

SANDESH

MAY - AUGUST 2017



United Nations Day of
VESAK
2560 B.E./2017 SRI LANKA



Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, along with the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe visiting the Seema Malaka Temple, in Colombo, Sri Lanka on May 11, 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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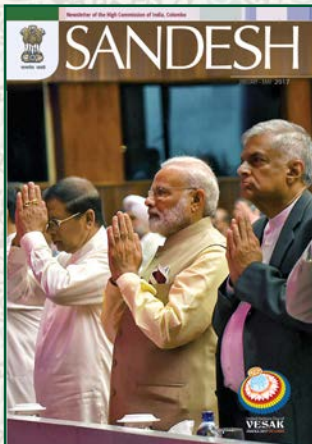
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Front Cover:

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Shri Narendra Modi
with President of the
Democratic Socialist
Republic of Sri Lanka, H. E.
Maithripala Sirisena and
Hon'ble Prime Minister
Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe
at the inaugural session
of the 14th International
Vesak Day celebrations,
in Colombo, Sri Lanka on
May 12, 2017.



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71st Independence Day of India



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Kathakali dancer performing during the cultural program at the Republic Day Flag Hoisting Ceremony at India House in Colombo



Visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, to Sri Lanka

May11, 2017



Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka on May 11, 2017 on a two-day visit at the invitation of President Maithripala Sirisena to participate in the International Day of Vesak celebrations as the Chief Guest.

Sri Lanka was hosting the United Nations International Day of Vesak for the first time this year from May 12-14, under the theme "Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace".

Various religious leaders and political leaders from various countries, especially those with the strong Buddhist traditions attended at the two-day event.

Prime Minister Shri Modi participated in a lamp lighting ceremony at the Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo.

Apart from participating in the International Vesak celebrations in Colombo, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also visited Kandy where he paid respects to the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth). He also sought the blessings of the Chief Prelates there.



Thereafter, the Indian Premier unveiled a plaque commemorating the foundation laying of the Faculty of Kandyan Dance which is to be constructed in the Sri Lankan Buddhist Academy in Pallekelle with Government of India's grant assistance.

Prime Minister Shri Modi also traveled to the plantations estates in upcountry of Sri Lanka. This was the first time an Indian Prime Minister visited the upcountry plantations.

The Indian Premier inaugurated a 150-bed multi-specialty hospital in Dickoya where most of the inhabitants are the Indian origin Tamils. The hospital with resident quarters for the staff was built with the assistance of the Indian government at a cost of Rs. 50 crore.

The project was part of India's overall development cooperation assistance since 2005 up to US\$ 2.6 billion commitment out of which about US\$ 450 million has been grants.

Apart from these activities, India participated in the International Buddhist Film Festival and other activities.







Address by Prime Minister at International Vesak Day celebrations in Colombo

May 12, 2017



United Nations Day of
VESAK
2560 B.E./2017 SRI LANKA

Most venerable, Mahanayaka Theros, of Sri Lanka
Most venerable, Sangaraja Theros, of Sri Lanka
Distinguished religious and spiritual leaders
Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka, Excellency Maithripala
Sirisena
Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Excellency Ranil
Wickremesinghe
Hon'ble Speaker of Parliament Excellency Karu
Jayasuriya
Most venerable Phra Brahmapandit, President of the
International Council for the Day of Vesak
Esteemed Delegates

Friends from the media
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen
Namaskaar.Ayubuvan.

Vesak is most sacred of days.

A day for humanity to revere the birth, the
enlightenment and the Parinibbana of Lord Buddha,
the "Tathagatha". A day to rejoice in Buddha. A day to
reflect on the supreme truth and timeless relevance of
Dhamma, and the four noble truths.



A day to contemplate the ten perfections of दान (generosity); सील (proper conduct); नेखख्म (renunciation); पनिया (wisdom); वीर (energy); खन्नती (tolerance); सच्च (truthfulness); अदत्तिग्न (determination); मेत्ता (loving kindness) and उपेख्खा (equanimity).

It is a day of enormous significance for you here in Sri Lanka, for us in India, and for Buddhists around the world. And, I am most grateful to Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena, Excellency Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the people of Sri Lanka for extending to me the honour to be the Chief Guest at the International Vesak Day festivities in Colombo. On this auspicious occasion, I also bring with me the greetings of 1.25 billion people from the land of the Samyaksambuddha, the perfectly self awakened one.

Excellencies, and Friends,

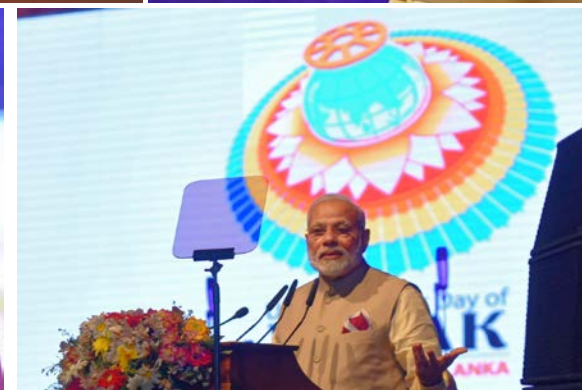
Our region is blessed to have given to the world the invaluable gift of Buddha and his teachings. Bodh Gaya in India, where Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha, is the sacred nucleus of the Buddhist universe. Lord Buddha's first sermon in Varanasi, which I have the honour to represent in the Parliament, set in motion the wheel of Dhamma. Our key national symbols have taken inspiration from Buddhism. Buddhism and its various strands are deep seated in our governance, culture and philosophy. The divine fragrance of Buddhism spread from India to all corners of the globe. Mahindra and Sanghamitra, the worthy children of King Ashoka made their journey from India to Sri Lanka as धम्मा दूत to spread the biggest gift of धम्मा.

And, as Buddha had himself said: सब्बदानामधम्मादानं जनाती, meaning, the gift of धम्मा is the biggest gift of all. Today, Sri Lanka takes pride in being among the most important nerve centres of Buddhist teachings and learning. Centuries later, Anagarika Dharmapala undertook a similar journey, but this time, from Sri Lanka to India to revive the spirit of Buddha in the land of its origin. In some way, you took us back to our own roots. The world also owes a debt of gratitude to Sri Lanka for preserving some of the most important elements of the Buddhist heritage. Vesak is an occasion for us to celebrate this unbroken shared heritage of Buddhism. A heritage that connects our societies across generations and through centuries.

Friends,

The friendship between India and Sri Lanka was etched in time by the "Great Master". Buddhism imparts an ever present radiance to our relationship. As close neighbours, our relationship spreads across many layers. It draws its strength as much through our interconnected values of Buddhism as it does from the limitless possibilities of our shared future. Ours is a friendship that lives in the hearts of our people and in the fabric of our societies.

To honour and deepen our links of Buddhist heritage, I have the great pleasure to announce that from August this year, Air India will operate direct flights between Colombo and Varanasi. This will ease travel to the land of Buddha for my brothers and sisters from Sri Lanka, and help you directly visit Sravasti, Kusinagar, Sankasa, Kaushambi and Sarnath. My Tamil brothers and sisters



will also be able to visit Varanasi, the land of Kashi Viswanath.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and Friends,

I believe we are at a moment of great opportunity in our ties with Sri Lanka. An opportunity to achieve a quantum jump in our partnership across different fields. And, for us, the most relevant benchmark for the success of our friendship is your progress and success. We are committed to the economic prosperity of our Sri Lankan brothers and sisters. We will continue to invest in driving positive change and economic growth to deepen our development cooperation. Our strength lies in sharing our knowledge, capacity and prosperity. In trade and investment, we are already significant partners. We believe that free flow of trade, investments, technology, and ideas across our borders will be to our mutual benefit. India's rapid growth can bring dividends for the entire region, especially in Sri Lanka. In infrastructure and connectivity, transport and energy, we are poised to scale up our cooperation. Our development partnership stretches across nearly every sector of human activity such as agriculture, education, health, resettlement, transport, power, culture, water, shelter, sports, and human resources.

Today, India's development cooperation with Sri Lanka amounts to US Dollars 2.6 billion. And, its only aim is to support Sri Lanka in realizing a peaceful, prosperous and secure future for its people. Because, the economic and social well being of the people of Sri Lanka is linked

with that of 1.25 billion Indians. Because, whether it is on land or in the waters of the Indian Ocean, the security of our societies is indivisible. My conversations with President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe have only reinforced our will to join hands in achieving our common goals. As you make important choices for the harmony and progress of your society, you will find in India a friend and partner that will support your nation-building endeavours.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and Friends,

Lord Buddha's message is as relevant in the twenty first century as it was two and a half millennia ago. The मध्यम प्रतपिदा , the Middle Path shown by Buddha, speaks to all of us. Its universality and evergreen nature is striking. It has been a unifying force among nations. The countries of South, Central, South East and East Asia are proud of their Buddhist links traced to the land of Buddha.

The themes of Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace, chosen for the Vesak day, resonate deeply with Buddha's teachings. The themes may appear independent. But, they are both deeply interdependent and interconnected. The issue of Social justice is linked to conflict within and among communities. This arises principally because of तन्हा or (तृष्णा in Sanskrit), the thirst, which in turn stems from greed . Greed has driven the mankind to dominate and degrade our natural habitat. Our desire to achieve all our wants has created income inequalities in communities and



disturbed social harmony.

Similarly, the biggest challenge to Sustainable World Peace today may not be necessarily from conflict between the nation states. It is from the mindsets, thought streams, entities and instruments rooted in the idea of hate and violence. The menace of terrorism in our region is a concrete manifestation of this destructive emotion. Sadly, these ideologies of hate and their proponents in our region are not open to dialogue and hence only open to causing death and destruction. I firmly believe that Buddhism's message of peace is the answer to growing arc of violence all over the world.

And, not just a negative notion of peace defined by the absence of conflict. But, a positive peace where we all work to promote dialogue, harmony and justice, based on compassion and wisdom. As Buddha said, "नत्तीसंतपिणसुखं", "there is no higher bliss than peace". On Vesak, my hope is that India and Sri Lanka will work together to uphold the ideals of Lord Buddha and promote values of peace, accommodation, inclusiveness, and compassion in the policies and conduct of our governments. This is the true path to free individuals, families, societies, nations and the world at large from the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and friends,

On the blessed day of Vesak, let us light the lamps of

knowledge to move out of darkness; let us look more within; and let us uphold nothing else but the truth. And, dedicate our efforts to follow the path of Buddha whose light shines all over the world.

As the verse 387 of Dhammapada says:

दवातपतआदचिचो, रत्तगिओभातचिंदमि.
सन्नद्धोखत्तयितपत, झायीतपत ब्राह्मणो.
अथसब्बमअहोरत्तगि, बुद्धोतपततिजसा.

Meaning:

The sun shines by the day,
he moon lights up the night,
The warrior shines in his armour,
The Brahmin shines in his meditation,
But, the awakened one shines all day and night by his radiance.

Thank you once again for the honour to be with you.

I look forward to paying homage at the Sri Dalada Maligawa, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, in Kandy today afternoon. May the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha bless us all.

Thank you, Thank you very much



Address by Prime Minister in Dickoya

May 12, 2017

Brothers and sisters, Namaskar.

Translation: I am delighted to meet you all.

Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka, Excellency

Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Excellency

And friends,

It is a great pleasure to be here today. And, I am most grateful for your warm and enthusiastic welcome. It is a tremendous honour to be the first Indian Prime Minister ever to visit this beautiful region of Sri Lanka.

But, it is a greater honour to have the opportunity to speak with you. People the world over are familiar with famous Ceylon Tea that originates in this fertile land. What is less known is that it is your sweat and toil that makes the Ceylon Tea the brew of choice for millions around the globe. If Sri Lanka today is the third largest exporter of tea, it is because of your hard work. It is your labour of love which is instrumental in Sri Lanka

meeting almost 17% of the world's demand for tea, and earning more than 1.5 billion US dollars in foreign exchange. You are that indispensable backbone of the thriving Sri Lankan tea industry that justly prides itself on its success and global reach today.

Friends,

Your contribution is deeply valued across Sri Lanka and beyond. I for one truly appreciate your hard work. You and I have something in common. As some of you may have heard, I have a special association with tea. Chai pe Charcha, or discussions over tea, is not just a slogan. Rather, a mark of deep respect for the dignity and integrity of honest labour.

Today, we remember your forefathers. Those men and women of strong will and courage, who undertook the journey of their life from India to then Ceylon. Their journey may have been uphill and their struggles hard, but they never gave up. Today, we remember and salute that spirit.

Your generation also faced relentless hardships. You



encountered the stiff challenge of making your own mark and identity in a newly independent nation. But, you faced them boldly; you fought for your rights, but you did so peacefully.

We will never forget leaders like Saumiyamurthy Thondaman, who worked hard for your rights, for your upliftment and economic prosperity.

Friends,

Kaniyan Pungunranar, a Tamil Scholar had declared more than two millennia ago, “यादुम् ऊर, यावरूम् केलि”

(Yaathum Oore; Yavarum Kelir), meaning “Every town is hometown and all people are our kin”. And, you have captured the true spirit of that saying. You have made Sri Lanka your home. You are an intrinsic part of the warp and the weft (वेष्ट) of the social fabric of this beautiful nation.

You are the children of Tamil Thai (Tamil mother). You speak one of the oldest-surviving classical languages in the world. It is a matter of pride that many of you also speak Sinhala.

And, language is much more than a tool for communication. It defines a culture, forges relationships, joins communities and acts as a strong unifying force. There is no better sight than a multilingual society living in peace and harmony. Diversity calls for celebration; and not confrontation.

Our past has always been harmoniously inter-woven. Several Buddhist texts including Jataka tales mention Saint Agastya, whom many consider to be the father of Tamil language. The Sinhalese Nayak Kings of Kandy had matrimonial alliances with the Nayak Kings of Madurai and Tanjore. Sinhala and Tamil were the court languages. Hindu and Buddhist shrines were both respected and revered.

We need to strengthen, not separate, these threads of unity and harmony. And, you are perhaps best placed to lead such efforts and make your contribution.

Friends,

I come from the State of Gujarat in India, the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi. Almost 90 years ago, he visited this beautiful part of Sri Lanka, including Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla, Bandarawela



and Hatton. Gandhiji's first and only visit to Sri Lanka was about spreading the message of socio-economic development. In commemoration of that historic visit, the Mahatma Gandhi International Centre was set up with Government of India assistance at Matale in 2015. Another national icon of India from later years, Puratchi Thalaivar MGR was born on this very soil, establishing a life-long connection. And, in more recent times, you have gifted to the world one of the finest spinners in cricket, Muthiah Muralitharan.

Your progress is our pride. We take much joy from your accomplishments in various walks of life. We rejoice in the success of the Indian-origin diaspora as they leave a mark across the world, near and far. I look forward to many more shining successes. You form an important link between Indian and Sri Lankan people and government. We see you as part of seamless continuum of our ties with this beautiful country. It is my Government's priority to nurture these links. And,

shape our partnership and engagement in a manner that ultimately contributes to the progress of all Indians and all Sri Lankans, and also touches your lives.

Friends, You have kept your bonds with India alive. You have friends and relatives in India. You celebrate Indian festivals as your own. You have soaked our culture and made it your own. India beats in your hearts. And, I am here to tell you that India fully reciprocates the warmth of your sentiment. We will continue to work tirelessly for your socio-economic upliftment in all possible ways.

I am aware that the Government of Sri Lanka is taking active steps to improve your living conditions, including a 5-year National Plan of Action. India will fully support their efforts in this direction.

India has also undertaken many projects for your well-being, together with Sri Lankan Government, particularly in education, health and community



development sectors. The Ceylon Estate Workers Education Trust (CEWET) was set up way back in 1947 in order to encourage promising students to continue their studies. Under this, we offer around 700 scholarships annually to students for studying in Sri Lanka and India. Your children have benefited from this.

In the area of livelihood and capacity building, we have set up vocational training centres and 10 English language training centres and labs to help impart suitable skill sets. Similarly, we have helped set up computer and science labs in plantation schools. We are also upgrading a number of plantation schools.

Just a while ago, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and I dedicated to the people a new 150-bed hospital complex in Dickoya, which has been constructed with Indian assistance. Its state-of-the-art facilities will cater to the health care needs of the region.

I am also pleased to announce that we have decided to extend the 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service, currently in operation in Western and Southern Provinces, to all the other Provinces as well. We are also happy to share with you India's holistic healthcare traditions such as Yoga and Ayurveda. As we celebrate the International Day of Yoga next month, we look forward to your active participation in popularising

its multiple benefits. As part of the innovative Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka, 4000 houses are being constructed in upcountry areas. I am happy that for the first time, beneficiaries are also being given ownership of the land on which the houses are being built. To continue our commitment in this area, I am delighted to announce the construction of an additional ten thousand houses in upcountry areas under this project.

Earlier today, I announced direct Air India flights from Colombo to Varanasi. With this, you would be able to visit Varanasi with ease and seek the blessings of Lord Shiva.

Friends,

The Government and people of India are with you in your journey towards peace and greater prosperity. We will help you overcome the challenges of your past to realise the promise of your future. I am confident that it will be a bright future that matches the dreams and potential of your children and your heritage. As the great poet Thiruvalluvar said "Wealth will find its own way to the man of unfailing energy and efforts".

Thank you, Nandri

Thank you very much.





United Nations Day of
VESAK
2560 B.E./2017 **SRI LANKA**

INTERNATIONAL VESAK DAY CELEBRATIONS IN SRI LANKA

Vesak is a popular Buddhist religious festival that is celebrated in memory of the birth of Lord Buddha, his Enlightenment as well as his passing away.

This year, vesak was celebrated in Sri Lanka on the 10th and 11th of May 2017. Buddhist leaders across the world have decided to hold the UN International Vesak Festival 2017 in Sri Lanka. Every year, Buddhist countries are given the opportunity to host the celebrations of United Nations Day of Vesak and this is the first time Sri Lanka has been given the chance, after a request made by Minister Rajapakse at the last UN Vesak Day held in Thailand. According to Justice Minister Wijayadasa Rajapakse, the UN Vesak Day Committee has unanimously agreed that the International Vesak Day festival was held from 11th to 13th of May 2017.

The theme of this year's festival is 'Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace'.

This is the 14th annual UN Vesak day celebration and it was held at BMICH – Colombo, where Sri Lankan president Maithripala Sirisena, Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and many other national and international delegates were present. More than 2000 delegates, including political and Buddhist leaders across the world attended the event.

On the 11th of May, the launch of this festival took place at Diyawanna – the special vesak zone near the Parliament complex in Colombo. The concluding ceremony was conducted in the cultural capital of Sri Lanka – Kandy. The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (Sri Dalada Maligawa) is where the delegates met for the conclusion of this festival.

Indian High Commission Stall at Sambodhi Viharaya Vesak Zone



Buddhism a key pillar in Indo-Lanka ties:

Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu

Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu's address at the opening of the Lakshman Kadirgamar library at Sri Sambodhi Viharaya on Tuesday.

I feel blessed to be here today at the Sri Sambodhi Viharaya on the auspicious occasion of Vesak. In my country too, Buddha Pournima, or Vesak, is celebrated widely.

We are honoured that my Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will be visiting Sri Lanka as the chief guest at the International Vesak Day celebrations, on the invitation extended by President Maithripala Sirisena. This represents our shared Buddhist heritage. We want to make these celebrations, which are being held in Sri Lanka for the first time a great success.

I would also like to remember Lakshman Kadirgamar today, in whose memory the library is being opened. It was his invaluable efforts which resulted in the UN granting official recognition to International Vesak Day. I had the special privilege of knowing and working closely with Mr. Kadirgamar during my previous posting in Sri Lanka. Lakshman Kadirgamar was a great son of Sri Lanka who sacrificed his life for his motherland. I pay my respects to Mrs. Suganthie Kadirgamar this evening.

