

News

Sri Lanka



Embassy of Sri Lanka
Washington D.C

January 2017

The Embassy of Sri Lanka wishes you a Happy New Year!

PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

The year 2017 dawns with new hopes of prosperity, coexistence and reconciliation in our hearts. The twenty two million people of Sri Lanka look forward to an era of sustainability with a determination to alleviate poverty in all its forms.

It is imperative that we overcome the challenges ahead of us. The progress of the human race was pioneered by people who faced challenges with confidence, utmost courage and determination amidst obstacles. Our goals could be achieved if we manage our work efficiently and productively, and do the right thing at the right time with unwavering commitment to serve the greater good.

The adverse effects of climate change show us the imperative need to be prepared for weather uncertainties. We have to be determined this year to live with nature and not above or against it. *More*

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND RECONCILIATION WEEK MARKED IN WASHINGTON

Based on a concept of President Maithripala Sirisena, for the first time, the week of January 8 -14 was declared the National Integration and Reconciliation Week by the Government of Sri Lanka. To mark this initiative in Washington D.C., the staff of the Embassy of Sri Lanka commenced the workday on Monday, taking a pledge to work towards national integration and reconciliation.

After hoisting the National Flag and singing the National Anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil, the following Pledge for National Integration and Reconciliation was made by all Embassy employees: *"While respecting the richness of our diversity of different ethnicities, religions, regions and languages, With the firm objective of making National Integration a reality in Sri Lanka,*

We are members of one and the same human race. We will strive resolutely with determination to foster peace among all citizens and communities in Sri Lanka with understanding, mutual trust, and a boundless sense of unity and compassion amongst all of us. More

PRIME MINISTER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

The New Year dawns as the Government of Good Governance marks two years in office. During these two years, we have achieved many milestones. Yet undoubtedly, much needs to be done in our pursuit to be a fully fledged democracy that is also economically sound and socially empowered.

The abolition of the 18th Amendment which cast a shadow of dictatorship and suppressed democracy, has been one of our greatest achievements during these two years. We have also been able to transform the perceptions the international community held with regard to Sri Lanka, enabling the country to build strategic relationships with other countries.

Dealing effectively with crimes against humanity, halting the wastage of public funds, minimizing corruption, establishing relevant commissions, finalizing the Right to Information Act, ensuring freedom for all, easing the cost of living as loans overburden the economy, creating political stability while laying the foundation for economic development are among the achievements of the Government during these two years. *More*

UNITED STATES SELECTS SRI LANKA FOR MCC COMPACT

Sri Lanka was selected as eligible for a Compact Programme under the U.S. Millennium Challenge Cooperation (MCC) at the meeting of the MCC Board of Directors held in Washington DC on 13 December.

Compact Programmes are large, five-year grants for countries that meet MCC's eligibility criteria of good governance, economic freedom and investment in its citizens. The selections are based on performance indicators of these criteria compiled by the MCC in an annual scorecard for countries under consideration.

Following the selection, the Board's decision was conveyed over the telephone to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, by a senior official of the MCC.

Created by the U.S. Congress in 2004 with bipartisan support, the MCC is a unique U.S. agency that operates on the principle of delivering assistance on the basis of a long-term consultative partnership with recipient countries. *More*

ADVANCING OPEN GOVERNMENT VALUES, CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI LANKA - FOREIGN MINISTER



The Open Government Partnership Global Summit convened in Paris from 7th to 9th December 2016, with the participation of over 80 governments and hundreds of civil society organizations from around the world. Mangala Samaraweera, the Minister of Foreign Affairs representing Sri Lanka at the Summit and in the subsequent Ministerial round-tables highlighted the importance of building trust in Government – through advancing OGP values. Minister Samaraweera commented on many of the far-reaching state reforms undertaken by Sri Lanka and the consultative processes underway on key policy initiatives of the government thereby capturing the diversity of various viewpoints and interests to uphold the vision of transparent, inclusive and participatory governance.

Sri Lanka became a signatory to the Paris Declaration for Open Government Partnership “Collective Action For Renewal Of Our Democracies” launched at the end of the Summit in signing up to country specific commitments and pledged to take concrete measures to move forward the process. Sri Lanka is also a signatory to the London Declaration of the London Anti-Corruption Summit and has taken a range of domestic measures to strengthen legal and institutional measures to combat corruption. Sri Lanka became a member of the “Open Government Partnership” in 2015. [More](#)

PRESIDENT OBAMA APPOINTS SRI LANKAN AMERICAN TO THE NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD



On January 6th 2017, President Barack Obama appointed Sri Lankan-American Dr. Tissa Illangasekare to the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, an independent agency of the U.S. Federal Government. Its sole purpose is to perform independent scientific and technical peer review of the Department of Energy’s program for managing and disposing of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel and provide findings and recommendations to Congress, the Secretary of Energy and the interested public.

