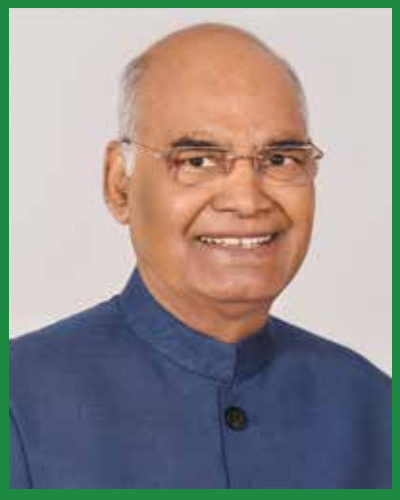


75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021



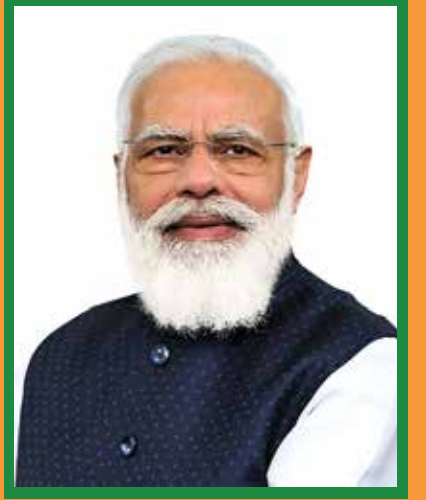
Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind
President of India



From Tokyo to South Asia: Neeraj Chopra became the first athlete from the region to win an Olympics Gold in Track and Field.



Two nations one passion : Indian team toured Sri Lanka for 3 ODIs and 3 T20s in July 2021.



Hon'ble Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India



H.E. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on a State Visit to India in November 2019



Virtual Bilateral Summit between H.E. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, September 2020.



External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar on an official visit to Sri Lanka, in January 2021.



National Security Advisor, Mr. Ajit Doval on an official visit to Sri Lanka in November 2020



Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on an official visit to India in January 2020.



H.E. Gopal Baglay

Message from High Commissioner

As India celebrates her glorious 75th year of Independence, I extend my heartiest greetings to all fellow Indians in Sri Lanka and all the friendly people of Sri Lanka. Guided by the strong leaderships in our two countries, India and Sri Lanka bilateral relations have progressed steadily, overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 global pandemic. The first ever virtual Bilateral Summit between our Prime Ministers in September 2020, the first visit abroad of External Affairs Minister of India this year to Sri Lanka and the visit of National Security Advisor of India to Sri Lanka in November 2020 have laid down the roadmap of cooperation in all sectors of mutual interest.

India's assistance for human-centric development partnership projects across Sri Lanka has left a meaningful impact on the lives of the common people in this country. While there are many examples from infrastructure to capacity building, the Suwaseriya 1990 Ambulance service – one of the important outcomes of the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Sri Lanka in 2017 – has served the people of Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the year gone by, India has been as much part of Sri Lanka's fight against the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has been a dependable and long-term partner in new initiatives. Whether it is fighting fire on ships such as MT New Diamond and MV Xpress Pearl or launching Sri Lanka's vaccination programme with COVISHIELD in January this year, India has been the first responder. The US\$ 100 million

concessional credit for development of solar power projects in Sri Lanka seeks to reinforce Government of Sri Lanka's emphasis on renewable energy. India is committed to taking similar projects forward in infrastructure, energy, connectivity, health, education and other spheres so as to promote greater economic interaction for shared prosperity of people of the two countries.

Through the course of the worst phase of COVID-19 in the two countries, it has been moving to see special prayers in both the countries for the well-being of the other, including at Mulgandhakuti Vihara in Sarnath and Tirumala in Tirupati. India was also the proud partner of Sri Lanka in the first ever aerobatic display of its kind in Sri Lanka by the Indian Air Force on the occasion of 70th of the anniversary of the Sri Lanka Air Force highlighting the cooperation, the camaraderie and friendship between the two countries and their armed forces.

As AatmaNirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) steadily marches ahead with record growth in exports and burgeoning investments while resiliently emerging from the shadow of COVID challenges, I and my colleagues in the High Commission are committed to working towards strengthening the age-old civilisational ties between India and Sri Lanka in the coming months and years, with special focus on health, well-being and economic growth.

