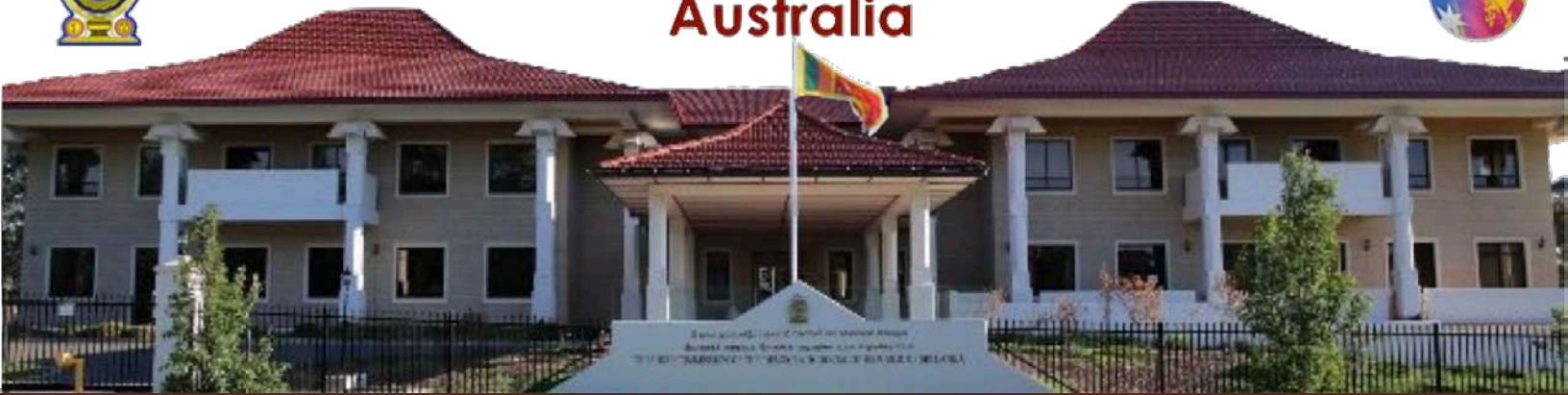




High Commission of Sri Lanka in Canberra Australia



Newsletter

November- December

Volume 5/2023



Best wishes from

The High Commissioner and the staff of
The Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra

Newsletter of Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra, Australia

The Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra is publishing a newsletter periodically (once in two months) which includes activities of the High Commission, important notices, selected Sri Lankan news which are important and may be of interest to the Sri Lankan expatriates in Australia, New Zealand and other accredited countries.

As the High Commission has a limited database, you may share this information with your contacts and request those who wish to receive the Newsletter to send their email address to Ms. Sewwandi De Silva, First Secretary via email to sewwandi.desilva@mfa.gov.lk



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President of Sri Lanka

New Year Message 2024

As we step into the year 2024, we find ourselves facing both challenges and the prospect of revitalizing the beloved nation. While each of us holds myriad personal aspirations, the realization of these goals is intrinsically tied to the resurgence of the country from its current state of crisis.

Through the unwavering commitment of all the citizens and their resilience throughout the past year, we achieved a foundational success in saving the country from financial distress. However, in order to achieve economic stability, we must continue to forge ahead in this demanding path - one that is not adorned with flowers but presents formidable challenges.

The responsibility to contribute to this national resurgence rests upon every Sri Lankan. Recognizing and fulfilling this collective responsibility is crucial for the rebuilding of the nation. January, named after God Janus, the God of beginnings and transitions in Roman mythology. God Janus possessed two faces to see the past and the future, serves as a reminder for us to reflect on the shared responsibilities.

Let us, in the spirit of the New Year, commit to fulfilling these responsibilities for the greater good of the country acknowledging both the past and the future. Through responsible and dedicated efforts, let us strive to make the New Year a prosperous one.

Ranil Wickremesinghe
President
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

31st December, 2023

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Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Meetings in Sydney to Promote Sri Lanka-Australia Links



Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Australia Chitrangenee Wagiswara paid an official call on the Minister for Multiculturalism, Small Business, Lands and Property and Sport of New South Wales (NSW) Steve Kamper on 7 November 2023 at his office.

The Minister spoke of the large number of Sri Lankan expatriates who have made their mark in NSW and noted that most of the Sri Lankans are very well educated and well integrated into the Australian Society. The minister has been closely involved with most of the activities which are organized by Sri Lankan associations in Sydney. The High Commissioner stated that she was pleased to note the encouraging sentiments expressed by the Minister.

