

Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

Activities in the Month of August 2012

10 – 12 August 2012

Photographic Exhibition titled “India Through Sri Lankan Eyes - The Buddhist Circuit”

Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo supported High Commission of India Colombo in organizing a photographic exhibition titled “India Through Sri Lankan Eyes- Buddhist Circuit”. The High Commission of India, Colombo organized this exhibition in partnership with the Photographic Society of Sri Lanka (PSSL). The exhibition was inaugurated by Hon. Prof. Tissa Vitarana, Senior Minister of Scientific Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka in presence of H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India on 10th August, 2012 at the J.D.A. Perera Gallery.

The exhibition titled "India through Sri Lankan Eyes" was curated by Mr. Mithra Weerakone, Immediate Past President of the Photographic Society of Sri Lanka (PSSL). Mr. Weerakone undertook an eight-day journey in December 2011 on the Mahaparinirvana train – a special train run by the Indian Railways starting from New Delhi covering various Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India. The photographs displayed an excellent combination of natural beauty and human devotion and capture the emotions involved, through “Sri Lankan eyes”. The exhibition was a display of popular Buddhist sites revered and visited by a large number of Sri Lankans to pay homage to Lord Buddha.

15 – 19 August 2012

Mohiniyattam performances by Dr. Kanak Rele and Nalanda troupe performed in Sri Lanka.





Colombo

Dr. Kanak Rele, accompanied by the Nalanda troupe performed at the Lionel Wendt Auditorium, Colombo as part of the 66th Independence day celebrations of India. Hon. D.E.W Gunasekera, Minister for Human Recourses was the Chief Guest and H.E Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India presided over the function.

The Mohiniyattam performance started with an invocation to the elephant-headed deity revered by the Hindus, who banishes impediments and grants success to any undertaking. It was followed by an enchanting rendering of portrayal of the four seasons summer, monsoon, autumn, and spring. The choreography of the item was done according to the traditional manner of the participation of birds and beasts who played a very significant part in human life.

The legendry Mohiniyattam dancer Dr. Kanak Rele, at her age of seventy five, performed a brilliant episode from the life of Lord Krishna based on a poem written by Mr. Sitakant Mahapatra. The composition was the dancer's response to the sufferings of women and her hope for women's freedom from exploitation. The Nalanda troupe performed another well-choreographed piece based on Geeta Govinda of Jaya Deva depicting the joy of being in love, before the interlude.

The musical interlude, led by Mr. M.S. Geerisan, a gifted vocalist, could enthrall the audience with songs based on Carnatic ragas in the style of the traditional Kerala singing Sopana. Mr. Narayanan Namboodri accompanied Geerisan on Mridangam, Mr. P. Nandakumar on Edakka and Mr. S. Balasubramaniam on Violin.

Under the stage management of Mr. C. Gopalakrishnan, who also did the Nattuvangam, the dancers performed excerpts from the dance-drama titled "The Enlightened One – Gautama Buddha", which is researched and choreographed by Dr. Kanak Rele. It highlighted the manner and method in which prince Siddhartha could achieve the ultimate salvation from the great agonies of worldly life.



Hambantota

The dance troupe led Dr. Kanak Rele performed at Hambantota in connection with the Indian Independence day celebrations on 17 August, 2012. Mr. R.C.D Soysa, District Secretary of Hambantota was the Chief Guest. The event was held at the Singapore Hall, Hambantota and 320 people witnessed the performance. The Consulate General of India, Hambantota and Indian Cultural, Centre, Colombo made necessary arrangements for the troupe and for the performers.

Kandy

In Kandy the performance of Dr. Kanak Rele accompanied by the Nalanda troupe was held at Hindu Cultural Hall, Kandy on 19.8.2012. The two hours of performance was highly appreciated by the audience. There were around 250 people from Kandy and nearby towns who came to attend the programme. The performance was organized by AHCI, Kandy in association with GOPIO and the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo.

20 August 2012

Symposium on “Relic Worship: History, Archaeology and Religion”

On the occasion of the exposition of the Sacred Kapilavastu Relics in Sri Lanka, Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS), Pali and Buddhist Studies Unit, University of Colombo in association with the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS) are organizing a half-day Symposium on “Relic Worship: History, Archaeology and Religion” at LKIIRSS Auditorium on 20 August 2012. The Indian Cultural Centre Colombo assisted on organizing the symposium.

In the inaugural session H.E. Mr. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India, Colombo, Hon. Prof. G. L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka and Hon. Kumari Selja, Minister of Culture, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, India addressed the gathering.

In the academic session of the symposium Dr. Sandagomi Coperahewa was the moderator. Dr. Ravindra Panth (Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, India) presented his paper on Relic Worship: History, Archaeology and Religion. The paper of Prof. Anura Manatunga (Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya) was on Excavations at Kapilavastu and the Discovery of Buddha's relics. Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne (Pali & Buddhist Studies Unit, University of Colombo) spoke on Relic-worship as religious practice: Personalizing impersonal Buddhist worship. The final paper was of Emeritus Prof. K. N.O. Dharmadasa (Editor –in- Chief, Sinhala Encyclopedia) and he presented his paper titled Worship of Relics in the Sinhala Literary Tradition.