75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021



Touching all aspects of human life: Development partnership

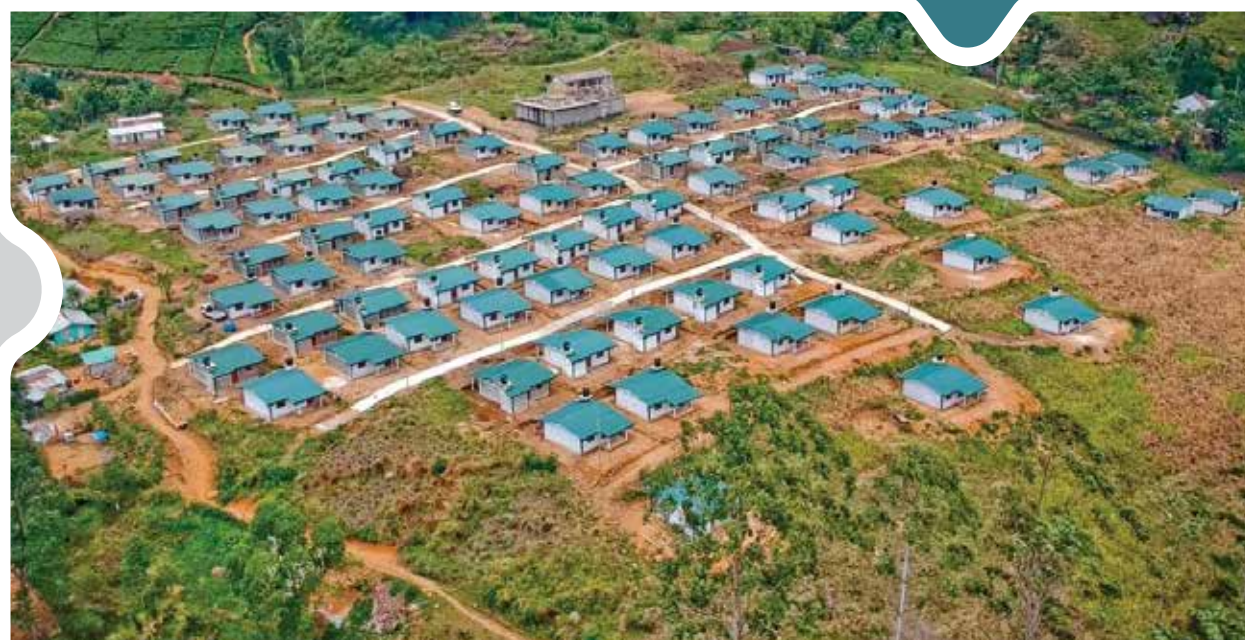
India's development partnership with Sri Lanka is driven by the priorities of the Government of Sri Lanka and aspirations of its people. At a total quantum of more than USD 3.5 billion, India has carried out development projects that affect most aspects of human life spanning from large scale infrastructure and connectivity projects to high impact community projects covering health, education, housing, industrial development and livelihood among several others. Implementation of these projects contribute vastly to the local economy as they rely mostly on Sri Lankan contractors and labour for execution.

The ongoing five concessional lines of credit cut across areas such as defence, railways, transport, infrastructure development, connectivity, solar etc. Overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, these projects have achieved considerable progress in the recent past, including the completion of supply of 10 Diesel Locomotives at USD 42.5 million in June 2020 and 40 Railway Passenger Coaches in 2021.

Signing of the USD 100 million agreement between Government of Sri Lanka and EXIM Bank of India for solar energy projects on 16 June 2021 underlines the commitment of the two Governments to clean and green energy and also aligns well with the vision of President of Sri Lanka to ensure that 70% of country's energy requirements are met through renewable energy sources by 2030. The agreement would pave way for financing various projects including rooftop solar photo-voltaic systems for households and government buildings and a floating solar plant for the Parliament building of Sri Lanka.

Country-wide housing programmes under which India has already constructed close to 50,000 houses across Sri Lanka have helped many in realizing their dream of having a living space of their own. 1990 Suwaseriya emergency ambulance service which was inaugurated just over five years ago has been of great value during these testing times. Rabindranath Tagore auditorium in Ruhuna University is a state-of-the-art structure and among the largest such facilities in the Southern Province.

