

The First official visit of Ambassador Karunasena Hettiarachchi to Bremen

Ambassador Karunasena Hettiarachchi paid an official visit to Bremen from 13-15 November 2017. Following a ceremonial welcome, discussions were held with the Vice-President of the Bremen Parliament, Frank Imhoff and the Bremen Mayor, Carsten Sieling on topics related to political and economic development since the establishment of the Unity Government in Sri Lanka.

While reiterating Sri Lanka's friendly relations with Germany, Ambassador Hettiarachchi requested the Federal State of Bremen to assist Sri Lanka particularly in the fields of trade and tourism.

Ambassador was also invited to visit the plenary hall of the Bremen Parliament and exchanged views on legislative structures. At the end of the meeting the Senate expressed willingness to extend their cooperation for the upcoming projects between Sri Lanka and Bremen, especially in the fields of higher education, fisheries and maritime.



Ambassador signing the Golden Book of the Federal State of Bremen

During his visit, the Ambassador met with the representatives of the Bremen Chamber of Commerce and encouraged them to explore the growing trade and investment related opportunities in Sri Lanka.

The programme also included a visit to Lürssen shipyard, where discussions on future cooperation in the field of ship building, particularly for defence purposes took place. The visit was coordinated by Mr. Thomas Kriwat, the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Bremen.

H.E. the President Maithripala Sirisena received the World No Tobacco Day Award – 2017

Sri Lanka received the World No Tobacco Day Award for the third time. The World Health Organization (WHO) presented this award for Sri Lanka's achievements in Controlling tobacco.

Officially, the award was presented to President H.E. Maithripala Sirisena by Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South East Asia Region at a ceremony held on 23rd November 2017 at the Waters Edge Hotel, Battaramulla.

Addressing the occasion, Regional Director of WHO South East Asia Region, highlighted Sri Lanka's outstanding commitments to control alcohol and tobacco.



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New Opening Hours of the Consular Division

The Consular Division of the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Berlin is now open to public from Monday to Thursday from 09:00 hrs. to 12:30 hrs..



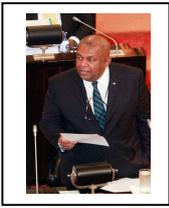
Special Notice to Sri Lankan Passport Holders Living Abroad

As per Sri Lanka Immigration & Emigration Act of No. 20 of 1948 as amended by Act No. 07 of 2015, it is mandatory to collect the Bio Metrics from all the passport applicants. Accordingly, all applicants have to provide their Bio Metrics – Finger Prints to Sri Lanka Immigration & Emigration.

In this context, it is mandatory that those applying for passports through Sri Lanka Missions Abroad on or after 1st January 2018 should provide biometrics to the Department of Immigration & Emigration upon their first entry to Sri Lanka. The applicant's departure from Sri Lanka will only be allowed if they comply with this requirement.



Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Finance and Mass Media presented the “Blue-Green Budget” for the year 2018



National Budget of Sri Lanka for the year 2018 was presented by Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Finance and Mass Media on 09th November 2017. During the presentation of the budget the Hon. Minister

pointed out that the introduction of reforms to the domestic revenue mobilization and productive engagement with international development partners resulted a growth of 41% in the GDP in 2016. In order to achieve 20% of GDP revenue over the medium-term of 2018 reforms will be introduced in the areas of Inland Revenue, Customs, Excise. Expected economic growth in GDP is around 4.5% in 2017 and 6.0% by 2020.

National Budget 2018 intends to create an encouraging environment for foreign direct investments. One Stop Shop for business registration, E-local Government application system, removal of land ownership restrictions, infrastructure facilities for proposed Industrial Zones are among the mechanisms to be implemented in 2018.

All the measurements effecting the formulation of the growth strategy are to be based on a “Blue-Green” concept encouraging sustainable agri and fishery ventures.

An appropriate incentive structure, emission and safety standards are to be introduced regarding the vehicle policy. Use of Polythene and Plastic products are to be replaced and environmental friendly alternatives to be introduced. Custom duties for recycling mechanism and materials will be omitted. measures were proposed to protect the blue ocean around the Island.

Sri Lanka targets 4.5 million tourists by 2020. Several areas of the Tourism Industry will be improved to create a better service-oriented destination for the incoming tourists.

UNHRC adopts the 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outcome on Sri Lanka

The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted the outcome of the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Sri Lanka at the 28th session of the Universal Periodic Review.



At the session the President of the Human Rights Council Joaquín Alexander Martelli proposed to the working group to adopt the recommendation section of the draft report and the UPR of Sri Lanka was adopted.

The review of Sri Lanka was held on Wednesday. The Sri Lankan delegation was headed by Hon. Deputy Minister of National Policies and Economic Affairs Dr. Harsha de Silva (M.P.). Sri Lanka accepted 177 out of the 230 recommendations made by the 3rd

UPR and noted 53. Sri Lanka has also undertaken 12 voluntary pledges.

Deputy Minister Dr. de Silva delivering the final remarks at the session said all recommendations made are constructive and useful to Sri Lanka and are meaningful.