This will be my Prime Minister's second visit to Sri Lanka, the first being in March 2015. During that visit, he paid respects to Sri Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura. In this visit, he would take part in the traditional lamp lighting ceremony in Colombo. I am delighted that he will also visit Sri Dalada Maligawa. I share a personal connect with Sri Dalada Maligawa. After my daughter was born in Colombo, the first temple we took her to seek blessings was Sri Dalada Maligawa.

Several Venerable Theras of Maha Sangha, have spoken about the importance, of the visit of the Prime Minister of India from the land of Buddha. We count on their blessings, for strengthening India-Sri Lanka relations. Buddhism is a key pillar, of the shared cultural heritage of India and Sri Lanka, spanning several centuries. Buddhist teachings, have universal, and contemporary relevance. As my Prime Minister has said, "the solution to the problems, that people are facing, across the world, lies in the Buddha's teachings".

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has deep personal respect for Lord Buddha. He has called him, "the crown jewel of India." Peace and

harmony can be a reality, only when we demolish the walls in our minds. As Buddha has said, "what we think, we become."

On this special occasion, I am happy to announce, a gift of a large number of candles, to Sri Sambodhi Viharaya from the people of India. These candles have been handcrafted, from the wax produced, at the world's oldest operating refinery in Assam, in the North Eastern part of India.

I am also happy to inform you that famous Indian sand artist 'Padma Shri' Sudarsan Pattnaik, will make the world's longest Sand Buddha, at a special Vesak Zone, near the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Incidentally, Shri Pattnaik hails from Orissa, erstwhile Kalinga, from where Arahat Mahinda and Bhikhuni

Sangha-mitta, children of Devanampiya Ashoka, came with the message of Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

I am delighted, that we have also been able to put up, a photographic exhibition, at Sri Sambodhi, showcasing the Buddhist cultural heritage in Ladakh. India-Sri Lanka Foundation, has supported the efforts of Mr. Nilan Maligaspe, the photographer who went to Ladakh, and whose camera captured, the rich Buddhist traditions, of Ladakh.

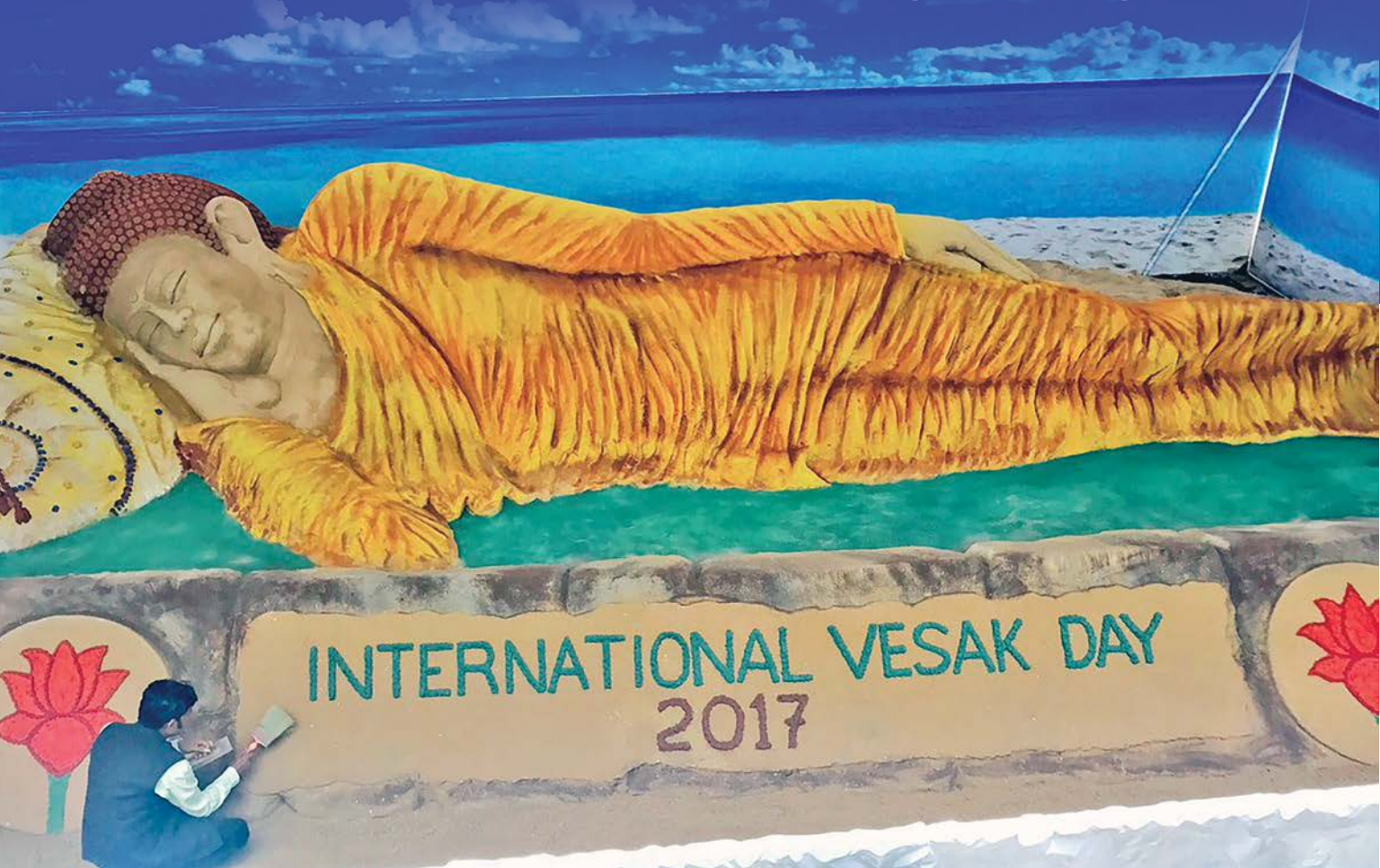
India is also participating in the International Buddhist Film Festival, organized at the 'Sakya Kingdom', set up by Ministry of Buddha Sasana.

We are working closely to strengthen the links of Buddhism, between our two countries. I look forward to working with the Sri Sambodhi and my Sri Lankan brothers and sisters towards this end.

On behalf of the diplomatic community and political leaders in Sri Lanka, I extend my greeting for Vesak.



The world's longest sand sculpture of reclining Buddha, unveiled on Vesak Poya Day



Indian Artist Sudarshan Pattnaik created the world's longest sand Buddha statue in Sri Lanka. He was invited by the High Commission of India in Colombo to participate in the 14th International Vesak Day Celebrations organized by Government of Sri Lanka. The reclining 40-foot Buddha Statue at the Diyawanna Vesak Zone. Pattnaik is an internationally acclaimed artist who won the jury prize gold medal at the 10th Moscow Sand Art Championship 2017.



Visit of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to India

April 26, 2017

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, who was on a working visit to India from 25-29 April 2017, met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The two leaders discussed a range of bilateral issues and matters of mutual interest. The Prime Minister hosted a lunch in honour of the Sri Lankan Prime Minister.

The Ministers of External Affairs, Home Affairs and Road, Transport, Highways and Shipping called on the visiting dignitary.

The discussions of the Indian leadership with the visiting dignitary provided both sides an opportunity to review the progress in implementation of the decisions taken during various high level exchanges in the past two years or so, including the visit of the Prime Minister to Sri Lanka in March 2015 and the visits of the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to India since February 2015. The two sides expressed their satisfaction at the progress in implementation of the outcomes of these exchanges, which further strengthened the historically close and friendly relations between the two countries.

The Indian side reiterated India's commitment to promoting prosperity in the neighbourhood and affirmed the continued support of India for realizing the vision of the Sri Lankan leadership for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka.

The leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for 'Cooperation in Economic Projects', which outlines the agenda for bilateral economic cooperation in the foreseeable future. Both sides expressed their commitment to ensuring that this mutually beneficial agenda is expeditiously implemented.



They also expressed the hope for early conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement.

Pointing out that India had welcomed Sri Lanka co-sponsoring the Resolution "Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka" at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) last month, the Indian leadership expressed the earnest hope that recommendations on the reconciliation would be completed within the stipulated timeframe of two years.

The Indian interlocutors requested continued cooperation of the Government of Sri Lanka for humanitarian treatment of Indian fishermen, without resorting to force under any circumstances. Both sides welcomed the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Fisheries held in Colombo earlier this month. The Indian side also informed the Sri Lankan side of the measures taken by India to encourage the Indian fishermen concerned for adopting deep sea fishing.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka reiterated the invitation to the Prime Minister for a visit to Sri Lanka on the coming Vesak Day.



India assists in flood relief

Government of India received a request from the Government of Sri Lanka in the afternoon of May 26 to provide assistance following major flooding and landslides in various parts of the country. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi immediately directed provision of all necessary assistance. He also expressed condolences at the loss of lives and property and said that India stands with her Sri Lankan brothers and sisters in their hour of need.

Pursuant to Prime Minister's directions, INS Kirch was diverted from her deployment and tasked to reach Colombo to provide immediate assistance. The ship, with around 125 personnel on board, arrived at Colombo Port in the morning of May 27 and offloaded relief supplies, inflatable Gemini boats with diving teams, and a mobile medical team with supplies. High Commissioner of

India H.E. Taranjit Sandhu handed over the supplies to Hon. Ravi Karunanayake, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, at Colombo Port. The Indian rescue personnel are now being deployed to the disaster affected zone in coordination with Sri Lanka Navy and other Sri Lankan authorities.

The High Commission of India in Colombo is in close touch with Sri Lankan authorities to coordinate any additional assistance that may be required

High Commissioner of India H E Taranjit Sandhu, while handing over the supplies to Hon. Ravi Karunanayake, Foreign Minister and Hon. Dunesh Gankanda, Acting Minister of Disaster Management, reiterated India's steadfast commitment to extend all possible assistance to Sri Lanka. Hon. Foreign Minister thanked the Government of India for providing assistance within hours of a request being made. Both Ministers also took a tour of the ship, and were briefed about the advanced equipment and facilities on board for disaster relief.

The second Indian Naval ship, INS Shardul arrived at Colombo Port on May 28. It has nearly 200 personnel on board, including specialized rescue, diving and medical teams, as well as a large amount of relief material and Gemini inflatable boats.

The 40 tons of relief material on board INS Shardul were as per the requirement conveyed by Sri Lankan authorities, such as rice, atta (flour), dal, sugar, bed sheets, blankets, durries, rain coats, milk, biscuits, etc. The rescue, diving and medical teams on board will



efforts in Sri Lanka

work in coordination with the Sri Lanka Navy and other authorities, and are now being deployed in the worst affected areas, particularly Ratnapura and Horana, as per requirements identified by the Sri Lankan side.

The third Indian Naval Ship, INS Jalashwa, arrived at Colombo Port on 30 May 2017 from Vishakapatnam, as part of India's ongoing assistance for flood relief in Sri Lanka. This is the largest of the three Indian ships sent to Sri Lanka. It has specialized equipment, including landing platform / dock, disembarkation crafts, helicopters, and a fully equipped medical hospital with operation theaters and laboratories. With around 400 personnel on board, the ship has on board multiple rescue and diving teams, along with inflatable boats and medical supplies. It

has also brought additional relief material

High Commissioner of India Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu handed over Indian assistance from the ship to Mr. P.B. Abeykoon, Secretary to President, and Vice Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne, Commander of Sri Lanka Navy. Later in the day, Hon. Ravi Karunanayake, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, along with the High Commissioner, flagged off the deployment of Indian Navy teams to various locations across Sri Lanka particularly in Akussera and Deniyaya in Matara District and Divitura in Galle District. These teams will work with the Sri Lanka Navy in undertaking rescue and relief operations.

In his comments, High Commissioner reiterated India's unwavering commitment and support to Sri Lanka in the relief operations. He conveyed that as

requested by the Government of Sri Lanka, India has focused on rescue operations by providing specialized diving and medical teams as well as essential relief items. He also mentioned that Specialized Disaster Management compact teams are ready to assist in case of requirement. The Sri Lankan dignitaries thanked the Government of India for its continued support.

Meanwhile, the rescue and medical teams from INS Shardul, which reached Colombo on May 28, continued to provide assistance at Kaluthara and Ratnapura. Joint medical camps with Sri Lankan Navy personnel were organized in different places, including Nagoda Hospital in Kaluthara.

Indian Air Force aircraft also delivered essential spare parts for Sri Lanka Air Force helicopters today evening.





High Commissioner's visit to Sri Dalada Maligawa

March 27, 2017

During his visit to Kandy, High Commissioner of India Mr Taranjit Singh Sandhu paid his respects and received the blessings of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Prelates in Kandy on 27 March, 2017.

The High Commissioner was welcomed by the foreign division of Sri Dalada Maligawa & by the Diyawadana Nilame of Sri Dalada Maligawa (Le custodian of Temple of Sacred Tooth Relic). More over the Indian High Commissioner & his crew visited to international Buddhist museum of Sri Dalada Maligawa

High Commissioner also called on the Hon'ble Governor of Central Province, Niluka Ekanayake.



SLR 300 million Indian Grant to Construct 3000 Rain Water Harvesting Systems

India and Sri Lanka signed an MoU to construct 3000 rain water harvesting systems at a cost of SLR 300 million in Jaffna District. The MoU was signed by Shri Arindam Bagchi, Acting High Commissioner of India and Mr. V. Sivagnanasothy, Secretary, Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation in the presence of Hon.A. H. M. Fowzie, State Minister of National Integration and Reconciliation.

The project envisages construction of 3000 rainwater harvesting systems for 3000 households in selected divisions of Jaffna District. The scope of the project also includes training of the households on operation and maintenance of the systems. Beneficiaries will be identified by Government of Sri Lanka in consultation with the Government of India. The selected beneficiaries would include women headed families and recently resettled families.

This grant project was approved by Government of India in response to a request received from the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation of Government of Sri Lanka. The project aims to assist people by supporting resettlement efforts focused on reintegrating internally displaced families in Jaffna by providing modern rain water harvesting systems to provide clean drinking water supply facility to households. The project will generate employment opportunities in Sri Lanka.



India Constructs Multi-Ethnic Tri-Lingual School in Polonnaruwa



India and Sri Lanka on February 02, 2017, signed an MoU to construct a new multi-ethnic tri-lingual secondary school in Polonnaruwa District. The MoU was signed by H.E Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka and Mr. Sunil Hettiarachchi, Secretary to the Ministry of Education. Senior Officials from Government of Sri Lanka, including Mr. Ranjan Dharmawardena, Chief of Staff to the President of Sri Lanka, participated in the event. The School will be constructed using a grant of SLR 300 million from the Government of India. The project envisages construction of class rooms, laboratories and library, as well as procurement of furniture and other equipment.

The school would provide opportunities to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students to learn in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment. The project would also contribute to H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena's efforts to promote and strengthen reconciliation and unity in Sri Lanka.

India Extends Helping Hand to Differently Abled People of Sri Lanka

India donated a bus on February 06, 2017, to facilitate the transport of differently abled people belonging to estate sector in Sri Lanka. The bus was handed over by H.E Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka to Ms. Sunethra Bandaranaike, Chairperson of the Sunera Foundation. The Foundation is a government-approved charity that was first set up in April 2000 in recognition of the need to address the psychosocial needs of differently abled people. It uses performance arts as a therapeutic tool.

The 28 seater Tata bus will replace the bus donated by India in 2010, and it was funded by a grant of SLR 2.9 million from the Government of India. The bus will be utilized for transporting disabled persons in the tea estate plantations from their homes to workshops conducted by Sunera Foundation and back to their homes.



Indian Housing Project Commences in Bogawana Estate, Hatton

The foundation stone for the construction of 355 houses in Bogawana estate on grant basis under Indian Housing Project was jointly laid by Hon'ble P. Thigambaram, Minister of Hill Country New Villages, Infrastructure & Community Development and Deputy High Commissioner of India, Mr. Arindam Bagchi on 13 February 2017. Hon'ble Mano Ganesan, Minister of National Co-existence, Dialogue and Official Languages and Hon'ble V.S. Radhakrishnan, State Minister of Education also took part in the event.

This project is part of Government of India's commitment to construct 50,000 houses in Sri Lanka. Around 45,400 houses have already been completed in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

Another 4000 houses will be constructed in the Central and Uva Provinces. Construction in two estates- Dunsinane and Diyagama West in Nuwara Eliya- have already commenced.

The total grant of SLR 9,50,000 per house is released in four tranches, linked to the physical progress, directly to the beneficiaries. The Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Societies will assist in construction of the houses. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will provide the technical assistance. The project will be implemented in close consultation with the Ministry of Hill Country New Villages, Infrastructure & Community Development and Plantation Human Development Trust.





High Commissioner visits India Assisted Projects in Central Province

H.E. Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka visited Central Province on 6 March, 2017 to inspect and assess the progress in the India Assisted Projects being implemented in Central Province. High Commissioner visited the construction site in Dunsinane Estate, one of the project sites of the third phase of India Housing Project in Nuwara Eliya District and the new Dickoya District Base Hospital building complex in Hatton.

High Commissioner inspected the houses being constructed and also interacted with the beneficiaries of the project. He expressed Government of India's strong commitment to



the development of the region and well being of the people of the region.

High Commissioner further visited the new building complex of the 150 bed District Base Hospital, Dickoya constructed by the Government of India at a project cost of SLR 1200 million. Interacting with the officials at the Hospital, High Commissioner expressed hope that the state of the art hospital would be of immense benefit to the people of the region and would act as a trigger for development of the region.



Indian Housing Project extends to Hellebodde Estate



In a special ceremony held on June 3, 2017, at Hellebodde Estate in Pusselawa, High Commissioner of India H.E. Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu along with Minister for Hill country New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development Hon. Palani Digambaram, and State Minister for Education Hon. V.S. Radhakrishnan, laid foundation stone for 100 new houses being constructed under the Indian Housing Project.

Members of Parliament and Central Provincial Council, senior Government officials as well as officials from Plantation Human Development Trust(PHDT), Plantation and Estate Management participated in the ceremony. More than 500 people from the Hellebodde Estate attended the function.

High Commissioner in his remarks recalled the promise of additional 10,000 houses announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narandra Modi during his visit to the Hill country on 12 May 2017 and reiterated Government of India's continued commitment to the wellbeing and development of the

Plantation areas. Both the Ministers in their remarks, thanked the Government of India for the support and the various development projects implemented by the Government of India in the Plantation areas, especially the Housing Project.

Government of India has committed a total of 14,000 houses in the Plantation areas. Habitat for Humanity, Sri Lanka is the implementing agency for the houses being constructed at Hellebodde Estate.



India Education Fair 2017

February 07-08, 2017



"India Education Fair 2017", organised by SAPE Events & Media Pvt Ltd, was jointly inaugurated on Tuesday 7th February by Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka and Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka at Galadari Hotel, Colombo.

Speaking at the occasion, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya appreciated the Higher Education facilities in India and recalled the long lasting relationship between India and Sri Lanka in the field of education. He also appreciated Government of India and the High Commission for offering more than 700 scholarships annually under various schemes for Sri Lankan students.

HE High Commissioner of India, during his address, highlighted the vast opportunities available in the field of higher education in India and the various

scholarship schemes for Sri Lankan students to study in India at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels. He also apprised the gathering about Government of India's recent decisions to provide admission to Sri Lankan students in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), which are centre of excellence in the field of technology and engineering, and Indian Medical Colleges from the Academic Session 2017-18 onwards based on entrance examinations.

Representatives from various Indian Universities are participating in this 2-day (Feb 07-08) Education Fair, which is open to public from 10.00 am to 06.00 pm, where aspiring Sri Lankan students can interact and explore avenues open to them in Indian universities.





India hands over Water Bowser to Sri Lanka for Drought Relief

21 March 2017

In a special event held at the Presidential Secretariat today, His Excellency Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, ceremonially handed over the keys of eight Lorry Water Bowser to His Excellency Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka, as part of India's assistance to augment Drought Relief measures in Sri Lanka.

Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Disaster Management, Mr. S. S. Miyanawala, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and other senior officials of Sri Lankan Government were also present on the occasion. Handing over of the bowser is part of India's continued commitment to assist Sri Lanka whenever required.

