

News

# Sri Lanka



Embassy of Sri Lanka  
Washington D.C

May 2017

***Wishing all our Readers a Happy and Peaceful Vesak !***

## PRESIDENT'S VESAK DAY MESSAGE



The year 2561 B.C. dawns, marking the commencement of the golden era in the Buddhist history of Sri Lanka. I believe it is an incomparable prestige that our motherland, as a place where the Buddha visited on three occasions, receives the opportunity to host the United Nations Day of Vesak. This is the foremost gift bestowed on us since Sri Lanka was blessed with the greatest gift, the teachings of the Buddha.

Offering the pivotal role for us in the 14<sup>th</sup> UN Day of Vesak certainly demonstrates the recent victories we have achieved in the international arena. All the citizens of Sri Lanka, who contributed to this accomplishment, will be added to history as devotees, who benefitted from this meritorious deed. This year's theme is 'Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable

Peace.' The key condition for social justice is equality. Buddhist teachings also give prominence to this universal concept of equality. Equality, which is demanded by the contemporary world, was discussed during the period of the Buddha 2561 years ago. The Buddha said, peace which is the key factor for the existence of human beings can only be built in a healthy society where equality has been established.

Our historical chronicle which starts with the Nibbana of the Buddha will enter a new path with Sri Lanka hosting the UN Day of Vesak this year. With that pride let us determine to commit to rise in the global society by overcoming petty boundaries.

I wish the Buddhist population in the entire world a joyful and peaceful Vesak!

*More: [www.president.gov.lk](http://www.president.gov.lk)*

**CELEBRATIONS ON THIS DAY  
SYMBOLIZE PEACE, COMPASSION, &  
GOODWILL, UNIVERSAL VALUES WE  
ALL SHARE. - SECRETARY TILLERSON  
ON VESAK**

On behalf of the people of the United States of America, I offer our best wishes to all those celebrating Vesak Day.



As Buddhist communities around the world gather, we wish you a joyous remembrance of the birth, enlightenment, and passing of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. Celebrations on this day symbolize peace, compassion, and goodwill, universal values we all share.

Vesak is celebrated by diverse Buddhist communities worldwide including here in the United States. In honor of Vesak Day, we recognize the enduring contributions to thought, culture, and belief that Buddhism has made for over 2,500 years.

May you all enjoy a peaceful and joyful Vesak.

*More: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)*

**SRI LANKA HOSTS UN DAY  
OF VESAK CONFERENCE &  
CELEBRATIONS**



Marking the birth, the attainment of enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha, Sri Lanka is hosting the UN Day of Vesak Conference, from May 12th to 14th in Colombo and Kandy. Around 1600 participants are expected to attend the event, with about 750 international participants from 85 countries, according to the Conference Secretariat.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will ceremonially open the conference in Colombo and Nepali President Bidhya Devi Bandari will be the Chief Guest at the closing ceremony to be held in Kandy. President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and senior Cabinet ministers will also grace these events. *Continued on page 3*

## FINANCE MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED SRI LANKA – U.S. BILATERAL TRADE



Minister of Finance Ravi Karunanayake speaking at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce highlighted prospects for increasing bilateral trade and U.S. investment in Sri Lanka at a breakfast roundtable meeting hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce. Minister Karunanayake was in Washington leading the Sri Lanka delegation to the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings.

Alluding to many investment opportunities in areas such as infrastructure development, agro processing, health care, export oriented manufacturing and the tourism sector, Minister Karunanayake outlined the business-friendly policies adopted by the Government of Sri Lanka to position the country as the gateway to Asia. He discussed the benefits that US companies in Sri Lanka could avail of under the existing and potential Free Trade Agreements with countries in the region, which can provide a larger market in the region beyond Sri Lanka.

Minister Karunanayake presented an overview of the progress in macroeconomic fundamentals of the country, which are integral cornerstones of a favourable investment climate and urged U.S. companies to look at Sri Lanka not only as an investment destination but also as a country with a high quality of life with excellent amenities for rest and recreation. He pointed out that the government is putting in place mechanisms to support entrepreneurship, technology adoption, trade diversification and environmentally friendly industries and urged U.S. businesses to forge partnerships with the Sri Lankan private sector paving the way to strengthen business links over the next decade.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam reiterated that with its market-friendly economic policies, geo-strategic location and high quality physical environment, Sri Lanka has become a business-friendly, eminently livable and welcoming destination in the region.