India is associated with more than 80 people-driven projects encompassing diverse areas in all parts of Sri Lanka. The 5000 MT temperature-controlled warehouse in Dambulla, which is expected to be complete soon, could aid the farming community immensely by extending the shelf life of their produce. In a unique arrangement, an Indian and Sri Lanka entity joined hands and formed a Joint Venture solely towards the realization of the project. Even as new models and ideas emerge, the human element will continue to be central to this key pillar of bilateral relationship.



“ Sri Lanka is going green, and we are working extensively to make it happen. Today, we formalized the agreement on the Line of Credit worth US\$ 100M b/w Sri Lanka and the Export & Import Bank of India. Steadily, we're getting closer to the goal of 70% renewable energy by 2030. ”



H.E. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa



75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021



A FORWARD-LOOKING PARTNERSHIP: Trade, commerce and investments

TRADE

- ▶ Overall bilateral merchandise trade of USD 3.6 billion in 2020
- ▶ India is Sri Lanka's 2nd largest trade partner.
- ▶ Signing of FTA in 1998 has resulted in a sharp increase in bilateral trade. While about 64% of Sri Lanka's exports are covered under the FTA, only 5% of India's exports to Sri Lanka avail of the FTA preferential route.

CONNECTIVITY

- ▶ Commencement of Karaikal - Kankesanthurai (KKS) ferry service and resumption of Jaffna- Chennai air links are under discussion towards promotion of greater economic engagement between the two countries.

CONVERTING CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES: COVID-19

- ▶ The two friendly countries are fighting the pandemic together.
- ▶ India provided a currency swap of US\$ 400 million to Sri Lanka in July 2020.
- ▶ Supply of about 26 tonnes of medical equipment/ medicines in April-May 2020
- ▶ The gift of 500,000 doses of vaccines on 28 January 2021 enabled Sri Lanka to roll out the vaccination programme ahead of the schedule.



India-Sri Lanka partnership in the economic and commercial sphere is multifaceted and comprehensive. These close ties are exemplified by robust trade relations, investment, joint collaboration in the power & energy sectors, cooperation in enhancing connectivity etc. In 2020, India and Sri Lanka were able to sustain and enhance the bilateral economic and commercial partnership despite various pandemic-related challenges.



INDIAN INVESTMENTS IN SRI LANKA

- ▶ India is among the largest FDI contributors of Sri Lanka.
- ▶ Presence of a large number of leading Indian companies across sectors in Sri Lanka.
- ▶ Board of Investment of Sri Lanka estimates Indian FDI from 2005 to 2019 to be USD 1.7 billion.
- ▶ Contribute to overall economic development of Sri Lanka by setting up manufacturing facilities, creating job opportunities for local Sri Lankans, bringing in new technologies, skill development and knowledge transfer.
- ▶ HCL Technologies established a global development centre in Colombo in September 2020. The Centre is expected to generate employment for more than 5000 people in the next 3-5 years.
- ▶ Lanka IOC (LIOC), which has partnered with Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) in meeting Sri Lanka's energy security requirements since last two decades, has proposed to set up Sri Lanka's first grease manufacturing plant in Trincomalee this year in line with the Government's policy of import substitution.
- ▶ Mahindra, Lanka Ashok Leyland and Tata are pursuing vehicle assembly in Sri Lanka.

FUTURISTIC

- ▶ LNG-based power plant at Kerawalapitiya
- ▶ A solar power plant at Sampur
- ▶ Cross border grid inter connectivity project
- ▶ And many more....