The commitment to donate eight water bowser and 100 metric tonnes of rice as immediate assistance for drought relief was made by Dr. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary of India, on behalf of Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj to Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, during his recent visit to Sri Lanka in February 2017.

Pursuant to this commitment, India handed over 08 lorry mounted water bowser, locally purchased from Lanka Ashok Leyland, at a cost of SLR 25 million to Sri Lanka today.





High Commissioner's speech at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS), Colombo : India's Global Outlook

March 25, 2017

Dr. Harinda Vidanage, Prof. Mohan De Silva, Dr. Senaka Dharmatilleke and Members of BCIS Faculty and Students

It is a privilege for me to be here today at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies. BCIS has been making invaluable contribution to enriching the field of International Relations over more than four decades.

It is the start of another Academic Year. It brings with it new friends, new hopes and sometimes new challenges. It takes me back to my own University days, where, just like you, I also studied International Relations. Later I became a diplomat. You and I share a unique bond.

Relationship between countries just like between individuals, are complex, and not easy to understand, analyse, let alone, predict. This is what makes it, interesting and exciting. However, despite the several layers of complexities, which one sees on the surface, human beings the world over, essentially have the same set of dreams and aspirations. "Yatra Viswam Bhavathyeka Needam", the whole world is a nest, as they say in the Vedas.

In today's world, we continue to see rapid strides in Science and Technology. This has brought about, a sea change, in the way we live. Also, there is a renewed focus, worldwide on 'good governance'. In other words, yahapalanayahas gone global! Governments have taken performance, and delivery seriously, and are genuinely, making an attempt, to make a difference, to the lives of average citizens.

We see the historical past, being buried to build a promising future. 2015 was witness to the restoration of diplomatic relations, between the US and Cuba, after a gap of 54 years. Columbia struck a peace deal, with FARC in 2016, to bring an end to more than 50 years of conflict. These developments, underline the need for, out of box thinking; the importance of moving ahead, without being hostage, to the past.

On the other hand, we also see a pause, in the globalisation process. We see the winds of

protectionism, blowing across continents. The world seems to suddenly look inwards, rather than outwards. Over the last several decades, the world has enjoyed the benefits, from fruitful exchange of products, services and ideas; there has been, a significant increase, in specialization and productivity; in overall standard of living, of the common man, and in cross-cultural awareness. We need to recognize it.

While some things, have changed substantially, others have not changed, at all. Terrorism continues unabated. From world capitals, to rural hinterlands, its reach has spread. Some states continue, to sponsor terror, with impunity. United Nations remains a forum, which is not reflective of today's global order. Multilateralism still refuses to acknowledge, the multipolarity of today's world. The democratization of global order, remains elusive.

Given this backdrop, what is India's global outlook? Over the years, Indian domestic situation, has seen a sea-change. India's trade to GDP ratio, has risen dramatically, since the reforms began in 1990s. So has capital flows, relative to GDP. Indian economy today, is far more open, and integrated, into the world economy, than most people realise. This has brought rich dividends. India grew fastest, among major economies worldwide, at over 7.5 per cent in 2016. India will continue to drive, global growth in 2017, and its share in the world GDP, is expected to rise to 17%. We have a shared interest, in seeing an open world.

Brand India is here to stay. By 2020, the average age in India will be 29, and it is set to become the world's youngest country, with 64% of its population, in the working age group. With Western Europe, the US, South Korea, Japan and even China aging, this demographic potential, offers India, an unprecedented edge, which could further contribute, to GDP growth rate.

It is a different India, that one sees today. In 2016, India overtook the US in terms of internet users. At 227 million people, India's internet user base, is now the second largest in the world. With India becoming, one of iPhone's fastest growing markets, Apple has decided to assemble, the iPhone in Bengaluru, making India the 3rd country, to do the final assembly of iPhones. The

world's largest solar power plant, was recently unveiled, in Tamil Nadu. India is running, the largest renewable energy expansion programme, in the world. For the first time in space history, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a record 104 satellites, in one go, in February 2017, out of which 100 satellites, belong to foreign nations.

It has been a chrysalis-like transformation for India, from a young independent nation, with little economic resources, to the fastest growing major economy, in the world. The world has realized, and recognized, India's leadership role. As the largest democracy in the world, and perhaps the world's most intricate, and pluralistic society, India's journey has been watched, with keenness by the world, at large. One thing which has remained with us throughout, is our belief, in the basic tenet, of our foreign policy: strategic autonomy.

So, what is the aim of India's foreign policy? The core aim of India's foreign policy, is to meet the developmental aspirations of its 1.25 billion people. Our Diplomacy, is for our Development. D for D! India also, looks at engaging effectively, with the world, to meet common challenges.

In recent times, our foreign policy has become more proactive, focussed and action-oriented, thanks to the vision of our leadership. We have made huge efforts, in reengaging our Diaspora. We have taken steps, to make new friends, as well as strengthen, the breadth and depth of friendship with existing partners.

The world appreciated India's leadership, in the finalization of the Paris COP-21 Agreement. International Solar Alliance, UN International Day of Yoga are other examples, where we demonstrated our willingness to shoulder global responsibilities. The mammoth evacuation/rescue operations in Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Ukraine, Nepal etc. which India undertook, validated our genuine willingness, to help not only our citizens, but all others, who came to us for assistance, irrespective of the colour of the passport.

We have cemented our relations with our neighbours; and with our extended neighbours. We have reenergised our partnership with P-5. Our ties with the US have been transformational; having served in the US till recently, I have seen it happen just before my eyes. Our relations with China have expanded, in areas where, we have commonality of views. In recent times, India-Japan 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' has further strengthened. We hosted the largest ever, India-Africa Summit. We have reconnected, with Latin America. For the first time, we hosted the Forum of India-Pacific Island Cooperation. We have made steady progress, in our ties with the West. While we have 'acted East, we have also linked West.' The first ever India-Arab League Ministerial Conference, held in Manama, outlined our expanding outreach with the Arab World. Our relations with Saudi Arabia, UAE and other West Asian countries have gained unprecedented depth.

I want to elaborate on the neighbourhood. Our Neighbourhood First policy, is the reflection of the importance, we attach to our nearest partners. We see our future, as intertwined. The scale and speed, of economic transformation in India, is an opportunity, that we do not want our friends, especially our neighbours, to miss. India's growth, is not, in the interest of India alone. We want you, to be part, of our growth story.

India sees itself as a net provider of security, in the Indian Ocean Region. We also see ourselves, as the First Responder in HA/DR operations in the Region (Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief). The first Indian naval helicopters, reached Sri Lanka, with immediate relief material, within 12 hours of Tsunami tragedy in 2004. Similarly, we responded swiftly with assistance, when the landslides, hit Sri Lanka last year. We are again extending a helping hand to Sri Lanka for drought relief.

I see a huge window of opportunity, for India-Sri Lanka ties. We will soon be launching a SAARC communications and meteorology satellite; which also has Sri Lankan partnership. There is a lot, that we can do together. We are keen to integrate, Sri Lankan economy, in the global supply and value chain. We are ready, to share our skill set, with Sri Lanka. We are interested, in making investments in energy; hard infrastructure and connectivity projects. We have a robust development partnership. We are ready to sail with Sri Lanka in its journey towards a more secure, prosperous and fulfilling future. All we need to do, is to think and act, and act now. As Gautama Buddha once said, "We are what we think. All that we are, arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world."

Thank you...I wish you all a bright future!



India International Textiles Expo 2017

27-28 March 2017



The IITExpo 2017 – COLOMBO Exhibition cum Buyer Seller Meet was organized by the Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL) (under Ministry of Textiles, Government of India) from 27-28 March 2017 at Galadari Hotel, Colombo.

More than 30 Indian companies exhibited / showcased the latest range of textile fabrics, industrial fabrics, specialty fabrics, made-ups & home textiles like bed linen; kitchen linen; bath linen; living & dining linen and technical textiles etc. at the Expo. This would be a unique opportunity to see the products of reputed Indian textile companies under one roof.



Celebration of the 'Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Day and the International Students' Day

March 28, 2017

High Commission of India, Colombo organized joint celebration of ITEC Day and International Students' Day on 28 March 2017. The ITEC alumni and Sri Lankan students who underwent training/studied in India under ITEC scheme and ICCR scholarship scheme of the Government of India gathered to celebrate Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Day (ITEC Day) and the 'International Students Day' at Hotel Taj Samudra, Colombo.

Hon. Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Government of Sri Lanka, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka H.E. Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu was the Guest of Honor. Over 250 alumni of Indian educational and training institutions, from various parts of Sri Lanka, attended the function.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest, Hon. Rishad Bathiudeen lauded India's valuable assistance for Sri Lankan nationals and acknowledged the contribution to Sri Lankan human resource development and skill development. He noted that these have boosted cultural ties and have further strengthened people-to-people contact between the two countries. The Hon. Minister termed the cooperation as historic and conveyed his gratitude to the people of India in this regard. He further added that the friendly ties between Sri Lanka and India is also helping in achieving the developmental goals of the current Government.

In his address, High Commissioner Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu thanked the Hon'ble Minister for gracing the function as the Chief Guest. He appreciated the large turnout of participants who had come from all over Sri Lanka. He underlined skills are the real strength and Government of India is committed to strengthening the skillset in Sri Lanka. High Commissioner conveyed that Sri Lanka is one of the most important partner countries for the Scholarship Programme. He added



colleges from the academic year 2017-18.

Sri Lankan ITEC and student alumni shared their experiences of studying and participating in training programmes in prestigious institutions in India, recollecting their warm memories, appreciating their useful experience and sharing how their exposure has helped them in enhancing their capabilities and using the experience gained for providing better service in their country.

For more details on the scholarship programmes and other educational assistance, please visit the High Commission of India's website www.hcicolombo.org and for more information on the ITEC please visit www.itecgoi.in





India - Sri Lanka *Shilpa Kala*

"Shilpa Kala 2017" an exhibition and sale of traditional handicrafts and textiles was held for the second successive year from May 25-28, at Nugasevana, BMICH, Colombo, showcasing a colourful array of handicrafts and textiles identical to different parts, in both countries.

The event was organized by the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka together with "Hands of Sri Lanka" - National Crafts Foundation headed by Buddhi Keerthisena and Dastkaari Haat Samiti, chaired by Jaya Jaitly as co-partners. As many as 25 Indian and 14 Sri Lankan artisans participated in this gala festival.

The main purpose of the event was not only to showcase cultural diversities, but also to enhance the livelihood of the artisans of both countries, making them gain recognition for their hard work and get a better value for their products.

A wide variety of handicraft and textile items from India were displayed, such as, wood products, painted fabrics, fashion jewellery, handloom saris, handbags and leather products, while an attractive collection of Sri Lankan items depicting batik, wood carvings, lace, ceramics, Dumbura work, embroidery, silver and copper ware, reed items and clay ware will be on display. The handicrafts industry in Sri Lanka dates back to King Devanampiyatissa's time, where Sangamitta, the daughter of the great Emperor Asoka brought a sapling of the Bo tree under which Buddha found enlightenment.

She brought people who represented 18 crafts or



professions, which laid the foundation for Sri Lanka to be renowned for its creative innovations and the incomparable skills of its master artisans and craftsmen. Various handicrafts such as pottery, jewellery, clay and wood carvings, found from different areas in the country depict the rich culture and heritage Sri Lanka had back then, and also the valuable connection with our Indian counterparts.

Arts and crafts represent a nation's pride, and the craftsmen who show their talent are the backbone of the country. It also depicts the talent of the artisan and also promotes friendship and cultural bondage. Thus, the Sri Lankan public is yet to experience a spectacular event which combines two nations together, in the world of handicrafts, not only showcasing the talents of their master craftsmen, but also creating an opportunity to promote friendship and goodwill, and exchange new ideas and concepts between the two countries on one stage.

"Shilpa Kala" is all about the artist as a crafts person; and the exceptional crafts created by such artistes. As nations with rich and diverse cultures, India and Sri Lanka have a lot to show to the world by way of arts and crafts.

It is also a way of showcasing new designs, concepts and knowledge, as well as quality comparison while providing marketing opportunities.

The Indian High Commission has extended its fullest support in organizing the event.





photo courtesy : Daily FT

High Commissioner's address at the inauguration of Shilpa Kala

May 25, 2017



India - Sri Lanka *Shilpa Kala*

Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of the Parliament
Smt. Jaya Jaitley, Mr. Keerthisena,
Talented Artists from Sri Lanka and India,
Distinguished Guests,

आयु बोन ! (Ayubowan)

I welcome all of you to the inauguration of Shilpa Kala - 2017. It is a privilege to have a friend of India - Hon'ble Karu Jayasuriya, with us this morning.

Shilpa Kala will showcase the best of traditional handicrafts from both countries. It will also emphasize the confluence of cultures that underlie the handicrafts traditions in both India and Sri Lanka.

Indian handicrafts are not unknown to Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan art creations are already popular with Indians. Shilpa Kala is focused to take this relationship to a higher level.

Government of India has taken many steps to promote Indian handicrafts abroad. But, this is a unique event, where we are focusing not only on Indian handicrafts but also providing a platform for Sri Lankan artisans. Shilpa Kala is a joint partnership between Dastakaari Haat Samiti from New Delhi and Hands of Sri Lanka foundation in Colombo. Smt. Jaya Jaitley and Mr. Keerthisena have put in special efforts to bring them together.

This is in line with the thinking of Indian leadership that all of us, particularly Sri Lanka and India, should grow together. We cannot prosper in isolation.

Sri Lanka can also benefit at a global level by partnering with resurgent India including in the field of Handicrafts. Partnership would help Sri Lanka market her products to a larger audience. India is a huge market for Sri Lankan Handicraft products! Regular Sri Lankan participation in Surajkund Mela (Crafts Festival) in India and the amount of popularity they receive is a

known example.

As you are aware, India continues to be the largest source of tourists into Sri Lanka, accounting for almost one-fifth of all tourist arrivals. Efforts like Shilpa Kala would attract more tourists and strengthen our timeless links of history, religion and culture and people.

I thank artisans from Dastakaari Haat Samiti, and Hands of Sri Lanka foundation, and wish them a successful exhibition!



First India-Sri Lanka Joint Research Symposium

May 29, 2017



The inauguration of the first India-Sri Lanka Joint Research Symposium was held in Colombo on 29 May 2017. The Symposium was inaugurated by Mr. Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Science, Technology & Research of Sri Lanka and Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India. Senior officials from Department of Science and Technology of India; Ministry of Science, Technology & Research of Government of Sri Lanka; scientists and experts; project collaborators from both India and Sri Lanka were also present.

Both India and Sri Lanka have jointly funded research programmes under the Programme of Cooperation signed in 2011 between Department of Science and Technology of Government of India, and Ministry of Science, Technology & Research of Government of Sri Lanka. The projects have now been completed. Ministry of Science, Technology & Research of Government of Sri Lanka is holding a Symposium to showcase the outcomes from the India-Sri Lanka joint collaboration in S & T.

During his address, Mr. Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Science, Technology & Research of Sri Lanka thanked India for its swift response to the Sri Lankan request for flood relief. He also appreciated India's readiness to share meteorological data to improve disaster preparedness. Noting the strides made by India in S&T, Mr. Susil Premajayantha noted the huge potential for cooperation that exist in the fields of basic as well as applied sciences, and emphasised the need for continued collaboration.

Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India noted that India is today well-positioned to make substantial contributions to the research and development (R&D) industry in the world. He added that India is committed to promoting 'science with a human face'. He reiterated India's commitment to sharing its expertise in S & T with Sri Lanka.

The Symposium was conclude on 31 May 2017.



BIMSTEC Day

June 06, 2017

On 6 June 2017, we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). BIMSTEC, a sub-regional organization that constitutes a bridge between South and South-East Asia, has become a key platform for regional cooperation in recent times. The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of the global population and a combined GDP of over US\$ 2.5 trillion.

BIMSTEC came into existence on June 6, 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. Its Membership constitutes seven Member States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand. Ambassador Sumith Nakandala of Sri Lanka is the current Secretary General of BIMSTEC. BIMSTEC Secretariat is situated in Dhaka.

Unlike many other regional groupings, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization: agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.

Following the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat hosted by Prime Minister of India in October 2016 in Goa, there is a renewed impetus to energise BIMSTEC and transform its role for enhanced regional cooperation. The Retreat has been described by various member countries as a turning point.

At the 17th Senior Official Meeting (SOM) held in February 2017 in Kathmandu, countries have expressed their firm commitment to realize the full potential for the grouping and to undertake measures as agreed to implement the Agenda for Action adopted during the Retreat.

Among the 14 priority areas in BIMSTEC (in each of which a Member Country takes lead), India is the Lead Country for Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime; Transport & Communication; Tourism; and Environment and Disaster Management. Sri Lanka is the lead country for Technology.

India has offered several initiatives to advance the Agenda for Action.

- (i) The first meeting of BIMSTEC National Security chiefs: This was hosted by India in March 2017. Brig. M.D.U.V Gunatilake, Director, Military Intelligence of Sri Lanka participated in the meeting. A key outcome of the meeting was recognition of the need to build BIMSTEC as a 'common security space'. Action points that emerged and being taken forward in coordination with NSCS include establishment of cooperation in maritime security; 100 training slots offered by India for capacity building in

security domain; Cyber security cooperation; Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR); Use of emerging space technologies to address security challenges etc.

- (ii) First BIMSTEC Annual Disaster Management Exercise (BIMSTEC DMEx 2017): This major Exercise will be hosted by India in September/October 2017 with an Advance Coordination Conference in August 2017. It would seek participation from each country.
- (iii) Establishment of BIMSTEC Tour Operators Network: India has offered to set-up a network of BIMSTEC Tour Operators and its first meeting to develop industry proposals to develop intra-regional tourism is to be held in New Delhi on July 7, 2017, followed by familiarization tours for tour operators being invited from Member countries. At the Leaders Retreat hosted by India in 2016, BIMSTEC leaders had encouraged the development of Buddhist Tourist Circuit and Temple Tourist Circuit within the region.
- (iv) BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA): The draft BIMSTEC MVA agreement has been shared with Member countries.
- (v) BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement: The draft will soon be shared with Member Countries.
- (vi) Creation of BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine: India has offered to host the first meeting in September 2017 to work on strengthening the role of traditional medicine for holistic health care.

In addition, the following initiatives are being hosted in India:

- (i) BIMSTEC Trade and Tourism Expo being organized by Indian Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata on September 15-17, 2017.
- (ii) BIMSTEC as partner in TEXTILES INDIA 2017 being held on June 30-July 2, 2017 in Gandhinagar.

India reiterates the importance of cooperation within BIMSTEC based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit. India looks forward to active participation by all BIMSTEC Member Countries including Sri Lanka in the aforementioned events.

9th Annual General Meeting of the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry: Address by High Commissioner of India H.E. Taranjit Singh Sandhu



[Colombo: 6 July 2017]

It is a pleasure to be here, at the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry. IL CCI is unique - the only joint business Chamber of Sri Lanka & India in Colombo!!

I was keen to be here with all of you, and I very much appreciate, the adjustment you made, in rescheduling this event.

IL CCI was built by friends of both India and Sri Lanka, under the aegis of, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, more than a decade ago. I am happy to note that your efforts, to deepen and strengthen economic partnership, between our great countries, have indeed borne fruits.

Economic relations, have become an important element, in any bilateral relations today. However old, the ties are, however strong, the civilizational links are, to use Prime Minister Modi's terminology, in his address to Ceylon Chambers, in March 2015,

"economic cooperation, is often the locomotive, that gives it momentum". I consider the business chambers, as the wheels of the locomotive.

You channelize and catalyse, economic and commercial ties. You create opportunities. As a wise man said, opportunities do not happen; they are created.

Perceptions matter in everyday life; however, it matters the most in business. Your perceptions about the economy, can have powerful impact, on the economy itself. Your paint-brush, can colour others' vision. This also means, that you have a huge responsibility.

