

## Indian Cultural Centre Colombo

### Activities in May 2011

**May 7**

#### **Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birth Anniversary celebrations in Sri Lanka**



Commemoration of the 150th birth Anniversary of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore in Sri Lanka was marked by release of a special postal stamp in the denomination of Rupees 5 and a First Day Cover by Government of Sri Lanka and of a Commemorative Volume "Remembering Rabindranath Tagore" published by University of Colombo on Saturday, 7th May 2011.

Releasing the stamp at a function held in Colombo, which was presided over by H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, Mr. Hemasiri Fernando, Secretary, Ministry of Postal Services of the Government of Sri Lanka said that release of the special stamp was the most appropriate manner in which Sri Lanka could have paid homage to this great personality who played an instrumental role in the cultural renaissance within Sri Lanka.

The first copy of the volume "Remembering Rabindranath Tagore" published by the University of Colombo with the support of India-Sri Lanka Foundation was presented by Mr. Wimal Rubasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Arts of the Government of Sri Lanka to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Colombo.



Volume published to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, H.E. the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka wrote that "Tagore inspired many Sri Lankans to develop and appreciate our own traditions of music and song and that Tagore also had a great influence on Ananda Samarakoon, who wrote and composed our own National Anthem". H.E. the President of Sri Lanka commended the initiatives of University of Colombo in collaboration with the High Commission of India and the Indian Cultural Centre for organizing series of activities to remember and honour this great Asian who reshaped and influenced thinking in our region and the world .



In his address at the event, High Commissioner thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for releasing a special postal stamp on this occasion. He said that this was a befitting homage to a towering personality who straddled the world of literature, art, music and intellectual discourse and contributed in a very meaningful manner to the cultural renaissance of India, Sri Lanka and other countries of Asia. High Commissioner recalled Tagore's strong association with Sri Lanka, which he had visited thrice in 1922, 1928 and 1934. He also noted Tagore's association with the Sri Palee Campus at Horana, whose foundation stone he had laid at the invitation of Wilmot Perera. High Commissioner announced that "Shaap Mochan", the play staged by Tagore during his 1934 visit, would be re-staged in Sri Lanka in November this year by famous Manipuri dancer Bimbavati Devi and her 21- member troupe.

High Commissioner especially thanked His Excellency the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for sending his message for the Commemorative Volume "Remembering Rabindranath Tagore".

Other events planned by the High Commission of India during the year to commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Tagore in Sri Lanka include a festival of films based on the novels and stories of Tagore and an essay competition in Sinhala, English and Tamil on Tagore for undergraduate students in the universities in Sri Lanka. The High Commission of India and Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Arts also agreed to organize later this year research by scholars on the three visits of Tagore to Sri Lanka in 1922, 1928 and 1934 and the impact of Tagore's visit in the cultural renaissance within Sri Lanka.

The special event organized to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Gurudev Tagore in Sri Lanka concluded with musical tribute to Gurudev Tagore in form of beautiful rendition of Rabindra Sangeet by Amar-Daya Foundation.

### **May 18 -21 Participation in the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi**



As a part of the activities being undertaken by India to commemorate the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi an Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsored Odissi Dance troupe presented a recital "Nirvana- the life of Gautam Buddha" at the BMICH Exhibition Centre, Colombo from 18-21 May 2011.

Hon'ble Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker of the Parliament was the Chief Guest during the 18<sup>th</sup> May performance. The troupe also performed at Kandy and Kegalle.

A photographic exhibition sponsored by Indian Council for Cultural Relations "Buddhism in India" by renowned photographer Sondeep Shankar was also displayed at the BMICH Exhibition Centre from 18-22 May 2011. India's contribution to the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi celebrations also included screening of a film "Gautam Buddha" by famous Director Bimal Roy and screening

ation", "The Path of Compassion", "The Land of Buddha"  
and "Path of Buddha" at the DMICH and Independence Square.

On March 20, H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka had inaugurated the International Buddhist Conference at Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Kandy, which was also organized by the Indian Council for Cultural relations (ICCR) as part of the joint commemoration by India and Sri Lanka of the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi. The other activities being undertaken by India to commemorate the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi celebrations include an exposition of the Kapilvastu Relics in Sri Lanka later this year, setting up of an Indian Gallery at the International Buddhist Museum in Kandy and installation of a 16 feet high idol of Lord Buddha in the Sarnath style from the Gupta Period at the entrance of the International Buddhist Museum Complex in Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy.

