

**Indian Cultural Centre  
Colombo**

**Activities in the month of June 2012**

**Tagore and Sri Lanka**

**Academic Seminar**



A One day seminar on “Tagore and Sri Lanka” organized by the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo, in association with the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies and the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies, University of Colombo was held on 12 June 2012. The seminar was organized as part of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary celebrations of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore.

The seminar commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, Executive Director of Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies. H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India addressed the gathering recalled that the idea of the Seminar originated on 7th May last year when Government of Sri Lanka released a special postal stamp to pay homage to Tagore on his 150th birth anniversary and the

University of Colombo had brought out a special volume “Remembering Rabindranth Tagore” with a message from H.E. the President of Sri Lanka. The High Commissioner announced that the deliberations of the seminar and the illustrations, letters, newspaper reports, photographs and paintings associated with Tagore's visits to Sri Lanka would be published in the form of a commemorative volume, which would serve as a treasure trove for students and researchers on Tagore. This was followed by the inaugural address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Senior Minister for International Monetary Cooperation, who emphasized the friendly relations between India and Sri Lanka and recalled that during difficult negotiations with IMF and World Bank, India had supported Sri Lanka. The Minister highlighted that the strong foundation of India- Sri Lanka relations was based on geographical proximity, history, common cultural space and people-to-people contacts.



The seminar focused mainly on the travels of Tagore to Sri Lanka and the cultural linkages they served to enhance. It was divided into five sessions, including three academic sessions and the inaugural and valedictory sessions. Eminent Indian author, historian and educationist, Prof. Bharati Ray, who is currently Vice President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, delivered the keynote address titled “ Through the Prism of Travel: Rabindranath Tagore's Internationalism” at the seminar. She underlined three aspects related to Tagore namely universalism, education and cultural exchanges. She underlined the impact of Tagore's visits to Sri Lanka which resulted in the cultural resurgence within Sri Lanka and at the same time, absorption of Kandyen and mask dances in future productions of Tagore.



The seminar was coordinated by the well-known Indian author and literary critic, Prof. Radha Chakravarty. Her presentation was mainly on Tagore's travels to Sri Lanka and the cultural inter-linkages. The three academic sessions featured presentation of papers by prominent scholars and artists. Dr. Sushobhan Adikary spoke on the influence of Kandyan dance on Tagore's dance-drama and Prof. K.N.O Dharmadasa spoke about the translations of Tagorean literature to Sinhala and its impact. Dr. Sandagomi Coperahewa reviewed Tagore's visits to Sri Lanka, whereas Prof. Vini Vitharana's paper was titled "Reminiscing within narrow domestic walls". Ravibandhu Vidayapathi spoke on the influence of Tagorean dance-drama on Sri Lankan dance-theatre and Chandraguptha Thenuwara delineated Tagore's influence on Sri Lankan visual arts. Prof. Tissa Kariyawasam, in his paper, analyzed Tagore as a visionary who visited Sri Lanka. Prof. Wimal Dissanayake, author and scholar from the University of Hawaii, presented a paper on the poetic humanism of Rabindranath Tagore.



The valedictory address was delivered by Dr. Jagath Balasuriya, Honourable Minister of National Heritage. The Hon. Minister announced at the Valedictory Session that the National Archives of Sri Lanka would be bringing out a compilation of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's speeches delivered during his five visits to Sri Lanka. Dr. Radha Chakravarty, the academic coordinator of the seminar summed up the various aspects issues deliberated in the seminar. Mr.P. Kumaran, Deputy High Commissioner gave the vote of thanks.

The event concluded with a beautiful rendition of *Rabindra Sangeet* by Charith Perera, a young and promising singer who studied music at Santiniketan.

Prior to the seminar, the Centre issued Press Releases to English, Sinhala and Tamil newspapers and television channels, printed 750 invitation cards and 100 Flyers, emailed to more than 4000 email ids. A number of press persons especially from Daily News, Daily Mirror, Island, Ceylon Today Thinakaran, Sudar Oli (Tamil), Lanka Deepa and some freelancers, 4 television channels (ITN, SLRC, Art TV and Sirasa) attended the Seminar. The Seminar was attended by Members of Parliament, diplomatic community, eminent personalities from the field of art and culture, civil society, media and other distinguished guests. The attendance of the audience was 225.

A day before the Seminar, Eye Channel (SLRC) held a breakfast show (live telecast) with Prof. Radha Chakravarty and Director, ICC, Colombo. The show was of 40 minutes length.

### **Lectures of Prof. Radha Chakravarty**

#### **Colombo**

Prof. Radha Chakaravarty delivered her lecture on "Tagore's Short Stories in English" at 12 noon on 11 June 2012, at the Department of English of the University of Colombo. The lecture was organized by the Indian Cultural Centre in association with the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies and the Department of English, University of Colombo.

#### **Kandy**

Prof. Radha Chakaravarty delivered her second lecture titled "Representations of the body in stories by South Asian Women" at 4.00 pm on 13 June 2012, at the Seminar Room, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya. The lecture was organized by the University of Peradeniya and the Assistant High Commission of India, Kandy.

### **ICCR Scholarships in Fine arts subjects for Sri Lankan students**

In the month of February the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo called for applications for the ICCR Scholarships in Fine Arts subjects for Sri Lankan students by issuing Press Releases in various newspapers in the 3 main languages. 56 applications were received and after the interviews 15 were short listed and forwarded to ICCR, New Delhi.

Out of the above students 10 received the Cultural Scholarship of ICCR New Delhi. The following students have accepted the scholarship in the following streams and joined the respective institutions:

<b>Sl.</b>	<b>Name of Scholar</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Institute</b>
1	Ms. Jeevarathnakumar Nivasini	Bharatanatyam	Kalakshetra Foundation, Thiruvanimiyur, Chennai - 600041.

2	Ms. Samadhi Anuraniijika Kuragodage	Kathak	Pracheen Kala Kendra, Sector 35-B, Chandigarh-160022
3	Ms. Hetharachenige Yashora Kalhani	Kathak	Rabindra Bharati University, 56 A, B.T. Road, Kolkata-700050
4	Mr. Lumbini Prasad Gunasekara	Kathakali	Kerala Kala Mandalam, Cheruthuruthy, Thrissur Dt., Kerala.
5	Mr. Hirimbura Gamage Madusanka Privadesha	Kathakali	Kerala Kala Mandalam, Cheruthuruthy, Thrissur Dt., Kerala.
6	Ms. Pathanathan Thadshayini	Carnatic Music	Kalakshetra Foundation, Thiruvannamiyur, Chennai - 600041.
7	Mr. Biyagamage Ishu	Hindustani & Instrumental Music	Rabindra Bharati University, 56 A, B.T. Road, Kolkata-700050
8	Mr. Heshaka Thilina Pilana Vithanage	Painting - BFA	Rabindra Bharati University, 56 A, B.T. Road, Kolkata-700050
9.	Ms. Gopalakrishnan Sihami Luxiska	Carnatic Music	Kalakshetra Foundation, Thiruvannamiyur, Chennai - 600041.
10	Mr. Senawirathna Ranhoiti Gamage Dinesh Ishantha	Painting - BFA	Rabindra Bharati University, 56 A, B.T. Road, Kolkata-700050

### **Morning Classes in Hindi**

With the joining of a Long Term Hindi Chair the centre has commenced morning classes for those who cannot attend the regular afternoon classes. At present there are three batches in the morning.