You are not just, a collection of Indian and Sri Lankan companies. You are one among those few groups, who knows India and Sri Lanka equally well. You have seen and experienced both, yourself. I consider your ground knowledge, as an important tool, to bridge asymmetry of information.

I am glad, that a delegation from Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, visited Mumbai to take part in, the Make in India Week last year. We would be happy to facilitate, more such visits.

As Government, our aim is to create, tangible and sustainable opportunities, for the benefit of the people, in both countries. We need to, look ahead. We need to, dream high. What we can achieve together, is limited only, by our collective imagination.

The winds of reforms, are sweeping across India. The impact of the reforms, has made India, a land of limitless possibilities, and endless opportunities. The launch of Goods and Services Tax, from 1 July, is a milestone, in the economic history of India. The creation of One Nation; One Market; One Tax, is expected to generate, several positive externalities. Economists are predicting, an addition of 2% growth, in India's GDP, from the roll out of GST.

Skill, scale and speed, have become the new mantra. Several thousands of processes, and procedures, have been revised, with an aim to facilitate, genuine business. We are aware that, we have to do much more, and we are, in the process. Your feedback, on what more could be done, is important for us.

India is a big country; therefore nothing is enough, when it comes to development. But, that is our strength, and your opportunity. Size of the Indian market, should not scare anyone, or act as a deterrent. Our size is a big opportunity-it creates, enough space for everyone. India's growth is not, in the interest of India alone. As my PM has said, our friends and partners, especially our neighbours, have the first claim, on the fruits of India's growth. Sabka sath, Sabka vikas, captures this vision. Together, we progress.

Sri Lanka has also started its journey, with renewed vigour, in meeting the developmental aspirations, of its people. We want to make this journey, faster and easier. In doing so, we want to ensure, that the journey is, as important, as destination itself.

We are at a very special moment, in the history of India-Sri Lanka bilateral ties. The frequency of summits, and high-level meetings, has in a way, been unprecedented.

We note with deep appreciation, that President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, and Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake, visited India, for their first overseas trip. In March 2015, Prime Minister Modi, made a landmark visit to Sri Lanka, which happened after 28 years. In less than two years, in May 2017, our Prime Minister made a stand-alone visit, to Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest, at the UN International Vesak Day celebrations, which Sri Lanka, had the privilege of hosting, for the first time.

We are happy that, we have been able to achieve concrete outcomes, from these high-level visits. We signed an MoU for cooperation, in joint economic projects, during the visit of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, to India, in April this year. The MoU identifies, specific projects in sectors, such as energy, power, roads, ports, railways etc. We are closely working, with Sri Lankan authorities, for timely implementation of these projects.

Our development partnership with Sri Lanka, currently stands at, US \$ 2.6 billion. We are ready to strengthen, our development partnership further, based on Sri Lanka's needs.

We intend to make, substantial investments in Sri Lanka, in conventional, and non-conventional energy, in the days ahead. Considering that LNG, is a cheaper and cleaner fuel, we are sharing our expertise, and skillset, with Sri Lanka, to facilitate the process of gasification, of the Sri Lankan economy. We also see, huge potential in Sri Lanka, for wind and solar energy, as well. India has made rapid advance in solar technology and we are ready to share it with Sri Lanka.

We have also identified, hard infrastructure and connectivity projects, in Sri Lanka, including roads, railways, ports etc. for joint development.

Certain sections, who may not be very well informed, unfortunately, have been trying to portray, that Sri Lankan interests would be harmed, when some of these projects, take off. Nothing could be further, from truth. These are, JOINT projects. These projects bring huge investments, and valuable foreign exchange, for Sri Lanka. They create several thousands, of direct and indirect jobs. These projects, only bring benefits, to Sri Lanka. You are, practical and pragmatic. We would like you to project, the right message, in your interactions.

When India and Sri Lanka, entered into an FTA in 2000, it was a first, for both countries. Total bilateral trade has increased 8 times since then. Share of FTA items in Sri Lanka's exports to India increased from 16% in 2000 to more than 65% in recent years. Majority of Sri Lanka's exports to India are through FTA.

On the other hand, share of FTA items in India's exports to Sri Lanka increased from 9% in 2000 to just 13% in recent years. Majority of India's exports to Sri Lanka are

outside the FTA. The facts and figures show FTA has indeed, been beneficial to Sri Lanka.

There are several Sri Lankan companies, who have crafted their own success stories, by becoming part of global supply, and value chains. We need to create, more such stories.

We have been working, towards expanding the contours, of the FTA to cover, investments and services. The proposed Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement is in mutual interest. However, I would like to reiterate that we are ready to move at a pace Sri Lanka is comfortable with.

On what Sri Lanka means to India, we are happy, that Sri Lankan Airlines, is currently the largest foreign carrier, to India. India also contributes, significantly towards Sri Lankan tourism, with an estimated 400,000 Indians visiting Sri Lanka annually. Sri Lanka has been providing MRO services, to Indian airline companies. Similarly, Colombo Dockyard have been supplying vessels to India, and have also been actively engaged, in ship repair business with India. More than 70% of Colombo Port transshipment, is India-related, an important lifeline for Colombo port. I could go on and on.

Where do we go from here? What more could we do together?

First, I would urge you, as individuals, as firms and as Chambers, to not only, promote connectivity between India and Sri Lanka, but also, to make use of it, yourself. Your participation in business, and investor-meets in India, would help to understand, the changed realities; it would also provide opportunities, to make new contacts.

Secondly, as Chambers, you have a crucial role to play, in disseminating right information. If there is an opportunity coming up, pls. pass it on. You also need to put, things in perspective. The High Commission has started a monthly High Impact Economic News, highlighting important economic policy decisions and developments in India. We will request the Chamber to share it with its members.

Last but not the least, if there are positive stories-let the world know. If there are, not so positive stories, and you are into difficulty, let us know. We will be happy, to provide all support, to resolve it.

We at the High Commission, will do all, we can, to strengthen, the pillars of co-operation, between our two great nations. India is ready to partner Sri Lanka, in its important journey of development, and share experience, expertise and technology!

I wish you the very best, in all your future endeavours.

Thank you!

India assists in developing Kilinochchi campus

June 30, 2017

In a ceremony held on June 30, 2017, the faculty of Agriculture and faculty of Engineering of Kilinochchi campus of University of Jaffna were dedicated by Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education and Highways, Lakshman Kiriella, High Commissioner of India H.E. Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Hon'ble Governor of Northern Province Reginald Cooray. Vice Chancellor of University of Jaffna, Deans of various faculty, other faculty members, officials and students participated in the ceremony.

High Commissioner in his remarks reiterated Government of India's continued commitment to the wellbeing and socio-economic development of people of Sri Lanka. He highlighted the importance of agriculture and engineering in the economic development. In his remarks, Hon'ble Minister thanked the Government of India for the support.

Government of India gave a grant of SLR 600 million for the project. The project includes construction of physical infrastructure like lecture halls, conference hall, computer laboratory, library, and sports complex for the Faculty of Agriculture; and lecture halls, a conference hall, laboratories, administrative office and staff room for the Faculty of Engineering. In addition, the Government of India will also provide support for curriculum development, faculty exchanges, training and research. The project will benefit students pursuing professional courses in Agriculture and Engineering by providing them better facilities and improved learning environment.





To celebrate the 3rd International Day of Yoga, a mega was held on Saturday, 17th June 2017 at the Independence Square park in Colombo.

On 11 December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution piloted by India declaring June 21 each year as the "International Day of Yoga". The resolution was supported by more than 170 countries, with Sri Lanka being one of the first co-sponsors of the Resolution. Yoga is an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition that embodies unity of mind, body and soul. Yoga, like Ayurveda, forms a part of shared heritage of India and Sri Lanka. The first and second International Day

of Yoga was celebrated with great fanfare throughout the island in 2015 and 2016 with participation of thousands of yoga enthusiasts.

Prior to the 3rd International Day of Yoga, High Commission of India organized the first ever YOGA ROAD SHOW, a soulful journey to the world of Yoga, travelling throughout the island from East to West, from North to South covering major cities of Sri Lanka. The journey connected thousands of minds, spreading the message of YOGA for well being. This journey was carried on in association with Astanka Yoga Mandir and Institute of Human excellence with active participation of eminent yoga institutions of Sri Lanka such as Sethsada Yoga, Dhamma Yoga, Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris, Student Council of Sri Lanka conducting yoga awareness programmes, lectures, demonstrations in schools, colleges, public places like parks, monuments.

The Third International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Colombo at the Independence square park area from 6.30am to 8am on Saturday 17th June 2017. A yoga demonstration and a practice session was organised at this event

President joins Yoga Day celebrations

H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena joined thousands of yoga enthusiasts at Independence Square in Colombo on June 17 to celebrate the International Day of Yoga 2017. He performed a number of yoga asanas and encouraged yoga institutions in Sri Lanka to continue their good work. The event was attended by a number of Sri Lankan Ministers and officials, apart from public at large, including professionals, doctors, academicians and cultural personalities, cutting across all religions and ethnicities. Messages from Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj were telecast.

Speaking on the occasion, High Commissioner Taranjit

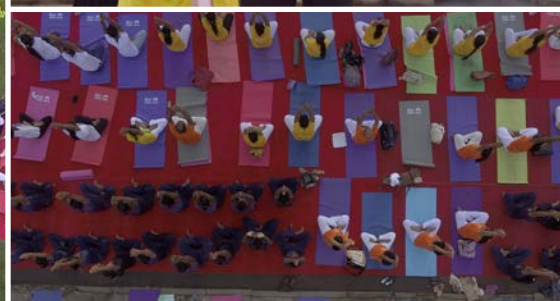
Singh Sandhu highlighted the efforts led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the United Nations declaring June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, and the world now recognizes yoga, as a human treasure - a key to good health. High Commissioner underlined the interest of H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena in health issues and admired his support to promote yoga, as a powerful tool for both, preventive and curative healthcare.

The event was organized by the Indian Cultural Centre in collaboration with eminent yoga institutions of Sri Lanka such as Astanka Yoga Mandir, Institute of Human Excellence, Sethsada Yoga Institute, Dhamma Yoga Academy, Hatha Yoga Centre, Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga Centre, Aum Kriyababaji Yoga Aranyam, My Yoga Lounge, Sudasuna Yoga Yathanya, Shakthi Ananda Yoga School and Saddharshi Yoga.

This event followed weeks of yoga activities across Sri Lanka, including the first ever Yoga Road Show, a unique event that saw dozens of yoga instructors travel by bus to various locations across Sri Lanka including Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Kataragama, Galle, Jaffna and Colombo to promote, popularize and teach yoga. The journey connected thousands of minds, spreading the message of yoga for well-being.

Yoga, an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition that embodies unity of mind, body and soul. Yoga, like Ayurveda, forms a part of shared heritage of India & Sri Lanka. In recognition of its global appeal, the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a resolution piloted by India declaring June 21 each year as the "International Day of Yoga". The resolution was supported by more than 170 countries, with Sri Lanka being one of the first co-sponsors.







71st Independence Day of India

India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi marked the 70th anniversary of the country's independence from British colonial rule with a speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi. He reiterated calls to end mob violence in the country, which has been directed against India's lower castes and religious minorities. "Sometimes in the name of faith, some people due to lack of patience end up destroying the social fabric" he said on Tuesday. "The country is governed by peace, harmony and unity. The poison of casteism and communalism can never benefit the country."

Prime Minister Shri Modi used the annual speech to ask Indians to work together and build a "New India." "If each one of us, irrespective of where he belongs to, strives with a new resolve, a new energy, a new strength, we can change the face of the country with our combined strength in the 75th year of our independence in 2022." He said. "It will be the New India – a secure, prosperous and strong nation."





Transcript of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's speech on the Independence Day

My dear fellow citizens,

Greetings from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day.

Nation is celebrating the Independence Day with the festival of Janamashtmi today. I can see a number of Bal Kanahiyas here. We are fortunate to have in our cultural and historical heritage from a Sudarshan Chakradhari Mohan to Charkhadhari Mohan.

From the ramparts of Red Fort, on behalf of our 125 crore countrymen, I bow and pay respects to all those men and women who have sacrificed their lives, who have undergone immense sufferings and made sacrifices for the independence, glory and pride of the country.

Sometimes, natural calamities are a big challenge for us. A good monsoon contributes immensely to the prosperity of the country. However, due to climate change, sometimes it turns into a natural calamity. Several parts of the country faced natural calamities recently. Besides our innocent children lost their lives in a hospital. Our 125 crore countrymen stand shoulder to shoulder with them in this hour of crisis and grief. I assure the countrymen that in this hour of crisis we shall leave no stone unturned to ensure the wellbeing of all.

My dear countrymen, this year is a special year for independent India. We commemorated 75 years of Quit India Movement last week. This year we are also commemorating the centenary of Champaran Satyagrah and the Sabarmati Ashram. The centenary of Lokmanya Tilak's call "Swaraj is my birth right" falls this year as well. The year marks the 125th Anniversary of the Ganesh Utsav which led to the rise of community awakening through the celebrations. It inspires us to dedicate ourselves to a cause for the country. A collective resolve of the citizens was visible during 1942 to 1947 across the country which forced the British to Quit India within a span of five years. We will have to exhibit the same resolve from now on in the 70th year of independence to 2022, the 75th year of

independence.

We now have five years before we reach the 75th year of our independence. Our united resolve, strength and determination to work hard remembering the memory of our great patriots will help us to build an India of their dreams by 2022. Therefore, we have to take the country forward with a pledge to build a New India.

We are aware of the power of the collective resolve, hard work, sacrifice and devotion of our 125 crore citizens. Lord Krishna was immensely powerful, but it is only when the milkmen came out with sticks in his support that they could lift the Govardhan parvat. When Lord Rama had to go to Lanka, the monkeys of vanar sena came to his help, Ramsetu was built and Lord Rama could reach Lanka. Then there was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who empowered his countrymen to weave the fabric of independence with cotton and spinning wheel.

The collective resolve and strength of the people got freedom for our country. No one is small or big. We have in our memory the story of squirrel which became an agent of change. That's why we must remember that no one among the 125 billion people is either small or big – everyone is equal.

If each one of us, irrespective of where he belongs to, strives with a new resolve, a new energy, a new strength, we can change the face of the country with our combined strength in the 75th year of our independence in 2022. It will be the New India – a secure, prosperous and strong nation. A New India where there is equal opportunity for all; where modern science and technology play an important role in bringing glory for the nation in the global arena.

Our freedom movement is linked to our sentiments. We know it well that at the time of the freedom movement, the teacher who was engaged in teaching, the farmer who was tilling his land, the laborer who was working – all of them knew in their hearts that whatever they were doing, was contributing towards the independence of the country.

This idea is a great source of strength. In the family, food is prepared everyday but it becomes 'prasad' only when it is offered to the deity.

We are working, but if we do so in the spirit of working for the glory of mother India, for the divinity of mother India, if we do it to rid our countrymen of poverty, if we do it to properly weave our social fabric, if we discharge our duties with feelings towards the country, if we do it with a sense of devotion to country, if we do our work by dedicating it to the country, then the achievements will be much more. That is why we should move forward with this spirit.

January 1, 2018 will not be an ordinary day – those born in this century will start turning 18. For these people, this is a decisive year of their lives. They are going to be the creator of the destiny (Bhagya Vidhata) of our nation in the 21st century. I heartily welcome all these youth, honour them and offer my respects to them. You have an opportunity to shape the destiny of our country. A proud nation invites you to become a part of its developmental journey.

My dear countrymen,

When Arjuna was posing a lot of queries to Lord Krishna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, then Krishna told Arjuna that you achieve goals as per your thinking and beliefs. We have a strong determination, we are committed for a brighter India. We, who have grown up with a state of hopelessness, have to reject the feeling of despair and must now march ahead with confidence.

We have to leave this 'Chalta Hai' attitude. We have to think of 'Badal Sakta Hai' - this attitude will help us as a nation. We should have this confidence that with sacrifice and hard work and a resolve to do something, we will get necessary resources and the ability to do it and then a big transformation will happen, and our resolve will convert into accomplishment.

Brothers and sisters,

It is natural for our countrymen to think of our safety and security. Our country, our military, our brave-hearts, our uniformed forces, be it any force, not just the army, air force or navy, all the uniformed forces, whenever they were called upon to do so, they showed their valour, their strength; our brave-hearts never turned their back in making the supreme sacrifice. Be it Left-Wing-Extremism, be it terrorism, be it infiltrators, be it the elements fomenting trouble inside our country- the uniformed forces of our country have made extreme sacrifices. And when the surgical strike was carried out, then the world had to acknowledge India's capability and strength.

My dear countrymen,

India's security is our priority. Be it our coast line or our borders, the space or the cyberspace, India is capable of ensuring its own security and strong enough to ward off any threats against the country.

My beloved countrymen,

Those who have looted the nation and looted the poor are not able to sleep peacefully today. Due to this, the confidence of the hardworking and honest person is increasing. An honest man now feels that his honesty matters. Today, we are celebrating a festival of honesty and there is no place for dishonesty. This gives us new

hope.

The law against Benami property was lying in limbo for years. Now, we have come up with a law against Benami Property. In such a short time, the government has confiscated Benami properties worth over Rs.800 crores. When these things happen, the common man develops faith that the country is for the honest persons.

The 'One Rank – One Pension' policy for our defence forces was stuck up for 30-40 years. Our government implemented it. When we fulfill the aspirations of our soldiers, then their morale goes high and their resolve to protect the nation grows manifold.

The country has many states and a Central Government. GST has shown the spirit of cooperative federalism and has given competitive cooperative federalism a new strength. The success of GST can be attributed to the hard work that has been put in to make it a success. Technology has made it look like a miracle. The global community is surprised how we were able to roll out GST in such a short time. It is a reflection of our capability and helps in building the confidence and faith of the future generations.

New systems are emerging. Today roads are being built at twice the speed. The railway tracks are being laid at double the speed. More than 14 thousand villages that were hitherto shrouded in darkness even after Independence, have been provided with electricity. Bank accounts of 29 crore people have been opened, more than 9 crore farmers have got Soil Health Card. More than 2 crore poor mothers and sisters are no longer using the fuel wood and using LPG gas stove NOW. The poor tribals have gained faith in the system. The person at the last mile of development now joins the mainstream and the nation is marching ahead.

Loans worth more than 8 crore have been sanctioned without guarantee to the youth for self-employment. The interest on bank loans have been lowered. Inflation is under control. If a person belonging to the middle-class wants to build his house, then he gets a loan at a lower rate of interest. In this way, the country is moving forward and people are joining the movement.

The times have changed. The government is determined to do all it says, like doing away with the interview process.

In the labour sector alone, even a small businessman had to fill up to 50-60 forms, but we have now made it more convenient by reducing it to just 5-6 forms. I can provide many such instances of Good Governance, simplifying the process of Governance. By reiterating this we have enforced faster decision making. And that is why 125 crore countrymen have been able to repose faith in our governance.

Dear Countrymen,

India today has gained in stature across the globe. You will be happy to know that we are not alone in our fight against terrorism. Many nations are proactively supporting us.

Be it Hawala, or any inputs related to terrorism, the global community is supporting us with critical information. We have joined hands with other nations in the combined fight against terrorism. I extend my heartfelt greetings to all those countries who are standing in solidarity with us

and acknowledge our prowess.

For the development and progress of Jammu & Kashmir, its prosperity, and fulfilment of the aspirations of the citizens, not only the J&K government, but we as responsible citizens also have a responsibility. We are committed to restore the state to its former glory so as to experience the paradise that it was, once again.



On Kashmir there is rhetoric and politics. But I am clear in my belief on how to win the war against separatism, which is spread by a handful of people. The problem will be solved neither by abuse or bullets – it will be solved by embracing all Kashmiris. Such is the legacy of 125 crore Indians. Hence, neither by abuse nor by bullets, change will come by embracing all. And we are moving forward with this resolve.

