## CONTENTS

### VISITS

- **State Visit of President of India to the Swiss Confederation and Republic of Austria** 3
- **State visit of President of Afghanistan** 4
- **State Visit of President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar** 4
- **State Visit of President of Vietnam** 5
- **State Visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan** 5
- **Visit of Prime Minister of Nepal** 6
- **Visit of Prime Minister to South Africa to attend the 5th IBSA Summit** 6
- **Visit of Minister of External Affairs to Japan** 7

### BILATERAL BEAT

- **Visit of Sh Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary to Sri Lanka** 7
- **Excerpts from media briefing by Foreign Secretary on Vice-President's visit to Perth for CHOGM** 8
- **Inauguration of National Defence College (NDC) Alumni Chapter in Sri Lanka** 9
- **India undertakes repair of 79 schools in Northern Province with a total outlay of SLR 187 million** 10
- **Students of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and Sabaragamuwa University participated in BLISSPOINT 2011 in India** 11
- **First Meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Committee on Science & Technology** 12

### ECONOMIC STRIDES

- **India provides assistance of SLR 326 million for restoration of Thiruketheeswaram Temple** 12
- **India-Lanka power grid link feasibility study by December** 13
- **Axis fifth Indian player in Sri Lanka's banking industry** 14
- **Cairn Lanka drilling second well in Mannar basin** 14
- **Indian Navy to buy 80 interception boats from Sri Lankan builder** 14

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- **Shri Kapil Sibal Launched ‘AAKASH’, Low Cost Access Device** 15
- **India successfully launched monsoon research satellite** 16

### CULTURE

- **Kanya – A combination of Sri Lankan and Indian classical and fusion dance.** 17
- **KATHAK Mahotsav** 17
- **Mahatma Gandhi Oration - Mahatma Gandhi beyond all the barriers by Prof. Sarath Amunugama, Vice Chancellor, University of Kelaniya** 18
- **The Film South Asia Retrospective** 18
- **The Cultural Calendar for the month of NOVEMBER 2011** 20

**Eminent Carnatic Vocalist T. M. Krishna performed in Sri Lanka**

---

**Cover Page:** DEEPA SETH BHANDO, The Protected
Visits

State Visit of President of India to the Swiss Confederation and Republic of Austria

The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil and the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey at Lausanne University on October 4, 2011 after the unveiling of the bust of Rabindranath Tagore.

Her Excellency President of India paid a State Visit to the Swiss Confederation from September 30 to October 4, 2011 and thereafter to the Republic of Austria from October 4 to 7, 2011. In Switzerland, the President paid homage to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 2011 at his statue in Geneva, unveiled a bust of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore at the University of Lausanne and visited the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). A MoU was also signed between the Lausanne University and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on setting up of a Chair on Indian Studies. In Berne, the President held official talks with the President of the Swiss Confederation Her Excellency Mrs. Micheline Calmy-Rey, and other members of the Federal Council.

In Vienna, the President met the President of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer and the Federal Chancellor of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Werner Faymann. The President visited the Austrian Parliament and met the President of the National Council, Her Excellency Ms. Barbara Prammer and members of the Friends of India Group in the Austrian Parliament. President had detailed discussions on issues of mutual importance and interest in the bilateral, regional and international areas. A 45-member business delegation also accompanied the President to Switzerland and Austria. The President addressed the Indo-Swiss Business Forum in Berne on October 4, 2011 and the India-Austria Business Forum Meet in Vienna on October 6, 2011.

India’s economic and commercial relations with Switzerland and Austria are comprehensive. Two-way trade in 2010 between India and Switzerland touched US$ 3.8 billion and between Austria and India it was over US$ 1.2 billion.

The State Visit of the Hon'ble President to both Switzerland and Austria added impetus in the further expansion and consolidation of the historical friendship and cooperation between India and friendly countries of Switzerland and Austria.

