lanka.
- (3) Facilitate visits by Sri Lankan Catholic leaders and scholars to the Vailankanni trail in South India.

Mission Objective 4.5: Obtain enhanced training and educational opportunities in India for Sri Lankans, including those from the plantation sector, by increasing the number of scholarships from the Government of India (ICCR) and other private universities of repute:

In order to increase the number of scholarships that are provided to Sri Lankan students by the Ministry of External Affairs of India under the aegis of the ICCR, a concrete proposal has to be made through the Ministry of Higher Education of Sri Lanka (the nodal agency in Sri Lanka)

to the ICCR through the High Commission of India in Colombo. This can, thereafter be followed up by the Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi with the Ministry of External Affairs of India. A similar request for enhancement of slots for the ITEC scheme of the Ministry could be made along with concrete substantive reasoning for seeking such enhancement, to the Indian High Commission in Colombo. This, too, will be followed up by the Sri Lanka High Commission with the Ministry in New Delhi. The Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations can also approach individual private universities of repute in India under their respective consular jurisdiction, with a view to securing scholarships or fee concessions for Sri Lankan students.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) The High Commissioner to meet with the Director-General of ICCR with the objective of enhancing the number of scholarships provided by the Government of India to Sri Lanka, including to underprivileged students from the plantation sector.
- (2) The Head of Mission/ New Delhi, and Heads of Post in Chennai and Mumbai to meet with Vice Chancellors/ Heads of Institutions of reputed private universities in the states under their consular jurisdiction, with a view to increasing the number of scholarships provided to Sri Lankan students, including those of the plantation sector.
- (3) Proactive dissemination of information on the availability of higher education opportunities in India, amongst the general public in Sri Lanka.
- (4) Maintain a database of Sri Lankan students studying in the states under the consular jurisdiction of each Mission.
- (5) Promote and facilitate MoUs between Indian and Sri Lankan universities for exchanges of students and faculty.
- (6) Enhance cooperation with the South Asia University in New Delhi as a centre of excellence.

Mission Objective 4.6: Strengthen technological and scientific cooperation between Sri Lanka and India under the framework of the India – Sri Lanka Joint Science & Technology Committee:

Enhanced cooperation in the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT, engineering etc. would prove beneficial for Sri Lanka. India being a leading manufacturer of pharmaceuticals with its own, homegrown COVID – 19 vaccines could prove to be advantageous for Sri Lanka, if pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities could be set up in the country. India has some home-grown IT majors; establishing commercial links with them could prove beneficial. Studying the ‘Digital India’ initiative of the Government of India would be of importance in this regard. The vast expanse of India throws a major challenge to the production of crops with varied soil, environment, precipitation patterns, etc. A robust agricultural scientific approach has been instrumental in growing crops throughout the geographical expanse of India. Also, the country in the past several years has had an effective disaster management system in place to deal with natural calamities, such as cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. Sri Lanka can immensely benefit from Indian experiences in these fields. Since the world is moving towards achieving SDGs by 2030, studying the Green Energy Concept of India and drawing from it would be beneficial to Sri Lanka.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Coordination with relevant agencies regarding the implementation of projects as per the agreed minutes of the meetings of the India – Sri Lanka Joint Science & Technology Committee.
- (2) Seeking avenues of cooperation at state level in the areas of science & technology and agriculture.

Mission Goal 5: Project a more positive image of Sri Lanka in India through public diplomacy initiatives, with a view to reaching out to the people of India and strengthening people to people contacts.

Overview:

In addition to cultural diplomacy initiatives, public diplomacy initiatives are very useful in enhancing Sri Lanka's image in India and to strengthen people-to-people contacts. In this regard, continuous engagement with the Indian media and influential journalists of foreign media outlets based in New Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai would be helpful to create a more positive image of Sri Lanka, as well as to combat any disinformation campaigns and reports inimical to Sri Lanka. In the same vein, the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations in India must endeavor to build contacts in prominent think tanks and in the academia, with a particular focus on establishing contacts with emerging, young influencers throughout India. Establishing close contacts with emerging young influencers would contribute towards enhancing the profile of Sri Lanka in the eyes of the future decision-makers in India. In addition, the Sri Lankan Missions are to endeavor to establish contacts, particularly with political researchers who write articles on Sri Lanka in these think tanks, as they reflect the thoughts of the intelligentsia and influence the political posturing of the government of the day. Further, it would be imperative to foster greater people- to-people contacts at all levels.