The nimble elephant- Highlights of the resilient Indian economy

Fueling the economy – Start ups

More than 50,000 recognized start ups
Creation of 180,000 formal jobs in last year alone



“ The COVID-19 pandemic has presented us an opportunity to reshape the world order, to reorient our thinking. We must create systems that address the problems of today and challenges of tomorrow. And we must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders. Humanity as a whole must be at the center of our thinking and action. ”

Record FDI inflows

All time high of USD 81.72 billion in 2020-21
Annual Increase of around 10%



Towards a greener future – embracing renewable energy

24% of installed capacity from renewable sources
Ranked among top 5 globally
450 GW of renewable energy by 2030



Touching new heights: Merchandise exports

Highest quarterly exports of USD 95 billion in April-June 2021
A whopping 85% increase over the corresponding quarter in 2020
Ambitious annual target of USD 400 billion



75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021




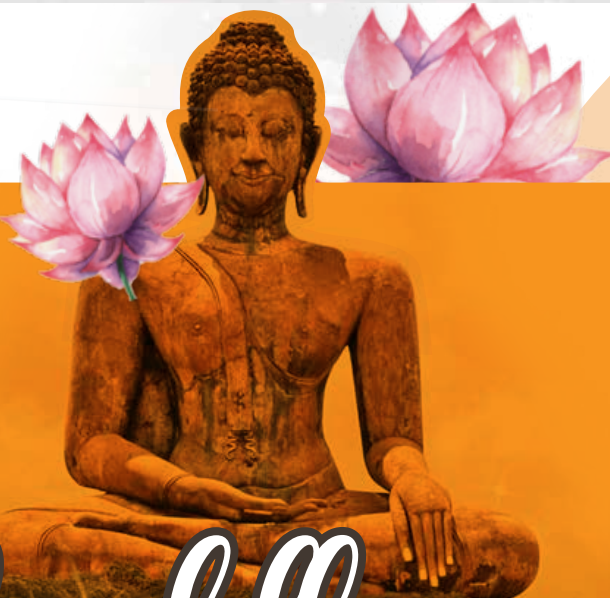
“ Lord Buddha’s teachings and the importance given to social justice can become a global unifying force. He rightly said - There is no higher bliss than peace. ”

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the keynote address on the occasion of Vesak Global Celebrations on Buddha Poonnima in May 2021.



“ Reeling under the impact of COVID-19, the world, more than ever before, needs the healing touch of compassion, kindness and selflessness. These universal values propagated by Buddhism need to be adopted by all in their thoughts and actions. ”

- President Ram Nath Kovind At The Dharma Chakra Day Celebration, July 2021

Buddhism abiding linkages across centuries

Millennia-old Buddhist linkages between India and Sri Lanka date back to the times of Lord Buddha. The arrival of Mahinda Thero and Sangamitta Theri to Sri Lanka marks the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi tree and the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha has an eminent position in the hearts of the Buddhist community in Sri Lanka.

In the contemporary times, these linkages manifest in multiple ways. Religious exposition is central to this. Venerated relics of Lord Buddha from Kapilawastu were brought from India to Sri Lanka in 1978 and 2012. The latter was on the request of H.E Mahinda Rajapaksa, the then President of Sri Lanka, to mark the 2600th anniversary of the Enlightenment of the Buddha. The sacred Saranath relics were flown down during the Vesak celebrations in 2018.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Guest at the 2017 International Vesak Day celebrations in Sri Lanka. Prime Ministers of the two countries were a part of the virtual Vesak Day celebrations in 2021. President of India Ram Nath Kovind planted a sapling of the Bodhi tree in the garden at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Presidential house, on the auspicious Esala Poya Day in July 2021.

The human connection is also significant. Father of the Indian Constitution Dr. B. R. Ambedkar visited Sri Lanka to study the practice of Buddhism in 1950. In 1956, Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with around 500,000 followers. Buddhist pilgrimage trips for the clergy, laity and Armed Forces are also organized frequently between the two countries. A pilgrimage trip to Kushinagar, the place of Lord Buddha’s Mahaparinibbana, is being planned. Numerous special ceremonies and prayers including chanting of Rathna Sutra held across Temples in Sri Lanka for their Indian brethren during the COVID surge in India earlier this year testify to the enduring human bonds.

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), the cultural arm of the High Commission of India organizes Dhamma Discourses and several other outreach programmes with Buddhist Educational Institutions, such as Pirivenas, other establishments, clergy etc on a continuous basis. Prime Minister Modi announced a dedicated USD 15 million fund to deepen the Buddhist ties during the Virtual Bilateral Summit on 26 September 2020.