The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil making her statement to the Press in Vienna on October 5, 2011. Also the seen is the President of the Republic of Austria Mr. Heinz Fischer.
State visit of President of Afghanistan

His Excellency the President of Afghanistan, Mr. Hamid Karzai paid a State Visit to India from 4-5 October, 2011. During the visit, an Agreement on a Strategic Partnership between India and Afghanistan was signed. The Agreement creates an institutional framework for our future cooperation in the fields of political and security cooperation, trade and economic cooperation, capacity building and education, and social, cultural, civil society and people-to-people relations. Two Memoranda of Understanding for cooperation in Mining and Hydrocarbons were also signed. President Karzai and Prime Minister Singh agreed that Afghanistan’s economic integration with the Indian economy and South Asia as a whole was in the national interest of the people of Afghanistan, and one of the ways to achieve this was to promote closer trade, investment and transit links. Prime Minister Singh reiterated to the President Karzai that India stands by the people of Afghanistan in their journey towards capacity building, reconstruction, development and peace. There were detailed and frank discussions on the issue of terrorism, which threatens our entire region, and no country can remain immune to its lethal effects.

Prime Minister conveyed sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan on the acts of terrorism that have taken place in Afghanistan recently, particularly the tragic assassination of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani. Prime Minister further said, “India will stand by the people of Afghanistan as they prepare to assume the responsibility for their governance and security after the withdrawal of international forces in 2014”.

State Visit of President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. U Thein Sein accompanied by a high level delegation paid a State Visit to India from 12 to 15 October, 2011, covering Gaya, Sarnath and New Delhi. During his visit, he held delegation level talks with the Prime Minister of India and met with the President. India attaches great importance to its relations with neighbouring Myanmar. The visit of the President, soon after his election earlier this year, further consolidated the multi-faceted bilateral relations.
State Visit of President of Vietnam

His Excellency Mr. Truong Tan Sang, the President of Vietnam paid a State visit to India from 11 to 13 October, 2011. This was the first visit by the President outside the ASEAN region and reflected the importance attached by both sides to our relationship. The bilateral trade between India and Vietnam reached 2.7 billion US dollars last year and a target to increase it to 7 billion US dollars by 2015 has been set. It was agreed to work towards an early finalization of the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Services and Investment.

India and Vietnam are maritime neighbours and face common security challenges from terrorism, piracy and natural disasters. Both countries believe that it is important to ensure the safety and security of the vital sea lanes of communication and have agreed to continue and strengthen our exchanges in these fields.

India and Vietnam have also agreed to celebrate 2012 as the Year of Friendship between India and Vietnam. The ‘Year of India in Vietnam’ will be organized in 2012.

A strong India-Vietnam partnership is a factor of peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region. It is a partnership that stands on its own merits.

State Visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan

The King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and the Queen, Her Majesty Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, paid a State Visit to India from October 23-31, 2011. This was the first visit abroad of His Majesty after the Royal Wedding on 13 October 2011; and the fourth visit to India since his Coronation in November 2008.

The unique and special relations between India and Bhutan are characterized by everlasting friendship, deep understanding and mutual trust. The visit of His Majesty the King of Bhutan contributed to further strengthening and expanding the close bilateral relations between our two countries.
Visit of Prime Minister of Nepal

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Rt. Hon. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Prime Minister of Nepal, paid an Official visit to India from 20-23 October 2011. This was Dr. Bhattarai’s first bilateral visit abroad and his first official visit to India, after taking charge as the Prime Minister of Nepal. Earlier, the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal had met on the margins of the 66th UNGA in New York on September 24, 2011.

During his visit, Dr. Bhattarai held talks with the Prime Minister, as well as, called on the President and met other Indian dignitaries. He interacted with representatives of Indian business community, civil society and intellectuals. The visit of Prime Minister Dr. Bhattarai provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss issues of mutual interest and ways to further strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries.

Visit of Prime Minister to South Africa to attend the 5th IBSA Summit

Hon’ble Prime Minister paid a visit to South Africa from 17 to 19 October, 2011 to attend the 5th IBSA Summit.

Excerpts from the Prime Minister’s Statement at a Joint Media interaction in Pretoria:

IBSA countries are already members of groupings such as BRICS, BASIC and the G-20. We have a tradition of collaborating on global economic issues and challenges such as international economic and financial crisis, climate change, energy security and food security.

This Summit was special because it has taken place in a year when all three of us are members of the United Nations Security Council. We have acted in concert on the global stage, dealing with complex regional and international political and security issues, including recently in West Asia. This suggests that IBSA can play a role in promoting the cause of international peace and security.

The IBSA framework is unique because the interaction under IBSA transcends the realm of government-to-government activity to encompass dialogue among civil society and people-to-people exchanges.

Its cooperative framework in the form of 16 Working Groups and 6 people-to-people fora brings together our officials, technical experts, business representatives, intellectuals and academicians. These have helped to expand our cooperation
considerably. The IBSA Trust Fund is another unique feature of our outreach activities, which we have agreed to promote further.

