

SANDESH

SEPTEMBER 2017 - FEBRUARY 2018



SANDESH

Published by
High Commission of India, Colombo

September 2017 - February 2018 issue



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi meets Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka at Hyderabad House in New Delhi (November 23, 2017)

The information and articles are collected from different sources and do not necessarily reflect the views of the High Commission

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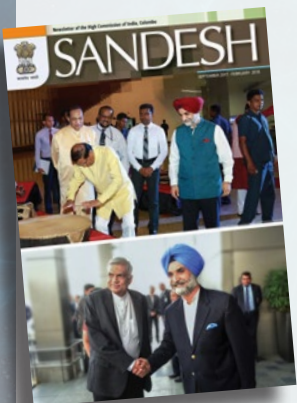
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Front Cover:

TOP:

H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena beating a traditional Indian drum during the celebrations of 70 years of Independence of India and Sri Lanka at BMICH



BOTTOM:

Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, was received by High Commissioner of India H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi (November 2017)

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External Affairs Minister attended the 2nd Indian Ocean Conference

August 30, 2017



External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Colombo, Sri Lanka on August 31, 2017 to participate in the 2nd Indian Ocean Conference. The two-day conference was jointly organised by the India Foundation, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore and the National Institute of Fundamental Studies (NIFS), Colombo. EAM addressed the inaugural session. The theme of this year's conference was "Peace, Progress and Prosperity" and involved participants from more than 35 countries. The first edition of the Indian Ocean Conference was held in Singapore in September 2016.

During the visit, EAM called on the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. She also had a separate meeting with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister. ■





Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka to India

September 09, 2017

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr. Tilak Marapana was on an official visit to India from 8-10 September 2017. He was accompanied by his spouse and senior officials. This is his first overseas visit after assuming the office as the Foreign Minister on 15 August 2017.

Foreign Minister Marapana called on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his visit. He also called on External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj held delegation level talks with the visiting Sri Lankan Minister and his accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and ways to further deepen the historically close and friendly relations between the two countries. External Affairs Minister also hosted a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary. ■





Visit of Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to New Delhi, India

November 22-24, 2017

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe was on a working visit to New Delhi from 22nd – 24th November 2017.

During his visit the Prime Minister attended the Inaugural Session of the '5th Global Conference on Cyber Space: 2017' held in New Delhi, where the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi was the Chief Guest.

Addressing the Inaugural Session, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe said that today, cyber space is the most crucial mode of transmitting information and

knowledge. Cyber space has become a key source of upgrading human lives, human resources and social transformation. Nevertheless, it has also posed new challenges to the social system. It has not only threatened civil liberties but has affected the personal freedom of people in many ways. Hence, time has come to focus on establishing a framework for an ethical cyber space, said Prime Minister Mr. Wickremesinghe. He noted that, there needed to be a balance between the freedom of information and civil liberties. The balance between the two can create the development of the cyber space and revolutionize the communication field.

The Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) is a prestigious global event which was launched with a view to establishing a more focused and inclusive dialogue between all those with a stake in the internet; governments, civil society and the industry



and, on how to use and implement the tools available in cyber space. It also aims to carry forward 'rules of the road' on behavior in cyber space. Representatives from 135 countries participated at the GCCS this year and more than 2800 viewers from worldwide participated live at the GCCS.

During the visit, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe had official bilateral talks with the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 23rd November 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted a Luncheon for the Prime Minister and his delegation. During the meeting, the two leaders reviewed progress of projects that

have been agreed upon and the implementation that needed to be accelerated.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that India is happy to join hands with Sri Lanka on development projects for economic advancement, which would provide employment opportunities for people. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe stated that Sri Lanka welcomes development projects with Indian involvement, which would contribute to Sri Lanka's economic progress and agreed that the two sides needed to work together to clear any difficulties in the implementation process.

The Prime Minister also paid a courtesy call on President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind at the Rashtrapathi Bhawan in New Delhi. President Shri Kovind stated that Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's leadership had contributed profoundly to the present status of close relations between the two countries and extended his best wishes to the prosperity of Sri Lanka. On behalf of the President of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe extended his warm congratulations and best wishes to President Kovind on his assumption of duties as the President of India. This was the first meeting between the two leaders after President Kovind was sworn in the post in July 2017. During the meeting, the President underlined the importance of taking forward the historical connections between India and Sri Lanka that formed the basis for a conducive economic and development partnership.

During the visit, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe also met with Smt. Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress. Smt. Gandhi was accompanied by Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, Shri Rahul Gandhi, Vice President of the



Overall, the visit paved the way to discuss at length the proposed agreements between the two countries on economic and technical cooperation. At the discussions it was agreed that the economic and technical cooperation should be based on the guidelines of the existing bilateral framework. The discussions with the President, Prime Minister and the Minister of External Affairs of India enabled the two sides to focus on further strengthening relations between India and Sri Lanka. The matters discussed during the last meeting relating to development projects were reviewed and the challenges ahead on implementation were focused during the discussions. The need to work together on Indian Ocean related projects was also emphasized.

Indian National Congress and Shri Anand Sharma of the Rajya Sabha. They discussed the current developments in Sri Lanka and views were exchanged on bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka and the developments in the region that impact on the political, economic and social fields of the countries.

Minister of External Affairs Smt. Sushma Swaraj called on Prime Minister Wickramasinghe during his visit. At the meeting the two dignitaries discussed the necessary steps required to strengthen the outstanding relationship between the two countries.

Prime Minister Mr. Wickremesinghe was accompanied by Prof. Maithree Wickramasinghe, Minister of Law and Order of Sri Lanka, Mr. Sagala Ratnayake, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Saman Ekanayake, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India, Mr. Chitranganee Wagiswara, Additional Secretary/Media at the Prime Minister's Office, Mr. Saman Athaudahetti, Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India, Mr. M R K Lenagala, and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Mr. Sandra Perera, who joined the Prime Minister at the meetings. ■





“Implement 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Building Broader Partnerships for Development” - Intervention by Prime Minister at the BRICS Emerging Markets and Developing Countries Dialogue, Xiamen

September 05, 2017

Your Excellency President Xi Jinping, my esteemed BRICS Colleagues, Distinguished Leaders

I am delighted to be here with you all today. Your countries are close and valued partners of India. And I am pleased to exchange perspectives with you on the shared priority of achieving comprehensive sustainable development. I thank President Xi Jinping for bringing us together for this dialogue.

Excellencies,

Two years since the adoption of UN's 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the imperative of collaborative action to achieve the goals is even stronger. Recently in July, India completed its first voluntary national review of SDGs. The bedrock of our development agenda lies in the notion of “SabkaSaath,SabkaVikaas” - that is: Collective Effort, Inclusive Growth. We have mapped each of the SDGs to our own development programmes and scheme, both at the federal and state level. Our Parliament too has taken the initiative to organize Parliamentary debates on SDGs. Our programmes are geared to accomplish these priority goals in a time-bound manner. To cite just one example, our three-pronged approach of providing a bank account to the unbanked, providing a biometric identity to all, and using innovative mobile governance solutions, has enabled Direct Benefit Transfers to almost 360 million people for the first time.

Excellencies,

We would like to see such domestic efforts buttressed by strong international partnerships. And, for this, we stand ready to do our part. India has a long tradition of partnerships with fellow developing countries, while pursuing our own aspirations for growth. At every step, we have shared our experience

and resources across a range of sectors: from strengthening democratic institutions to deploying high-tech solutions for public good. Earlier this year, we launched the South Asia Satellite to benefit willing regional partners in meeting their developmental goals in education, healthcare, communication, and disaster management. For over half a century, India's flagship initiative – Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation, ITEC - has offered training and skill development to 161 partner countries from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Caribbean and Pacific Island states. From Africa alone, over the last decade, over 25,000 students have trained in India on ITEC scholarships. At the Third India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015, with participation of all 54 African countries, we decided to double the number of ITEC scholarships to 50,000 over a period of only 5 years. The “Solar Mamas” of Africa, trained in India, are lighting up thousands of homes across the African continent. Our growing engagement with Africa has led to the African Development Bank holding its Annual Meeting outside Africa for the first time, in India earlier this year. Our development partnerships projects are providing water, electricity, roads, healthcare, tele-medicine, and basic infrastructure to people in dozens of countries across the world. And, in all of this, our “no strings attached” model of cooperation is driven purely by the requirements and priorities of our partner countries.

Excellencies,

The countries present here together represent almost half of the humanity. Whatever we do, will impact the world substantially. So, it is our solemn duty to make a better world – brick by brick, or, through BRICS. Yesterday, I had spoken about the BRICS driving the global transformation in the next ten years for it to be a Golden Decade. I suggest that this can be brought

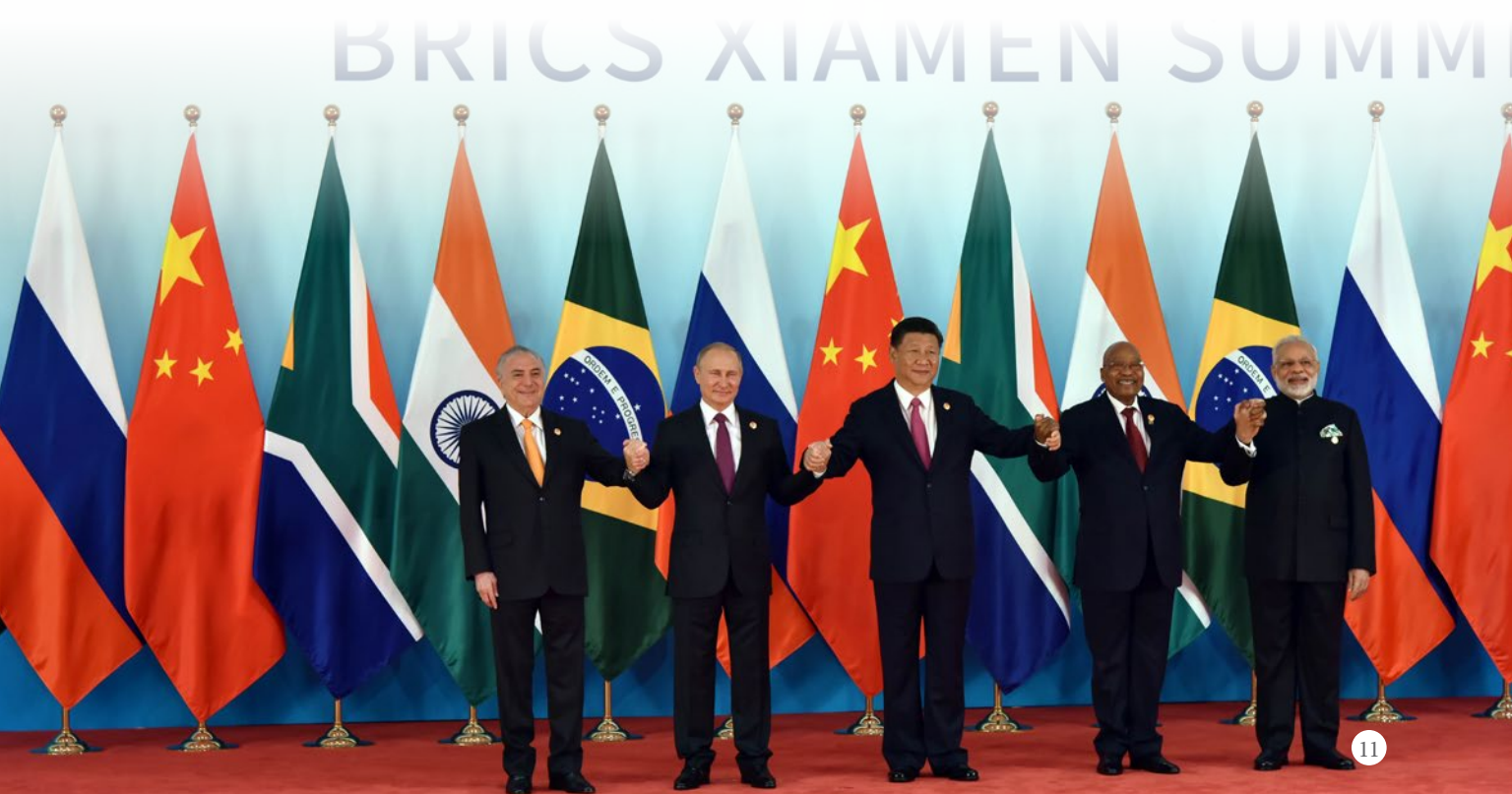
about with our proactive approach, policies, and action, on the following ten Noble Commitments:

- Creating a Safer World: by organized and coordinated action on at least three issues: Counter Terrorism, Cyber Security and Disaster Management;
- Creating a Greener World: by taking concerted action on countering Climate Change, through initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance;
- Creating an Enabled World: by sharing and deploying suitable technologies to enhance efficiency, economy and effectiveness;
- Creating an Inclusive World: by economic mainstreaming of our people including in the banking and financial system;
- Creating a Digital World: by bridging the digital divide within and outside our economies;
- Creating a Skilled World: by giving future-ready skills to millions of our youth;
- Creating a Healthier World: by cooperating in research and development to eradicate diseases, and enabling affordable healthcare for all;
- Creating an Equitable World: by providing equality of opportunity to all, particularly through gender equality;
- Creating a Connected World: by enabling free flow of goods, persons and services; and,
- Creating a Harmonious World: by promoting ideologies, practices, and heritage that are centered on peaceful coexistence and living in harmony with nature.



Through these agenda points, and action on them, we will be contributing directly to the welfare of the Global Community in addition to welfare of our own people. And in this, India stands ready as a willing and committed partner to enhance cooperation and support each other's national efforts; I look forward to our progress together on this path. I commend President Xi for ably steering the BRICS Chairmanship for the year 2017, and for his warm welcome and hospitality in this beautiful city of Xiamen. I also welcome President Zuma and commit India's full support for Johannesburg Summit next year.

I thank you. ■



69th Republic Day of India

Republic day 2018 in India was celebrated on 26th of January, at Friday. In 2018, India has celebrated its 69th Republic Day. First Republic Day of India was celebrated in 1950.





REPUBLIC DAY IN INDIA

Republic day in India is celebrated every year with great pride on 26th of January to honour the Constitution of India as it came into force on the same day in the year 1950. It had replaced the Government of India Act, 1935 into the governing document of India. On this day, national holiday is declared by the Indian Government. The new Indian Constitution was sketched and approved by the Indian Constituent Assembly and decided to celebrate it on 26th of January every year as India became a republic country.





CHIEF GUESTS ON REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA, 2018

The chief guests on Republic Day of India 2018 were 10 Leaders of 10 nations of the world (Heads of ASEAN states). Below is the list of names of all Chief Guests and their Nations:

1. Sultan and incumbent Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah – Brunei
2. Prime Minister Hun Sen – Cambodia
3. President Joko Widodo – Indonesia
4. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith – Laos
5. Prime Minister Najib Razak – Malaysia
6. President Htin Kyaw – Myanmar
7. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte – Philippines
8. President Halimah Yacob – Singapore
9. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha – Thailand
10. Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc – Vietnam



What was Special on 2018 Republic Day of India

Following was special on 2018 Republic Day of India in New Delhi:

- India celebrated its Republic Day 2018 with the great leaders of 10 Asean countries (Association of South East Asian Nations). This year in 2018, it happened for the first time in Indian history that 10 chief guests graced the Republic Day of India. It was very special because the Southeast Asian bloc completed its 50 years of formation (created on 8 August 1967) and India completed its 25 years of partnership (started in 1992) with the grouping in 2017.
- It was for the first time that ASEAN Flags were displayed through fly in the sky over Rajpath.
- It was for the first time that one of the floats showed "All India Radio" to display Prime

Minister's monthly address "Mann Ki Baat".

- One of the floats from Income Tax Department displayed anti-black money drive (swachh dhan abhiyan).
- 113 BSF women performed motorcycle stunts such as pyramid, shaktiman, fish riding, seema prahari, bull fighting, etc.
- Aircraft Carrier (IAC) Vikrant was displayed by the Indian Navy which will be commissioned in 2020.
- "Nirbhay missile" and the "Ashwini radar system" from The Defence Development and Research Organization were displayed.
- "Airborne Early Warning and Control System (Netra) flown over the Rajpath.
- Group of students from Delhi school performed to represent Indo-ASEAN ties.
- Around 700 students from the guest countries performed in the parade other than the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy.
- A float by Punjab displayed under the theme "Sangat and Pangat" (Sangat means communal harmony; Pangat means community kitchen) representing love for humanity.
- Kathak and folk dances of many countries like Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, etc were also displayed.
- Around 61 tribal guests were invited to participate in the Republic Day celebration.
- 100-odd government agencies were involved in the preparations for Republic Day parade 2018.
- State capitals celebrated republic day in the presence of governors of the state.

REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION

National Flag of India

Like Independence Day is celebrated to enjoy the hard won freedom of India from the British Rule, Republic Day in India is celebrated to commemorate the coming of its own constitution into force. It is officially celebrated every year in the national capital of India (New Delhi) at Rajpath in the presence of the Indian President. Besides, celebrations in various other states also take place in the presence of their respective state governors by hoisting the National Flag of the country.

January 26 is declared as the national holiday all over the country by the Government of India. It is celebrated throughout the country with great enthusiasm and show by the students and teachers in schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

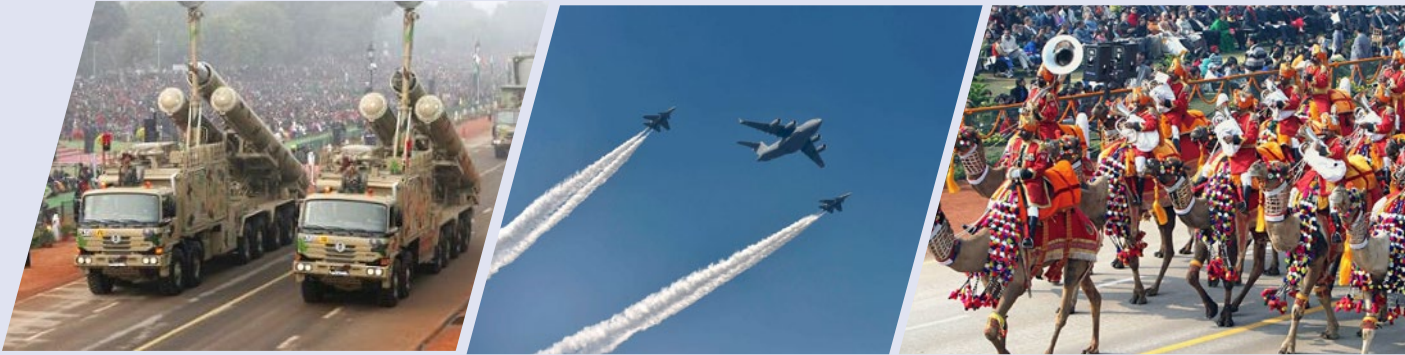
An excellent parade and salute event is held by the military team at Rajpath in front of the India Gate in New Delhi, India.