Caring for each other

Numerous special prayers and ceremonies were held by people of multiple faiths across Sri Lanka for the health and well being of their brethren in India in April-May 2021. Similarly, special prayers were organized at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in Saranath and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam for the people of Sri Lanka on 9 August 2021, which coincided with the first anniversary of swearing in of H.E Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister.



75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021



ALONG THE SKIES
AND SEAS:

DEFENCE COOPERATION



Multifaceted nature of defence cooperation between India and Sri Lanka encompasses myriad activities in numerous domains including training, joint exercises, supply of military equipment etc. They are also marked by institutional dialogues at different levels and periodic bilateral goodwill visits by Navy and Coast Guard ships.

Participation of the largest ever Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent for the 70th Anniversary of the Sri Lanka Air Force clubbed with the visit of Indian Air Chief in February 2021 was a testimony to friendship and jointmanship, wherein twenty three aircraft participated in the event. It was also the first time that The Surya Kiran, Sarang, Dornier and Tejas fighter aircraft collectively performed outside India.

The two Navies conducted the bilateral Naval exercise SLINEX off Trincomalee coast in September 2020. In the immediate past, Indian Navy Missile Destroyer Ranvijay visited Colombo in April 21 and Survey ship Sarvekshak in June 21. Further, ICG Offshore Patrol Vessels Vaibhav and Vajra and Pollution Control Vessel Samudra Prahari visited Colombo in May-June 21.

Reinforcing India's image as the 'first responder' in the region, Indian Navy and Coast Guards immediately responded to the call for assistance by Government of Sri Lanka during fire on-board MT New Diamond and MV X-Press Pearl in Operation Sagar Aaraksha 1 and 2 in September 2020 and June 2021 respectively. These Operations underscored the close understanding and enduring bonds in the field.

As a testimony to India's long-term commitment, spares worth SLR 430 million were provided by IAF, Navy and Coast Guard to the Sri Lankan Forces on a goodwill basis during the past one year alone. Life extension checks of 54 shoulder launched surface to air IGLA Missiles were also carried out in January 2021.

2020-2021 marked a new milestone in bilateral defence and security cooperation through the establishment of the Colombo Security Conclave during the 4th NSA-level trilateral meeting in November 2020. The inaugural bi-annual Deputy NSA-level dialogue under this rubric was held online on 4 August 2021.

India is the largest provider of foreign training assistance to Sri Lankan Armed Forces. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, training courses for Sri Lankan Forces in premier institutes in India continued strongly. Camaraderie and close collaboration between the Forces of the two countries in the defence sphere also cuts into other areas as well. The 7th International Day of Yoga was organized in collaboration with Sri Lanka Armed Forces on 21 June 2021.

75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021

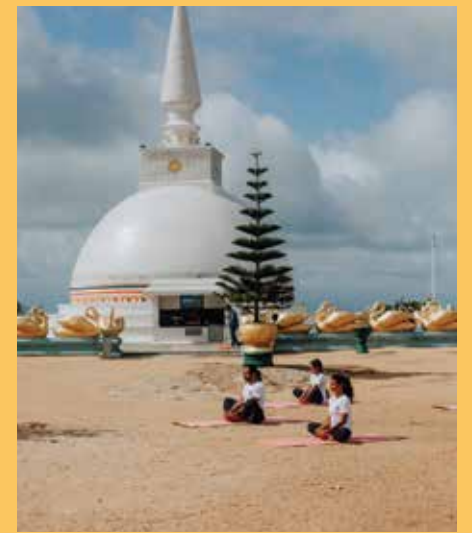
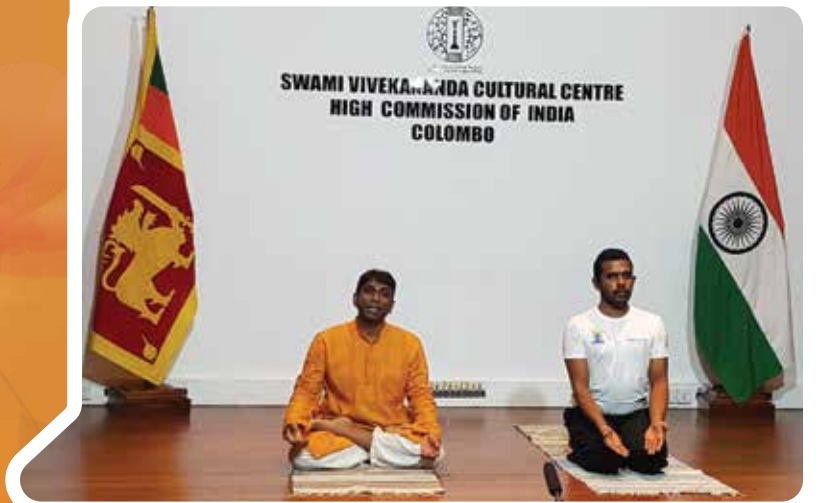