We shall take strict steps against terrorism. There is no question of being soft on terrorism or terrorists. We have been asking the extremists to join the mainstream. Democracy provides an equal opportunity and rights to be heard for all. The process of engagement can take place only by their joining the mainstream.

I deeply appreciate the efforts of security forces in curbing the Left Wing extremism which mobilized a lot of youth from these regions to surrender and joined the mainstream.

Security forces are keeping a tight vigil on our borders. I am delighted to announce that today the Indian Government is launching a website which will give an account of the valour of the Gallantry Award winners. A portal is also being launched which aims to provide the entire details of these brave hearts who have brought pride to the nation. The story of sacrifices made will certainly inspire the younger

generations.

With the help of technology, we are trying to promote honesty and transparency in the country. Our fight against black money will continue; our fight against corruption will continue. With the intervention of technology, slowly we are trying to link Aadhaar with the system. We have been successful in infusing transparency in the system. People from around the world have appreciated this model and have been studying it.

A common man living thousands of kilometres away can now supply his products to the Government. He doesn't need any middle man. We have launched a portal called "GEM". The Government is making procurement through this portal. We have been successful in bringing transparency at various levels.

Brothers and Sisters,

Implementation of Government schemes are gaining momentum. When a work is delayed, it is not only the project that is delayed. It is not a matter of expenditure of money. When a work is stalled, the poor families are the ones who suffer the most.

We can reach the planet Mars within 9 months; we are capable of achieving that.

I review Government Projects every month. A specific project came to my notice. It was a 42-year old project. 70-72 kilometres of Railway lines were to be laid, but the project was lying in limbo for the last 42 years.

My brothers and sisters,

When a country that is capable of reaching Mars within 9 months, how is it possible that it is not able to lay 70-72 Kilometres railway lines for 42 long years. It sets in doubts in the minds of the poor. We have taken care of all these things. We have been striving to bring in the changes through technology. Whether it is Geo-Technology or Space-Technology, we have tried to link all these technologies to bring in transformation.

You must have seen that there was a time when tension prevailed between the Centre and the States for Urea and Kerosene. The Centre was like an elder brother while the State was treated like a younger brother. I have been a Chief Minister for a long time and I know the importance of states in the development of the country. I know the importance of the Chief Ministers and the State Governments. Hence, we laid emphasis on Co-operative Federalism. Now we are moving towards a Competitive Co-operative Federalism. You must have seen that we are taking all the decisions together.

You may recall that one of our Prime Ministers in his address from the ramparts of Red Fort had talked about the poor state of affairs of the power supply companies of the country. He expressed his concerns over the issue. Today with the "UDAY" Yojana, we have worked together to resolve the issues with these power companies. It is a concrete example of federalism in its real sense.

Whether it is GST or Smart City Project, whether it is Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, or construction of toilets, or ease of doing business, all these are being accomplished by working together shoulder to shoulder with the States.

My dear fellow countrymen,

In the New India, the biggest strength is democracy. But we have reduced our democracy to mere ballot boxes. However, democracy cannot be confined only to ballot boxes. Hence our resolve is to see to it that we have a democracy in New India, where people are not driven by the system, rather the system is driven by the people. Such a democracy should become the identity of New India and we want to move towards that direction.

Lokmanya Tilak Ji had said "Swaraj is my birthright". In Independent India our Mantra should be "Good Governance is my birthright". 'Suraja' or Good Governance should be our collective responsibility. The citizens should fulfil their duties and the Government too should discharge its responsibilities.

When we move from "Swaraj" to "Suraja", the citizens do not lag behind. For example, when I called upon the countrymen to give up gas subsidy, the nation responded as a whole. I have spoken about cleanliness. Now people are joining hands from every part of the country to take up this cleanliness drive forward.

When demonetization was announced, the world was surprised. People thought that this was the end of Modi. But the way our 125 crore countrymen had shown patience and faith, we were able to take one after another step in our drive against corruption.

With this new practice of people's participation, our effort to take the country forward with people's involvement will help us to reach our goal.

My dear fellow countrymen,

Lal Bahadur Shastri had given the slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan." Our farmers have not looked back since then. They are now producing record harvests and scaling new heights despite facing natural adversities. There has been a record production of pulses this year.

My dear brothers and sisters,

India never had the tradition to import pulses and if it had to import on rare occasions, it was only a few thousand tons. This year when they produced 16 lakh tons of pulses to provide nutrition to the poor, the government took the historic step of encouraging them by buying their produce.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna has provided a security cover to our farmers. Three years back, this scheme which was running under a different name earlier, covered only 3.25 crore farmers. Now over a short span of three years more farmers have been brought under its ambit. The number is soon going to touch the 5.75 crore mark.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna aims to meet the demand of water of the farmers. If my farmers get water, they can produce rich harvests from their fields. That is why I had made some announcements from the ramparts of Red Fort on the last Independence Day. Out of those, we have completed 21 projects and remaining 50 would be completed soon. I have resolved to complete 99 big projects. By completing those 99 big projects before 2019, we shall fulfill our commitment. We cannot change the lot of our farmers until we hand hold him from procuring seeds to ensure that his produce reaches the market. For this we need infrastructure and supply chain. Every year vegetables, fruits and grains worth lakhs of crores of rupees are wasted. In order to change the situation, the government has encouraged Foreign Direct Investment in food processing sector. Government of India has launched 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojna' to encourage infrastructure building. Due to this, systems shall be put in place that will ensure hand-holding of the farmers from supplying seeds to marketing his produce. Such arrangements will usher in a new change in the lives of crores of our farmers.

With the changes in demand and technology, the nature of jobs in our country has been changing. The Government has launched several new initiatives in the employment related schemes and also in the manner in which the training is imparted for the development of human resource according to the needs of the 21st century. We have launched a massive program to provide collateral free loans to the youth. Our youth should become independent, he should get the employment, he should become the provider of employment. Over the past three years, 'Pradhanmantri Mudra Yojana' has led to millions and millions of youth becoming self-dependent. It's not just that, one youth is providing employment to one, two or three more people.

In the education sector, we have taken an important step to grant the universities freedom from restrictions to make them the world class universities. We have asked 20 universities to decide their own destiny. The government will not interfere in their functioning. Besides,



the government is willing to provide funds up to Rs. 1,000 crores. We have appealed to them and I am confident that the education institutions of our country will certainly come forward and make it a success.

Over the last three years, we have set up 6 IITs, 7 new IIMs and 8 new IIITs and we have also done the groundwork for linking the education with job opportunities.

My mothers and sisters, the women in the families seek employment in large numbers. And therefore we have taken a very important step to reform the labour laws to provide them the employment opportunities in the night also.

Our mothers and sisters are an integral unit of our families. Their contribution in making our future is extremely important. And that is why we have decided to increase the paid maternity leave to 26 weeks from the earlier 12 weeks.

In the context of women empowerment, I'd like to honour those sisters who have been forced to lead a very difficult life due to 'Triple Talaq'. There is no recourse for them, and such victims of 'Triple Talaq' have launched a massive movement in the country. They shook the conscience of the intellectual class of the country, the media of the country also helped them and a movement against 'Triple Talaq' was started in the country. I heartily commend those sisters who have launched this movement, who have been fighting against the 'Triple Talaq' and I'm confident that the country will help them in this struggle. The country will help these mothers and sisters in securing this right. India will fully support them and they will ultimately achieve success in this very important step in the direction of women empowerment; I am fully confident about this.

My dear countrymen,

Sometimes in the name of faith, some people due to lack of patience end up destroying the social fabric. The country is governed by peace, harmony and unity. The poison of casteism and communalism can never benefit the country. This is the land of Gandhi and Buddha, we have to move forward taking everyone along. This is a part of our country's culture and tradition. We have to successfully carry it forward, and that is why in the name of faith, violence cannot be allowed.

If something happens to a patient in a hospital and the hospital is burnt down; some accident happens and the vehicles are burnt down; people launch a movement and the public property is burnt down; is it for a free India? It is the property of 125 crore Indians. Whose cultural legacy is this? This is our cultural legacy, the legacy of 125 crore people. Whose faith is this? This is our faith, the faith of 125 crore people; and that is why the path of violence in the name of faith can never succeed in this country. The country will never accept this. And that is why I'd like to appeal to all the countrymen that at that time our motto was 'Bharat Chodo' and today's slogan is 'Bharat Jodo'. We have to take everyone and every section of the society along to take the country forward.

In order to build a prosperous India, we need a strong economy, balanced development and next generation infrastructure. Only then, we can realise the India of our dreams.

Brothers and sisters,

We have taken innumerable decisions over the past three years. Some have been noticed, while the rest may not have been noticed. But one thing is important – when you move towards big changes, you will face hurdles. But look at the working style of this government; when a train crosses a railway station and changes the track, the speed needs to be reduced from 60 to 30. The speed of the train decreases while changing the track. We are trying to put the whole country on a new track without decreasing the speed. We have maintained the speed.

We may have brought a number of new laws and systems such as the GST, but we have successfully accomplished the task and the work goes on.

We have laid emphasis on infrastructure. We have invested lot of funds for building the infrastructure – from modernization of the railway station in a small town, to build an Airport, to expand water-ways or roadways, to form a gas-grid or a water-grid or to lay down an optical fibre network. We are emphasising on all types of modern infrastructure.



My dear countrymen,

The prosperity of Eastern India is required for India's forward movement into the 21st century. It has tremendous potential, rich human resources, immense natural wealth, work force and it has the power to change lives. We are devoting significant attention to eastern India-Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, and the Northeast. These parts have to grow further. These are abundant in natural resources and are striving hard to take the country to new heights.

Brothers and sisters,

Making India corruption-free is an important task and we are trying to provide impetus to it. After forming the government, our first task was to constitute an SIT. Today, after three years, I want to tell the countrymen proudly that we have confiscated black money worth Rs. 1.25 lakh crores, the culprits would be brought to book and forced to surrender.

Demonetization followed this move. We have achieved several milestones through demonetization. The hidden black money has been brought into the formal economy. You must have seen that we used to extend the days from 7 days to 10 days to 15 days; sometimes we allowed the old notes at the petrol pump, at the chemist shops, and

sometimes at the railway stations, because our intention was to bring all money into the formal banking system and we achieved success in completing the task. According to the research conducted by outside experts, about Rs.3 lakh crores that had never come into the banking system before, has been brought into the system after the demonetization.

More than Rs. 1.75 lakh crores deposited in the banks is under the scanner. Black money worth Rs. 2 lakh crore had to be deposited in the banks and this system has forced them to be accountable. It has also stopped the flow of black money. The number of new taxpayers filing income tax returns from April 01 to August 05 is 56 lakhs while in the same period last year only 22 lakh filed the returns.. In a way it has more than doubled. This is the result of our fight against black money.

Over 18 lakh people have been identified, whose income is much higher than what their declared income and therefore they have to clarify this. Around 4.5 lakh people have now come forward and are trying to trade the right path after accepting their mistakes. One lakh people, who had neither heard of Income Tax nor paid Income Tax, have now been forced to do so.

Brothers and sisters,

In our country, we tend to indulge in endless debates and discussions following the shutdown of companies. People start speculating about economic meltdown and what not.

You will be surprised to know that black marketers used to own shell companies. Post demonetization, the reports from data mining astonishingly revealed that there are 3 lakh shell companies dealing in Hawala transactions. Can anyone imagine? Out of these 3 lakh shell companies, registration of 1.75 lakh companies were cancelled.

Even if five companies shut shop in India, there is huge public outcry. And here, we have closed one lakh Seventy five thousand companies. The looters of nation's wealth will have to answer. We have accomplished this task.

You will be surprised to know that there are some shell companies operating from a single address. As many as 400 companies have been found to be operating from one address. There was no one to question them. There was a total collusion.

Therefore, Brothers and sisters, I have waged a big war against corruption and black money. We are fighting corruption – for the bright future of India and the wellbeing of our people.

Brothers and sisters,

We have taken several steps and I am sure that post GST, it will increase further and bring in transparency. Today a truck driver on an average is able to save 30% of his travel time from one point to another after GST was introduced. Hundreds of crores of rupees have been saved due to removal of check posts. This amounts to 30% increase in his efficiency. Can you imagine what it means to accomplish 30% more efficiency in the Indian transportation sector? GST has brought this revolutionary change.

My dear countrymen,

Today due to demonetization, banks have enough liquidity.

Banks are reducing their interest rates. Even a common man is able to access inflow of funds through Mudra. He is getting opportunities to stand on his feet. The middle class and the underprivileged who aspire to have their own homes someday, are getting loans from the banks at low interest rates. Such moves are giving a fillip to the economic growth of the country.

My dear countrymen,

Time has changed. We are in the 21st Century. Our country boasts of the world's largest youth population.

India is known in the world for its prowess in IT and Digital World. Should we still remain in the old mind-set? There was a time when leather coins were in vogue, but gradually they ceased to exist. Today we have paper-currency. Slowly this paper-currency will be replaced by the digital currency. We should lead from the front to make a move towards Digital transactions. We should adopt BHIM App for transactions and make it a part of our economic activities. We should also work through prepaid systems. I am happy that there has been an increase in Digital transactions. It has increased by 34% compared to last year while the prepaid transactions have gone up by 44%. We should



move towards a less-cash economy.

My Dear Countrymen, some schemes of the Government are meant for ensuring savings for the common man. If you use LED bulbs, you can save Rs.2000 to Rs. 5000 per year. If we succeed in Swachh Bharat, poor will be able to save Rs. 7000 on medicines that they would otherwise have spent. Curbing inflation has helped people in saving money in a way.

Cheap medicines through Jan Aushadhi Kendras are a boon to the poor. There used to be a lot of expenditure on operations and stents. We are striving to make it possible for knee operations as well. We are striving to minimize this expenditure for the poor and the middle class.

Earlier there used to be Dialysis only at the State capitals. Now we have decided to open Dialysis Centres at district level. We have already opened this facility in 350 to 400 districts where free Dialysis services are available for the poor.

We can take pride in the fact that we have developed various systems to showcase to the world. We have been able to develop the 'NAVIC Navigation System' through GPS. We have helped the neighbouring countries by successfully launching SAARC Satellite.



We asserted our supremacy in the world by introducing Tejas aircraft. BHIM Aadhaar App for digital transaction has come as a surprise to the world. Crores of RuPay Cards are now available in the country. When all the cards will be operational, it will be the largest number of cards in the world.

My dear countrymen, I shall urge you to take up the New India Pledge and move ahead. Our scriptures say “अनियत कालरु, अनियत कालः प्रभृत्यो विपलवन्ते, प्रभृत्यो विपलवन्ते” It implies that, if we don't accomplish a work within the stipulated time then we shall not be able to get the desired results. So for the 'Team India', for the 125 crore countrymen, we have to take the pledge to achieve the goal by 2022.

We will do it with dedication to see a great, majestic India by 2022.

So we will together build such an India where the poor will have Pucca House with electricity and water.

Together we will build such an India where the farmers can sleep without worry. They will earn double by 2022 of what they are earning today.

Together we will build such an India where the youth, the women will have enough opportunities to fulfil their

dreams.

Together we will build such an India which will be free from terrorism, communalism and casteism.

Together we will build such an India where nobody will compromise with corruption and nepotism.

Together we will build such an India which will be clean and healthy, and where the dream of Su-Raj will be fulfilled.

And that is why my dear fellow countrymen, we will together strive to move ahead in this march towards development.

Let all of us march together with the dream of a building an India of grandeur and majesty as we wait for the 75th year of independence after completing 70 years of Independence in the next five years.

With this thought in mind I once again bow my head before the heroes of our freedom movement. I bow my head before the new confidence and passion of my 125 crore countrymen and I call upon Team India to march on with this new pledge.

With this thought I convey my hearty congratulations to all of you.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Vande Matram, Jai Hind

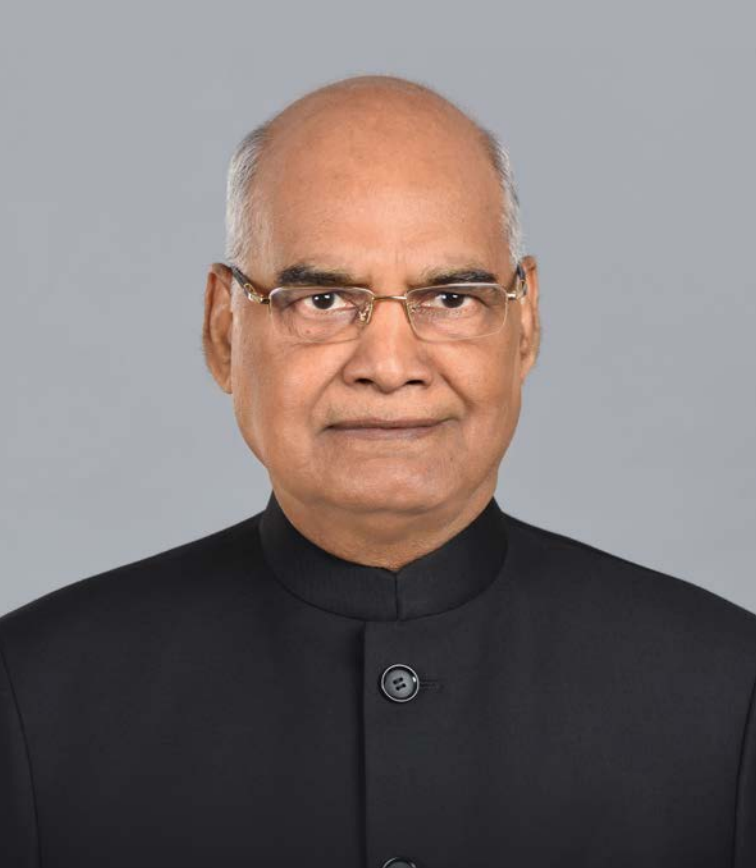
Jai Hind, Jai Hind, Jai Hind, Jai Hind

Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Bharat Mata Ki Jai,

Vande Matram, Vande Matram, Vande Matram, Vande Matram,

Thanking you all.





Transcript of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind's address to the nation on the eve of 71st Independence Day

Dear Fellow Citizens engaged in the task of nation building

My greetings to you as we complete 70 years of our Independence

Our country will be celebrating its 71st Independence Day tomorrow. On the eve of this anniversary I extend my good wishes to all of you.

On August 15, 1947, we became a free nation. Sovereignty and the responsibility for our destiny moved from the British crown to the people of India. Some have called this process a "transfer of power".

It was much more than that. It was the culmination of a dream for our country – a dream seen by our forefathers and freedom fighters. We were free to imagine and build our nation anew.

It is crucial to understand that this dream for a free India was rooted in our ordinary villages, in the well-being of our poor and underprivileged, and in the all-round development of our country.

For this we owe so much to the countless freedom fighters who made great sacrifices to bring us here.

was shot by the colonial police in Tamluk, in Bengal, while leading a peaceful protest march. She died with "Vande Mataram" on her lips and with the hope of a free India in her heart.

Freedom fighters like Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Birsa Munda and thousands of others gave their lives for us. We can never forget them.

From the earliest days of our freedom struggle, we were blessed with a galaxy of revolutionary leaders who guided our country.

They spoke of not just political freedom. Mahatma Gandhi emphasised the moral character of India and of Indian society. The principles that Gandhiji spoke about are relevant even today.

Gandhiji was not alone in this nationwide struggle for freedom and reform. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose exhorted our people, saying: "Give me blood and I will give you freedom". At his word, millions of Indians joined the freedom movement under his leadership and gave their all.

Nehruji emphasised that India's age-old heritage and traditions – so dear to us – could co-exist with technology and a quest to modernise our society.

Sardar Patel instilled in us the importance of national unity and integrity. And of a disciplined national character.

Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar urged upon us the virtues of constitutional governance, of the rule of law – and of the vital need for education.

I have given only a few examples of illustrious leaders. I could give you many more. The generation that brought us to freedom was diverse. They were men and women who represented all parts of our country and a variety of political and social thought.