HOW REPUBLIC DAY IS CELEBRATED

Events and celebrations are organized with great effort by the government of India in order to celebrate Republic Day in the Capital. A huge, grand military parade is held in New Delhi at Rajpath as well as the state capitals. Participants from the Indian Army, Air Force, Navy and traditional dance group takes part in the parade.

Parade held in New Delhi especially begins when prime minister of India pays tribute to the Amar



Jawan Jyoti at India Gate. It is done to commemorate the sacrifices made by our Indian army soldiers while saving the country. Military salute is taken by the President of India during the parade in the Capital whereas military salute is taken by the state governors in their respective state capitals. On this special day, one foreign head of the state is invited as the president's chief guest.

On this day, the soldiers of armed forces, common people and students from the school are honored with various national awards, such as Maha Veer Chakra, Ashok Chakra, Param Veer Chakra and Veer Chakra along with bravery medals for their exemplary work and performances. Most strikingly, the helicopters of our armed forces perform a show in the sky and shower rose petals over the audience sitting in India Gate. In addition, you can also enjoy various dance and singing performances by the school children. The staff of the armed forces performs rides through motorcycle whereas the staff from the Indian Air Force performs fly parade on the fighter planes (making tri color of the Indian Flag with the help of smoke) for offering the honor salute to our president.

A range of traditional and cultural programs are performed by the professionals from different states to focus on the history and culture of our country. During this grand celebration, prime minister's rally and Lok Tarang – National Folk Dance Festival is also held from 24th to 29th of January.

All the government and non government offices of the nation and state, including post offices and banks remain closed on this day. Special security is organized on this day because of a huge gathering

and to prevent any mishap from happening.

HISTORY OF CELEBRATING REPUBLIC DAY

India got freedom from the British Rule on 15th August 1947. At that time, there was no permanent constitution of the country. It was on 4th November 1947 that the first draft of the Indian Constitution was presented by the drafting committee to the national assembly. The first draft of the Indian Constitution was signed by the national assembly in both versions, i.e. English and Hindi on 24th January 1950.

Thereafter, the Constitution of India came into effect on Republic Day, i.e. 26th January 1950. Since then, 26th of January is being celebrated as the Republic Day in India. On this day, India was declared as the Purna Swaraj Country and thus we began celebrating this day as the anniversary of the Purna Swaraj Day.

The Constitution of India empowered the Indian Citizens to select their own government. The oath was taken by Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the first president of India at Durbar Hall in the Government House. India has a big history behind celebrating the Republic day.

IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING 26 JANUARY

Republic Day is the symbol of true spirit for the independent India where Indian President hoists our national flag and grand military parades, exhibiting the military equipment take place, including a variety of other events. Indian National Flag is tricolor in nature having horizontal stripes, i.e. upper saffron, middle white and bottom of dark green colour divided in equal proportions and a wheel (navy blue colour, having 24 spokes) in the centre representing the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka.

India is a country where people from different cultures, societies, religions and languages live in harmony with each other. The freedom of our country is indeed a matter of great pride because needless to say it was obtained after many years of struggle and great sacrifice.

Therefore, this day is celebrated every year in order to make Indian people feel proud of having taken birth on this multi-cultural land. Republic Day is celebrated in a very colorful fashion in order to make

celebrations memorable and special for every Indian Citizen. National Anthem is sung by the people who take part in the celebration. This celebration brings all the Indian people together and instills a feeling of national pride as well as love for our country.

Republic Day (26 January) Parade

This is the actual picture from the Republic Day parade at Rajpath where the body guards of our president step out from the President's house wearing the winter ceremonial dress. The bodyguards for the president are selected through a special selection procedure performed by the Indian Army from cavalry regiment, based in Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi and the senior most unit of the Indian Army. The bodyguards of the Indian President are completely responsible for giving protection to the President of India. They remain fully armed with the equipment and BTR-60 vehicles in order to use them during the situation of crisis.

This is the picture of Republic Day parade where you can see an Agni-II Ballistic missile on the display at Rajpath. Agni-II is a great Indian ballistic missile of an intermediate-range having a target capacity of around 3,500 km to 5,000 km deep. It has been developed as the most sophisticated Indian ballistic missile of its range having the circular error probably within 40 meters of range. After it, the Agni-III Ballistic missile of India has also been developed as its successor in the month of June in 2011.

This is an exceptionally decorated picture of the Lion Capital at Rajpath on the occasion of the Republic Day of India. Right in front of the Lion Capital is made the map of India decorated with yellow flowers. In the middle of this map, an Indian Flag in tricolor is drawn out. Below the map of India, three circles are made within a big circle using flowers. Clearly, the Lion Capital wears such a mesmerizing look on this day!

This is yet another picture from the Republic Day parade by the exclusive BSF Camel Contingent of India at Rajpath. BSF of India is the Border Security Force of the Indian Government, under the administrative ministry control of Indian Home Affairs, which is responsible for guarding the Indian International Borders. BSF becomes one of the specially selected Central Armed Police Forces, which was established on 1st December 1965 to guard the International borders of India in order to maintain peace as well as to prevent trans border crimes. Indian BSF has the strength of around 240,000 personnel (both men and women) divided into 186 battalions. Indian BSF is the largest border guarding forces all over the world. The first Director General of the Indian BSF was K. F. Rustomji who had founded BSF in India and known as the "Founding Father of the Indian BSF".

This is a remarkable shot from the Republic Day

parade by the Indian Army Madras Regiment at Rajpath. The Madras Regiment of India is considered as the oldest regiment of the army formed in India during 1750s (Madras town was founded in the year 1639). It has become an old Indian regiment that experienced various campaigns of the British Indian Army and continuously as an Indian Army. Earlier during 1660s, it was developed as a Madras European Regiment by the East India Company; however later during 1750s, it was developed as a battalion by the Major Stringer Lawrence. After independence, the Madras Regiment was formed which has become involved in various campaigns like humanitarian aid operations and UN peacekeeping missions.

BEATING THE RETREAT CEREMONY – A MAGNIFICENT RITUAL BY THE INDIAN ARMY

The Beating the Retreat Ceremony is organized in Delhi, the capital city of India. As we know that the celebration of Republic day, i.e. 26th January, in Delhi kick starts with the multihued parade at Rajpath. But it's not the parade that marks the end of this glorious day because the ceremony is brought to a closure with the 'Beating the Retreat Ceremony' that takes place on 29th of January. The venue for this ceremony is Vijay Chowk or the victory square, Delhi, having the majestic background of Rashtrapati Bhawan.

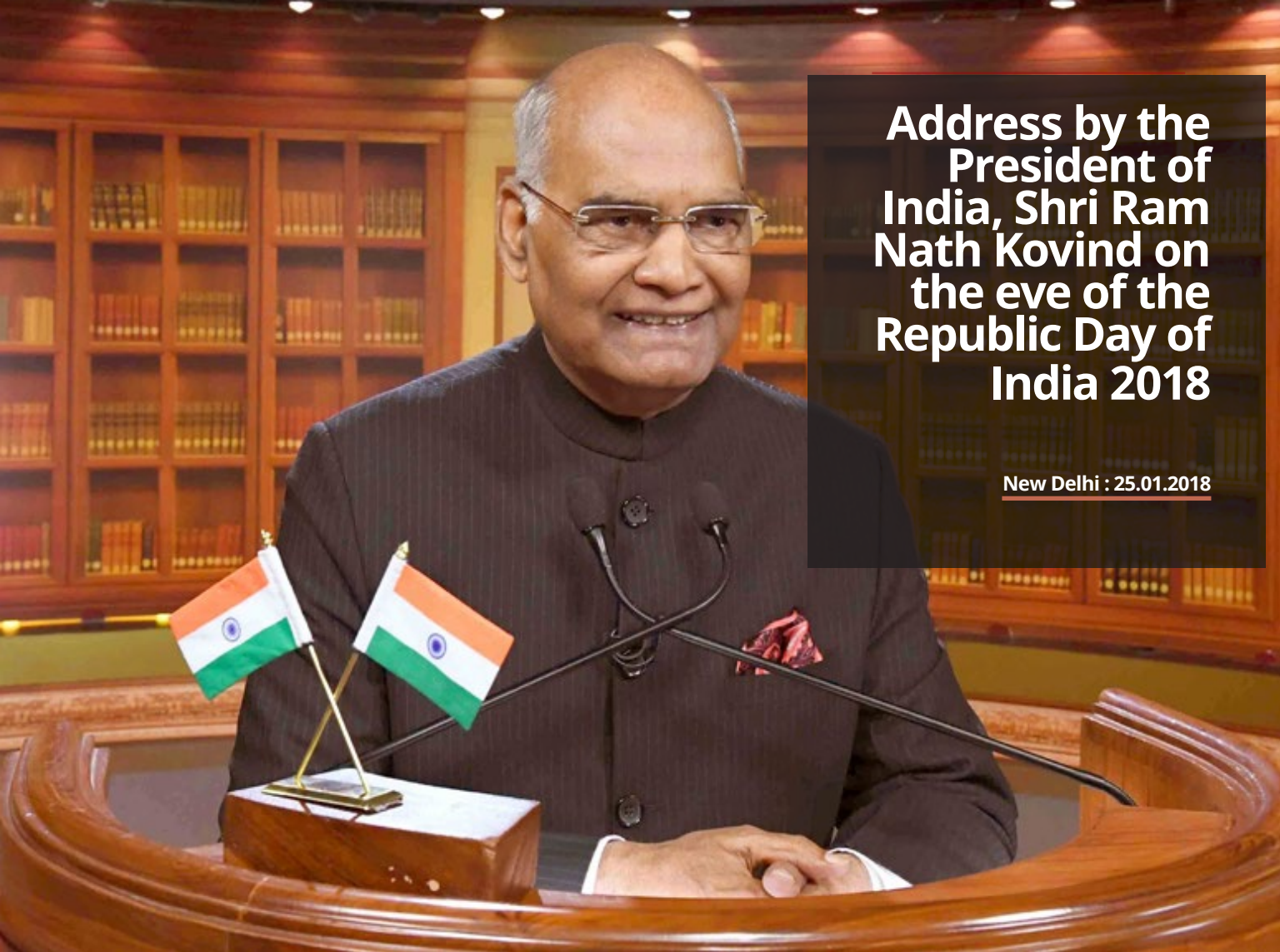
When Beating Retreat Ceremony is celebrated?

The Beating Retreat Ceremony is celebrated on 29th January in the capital city of Delhi. This ceremony is organized right after three days of the Republic Day celebration, i.e. on 26th January. The Beating Retreat Ceremony in Delhi officially marks the end of the Republic Day celebration.

Importance of Beating Retreat Ceremony

This festival of 'Beating the Retreat Ceremony' is observed every year in Delhi with a view to commemorate the age-old customs and tradition, which the soldiers brought to an end while approaching a war during the sunset. The sound of the bugles can be heard and its vibrations can be felt across the battleground and the fighting is called off.

This ceremony is marked as the official culmination point of the Republic Day celebrations. The whole view looks so majestic when the definite units of our military forces perform live executions. After their live performance, a hymn is being played by the group bands, which are collectively known as "Abide with me". On this day, during the evening the bugles are played in order to produce retreat sound and the National Flag is brought down with the singing of National Anthem in an absolutely musical harmony. There are silhouetted riders who recede into the background and with this the celebration is brought to a close. ■

A photograph of President Ram Nath Kovind, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a dark brown Nehru-style jacket. He is seated at a wooden podium, smiling slightly. In front of him are two small Indian tricolor flags on stands. The background shows a large hall with wooden bookshelves filled with books.

Address by the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind on the eve of the Republic Day of India 2018

New Delhi : 25.01.2018

My Dear Fellow Citizens

Greetings to all of you on the eve of our 69th Republic Day. This is a day for all of us to celebrate and honour our nation and our sovereignty. This is a day to remember with gratitude the enormous efforts and sacrifices of millions of freedom fighters whose blood and sweat gave us Independence and created our Republic. Above all, this is a day to cherish our republican values.

A Republic is its people. Citizens do not just make up and preserve a Republic; they are its ultimate stakeholders and in fact pillars. Each one of us is a pillar – the soldier who defends our Republic; the farmer who feeds our Republic; the forces that keep our Republic safe; the mother who nurtures our Republic; the doctor who heals our Republic; the nurse who tends to our Republic; the sanitation worker who makes our Republic cleaner and hygienic; the teacher who educates our Republic; the scientist who innovates for our Republic; the missile technologist who puts our Republic on a new trajectory; the wise tribal who conserves the ecology of our Republic; the engineer who re-imagines our Republic; the construction worker who builds our Republic; senior citizens who can look back with pride at how far they have brought our Republic; the youth in whom lie the energy, hopes and future of our Republic; and our dear children, who dream for our Republic.

There are so many more who contribute to our Republic in diverse ways and whom I may have missed mentioning. Happy Republic Day to all of you.

India became a Republic on January 26, 1950. This was the second major milestone in our nation building process. Independence had come a little over two years earlier. But it was with the framing and adoption of the Constitution – and the birth of the Republic of India – that we truly achieved the ethic of equality among all citizens, irrespective of religion, region or community. This ethic of equality complemented the liberty that had come at Independence. And a third principle also defined both the cooperative efforts at creating our Republic as well as the India that we wished to be. This was the principle of fraternity.

Independence had come after a great struggle in which millions had participated. They gave their all; many gave their lives. Inspired and led by Mahatma Gandhi, the men and women who took us to freedom could have rested on the gaining of Independence. They could have let down their guard, and remained satisfied with political freedom. But they did not rest. Instead, they re-doubled their efforts. They immersed themselves in the process of writing a Constitution. They saw the Constitution not just as a basic law for a new nation, but as a scripture for social transformation.

6. Our Constitution framers were men and women with great foresight. They understood the majesty of the rule of law, and of rule by laws. They represented an important phase in our national life. We are fortunate to have inherited its legacy in the form of the Constitution and the Republic.

FELLOW CITIZENS

The lessons from that formative period, the period that gave shape to our Republic, serve us well to this day. They serve us well in whatever we do, wherever we work, whichever goal we aim for. These lessons continue to spur our nation building project. Nation building is a grand project. But it is also the compilation of a million – rather, a billion – smaller projects, each as sacred as the other. Nation building is also about building a family, building a neighbourhood, building a community, building an enterprise, building an institution. And building society.

- A happy and equal-opportunity nation is built by happy and equal-opportunity families and communities. Families where girls have the same rights and the same access to education and healthcare as boys. Governments can bring in policies and laws to ensure justice to women – but these policies and laws can only be made effective by families and communities that must hear the voices of our daughters. We cannot shut our ears to their urgings for change.
- A confident and forward-looking nation is built by confident and forward-looking young people. Over 60 per cent of our fellow citizens are below the age of 35. It is in them that our hopes lie. We have made strides in spreading literacy; now we must expand the frontiers of education and of knowledge. Our aspiration must be to reform, upgrade and enlarge our education system – and to make it relevant to 21st century realities of the digital economy, genomics, robotics and automation.

Many programmes and initiatives have been launched to equip our youth with the education and skills to compete in a globalised world. Sizeable resources have been set aside for these programmes. It is for our talented young people to make the most of these opportunities.

- An innovative nation is built by innovative children. This must be our obsessive goal. Our schooling system has to encourage our children to think and to tinker, not just to memorise and reproduce. We have made strides in tackling hunger, but the challenge of malnutrition and of bringing the right micronutrients to the plate of every child is still there. This is important for both physical and cognitive development of our children – and for the future of our country. We simply have to invest in our human capital.
- A civic-minded nation is built by civic-minded neighbourhoods, whether in our cities or our villages. Where we respect the next-door person's

space, privacy and rights. Where we do not inconvenience our neighbours – while celebrating a festival or while resorting to a protest or on any other occasion. Where one can disagree with another viewpoint – or even with a historical context – without mocking a fellow citizen's dignity and personal space. This is fraternity in action.

- A nation with a sense of selflessness is built by citizens and by a society that embraces selflessness. Where voluntary groups clean public places such as beaches and rivers. And care for orphaned children and homeless people, and even for homeless animals. Where we donate blood or a body organ to help a fellow citizen who may be a stranger to us. Where idealistic individuals travel to remote places to teach children, and change their lives with the magic of education. They do so not because anybody has asked them to, but because of a call from within.

Where a better-off family voluntarily gives up an entitlement – it could be subsidised LPG today and some other entitlement tomorrow – so that another family, which has a greater need, can avail it. Let us all collate our privileges and entitlements. And then look at less-privileged members of a similar background, those who are starting off from where we once started off. And let each of us introspect and ask: Is his need or her need greater than mine? The spirit of philanthropy and of giving is part of our age-old culture. Let us renew it.

- A culturally vibrant nation is built by a collective will that cherishes and preserves cultural traditions, art forms and handicrafts. Whether these be folk theatre artistes, traditional musicians, weavers and handloom workers, or those whose families have been hand-making marvellous wooden toys for centuries. Or day-to-day articles made of bamboo.
- A disciplined and morally upright nation is built by disciplined and morally upright institutions. Institutions that respect their fraternal relationship with other institutions. Institutions that maintain the integrity, discipline and limits of their functioning, without compromising on excellence. Institutions that are always more important than the individuals located there. And institutions where the holders and members make every attempt to live up to the office they occupy as trustees of the people.