The two sides discussed avenues for further cooperation and the need for the State government's assistance in promoting links between Australia and Sri Lanka especially in the trade sector. It was agreed that the High Commission and the State Minister's Office would keep in close contact to facilitate and promote further links that would be mutually beneficial.

During the visit to Sydney, the President of the Sri Lanka Australia Chamber of Commerce Kalum de Silva organised a Business Round Table on 8 November 2023. Members from the Australia-Sri Lanka Business Council also attended the Round Table.

Kalum De Silva highlighted the ongoing activities and programmes that are in place between Sri Lanka and Australia. He also spoke of the visit to Sri Lanka by a business delegation organized in partnership with the Victoria State Government, the Aboriginal Economic Development Group (AEDG) and other stakeholders.

Meetings were held in Sri Lanka with Export Development Board, National Chamber of Commerce, SLASSCom and other stakeholders as well as visits to places of interest.

In addressing the participants at the Round Table, the High Commissioner outlined the areas of cooperation and potential that could be looked into by those interested in business and the investment sectors. Some of those present at the Round Table raised issues that need to be addressed in promoting trade and investment links and made suggestions on areas that could be pursued.

The High Commissioner invited the members of the chambers and other interested parties to be in touch with the High Commission as well as the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Melbourne so that any assistance sought and networking opportunities could be arranged.



Cultural Show 2023 organized by Sri Lankan Community in Wagga Wagga, Australia



The High Commissioner was invited to attend a "Culture and Rhythm Rejoice 2023" organized by Sri Lankan community in Wagga Wagga to mark the 10th Anniversary of WASCA on 9th December.

Commander of the Navy attends Indo-Pacific International Maritime Exposition and Sea Power Conference - 2023 in Sydney



In a significant display of maritime collaboration and strategic engagement, the Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition and the Indo Pacific Sea Powers Conference 2023, hosted by the Royal Australian Navy, were successfully held from 06th to 09th November 2023 in Sydney, Australia. Amidst a gathering of naval leaders, defence experts, and maritime industry professionals across the globe, the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, Vice Admiral Priyantha Perera also attended this year's naval defence exposition and conference. He was accompanied by the Minister Counsellor (Defence) for Australia, Commodore Sanjeeva Kathriarachchi throughout the event.

The Indo-Pacific International Maritime Exposition was held over three (03) days at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. In parallel with exposition, the Indo Pacific Sea Power Conference 2023, hosted by the Royal Australian Navy, was also held under the theme 'Fleet 2035: Sea Power and the Future of Maritime Warfare'. The conference saw the involvement of defence specialists from over 46 countries globally. Notably, senior naval officers, including 19 Navy Chiefs, represented the navies of 25 countries in the event.

As part of the Sea Power Conference, the Royal Australian Navy arranged the 'Bay of Bengal Round Table' to engage in discussions, the maritime security landscape in the Bay of Bengal. The session focused on exploring the security measures implemented by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives in the region. The Sri Lanka High Commissioner and Minister Counsellor (Defence) also participated at the 'Bay of Bengal Round Table'.

On the sidelines of the events, the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy also met with the Chief of the Naval Staff Pakistan, Commander Royal Canadian Navy, Chief of Naval Staff, Bangladesh, Commander, US Pacific Fleet, Commander, Seventh Fleet, United States and Commander Maritime Border Command, Royal Australian Navy.

The cordial discussions centred on matters of bilateral importance and long-standing relations between the Sri Lanka Navy and respective partners.

Public Holidays for the Sri Lanka High Commission for the year 2024

The High Commission will be closed on the following Public holidays as per the guidelines of the Government of Sri Lanka and Australia for the year 2024.