Mission Objective 5.1: Foster networking between scholars, archaeologists, journalists, writers, filmmakers, dance troupes etc. to promote goodwill between the peoples of the two countries:

It is important to build networks between think tanks, scholars, archaeologists, journalists, writers, filmmakers etc. of the two countries with a view to promoting goodwill between the peoples. This would enable the creation of groups which would promote positive images of each other's countries.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Coordinate exchanges between associations of journalists, writers and filmmakers.
- (2) Facilitate visits by Sri Lankan journalists, writers, filmmakers etc. to interact with their Indian counterparts.
- (3) Explore avenues for establishing Sri Lanka and India Chairs at universities in the two capitals, in particular, the pursuit and follow-up on the proposal to establish a Sinhala Language Chair at Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- (4) Maintain a database of scholars, archaeologists, journalists, writers, filmmakers etc.
- (5) Seek the possibility of building contacts among the museums, universities, archaeological departments of the two countries and promote joint excavations by archaeologists of the two countries to foster historical connections.
- (6) Seek the possibility of securing internships for Sri Lankan journalists in Indian media establishments and vice versa.
- (7) Seek the possibility of obtaining films/ tele-series that are beyond the popular stream, particularly from individual states, for screening /telecast in Sri Lanka.

Mission Objective 5.2: Engage with prominent Indian media, prominent personalities of influential foreign media outlets based in India, opinion and thought leaders and influencers, to generate enhanced awareness with regard to Sri Lanka. Organize media tours to Sri Lanka:

Constant engagement with the media, opinion and thought leaders as well as influencers, is extremely important. This could be both informal as well as formal.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Head of Mission/ Post to give six media interviews (both print and electronic) per year, i.e., an interview once every two months.
- (2) Organize annual media familiarization visits to Sri Lanka for reputed Indian journalists who cover the region.

Mission Objective 5.3: Mark the 80th anniversary of the establishment of official relations between Sri Lanka and India, the centenary of the first visit of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore to Sri Lanka and the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, by organizing appropriate activities:

The year 2022 marks the 80th anniversary of the appointment of Sir D. B. Jayatilaka as the first representative of the then Government of Ceylon, and the country's first step towards initiating formal bilateral relations with India. His appointment also symbolizes the inception of the building of the foundation for exchange of diplomatic agents between the two countries (which then were under the British dominion), and is, thus, a significant milestone in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Commemorating 80 years of bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka provides a unique opportunity for both countries to reiterate their age-old connections, and to embark on a pragmatic reassessment of, and strengthen current bilateral relations. The year 2022 also marks the centenary of the first visit of Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore to Sri Lanka, while 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and India.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Issuance of a commemorative stamp.
- (2) Issuance of a commemorative coin to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.
- (3) Release of joint publications.
- (4) Enhancing public awareness of the importance of this milestone anniversary.
- (5) High-level dialogues between Sri Lanka and India and efforts to highlight the occasion, at every possible level.
- (6) Facilitating the commemorative event to be held at the *Vidyalankara Pirivena* on 01 November 2022, with the possible participation of high-level dignitaries from India.
- (7) Conducting of conferences/symposia on the evolution of relations between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Objective 5.4: Utilize social media platforms effectively to promote Sri Lanka and project a positive image in India:

Effective use of social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook which have wide outreach amongst the educated Indian masses, to promote Sri Lanka in India, is of paramount importance. Sri Lanka Diplomatic Representations in India should endeavor to constantly use these two social media platforms to promote Sri Lanka as a prime tourist and investment destination. The platforms can also be used for proactive dissemination of vital information on Sri Lanka, as well as to counter any disinformation by vested interests that are inimical to the image of the country.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Post at least one daily Facebook post and a Tweet, containing promotional content on Sri Lanka.
- (2) Post/ Tweet messages on every key cultural/ religious event of India and the states, with a view to reaching out to the wider public audience.
- (3) Use local languages in posting/ tweeting wherever possible, in addition to English.
- (4) Use Mission social media platforms to build a network of friends of Sri Lanka.

Mission Goal 6: Enhance connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Overview:

As close neighbours, increasing connectivity between India and Sri Lanka is a vital aspect in the bilateral relationship and it is critical in enhancing people-to-people contacts. Given India's geographical size and its population, Sri Lanka stands to benefit from increased connectivity in terms of trade, tourism, people-to-people interactions etc. This would immensely contribute to the goal of making Sri Lanka an aviation hub and a gateway to South Asia.

Mission Objective 6.1: Facilitate the increase of air connectivity between Sri Lanka and India:

Increasing the number of destinations in India for Sri Lankan airlines would be of importance. This could be done by mainly targeting Sri Lankan Buddhist pilgrims coming to India, outbound Indian tourists and air cargo.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Identify new air destinations for Sri Lankan airlines flights.
- (2) Operationalize already identified destinations such as Ahmedabad.