And of course the highest stage of India's nation building project is to contribute to building a better world – a composite and cohesive world, a world at peace with itself and at peace with nature. This is the ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – of the World being One Family. It is an ideal that may sound impractical in today's times of tensions and of terrorism. But it is an ideal that has inspired India for thousands of years – and that ideal can be felt in the very texture of our constitutional values. The principles of compassion, of assisting those in need, of building capacities

of our neighbours, or even of those further away, underpin our society. These are the very principles that we bring to the international community.

Such principles are also meant for our global Indian family. When Indians living abroad face humanitarian or similar challenges, it is natural for us as a country to reach out to them. We have, and we will continue to do so.

FELLOW CITIZENS

I referred earlier to that glorious period between Independence and our first Republic Day. This was a period of constant striving – of dedication, determination and commitment to improving our country. And setting right the aberrations of our society. Today, we are at a similar juncture. We have achieved a lot as a nation, but much remains to be done. We need to work on this in the spirit of the generation that gave us our Republic.

In 2020, our Republic will turn 70. In 2022, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Independence. These are special occasions and we must strive, in the manner of the leaders of our national movement and the framers of our Constitution, to build the edifice of a better India – an India where each and every citizen will be able to realise his or her full potential. An India that will reach its deserved pedestal in the 21st century.

We need to further improve the lives of our hardworking farmers. Like mothers, they toil to feed us – more than a billion of us. We need to continue to modernise and strengthen our strategic manufacturing sector so as to provide the valiant personnel of our Armed Forces, and our police and paramilitary forces, the equipment that they need. We need to move ahead rapidly on the Sustainable Development Goals – Goals that commit us to

eliminating poverty and hunger, to universal access to quality education and healthcare, and to giving our daughters equal opportunity in every field. We need to make clean, green, efficient and affordable energy reach our people. We need to ensure that housing for all becomes a living reality for the millions of families who await their own home. We need to craft a modern India that is both a land of talent – and a land of unlimited opportunities for that talent.

Above all, our Republic cannot rest and cannot be satisfied without meeting the basic needs and essential dignity of our less well-off brothers and sisters. I refer to those from a less privileged socio-economic background, from the weaker communities and from families that still live at the edge of poverty. It is our sacred obligation to eliminate the curse of poverty in the shortest possible time. This is non-negotiable for the Republic.

FELLOW CITIZENS

The promise of a developed India beckons us. This is the new stage of our nation building project on which we have embarked. This is the Republic that our young people need to take forward and enhance – in keeping with their vision, their ambition and their ideals. And their vision, ambition and ideals, I am confident, will always draw inspiration from both our republican values – as well as from our ancient Indian ethos.

15. With those words, I once again wish all of you a very happy Republic Day. And wish all of you a very bright and fulfilling future.

Thank you

JAI HIND!



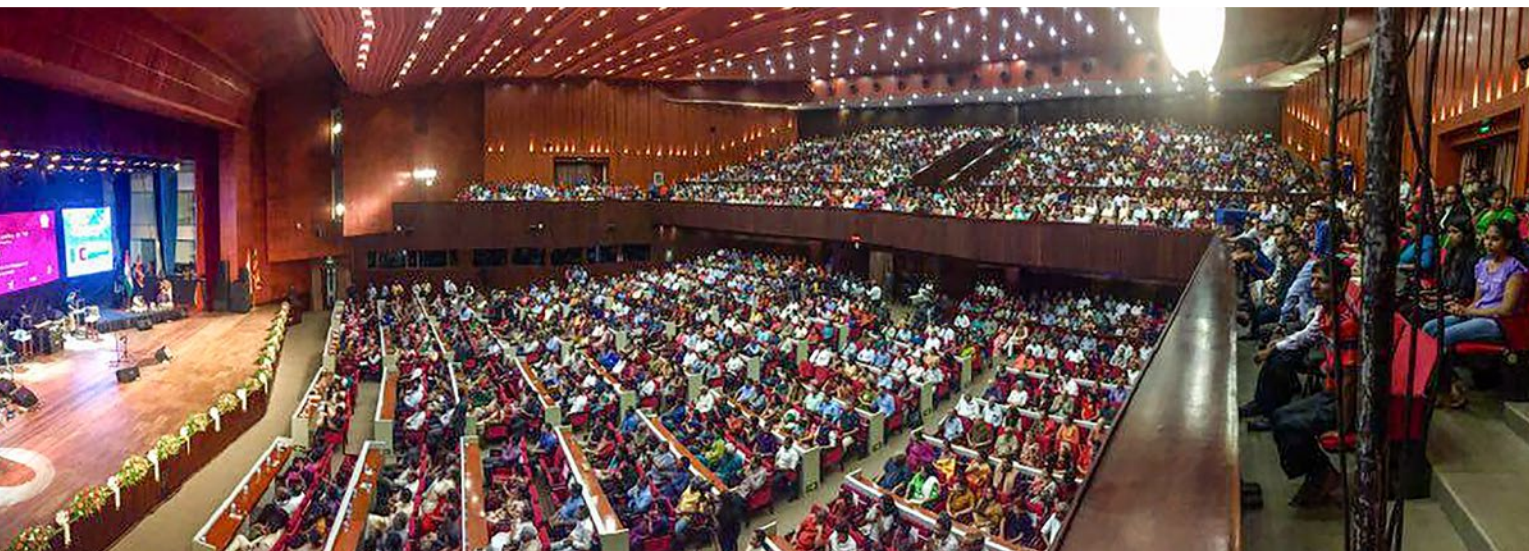
Musical evening in Colombo celebrates India and Sri Lanka @ 70



H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena, Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, a number of Ministers, Members of Parliament, senior officials and diplomats were among the dignitaries who participated in the special cultural event "Bollywood and Beyond" to jointly celebrate 70 years of independence of India and Sri Lanka, popularly termed as "India and Sri Lanka @ 70".

The event was organized by the High Commission of India in Colombo and featured an enthralling

performance by Indian violin wizard Dr. L. Subramaniam and renowned Indian singer Kavita Krishnamurthy. The musical evening showcased the beautiful blending of Indian and Western classical music with popular Bollywood songs. The duo was joined by their immensely talented singer composer daughter Bindu Subramaniam. They were accompanied by eminent musicians Tanmoy Bose on Tabla, Frijo Francis and Sanjay Marathe on Keyboard, Alwyn Dominic Fernandes on Guitar, Keith Peters on Bass guitar, Prasad Kulkarni on Octopad and percussion and Satya Sai on Mridangam.





The BMICH auditorium was filled to capacity and more than 1500 music lovers appreciated the performances and melodies of the artistes. The event showcased the shared cultural ethos between India and Sri Lanka and is a reflection of the vibrant cultural connect between the people from both countries.

A special exhibition of musical instruments from both countries was also organized, which was appreciated by the attendees.

Speaking on the occasion, High Commissioner Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu recalled the sacrifices made by both countries to attain independence and the successful democratic journeys undertaken since

then on the challenging path to socio-economic development. He also highlighted that close bonds between the two countries and reiterated India's continued development assistance to Sri Lanka in line with Sri Lanka's own priorities and requirements.

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Wayamba Development and Cultural Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, Lanka Indian Oil Corporation, Jet Airways, India Sri Lanka Foundation, Taj Samudra and MTV MBC partnered for the event. ■





69th Republic Day of India celebrations in Sri Lanka

January 26, 2018

The High Commission of India and the Indian expatriate community in Sri Lanka celebrated the 69th Republic Day of India on Friday, January 26, 2018 at India House in Colombo. High Commissioner Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu unfurled the Indian flag and inspected a Guard of Honour presented by a contingent of the Border Security Force. He read out excerpts from the Address to the Nation on the eve of the Republic Day by the Hon'ble President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind.

The President of India recalled with gratitude, the sacrifices made by millions of freedom fighters in obtaining Independence and creating the Republic of India. President's address complimented the contribution of various sections of people including soldiers, farmers, mothers, doctors, nurses,

sanitation workers, teachers, scientists, missile technologists, engineers, senior citizens, youth, children and many more, to the Republic in diverse ways. The ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – of the World being One Family and the principles of compassion, of assisting those in need, of building capacities of our neighbors are the principles that underpin Indian society - the very principles India brings to the International Community. President further urged all to renew the sense of selflessness, determination and commitment to craft a modern India that is both a land of talent- and a land of unlimited opportunities for that talent.

High Commissioner congratulated the Government of Sri Lanka on completion of three years in office. Recalling that both India and Sri Lanka celebrate





70 years of independence, he highlighted the special place Sri Lanka has in the hearts of Indian people. He recalled the exceptional high level bilateral visits including the landmark visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in May 2017. He further enumerated some of the many achievements in the last year including the expansion of Indian assisted 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service nationwide, completion of nearly 46000 houses in the North and East and ongoing construction of 14000 houses in the plantation sector, fresh infrastructure assistance of US\$ 318 million for development of Sri Lanka

Railways and US\$ 45 million for renovation of Kangesanturai Harbor among others. He added that India's total development assistance to Sri Lanka stood at US\$ 2.76 billion, with over US\$545 million as outright grants.

To commemorate India's 69th Republic Day a special cultural event "Bollywood and Beyond" was organized at BMICH, Colombo on January 17, 2018. The event featured an enthralling performance by Indian violin wizard Dr. L. Subramaniam and renowned Indian singer Kavita Krishnamurthy accompanied by other eminent musicians. H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena, Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, a number of Ministers, Members of Parliament, senior officials and diplomats were among the dignitaries who participated in the event.

The Consulates General of India in Jaffna and Hambantota and the Assistant High Commission of India in Kandy also celebrated the 69th Republic Day by organizing flag hoisting ceremonies this morning.





High Commissioner and officials of the High Commission paid their respects to the fallen soldiers of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in a solemn ceremony at the IPKF memorial in Colombo. ■



High Commissioner Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu's Republic Day January 26, 2018 Address

January 26, 2018

On the occasion of the 69th Republic Day of India, I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to my fellow Indian citizens and to the friendly people and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the National Unity Government of Sri Lanka, headed by H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena and Hon. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, on completing three years in office.

This year marks a very special occasion for India and Sri Lanka, as we both celebrate 70 years of independence. We take pride in being fellow democracies, where the will of the people reigns supreme, and in the enormous strides that we have made over the last seven decades. At the same time, we remain equally mindful of the challenges that lie ahead and continue to make relentless efforts to meet the developmental aspirations of our citizens.

We have a special place for Sri Lanka in our hearts. We are privileged that Sri Lanka shares our sentiment in equal depth. India will be there to support and partner you, whenever you need us. We believe that together, we can do more than what we can do individually.

Last year was an exceptional year for our bilateral relations. You would recall the landmark visit in May of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Sri Lanka, as the Chief Guest at the UN Vesak Day celebrations. This was his second visit to Sri Lanka in two years. In August last year, our External Affairs Minister Ms. Sushma Swaraj visited Sri Lanka. We had the privilege of hosting the Sri Lankan leadership in India as well on several occasions. This high level of bilateral engagement has resulted in tangible outcomes that are of direct benefit to ordinary citizens in both countries.

Friends,
Today is also an occasion for introspection. How did we perform last year, as neighbours, partners and, more importantly as trusted friends? Allow me to list out a few achievements or indicators of the year gone by:

Nothing is more noble than saving human life. Considering the success of 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service in Western & Southern Provinces, we agreed to expand the service nationwide with Indian assistance

A decent house is every man's dream. We have nearly completed 46000 houses in the North and the East; construction of another 14000 houses, in the plantation sector is currently underway. We launched construction of 1200 houses under Model Village Program all across Sri Lanka, and a Gram-Shakti housing Program in Southern Province.



Coming to infrastructure, we provided fresh assistance of US\$ 318 million for development of Sri Lanka Railways. We recently signed an agreement for over US\$ 45 million for renovation of the Kankasanturai Harbour. We are also looking at other connectivity projects including roads.

We are constructing a 1500-capacity auditorium for the Ruhuna University, which will be completed soon.

We are honoured to assist the Dalida Maligawa to set up a school to preserve and promote Kandyan heritage and dance.

We are helping establish a Trilingual National School in Polonnaruwa. We also upgraded Engineering & Agricultural Faculties in Killinochchi Campus of Jaffna University.

From last year, we opened up our premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to meritorious Sri Lankan students, and the entrance examination was held in Colombo for the first time. Sri Lankan



students can also take part in our National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for pursuing medical and dental courses in India.

We launched a Knowledge Network that allows Sri Lankan Universities digital access to more than 1600 academic institutions in India and beyond.

Our defence partnership became stronger with naval ships, Sayurala and Suraksha, built under Indian assistance, joining Sri Lankan Navy.

Our cultural and people to people relations touched new heights: Sri Lankan Airlines has become the largest foreign carrier to India. More flights were launched, including flight by Varanasi by Air India. India continued to be the largest source of tourist arrivals into Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan tourists too are among the top ten sources for the Indian tourism market.

Sri Lanka became a proud partner in the South Asia satellite, a gift from India to its South Asian neighbours.

Considering that India and Sri Lanka are both societies that respect technology and innovation, the first India-Sri Lanka Joint Research Symposium was held in Colombo in May last year.

As you would have noticed, our activities in Sri Lanka are centred around one theme: to touch the lives of ordinary people. India will continue to remain engaged with Sri Lanka, and offer our support in a spirit of partnership and cooperation, based on your own choices, and priorities.

India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has a compelling story to tell the outside world. I say this with all humility that India has become a land of limitless possibilities and endless opportunities. I would encourage Sri Lanka to take advantage of the growing economic prowess and technological strength of India. I genuinely hope that we craft together a future that our future generations can be proud of.

As Lord Buddha said, "there is no path to happiness. Happiness is the path". Let us walk the path of happiness together, hand in hand.

Long live India-Sri Lanka friendship. ■

69th Republic Day of India Celebrations at India House





69th Republic Day of India Celebrations at India House



Speech by High Commissioner at the Republic Day Reception at India House on January 26, 2017



Hon. Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Minister of Special Assignments,
Hon. Ministers of the Government of Sri Lanka,
Hon. Members of Parliament,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps, including some buddies for many years,
Officials of the Government of Sri Lanka,
Business leaders and friends of India,
Fellow citizens and people of Indian Origin,
Distinguished Invitees,

Thank you for your presence here tonight. I extend a very warm welcome, on the occasion of the 68th Republic Day of India.

Today is particularly special to me as, this is my first Republic Day reception as High Commissioner here. I have had the privilege of serving as an Indian diplomat in Sri Lanka some years ago. More importantly, on a personal note, Sri Lanka is special to my family. The most important person in my family is a Sri Lankan by birth. My daughter was born in Colombo's Joseph Fraser Hospital in 2001. I count many of you here tonight as old friends. I look forward to making new friendships and above all, I look forward, to working to bring, our two countries even closer.

More than two millennia of shared civilizational, religious, cultural and ethnic bonds, underpin the close bilateral relations that our two countries enjoy today. These ties have seen, a renewed momentum, after the assumption of office by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in May

2014 in India, and H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena and Hon. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, in January 2015 in Sri Lanka.

I take this opportunity to congratulate, the national unity government of Sri Lanka, on completing two years in office. These two years have been marked by, high level engagement, between our two countries. H.E. President Sirisena and Hon. Prime Minister Wickremesinghe chose India, as the destination of their first overseas visits, after assuming office, while Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi undertook a historic visit to Sri Lanka, in March 2015, the first stand-alone bilateral visit, to Sri Lanka by an Indian Prime Minister since 1987.

We were honoured that President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe have made a number of official visits to India last year. In addition, Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, and numerous other dignitaries, also visited India. From our side too, there have been a number of visits, including by External Affairs Minister last February for the Joint Commission Meeting, Commerce and Industry Minister in September 2016 and by Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare earlier this month. Further visits from both sides at various levels are expected in the months to come.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Indian economy is witnessing a resurgence, in economic growth despite a global economic slowdown. We are today, the fastest growing major economy, of the world, and is being seen as an engine of global growth. Over the last two and a half years, Foreign Direct Investment inflows, have touched US\$ 130 billion, while India's ranking on parameters, such as global competitiveness, global innovation and ease of doing business have moved up. Numerous legislative and regulatory reform measures, are being implemented, including an historic Goods and Services Tax that will truly make India, a common market. The demonetization initiative, will yield numerous long-term benefits. Reform of regulatory measures, have been initiated, and special initiatives have been launched, such as Make in India, Digital India, Smart Cities, Skill India, Housing for All and Start Up India. These have set India, on the path to being an efficient economy, focused on industry, innovation



and entrepreneurship.

India has made enormous strides in various fields, particularly in high technology and innovation. The Indian Space Research Organization, having successfully reached Mars and also launched 20 satellites on a single rocket, and is now targeting launch of more than 100 satellites at one go, a feat not achieved by any country so far. We are also developing, a reusable space shuttle. We are part of global efforts in fundamental research, through projects, like study of gravitational waves, and development of a 30



metre telescope. Our renewable energy expansion programme, is the largest in the world. The world's largest solar power plant was recently unveiled in India. India's internet base is now the second largest in the world. We are using biometric technology, to better target government assistance, to the needy, with more than a billion Aadhaar cards issued.

I would encourage Sri Lankan business leaders to take advantage India's growth story and technology strength. This also fits in, with our "neighbourhood first" policy, in which Sri Lanka has a special place, and which recognizes that India's growth is linked to the prosperity of its neighbourhood. Our bilateral trade and investment links are robust, and the India - Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement has played an important role in this. Nearly 60% of Sri Lankan exports, now take advantage of the concessions, under this Agreement. Investments, from both sides, are increasing. I also look forward to the implementation of numerous projects, by Indian companies in Sri Lanka this year, particularly in the energy and infrastructure sectors. Negotiations are underway, to conclude an Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement to take the FTA to the next level. I want to emphasize, that we will move at a pace, that Sri Lanka is comfortable with.

I am happy that our development partnership projects are progressing well, particularly the flagship Indian Housing Project, under which more than 45,000 houses, have been constructed on grant basis. We are now focusing on Central and Uva Provinces, where

an innovative community-driven approach is being adopted. Overall, India has committed over US\$ 2.6 billion in development assistance to Sri Lanka, with over US\$ 435 million as outright grants. Numerous Indian-assisted projects are underway in various sectors, including the emergency ambulance service in the Southern and Western Provinces. The high level attention in India to such projects, was manifested, in President Sirisena jointly inaugurating, with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the renovated Duraipappah Stadium in Jaffna last year. I would like to stress, that India will continue to extend, whatever assistance we can, to support Sri Lanka's development efforts.