The roundtable discussion was attended among others, by senior officials of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce South Asia Team, senior representatives from Coca Cola, Exxon Mobil, Ventech Engineering LLCs, McLarty Associates, Bower Group Asia, USIBC, CIPE, Mastercard, FedEx, Trimble Navigation Ltd.

*More: [www.slembassyusa.org](http://www.slembassyusa.org)*

## A DAY OF SRI LANKAN CULTURE AND TRADITION IN DC



Despite spring showers, the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington DC was a hive of activity on Saturday as thousands of visitors thronged to the embassy premises for a celebration of Sri Lankan culture. The Embassy opened its doors to the public as part of the annual Passport DC Around the World Embassy Tour, an event organized by Cultural Tourism D.C., which provides embassies in Washington D.C. the opportunity to offer a peak into their cultures and cuisine.

Throughout the day visitors to the Sri Lanka Embassy were treated to an array of Sri Lankan food and beverages, including Ceylon tea, while enjoying live traditional music, dances and folk games. As in past years, the 'sari corner' generated much excitement among the visitors, as they tried on the country's colourful traditional attire and posed for photographs. The visitors were also eager to have their names written in the age-old Sinhalese and Tamil scripts, as a unique souvenir of their visit. Many were also eager to learn what made Sri Lanka such a globally popular tourist destination.

Around the World Embassy Tour is Washington D.C.'s citywide international cultural awareness program that provides its residents and visitors an opportunity to explore the international culture that is a crucial part of the city's character.

*More: [www.slembassyusa.org](http://www.slembassyusa.org)*

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE HONORS GLOBAL EMERGING YOUNG LEADERS



Chamathya Fernando was one of ten youth from around the world who was awarded the Emerging Young Leaders Award by the U.S. Department of State on May 4. The annual Emerging Young Leaders Award program recognizes youth from around the world for their courage in resolving conflict, promoting security, and creating economic opportunity in challenging environments.

*More: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)*

## 12 SRI LANKAN HOMES THAT WILL INSPIRE YOUR VACATION HOUSE DECOR - ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

With its unpredictable climate and range of colonial influence—Dutch, Portuguese, British—it comes as no surprise that Sri Lanka presents a truly fascinating architectural landscape.

Hallmarks of the equatorial region, it turns out, include colonnaded verandas, wind-



ing balconies, high ceilings, and breezy folding doors, features that cater to the sticky, tropical weather and the torrential down-pour that might suddenly devolve.

*More: [www.architecturaldigest.com](http://www.architecturaldigest.com)*

## BEST NEW HOTELS IN THE WORLD: HOT LIST 2017 - CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER



Four Sri Lankan hotels are featured in the Condé Nast Best New Hotels in the World Hot List: Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, Chena Huts, KK Beach Habaraduwa and Santani Wellness Resort & Spa Kandy.

*More: [www.cntraveler.com](http://www.cntraveler.com)*

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The inauguration of the international conference will take place on Friday (12th) with the participation of the Chief Prelates of the respective Nikayas, the venerable Maha Sangha, religious dignitaries including Sangharaja Theras from Theravada countries including Sri Lanka. The theme of this year's conference is "Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace". The four main topics of the conference will be Social and Natural Justice from the Buddhist Perspective, Inter-religious Understanding for the Common Future of humankind, Buddhist Forum for Economics and Promotion of Cultural Tourism and International Buddhist Media Network.

The second half of the conference including the closing ceremony will be held on Sunday (14th) within the precincts of the historic Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. A special exposition of the Tooth Relics of the Buddha will also be held. Minister of Buddhasasana Dr. Wijayadasa Rajapakse will conclude the academic session with a presentation of the declaration of the conference titled "Mahanuwara Prakashanaya." A special

cultural pageant under the guidance of the Chief Prelates of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters and the Diyawadana Nilame will mark the closing of the conference.

While the UN Day of Vesak has only a brief history of around 18 years, the initial proposal originated far back in 1950, when Prof. Gunapala Malalasekera proposed at the Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Ceylon - as Sri Lanka was then known - that the day should be officially recognized by the UN. However, it was only in 1999 that then Minister of Foreign Affairs the Late Lakshman Kadirgamar with the support of 33 countries moved for the adoption of a resolution for the international recognition of the Day of Vesak by the UN.

Since then, annual celebrations of the UN Day of Vesak have been held annually on 13 occasions in Thailand (11) and Vietnam (2). At the annual celebrations held in Thailand last year, the keynote address was delivered by Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakse where he proposed that Sri Lanka be given the opportunity to host the International Conference and Celebrations in 2017.