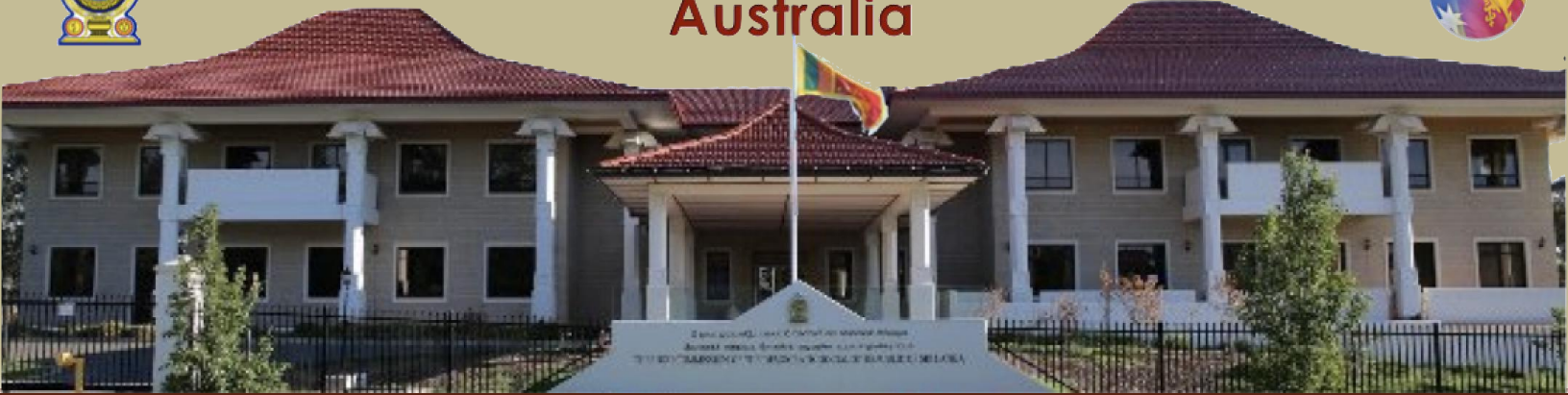




High Commission of Sri Lanka in Canberra Australia



Newsletter

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Sri Lanka Festival 2024 held in Canberra



The Sri Lanka Festival 2024 was celebrated on a grand scale at the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra on Saturday, 02 March 2024. This Festival had been held in the past from 2016-2019 annually, and after a lapse of 5 years it was timely to hold the festival this year.

The prime objective of this festival was to introduce Sri Lanka as an attractive destination for tourism, trade and investment. Australia is ranked as one of the top 10 tourism markets for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan community leaders and associations joined the Sub-Committee of the High Commission and voluntarily contributed in organizing the event.



The Sri Lanka High Commission stall featured Sri Lanka tea and flavored iced tea which was very popular with the visitors due to the warm weather. The promotion of tourism received a greater focus with tourism clips been shown throughout the day and attractive tourism brochures were distributed to all those who visited the stall.

The Sri Lankan Airlines partnered with the High Commission by providing a return air ticket as the first prize in the raffle draw, while Hilton Hotel, Colombo, Mountain Heaven, Ella and Sri Lankan Restaurant in Canberra Banana Leaf offered vouchers. In addition, the High Commission arranged five consolation prizes.



Right throughout the day, prominent dance troupes and musical groups performed colorful and graceful dances depicting the multicultural diversity of Sri Lanka which included low country/upcountry dances and Bharatha Natyam.

This event attracted over 3,000 visitors including Australians, Sri Lankans living in Australia, diplomatic community, the business sector and the media.



Sri Lankan tourism showcased at Australian roadshows



As a part of the worldwide promotional campaign, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau arranged three road shows in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The inaugural event took place in Brisbane on 19 March in the presence of High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Australia Chitrangane Wagiswara, Sri Lanka's Consul General in Melbourne Sandith Samarasinghe, and Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) Chairperson Chalaka Gajabahu, accompanied by officials from SLTPB, Sri Lanka Consulate, and proved to be a resounding success.

Thirty-two Sri Lankan companies participated alongside sixty Australian travel and tour operators and Australian media personnel.

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, indicating a fruitful exchange of ideas and opportunities. These roadshows serve as vital platforms to develop partnerships and enhancing collaborations between Sri Lankan businesses and their Australian counterparts. Moreover, they play a pivotal role in revitalizing the tourism sector in Sri Lanka by stimulating interest and engagement with Australian markets. The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau initiative and organization of these events underscores its commitment to promoting tourism and facilitating meaningful connections within the industry.

On 21 March, Sri Lanka Tourism successfully concluded its second roadshow at the Shangri La Hotel in Sydney. The event garnered participation from over 75 Australian travel trade companies, 25 media representatives and other prominent businessmen facilitating, fruitful business discussions between Australian and Sri Lankan participants.

The third roadshow in Melbourne was held on 25 March 2024 with the participation of the Minister of Tourism, Harin Fernando.