Our cultural and people to people, relations remain strong. I am happy that we were able to present, before you today a cultural item performed by renowned artists from India. India remains the largest source of tourists to Sri Lanka, with over 350,000 arrivals last year utilizing the more than 150 flights a week between eight Indian destinations and Colombo. I am also delighted, at the response to the large number of scholarships that we provide for education as well as short term training opportunities, both in Sri Lanka and in India.

Our defence partnership is strong, characterized by regular high level exchanges of visits, joint training and exercises, as well as ship visits. We were privileged to welcome President Sirisena and other dignitaries onboard our aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya, last year at Colombo port, on its maiden overseas port call. Both India and Sri Lanka also share similar perspectives against terrorism.

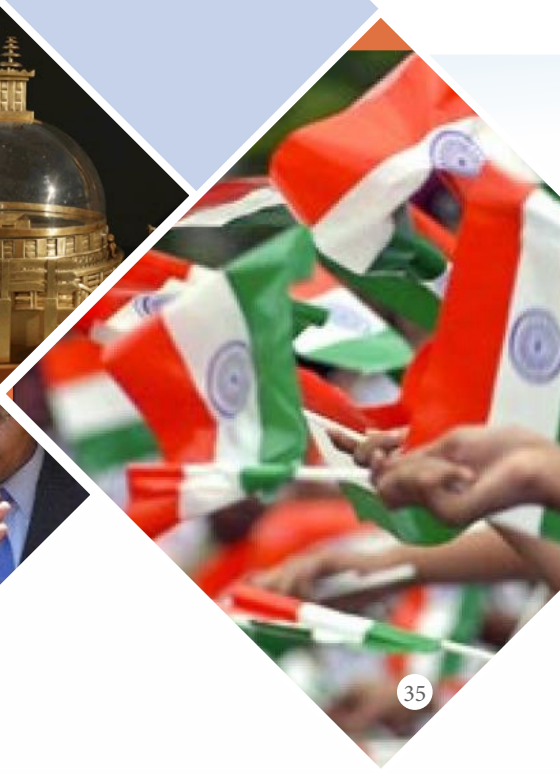
India has an abiding interest, in the security of Sri Lanka, and remains committed to Sri Lanka's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have always supported efforts, to preserve Sri Lanka's character as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society in which all citizens can live in equality, safety and harmony, and prosper and fulfill their aspirations. India will continue to remain engaged with Sri Lanka, and offer our support in a spirit of partnership and cooperation. We hope that ongoing efforts for constitutional reform and reconciliation are successful.

I am confident that India - Sri Lanka relations will scale new heights. Please join me in raising a toast to:

- the good health of H. E. President Maithripala Sirisena
- the continued progress and prosperity of the Sri Lankan people
- to closer friendship and cooperation between India and Sri Lanka.



India - Sri Lanka Relations







India helps renovate Saraswathy Central College, Pusselawa, Kandy

September 28, 2017



India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today, to renovate Saraswathy College, Pusselawa located in Kandy District of Sri Lanka.

The MoU was signed by H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka and Mr. Sunil Hettiarachchi, Secretary, Ministry of Education at an event held at the High Commission of India, Colombo, with the participation of senior officials of Government of Sri Lanka.

The renovation of the college will be done using a grant of SLR 96 million from the Government of India. The project includes construction of a new buildings to accommodate Science Labs, Lecture Halls and

teachers' quarters; repair and renovation of existing buildings including parapet and retaining walls; provision of office & ICT equipment, furniture etc as well as full renovation of the school playground.

This project is in continuation of Government of India's efforts to assist and cooperate with government of Sri Lanka in the field of Education including renovation of schools, provision of IT and Scientific Laboratory equipment to schools, organizing English language and other training programs, apart from granting scholarships to Sri Lankan students to pursue their studies in Sri Lanka and in India. ■

Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships for 2016-17

September 22, 2017



The prestigious Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships for 2016-17 were awarded to 150 Advanced Level school students from all 25 districts across Sri Lanka by Hon. Akila Viraj Kariyawasam, Minister of Education, Sri Lanka, Hon. V. Radhakrishnan, State Minister of Education, Sri Lanka, and H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India, at a special ceremony at the Ministry of Education Auditorium, Battaramulla on September 22, 2017.

The Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship, a merit-cum-means based Scholarship instituted in 2006-07 for Sri Lankan students, is awarded annually by the High Commission of India in cooperation with the Ministry

of Education of Sri Lanka. Recipients receive cash assistance during their two years of 'A' level studies. The High Commission of India has increased the scholarship amount from LKR 2,000/- to 2,500/- per month from 2015-16 onwards and accordingly; this year's awardees will receive Rs. 30,000 annually during their two years of 'A' level studies.

High Commissioner, while addressing the gathering, highlighted the importance of having closer interaction between the youth of both countries, various scholarship schemes Govt of India is offering to Sri Lankan students and the projects being carried out by Govt of India to assist Sri Lanka in the education

sector. He also spoke about the transformation that is taking place in India in the fields of Science and Technology, Agriculture, Space Research, Education and Health.

Hon. Minister of Education and Hon. State Minister of Education of Sri Lanka, in their speeches, recalled the robust Indo-Sri Lanka relationship and appreciated the Mahatma Gandhi scholarship scheme which has benefitted 1100 meritorious students since its inception in the year 2006. They also commended the other educational projects supported by Government of India.

150 students (six each from 25 districts) were selected in March/April 2017 by a joint selection committee comprising officials from the High Commission of India and the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka, based on the performance of students in the 'O' level examinations and an interview. Apart from this, Govt of India is providing opportunities to young Sri Lankans to study in reputed Indian Institutions of higher education through more than 270 scholarships per year, besides providing 370 short-term training slots every year to working professionals from Sri Lanka under ITEC programme. ■



President lays Foundation Stone for India funded Tri-Lingual National School Kaduruwela, Polonnaruwa District

September 29, 2017



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H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena laid the foundation stone for a new Tri-Lingual National School in Kaduruwela in Polonnaruwa District along with High Commissioner of India Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu in a special ceremony held in Polonnaruwa. State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Vasantha Senanayaka and other senior officials from Government of Sri Lanka attended the ceremony.

The Tri-Lingual National School is one of the key projects prioritized in close consultation with HE President Maitrapala Sirisena under the "Pibidemu Polonnaruwa" i.e. "awakening polonnaruwa" district development program.

The school would be constructed using a grant of 300 m SLR from the Government of India. The School would provide opportunities to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students to learn in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment.

This project is in continuation of Government of India's efforts to assist Government of Sri Lanka in the field of Education including renovation of schools, provision of IT and Scientific Laboratory equipment to schools, organizing English language and other training programs, apart from granting scholarships to Sri Lankan students to pursue their studies in Sri Lanka and in India. ■

Southern Naval Command's ships call on Colombo port

November 04, 2017

Indian Naval Ships 'Tir', 'Sujata', 'Sudarshini', 'Shardul' and Coast Guard(ICG) vessel 'Sarathi' belonging to the First Training Squadron (1 TS) of the Indian Navy functioning under the Southern Naval Command (SNC) were on a five-day visit to Sri Lankan capital Colombo from November 2-6, 2017. The visit is aimed at exposing the Naval cadets to the conduct of Indian Navy's warship in foreign waters, port familiarisation and foster 'bridges of friendship' between the two countries.





The 1 TS comprises six ships, including the indigenously built Tir, Sujata and Shardul, ICGS Sarathi and two Training Ships (INS Sudarshini and Tarangini). The Training Squadron is helmed by Captain D J Revar, Senior Officer 1 Training Squadron, who is also Commanding Officer of INS Tir.

The Senior Officer, the Squadron and Commanding Officers of the visiting Indian Naval ships called on the Commander of the Sri Lankan Navy Vice Admiral S S Ranasinghe. Later, Indian trainee officers led by the senior officer of Squadron visited the Indian Peace Keeping Force - which had been deployed on the Emerald Island to end the fighting between Tamil Tiger rebels and the Lankan forces - memorial and laid wreaths while the ships were visited by Sri Lankan NCC cadets.



Second International Conference on ‘Social Entrepreneurship’-Innovations in Social Enterprise for Development (ICSE 2017)

The Colombo School of Business and Management (CSBM) organised the Second International Conference on ‘Social Entrepreneurship’-Innovations in Social Enterprise for Development (ICSE 2017) on 1 December 2017 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. The Conference Partners were the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok and the Colombo Plan. High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu was the Chief Guest at ICSE 2017.

Mr. Kinley Dorji, Secretary General, Colombo Plan, Mr. Dian Gomes, Chairman, Colombo School of Business & Management, Prof. Ranjith Bandara, Head, Colombo School of Business & Management, Dr. Faiz Shah, Director, Yunus Centre, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok and Mr. Channa De Silva, Chairman, Sarvodaya Development Finance Ltd., Sri Lanka were also present at the inaugural session.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Sandhu spoke about the several initiatives and policy measures instituted by Government of India to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in India. He added that Sri Lanka also has a strong tradition of innovation, and that there is a lot that we can learn from each other. He also spoke about technology as a great leveller, and social entrepreneur has the potential to offer small solutions to big problems. He noted that innovation and entrepreneurship are critical for development, not just because they enhance productivity but they also address social issues in a novel manner. He urged Sri Lankan youth to make use of the varied learning opportunities provided by Government of India under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, various scholarship programmes and S&T research innovation programmes. ■



High Commissioner, Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu's Address at the second Annual International Conference on Social Entrepreneurship:

Mr. Dian Gomes, Chairman, Colombo School of
Business & Management,
Prof. Ranjith Bandara, Head of the Business School
and Conference Co-Chair,
Dr. Faiz Shah, Director, Yunus Centre, Asian Institute of
Technology and Conference Co-Chair,
H.E. Mr. Kinley Dorji, Secretary General, Colombo Plan
Mr. Channa De Silva, Chairman, Sarvodaya
Development Finance Ltd.,
Distinguished leaders from the Industry,
Esteemed members of the faculty,
My colleagues, Ashok & Suja,
Dear students,
Conference Participants,
and distinguished guests,

I am delighted to be here at the Colombo School of Business and Management for the inaugural session of the second Annual Conference on Social Entrepreneurship. I thank the organizers, the Colombo School of Business and Management (CSBM) and its Conference partners, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok and the Colombo Plan for giving me this opportunity to address young and thinking minds.

I will start with some probing questions.

How do we ensure that nobody walks barefoot on this planet?

How do we ensure waste-to-wealth transformation at all levels?

How do we ensure that our urban spaces remain clean and green, while addressing our quest for

development?

How do we incentivise people to take public transport in megacities?

I do not have answers for any of them, but I presume, you would have answers for some. You are social entrepreneurs. You think out of the box. You offer small solutions to big problems. You ideate. You breathe innovation. Simply, you create a better life around..

As you are aware, innovation and entrepreneurship are critical for development. They enhance productivity by leaps and bounds. That's not the only reason why it is important. They address social issues in a novel manner. They have the prowess to make societies more inclusive. They craft social empowerment. The theme of this year's Conference, 'Building an Intellectual Economy to Foster Socially Innovative Enterprise Development' is apt in every sense.

In today's day and age, technology is a great leveller. As Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has said, today there is an "app" for filling every gap! A farmer can today find out the best farming methods, thanks to his mobile phone. A fisherman can tie up the best price for his day's catch while still at sea. Students can access online courses from the best Institutes in the world, sitting in the comfort of their homes. Today, we see and speak with friends and relatives spread across continents almost daily, that too almost free. Behind all these sea changes, is not just technology, it is someone who found out the best use of technology to contribute to the society, a social entrepreneur who thinks differently.

As human life expectancy increases, we may not be able to survive with learning just one trade to last a lifetime. We need to learn multiple trades spread over our life cycle. We need to learn, unlearn and relearn. Some of the trades which were relevant perhaps till yesterday are no longer relevant today. Wikipedia replaced Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Smart phone has replaced calculator, camera, computer and what not! Disruptive innovations have forced us to rethink on existing strategies and business models.

As you may be aware, the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) which India co-hosted with the

United States concluded just yesterday in our tech-capital, Hyderabad. The US delegation was led by Advisor to the US President, Ivanka Trump. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi spoke at the inaugural session. This was the first time GES was hosted in South Asia. This year's theme was "Women First, Prosperity for All". The event highlighted India's enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. There have been participants from over 150 countries at the Conference, including Sri Lanka. Interestingly, over 31 percent of entrepreneurs at GES were 30 years old or younger. The youngest entrepreneur was just 13.

We have been able to create Brand India, known for its spirit of enterprise and innovation, thanks to our youth. The demographic profile is set to make India the world's youngest country, with 64% of its population in the working age group. With Western Europe, the US, South Korea, Japan, Russia and even China all aging, this demographic profile offers India an unprecedented opportunity for growth. We are, of course, conscious that demography only provides the potential; it is in our hands to transform it into reality.

The motto of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is to reform, perform and transform. In fact, Prime Minister himself 'crowdsources' ideas for better governance.

The Government of India has recently undertaken several initiatives and instituted policy measures to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. Flagship programmes, such as Digital India and Start Up India are aimed at creating virtuous cycles of innovation, economic development and social empowerment.

India has currently the largest, financial inclusion programme (Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana), in the world.

Adhaar, the unique identification system, has become the largest and most successful IT project ever undertaken in the world. As of 2016, 1.1 billion people (95% of the population) has a digital proof of identity. To understand the scale of what India has achieved with Aadhaar, you have to understand that India accounts for 17.2% of the entire world's population!

The JAM- Jan Dhan Aadhar Mobile- technology trinity- has enabled direct transfer of subsidies to intended beneficiaries and, therefore, has eliminated middlemen and leakages in the system, and checked corruption, touching upon the lives of millions of Indian citizens.

We have launched 'AIMtoInnovate' with over 900 Atal Tinkering Labs to promote a culture of innovation among children. Numerous incubation centres have been set up in various universities in India to nurture

India has currently the largest, financial inclusion programme (Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana), in the world.

innovative startup ventures.

Our recent World Food India initiative, which also saw Ministerial participation from Sri Lanka, focussed on entrepreneurs in the food processing industry and agricultural waste sectors.

Innovation, as we know of it today, may be novel in its approach and use. But, India's culture of innovation is not new. I do not know if you are familiar with the Hindi word, "Jugaad", sometimes used pejoratively though, which means finding low-cost solutions in an intelligent way, in an Indian way, if I may say so.

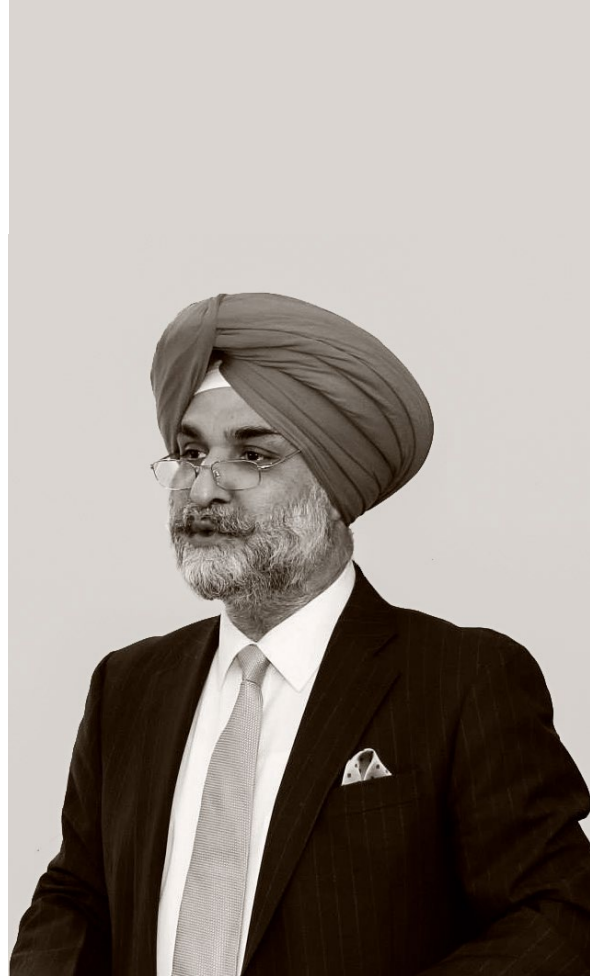
India currently has the third-largest scientific and technical manpower in the world with 162 universities awarding over 4,000 doctorates degrees and 35,000 post graduate degrees annually. India is ranked as the 3rd largest tech-based start-up hub in the world. More than one-third of the top 1,000 global R&D spenders have centres in India. The Tech start ups in Bengaluru and Hyderabad have changed the face of modern India.

Sri Lanka also has a strong tradition of innovation. The magnificent rock fortress in Sigiriya is a stellar example of this tradition. The traditional irrigation systems in Sri Lanka are another example. Basawakkulama reservoir, which is used even now, was built as early as 5th century BC by King Pandukabaya. It is also interesting to note that futurists like Arthur C. Clarke made Sri Lanka their home. There is a lot that we can achieve from each other.

India and Sri Lanka have been jointly funding S&T research and innovation programmes. This has further strengthened innovation and techno-commercial partnerships.

In addition, India has been providing fully-funded training opportunities to Sri Lanka, under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme over the last several decades. A large number of ITEC slots are for entrepreneurship and innovation related subjects.

Government of India also offers 700 scholarships annually to the Sri Lankan students. A number of these Scholarships are meant for undergraduate



studies, Postgraduate studies etc.

I urge you to make use of these opportunities.

A long journey starts with a small step. All of us may not be social entrepreneurs; but we can be socially responsible in our own way.

When we switch off lights in our office and homes when not needed; when we use cloth and paper bags to buy grocery instead of new polythene bags every time we visit a supermarket; when we grow vegetables and fruits in our home garden; when we contribute to recycling and upcycling in our own way; when we realize that every small individual action counts in making a global change; we not only make the difference, we are the difference.

I wish you the very best in all your endeavours. Let us together build a better tomorrow..

Thank you...