The Deputy Minister added the 3rd cycle of the UPR gave Sri Lanka an important opportunity, right from the process of drafting the National Report, to the point of undergoing the Review in Geneva, to demonstrating the importance that Sri Lanka, especially since January 2015, attach to human rights, and the way in which the government is seeking to fulfil its commitments to the people, in a manner that empowers and benefits everyone in the country.

Sri Lankan Authorities to release 50 acres in Colombo for Investments



Targeting the expansion of foreign direct investments up to \$2.5 billions, the coalition government will release almost 50 acres of state owned land in the

Commercial hub of Colombo for direct foreign investments next year.

National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2017-2021

An Inter-Ministerial Committee, appointed by the Cabinet, consisting representatives from the government, civil society organizations, National Human Rights Commission, United Nations Agencies, INGOs and Academics recently released a National Action Plan consisting of goal oriented activities and mechanisms for the next five years to meet reforms in the post conflict Sri Lanka. This initiative ensures Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through substantial constitutional, legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of the country.



Civil and Political Rights, Prevention of Torture, Rights of Women, Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and Returning Refugees, Rights of Migrant Workers, Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Rights of Children, Labor Rights and Environmental Rights were taken into account in preparation of the Action Plan.

The aim of the action plan is to strengthen the existing legal and institutional mechanisms in order to comply with international standards and best practices with respect to the protection and promotion of civil and political rights in Sri Lanka. In addition to this, it intends to build laws, policies and guidelines that enable an integrated system strengthening the rights of the above categories and areas.

Joint venture of Deutsche Bank AG and Asian Development Bank to support the SMEs in developing Asia

Deutsche Bank AG (DB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to enter into a Supply Chain Finance Programme (SCFP) which focuses financing small and medium-sized enterprises in the developing Asia. Sri Lanka is also among the benefitting countries under this programme. The objectives of the Partnership of Deutsche Bank AG and Asian Development Bank is to support the growth of working capital of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) and to create more job opportunities in the home market.

SMEs supply their services to the head quarter Landmark Group based in United Arab Emirates. The partnership between the ADB and the DB will open up opportunities for more supply chains.

Inauguration of the Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo marks a New Era in the Tourism Industry



© Shangri-La

The biggest Asian hotel chain Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts inaugurated Shangri-La Hotel Colombo on 16th November 2017. The grand opening was graced by His Excellency the President Maithripala Sirisena, Hon. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and many other distinguished guests. The opening ceremony signaled the highly anticipated hotel launch in the country for the last 30 years.

Shangri-La Colombo, which is located facing the Galle Face Green with an uninterrupted view of the Indian Ocean, Beira Lake and the city skyline, facilitates 500 guestrooms and suites, 41 serviced apartments. With its aptitude, Shangri-La intends to appeal to large conferences and events and consequently make Sri Lanka as one of Asia's top MICE (Meetings Incentives Conventions Exhibitions) destinations.

Shangri-La Hotel Colombo is also housed for six restaurants and bars enhancing Colombo's dining scene and offering guests a multi-faceted lifestyle hotspots.

'Sri Lanka Evening' in Berlin



Sri Lanka was promoted as high profile tourist destination at the Sri Lanka evening held on 04th November 2017 in Berlin organized

by meso Reisen, a prominent travel operator in Germany. More than 200 German travelers who have shown interest in traveling to Sri Lanka in near future have participated at this event.

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Berlin supported this event and the Ambassador Karunasena Hettiarachchi delivered the keynote speech. Ambassador emphasized that Sri Lanka has an inherent advantage of having a highly diversified tourism products which could be pitched against any other well established tourism destination in the world. Also, he appreciated the travel operators in Germany for promoting Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and highlighted the vision of the National Unity Government of Sri Lanka in developing the tourist sector to provide better service.

During the event, a presentation was made by the Qatar Airways on the air connections between Sri Lanka and various cities of Germany. Photo Journalist Kay Maeritz took the visitors on a multi-vision show to impressive tourist attractions of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan foods were served to the invitees and the Students of Sri Lankan origin residing in Berlin performed cultural items bringing more colours to the evening.

Colombo International Shopping Festival



Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), under the Patronage of the Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs and in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Retailers' Association (SLRA) organized the Colombo International Shopping Festival.

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The inaugural Colombo International Shopping Festival aims to be one of the biggest shopping spectacles in South Asia, featuring an endless range of retailers from around the island, giving shoppers from across the globe a unique shopping experience in a one-of-a-kind tropical paradise. The 46 day long shopping festival took place from 1st October to 15th November 2017 at stores island-wide, with an anchor event from the 20th to 22nd of October at the Sri Lanka Exhibition and Convention Centre (SLECC). The event featured retailers with exclusive deals and discounts for festival shoppers.

Thanks to Cologne citizens Namal can walk again



© Zoo Cologne

Thanks to numerous financial supports from the citizens of Cologne, Germany, the elephant Namal from the elephant orphanage Udawalawe, Sri Lanka can walk again with the help of new prostheses. Theo Pagel, the Director of the Cologne Zoo went to Sri Lanka with the veterinarian Sandra Langer and caretaker Brian Batstone to accompany the adaptation of Namal to the padded walking aid donated by the Cologne Zoo.