Yoga

India's gift to the world

Glimpses of the
7th International Day of Yoga
in Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed the idea of an International Day of Yoga during his address at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014. The UNGA resolution to mark 21 June as the International Day of Yoga in December 2014 was endorsed by a record 177 member states. Since then, this day is being celebrated with great fervor in Sri Lanka every year. Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, the event was held online this year. Close to 7000 participants attended various online events that were held to mark the occasion.



Activities ACROSS THE ISLAND



75th Independence Day of



AUGUST 15, 2021

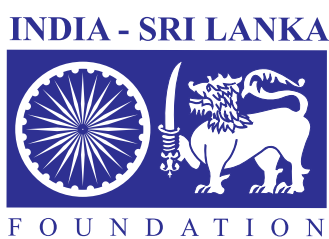


Strengthening people to people connect : India – Sri Lanka Foundation

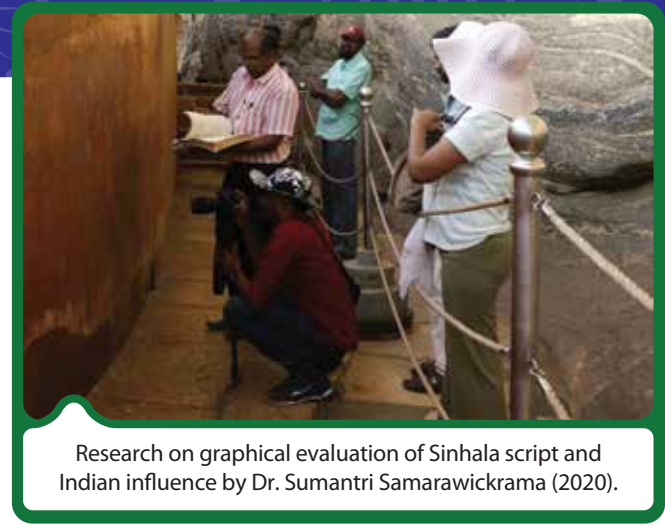
Since its inception in 1998 as an inter-governmental initiative, the India – Sri Lanka Foundation (ISLF) has been continuously fostering ties between the two countries through economic, education, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. As a result, the ISLF has been instrumental in establishing greater people to people contacts.

The specific focus of the ISLF pivots around supporting creative initiatives and bringing together the youth and the civil societies of the two countries. Till date, the Foundation has funded more than 300 projects worth SLR.150 million and currently 22 projects in the areas of research, art & culture, social work, science and technology etc. are in progress. The ISLF has supported youth exchange programmes and has also promoted the pursuit of higher studies as well as research, besides supporting a variety of cultural programmes.

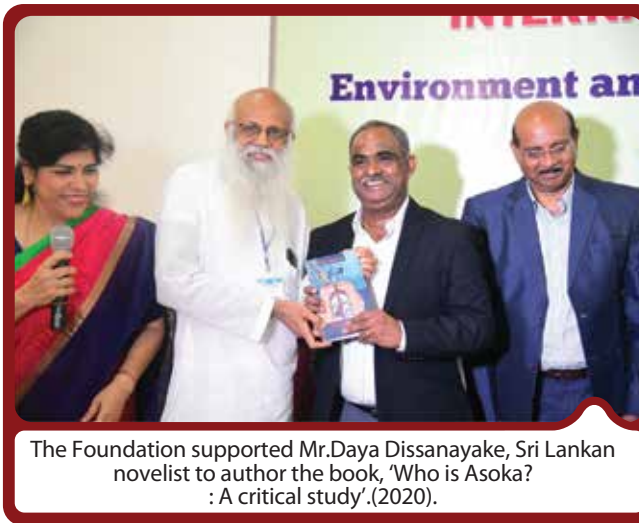
Recently, ISLF helped in setting up the “Guru Dev Rabindranath Tagore Gold Medal” at the Sri Palee Campus of University of Colombo for students securing the highest marks. ISLF has supported many social events including the Attorney General’s Department, the Legal Officers’ Association to organize a fundraiser, “A Ray of Hope” to help the children who lost their parents in the Easter Sunday Bomb attack; donation of 300 white canes, scholarships for 50 students and radios to 100 families to visually impaired through Welfare Organization of Visually Impaired Women etc. ISLF will continue to collaborate with the people of Sri Lanka to further strengthen people to people linkages between both the countries.