Remarks by High Commissioner H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu

Temple Trees: January 03, 2018

Expansion of Emergency Ambulance Service island-wide in Sri Lanka under Indian grant of US\$ 15.02 million:

Exchange of Letters



Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe,
Minister of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine of Sri Lanka, Hon. Dr. Rajitha Senaratne,
Minister of Law & Order & southern Development, Hon. Sagala Ratnayaka,
Deputy Minister of National Policies and Economic Affairs of Sri Lanka,
Hon. Dr. Harsha de Silva,
Chairman G.V.K.Reddy,
Officials of Government of Sri Lanka,
Dignitaries,
Ladies & Gentlemen..

It is the beginning of a new year, and I am delighted that we are starting our developmental journey in 2018, with a joint project, which is one of the most shining examples of the India-Sri Lanka friendship, the expansion of 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service nation-wide in Sri Lanka, under an Indian grant assistance of US\$ 15.02 million. This was announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, during his landmark visit to Sri Lanka, in May last year, as the Chief Guest of the UN Vesak Day celebrations. Today, we see the fulfilment of a dream.. a commitment transformed into reality.. one of most notable illustrations of success of a Public - Private Partnership model. There is nothing more noble, than saving human life; it is most satisfying to note, that we are able to assist our dear Sri Lankan brothers and sisters, in this endeavour.

This project is unique in many ways; I want to underline six main aspects:

Firstly, it is purely a grant project. We launched the Emergency Ambulance Service, more than a year ago, in July 2016 to be precise, in Western & Southern Provinces of Sri Lanka under an Indian grant of around US\$ 7.56 million. Today, we have reached an Understanding, for a further Indian grant assistance, of US\$ 15.02 million for extending the Service, to all other Seven Provinces of Sri Lanka. ■

Secondly, as Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi mentioned, in his video message during the launch of the Service, in July 2016, this is an example of how India joins hands with its dear and near partner, Sri Lanka to cooperate on projects, based on Sri Lanka's own choices, and priorities for development. We are meeting your aspirations. We are here to help, you achieve your goals.

Thirdly, the project is not just about purchase of ambulances and their usage. It is about use of technology for transforming lives, around us. Through

Lastly, I want to underline, the aspect of importance of looking objectively, at issues. The future of our two great nations, is built by leaders, who look ahead; it is built by leaders, who are passionate about their goals. If we are determined to achieve success, nothing can stop us, from reaching our goal. All we need is, the determination to grow together. Let me say it loud and clear, India has only one agenda, in Sri Lanka, that is, to cooperate and collaborate with Sri Lanka, on issues of mutual interest. For us, bilateral cooperation is, all about sharing and caring.



It is gratifying to note, that our cooperation in health sector has strengthened, in recent years. Excellencies, you would recall the inauguration of a new District Base Hospital in Dickoya, in May last year, built under Indian grant assistance, in presence of Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Hon'ble Ranil Wickremesinghe. We have also gifted the construction of a hospital in Vavuniya; and provided medical equipment to Hospitals in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu. These are important milestones in our bilateral relations.

this project, we are bringing new technology and best practices to Sri Lanka. GVK is here today, and they have demonstrated their ability, to replicate success stories of India in Sri Lanka. I take this opportunity to wish them, the very best in their continued efforts.

Fourthly, I would like to highlight the fact that, Indian development partnership stories are written, without caveats and riders. The project has created several hundreds of local jobs, and will continue to create many more. The classic features of any development story, are job creation, technology transfer and innovation. This project is a comprehensive mix of both...

Fifthly, we are extremely pleased with the commitment from Government of Sri Lanka and its leadership, to ensure sustainability of the project. Excellencies, you have put in mechanisms in place, so that this project 'survives', and is thereby able to ensure, 'survival' of precious lives of Sri Lankan citizens. Your nourishment of the project, is critical in future, which you have already so well demonstrated, in the Western and Southern Provinces.

It was Lord Buddha who said, "Thousands of candles, can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle, will not be shortened. Happiness only increases, by being shared". Let us be the light, for each other, let us together light the world.

Thank you..



India extends financial assistance of LKR 6.9 billion to upgrade KKS Harbour

January 11, 2018

An agreement for Indian financial assistance for US \$ 45.27 million (LKR 6.9 billion) for upgrading Kankesanthurai (KKS) Harbour was signed on 10 January 2018 in New Delhi by Mr. David Rasquinha, Managing Director, Export-Import Bank of India and Dr. R.H.S. Samararatunga, Secretary to Treasury of Sri Lanka. Senior officials from the governments of India and Sri Lanka were also present.

The upgradation project would make KKS Harbour a full-fledged commercial port, further strengthening Sri Lanka's efforts to become a regional maritime hub. It would also assist in reconstruction efforts in northern Sri Lanka.

It may be recalled that there exists an MoU between India and Sri Lanka for rehabilitation of KKS Harbour. Four out of the six phases of the rehabilitation have already been completed under India's grant assistance. This includes preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR), works related to Geo-technical studies, wreck removal and disposal, dredging and hydrographic survey. The fresh assistance of US \$ 45.27 million (LKR 6.9 billion) would be used for the remaining two phases involving works relating to the rehabilitation of the breakwater and existing pier, construction of a new pier for commercial cargo handling, installation of port infrastructure facilities, etc.

The signing of the MoU is a reflection of the continued commitment of Government of India to assist Sri Lanka in its development journey. ■





India & Sri Lanka expand IT cooperation

January 15, 2018

Hon'ble Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & Information Technology is visiting Sri Lanka from 14-17 January 2018.

Hon'ble Ravi Shankar Prasad called on H.E. Maithripala Sirisena & Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. He had detailed discussions on furthering bilateral cooperation in ICT sector with Hon. Harin Fernando, Minister of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure of Sri Lanka.

Hon'ble Ravi Shankar Prasad noted India's commitment to share the fruits of the ambitious Digital India programme with Government of Sri Lanka. He underlined the importance of digital inclusion, the need to use IT to uplift the people at the grassroots level, and the need for benefits of IT to percolate to the most needy.

An MoU for cooperation in IT & Electronics was signed between Hon'ble Ravi Shankar Prasad & Hon. Harin Fernando. The scope of MoU inter alia includes e-Governance, m-Governance, e-Public Services Delivery including e-learning, tele-medicine, cyber security etc.

A pilot programme on E-Office, an electronic platform developed by National Informatics Centre of India (NIC), which enables conduct of office procedures electronically was launched in Sri Lanka. The E-office platform is widely used in Govt. offices in India and has transformed the government functioning to a more efficient and transparent mode, removing the need for processing/storage of conventional paper files.

A knowledge partnership between National Knowledge Network (NKN) of India and Lanka Education And Research Network (LEARN) of Sri Lanka was also launched. This would enable secure and reliable connectivity between educational institutions of India and Sri Lanka under a Ultra High Bandwidth network. In one of its kind, several Universities in India and Sri Lanka were linked through a Digital Video Conference during the launch. Sri Lankan Universities would now be able to connect with Educational Institutions in Europe also through the network.

Top educational institutions in India & Sri Lanka are now connected through NKN such as IIT, Delhi, IISC, Bengaluru, JIPMER, Puducherry, MSU & MKU from India & Open University, Universities of Jayawardenapura, Ruhuna, Jaffna, Moratawa, Rajarata and Eastern University from Sri Lanka.

India remains committed to offer all assistance to Sri Lanka, based on Sri Lanka's priorities and requirements. ■



150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka: High Commissioner's address

14 February 2018



Ven. Religious Leaders of Maha Sanga,
Hon. AG, Judges of SC
Hon. Speaker Karu Jayasuriya,
Leadership of the Public Trustee of Sri Lanka
Dr. Wickrama Weerasooriya, distinguished guests
& Friends.

I am honoured to be here at the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka. I thank Hon. Karu for his gracious invitation. The statue of Sir DB Jayatilaka reminds us today of the struggles and sacrifices of our forefathers, that too when both our nations are celebrating 70 years of independence. It also provides an opportunity for reflection and introspection. Sir DB Jayatilakawas most honourable, scholarly, and selfless in his sacrifice for the country; he was truly giant of a man. We owe our existence today to brave men and women like him. I salute his spirit.

It was Thomas Carlyle, who said, that history of the world is nothing, but biography of great men. The history of Sri Lanka is definitely not complete without the special mention of Sir DB Jayatilaka. As High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, I will add that the history of India-Sri

Lanka bilateral relations, is also not complete, without acknowledging, the priceless contribution of Sir DB Jayatilaka.

Sir D.B.Jayatilaka's association with India started early. He was a linguist, well versed in several languages including Singalese, Pali, Sanskrit, English& Latin. He graduated from University of Calcutta in 1896 and went on to gain a BA in jurisprudence from Oxford. His formative years in Oxford provided the basis for a life-long friendship with India; he was active in the Society of Indian students in Oxford, serving as its Secretary, Treasurer, and President on various occasions.

Ceylon turned to India when the food shortage hit the country during the heights of World War II; Sir DB Jayatilakawas sent as an emissary, and India did honour his request and sent food shipments to the island. He was later appointed as Representative of Government of Ceylon to India. Unfortunately he fell ill when he was in Delhi; the Viceroy had arranged a special plane for him to return to Ceylon; unfortunately, he passed away when the plane was over Bangalore. He was later cremated in Borella. He remained a true son of Ceylon; he would remain forever, a true friend of India. Had destiny allowed him a longer life, who knows, what turn his career would have perhaps taken.

Sir DB Jayatilaka was a patriot, freedom fighter, national leader, philanthropist and a statesman of extraordinary vision. He was the perfect mix of the best of orient and occident. He was a flagbearer of Buddhism, and was deeply influenced by Theosophical Movement. He was also a great educationist. It might be a strange coincidence but it is true that in 1923, when Sir D.B. Jayatilaka was elected President of Ceylon National Congress, another great educationist, who would later become independent India's first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, was elected President of Indian National Congress.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in his Vesak Day speech, noted that the friendship between India and Sri Lanka was etched in time by the 'Great Master'. Sir DB Jayatilaka was a worthy son of the Great Master, and his contributions to strengthening the bonds between our great nations will be remembered forever. As Lord Buddha has said,' even death is not to be feared by those who have lived wisely.' Sir DB Jayatilaka did live wisely; let us be his worthy disciples and live wisely, today and everyday.

May the Triple Gem bless you all...

Thank you...



PDEXCIL organizes India International Textiles Expo-Colombo 2018

21-23 February 2018

The India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) - Colombo 2018-Exhibition cum Buyer Seller Meet organized by the Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL) of India was inaugurated at Hotel Galadari today. The three-day event is organized by PDEXCIL with the support of Ministry of Textiles & Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. The Chief Guest at the inauguration ceremony was Hon. Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Minister of Special Assignments of Sri Lanka. Hon. Anoma Gamage, Deputy Minister of Petroleum Resources Development of Sri Lanka, Mr. Arindam Bagchi, Acting High Commissioner of India, Mr. Felix Fernando, Chairman, Sri Lanka Apparel Export Association, Mr. Purushottam Vanga, Chairman, PDEXCIL were also present.

Dr. Sarath Amunugama noted the stellar contribution of textile sector to Sri Lanka's economy. He mentioned about the upswing in the sector in the post conflict period, and noted that there are huge opportunities especially considering the regaining of GSP plus status from the EU. He cited the rich textile traditions in both India and Sri Lanka, and said that Sri Lanka sourcing of textile material from India, and transforming it into apparel and garments for rest of the world, could lead to win-win situation for both the countries.

Mr. Arindam Bagchi, Acting High Commissioner of India noted that India would encourage Sri Lankan

companies to be part of the supply and value chains of large Indian companies. He noted that apart from traditional fabrics, there is a niche market for products such as banana and bamboo fibres, organic dyes; Sugandha Vastra (Ayurvedic Spice Dyed Garments) etc. and our effort should be to innovate and grow together. He also urged Sri Lanka to make use of fully-funded training opportunities in India, under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, in which a number of slots is earmarked for textile related subjects.

PDEXCIL has had a longstanding association with Sri Lanka since 1998. There exists an MOU between PDEXCIL and Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association (SLAEA), which was signed on the sidelines of Textiles India 2017, the first ever Global B2B Textile event held in India, organized by Ministry of Textiles, Government of India in Gujarat in June 2017, which saw participation from several Sri Lankan companies.

At the event, about 45 exhibitors from various textile clusters of India are displaying variety of fabrics (woven, knitted and non-woven), made-ups, home textiles, traditional items etc., in various blends, texture, colour designs etc., suitable for apparel, industrial, technical application and general consumers. This would be a unique opportunity to see the products of reputed Indian textile companies under one roof.



Impetus for Green Energy Cooperation President Maithripala Sirisena to visit New Delhi for the Solar Summit

February 23, 2018



The International Solar Alliance (ISA) Founding Conference and Solar Summit is scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018. An invitation to grace the Conference, jointly signed by Prime Minister of India H.E. Shri Narendra Modi & President of France H.E. Emmanuel Macron, was handed over today to President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena jointly by High Commissioner of India H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Ambassador of France H.E. Jean-Marine Schuh.

Around 500 delegates from all

over the world are expected to participate in the Conference including around 30 Heads of State/ Government.

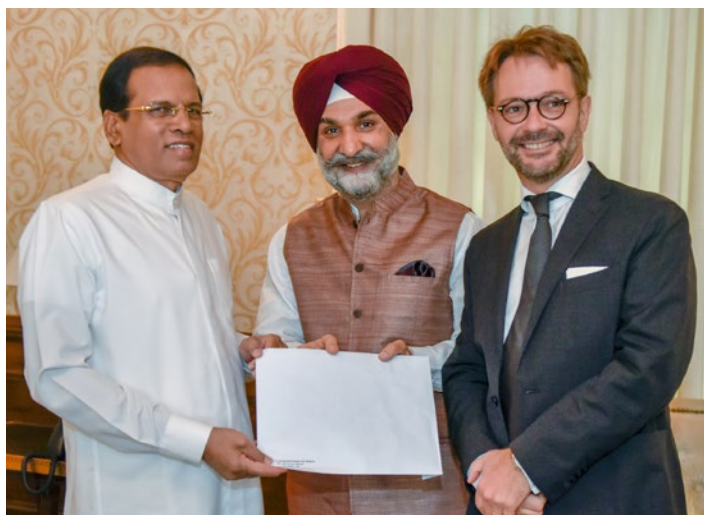
Sri Lanka signed the Framework Agreement on ISA on 31 January 2018 in New Delhi. With the completion of the ratification process, Sri Lanka has now become a full-fledged member of ISA. As on date, 54 countries have signed / ratified ISA.

President Maithripala Sirisena attended the launch of ISA at the COP-21 in Paris on 30 November 2015. The ISA was launched by

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi & the then President of France H.E. Francois Hollande. The ISA is conceived as a coalition of 121 solar resource rich countries (lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn) to address their energy needs, through a common platform for collaboration, for achieving speed, scale and skills for deploying available solar technologies; facilitating strategic and collaborative solar R&D; and lowering the cost of finance for solar projects and capacity building.

The ISA aims to mobilize more than US \$ 1 trillion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy. ISA is committed to contribute significantly towards the global efforts for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The ISA is headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana. ISA became a full fledged legal entity on 6 December 2017. ■



GOING 'DESI' WITH STREET FOOD

February 26, 2018 - www.dailynews.lk



The Fairway Colombo street food festival in January saw Indian street food being featured in collaboration with Country Food Promotions as well as the Indo-Sri Lanka Cultural Foundation and the Indian Cultural Center representing the High Commission of India.





The presence of the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu added glamour to the evening and without doubt the evening offered the authentic taste of India to the visitors.

India is naturally a food paradise with a vast variety of food and delicacies. From the Himalayan Mountains of the north to the Punjabi plains, the Goan beaches and the backwaters of Kerala, Indian cuisine is diverse in all palatable sense. The Fairway Colombo Street Food Festival captured the essence of this myriad of gastronomical experiences by bringing to the table the favourites from each state.

The Indian Street Food Festival was an exciting twist for food lovers as it presented a plethora of tantalizing dishes. Indian music set the festive mood while the traditional and modern dances added colour to the night as visitors thronged to Hospital Street.

Fairway Colombo's many ventures including the Cultural Show, Art and Jazz on the Street, and Jam on the Street have made Hospital Street in Colombo a regular hub of entertainment attracting the locals and foreigners alike. ■



25th Anniversary of Kala-Pola- 2018

September 2017 - February 2018

High Commissioner Shri Taranjit Sandhu was the Chief Guest at the 25th Anniversary of annual art fair (KalaPola.) More than 300 artists from all over Sri Lanka exhibited their creativity at the serene surroundings of Vihara Mahadevi Park. Visited by almost 20000 art connoisseurs from all over the world.

February 25, 2018

Distinguished Guests, Organizing Committee of Kala-Pola, Artists from all over Sri Lanka, Art lovers from all over the world...

I am glad to be here at the 25th Edition of Kala Pola in this green and serene surroundings of iconic Vihara Mahadevi Park. I would like to call 'Kala Pola' the 'Montmartre of South Asia'. There are not many places in South Asia such as these. Who knows some of you here may be Picassos of tomorrow!

25 years is a real milestone. On this silver jubilee year, I compliment the organizers, George Keyt Foundation and John Keells Holdings, for this significant achievement. You have facilitated the process of art reaching the people. This is truly uplifting, even spiritually, as I believe that art and creativity clean our souls. The enthusiastic artists and art lovers that I see around reflect that they have made this fair their own..their very own..

World renowned art historian from Sri Lanka, Ananda Coomaraswamy, in whose memory the road here is named, had once remarked, "The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."

Sri Lanka is blessed with a rich art history. The famous rock paintings at Sigiriya and the cave paintings in Dambulla are a testimony to Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage. More such evidences can be found in folk paintings, sculptures, and handicrafts of Sri Lanka.

India also is equally blessed. Some of the rock paintings found in the Bhimbetka rock shelters in Madhya Pradesh in India are approximately 30,000 years old. Indian art has of course come a long way: Literally, every Province in India can today boast of its own art traditions, whether it is Patta Chitra from Orissa and West Bengal; Buddhist Thangka from Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh; Phad of Rajasthan; puranic mural paintings of Kerala; Tanjore paintings of Tamil Nadu; Mysore paintings of Karnataka and so on...India is also proud of its rich legacy of Buddhist art & architecture, which essentially is aimed at upliftment of human mind, and bless the viewers with inner peace.