We need to draw inspiration from such brave freedom fighters, many of whom sacrificed even their lives for the country. We need to invoke the same spirit today in the task of nation building.

The stress on the moral basis of policy and action, belief in unity and discipline, faith in a synthesis of heritage and science, and promotion of the rule of law and of education – all of it was located in a partnership between citizen and government.

That is how our nation has been built – by a partnership between citizen and government, between individual and society, between a family and the wider community.

Fellow Citizens

A tradition I remember from my childhood was that when there was a wedding in any one family, the entire village shared the responsibility and contributed. Regardless of the caste or community, the bride became the daughter of not just a single family but of the entire village.

Neighbours and others living in the village looked after guests, and took charge of different arrangements. Contributions came from many families. One family would send food-grains for the wedding, another would send vegetables, a third would arrive with some other item.

There was a sense of caring and of sharing, and of interdependence. If you helped your neighbours in their times of need, they instinctively helped you in turn.

Today, in big cities we may not even know our neighbours. Whether in cities or villages, it is important to renew that sense of caring and sharing. This will make us a gentler and happier society and help us understand each other with greater empathy.

Fellow Citizens

This spirit of empathy and of social service and volunteerism is very much alive in India. There are so many people and organisations that work quietly and diligently for the poor and the disadvantaged.

They could be running schools for street children, caring for stray animals and birds, and providing water to hard-to-reach tribal communities in remote areas. Or cleaning rivers and public places. They are nation builders in action, and we need to draw inspiration from them.

We should also work with unity and purpose to ensure that the benefits of government policies reach all sections of society. For this, the partnership between citizens and government remains essential:

- The government has started the Swachhh Bharat campaign – but it is for each of us to ensure a Swachhh Bharat
- The government is building toilets or helping build toilets – but it is for each of us to use those toilets and make India open-defecation free
- The government is enabling communication infrastructure – but it is for each of us to use the Internet for the right purposes: to bridge knowledge gaps, create opportunities, and enhance educational and information access
- The government is promoting the idea of Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao – but it is for each of us to ensure that our daughters are not discriminated against and get the best education
- The government can frame laws and strengthen law enforcement – but it is for each of us to be a law-abiding citizen. And to build a law-abiding society
- The government is pushing transparency and eliminating corruption in public recruitment and procurement – but it is for each of us to answer to our inner conscience in everyday life
- The government is implementing GST to eliminate multiple taxes and simplify transactions – but it is for each of us to make this an essential part of our everyday transactions and business culture

I am happy that the transition to the GST system has been smooth. It should be a matter of pride for all of us that the taxes we pay are used for nation building – to help the poor and the marginalised, to build rural and urban

infrastructure, and to strengthen our border defences.

Fellow Citizens

In the year 2022, our country will complete 75 years of Independence. It is our national resolve to attain certain desired milestones for a New India by then.

When we speak of a New India, what do we mean? There are some obvious parameters – like a house for every family, power on demand, better roads and telecom, a modern railway network, rapid and sustained growth.

And yet there is more. New India must include that integral humanist component that is in our DNA, and which has defined our country and our civilisation. New India must be a society rushing towards the future, but also a compassionate society.

- A compassionate society where the traditionally disadvantaged, whether SCs, STs or OBCs, are part of our national developmental process
- A compassionate society where populations in our frontier areas and states, who may sometimes feel a sense of alienation, are embraced as our brothers and sisters
- A compassionate society where the deprived child, the aged and the ailing senior citizen, and the poor and the under-privileged are always in our thought – not an afterthought. And where we take special care to ensure that our divyang brothers and sisters get equal opportunities in all walks of life
- A compassionate and egalitarian society that does not discriminate on gender or religious background
- A compassionate society that enriches our human capital and equips our young people by promoting accessible, affordable and world-class educational institutions. And where quality health-care and nutrition are not a challenge

It is only with all this that we will build the New India we can cherish – where every Indian is equipped to fulfil his or her potential and do so in a manner that leaves each one of us content and happy. And helps each of us contribute to society and our country.

I am confident that a strong partnership between citizens and the government will allow us to meet the goals of New India.

Your immense patience and understanding in the days following demonetisation – and your whole-hearted support in the battle against corruption and black money – reflected a responsible and enlightened society.

Demonetisation has boosted our efforts to build an honest society. We must sustain this spirit and this momentum.

Fellow Citizens

There is also need to adopt technology. We must use technology to empower our people and achieve the goal of poverty elimination in a single generation. Poverty and New India are simply not compatible.

Today, the world is looking at India with admiration. Our country is seen as a responsible global citizen, a growing economy, and a solution provider to various international

challenges – such as climate change, disasters, conflicts, humanitarian crises, radicalism and terrorism.

The Tokyo Olympics of 2020 offer another opportunity for us to raise our standing in the world's eyes. Over the coming three years, we should absorb ourselves in this national mission. Government agencies, sports bodies and business enterprises need to join hands to identify and support our talented sportspersons and provide them world-class training facilities – so that they can be even more successful in Tokyo.

As citizens and children of India – whether we live at home or abroad – we must ask ourselves how we can add to our country's pride.

Fellow Citizens

It is natural for us to think of our families, but we must also think of society. We must heed the call for that extra degree of selflessness, that extra something beyond just duty. A mother who nurtures and brings up her child is not just doing a duty. She is displaying a unique selflessness.

- Our soldiers who guard our borders, on a hot day in the desert or high up on a cold mountain, are not just doing their duty. They are displaying an extra degree of selflessness

- Our police and paramilitary forces that brave death to combat terrorism or crime and keep us safe are not just doing their duty. They are displaying an extra degree of selflessness

- Our farmers who labour under extremely tough conditions to grow food to feed fellow Indians whom they have never met, and who live in the other corner of the country, are not just doing a job. They are displaying an extra degree of selflessness

- After natural disasters, so many motivated people, civil society groups and public agencies work day-and-night in rescue and relief operations. They display an extra degree of selflessness

Can each of us not imbibe this spirit of selflessness?

We can and we have.

On an appeal from the Prime Minister, more than one crore families voluntarily gave up their LPG fuel subsidy – so that a gas cylinder could reach the kitchen of a poorer family of fellow Indians. And so that members of that family, particularly women, were saved from smoke from chulhas that damaged their eyes and lungs.

I salute those families that gave up their subsidy. No law or government order made them do what they did. Their response came from within.

We should draw inspiration from these families. Each of us must find a way to give back to society. Each of us must choose one thing we can do to help another, less-fortunate Indian.

The single most critical factor for building our nation is to equip our coming generation. We need to ensure that not one child is left behind. As such I would urge you, as fellow nation builders, to help educate less-privileged children in our society. Help teach a child other than your own. Enrol

and pay the school fees or buy the books of at least one child other than your own. Just one!

Our India is at the door of great achievements. In a few years, we will become a fully literate society. We must set the bar higher, and aim to become a fully educated society.

We are all stake-holders in this mission. If we achieve it, our country will change before our eyes. And we will become agents of this defining change.

Two thousand five hundred years ago Gautam Buddha said, "????????? ... Be a lamp unto yourself ..." If we follow his teachings, acting together, with the passion of our freedom movement, we can collectively be the 125 crore lamps that light up the path to a New India.

One more, I wish all of you the very best on the eve of our 71st Independence Day.

Jai Hind

Vande Matram



71st Independence Day of India Celebrated in Sri Lanka



71st Independence Day of India Celebrated in Sri Lanka



The High Commission of India and the Indian expatriate community in Sri Lanka celebrated the 71st Independence Day of India on Tuesday, 15 August 2017 at India House in Colombo. At a flag hoisting ceremony, the High Commissioner, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, unfurled the National Flag and inspected a Guard of Honour presented by the BSF contingent. He read out excerpts from the Address to the Nation on the eve of Independence Day by the President of India, Hon'ble Ram Nath Kovind.

A brief cultural programme was also held during the function. Thereafter, High Commissioner, in the presence of other officials of the High Commission laid a wreath to honour the memory of fallen soldiers of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in a solemn ceremony at the IPKF memorial in Colombo.

As part of the special India@70 event to mark the celebrations of Indian Independence Day, a special musical programme by Pandit Bickram Ghosh and other artists would be organised at BMICH in the evening.

Consulates General of India in Jaffna and Hambantota and the Assistant High Commission of India in Kandy also celebrated the 70th Independence Day by organizing flag hoisting ceremonies.





High Commissioner's Message on the occasion of 71st Independence Day of India

On this special occasion of completion of seven decades of being a free and sovereign nation, I extend my greetings and warm wishes to my fellow members of Indian community and to the friendly people and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. From a young independent nation which has been impoverished by centuries of colonial rule, coupled with the agony of partition, to the fastest growing major economy in the world upholding the prized ethos of democracy, inclusiveness and pluralism, India has undertaken an incredible journey. The chrysalis-like transformation of India is a culmination of a heroic struggle of an extraordinary generation of leaders, who overcame all the challenges and established the strong foundations of our nation. Our great founding fathers, believed in striving for the betterment of not only our own citizens, but for the entire humanity. The verse from Panchatantra, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is a family), engraved at the entrance of the Indian Parliament, encapsulates all that India stands for, today, tomorrow and forever.

The spirit of global good is reflected in India's "neighbourhood first" policy. Sri Lanka is India's one of the most valued partners. There has been continuous

momentum in bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka in recent times. Prime Minister of India H.E. Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest for the International Day of Vesak in May 2017, at the invitation of President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, took our relationship to new heights. The visit was a reflection of the shared Buddhist ties between India and Sri Lanka, that goes back to several centuries. It also marked our respect towards Buddha and His teachings, which have contemporary and universal significance. Prime Minister's address at the public gathering of Sri Lankans living in Upcountry area, particularly Indian Origin Tamil (IOT) people at Norwood in presence of President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, was a testimony to the warm ties of friendship between our leaders, as well as between our two great nations.

In May 2017, the world also witnessed Sri Lanka becoming a proud partner in the South Asia Satellite, designed and launched by India to help participating countries in South Asia to achieve their economic and developmental goals. Following the launch of South Asia Satellite, Prime Minister of India was joined by President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena and other leaders of participating South Asian countries on a video conference, which was termed as mini SAARC summit. This proved that not even sky is the limit to our partnership!

The oceans that separate us are the oceans that connect us. As a true friend and neighbor, India has always responded swiftly to needs of Sri Lanka, be it drought, tsunami or floods. Indian Naval Ships touched Sri Lankan shores within hours of receiving the request from Government of Sri Lanka, when Sri Lanka was hit by floods in May 2017. Indian Navy worked hand in hand with Sri Lankan Navy in relief and rescue operations, and providing relief materials and medical assistance.

The vision of our leaders have guided us to chart a blueprint for future engagement. We consider the MoU for cooperation in joint economic projects signed during the visit of Prime Minister H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe to India in April this year as an important milestone in our bilateral economic engagement. The MoU identifies specific projects for cooperation in Sri Lanka in sectors such as energy, power, roads, ports, railways etc. We are closely working with Sri Lankan leadership for timely implementation of these projects.

The world is currently looking at India as the engine of growth. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, there has been a special focus to meet these expectations. Substantial efforts have been made to make procedures simple and clear, and processes quick. There is special emphasis on becoming a Digital Economy. Numerous legislative and regulatory reform

measures have been implemented, including an historic Goods and Services Tax transforming India into a single, common national market. New laws and institutions for Bankruptcy and Insolvency as well as IPR and Arbitration are now in place. Foreign Investment Promotion Board has been abolished, making it even easier to invest in India. The reform measures have already had a positive impact. Foreign Direct Investment inflows over the last two and a half years have touched US\$ 130 billion, establishing India as a magnet for global investments.

These changes are not sporadic. The demographic profile is set to make India the world's youngest country, with 64% of its population in the working age group. Half the population of India is below the age of 25 years. By the end of this decade, the average age of an Indian is projected to be only 29 years. This aspirational, new generation, would bring a new dynamism to the country, and will ensure that India remains a bright spot in the global economic canvas in the several decades to come.

Sri Lanka is uniquely placed to take advantage of India's economic growth story. I am happy to note that our bilateral economic and commercial ties remain stronger than ever. When both countries entered into a Free Trade Agreement in 2000, it was a first for both of us. Bilateral trade has increased more than eight fold since then. India is among the top investors in Sri Lanka, with cumulative investments of over US\$ 1 billion since 2003, and much more is in the pipeline. I am also happy to note the increasing Sri Lankan investments in India. Efforts are on to make Sri Lankan companies a part of supply and value chains of Indian companies.

Development partnership remains an important facet of our close friendship. India has committed over US\$ 2.6 billion in development assistance to Sri Lanka, with over US\$ 460 million as outright grants. Indian projects span diverse areas. The Indian housing project, which now aims to construct 60,000 houses on grant basis, is proceeding well with over 45,000 houses constructed till date. We would soon commence building next phase of 10,000 houses, as announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his visit to upcountry areas. Emergency Ambulance Service, funded under Indian grant, covering Southern and Western provinces of Sri Lanka, allowing patients quick access to ambulances, free of charge, would now be extended to all parts of Sri Lanka, as announced by Prime Minister during his visit to Sri Lanka in May 2017. Prime Minister also dedicated to the people of Sri Lanka a new building complex of District Base hospital at Dickoya built with Indian grant assistance in presence of President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe. A Line of Credit Agreement for \$ 318 million was signed in June 2017 for railway sector between EXIM Bank of India and Sri Lankan Treasury. India will continue to provide all possible assistance to



support Sri Lanka's developmental efforts.

People-to-people contacts remain the bedrock of our relationship, and connectivity is crucial to strengthening people-to-people ties. We are happy that Sri Lankan Airlines recently became the largest foreign carrier to India, making use of the Open Sky policy. We are equally delighted that an Air India flight connecting Colombo and Varanasi is now operational, realizing the commitment made by our Prime Minister during his visit to Sri Lanka in May 2017. There are now more than 150 flights a week connecting Colombo with India. Sri Lanka also contributes significantly towards Indian tourism, with an estimated 300,000 Sri Lankans visiting India annually. India is the largest source country for Sri Lankan tourism with more than 350,000 Indian tourists visiting Sri Lanka during 2016. Let us take more and more advantage of our geography.

Our linguistic and cultural interactions have interwoven us into a unique tapestry. Is it any wonder then that the classes in Indian music, dance, Hindi and Yoga offered at the Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo are so popular? To showcase the common thread of yoga running through the tradition and culture of both

countries, thousands participated in yoga events held across Sri Lanka to commemorate the International Day of Yoga. It has been an honour for us to have H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena join thousands of yoga enthusiasts at Independence Square on 17 June to celebrate the International Day of Yoga 2017.

Both countries attach high importance to education and innovation. I am happy to note that India now offers more than 200 scholarships annually to Sri Lankan students to study in India, at undergraduate, postgraduate and research levels, apart from 500 scholarships to students pursuing education in Sri Lanka at Advanced and undergraduate levels. Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Scheme and the Colombo Plan, India also offers 370 slots annually to Sri Lankan nationals for short term training in India. We have also recently opened up our Medical Colleges and Indian Institute of Technology to foreign students. For the first time, IIT JEE (Advanced Level) entrance examination, was held in Colombo in May 2017. We hope to create more bridges between our two countries.

India and Sri Lanka continue to enjoy a strong defence partnership. Common security concerns, especially the protection of important sea lanes in our immediate maritime neighbourhood, guide our bilateral defence engagement, marked by regular high level exchange of visits, joint training and exercises as well as ship visits. Of all the threats that are global in nature and should concern us all, terrorism is clearly the most serious. The heinous attacks around the world in the last few months are stark reminders of this dark reality. It is our firm conviction that no belief, justification, political cause or argument can be used to justify acts of terrorism. The perpetrators of terrorist attacks, as well as the States that support and sponsor or provide safe havens to terrorists or terrorist groups, must be held accountable. India sees itself as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean Region. We also see ourselves as the First Responder in HA/DR operations in the Region (Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief). Our defence and counter-terrorism cooperation must take into account the geopolitical realities of today and must equip us to for a better tomorrow.

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. With investments in each other's countries in infrastructure, manufacturing, health, education, science and technology, we are positioning ourselves well for further deepening our cooperation.

As democracies, as young nations who gained independence around the sametime, as close

neighbours, our dreams have been similar and our destinies have been intertwined. Let us work together to realize those dreams.

Long live India-Sri Lanka friendship!



Sri Lanka India Society commemorates 70th Year of Indian Independence

August 23, 2017

Sri Lanka India Society held their 70th Indian Independence Day celebrations amidst a distinguished gathering of invitees at Taj Samudra on 19 August. Hon. Minister of Special Assignments Dr. Sarath Amunugama was the Chief Guest, while the Guest of Honour was H.E Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka. Suboroto Bagchi, world renowned business author and much-admired entrepreneur who co-founded Mindtree, a \$ 500 million global IT service company with over 15,000 employees, was the Keynote Speaker.

President of Sri Lanka India Society Mr T S Prakash welcomed the dignitaries and gave a brief overview of activities of the Society. In his speech, Dr Sarath Amunugama recalled the deep ties of cultural heritage shared commonly by the two countries. Dr Amunugama highlighted the similarities between the two national anthems, and the connection with Rabindranath Tagore. He narrated many interesting anecdotes that signified the strong relationship between India and Sri Lanka.

Addressing the audience, High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu said that the India of 2017 was very different from India a decade ago; with 50% of its population under 25 years, India is unleashing the forces of innovation, enterprise and growth. He also stressed upon the close links between the two countries in recent history with momentous visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Chief Guest for International Day of Vesak. High Commissioner elaborated on initiatives undertaken in economic and political spheres, including humanitarian assistance during recent floods. High Commissioner highlighted that India's development assistance of over US\$ 2.6 billion reflects the commitment Prime Minister Modi has towards our closest neighbour - Sri Lanka. He encouraged citizens of both countries to work together in harmony, quoting Mahatma Gandhi

In his keynote address, Subroto Bagchi outlined the exceptional leadership qualities displayed by historic figures such as Moses, William Wallace and Mahatma Gandhi throughout the centuries, harping on the relevance of such qualities in the 21st century as well.

Cultural performances added colour to the event. Ever since its inception, Sri Lanka India Society has played a stellar role in building greater harmony and unity between Sri Lankan and Indian people.





High Commissioner's speech at Sri Lanka India Society

Hon'ble Sarath Amunugama, Senior Minister, and a great friend of India,

Our distinguished guest, Subroto Bagchi,

Mr. T. S. Prakash, President of the Sri Lanka India Society

Other office bearers and members of the Society,

My friends from India and Sri Lanka,

Ladies and Gentlemen..

It is a privilege to be here this evening - an evening dedicated to thoughts, ideas and vision - as we celebrate 70 years of Independence of India. India @ 70, is an occasion to celebrate, contemplate, introspect and ide-ate.

I am delighted, that we have two brilliant thinkers with us today, - one from Sri Lanka & the other from India, Dr. Sarath Amunugama & Mr. Subroto Bagchi, two visionaries, acclaimed authors, scholarly leaders, who have dedicated their lives, to the world of ideas and action, going beyond their own domain!.

I commend the Sri Lanka India Society, for their efforts in putting together this event. They have been playing an important role, in strengthening the millennia-old ties of friendship, between our two great nations.

I have no intention to make, a long speech today - just share a few thoughts.

As you all know, there is an economic revolution, happening in India. India of 2017 is very very different from India a decade ago. It is the young India with more than 50 % under 25 years, that is unleashing the forces of innovation, enterprise and growth. It is this young India, which will create the magic of 'New India', in the decades to come. We want Sri Lanka, as our closest neighbour, to be our partner in this magnificent journey!

Sri Lanka is also treading the path of development. As nations who uphold, similar values of democracy, and pluralism, and as nations, who have gained independence around the same time, our dreams are similar. There is a historic opportunity at our hands, to transform these dreams, to reality. We can achieve our dreams only, if we look ahead; if we have a vision, for future. We cannot afford, to remain prisoners of the past; we need to work with passion, for the future.