Student Exchange Programme between St.Patrick’s College Jaffna and Apeejay School Uttar Pradesh (2019).



Research on graphical evaluation of Sinhala script and Indian influence by Dr. Sumantri Samarawickrama (2020).



The Foundation supported Mr.Daya Dissanayake, Sri Lankan novelist to author the book, ‘Who is Asoka? : A critical study’.(2020).

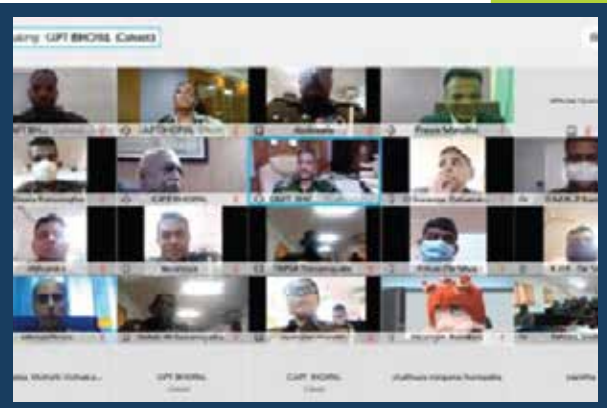


International White Cane Safety Day organized by Sri Lanka Welfare Organization of Visually Impaired Women. (2019).

Preparing for the future: Capacity building and scholarships



Training Program on Investigation of Allegations of Bribery and Corruption’ was organized for 20 Sri Lankan Police officials at Gujarat Forensic Sciences University (GFSU), Gujarat.(02-13 March 2020)



Central Academy for Police Training organized e-ITEC Course on ‘Cyber Crime Investigation’ for the police officers of Sri Lanka. (February 2021)

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme was instituted by Government of India in 1964 as an assistance programme. This fully funded Programme, covering airfare, accommodation, study tours, course fee and other allowances, has grown considerably over the years and along with its sister program SCAAP (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme), 161 countries across the globe are invited to gain from sharing of the Indian developmental experience. Under capacity building, which is an important pillar of ITEC, professionals from these countries are offered tailor-made training courses in both civilian and defence spheres in reputed institutions in India.

Sri Lanka is among the most important ITEC partner countries and 402 fully-funded slots are offered every year to Sri Lankan Government personnel and other nationals for short-term training programs towards enhancing their skill-set. The courses are spread over a multitude of sectors such as Management & Leadership, International Trade, Tourism, Textiles, Renewable Energy, Petroleum & Hydrocarbon, IT, English language etc. The Programme draws an enthusiastic response in Sri Lanka every year.

The Programme has been modified into e-ITEC due to restrictions on account of COVID-19. More than 300 participants from Sri Lanka attended various e-ITEC Programmes virtually last year in diverse areas including on the pandemic and law and order. Upon a specific request from Sri Lanka police, a customized Programme was also organized and this was attended by senior police officers including Inspector General of Police of Sri Lanka.

In addition, India has been supporting the Sri Lankan youth by providing them scholarships to pursue undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral and other specialized courses in India. The scholarship program has gained wide acceptance amongst Sri Lankan youth and close to 150 Sri Lankan students have pursued higher education in India over the past three years alone.



Major General H. J. S. Gunawardena, Chief of Staff, Sri Lanka Army, sharing the Sri Lankan experience and best practices for COVID pandemic; during the e-ITEC webinar on COVID-19- Good Governance Practices in a Pandemic,(June, 2020)



Telecom Management, (April,2020)