It is heartening to note that we, at the High Commission, have been able to organize Shilpa Kala and Shankar's



Children Art competition every year with participation from all over the island. Under the patronage of India-Sri Lanka Foundation, many artists from Sri Lanka have been able to visit India and showcase their skills. We also provide scholarships to young artists from Sri Lanka to study visual arts in world renowned Universities in India such as Vishwa Bharati, Rabindra Bharati and others. There is of course much more that we can do together...

The possibilities of art are constrained only by our imagination. As High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, I can say with confidence that the possibilities of India-Sri Lanka partnership are also constrained only by our imagination. We need to together work on this beautiful artform; beautiful friendship.

I once again congratulate the organisers and all the participating artists on this momentous occasion of silver jubilee of Kala Pola and wish them greater success in years to come.

It was Lord Buddha who said, "Happiness comes when your work is of benefit to yourself and others." Artists truly make the people around happy and make this world a better place!

Thank you..



KNOW INDIA PROGRAMME (KIP) FOR INDIAN DIASPORA YOUTH

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India has launched the following tentative schedule of the 45th and 46th edition of the “KNOW INDIA PROGRAMME (KIP)”

	Tentative Date	Partner State
45th KIP	January 2018	Rajasthan
46th KIP	January-	
	February 2018	Madhya Pradesh

This programme is open for Overseas Indians residing in Sri Lanka in the age group of 18-30 years who have distinguished themselves in various fields and who have shown an abiding interest in India and links with India through parentage. Non Resident Indians (NRIs) are not eligible to apply for this programme.

The KIP in the nature of an Orientation Programme is expected to provide the participants exposure to various facets of the Indian way of life, culture, spirituality, adventure and sports, creativity and composite character of India and interaction with youth from different parts of the country. The activities of KIP Participants within Partner State will involve visit to historical, cultural, industrial, academic and tourist places along with meeting the constitutional head, Hon’ble Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, Chief

Minister and other eminent personalities. They are also given exposure of village life and interactive sessions in premier university/ institution/organization within the State.

High Commission of India will arrange return air ticket subject to 10% of the total airfare is deposited by the participants. The participants would need to give an undertaking that he/ she will complete the KIP, failing which amount spent on airfare by Govt of India will have to be reimbursed to the High Commission of India.

Eligible applicants need to login the KIP portal www.kip.gov.in and register for the same. All the information regarding registration, application and guidelines are available in the site. The last date of the registration by applicant is 19 November, 2017. ■

High Commission of India offers fully funded training programmes in India

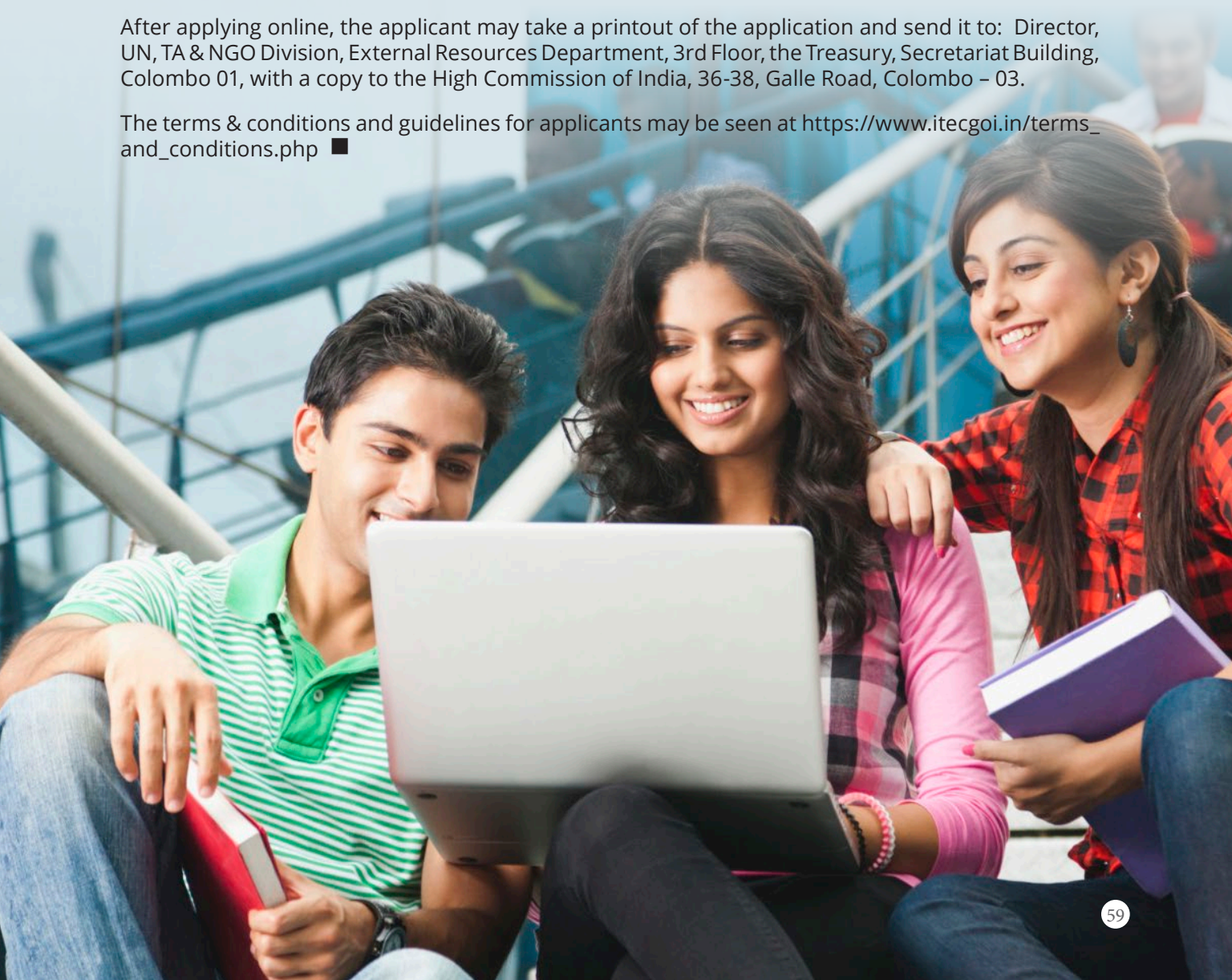
More than 40 training courses, spread over a multitude of sectors, in various institutions in India are available for Government of Sri Lanka officials (45 years of age and below) under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India from 15 January to 31 March 2018. The courses are fully funded by Government of India and cover airfare, accommodation, study tours, course fee, living allowance, book allowance etc.

The streams include Leadership & Skill Development, International Trade, Management, Accounting, Water resources, Entrepreneurship, Renewable Energy, Governance, Telemedicine, IT, English language, Agriculture, Rural Development, Tourism etc. Details are available at <https://www.itecgoi.in/coursecal.php>

Those who are interested may apply for ITEC courses online (<https://www.itecgoi.in/meaportal/registerApplicant>). The applicants can choose their own login email ID and create their login password. They can check on the status of their application online.

After applying online, the applicant may take a printout of the application and send it to: Director, UN, TA & NGO Division, External Resources Department, 3rd Floor, the Treasury, Secretariat Building, Colombo 01, with a copy to the High Commission of India, 36-38, Galle Road, Colombo – 03.

The terms & conditions and guidelines for applicants may be seen at https://www.itecgoi.in/terms_and_conditions.php ■



UNDER GRADUATE AND POST GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDYING IN INDIA

The High Commission of India, Colombo announces the offer for the following ICCR scholarships for 2018 -19 academic sessions:

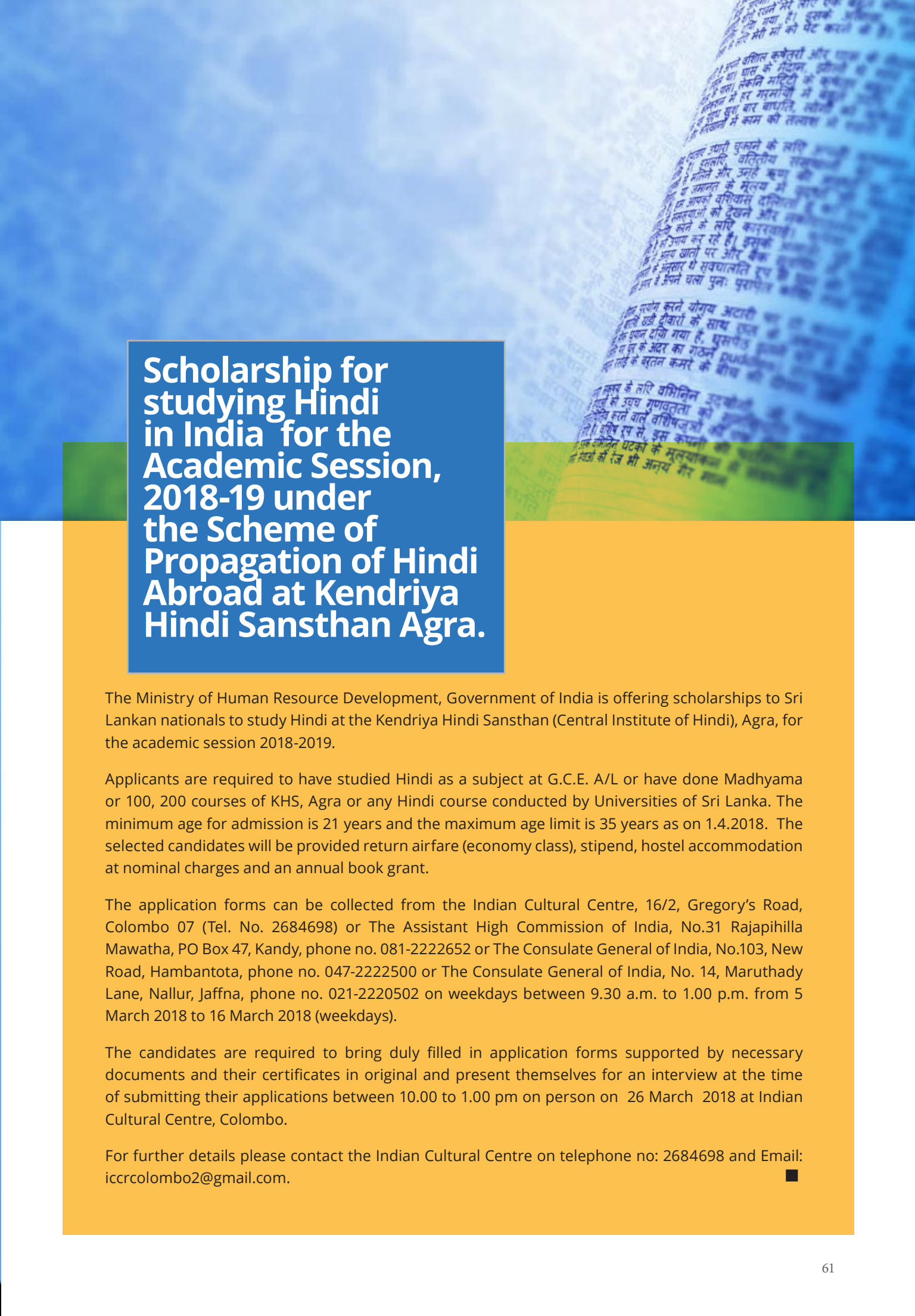
- **Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme:**
Hundred (100) slots are being offered under this scheme which covers all Undergraduate courses (except Medicine) including Engineering, Science, Business, Economics, Commerce, Humanities and Arts (including Classical Music, Classical Dance and Visual Arts).
- **Maulana Azad Scholarship Scheme:**
Fifty (50) scholarships for Masters Degrees courses including Engineering, Science, Economics, Commerce, Humanities and Arts. However, preference would be given to the fields of Engineering, Science and Agriculture.
- **Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship Scheme:**
Twenty five (25) slots for Undergraduate courses in the field of IT/B.E/B.Tech.

The Government of India selects meritorious Sri Lankan nationals for award of these scholarships. Selection of candidates is done in consultation with the Ministry of Higher Education & Highways, Government of Sri Lanka, to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate Degrees in some of the topmost Universities and Institutions in India.

All scholarships cover full tuition fees for the entire duration of the course, monthly sustenance allowance, and annual grant for books and stationery. The selected candidates would also be provided hostel facility inside the campus. Besides, all ICCR scholars in India are provided full healthcare facilities, air fare to the nearest destination in India and an annual grant for educational tours to various parts of the country, apart from several other auxiliary benefits.

The eligible candidates can download the application forms from the website of Ministry of Higher Education & Highways at www.mohe.gov.lk. The last date for submission of duly filled up application forms of selected candidates for Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses at the High Commission is 15th January, 2018.

Prospective students are advised to approach the Ministry of Higher Education & Highways to learn more about the eligibility criteria and selection procedure. Interested candidates can also direct their queries to the High Commission of India or visit High Commission's website for further details on the scholarships. ■



Scholarship for studying Hindi in India for the Academic Session, 2018-19 under the Scheme of Propagation of Hindi Abroad at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan Agra.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India is offering scholarships to Sri Lankan nationals to study Hindi at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (Central Institute of Hindi), Agra, for the academic session 2018-2019.

Applicants are required to have studied Hindi as a subject at G.C.E. A/L or have done Madhyama or 100, 200 courses of KHS, Agra or any Hindi course conducted by Universities of Sri Lanka. The minimum age for admission is 21 years and the maximum age limit is 35 years as on 1.4.2018. The selected candidates will be provided return airfare (economy class), stipend, hostel accommodation at nominal charges and an annual book grant.

The application forms can be collected from the Indian Cultural Centre, 16/2, Gregory's Road, Colombo 07 (Tel. No. 2684698) or The Assistant High Commission of India, No.31 Rajapihilla Mawatha, PO Box 47, Kandy, phone no. 081-2222652 or The Consulate General of India, No.103, New Road, Hambantota, phone no. 047-2222500 or The Consulate General of India, No. 14, Maruthady Lane, Nallur, Jaffna, phone no. 021-2220502 on weekdays between 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. from 5 March 2018 to 16 March 2018 (weekdays).

The candidates are required to bring duly filled in application forms supported by necessary documents and their certificates in original and present themselves for an interview at the time of submitting their applications between 10.00 to 1.00 pm on person on 26 March 2018 at Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo.

For further details please contact the Indian Cultural Centre on telephone no: 2684698 and Email: icccolombo2@gmail.com.

ON A SOLAR TRACK

Indian Railways' first solar-power augmented diesel-electric train is emblematic of its endeavour to shift towards green energy

BY GAURAV NAGPAL

Rail transport has a glorious and long-running history in India, dating back to the early 19th century, with the steam-engined Red Hill Railway of 1837 being the country's first train. Today, the Indian Railways has become a significant participant in the Government of India's larger effort to promote energy-efficient and environment-friendly practices in the country. It has recently marked a very significant milestone - a move towards solar power! The first solar-powered diesel-electrical multiple unit (DEMU) train was launched from the Safdarjung railway station in Delhi, by the Indian Railways Organisation for Alternate Fuels (IROAF). Former Union Minister for Railways, Suresh Prabhu, said on the occasion: "Railways is trying to increase the use of non-conventional sources of energy". The 10-coach train - with two motor coaches and eight passenger coaches - will travel from Delhi to Haryana in one-and-a-half hours, ferrying more than 500 passengers at full capacity.

Six of the passenger coaches are equipped with a total of 16 solar panels, manufactured under the Make in India initiative; the remaining two are powered by

diesel. The solar panels have an estimated life span of 25 years, and will be monitored on a regular basis. In case of insufficient solar power, the train has a battery-powered backup system, sufficient to run the train for up to 72 hours.

This is an important step in the Railways' focus on renewable energy, and the benefits are immense - an annual saving of diesel worth `2 lakh per coach per annum is expected, with total annual savings amounting to `672 crore. This also fits in neatly with the announcement in the 2016 railway budget that the railways would generate 1,000 MW solar energy in the next five years.

It is expected that the success of this solar-powered



train will encourage the Indian Railways to bring in more such initiatives, as the organisation is exploring options to use solar energy as fuel for its operations. Previously, in 2016, the Indian Railways had introduced India's first CNG DEMU train on the Rewari-Rohtak section of Northern Railways. ■



FACT FILE

- The train will travel from Sarai Rohilla station in Delhi to Garhi Harsaru Junction, Farukh Nagar in Haryana
- Six of the eight passenger coaches have solar panels. The train is equipped with a total of 16 such panels, each producing 300 watt peak (Wp) and manufactured under the Make in India initiative
- The train also has a built-in power backup system via battery, which allows it to run without solar power for up to 72 hours
- Per coach, 89 passengers can be accommodated
- There will be cushioned seats, luggage racks and a display board in each coach
- The train is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to nine tonnes per coach per annum
- The total cost of the train is ₹13.54 crore - eight coaches of ₹1 crore each, two motor coaches of ₹2.5 crore each, and solar panels on six coaches of ₹9 lakh each

PSLV Successfully Launches 31 Satellites in a Single Flight

January 12, 2018



using its panchromatic (black and white) and multispectral (colour) cameras.

The 11 kg INS-1C and the 100 kg class Microsat, the two Indian co-passenger satellites of Cartosat-2, are also being monitored and controlled from ISTRAC, Bengaluru. The 28

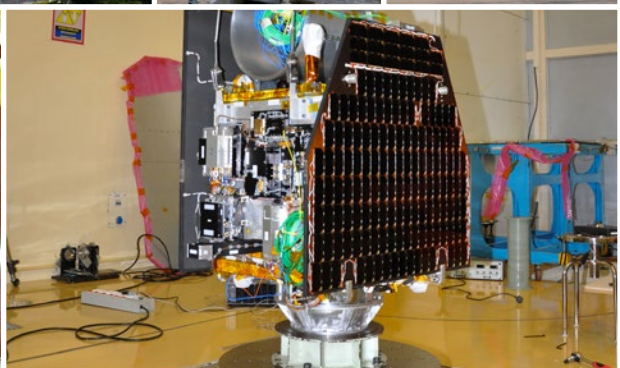
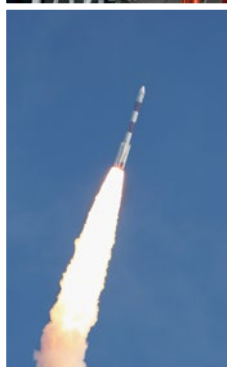
international customer satellites belong to Canada, Finland, France, Republic of Korea, UK and the USA.