There is, however, vast potential to increase and expand our cooperation. Intra-IBSA trade is now close to 20 billion US dollars. I am therefore confident that we will be able to cross the target of 25 billion US dollars by 2015. We need to do much more to address the present deficit of intra-IBSA linkages in terms of people’s travel, transport facilities and other related infrastructure.

EAM’s visit to Japan

At the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Japan H.E. Koichiro Gemba, the External Affairs Minister of India Hon’ble S.M. Krishna paid an official visit to Japan from 28-30 October, 2011 to co-chair the 5th annual India – Japan Strategic Dialogue. They reviewed all aspects of the bilateral Strategic & Global Partnership and discuss regional and international issues of mutual interest. External Affairs Minister also called on the Prime Minister of Japan H.E. Yoshihiko Noda.

Visit of Sh Ranjan Mathai, Foreign Secretary to Sri Lanka

Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai, visited Sri Lanka from 8-10 October 2011. This was his first visit to Sri Lanka, since he took over as Foreign Secretary in August 2011.

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary called on the President of Sri Lanka H.E Mahinda Rajapaksa. He also met the Leader of Opposition, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Minister of Economic and Development, Hon. Basil Rajapaksa representatives of the Tamil National Alliance and other political parties.

Foreign Secretary also visited Northern Sri Lanka and reviewed developmental projects being taken up in various parts of Northern Sri Lanka under Government of India assistance.

During the field visit of the housing project the Foreign Secretary and Indian High Commissioner impressed upon the project management consultant Hindustan Prefab and the contractors to expedite work on the project. The contractors have faced a plethora of problems, and the peculiar nature of the project — built with heavy inputs from the beneficiaries — added to the time-lines going haywire.

As three developing democracies, we share very similar aspirations. We seek the empowerment of our people and betterment of their lives through inclusive socio-economic development. Our cooperation so far indicates that we are on the right path.

India looks forward to working closely with its IBSA partners in our collective endeavours to further deepen our cooperation.

I have offered that India will be happy to host the next IBSA Summit in India in 2013.
house a little while earlier — and the fact that they had to walk a long distance to the community well. They said they would be very happy if they get piped water supply. “The house is good. We don’t have complaints except the vent,” said one of them.

The two other projects that Mr. Mathai visited — the northern railway construction being handled by Indian public sector company IRCON, and the wreck removal project at the Kankasanthurai harbour — were progressing ahead of schedule.

India will expedite the process of giving sanction to remove the additional four wrecks at the Kankasanthurai harbour, Mr. Mathai said.

Initially it was found that there were six wrecks to be removed, four inside and two outside the harbour. Recently, four additional wrecks have been found. Earlier, the government of India, through the Shipping Corporation of India, had awarded a contract for removal and disposal of six wrecks at KKS harbour to Resolve Salvage and Fire (Asia) Pvt. Ltd, Singapore, at a total cost of $19 million (SLRs 2.18 billion).

At a presentation at the KKS harbour, representatives of the firm, Resolve Salvage, requested that the process of sanction for additional wreckages be expedited so that they could complete the work early.

**SIX STAGES**


The Preliminary Hydrographic Survey has already been completed in June-July 2010 as part of the preparation for this project. The contract for Geotechnical and Geo-physical studies and preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been awarded to RITES Ltd of India. These studies are in progress.

**DREDGING**

The dredging of the harbour will be undertaken by the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI). Rehabilitation of breakwater/pier and construction of new pier with attendant port facilities will be undertaken in accordance with the approved DPR, which is being prepared by RITES. Final Hydrographic Survey and preparation of Harbour Chart will be taken up as the final stage of work.

(Courtesy: Report filed by Mr. R. K. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu.)

---

**Excerpts from media briefing by Foreign Secretary on Vice-President’s visit to Perth for CHOGM**

**Official Spokesperson (Shri Vishnu Prakash):** A very good evening to all of you and sorry to keep you waiting.

You know that Hon. Vice-President of India would be leaving for Perth to head the Indian Delegation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit, on the 27th morning. Foreign Secretary would like to brief you about the visit of the Vice-President for the CHOGM Summit. We also have with us Mr. P. Harish, to the right of Foreign Secretary, who is the Joint Secretary in the Vice-President’s Secretariat.

I would like to invite the Foreign Secretary to make his opening statement.