You would have noticed, that there have been momentous events, in India-Sri Lanka relations, since I met you, last in February. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe visited India in April. An MoU for cooperation in joint economic projects was signed, during the visit, - is an important milestone, in our bilateral economic engagement.

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi made an historic visit to Sri Lanka, as the Chief Guest for the International Day of Vesak, in May 2017, at the invitation of President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena. The visit which was widely seen in Sri Lanka & India - gave our bilateral relations, a huge boost!

As a true friend and neighbor, India has always responded swiftly to needs of Sri Lanka, be it drought, tsunami or floods. You all witnessed the swiftness with which the Indian Naval Ships along with assistance, touched Sri Lankan shores within hours of receiving the request, when Sri Lanka was hit by floods in May 2017.

We will continue to support Sri Lanka in all areas wherever and whenever needed. Currently, India has committed over US\$ 2.6 billion in development assistance to Sri Lanka. The figure is only a reflection of the commitment Prime Minister has towards our closest neighbour - Sri Lanka.

We have also been trying to facilitate genuine travel to further strengthen people-to-people ties. Sri Lankan Airlines has been permitted to fly maximum flights to Indian cities. India is bringing in largest number of tourists into Sri Lanka. We have recently reformed our OCI card holder rules. We hope more and more people travel, explore and understand each other's country.

I consider Sri Lanka India Society as a flag bearer in our journey ahead.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who said, "Happiness is when, - what you think, what you say, and what you do, are in harmony". Let us work together, hand in hand, to create harmony of existence.

Thank you.

Celebrating 70 years of independence of India: performance by legendary percussion maestro Pandit Bickram Ghosh



High Commission of India, Colombo celebrated 70 years of Independence of India on 15th August 2017 with a scintillating musical performance by Maestro Bickram Ghosh featuring Rythmscape with the gracious presence of H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka Hon'ble Ranil Wickremasinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, H.E. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Former President of SL, H.E. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, High Commissioner of India, Ministers and dignitaries.

One of world's greatest Tabla maestros, Pandit Bickram Ghosh has been nominated for Oscar and many Grammy awards. The event also featured other celebrated artists such as Pandit Subramaniam Sekhar on Mridangam, Pulak Sarkar on keyboard, Ambarish Das doing vocals, Abhisek Mallick on sitar, Satayajit Mukherjee on drums and Shamik Guha Roy on percussion. Through a variety of musical instruments, Rythmscape explored the journey of ancient classical Indian music to the world of contemporary fusion music.



A scintillating musical evening by Maestro Bikram Ghosh along with other renowned musicians from India was held at BMICH on August 15, 2017



ISRO launches 104 satellites in one go, creates history



India, a one-rocket fledgling in space transportation compared to its European and U.S. counterparts, created launch history on Wednesday by placing a record 104 spacecraft in their desired orbits.

The feat was performed on the old reliable launch vehicle, the PSLV, numbered C-37, which took off from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, at 9.28 a.m.

Precise launch

C-37 was a largely commercial flight as all but three passenger satellites, small nanosats, belonged to six other countries. The 29-minute launch went off precisely as planned; it took just 11 minutes from the release of the primary Cartosat-2 series spacecraft to the last launch of a client satellite, ISRO said after the mega-payload launch.

The PSLV, in the category of launch vehicles that can lift relatively light loads to space, now marks 38 successful missions in a row out of a total of 39 flights.

This time, it took to space a total of 1,378 kg, of which the primary satellite was 714 kg.

The latest Cartosat is the fifth in the series of six Cartosat-2 spacecraft, starting from Cartosat 2 in 2007 and followed by what were earlier marked A, B, C, D and E. The last one is due.

"After a flight of 16 minutes and 48 seconds, the satellites achieved a polar Sun synchronous orbit of 506 km inclined at an angle of 97.46 degrees to the equator — very close to the intended orbit. In the next 12 minutes, all 104 satellites successfully separated from the PSLV fourth stage in a predetermined sequence, beginning with the

Cartosat-2 series, INS-1 and INS-2," an official communique said.

ISRO's workhorse lives up to its billing

The PSLV, which created launch history on Wednesday by placing a record 104 spacecraft in their desired orbits, has totally launched 46 Indian spacecraft, most of them Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites.

As many as 180 small satellites of foreign customers contracted by ISRO's commercial company Antrix Corporation have also reached space on this vehicle.

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The PSLV, 39 flights old since 1993, also launched the Indian Moon mission Chandrayaan-1 in 2008; and is set to launch a private lunar mission for Bengaluru start-up Team Indus in late December this year.

"It is confirmed that all 104 satellites have been successfully deployed in the orbit," PTI quoted PSLV Project Director B. Jayakumar at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) as saying.

"After separation, the two solar arrays of Cartosat-2 series satellite were deployed automatically and ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) at Bengaluru took over the control of the satellite," the space agency said.

Heaviest so far - 3,136 kg communication satellite GSAT-19 successfully launched by ISRO GSLV Mk III

June 5, 2017

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched its heaviest-ever rocket with a strapped-on satellite on Monday, 5 June 2017. The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III (GSLV MkIII nicknamed 'Fatboy') ferried the GSAT-19 communications satellite into space. GSAT-19, the 3,136 kg communication satellite, is aimed to bring a massive change in the communications mechanism system of the country.

With the launch, ISRO has demonstrated its mastery in developing a cryogenic engine, a technology denied to it years ago. The launch proves the homegrown launch vehicle's capability of hurling up to four tonne payload into higher orbits. It has also laid a strong foundation for its ambitious future projects, including Chandrayaan-II and a manned mission, besides venturing into the global heavy payload market.

Congratulating ISRO scientists for the successful launch, PM Narendra Modi said, "GSLV-MKIII D1/Gsat-19 mission takes India closer to the next generation launch vehicle and satellite capability. The nation is proud." Calling it a "historic day", a jubilant ISRO chief A S Kiran Kumar said, "I wish to congratulate the entire team which has relentlessly worked each day for the launch from 2002." The PM called Kumar and congratulated each member of the ISRO team for the successful mission..."

ISRO took relentless efforts to develop rocket and cryogenic engine technologies. Overcoming the initial hurdles, the PSLV rocket has over a period of time emerged as the most reliable and versatile workhorse launch vehicle with 38 consecutive successful missions since October 1994. Between 1994 and 2017, PSLV has launched 46 indigenous and 180 foreign satellites.

GSLV Mk II was developed and the rocket, fired by an indigenously made cryogenic engine, had four consecutive successful launches since January 2014. On May 5 this year, the fourth GSLV Mk II rocket made PM Narendra Modi's dream project a reality when it successfully launched 'South Asia satellite', which was India's 'free gift' to friendly SAARC neighbours.

The successful launch of GSLV Mk III+, which cost ISRO Rs 300 crore, has also set the stage for ISRO's manned mission. Not only the rocket, the GSLV Mk III launch has also proved the efficiency of CE20 indigenous cryogenic engine, a completely new technology designed to double the thrust and capability to lift double the payload than the previous GSLV Mk II, which could only carry a 2-tonne payload. The development of this advanced desi engine has put India into an elite club of nations -US, European Space Agency, Russia, China and Japan-which have mastered the cryogenic engine technology'.



GSLV Successfully Launches South Asia Satellite

May 05, 2017



India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F09) successfully launched the 2230 kg South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9) into its planned Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) today (May 05, 2017). Today's launch of GSLV was its eleventh and took place from the Second Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR (SDSC SHAR), Sriharikota, the spaceport of India. This is the fourth consecutive success achieved by GSLV carrying indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage. In its oval shaped GTO, the South Asia Satellite is now orbiting the Earth with a perigee (nearest point to Earth) of 169 km and an apogee (farthest point to Earth) of 36,105 km with an orbital inclination of 20.65 deg with respect to the equator.

Few seconds before the launch countdown reached zero, the four liquid propellant strap-on motors of GSLV-F09, each carrying 42 tons of liquid propellants, were ignited. At count zero and after confirming the normal performance of all the four strap-on motors, the 139 ton solid propellant first stage core motor

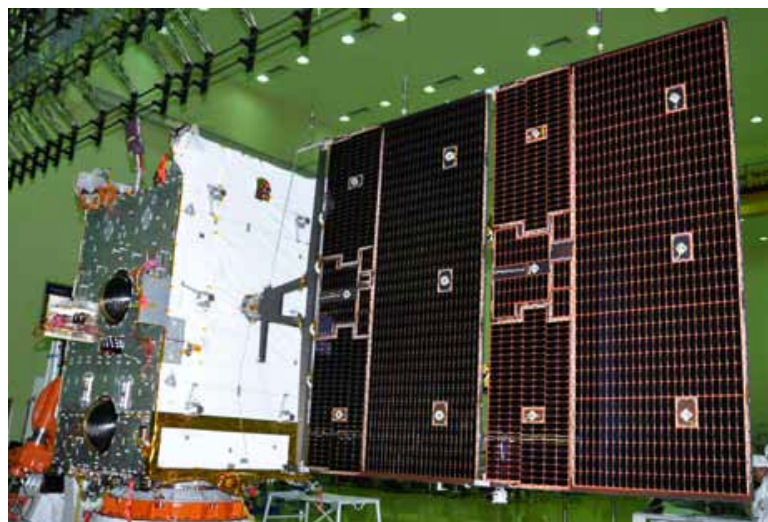
was ignited and GSLV lifted off at 16:57 IST. The major phases of the flight occurred as scheduled. About seventeen minutes after lift-off, South Asia Satellite was successfully placed in GTO.

Soon after separation from GSLV, the two solar arrays of the satellite were automatically deployed in quick succession and the Master Control Facility (MCF) at Hassan in Karnataka assumed control of the satellite.

South Asia Satellite is a communication satellite built by ISRO to provide a variety of communication services over the South Asian region. For this, it is equipped with Ku-band transponders.

Following the successful launch, the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi addressed along with the South Asian leaders. He congratulated ISRO and remarked that today was a historic day for South Asia and a day without precedence. The Prime Minister recalled that two years ago India made a promise to extend the advanced space technology for the cause of growth and prosperity of the people of South Asia and felt that the successful launch of South Asia Satellite today marks a fulfilment of that.

In the coming days, the satellite orbit will be raised from its present GTO to the final circular Geostationary Orbit (GSO) by firing the satellite's Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) in stages. The South Asia Satellite will be commissioned into service after the completion of orbit raising operations and the satellite's positioning in its designated slot in the GSO following in-orbit testing of its payloads.





How would the SAARC Satellite benefit the SAARC nations ?

It would support a range of applications in telecommunications, broadcasting, tele-education and telemedicine.

The satellite carries a new technology demonstrator called electric propulsion system which will cut the fuel load of spacecraft.

The GSAT-9 is a Geostationary Communication Satellite and data from it will be shared with the other five countries.

It is also aimed at providing disaster management system linked to all nations for continuous communication when natural disasters strike the region.

Besides the satellite, Isro could get an opportunity to build ground stations as well receive and interpret data from the satellite.

The SAARC nations who are a part of the project will have access to at least one transponder using which they can telecast their own programming. The countries will develop their own ground-level infrastructure.

The SAS will catapult India's diplomatic skills to an uncharted trajectory with a mission life is 12 years.

GSLV-F09 mission is the fourth consecutive flight with the indigenous Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS).



Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka Mr. Maithripala Sirisena Congratulating the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi via satellite technology from the President's House in Anuradhapura.

Kerala



Area : 38,863 sq.km / 15,005 sq. miles

Population : 318.38 lakhs(2001 Census)
(3.34 % of total population of India)

Land Mass : 1.18 % area of total land.

Capital : Trivandrum

Language : Malayalam

Literacy : 100% (app)

Climate : Tropical

Clothing : Light cottons

Border : East: Western Ghat Mountains,
west:: Arabian Sea, South:
Tamil Nadu and North:
Karnataka

History :

Kerala had become a Linguistically distinct region in 14th century First Recorded Kingdom: Empire Chera Ruled Kerala from Vanchi Between 8th and 14th century -Malayalam is developed as a language under Chera Empire-II. Kerala was first mentioned in the Sanskrit epic Alitareya Aranyaka

Early Trading centres:

Evidence shown Arabs from 8th century, Portuguese in 1498, The dutch and Britishers from 16th and 17th centuries establish trade centres with Kerala. Cranganore, Quilon, Alleppey, Cannanore and Cochin are major ports used for trading.

Exports: Marine, Coir, Handicrafts, Spices,
Food and other products

Major Industries

Tourism, Information Technology,
Fertilizers, Oil Refining and Power
Generation, Ship Building , Machine
Tools, Electronics, Cables,

Rubber.

No.of Districts : 14

Sex Ratio : 1058 women for 1000
men

Literacy Rate : 90.92 percent



Kerala is situated between the ever green Western Ghats in the East and deep blue Arabian Sea in the West and it is a beautiful landscape, showing unique geographical diversity distinct from other States of India. It has a coastal belt of about 580 Kms along with the Arabian Sea from South to North. The coastal belt is covered with innumerable backwaters, lagoons and canals. The backwaters are the backbone of tourism of the State. The State is enriched with abundant coconut groves and green rice field. It is rich in minerals and the most important is monazite which is found rich on its coastal belt.

The Western Ghats form almost a continuous mountain wall on the East, separating the State from its neighbors. The high range area offer cool, misty mountains, undulating meadows and picturesque valleys.

Recently, Kerala tourism has been gaining more popularity and global attention. This is because of her amazing natural beauty and has been recognized as the best tourism brand in the World. Presently, foreigners identify Kathakali alone as the symbol of Kerala culture. It is true that there would be no other place in the World like Kerala in case of art diversity. All these art

forms are colourful as well as attractive.

Kerala tourism is built and developed in the strong foundation of attractive natural environment.

Tourism Products of Kerala

Kerala is famed as God's own country. The unique geographical features and friendly climate have made it one of the most sought after tourist destinations in Asia. Magnificent waterfalls, endless shoreline with serene beaches, sprawling plantations and paddy fields, Ayurvedic health resorts, tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, ever green forests, lush hill stations and exotic wildlife, divine cuisine, literate people, enriching art forms, historic and cultural monuments, magical fairs and festivals are the unique features of the State. Most of the tourism products of the State are based on nature. The diversity of tourism products are capable of



satisfying all types of tourists, namely; children, youngsters, couples, aged people, pilgrims, illiterate and educated people.

The primary tourism products of the State are natural environment product, symbiotic environment product, manmade environment product and cultural environment product.

I Natural Environment Products

Natural environment are those features such as air, water, flora, fauna, soil, natural landscape, or geographical features which form tourism product such as beaches, waterfalls, rivers, forest, deserts, hill stations and climate. Products based on natural environment are known as natural environment products. In the present study, natural environment product includes beach tourism, waterfalls, hill stations, rivers, monsoon tourism and climate.



1. Beach Tourism

The 600- km long coastal areas of Kerala has attracted visitors since ancient times. It offers a variety of options to the tourist and invites their attention from all over the World.

2. Hill Stations

The hill stations of Kerala are clothed in green all through the year. This place is rich in Plantations of pepper, cloves, cardamom, and cinnamon and nutmeg. A large area of this part is used for cultivation of tea, coffee and spices.

All the hill resorts of Kerala offer the most magical experience of nature in all its virgin beauty.

2. Climate

In Kerala, tourist arrival is mainly based on climate. A large proportions of tourists from U.S.A., Germany and France, (in order) showed interest in the factor, favourable climate. Overall the climate itself is an essential attraction in the case of tourism in Kerala.



3. Waterfalls

Waterfalls of Kerala are very attractive and beautiful. The rain in the Western Ghats passes through the forest and rock through which so many wonderful waterfalls are formed. The flowing surf of waterfalls looks like milk and its singing sound are melodious and most attractive to the tourists.

4. Rivers of Kerala

There are forty four rivers in Kerala, out of which forty one are westwards flowing and the other three are flowing eastwards. All rivers other than Kabani, Bhavani and Pambar are westwards flowing. The westwards flowing rivers ultimately reach into the backwaters of Kerala or into the Arabian Sea

5. Monsoon Tourism

Monsoon tourism is purely based on climate. The State has generally two rainy seasons. June to September, the Southwest monsoon, is the heavy rain season, which is called Edavappathy and the Northwest monsoon during the month of October is called Thulavarsham, which is lighter. The mountains are the generator of heavy rainfall in the State and maintain cool climate in the State.

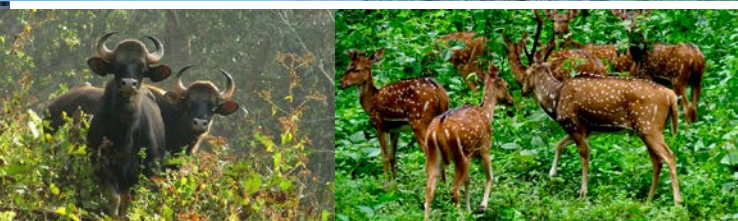
II. Symbiotic environment products

Symbiotic environment products means the tourism products which are combination of products created by blending natural attractions and built attractions. These products are made in the background of natural environment. The resources are provided by nature, which are converted into tourism products by humans. In the present study symbiotic environment products are backwater tourism, wildlife sanctuaries, ecotourism, Ayurvedic health tourism, forest tourism, green farm or plantation tourism, tourist villages and picnic centres and adventure tourism.

1. Backwater Tourism

The State has a wide network of interconnected canals, lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries. The backwaters are parallel to the Arabian Sea and sometimes separated from the sea only by narrow sand banks. This labyrinthine network of rivers, lagoons, streams and canals forms the backwaters of Kerala which is the main attraction of tourist; both domestic and foreign.

Backwaters of Kerala are the backbone of Kerala Tourism.



It is unique in Kerala and not seen elsewhere in other States of India. Kerala is the land of canals, lagoons, lakes and rivers. These backwaters with their peculiar landscape have had a direct impact on the lifestyle of people who live along its banks. Kerala's uniqueness lies in these backwaters found nowhere else in the World. This forms beautiful and economically viable features of Kerala. The

2. Wildlife Sanctuaries

Kerala is famous due to her evergreen scenery. The State consists of 10, 81,509 hectares of forest area. The Western Ghats are enriched with thick forest. This forest is the happy mingling place of thousands of wild animals and birds. Hence, a number of wildlife sanctuaries are set up here to protect the wild animals and birds and sustain the rare species for the awareness of future generation.

Nestled in the luxuriant forests of the Western Ghats in Kerala are fourteen wildlife sanctuaries. And skirting these exotic destinations are some of the most delightful trekking trails in the country. All wash in the spice-scented air of endless acres of plantations ranging from cardamom, vanilla and pepper to tea and coffee

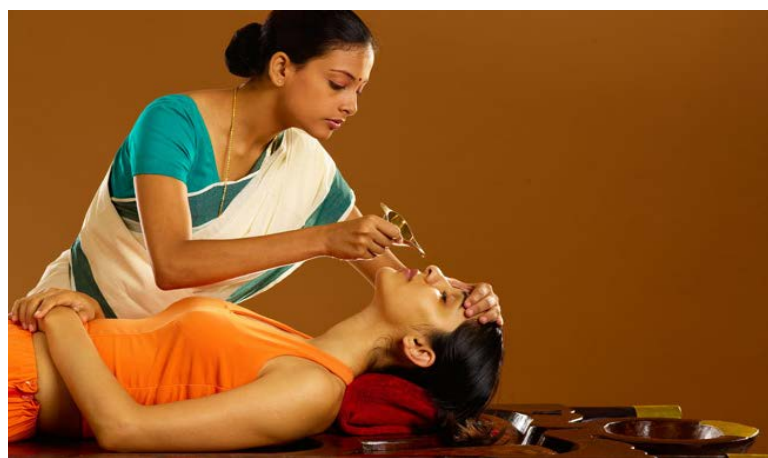
3. Ecotourism

Due to ecological significance, all of the wildlife sanctuaries and most of the hill stations, waterfalls and backwaters of the State are declared as ecotourism destinations.

