

News

Sri Lanka



Embassy of Sri Lanka
Washington D.C

April 2017



We wish you a Prosperous and Peaceful Sinhala and Tamil New Year

U.S. CONGRESS MEMBERS SIGNAL GREATER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR SRI LANKA



In the month of February, two congressional delegations of the U.S. House of Representatives visited Sri Lanka. The first was a bipartisan four-member delegation of the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) Committee led by Chairman Peter Roskam and Ranking Member David Price. An eight-member bipartisan delegation led by the House Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Goodlatte immediately followed.

Following up on the manifest greater engagement by the members of the U.S. Congress with Sri Lanka, Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam met with several leading members of the U.S. Congress recently.

The Ambassador had fruitful discussions with the leadership of the House Foreign Affairs Committee

Chairman Ed Royce and Chairman Ted Yoho of the House Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee. He met with Congressman David Price, the Ranking Member of the House Democracy Partnership, in follow up to his visit to Sri Lanka for promoting a deeper partnership with the HDP. The Ambassador also called on Senator Chris Van Hollen, the newly appointed Senator for Maryland.

The Ambassador briefed the members of Congress on the progress made by the Unity Government in advancing good governance, the rule of law, political and economic reforms and reconciliation. Discussions centered on working towards expanding the partnership between the two countries in multiple spheres of cooperation. *More: www.slembassyusa.org*

REMARKS BY DR. HARSHA DE SILVA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. President, High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the High Commissioner for the presentation of his Report in which many of the achievements made by Sri Lanka during the period concerned have been acknowledged.

As this Council is aware, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Hon. Mangala Samaraweera addressed this Council on the 28th of February on behalf of the Government, and outlined what we have achieved in terms of Resolution 30/1 and beyond, what still remains to be done, and the challenges that we face in the process.

Most importantly, he stressed that Sri Lanka's



resolve to the reconciliation process has not diminished. He said – with the help of all our citizens in all walks of life, our friends and partners in the international community, and Sri Lankans overseas, with patience, understanding, and constant and consistent effort and perseverance, we strongly believe that we can make the reconciliation process a success, and establish a progressive and united society, working in harmony to take our nation towards new heights of socio-economic development.

I take this opportunity today, to reiterate our resolve and reaffirm our commitment to the reconciliation process and commitments articulated in Resolution 30/1. *More: www.slembassyusa.org*

SRI LANKA APPOINTS FIRST HONORARY CONSUL IN PENNSYLVANIA



On March 15th 2017, Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam handed over the Commission of Appointment to David Bruce Sherman as Sri Lanka's Honorary Consul in the state of Pennsylvania. He is the first Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in that state.

The Ambassador observed that at a time when Sri Lanka is expanding its bilateral partnership with the United States, the long years of experience, professional calibre and commitment of the newly appointed Honorary Consul will serve to strengthen Sri Lanka's representation in the United States. Honorary Consul Sherman expressed his desire to foster business and cultural contacts with Sri Lanka and to promote greater awareness of the many splendours of Sri Lanka in his state.

A well-respected lawyer and an owner and founding member of the law firm Solomon, Sherman and Gabay, David Bruce Sherman has been selected consecutively as one of the top 100 Super Lawyers in Pennsylvania. During his illustrious career, he has developed a vast network of relationships with the legal, business and medical communities of the greater Philadelphia area.

Honorary Consul David Sherman is expected to play an important role in enhancing commercial, cultural and people to people ties between Pennsylvania and Sri Lanka, and in promoting Sri Lanka as an attractive travel destination to fellow Pennsylvanians.

More: www.embassyusa.org

USS COMSTOCK PARTICIPATES IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TRAINING IN SRI LANKA



USS Comstock (LSD 45) departed Sri Lanka on April 1st 2017 following a week of exchanges with the Sri Lankan Navy

and Marine Corps. These exercises focused on improving humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts and coordination, the third such military-to-military exchange between U.S. Sailors and Marines and their Sri Lankan counterparts in the past 12 months.

"We hope to build upon past successes and do what we can to exchange best naval practices for regional security and humanitarian assistance, and to ensure a bright future for further bilateral engagements like this," said Commander Bradley Coletti, commanding officer of the USS Comstock.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap noted, "Our growing military-to-military cooperation reflects the progress Sri Lanka has made on reconciliation and justice. As Sri Lanka continues to make progress in implementing its commitments to its people and the international community, this will form the basis of further cooperation between our militaries."

Approximately 325 U.S. Sailors and Marines joined 175 participants from the Sri Lankan Navy and Marine Corps as part of this exchange. U.S. Marines embarked aboard the USS Comstock helped introduce the latest tactics and equipment for the Sri Lanka Marine

Corps, including life-saving skills; convoy operations; humanitarian assistance and disaster

relief training; and amphibious vehicle familiarization.