Mission Objective 6.2: Facilitate the increase of sea connectivity between Sri Lanka and India:

Increasing sea connectivity, particularly in terms of passengers, would be as vital as increasing air connectivity. This would promote more people-to-people contacts between southern India and Sri Lanka.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Pursue the resumption/ establishment of passenger ferry services between Sri Lanka and India: Thalaimannar-Rameswaram, Colombo-Tuticorin and Kankesanthurai-Karaikal.

Mission Objective 6.3: Facilitate electrical grid connectivity between Sri Lanka and India:

Establishing electrical grid connectivity between India and Sri Lanka would be mutually beneficial. This would enable Sri Lanka to obtain electricity during operational maintenance and droughts, and also to export excess generation to India. This will also allow greater space for renewables (e.g., wind farms in Mannar Basin).

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Facilitate projects that create electrical grid connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.
- (2) Focus on need to address interconnection rules.

Mission Objective 6.4: Facilitate digital connectivity between Sri Lanka and India:

Sri Lanka has reportedly underutilized potential for E-Commerce platforms, E-payment gateways etc. More PPP activity in this area can spur a surge of business beneficial to both countries, especially in the post- Covid scenario.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Facilitate projects that create digital connectivity between Sri Lanka and India.

Mission Goal 7: Promote Sri Lanka's interests in protecting its ocean resources.

Overview:

Sri Lanka and India being maritime neighbours gives rise to great challenges, such as poaching and bottom trawling by Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters. It is imperative to seek sustainable and long-lasting solutions for these challenges, while also using the opportunities presented by the close proximity of the two countries.

Sri Lanka and India have closely collaborated on maritime issues over a long period of time. At the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, both countries were successful in securing a Statement of Understanding on a special method of delimitation of the Continental Shelf for states in the southern part of the Bay of Bengal. The Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements of 1974 and 1976 settled the maritime boundary between the two countries in the Palk Straits, Palk Bay and in the Bay of Bengal respectively. This includes the Kachchatheevu issue.

India and Sri Lanka also coordinated the promulgation of national laws declaring their respective maritime zones.

On the Continental Shelf, Sri Lanka and India held bilateral consultations several years ago. However, these consultations were suspended, pending the determination of the outer limits of Sri Lanka's shelf by the UN Commission on the Continental Shelf. Once this process is completed, consultations can be resumed on issues of bilateral delimitation of an overlapping area in the Bay of Bengal, under the guidance of the National Ocean Affairs Committee (NOAC).

Mission Objective 7.1: Engage with Indian authorities (Central government, relevant State governments and other stakeholders) for a mechanism acceptable to all sides for the resolution of fisheries-related issues:

The Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi along with the Deputy High Commission in Chennai are to engage with the government at the central and state levels, and also with major stakeholders in Tamil Nadu to curb poaching and IUU fishing, as well as to impress upon the Indian side the adverse effects of bottom trawling. A proposal incorporating these issues is to be drawn up by the Government of Sri Lanka. The proposal may also highlight the various resolutions adopted at international fora pertaining to the ecological damage of bottom trawling, and provisions of the Sri Lankan law itself, while proposing a humane approach to genuine issues faced by fishermen on both sides of the IMLL.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Submission of concrete proposals from GoSL to the Ministry of External Affairs of India, also taking on board the views of Sri Lanka's Northern/ Eastern fishers.
- (2) The High Commissioner to engage with the Minister of External Affairs of India and the Foreign Secretary, to expedite political clearances at the central government level.
- (3) The High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai to hold meetings with the leaders of Tamil Nadu and influential representatives of fisheries associations, with a view to impressing upon them the importance of the proposal, and how it can benefit the fishermen of the state.

Mission Objective 7.2: Engage with Indian authorities for setting up a training centre for a marine disaster task force:

Given the increasing regularity of major marine accidents around Sri Lanka which affect Sri Lanka's ecological environment and destroy the livelihood of tens of thousands of people who are dependent on the sea, setting up of a marine disaster training center with Indian expertise would prove to be of assistance to handle such future disasters. Much depends on the initial response during such incidents. The Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi may reach out to relevant institutions in India, with a view to initiating a formal process in this direction.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Initiation of meetings with the National Disaster Management Authority of India, which is involved in the mitigation and control of natural disasters in India.
- (2) Identification of particular organizations which could assist Sri Lankan authorities in setting up training institutions and organizations to manufacture items related to disaster mitigation.

Mission Objective 7.3: Promote joint research in fisheries as well as in other marine and mineral resources:

Sri Lanka could benefit much from Indian expertise in research in fisheries and other marine and mineral resources, if engaged in joint endeavours.

Key Tasks for Implementation

- (1) Explore possibilities of arranging joint research projects.
- (2) Seek opportunities for Sri Lankan scientists and experts to be stationed on board Indian research vessels.