The opening remarks at the second roadshow were delivered by the High Commissioner and SLTPB Chairperson Gajabahu who provided the keynote address on the new global positioning of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Consul General in Melbourne Sandith Samarasinghe also addressed the attendees. SriLankan Airline Manager for Sydney Sakura Wijethunga represented the National carrier in Sri Lanka.

Canberra Fellowships Program; Economic Governance



Six Sri Lankan delegates comprising senior officials of the Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, the President's office and economists from Advocata Institute visited Australia under the

Auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Canberra Fellowship Program.

The Canberra Fellowship Program is personally tailored to build an understanding of Australia and to make the delegates' time in Australia informative interesting and at the same time promote interaction between Australia and Sri Lanka at a high official level. The delegates visited key Australian cultural landmarks in New South Wales including the Australian Parliament and dined at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The nine-day visit will also include meetings with senior DFAT officials, key Australian departments and agencies, relevant businesses, and policy think tanks in Canberra and Melbourne.

The delegates' visit to the three cities were from 27th April to 5th May 2024. They visited to the High Commission for a briefing on 30 April 2024.

Visa to Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka has shifted from its Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) visa programme to the new eVisa scheme with effect from 17th of April 2024.

The official Sri Lanka eVisa

website, www.srilankaevisa.lk is the only authorized website of the Department of Immigration and Emigration which is operated exclusively by IVS-GBS and VFS Global.

Annual Australian War College International Day - 27 April 2024



Annual Australian War College International Day was held on Saturday 27 April 2024 at the Australian Defence College (ADC) Weston Campus. The aim of the event is for Australian War College overseas course member's and international staff to introduce and celebrate the culture and cuisine of their respective nations with students, staff, esteemed guests with a variety of cultural activities on display.

Brigadier Thusitha Bandara from Sri Lanka Army who is following a Defence and Strategic Studies Course at ADC arranged a Sri Lankan stand which showcased the splendour of Sri Lanka which elevated the Sri Lanka's image and promoted its vibrant cultural heritage.

This significant event served as a dynamic platform for the participants of the international course to celebrate and share the rich tapestry of their respective nation's culture, traditions and heritage.

Sri Lanka High Commissioner also participated in the event along with other dignitaries from various countries.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs relocates its Consular Division to new Premises at "Suhurupaya", Battaramulla

The Consular Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be relocated to the new premises at the 16th floor of "Suhurupaya", Sri Subhuthipura Road, Battaramulla with effect from 02nd May 2024. All consular services will be provided to the public at the new office premises during regular office hours from Monday to Friday 8.30a.m. to 4.15p.m.

News Item Sri Lanka New Year Celebrated in Papua New Guinea



Sinhala and Tamil New Year was celebrated in Port Moresby the capital city of Papua New Guinea with the participation of Sri Lankans living in Papua New Guinea.

The chief guest of the occasion was Mr. Rajeev, CEO, National Superannuation Fund. In his speech, he highlighted that New Year Celebrations in India and Sri Lanka has similarities because these two countries have similar cultural background. He emphasized the importance of identity of people live overseas. When we live overseas, we cannot forget our culture, language and religion. We pass these values to our children. One cannot forget his or her roots and said that it is everyone's responsibility to promote their culture.

Mr. Panditha Bandara, Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka in Papua New Guinea and President of Sri Lanka Papua New Guinea Friendship Foundation in his welcome speech outlined the significance of Sri Lanka New Year. He said Sri Lankans in PNG celebrate their new year every year.

This celebration commenced with the lighting of the tradition oil lamp by the Chief Guest and other dignitaries and singing the national anthem of both countries. There were performances by children, traditional games for both children and adults.

The most significant event was the traditional breakfast table consisting of Sri Lanka traditional food specially prepared for the New Year celebration.

Sri Lanka to establish a Resident Mission in Wellington, New Zealand

Following the decision by the Cabinet of Ministers to open a Sri Lanka High Commission in Wellington, New Zealand, an official delegation led by Director General, Overseas Assets Management & Development Division of the Ministry Pradeepa Saram visited New Zealand from 22-25 April 2024 to attend to matters related to the opening of the High Commission.

During the visit, the delegation engaged in meetings with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, and other related agencies and stakeholders.

New Zealand has a significant Sri Lankan expatriate community comprising mostly professionals and students. The opening of a resident Mission will facilitate outreach to the community and pursuit of stronger collaboration in the fields of trade, education, sports, science & technology, tourism and health.

New Zealand opened a resident Mission in Sri Lanka in 2021, which is an important milestone in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Changes in the High Commission Staff

Cdre. Sanjeewa Kathriarachchi, Minister Counsellor (Defence) completed his two year tenure in this High Commission on 09.04.2024 and returned to Sri Lanka.

Capt. Lanka Dissanayake assumed duties as the Counsellor (Defence) w.e.f. 02.04.2024.

Ms. Padmalatha Vithana (IT Officer) who also handled Registration of Birth and Citizenship completed her tour of duties and returned to Sri Lanka.

Ms. Sumudu Yatiwella, Attaché has been assigned to handle registration of Birth and Citizenship until a new IT officer assumes duties.