

High Commission of India,
Colombo

Press Release

Sri Lanka India Society celebrates India's 73rd Independence Day Minister Sagala Ratnayaka attends as chief guest

The Sri Lanka India Society (SLIS) celebrated India's 73rd Independence Day on September 1, 2019 at a function held at the Taj Samudra hotel in Colombo. Hon. Sagala Ratnayaka, Minister of Ports and Shipping and Southern Development, Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest and High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka H.E. Taranjit Singh Sandhu was the Guest of Honour. Justice S. Thurairajah, Justice of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, President of SLIS Mr T.S. Prakash, members of the Diplomatic community, leaders of the industry, and other dignitaries were also present.

Speaking at the occasion, Hon. Sagala Ratnayaka underscored the special bond between India and Sri Lanka exemplified by the centuries old cultural ties, shared interests and common way of life. Minister drew special attention to the greatest gift from India to Sri Lanka – Buddhism which was brought to Sri Lanka when Arahata Mahinda visited Sri Lanka and met King Devanampiyatissa. Minister highlighted the various people-oriented development projects implemented using Indian development assistance in Sri Lanka covering diverse areas such as the Housing Project to build 14000 houses for plantation workers in upcountry and south, the 1990 Suwaseriya Ambulance service

In his address, the High Commissioner of India highlighted that India the recently concluded general elections in India is the largest democratic exercise in human history which gave an overwhelming mandate in favour of continuity of policies and stability. High Commissioner stated that in the seven decades of independence, India has built many eminent centres of education par excellence like the Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management which are amongst the best in the world today. India has also sent Missions to the Moon and the Mars and has crafted the minds who are heading international IT and financial corporations today.

High Commissioner said that in Sri Lanka, the scourge of Jehadi terrorism raised its ugly head during Easter attacks, which was an attack not just against Sri Lanka, but against the whole of humanity who believe that all human beings are essentially one. High Commissioner noted that the Prime Minister of India was the first world leader to visit Sri Lanka after the Easter attacks in a solidarity visit to underline that India is with Sri Lanka in these difficult times. High Commissioner highlighted that India continues to believe in Sri Lanka's strength; Sri Lanka's resilience; Sri Lanka's ability to rise and rise in all its glory and added that Indian tourists are back in big numbers in Sri Lanka, driving all the supply chains in the Sri Lankan economy. Indian

companies continue to participate wholeheartedly in Conferences and Exhibitions in Sri Lanka and are making substantial investments.

High Commissioner stated that India is committed to partnering with Sri Lanka, as per Sri Lanka's own priorities and requirements. High Commissioner complimented the Society's Executive Committee under the able leadership of Mr. T.S. Prakash who has been very active in organizing various events over the last few years.

A coffee table book titled 'Ritualistic visual traditions : Sri Lanka and Kerala' authored by Mr M. Ramachandran, former Director of Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo was also released at the event.

SLIS which is the oldest and largest friendship society in Sri Lanka, was founded in 1949, soon after the independence of India and Sri Lanka.

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Colombo
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