**Foreign Secretary (Shri Ranjan Mathai):** Thank you.

.........

EAM inaugurating premise of the new Consulate General of India at Perth (26 October 2011)

Question: There has been a push in Australia and also from the Canadian Prime Minister to have the Sri
Lankan proposed hosting of CHOGM in 2013 postponed until there has been some, I think it has been said, progress on human rights and accountability there over the war and some allegations of war crimes. What is India’s position on that? Secondly, with regard to the Eminent Persons Group Report that is likely to be submitted during CHOGM, there are some suggestions that India does not support the creation of a Human Rights and Rule of Law Monitor. Can you speak about that and explain what India’s objections are?

Foreign Secretary: First of all on Sri Lanka, the decision was taken in 2009 for the next two CHOGM Summits. I think that matter has been decided already and it is not a subject which needs to be reopened.

As far as the Eminent Persons Group is concerned, we have seen the report and we had a discussion on it in New York. The Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth met. I was present at that meeting. The report is very voluminous. It has got 106 recommendations covering the entire range of activities of the Commonwealth. The report itself was prepared over a period of one year with five meetings between July 2010 and July 2011. Since that time the member governments have had only a few weeks to actually look at it and in fact to start a discussion on it. I would not like to comment on each of the recommendations. Even these 106 have been classed into 14 core recommendations and the others. There are a number of areas where we think there is need for a more careful view.

Certainly the proposal for the Commissioner for Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights is one on which we have some reservations. The responsibilities spelt out in this would seem to undermine the role of both the Secretary-General and the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group itself which is actually dealing with precisely those issues. Secondly, it seems to us that this particular proposal is like a duplication of what the UN is already doing through its Rapporteurs. And at a time when the organisation is facing budgetary difficulties whether it should really go that direction, is not quite clear. In fact, I raised the specific issue as to where the money was going to come from, and it was mentioned that it might involve reallocation of some of the resources of the Secretariat as of now. And when you consider that the current allocation and budget of the Commonwealth secretariat has been decided after considerable discussion and approval by the Heads, reallocation at this stage does not seem appropriate. It seems to us that the real focus of the Commonwealth should be once again on the development challenges which are uppermost in the minds of the vast majority of the members. So, while we support the important values of democracy, rule of law and human rights, we believe the Commonwealth should focus on strengthening the existing institutions rather than trying to create new ones.

Inauguration of National Defence College (NDC) Alumni Chapter in Sri Lanka

A 15-member delegation from the National Defence College, New Delhi visited Sri Lanka. The delegation comprised of 14 senior officers from the Indian armed forces and civil services, apart from three other officers from USA, Nepal and Vietnam. The delegation was led by Maj. Gen. PK Goswami, VSM, Senior Directing Staff, National Defence College (NDC).

During the visit, the delegation called on Secretary Defence, Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Commanders of SL Army, Navy and Air Force. The delegation interacted with officials of the Sri Lankan Ministry of External Affairs and the Central Bank. They also visited Trincomalee and called on the Commander Eastern Naval Area.

At the ceremony organized for inaugurating the Sri Lanka Chapter of the Alumni of the National Defence College, the Commander of Sri Lanka Navy hosted a reception for the delegation at the Light House Galley on 2nd October. The reception was attended by H.E. the High Commissioner of India, Mr. Ashok K Kantha, RAdm (Retd) Mohan Wijewickrama, Governor of Eastern Province, Maj Gen (Retd) GA Chandrasiri, Governor of Northern Province, RAdm (Retd) Sarath Weerasekara, Member of Parliament and several members of the NDC Alumni in Sri Lanka.

The NDC Alumni Chapter in Sri Lanka is the first of its kind outside India. Among the foreign countries that are offered slots in the Indian NDC, Sri Lanka is the only country to be offered two slots every year. Sri Lanka has the highest number of NDC alumni of 58, which will go up to 60 on completion of the ongoing course in December 2011. Out of the 58 NDC alumni in Sri Lanka, 24 have risen to become Commanders of Sri Lankan armed forces (10 have become Commander of Sri Lanka Army, 7 have become Commander of Sri Lanka Navy and 7 have become Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force). VAdm. DWAS Dissanayake, the present Commander of Sri Lanka Navy, is the senior most serving officer among the Indian NDC alumni in Sri Lanka.
India undertakes repair of 79 schools in Northern Province with a total outlay of SLR 187 million

As part of its development partnership with Sri Lanka and in response to requirements projected by the Government of Sri Lanka, the Government of India is undertaking a project to repair 79 damaged schools in the three districts of Kilinochchi, Mulaittivu and Vavuniya. After a process of open tendering carried out locally, the High Commission has awarded the contract to a Sri Lankan construction company. The signing of the contract agreement, in this regard, which was held on 10th October, 2011, was witnessed by Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development and H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India.