More: lk.usembassy.gov

OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR RECRUITMENT TO GRADE III OF THE SRI LANKA FOREIGN SERVICE – 2016 (2017)

Applications have been called to fill 25 vacancies in Grade III of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service. *Read the notification [here](#).*

GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA SECURES THE RELEASE OF SRI LANKAN CREW AND 'ARIS 13' VESSEL HIJACKED BY PIRATES

The Ministry is pleased to announce that the vessel 'Aris 13' that was hijacked by pirates was released 16-17 March, along with the eight Sri Lankan crew. The crew members were released unharmed, without the payment of a ransom.

The Ministry wishes to express its deep appreciation on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, to the President of Puntland, the semi-autonomous region of Somalia, and his Chief of Staff Abdinasir Sofe, who cooperated and collaborated with the relevant officials of the Government of Sri Lanka in securing the release of the vessel and crew. This task would not have

been made possible without their unstinted and active effort.

The Government of Sri Lanka also expresses its gratitude to the Government of the United States of America, the Ambassador of the United States of America in Sri Lanka, the Combined Naval Force in Bahrain, the EU, and all other Governments, Organisations and individuals who extended their assistance in this effort, as well as all local Ministries, Departments, and individuals.

More: www.mfa.gov.lk

SANDYA EKNELIGODA AWARDED 2017 SECRETARY OF STATE'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD

Sandya Ekneligoda was one of 13 women who received the 2017 International Women of Courage Award on March 29 at a ceremony hosted by the Department of State. The annual award which was presented by the First Lady Melania Trump and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas



Shannon, recognizes women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality, and women's empowerment, often at great personal risk. Since the inception of this award in 2007, the Department of State has honored over 100 women from more than 60 different countries.

The State Department website states the following about Sandya Ekneligoda: *Sandya Ekneligoda is a symbol of the search for justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Following the disappearance of her husband, journalist Prageeth Eknelygoda in 2010, Sandya made it her mission to fight for the families of the missing. As a result, her husband's case has become a barometer of the Sri Lankan government's ability to restore the rule of law and accountability to the United Nations Human Rights Council*

resolution it co-sponsored in October 2015. Sandya's pursuit of justice is now in its seventh year. In that time, she has made over 90 court appearances, seeking information and resolutions regarding her husband's fate. Sandya has readily lent her voice to families of disappeared victims from Sri Lanka's civil conflict, primarily in

the Northern and Eastern provinces. Sandya has regularly traveled to these areas at considerable personal expense to meet with families of the missing and offer them advice and encouragement. Although Sandya comes from the majority Sinhalese community of southern Sri Lanka, she has been embraced by the Tamil people of the north as a symbol of the nation-wide search for justice and reconciliation. Sandya's campaign is based upon her belief that "pursuing the truth is not a crime, protecting the perpetrators is." She stands for all Sri Lankans who seek the truth regarding those that have disappeared.

Sandya is the second Sri Lankan to receive this award since its inception in 2007. In 2010, Jansila Majeed of Puttalam received the award for her advocacy on behalf of internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka.

More: www.state.gov

KUSUMA COORAY HONORED FOR WORK IN U.S.-SRI LANKA RELATIONS

Kap'iolani Community College Professor Emerita Kusuma Cooray was honored by the U.S. Pacific Command for her work as Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka from 2001 to 2017.

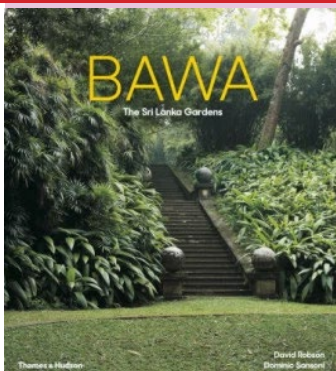
Admiral Harry Harris, Commander of the United States Pacific Command, presented Cooray the Distinguished Public Service Award on March 24 at the U.S. Pacific Command Headquarters, Camp H.M. Smith, in acknowledgement of her "distinctive accomplishments and services" as Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka for 16 years.



The citation reads in part: *Honorary Consul Cooray diligently worked to strengthen solidarity between the United States military leadership stationed in Hawai'i and all levels of the Sri Lankan government. During her tenure, she played a pivotal role in improving bilateral and multilateral cooperation in support of*

the United States Pacific Command's mission with the clear purpose of enhancing the United States-Sri Lanka partnership. More: www.hawaii.edu

SRI TO SHINING SRI: SOUTH ASIA'S RISING STYLE SUPERSTAR



Courtesy: James & Hudson

Sri Lanka conjures images of heavenly sunsets, fisherman gracefully balancing on stilts and feel-good moments of Buddhist Zen. Yet for many, the devastation of the 25-year civil war and the 2004 tsunami kept the Indian Ocean island off itineraries.

Now, new resorts and tourists are bringing the island (formerly Ceylon) back

into focus.

"People often think of Sri Lanka as "India light" and they come for the beach and hot weather," says James Jayasundera, a Sri Lankan by birth and the founder of UK-based Ampersand Travel. "But Sri Lanka also has a strong modern design and architectural history that's often overlooked."

In particular, design enthusiasts will revel in the legacy of Sri Lanka's foremost architect, Geoffrey Bawa (1919-2003), who over his nearly 50-year career imprinted his own unique interpretation of Tropical Modernism onto the island. *More: www.nypost.com*