So far, PSLV has successfully launched 51 Indian satellites and 237 customer satellites from abroad. ■

ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its forty second flight, successfully launched the 710 kg Cartosat-2 Series Remote Sensing Satellite along with 30 co-passenger satellites on January 12, 2018 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. This flight is designated as PSLV-C40.

The lift-off of PSLV-C40 occurred at 0929 hrs (9:29 am) IST from the First Launch Pad. After a flight lasting 16 minutes 37 seconds, the satellites achieved the polar Sun Synchronous Orbit of 503 km inclined at an angle of 97.55 degree to the equator. In the succeeding seven minutes, Cartosat-2 series satellite, INS-1C and 28 customer satellites successfully separated from the PSLV in a predetermined sequence. The fourth stage of PSLV-C40 fired twice for short durations to achieve a polar orbit of 365 km height in which India's Microsat successfully separated.

After separation, the two solar arrays of Cartosat-2 series satellite deployed automatically and ISRO's Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) at Bengaluru took over the control of the satellite. In the coming days, the satellite will be brought to its final operational configuration following which it will begin to provide remote sensing data





The Indian Navy Launched the Third State-Of-The-Art Scorpene Class Submarine, Karanj

January 31, 2018

Amid chants of invocations from Atharva Veda, the Indian Navy on January 31, 2018 launched the third Scorpene class submarine 'Karanj' at Mumbai's Mazagon Docks.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba's wife Reena Lanba launched the submarine while Admiral Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff was the chief guest on the occasion.

During his address, Admiral Lanba said, "The launch of Karanj marked a significant departure from the manning and training philosophy that was adopted for the first two submarines and added that from third submarine onwards the Navy would be fully self reliant in training and certification processes."

He also mentioned that the old Karanj had served the nation for 34 years from 1969 to 2003 including participation in 1971 war.

This historic event reaffirms the giant strides taken by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) in the ongoing 'Make In India' programme, which is being actively implemented by the Department of Defence Production (MoD), the Indian Navy said.

The submarine was then towed to Mumbai Port Trust, for separation from the pontoon.

Karanj will now undergo rigorous trials and tests, both in harbour and at sea before it is commissioned into the Navy.

The contract for the construction and Transfer-of-Technology for six Scorpene submarines in series, has Naval Group (formerly DCNS) of France as 'Collaborator' and are being built by MDL.

The state-of-the-art technology utilised for construction of the Scorpene class submarines has ensured superior stealth features such as advanced acoustic silencing techniques, low radiated noise levels, hydro-dynamically optimized shape and the ability to launch a crippling attack on the enemy using precision guided weapons.

The attack can be launched with both torpedoes and tube launched anti-ship missiles, whilst underwater or on surface.

The stealth of this potent platform is enhanced by the special attention given to various signatures.

These stealth features give it an invulnerability, unmatched by most submarines.

Scorpene submarines can undertake multifarious types of missions i.e Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance.

The submarine is designed to operate in all theatres, with means provided to ensure interoperability with other components of a Naval Task Force.

It is a potent platform, marking a generational shift in submarine operations.

In December 2017, INS Kalvari, the first Scorpene class submarine was commissioned into the Indian Navy by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Khanderi, the second Scorpene class submarine was launched in January 2017, and is currently undergoing the rigorous phase of sea trials and is also scheduled to be delivered shortly. ■



Shankar's Children Competition 2017

Indian cultural Centre organized all island Art and Essay competition to celebrate Children's Day. More than 300 young budding artists from all over Sri Lanka participated in the event. H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner made a special visit to the Centre during the event and interacted with the children.



Indian Cultural Centre



ICCR



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Vishwa Hindi Divas 2018

High Commission of India celebrated Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Vishwa Hindi Divas with participation of members of GOPIO and Hindi enthusiasts. H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner presided over the function as Chief Guest.



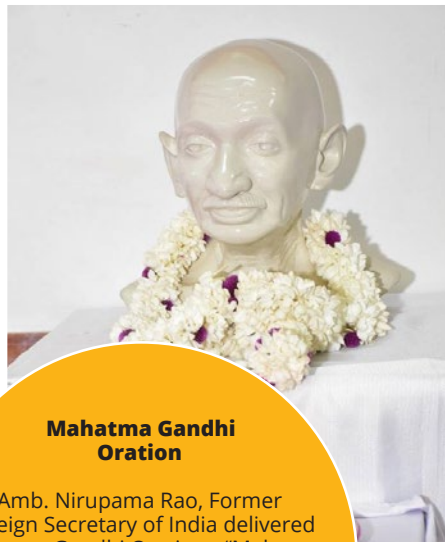


Peace is my Dream-

As a part of celebrating India and Sri Lanka@ 70 Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo presented Peace is my Dream- a unique concert by Amb. Nirupama Menon Rao as lead Singer along with Ms. Soundarie David Rodrigo in Piano and Mr. Nieranjan De Silva on Keyboard, bringing together musicians from India and Sri Lanka projecting unity through Music.



Glimpses of Events and Programmes



Mahatma Gandhi Oration

Amb. Nirupama Rao, Former Foreign Secretary of India delivered Mahatma Gandhi Oration - "Mahatma Gandhi: The Ageless Life" on 23rd October 2017 at BCIS auditorium. The event was organized in collaboration with Sri Lanka India Society and Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies.





Sri Thyagaraja Aradhana-2018

Thyagaraja Aradhana 2018 was organized by Indian cultural Centre, Colombo for the 14th year with participation of hundreds of musicians from all over Sri Lanka



Indo-SriLanka Hindi Sammelan at University of Kelaniya-September 2017



Indian Cultural Centre

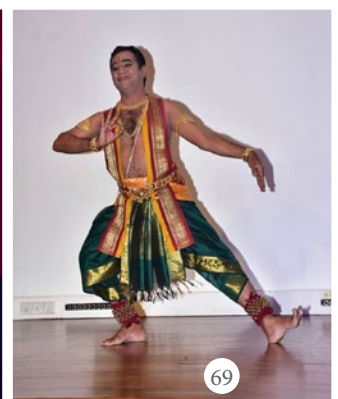


ICCR





Glimpses of Events and Programmes



Rajasthan



Rajasthan - 'The Land of Kings, Palaces, Valor and Sacrifices'. Rajasthan derives its name from "Rajah" "Sthana", which literally means home of Kings.

Rajasthan being situated in the Northwest part of India, is a land of majestic Aravali Hills, crowned with sand dunes of Jaisalmer and Bikaner, Scenic and serene beauty and warrior princes – the land of regal creatures bird watcher and many more. The formation of Rajasthan in its present form has come in gradual states after the independence of the country. The present state of Rajasthan is effectively a union of 22 former princely states. Rajasthan has a total area of 0.342 Sq. Kms, making it geographically the largest state in the country. The state shares its geographical boundaries with the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat in India and also has a long 1070-Kms west boundary with India's neighboring country Pakistan. The topography of Rajasthan mainly comprises of three regions, namely, the Aravali hills range, the Great Indian Thar Desert and the Eastern part of the state. The population of the state is around 58.55 Million according to the 2011 census which constitutes nearly 5.5% of the nation's population. The principal language of the state is Rajasthani, the four important dialects being Marwari in the West, Jaipuri in the East, Malwi in South-east and Mewati

in North-east. Hindi is widely spoken and is rapidly replacing Rajasthani language.

Rajasthan is a land of great beauty and diversity. From the Thar Desert in the west to the fertile Southeastern plains, Rajasthan's topography too shares in this diversity. The state is home of brave Rajput warriors, is popular for its culture, from the lively folk dances to the many schools of Indian classical music. The main cities in Rajasthan are Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Mount Abu, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Chittor, Bharatpur and Alwar which enjoying benefit of tourists attraction. The customs and traditions, fairs and festivals, handicrafts, art and music reflect the very broad spectrum of the Rajasthani culture where much of the Rajasthani thought, philosophy and culture is being reflected all over the state.²

Rajasthan accounts a major contributor to the country's production of gypsum, silver ore, asbestos, feldspar and mica and has rich salt deposits at Sambhar and copper mines at Khetri and Dariba. The state is also famous for production of building stones like sandstone, marble, kotastone and granite in different colors and in large quantities. Rajasthan also has an emerging industry sector, the main industries being textiles, manufacture of rugs and woollen goods, vegetable oils and dyes. Traditional handicrafts such as jewellery, marble work, embossed brass, block printing, embroidery, pottery and decorative paintings are good foreign exchange earners for the state. The state includes heavy industries such as railway rolling stock, copper and zinc smelting. The chemical industry produces caustic soda, calcium carbides, fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides. The principal industrial clusters

in the state are at Jaipur, Kota, Alwar, Udaipur and Bhilwara. Another sector that has always played an important role in the state economy, particularly during the last few decades is tourism. Rajasthan tourism industry has seen a strong growth in both the domestic and international tourist arrivals over the decades.

Tourism industry in Rajasthan is a vital breath in the economic activity. Tourism has direct and indirect impact on financial, social and cultural life of people. This industry is considered as leisure industry with many economic benefits like foreign exchange earnings, regional development, promotion of local handicrafts and artisans, infrastructure development and increasing standard of living.

Rajasthan is a popular tourist spot in North India and emerged as one of the popular tourist destinations in India for both domestic and foreign tourists. The royal land dotted with numerous tourist attraction sites. The rich tourist attractions of Rajasthan includes numerous forts and palaces, monuments and structures, lakes and mountains, sand dunes and desert beauty, national parks and wildlife destinations. Even the cities and towns of Rajasthan are worth exploring. The state is known for its diversity in terms of natural resources, cultural heritage, historical as well as archaeological wonders and rare wild life. The forts and palaces, heritage hotels, colourful fairs and festivals, local art and handicrafts has been a unique selling proposition for tourists coming to the state. The desert environment in the Western parts of the state is also a major attraction for visitors, particularly for foreign tourist. Rajasthan has emerged as one of the leading state in India and Rajasthan was the third preference of tourist after Goa and Kerala as travel destination in India.

TOURISM PRODUCTS IN RAJASTHAN

Tourism in Rajasthan is one of the fast growing industry which gives higher contribution in state by increasing revenue, increasing standard of living, providing platform to local artisans and culture and developing infrastructure. There are many tourism products in the state which attracts tourists such as forts and palaces, shopping, safari tours, wildlife sanctuary parks, heritage and pilgrimage places, lakes in Rajasthan and many more.

Forts and Palaces in Rajasthan:

The Royal state of Rajasthan offers many grand forts and palaces, which are part of the heritage of India and attract a large number of tourists from all over the world. The capital city Jaipur and other cities such as Jaisalmer, Udaipur, Chittorgarh and Jodhpur are major popular cities for their historical forts and palaces in the state. The Hawa Mahal, City Palace, Amber Fort, Jaigarh Fort, Nahargarh Fort and Jantar



Mantar are most visited forts and palaces in the pink City Palace in Jaipur

city Jaipur. The city of Jaisalmer is also dotted with many significant golden fortresses, historical carved havelies.⁶ Jaisalmer (Sonar) Fort in Jaisalmer is one of the major attractions for domestic and foreign tourists in Jaisalmer. The majestic Mehrangarh Fort and Umaid Bhavan Palace represent the city of Jodhpur which is known for its magnificent palaces.

Similarly Juangarh Fort in Bikaner, City Palace and Lake Palace in Udaipur are the major attractions for tourists to enjoy heritage of Rajasthan. As all these forts and palaces in Rajasthan attract more and more tourists in the state which gives knowledge about history and royal life of king's who ruled in the state.

Rajasthan Safari Tours:

The state of Rajasthan in western India is a treasure trove of natural beauty, historic monuments and an amazing wildlife. Rajasthan has a varied landscape that comprises magnificent golden sand dunes, majestic hills and good-natured lakes. The best way to explore this vast land is organized by safaris. The Rajasthan safari tours offer a different way to explore various tourist destinations in the state.

The camel safaris are very popular in the regions of Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. Camel safaris can be quite an experience in Thar Desert which is a part of Rajasthan. Similarly Jeep safaris are quite popular among the tourists owing to the speed and maneuverability of the vehicles. They can be used to go to places where the normal tourist vehicles cannot access and where horses and camels will take a lot of time to reach. Jeeps are particularly useful in exploring the wildlife in Rajasthan. Jeep safari tours throughout Rajasthan is an all together new concept which is born to give immense excitement



as it is unique in its kind. Jeep safaris are one of the fastest ways for visit of colorful Thar Desert. Some of the most popular jeep safari routes in Rajasthan are Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur.

Rajasthan and horses are like the two sides of the same coin. The Rajputs on horseback, with swords symbolize the royalty of the place. Horse safaris in this kind of a land are the most innovative, exciting and adventurous way of leaving behind marks of enjoyment across the sands of Rajasthan. Horse safaris are relatively a recent addition to the safari tours of Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, region around Jodhpur, Bikaner and Udaipur are covered by most horse safaris. In recent times horse safari is organized by some private tour operators also.

Wildlife Sanctuary Parks:



Sariska Tiger Reserve Keoladeo Ghana National Park

Rajasthan has one of the most varied forms of landscapes and natural attractions that offer to the tourist. On one side, it has dry Great Indian Thar Desert while on the other side it has one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world - the Aravalis. It has also over 25 sanctuaries parks, which can offer a different tourism experience. The forests of Rajasthan cover an approximately 9.3% of the total geographical area of the state. These forests are spread unequally in northern, southern, eastern and southeastern parts of the state. Rajasthan has 4 National Parks

and 25 Wildlife Sanctuaries identified by the State Forest Department. The total area of National Parks and Sanctuaries is 9,161.21 sq. km., which is roughly 2.8% of the geographic area of the state or 30.2% of the forest areas in the state. Although the state has over 25 sanctuaries parks, out of them the National Parks at Bharatpur, Ranthambhor and Sariska are amongst the popular tourist attractions in the state. The Rajasthan wildlife tourism is the ideal way to systematically explore this fascinating aspect of tourism in Rajasthan. The species that can expect to spot on the Rajasthan wildlife sanctuary parks include tigers, leopards, jungle cat, civet, mongoose, hyena, wild boar, sloth bear, sambhar, four horned antelope, spotted deer, nilgai, gaur, langur and the rhesus macaque. The black bucks and the great Indian bustard are among the severely threatened



species that are found in Rajasthan.

The major wildlife national parks in the state are Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Ranthambore National Park and Desert National Park are protected sanctuary having nearly more than 375 species of birds, Tiger, Elusive jungle cat, Stealthy leopard, Panther, Neelgai Hyena and Sambhar are major animals finds in this park which offer good opportunity for tourists who interested in natural wealth.

Pilgrimage Places:

Dargah Sharif in Ajmer

Rajasthan is undoubtedly the most charming and colorful state of the country acknowledged for its lively and colorful traditions, arts, heritage and culture. At the same time, Rajasthan is home to a number of religious communities that reside in peace and harmony here. People of various faiths including Hindus, Muslims, Jains and Christians have lived in perfect communal harmony for many centuries. This has consequently given rise to a number of religious sites around the state. The Rajasthan Pilgrimage places can be found spotted all over the town and are visited by a large number of religious devotees not only from Rajasthan but from all over the country. Some of the famous pilgrimage sites in Rajasthan are Dargah Sharif in Ajmer, Dilwara temple in Mount Abu, Jain temples in Ranakpur, Karnimata temple in Deshnoke, Eklingji temple in Udaipur, Shrinathji temple at Nathdwara, Brahma temple in Pushkar and Govind Devji temple at Jaipur.

This pilgrimage places in Rajasthan are easily connected with transport network and right kind of accommodation are also available. Many tour operators also arrange a special tour packages for visit of these pilgrimage places which are mostly visited by tourists.

Shopping in Rajasthan:

The state has something for every traveler, presenting a vast range of arts and crafts, which is a treat for the



visuals and are ready to be picked. The bazaars spill with products and there is a magnificent glow of colors all over. Intricate work carved on handicrafts and the wonders of gems and stones and even more. For instance, the colors dancing on the textiles and fabrics with silver or gold thread settings and complimented with variety of silk-threads, beads, gota, zari, zardosi and banarasi are designed by the age old families of skilled artisans. The major shopping paradise cities of Rajasthan are Jaisalmer, Kota, Udaipur, Bikaner, Pushkar, Jodhpur and Jaipur. The major shopping products are vibrant embroideries, wool carpets and blankets, light cotton quilts and brilliantly dyed cotton fabrics, embroidered fabrics, silver jewellery, wooden

toys, leather goods, paintings, weave cotton sarees, camel saddles, blankets, shawls, beads, bangles and many more. Here in Rajasthan tourists are attracted to purchase colorful, handmade cultural products which are available at many places of Rajasthan at reasonable prices.

Luxury Trains in Rajasthan:

There are numerous ways to explore the majestic state of Rajasthan in Western India; the most fascinating is the tour in the famous Rajasthan luxury trains. These trains are not only luxurious but also they take back to the age of the Maharajas of Rajasthan who used to travel in these grand coaches within their estates. These trains are the most important attractions of tourism in Rajasthan. The luxury trains of Rajasthan, India have been formed by bringing together the coaches and components of the lavish personal trains used by the erstwhile rulers of wealthy states of Rajasthan and other parts of India. The Nizam of Hyderabad, the rulers of Rajputana and the viceroy of India used to travel in these trains. After independence, these coaches were pulled out of service as they could not be incorporated in the regular trains, being excessively lavish for such purposes.

At present, most famous Rajasthan luxury trains include the Palace on Wheels, the Fairy Queen, the Royal Orient and the Royal Rajasthan on Wheels. Out



of all these trains the Palace on Wheels train is the most celebrated of the four. It is a world famous train, known for its royal splendor. The coaches of this train have come from the erstwhile estates of Rajasthan and bear the names of the states they belong to. The train has achieved the most fame among the luxury trains of India. This train won the "Readers Travel Award" by Conde Nast Traveller where Palace on Wheels rated No. 4

Luxury Train in the World. The trip aboard the Palace on Wheels includes visits to some of the best known destinations in Rajasthan.