2024 Public Holidays

i	26 th January 2024 (Friday)	Australia Day	AUS
ii	04 th February 2024 (Sunday)	Independence Day	SL
iii	11 th March 2024 (Monday)	Canberra Day	AUS
iv	29 th March 2024 (Friday)	Good Friday	AUS
v	1 st April 2024 (Monday)	Easter Monday	AUS
vi	11 th April 2024 (Thursday)	Ramazan day	SL
vii	12 th April 2024 (Friday)	Sinhala & Tamil New Year Day (in Lieu)	SL
viii	13 th April 2024 (Saturday)	Sinhala & Tamil New Year Day	SL
ix	23 rd May 2024 (Thursday)	Vesak Full Moon Poya Day	SL
x	10 th June 2024 (Monday)	Sovereign's Birthday	AUS
xi	07 th October 2024 (Monday)	Labour Day	AUS
xii	31 st October 2024 (Thursday)	Deepavali Festival Day	SL
xiii	25 th December 2024 (Wednesday)	Christmas Day	SL/AUS

SL's Pekoe Trail wins big at British Guild of Travel Writers International Tourism Awards



Tourism Minister Harin Fernando with the award at ITA on Sunday

Sri Lanka's Pekoe Trail won the 'Best Wider World Tourism Project' at the British Guild of Travel Writers International Tourism Awards (ITA)

The nominations included five countries, with Sri Lanka's Pekoe Trail taking the first place. The Pekoe Trail was nominated by the British Guild of Travel Writers members Petra Shepherd and Jessica Vincent.

Spanning 300 kilometres, the Pekoe Trail guides hikers on a 22-stage odyssey through the breathtaking Central Highlands of Sri Lanka. Beginning in Kandy and ending in Nuwara Eliya, the trail winds through the stunning landscapes of Haputale, Hatton and Ella, offering a unique trekking adventure that stands unparalleled in the region.

for more information use link below

<https://www.ft.lk/business/SL-s-Pekoe-Trail-wins-big-at-British-Guild-of-Travel-Writers-International-Tourism-Awards/34->

"Visit Sri Lanka!" Tourism Promotion networking event in Canberra



The High Commission of Sri Lanka in Canberra in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau hosted a vibrant evening reception to a selected number of outbound tour operators in Canberra on 06 December 2023 at the Sri Lanka High Commission premises. The key objective of this event was to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and present Sri Lanka as an attractive and secure tourism market for Australian visitors.

Welcoming the guests, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Australia Chitranganee Wagsiswara stated that tourism is a key

industry in Sri Lanka due to its varied attractions, unique adventures that could be experienced including the Sri Lankan cuisine favoured by Australians. She invited the attendees to look at new destinations and promote Sri Lanka during the upcoming holiday season.

Eye-catching videos depicting the beauty of Sri Lanka were screened including "Pekoe Trail" which, at the British Guild of Travel Writers International Tourism Awards presentation won the best award for the year 2023. The event was followed by a Q & A session and the tour operators showed a keen interest in promoting Sri Lanka among Australian travelers.



for more information use link below

<https://www.slhcaust.org/visit-sri-lanka-tourism-promotion-networking-event-in-canberra/>

SAAG SEA RIDE 2023



Service Attaché and Advisers Group (SAAG) members recently undertook a sea ride aboard HMAS Adelaide. The International Policy Division together with Navy International Engagement jointly organized the 2023 SAAG Sea Ride aboard HMAS Adelaide, the Canberra-class landing helicopter dock (LHD).

It mainly consisted of two legs; the first program was movements to and from Russell Offices and lunch at HMAS Creswell. The second program was for aboard the ship. Nearly 35 SAAG officers, including three non residential Das, participated on this Short Sea Ride on HMAS Adelaide where they were taken from shore to ship by a LCU and then taken on a Sea Sortie overnight off Sydney. The ship's staff interacted with them and it had been a very useful and a very insightful endeavour where they were taken on a tour to the Maritime Museum ashore as well. The ship being an LHD is the largest vessel they RAN operates as of now. The program was aimed at promoting engagement between the ADF and the SAAG, to build enduring relationships & enhance understanding of ADF capabilities.

Diwali Celebration at the High Commission of Sri Lanka, Canberra



Sri Lanka High Commission together with Sri Lankan Hindu devotees and representatives of Sri Lankan Associations in Canberra celebrated Diwali, the Festival of Lights at the Sri Lanka High Commission premises on 24th November 2023.

The High Commission was decorated with Kolam and other festive decorations. Swamy Arjun conducted the auspicious religious rituals connected with the Diwali festival and invoked blessings on the participants.



The guests were welcomed by the High Commissioner and highlighting the value of celebrating Diwali. She stated that, as Sri Lankans the celebration demonstrates the multicultural, multi religious, multilingual nature of Sri Lankan society. , The President of Sri Lanka Senior's Tamil Association in Canberra Maniwanan in his speech emphasized the significance of the Diwali festival and its relevance to the people's way of life.

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