### **May 10 Talk on wildlife – Sri Lanka: the Last and Best Hope of the Leopard in Asia**



talk on Wildlife titled "Sri Lanka: The Last and Best Hope of the Leopard in Asia". He spoke about the Leopards in Sri Lanka and their living habitual. He interspersed his talk with a multimedia presentation. The talk was followed by an interactive session. Around 75 guests attended the event.

**May 12 – 15 Children and Youth Art Exhibition (To Commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore organized by the Tagore Society of Sri Lanka)**



The Tagore Society of Sri Lanka organized a Children and Youth Art Exhibition at the Centre. The exhibition was inaugurated with the traditional custom of lighting the oil lamp. The oil lamp was lit by Prof. Carlo Foneska, Mr. Kamal Premadasa, President of the Tagore Society, Dr. Leel Gunasekara, and Director of the Indian Cultural Centre Mr. M.Ramachandran. Prof. Carlo Fonseka garland the portrait of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. The Tagore Society brought out this exhibition under the Guidance of Mr. K.M.A.Bandara. Students from various schools participated and displayed their works at the exhibition. Around 100 guests attended the event.



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## Journey through Norwegian traditions

The Indian Cultural Centre organized an Indian tradition dance & Norwegian traditional dance concert in collaboration with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombo on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at the Indian Cultural Centre Auditorium.

The concert featured internationally acclaimed artists Andreas Ljones (fiddle) and Ulf-Arne Johannessen (fiddle dancer) from Norway and a collaborative Indian dance performance by the dancers of Aru Sri Art Theatre. Around 125 guests attended the event.



## Classical Dance by Aru Sri Art Theatre

The dancers of Aru Sri Art Theatre presented an evening of Indian Classical Dances at the Indian Cultural Centre Colombo 27 May 2011.

Aru Sri Art Theatre, the brain child of the reputed celebrity Kalasuri Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan was founded by her in 2004 to promote the visual and performing arts, nationally and internationally. It has bloomed into a centre par excellence in innovative, artistic and cultural creations renowned worldwide.

Its unique styles of performance based on the subtle nuances of movements has caught the attention of many lovers of art and music all over the world leading to international performances at several prestigious festivals in many world renowned concerts including the OSLO MELA festival in Norway, FERDE folk music and dance festival in Norway, SHANGHAI Music and dance festival in China, VOICE OF ASIA festival in Kazhakastan, NEW OPERA HOUSE Opening ceremony in Norway, and at the International RAMAYANA festival in Madhya Pradesh – India, at the 61st Anniversary of India s independence in Colombo, and several repeat performances of Ramayana for the Ministry of Tourism in Gujarat and Sri Lanka. The theatre, with its main mission focusing on ethnic harmony produced numerous multi-cultural concerts titled UNITY IN DIVERSITY through popular demand.

The latest production of the theatre is Mahakavi Kalidasa's SAKUNTHALA – a Dance Drama staged in Colombo in September 2009. A special performance of the said dance drama was held in Jaffna and a repeat performance of this production was held on popular demand in Colombo on 11th June 2010. The Theatre performed ethnic drumming and dancing in Norway in August 2010 at the MELA FESTIVAL on the invitation extended by Concerts Norway. The Dance performance included various dance styles of India such as Odissi, Kathak, Bharata Natyam & Kuchipudi. Around 150 guests participated in the event.





**May 23**

**Film: Do Bigha Zamin** – A film directed by Bimal Roy

**May 25**

**Film: Mahabharat (Vol. IX)**

**May 30      Slide Lecture - Ritual Performances of Kerala by  
Balan Nambiar, Eminent Indian Artist**

Eminent Indian Artist Mr. Balan Nambiar will be presented a slide lecture entitled "Ritual Performances of Kerala" at the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Balan Nambiar is a painter, sculptor, enamellist, photographer and a research scholar. His paintings and sculptures have received national and international acclaim and his works are in the National Gallery of Modern Arts and four Museums in India. He is the recipient of various awards including the National Award of Lalit Kala Akademi and the State Award of Karnataka LKA for his creative works and the Senior Fellowship of the Ministry of Culture of Govt. of India and the prestigious Nehru Fellowship for his academic research work. His two important works



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ork (2010) is a monumental sculpture in stainless steel, titled "The Sky is the Limit" for IOC, Delhi.

Mr. Balan Nambiar interspersed his talk with a slide presentation showcasing various ritual performances of Kerala. Around 75 guests attended the event.