The Fairy Queen is yet another among the famous Rajasthan luxury trains. The train derives its name from the locomotive that draws the two air conditioned coaches. The Fairy Queen is the world's oldest running locomotive. It started its service in 1855 and was taken off service in East India railway in 1908. The tour covers the cities of Delhi and Alwar and a visit to the Sariska tiger reserve. The Royal Orient train also gives fascinating experience of Rajasthan. The train starts from Delhi and travels across the desert of Rajasthan before moving over to the state of Gujarat. The destinations covered by the Royal Orient include Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Dilwara, Junagarh, Sasangir, Palitana, Jaipur, New Delhi and Ahmedabad. As considering the success of the "Palace of Wheels" train a new luxury train "Royal Rajasthan on Wheels" has been introduced by RTDC which also gives a royal touch of Rajasthan. The 'Royal Rajasthan on Wheels' is a joint venture of the Ministry of Railways, Government of India and Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation Ltd., supported by the Department of Tourism, Government of India. The Rajasthan luxury trains are special trains operated jointly by the tourism authorities of India and the Indian railways and covering the many important tourism sectors in India.

Folk Dances of Rajasthan:

Folk dances of Rajasthan derived from various folk art cultures. They have their own significance and importance. A medieval history includes the existence of princely states, which provided patronage to these art forms and their artists. The major cultural things in Rajasthan include dancing, singing, drama, devotional music shows and other community festivities which transform their performance into folk dance. The most famous styles of folk dance in Rajasthan are Ghoomar Dance, Gait Ghoomar, Gair, Chart Dance, Terahtali Dance, Kathputli Dance, Kachhi Ghodi and fire dance. The Ghoomar Dance which is basically a community dance for women and performed on auspicious occasions. The word Ghoomar derived from the word ghoomna, pirouette, this is a very simple dance where the ladies move gently, gracefully in circles. Gait Ghoomar is one of the dance form of the Bhil tribals performed during Holi festival, this is among a few performances where both men and women dance together. Gair is also another type of folk dance of Rajasthan which is performed on festival Holi. This dance form known with different names such as Dandia Gair in Jodhpur and Geendad in Shekhawati. This magnificent dance

is performed by both men and women. This dance has two versions being the the Dandi Gair of the Marwar region and the Geendad belonging to the Shekhawati region.

Chart Dance is popular in the Kisherigarh region and



involves dancing with a chari or pot, on one's head. A lighted lamp is then placed on the pot. Kachhi Ghodi is a dance performed on dummy horses. Men in elaborate costumes ride the equally well decorated dummy horses. This is also one of the remarkable folk dances of Rajasthan and its origins in Shekhawati region. The primary motive of this dance performance is the amusement of the bridegroom's party. The performers are dressed in elaborate costumes and dance as if riding on a dummy horse. Terahtali Dance form is also performed by women and it is considered as a devotional form of dance. In this folk dance Manjeeras are tied on the wrists, elbows, waists and arms of the performers. The women with dexterous and fine movements dance at a strong rhythm on beats of 'Manjeeras', whereas, the male partners sing songs and play Tandoora.

Fire Dance is the Jasnathis of Bikaner and Chum are renowned for their tantric powers and this dance is in keeping with their lifestyle. A large ground is prepared with live wood and charcoal where the Jasnathi men and boys jump on to the fire to the accompaniment of drum beats. Kathputli Dance means the dances of puppets. It is a traditional dance of Indian state of Rajasthan. Through the puppet shows all the real stories of great heroes have been told from village to another. In all these folk dances male and female dancers wear colourful, embroidered and mirror worked costumes and use variety of musical instruments such as sarangi, ghunroos, dhol, kartal, shahenai and ektara to bring out sweetest melody which is one of the major tourist attraction of Rajasthan for domestic and foreign tourists.

Fairs and Festivals in Rajasthan:

In Rajasthan there is a celebration for every religious occasion almost round the year. The major celebrations of festivals are Desert Festival, Gangaur



Festival, Pushkar Festival, Marwar Festival, Teej Festival, Nagaur Fair, Urs Ajmer Sharif, Summer Festival and Baneshwar Fair.

In the all well-known festivals of Rajasthan, the Pushkar Festival is one of the famous festivals in Rajasthan which is celebrated in the month of Kartik of each year. An incredible number of camels travel their way across the golden sands of Rajasthan to collect at Pushkar for the week-long fair devoted to them. Pushkar is an important pilgrimage in the state and play a role of important venue of cattle fair. In Pushkar the only temple dedicated to Lord Brahma (the creator) is located. The Pushkar Lake is surrounded by 52 flights of steps called ghats. Pushkar is among the five principal places of Hindu pilgrimage. The highlight of the Pushkar fair is the trading in camels. Desert Festival in Jaisalmer is one of the most popular among the festivals of Rajasthan, the Jaisalmer Desert Festival is a journey into the heart of the Rajasthan desert. Folk performers like musicians, ballad singers, snake charmers and puppeteers exhibit their traditional skills. There are exciting camel dances, camel acrobatics, camel races and camel polo, competitions for the best decorated camel, tug-of-war between musclemen and a turban tying competition. The Jaisalmer fort provides a delicate backdrop to the annual desert festival. The Rajasthan State Tourism Corporation sponsored this festival which is a joyful celebration of the traditional performing arts and creative crafts of Rajasthan.

The Gangaur Festival is the most important local festival of Rajasthan which is observed throughout the state with great fervor and devotion by womenfolk who worship Gauri, the partner of Lord Shiva. It is time for young girls to dress up in their finery and pray for grooms of their choice while the married women pray for the well-being of their husbands. This Gangaur Festival celebrated among



the all over the Rajasthan and people prepare many sweets, wear colorful cultural clothes and celebrate this mythological festival. The Marwar Festival in Jodhpur devoted mainly to the music and dance of the Marwar region. This is a festival that allows visitor to understand and enjoy the folk traditions of the state. This festival is organized by the Department of Tourism and Government of Rajasthan. The Marwar Festival was originally known as the Maand Festival. Maand is a classical style of folk music centered on the romantic life style of Rajasthan's rulers and Maand Raag recreates the old world charm and graceful dances of the desert. Teej Festival in Jaipur is essentially a women's festival, it is interesting to watch them enjoying in groups and at various bazaars where they turn up to shop in all their finery. Song & dance mark the fun of the Teej Festival celebrated in Jaipur. Teej is held every year during the Hindu Month of Shravan and marks the advent of the monsoons. Nagaur Fair in Nagaur essentially an animal fair, it provides an opportunity to participate in some of the local sports. Nagaur is situated half way between Bikaner and Jodhpur with the thronging of cattle,



horses and camels accompanied by their colorfully turbaned owners. Games, tug-of-war contests, camel races and strains of ballads create a joyful atmosphere with the setting sun in the background. The Nagaur Fair is the second largest fair in Rajasthan and it is held every year during the Hindu month of Magh. The fair is renowned for the trading of cows, bullocks, camels and horses. Their owners are seen with wearing colorful turbans and flaunting long mustaches. The Urs Ajmer Sharif, Ajmer held in the

memory of the honored Sufi Saint Khawaja Moinuddin Chisti. It is an occasion for thousands of believers to congregate at the memorial and offer their prayers. All of Ajmer seems to take on a festive air and several programmes are organised to mark the festival. The Dargah Sharif in Ajmer is the place where the Saints mortal remains lay covered and is the site of the largest Muslim Fair in India. There are thousands of devotees offering Chadar; Ghilaph and Neema to the tomb of Sufi Saint Khawaja Moinuddin Chisti to fulfill their wishes.

The Summer Festival, Mount Abu organised at hill station of Rajasthan, this is the coldest place in the state. Folk dances and a general atmosphere of gaiety prevail in this tiny hill resort and the tourist has ample time to relax and enjoy himself. Baneshwar Fair, Baneshwar a religious festival with simple and traditional rituals. This fair is the centre of attraction of a large number of tribal from the neighboring states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat who join their brethren from Rajasthan in offering prayers to Lord Shiva. The Baneshwar fair is predominantly a tribal fair with more than half of the worshippers consisting of Bhils. Hence all these colorful fairs and festivals create a picture of culture of Rajasthan and attract many tourists to visit the state and to get experience the vibrant fairs and festivals of Rajasthan during their royal journey.

Heritage Properties in Rajasthan:

The state Rajasthan famous for its history and culture, there are many heritage properties exist in the state since the time of kings who ruled on the state which gives experience of their royal lifestyles and knowledge of their culture. As the government of Rajasthan declares tourism as a brand "Atithi Devo Bhava" which provides tradition of hospitality which is instant and spontaneous to visitors, guests and even strangers, continues undiluted since the days of kings and princes. The post independence democratic India witnessed the integration of the princely states, abolition of 'jagirs', land reforms and finally the withdrawal of the special privileges from the royal families. Consequently the noble families lost their traditional means of livelihood. In order to tide over the prospect of financial hardship, large palaces of the Maharajas set the trend by becoming five star hotels. Now some of the ancestral homes transfer in the new lease of life - as heritage hotels. Each of these heritage hotels or ancestral homes are different and having their own history and tradition. In fact one can replicate the experience of living like a king in a heritage hotel. There are more than 85 heritage properties in Rajasthan at different cities in such as Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Bharatpur and many more. The major heritage properties are Laxmi Vilas Palace, Bharatpur, Bhanwar Niwas, Bikaner, Bissau Palace, Jaipur, Ajit Bhawan, Jodhpur, Connaught House, Mount Abu, Basant Vihar Palace,

Bikaner and Balsamand Lake Palace, Jodhpur.

Lakes in Rajasthan:

There are number of lakes in Rajasthan which are popular for their pilgrimage place and tourist place for its natural surroundings and beauty which attracts tourists to visits these lakes. The famous lakes in Rajasthan are Pushkar Lake, Pichola Lake, Lake Fetch Sagar, Rajasamand Lake at Udaipur and Nakki Lake



at Mount Abu. One of the famous lakes situated in the middle of Nag Pahad Hills of the Aravali range, right on the edge of desert, the only one temple for Brahma the deity in the country is Pushkar Lake. The Lake Pichola is another lake situated at the back of the city palaces of Maharana. It was constructed by a Banjara in the 15th century. This lake is fringed by hills, shrines and ghats on its southern and western periphery. One of the great attractions of Udaipur is Lake Fetch Sagar which is an artificial lake created by Maharana Jai Singh in 1678 and reconstructed by Maharana Fateh Singh. The Rajasamand Lake also known as Raj Sagar Lake was founded by Maharana Raj Singh in the late 17th century which 64 kms from Udaipur. There is also one of the famous lakes in the state Rajasthan is Nakki Talab which is an artificial lake which was dug by the nails (nakki) of the gods and therefore it is known as Nakki Lake. The main attraction of this lake is surroundings hills. The beautiful lake that has never been known to become dry is surrounded by rocks, parks and temples.

TYPES OF TOURISM IN RAJASTHAN

Heritage Tourism:

The state Rajasthan has been always famous for its rich heritage and ancient cultural diversity with glorious past which attracts millions of tourists in each year. Rajasthan's rich heritage is adequately reflected in the various temples, palaces, monuments and forts that can be found everywhere in the state. The state abounds with some of the best forts and palaces in the country spread throughout the state. The state government will encourage the preservation, conservation and upkeep of such heritage properties and selectively open some of them for being developed into hotels and tourist



complex.

The state Rajasthan occupies unique place in heritage tourism because of various forts, palaces and monuments at various cities of Rajasthan such as Jaipur, Jodhpur, Mount Abu (Hill station) and Udaipur which attract domestic

and foreign tourist every time. Rajasthan is also famous for Mandawa castle. The government also invited corporate sector to join hands for conservation of historical heritage and monuments in the state.

Spiritual Tourism:

India is one of the most spiritually enriched places on the earth with gift of structure of spirituality. India is the spiritual capital of the world because of the land of the vedas and temples. India, its people, its infrastructure and in fact, it's very soil, encourage and foster spiritualism, allowing religions to succeed, flourish and prosper. Spiritual tours of Rajasthan take one on tours to several spiritual destinations of the state which are much renowned for their religious and spiritual significance. The major spiritual places visited in the state are Khwaja Saheb Dargah (Ajmer), Eklingji temple in Udaipur, Govind Devji temple at Jaipur, Dilwara temples in Mount Abu and Jain temples in Ranakpur where tourist receives the peace of mind, refresh their essence, body and mind.

Cultural Tourism:

India is known for its rich cultural heritage and an element of mysticism, which is why tourists come to India to experience it for themselves. One can see the influence of various cultures in dance, music, festivities, architecture, traditional customs, food and languages. This richness in culture goes a long way in projecting India as the ultimate cultural tourism destination. Among the various states for cultural tourism in India, Rajasthan is the most popular state for its cultural tourism. Rajasthan is famous for its rich cultural heritage and renowned for many magnificent palaces and forts which showcase the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan. The various folk songs and music also reflect the cultural heritage of Rajasthan. A large number of fairs and festivals held in Rajasthan such as the Camel festival, Marwar festival and Pushkar festival which shows image of Rajasthan culture. All these fairs and festivals attract many tourists to Rajasthan so that they get to see the

rich culture of the state.

Wild life & Eco-Tourism:

Wild life and Eco- tourism involves personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet and enjoying company of nature without harming it. The conceptual experience of eco-tourism is for the travelers who research and understand the environmental phenomena around them. Rajasthan is a hot destination for eco tours. Rajasthan is proud for being a responsible eco- tourism place and it includes programs to minimize the negative aspects of traditional tourism on the environment and gives immense possibilities to relate with the local



people. Hence, in addition to environmental and cultural features, eco-tourism in Rajasthan is also a promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation and creation of economic opportunities for the local communities. Tourist will see solar panels for hot water provision, bio- gas and solar for cooking purpose. The clean ambiance, bio degradable utensils like leaf plates, glass bottles are some of the characteristics of Rajasthan eco-tours. The numbers of eco parks are here for attraction of tourists and they also preserve and restore the endangered wildlife. The wild life parks provide a natural habitat to a plentiful species of wild animals, birds, reptiles and floral kingdom. The most notable wild life parks in Rajasthan are Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Sariska Tiger Reserve and Keoladeo Ghana National Park which gives an immense picture of wildlife tourism.

Desert Tourism:

The Thar Desert in Rajasthan also known as the Great Indian Desert, the Thar Desert extends into two states of North West India (Rajasthan and Gujarat) and in the Eastern region of the neighboring country, Pakistan. The desert environment in the western parts of the state is a major attraction for visitors, particularly the foreign tourist. Rajasthan receives a great gift in the form of Thar Desert where various

desert festivals are celebrated to attract tourists to visit this colorful festival. The major desert cities in Rajasthan are Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Jodhpur where Tourism Development Corporation arranges many desert festivals.

The golden city of Jaisalmer, which lies courageously as the western guard of India, is a place worth visiting. The Jaisalmer fort provides a delicate backdrop to the annual desert festival. This festival is sponsored by the Rajasthan State Tourism Corporation, which is a joyful celebration of the traditional performing arts and creative crafts of Rajasthan. Jaisalmer is the place where this desert festival is celebrated with



great passion and enthusiasm. The grand part of this festival is to enjoy pleasure of a camel ride.

MICE Tourism:

India is a perfect destination for hosting Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. This makes MICE tours India very exciting. India offers excellent business opportunities for business houses such as IT, Medical, Telecommunications, Tourism, Textiles, Media, Banking, Insurance, Oil and Petroleum, Sporting and Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals,

Agriculture and Food Products.

With an impressive combination of accommodation and other conference support amenities, Rajasthan is a perfect venue to hold successful conferences and business meetings. The state offers a lot of groundwork that is involved while executing the conferences and business trips successfully. The hotels and resorts of Rajasthan are good in terms of budget, accommodation and other basic facilities that make a business trip successful. The five star hotels, heritage hotels, village resorts and other venues are equipped with all modern facilities to provide the businessmen high quality service. Dotted with business hotels and resorts, Rajasthan is proud for its MICE infrastructure. Some of the Services offered for MICE tours in Rajasthan include Reception, Hotel Accommodation, Land and Air

Transport, Information and Hospitality and Technical Visits.

Adventure Tourism:

As a kind of tourism, Adventure Tourism in India is endless because the country has a rich diversity in terms of climate and topography. The various kinds of adventure tourism in India are Rock climbing, Skiing, Camel safari, Para gliding, Mountaineering, Rafting in white water and Trekking. The various places in India where tourists can go for adventure tourism are Badami, Kanheri Caves, Manori Rocks and Kabbal for rock climbing. The state Rajasthan provides a great attraction to foreign and domestic tourists for adventure tourism in the state. Most of the tourist shows their preference for adventure activities like Trekking, Horse and Camel Safaris, Polo and Golf. Apart from the Desert, there are numerous lakes in all over the state where water sports would be developed in a phased manner. The major water sport activities are Yachting, Canoeing, Kayaking and Water Sports would be launched in collaboration with the Department of Sports.

River cruises would be launched in perpetual rivers like Chambal and possibilities of launching Canal Safaris and Canal Cruises in the Indira Gandhi Canal would be explored in consultation with authorities of Indira Gandhi Nahar Project (IGNP). The efforts also made to procure houseboats from the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Kerala and secure them in big lakes of Rajasthan under the brand name of Palace-On-Waves. These Houseboats would have facades in typically Rajasthan style. These activities will not only provide recreation to the tourists but also help in extending the period of stay inside the state and would generate a lot of employment opportunities for the local residents. ■



Area	342,000 sq km (132,139 sq miles); Largest State in India
Location	North-western India; shares domestic borders with Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat
Population	68.55 million (2011)
State Capital	Jaipur
Time Zone	GMT + 5 hours, 30 minutes
Currency	Indian Rupee (Rs)
Districts	32
Cities and Towns	222
Population Density	165 persons per square km (2001 Census)
Languages	Hindi and Rajasthani dialects; English is widely used in business, higher education and professions
Major Cities	Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Ajmer, Bikaner, Bhilwara, Alwar
Literacy	60.40%
Climate	Generally dry with extreme temperatures; and rains during July-August
State Income (NSDP)	Rs.1381.84 billion (2007-08: Advance Estimate/current prices)
Urban Population	23.38%
State Animal	Chinkara
State Bird	Indian Bustard
State Tree	Khejri
State Flower	Rohira





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