Dr. Illangasekare is currently a Distinguished Endowed Chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Director of the Center for the Experimental Study of Subsurface Environmental Processes at the Colorado School of Mines. Dr. Illangasekare received a B.S. from the University of Ceylon in Sri Lanka, an M.Eng. from the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, and a Ph.D. from Colorado State University. [More](#)

ADVANCED U.S. MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT VISITS SRI LANKA

The “Red Lancers” of Patrol Squadron TEN (VP-10) departed Sri Lanka on Sunday, December 11, aboard a P-8A Poseidon aircraft from Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota. The Poseidon arrived in Colombo on December 4,



where its sailors met with Sri Lanka military personnel to demonstrate the capabilities of the P-8A and exchanged expert advice. The exercise worked with Sri Lanka Air Force and Navy in safe-guarding the international shipping lanes that are vital to global commerce.

“This bilateral partnership with Sri Lanka security forces reinforces the global maritime rules that produces greater prosperity for all of us,” said U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Robert Hilton.

The Red Lancers are stationed in Jacksonville, Fla. and

were on a routine deployment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific to ensure safety and security of vital sea lanes and trade routes, including integrating air and sea patrol operations. The P-8A is a multi-mission aircraft that provides long-range maritime patrol capabilities,

making it the most advanced ocean surveillance aircraft in the world.

We are pleased about the opportunity to partner with our friends in the Sri Lankan government and armed forces,” said Lt. Anthony Beres, the detachment officer in charge. “The P-8A Poseidon brings advanced capabilities to maritime safety patrols, search and rescue, counter-narcotics, and humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, and we appreciated engaging with the Sri Lankan Navy during this visit.” [More](#)

SRI LANKA ON BLOOMBERG'S WHERE TO GO IN 2017 LIST



Bloomberg has listed Sri Lanka among the top 20 travel destinations of 2017:

Leopards are some of the toughest cats to spot on an African safari; in Sri Lanka's Yala National Park, their abundance practically guarantees daily encounters. And that's only one reason to go. Add to the list ruins that rival Angkor Wat and opportunities to see humpback and blue whales off the country's southern coast, and you'll wonder why so few tourists have caught on. [More](#)

BRAVO: 5 REASONS WHY SRI LANKA MIGHT BE YOUR DREAM SAFARI DESTINATION



Get out that travel bucket list and take some notes, pupils.

Did you know that Sri Lanka is only the size of West Virginia, but it has one of the world's highest concentrations of endemic species? It ranks in the top five of biodiversity hotspots for the entire globe.

African countries like Botswana and Tanzania have long been popular travel destinations for wildlife thrill seekers — so you may have already considered planning a once-in-a-lifetime-safari there. But here's something else to consider: While those countries are still excellent options, you should also throw Sri Lanka into the wanderlusting mix if animals are tops on the agenda.

The island nation offers such a concentration in such a small space, your chances of spotting one of the elusive leopards or lightly speckled Asian elephants is incredibly high. Want to snorkel with turtles? That's an option, but so is snorkeling with blue whales. The decision sounds like a pretty good problem to have when you're planning your day.

Here's a primer on the wildlife awaiting you in Sri Lanka... and a little nudge to get you excited about a new and possibly overlooked option for that epic safari you've been mulling. [More](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST: WITH CIVIL WAR AND A TSUNAMI BEHIND IT, SRI LANKA'S EAST COAST IS OPENING UP TO TOURISM

By Henry Wismayer



Beside the temple on Swami Rock, amid the heady swirl of colorful deities and burning camphor, one object caught my eye. It seemed that a special reverence had been reserved for a statue of a holy cow. Centuries ago, a placard beside it explained, this Chola-era figurine had been buried by concerned priests as the Portuguese colonists sailed into harbor. There it had remained interred, through centuries of colonial occupation and decades of civil war. But in 2013 it was rediscovered and dusted off — returned to its Hindu shrine after almost 400 years. And as I watched the pilgrims queuing to leave offerings at its base, it seemed a fitting symbol for this part of Sri Lanka, where an air of resurrection is precisely what brought me here.

Sri Lanka's east coast, running from Trincomalee in the north to the grasslands of Yala in the south, has good reason to feel optimistic about the future. Twelve years ago, when my partner Lucy visited the region on a teaching exchange, her minibus had to pass through dozens of army checkpoints to get anywhere near this region. The Tamil insurgency, which blighted Sri Lanka for nearly 30 years, made travel hazardous. A few months later, the east was devastated along with much of the south coast by the Boxing Day tsunami. The natural disaster claimed 40,000 lives on the island alone.



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