The cost of repairs of these schools is in the range of SLR 0.50 million to 7.0 million depending on the size and number of buildings. The total cost of the project is SLR 187 million. The project is expected to be completed in nine months from the award of contract.

The project has been conceived and finalized in partnership with the Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security in the Northern Province, the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Education, Northern Province. The technical monitoring and quality inspection during the construction process will be carried out by engineers and technical officers of Zonal Education Offices under the Provincial Ministry of Education.

The objective of the project is to assist early restoration of educational activities for children of resettled IDPs in the Northern Province and deliver a facelift to basic educational infrastructure of the region. It will help families send their children to schools, provide students with a decent learning environment and offer them a better future. The project will directly benefit a community comprising about 42,000 students and 2,400 teachers & educational officers.

India has been supporting projects for rehabilitation, resettlement and well-being of displaced persons in the Northern Province in the areas of shelter (through roofing sheets and cement bags), health-care (providing emergency medical relief, organizing artificial limbs refitment camps and equipping hospitals), livelihood generation (provision of fishing equipment, tractors, agricultural equipment and seeds), education (repairs of schools and setting up of vocational training centres) and infrastructure development (restoration of Northern Railway lines, rehabilitation of Palaly Airport and KKS Harbour).

Eminent Carnatic Vocalist T. M. Krishna performed in Sri Lanka

T. M Krishna, one of the major vocalists from the younger generation of Carnatic musicians from Chennai scintillated the audience at Ramakrishna Hall, Colombo with his great command over voice and immense control over sound variations.

His concert was sponsored by the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo as part of Navarathri Festival organized by the Department of Religious and Cultural Affairs of Government of Sri Lanka on 7 October, 2011 06 at Ramakrishna Mission Hall.

D. M Jayaratna, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka inaugurated the Festival. Ashok K. Kantha, the High Commissioner of India and M.K.A.D.S Gunawardana, Deputy Minister of Buddhhasasana and Religious Affairs, were the Guests of Honor on the occasion.

T. M Krishna captured the heart of the audience that included several Ministers, Member of Parliament and other leading personalities from all walks of life, with his
especially for a concert tour to the North of Sri Lanka to provide some kind of solace to the people who have seen a lot of tragedy in the past.

After more than two decades an eminent musician from India has had concerts in the North of Sri Lanka. The Department of Culture, Northern Province along with the Consulate General of India in Jaffna arranged the concerts of Krishna and his troupe in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya.

On October 02, 2011, Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Anniversary day T.M Krishna and the troupe performed in Jaffna. The concert was held at Veerasingam Hall, Jaffna and inaugurated by Douglas Devananda, Minister of Traditional Industries & Small Enterprises Development of Sri Lanka. V. Mahalingam, Consul General of India, Jaffna and Yogeswaray Patgunarajah, Mayor, Jaffna Municipal Council were the Guests of Honor.

Befitting to the occasion Krishna sang a melodious song praising Mahatma, the great soul and his contribution to the noble principle of Ahimsa.

The Carnatic concert was the first of its kind to be ever organized in Kilinochchi for many years rekindled the passion for art and culture among the audience.

The third concert was held on 04 October 2011 at Urban Council Hall, Vavunia. G.A Chandrasiri, Governor of Northern Province, graced the concert as Chief Guest.

M.K A.D.S Gunawardana, Deputy Minister of Buddhhasasana honored the musicians. The music concert of T.M. Krishna was followed by Shakti Samarpanam, a dance recital by the Nirthana Dance School and choreographed by Shivananthy Haritharshan. The dancers were honored by Ashok K. Kantha, the High Commissioner of India.

T. M Krishna was invited by the Indian Cultural Centre for a concert tour to the North of Sri Lanka to provide some kind of solace to the people who have seen a lot of tragedy in the past.

After more than two decades an eminent musician from India has had concerts in the North of Sri Lanka. The Department of Culture, Northern Province along with the Consulate General of India in Jaffna arranged the concerts of Krishna and his troupe in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya.