4. Ayurvedic Health Tourism

Ayurveda is a branch of Atharva Veda. It is the science of life. It is the oldest and most holistic system of medicine. Even though it is practised all over India, Kerala is the only State

in India where this branch of medicine is practised still as per traditional laws. The State has rich forest resources and the Western area is enriched with mountains. Being situated in the tropical region, the State has abundant supply of herbs and natural vegetation. So, Ayurveda can be practised in Kerala in its original form without duplication of medicine as it has an unparalleled wealth of herbs and natural vegetation. Agasthyakoodam is the legendary herbal mountain is a treasure trove of medical herbs. Due to thick forests and humid climate make the land fertile for growth of medical plants. Moreover, the hot and humid climate



condition of Kerala is regarded as specially favourable for Ayurvedic treatment.

Rejuvenation and revitalization are the major areas of Ayurveda in connection with health tourism. Rejuvenation means to make young again. There are many hotels, spas and Ayurvedic centres across the State offering rejuvenation packages.

There are so many Ayurvedic health centres and health resorts in Kerala for treatment. Government of Kerala has brought out a scheme for the approval of Ayurvedic centres. There are two types of classification, namely, The Green Leaf and The Olive Leaf.

5. Plantation Tourism / Green Farm Tourism

The forest of Kerala consists of a dynamic repository of a wide range of invariable timber resources. The plantations occupy a major part of forest area. There are different arrays of timbers like, teak, rose wood, medical and aromatic plants, bamboos etc. In Idukki and Wayanad, the plantation sector organises tourism promoting activities in plantation sector. Teak plantations, tea plantations, coffee plantations and



spice plantation are amazing and very beautiful. This product is tapped as a new area of Kerala Tourism. It is a novel idea of promoting tourism along with the traditional agricultural or farm activities.

Tea gardens of Munnar In the farm tourism, tourists are permitted to take part daily activities of farm, offering visitors a taste of the local cuisine and selling farm products to them etc. The tourists are allowed to all types of entertainment activities and farm activities. A number of tourists are attracted in farm tourism. This product is totally based on environment.



6. Tourist Villages, Picnic Centres etc

Tourist villages and picnic centres are created in beautiful natural areas of the State which attract thousands of tourists. Here also nature is the main attraction. In addition to this, some facilities are created for entertainment. The important places of this category are veli tourist village, akkulam tourist village, ashramam tourist village, and aranmula heritage village etc.

7. Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism is another tourism product based on natural environment. In Kerala, adventure tourism can be developed along with eco- tourism. Trekking, wild animal watching, halting on tree tops etc. which can be successfully marketed now.

8. Forest Tourism

Forest tourism is purely based on natural environment of the country. As far as our State is concerned, it consists of 10, 81,509 hectares of forest area. The forest of the State is the haven of different types of wild animals, birds. Thousands of plants species are also seen in the forest. Therefore, forest itself is an attraction of tourism in Kerala. A tourist can see a new World, which had not ever seen earlier. It is really an experience, a novel one, enthusiastic and enhancing the knowledge. The concept of forest tourism lies in marketing the serene natural habitats as tourism products with an interest element of nature education. This aims at making the user aware of the productive and regulatory facilities. This also aims at creating employment opportunities at local level. It is targeted towards specialized nature interest groups and eco-conscious tourists. Forest tourism activities include wildlife observation, bird watching, trekking, mountaineering, staying in the tree top huts and environmental studies and in

the State, adventure tourism, eco- tourism and forest tourism can be successfully combined together and offer to the tourist as a combination of tourism product.

III. Manmade environment products

Products created by people like architecture, museums, fairs, festivals, cuisine, monuments, amusement park,, medical tourism etc. are known as manmade tourism products. For the present study, human made attractions mainly or purposefully created to attract tourist is termed manmade environment products. For the purpose of the study, manmade environment products include cuisine tourism, medical tourism and amusement park.

1. Food Tourism (Cuisine)

Kerala is the land enriched with spices, fruits, vegetables, coconut and sea foods. So many tourists are attracted in the tasty cuisine of Kerala. The different varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisine are very delicious. Kerala has a cuisine as distinctive as its cultural life. Influenced by its long coastline and flavored by the all-pervasive coconut, it is enriched by exotic fruits, vegetables and sea food, and garnished to perfection with the distinctive aroma of spices.

Kerala is known to be the best place where the most delicious breakfast is available. The popular menu in the breakfast include Puttu, made of rice flour and coconut and kadala (gram) curry, idiappam (noodle like rice cakes) and egg or vegetable curry and appam (soft centered lacy pancakes) and mutton or vegetable stew. All these breakfast are rich in nutrient value and taste. Another World famous Kerala's launch menu is Sumptuous Sadya. It is a three course meal served on a plantain leaf. In all houses of Kerala, on the day of Thiruvonam, all Keralies prepare compulsorily Sumptuous sadya as their launch. It has variety of up to 40 vegetarian delights. The main item is boiled rice. It is also accompanied by Crispy pappadam and different types of pickles. Different types of Payasams are also served. The order serving of different menu is also very important.



2. Amusement Parks

There are so many choices to the tourist like boating, swimming pool, sports, tennis court, music enjoyment, cinema, recreation clubs and amusement park for all age groups. Now, in Kerala, there are five amusement parks; Veegaland, Fantasy Park, Silver Storm, Happy Land and Vismaya.

3. Health Tourism

The State of Kerala is maintaining the international standard of health care and medical facilities. The State is also known to have India's highest life expectancy and lowest infant mortality rate. To the present time, our State is gaining much attention among the World, in the area of Ayurvedic medical treatment related to rejuvenation and treatment related to neurological disorders. Health tourism or medical tourism is also getting much attention here now.

Kerala is a renowned destination for Ayurvedic healthcare tourism. The challenge is to build on this reputation, improve infrastructure, connectivity, service levels, and to aggressively market destination for healthcare tourism in Western medicine as well. In the public sector, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala has identified healthcare tourism as a thrust area and is in the process of preparing to aggressively market Kerala as a healthcare tourism destination at international tourism fairs. In the private sector, the Great India Tour Company and the Kerala Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital in Thiruvananthapuram, have teamed up to provide healthcare tourism packages to the international market.⁴⁰

IV. Cultural environment Products

Manmade attractions which are not mainly or purposefully created to attract tourists but form part of culture of the State but which also attract the tourist is known as cultural environment products. Many tourists showed interest to visit the birth place of famous men, architecture and historical monuments. The cultural environment of tourism is related to literature, music, drama, poetry, painting, sculpture, folklore, engraving, handicrafts, arts, fairs and festivals, monuments, architecture, historical sites, museums, religious building, cultural centres, archeological sites and centres of contemporary life.

1. Palaces, Museums, Monuments, Architecture, Historical and Cultural Centres

The style of our architecture is distinctive and the symbol of it is seen in the traditional houses, palaces, temples, churches and mosques in Kerala. Wood was used extensively on doors and windows, even to solid curved walls. Almost all churches, temples, palaces, mosques dotting the State showcase this traditional architecture style which is very impressive.

The State was divided into different regions and ruled by many rulers. There are so many spectacular palaces, heirlooms, art forms, architecture as a remembrance and they are kept as such. Now, Department of Tourism of the State highlights these historical, archeological, artistic palaces and places as a strong tourism product and many tourists are attracted in it.

2. Art Forms of Kerala

The spectacular art of the folk and classical performing art shows hundreds of years of our cultural heritage. The classical dances include Kathakali, Mohiniyattam and Koodiyattam. Solo dance is also staged and is very popular. Ottamthullal, a solo dance used as a weapon to ridicule and criticize the society.

The ritual arts include Padayani and Theyyam. Padayani is more popular among South-Central Kerala, whereas Theyyam and traditional martial art form, Kalarippayattu are more popular in Northern Kerala. An important dance among Syrian Christians is Margamkali. It is similar to Thiruvathirakali and celebrates the legend of St. Thomas in Kerala. The most important dance popular among Malabar Muslims is Oppana, staged as an entertainment at wedding ceremonies and festivals, often teasing comments and innuendoes about the bride's anticipated nuptial bliss. All these dances have their distinctive styles of performance, mudras, attires and techniques of expression and mark the celebrations of certain occasions, traditions and customs and religious ceremonies and a bright pattern of the colourful Kerala culture that has cascaded down the generation. Many legends are related with the dances of Kerala. Some of these dances are colourful expressions of the events noted in the great Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

The art forms of Kerala are mainly classified into three; Ritual arts, Performing Arts and Martial art form. The ritual art forms are Theyyam, Padayani, Poothanumthirayam, Mudiattu, Koothu, Arjunanritham, Kannyarkali, Velakali, Kalamezhuthu, Margom Kali and Theyyattu. The performing art forms are Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Thullal, Koodiyattam, Thiruvathirakali, Oppana, Kolkali, Duffmuttu and Krishnanattom and Kalarippayattu is the martial art form. For the purpose of giving training to children and youngsters, a stage or Kalari is functioning at New Mahe, 29 km away from Kannur. The Kalari is known as Malayala Kalagramam. Here all forms of fine arts are practised such as painting, sculpture, music and dance and art pottery. Yoga is also practised in the Kalari. Kerala Kalamandalam near Thrissur is one and only institute in India

A. Ritual Art Forms

Kerala has a rich repertoire of folk performing arts, folk songs and folk drama reflecting man's overpowering rapport with nature and his constant desire for communication with unknown. The tribals of Kerala, adivasis (the first native people), keep alive a folklore tradition in the eco-friendly life they lead and the natural pharmacy they practice. Theyyam, Thira, Mudiattu, Kaduvakali, Velakali, Kakkariissi, Natakam, Chavittunatakam, Margamkali, Kolkali, Parichamuttukali, Bhadrakalipattu, Pulluvanpattu, Thiruvathirakali and so on are only a few of Kerala's folk art forms, some of them being ritual arts. Theyyam exists in four hundred different forms. The brilliantly painted masks worn by the artist of Theyyam, Padayani and so on are fine examples of the crafts of Kerala. The masks and headgear of Theyyam symbolize social consciousness and a sense of morality. The best time to enjoy the performing arts of Kerala is during January and February, the time of temple festivals.⁴⁴



B. Performing Arts of Kerala

The tradition of classical arts in Kerala dates back to thousand years. Koodiyattam, a dance drama associated with temple rituals is perhaps the oldest of these. Kathakali, popular as the art form of Kerala has been referred to as 'the first theatre of imagination' of the World owing to its elaborate costumes, ornaments and facial make-up. Mohiniyattam, the dance of the enchantress, reflects the graceful nature of the land. The movements of the dancer have been compared to the palms swaying in the gentle breeze and sweeping waves which are so much a part of Kerala's lush landscape. Thullal, another classical art form is social satire at its best, and keeps the audience in a constant state of merriment. Ottamthullal, parayanthullal and seethanganthullal are the three different forms of Thullal.

C. Martial art forms

This martial art form originated from the war field. In Kerala, the country was ruled by small rulers and the rulers maintain a militant force. Actually, each ruler maintains a Kalari for practising the soldiers. The most important, oldest and scientific martial art form of Kerala is Kalarippayattu. Training in fight is given at Kalari or training school. It begins with an oil massage of body which is continued until the body is quick moving and supple. The next step is practising of jumping, running, somersault etc. Finally the combat is given the training for using weapons such as swords, daggers, maces, spears, the bow and arrow and so on. Kalari is considered as a place of religious worship.

3. Fairs and Festivals

Fairs and festivals are unique in Kerala. Thousands of tourists showed their interest in Onam festivals, boat races, Thrissur pooram and performing art like, Theyyam, Kathakali, and Padayani etc. Kerala is famous for boat races also. The boat races are mainly conducted in Alappuzha district in the water logged area of Kuttanad region. The boat races are arranged during the festival season of Onam. Tourists are coming from all over the World during the festival season to enjoy the fairs and festivals of Kerala.

There are more than three thousand temples in the State and each temple celebrates annual festival.

4. Pilgrim Tourism

Kerala has a number of pilgrimages of importance to Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jains. Pilgrim centres of the State are also World famous. Even though, pilgrim centres of Kerala are visited by tourists from all over the World, domestic tourists show more interest in it. Thousands of tourists from Kerala

and outside the State are visiting in the pilgrim centres of the State. There are more than 3000 temples in the State.

5. Handicrafts.

The handicrafts of Kerala are unique and World famous in design, style and perfection of form. The main shopping articles are Coir products of Alappuzha, traditional handloom products of Balaramapuram, Aranmula Kannadi, Kasavu Mundu, Nettur Petti, Spices and Traditional Gold Jewellery. The Aranmula mirror is made upon copper and tin and is in oval shape and 6 inches by 4 inches in size, till the manufacturing secrecy is kept secret. Nettur petti is a symbol of aristocracy and it is an ethnic jewel box. Kasavu mundu is the handloom sarees of Kerala with light weight and laced with gold Kasavu. Spices include cinnamon, clove, pepper, cardamom etc. Traditional Gold Jewellery is another memento of an occasion of Kerala's experience. Different varieties of traditional jewellery items like necklaces, ear rings, bangles of different design and style are best memento. All these shopping items are available even in small towns of Kerala.



Secondary Tourism Products of Kerala

Tourism infrastructure is a broader concept, which encompasses basic as well as supportive facilities required to cater to the needs of the tourists. In fact, tourism infrastructure is the foundation for healthy growth of the tourism. Technically, tourism infrastructure includes accommodation, transportation, communication, drinking water and civic amenities such as parking, health, sanitation, power, toilets, parks, amusement and entertainment facilities. All these basic facilities influence the tourism industry in terms of tourist inflow in the region particularly at any destination.

A. Accommodation Facilities

The accommodation requirements of tourists in the state is now covered by a wide range of accommodation facilities



like classified hotels and resorts, home stay facilities, Grihasthali units and Ayurvedic health centres, unclassified hotels etc., covering different ranges of price pattern and facilities. At present, house boats are also providing accommodation facilities to the tourists.

B. Food

Hotels, restaurants and motels are functioning all over the State for providing food to the tourists. Motels and restaurants are essential for tourism development. All tourism centres must be provided with the facility of restaurants and motels which will supply good quality food. This facility must be provided throughout the State. As most of the tourists are from outside of Kerala and India, all types of Continental, South and North Indians food must be provided, even though, traditional Kerala food is a major attraction to the tourists.

2. Infrastructure Environment Products

Roads

The State of Kerala has well connected with good roads. The State has 1,73,592 kms of roads.

Ports and Waterways

The water transport along the coastal belt of Kerala from South to North can prove the great boom to the tourist and local people as a sight- seeing and pleasure trip. The important attractions of backwater tourism in Kerala are house boats and boat races. Both these attractions are attracted by a number of foreign and domestic tourists. House boat facilities are available round the year where as boat race are found on special occasions like Onam Season.

Railways

The Indian Railway, the largest public utility concern in India is effectively functioning in the State. There are 200 railway stations in Kerala. The entire length of rail route is around 1148 kms and covers 13 railway routes within its fold. Most of the districts of Kerala are connected with trains.

Air Transport

The State of Kerala has three international air ports; Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi (Cochin) and Kozhikode (Calicut)

Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode air ports are owned by government of India while, Kochi (Nedumbassery) air port is owned by International Air port Ltd, a company set up by government of Kerala with private participation. A number of domestic and international flights are operating from these air ports and connection flights are available from other air ports of India to the whole World.

Recreation facilities

Kerala has different varieties of recreation and entertainment facilities. The important recreation facilities available in the State are amusement park for kids, teenagers, married and single tourists, boating, indoor and outdoor sports, theaters, music program etc.

II. Human Environment Product

Human environment products are literacy and education of people of the host country, attitude of local people towards tourist and hospitality of people working directly or indirectly in the tourism sector. Literacy plays a very significant role in giving proper answers. At every step there is always a chance to give the required or additional information to the visitors from time to time which can only be performed by an educated and alert person who keeps himself aware with the day-to-day happening in and around the city and even in general.

III. Economic Environment Product

Kerala is a place with a low cost of living in comparison with other popular destinations in India. Now thousands of foreign tourists are coming to this land for medical treatment as the cost of treatment in the State are many fold times less as compared to the Westerns countries. It is evident that low cost of living in the State attracts many tourists and in that way also tourists are more satisfied. The economic environment products are rent of accommodations, charges of food, price of shopping articles and other goods, cost of beverages, cost of travel from place of origin to Kerala and cost of travel within Kerala.



Emotional Dance: A New Technique of Dancing for the Deaf

By Mandulee Mendis

Dance is a significant part of our culture. It is not just an art, but a way we express our feelings.

We hear music, we understand the tone and we dance accordingly. But what if you are not gifted with the ability of hearing? Nilan Maligaspe, the Chief Choreographer of Creative Dance and Drama Academy has found a solution, a better way, for deaf people to engage in dancing.

EMOTIONAL DANCE

At present, deaf children and even people, engage in dancing without an ideal about what they are dancing for. Dancing is an art, there should be an emotion generation in it. That is why Nilan has introduced this new method of dancing where they understand the meaning and tone of music before dancing for it. The main part of this dance technique is, hand movements or dance4 pauses. He utilizes different hand movements with different meanings to explain the meaning and make the dancer feel the aura. Sign language and a syllabus invented by himself, are used in the process of teaching. This new technique is not only for deaf children and people, but also for everyone. Deaf people can dance better with more meaning using this technique while normal people can utilize this technique to do more complex and advanced dancing.

VISIT TO INDIA

Inspired by the talent and potent of Nilan and his crew, Col. Karaminder Singh (Retd.) the secretary of the Society for Welfare of the Handicapped invited Nilan to perform at the Golden Jubilee of Patiala School for the Deaf and Patiala School for the Blind, in India. Nilan and his crew not only performed at the Jubilee Celebration, but also conducted workshops for teachers and students, sharing his inspirational newly invented technique. They also taught them the basic concept of our own Kandyan Dancing. Nilan extends his gratitude to India Sri Lanka Foundation, Patiala School for the Deaf, Patiala School for the Blind and Indian Cultural Centre.





Indian Cultural Centre,Colombo

EVENTS & PROGRAMMES

Sitar Recital by K.G.West, Swedish Sitarist



World Music Day Celebrations



Violin recital by Dr. Swarna Khuntia





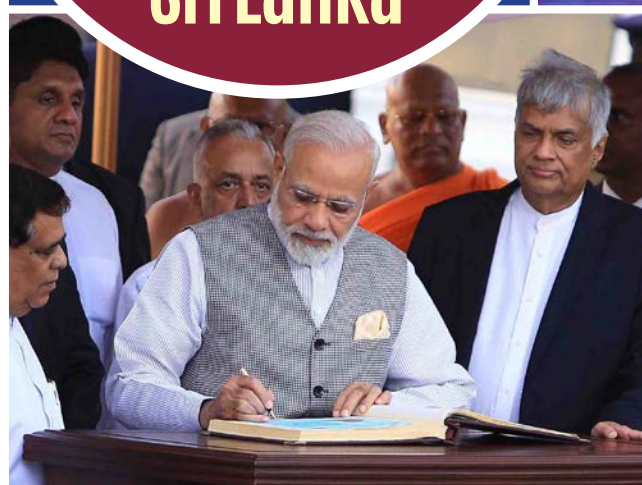
Nrityanali – “Niravana” – Life of Buddha

The Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo presented Nrityanali - “Niravana” depicting life of Buddha through an amalgamation of two Indian classical dance styles Kathak and Bharatnatyam on the occasion of 14th International Vesak Day Celebrations in Sri Lanka held at Nelum Pokuna on May 13, 2017. H.E. Bidhya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal graced the occasion as Chief Guest and H.E. President Maithripala Sirisena, Hon’ble Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, Hon’ble Minister Wijayadasa Rajapaksha, Hon’ble Minister S.B.Nawinne and other dignitaries graced the occasion. This cultural pageant was also participated by artistes from China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.





Highlights of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi's Visits in Sri Lanka



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF

yoga

2017



International Day
of Yoga 2017 events
across Sri Lanka