



A Roundtable interactive session organized by the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry in association with the Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi was held on 3rd May 2019 at the PHD Chamber premises in Delhi, under the theme of “Strengthening ties with Sri Lanka”, to share thoughts on further strengthening business environment, with focus on travel and tourism industry in Sri Lanka, through the professional and business activities of the members of the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The President of the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rajeev Talwar speaking at the event, expressed India’s solidarity with Sri Lanka for revival process, following recent terrorist attack in the country that took place on 21st April 2019, and expressed his confidence that Sri Lanka will bounce back sooner than anticipated. He further stated that PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry is prepared to extend every support organizing travel and tourism related events in key metro cities in India to revive Sri Lanka Tourism.

Delivering the keynote address at the interactive session, Sri Lanka High Commissioner to India, Austin Fernando expressed his appreciation to the PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the initiative taken to organize the event. While speaking on historical ties between the two countries, High Commissioner Fernando highlighted on the progressive steps taken by the two countries to strengthen collaboration that are extremely important; such as political, economic, cultural, social, security, education etc. He emphasized that the existing relationships could bolstered bilateral ties to a high level for the benefit of both countries.

Focusing the travel and tourism industry in Sri Lanka, High Commissioner Fernando featured the significant contribution from the tourism segment to the Sri Lanka economy during past eight years and the relevant infrastructure development to achieve the set targets for year 2019 and beyond. In addition, he apprised the PHD members the latest developments in relation to the travel and tourism industry in Sri Lanka, especially in the wake of the series of explosions across the island. He also briefed the members the emergency measures that the Sri Lanka Government has taken to ensure the maximum safety of the tourists visiting Sri Lanka.

High Commissioner stated that Sri Lanka Tourism has decided to continue all planned promotion activities in India as well as globally, to renew confidence among travelers and to reach set target for 2019. In conclusion, High Commissioner requested members of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their contribution to achieve the target of 550,000 Indian visitors to Sri Lanka in 2019, that will increase the profit of the Indian Outbound Travel Industry, as the visitors to Sri Lanka are their clientele too!.

Among other, Ambassador Yash Sinha, Former High Commissioner of India to UK and Sri Lanka; Ambassador K V Rajan, Convener, PHD Chamber Ambassadors' Economic Forum, Mr Binay Kumar, Former President; PHDCCI, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Sri Lanka based in Delhi H.E Joanna Kempkers, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Sri Lanka based in Delhi H.E. Milan Hovorka, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to Sri Lanka based in Delhi H.E Andrei I Rzhewsky were also present at the event.

The event received an overwhelming response from the Diplomatic Corp in New Delhi, top management officials of Indian enterprises working in various sectors including travel and tourism, think tanks and media. The event ended with a Q &A session followed by screening of Sri Lanka Tourism video.

India has emerged as one of the leading partners of tourism to Sri Lanka with a total number of 424,887 of the total traffic in 2018. There is tremendous potential to increase the numbers, given the size of the Indian travel market and the interest of the Indian tourists to visit Sri Lanka.

Further, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020.

[Full Text of the Speech](#)

Sri Lanka High Commission
New Delhi
07th May 2019