On October 02, 2011, Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Anniversary day T.M Krishna and the troupe performed in Jaffna. The concert was held at Veerasingam Hall, Jaffna and inaugurated by Douglas Devananda, Minister of Traditional Industries & Small Enterprises Development of Sri Lanka. V. Mahalingam, Consul General of India, Jaffna and Yogeswaray Patgunarajah, Mayor, Jaffna Municipal Council were the Guests of Honor.

Befitting to the occasion Krishna sang a melodious song praising Mahatma, the great soul and his contribution to the noble principle of Ahimsa.

The second concert was held on 03 October 2011 at Maha Vithiyalayam Hall, Kilinochchi. M. Chandrakumar, Member of Parliament was the Chief Guest and Mrs. R. Ketheswaran, Government Agent, Kilinochchi was the Guest of Honour. Raghu Ram, Deputy Consul from Consulate General of India was the Chairperson for the event.

The Carnatic concert was the first of its kind to be ever organized in Kilinochchi for many years rekindled the passion for art and culture among the audience.

The third concert was held on 04 October 2011 at Urban Council Hall, Vavunia. G.A Chandrasiri, Governor of Northern Province, graced the concert as Chief Guest.
First Meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Committee on Science & Technology

The first meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Committee on Science & Technology was held at New Delhi on 22 September 2011. The Indian and Sri Lankan delegations were led respectively by Dr. Arabinda Mitra, Adviser and Head, Bilateral Cooperation Division, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India and Mrs. Dhara Wijayatilake, Secretary, Ministry of Technology Research, Government of Sri Lanka respectively. During the Joint Committee meeting, both sides discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of science & technology and identified common areas for future cooperation. They agreed that bilateral cooperation in science and technology needed to be stepped up. As an outcome of the meeting, the two sides signed a Programme of Cooperation in the Field Science & Technology for the period 2011-14.

The two sides identified several areas for cooperation, areas including food science & technology, nuclear technology applications, oceanography and earth sciences, bio-technology & pharmaceuticals, materials sciences, medical research including traditional medical systems and spatial data infrastructure and space sciences. The two sides also agreed to take up joint science and technology projects, conduct joint scientific symposia and workshops and exchange of experts.

India provides assistance of SLR 326 million for restoration of Thiruketheeswaram Temple

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 17th October, 2011 in Colombo between the High Commission of India and the Board of Trustees of Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society, for restoration of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Mannar, Sri Lanka. The MoU was signed by H.E. Mr. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India and Mr. V. Kailasapillai, Chairman, Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society in the presence of Hon’ble Basil Rajapaksa, Minister for Economic Development, Government of Sri Lanka. The Indian assistance for the restoration of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple is about SLR 326 million. The signing ceremony was also attended by Hon’ble...
Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Mannar, Sri Lanka is symbolic of India’s commitment to assist in the rejuvenation of the social, cultural and spiritual life in the Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka.

India has also been supporting projects for rehabilitation, resettlement and well-being of displaced persons in the Northern Province in the areas of shelter (through roofing sheets and cement bags), health-care (providing emergency medical relief, organizing artificial limb refitment camps and equipping hospitals), livelihood generation (provision of fishing equipment, tractors, agricultural equipment and seeds), education (repairs of schools and setting up of vocational training centres) and infrastructure development (restoration of Northern Railway lines, rehabilitation of Palaly Airport and KKS Harbour).

The MoU signed is pursuant to the Joint Declaration issued during the State Visit of His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka to India in June, 2010, which had welcomed the proposal for restoration of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple at Mannar to be undertaken with the assistance of the Archaeological Survey of India and the College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram. A team led by the Superintending Archeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai Circle and consisting of representatives from the College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram had visited Sri Lanka in August, 2010. A detailed report on the restoration of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple was prepared, based on discussions with the Department of Archaeology, Government of Sri Lanka and TTRS, in addition to inputs from their field visit to the Thiruketheeswaram temple.

The signing of the MoU will result in the re-initiation of the restoration work which was being carried out in the years 2005-2006 at the Thiruketheeswaram Temple, but had to be abandoned due to the then prevailing security situation.

The historic temple of Thiruketheeswaram is one of the holiest shrines in Sri Lanka and an important symbol of Sri Lanka’s cultural Heritage. The restoration of the

India-Lanka power grid link feasibility study by December

A feasibility study for the interconnection of electricity grids between India and Sri Lanka is expected to be complete by December this year, more than a year after the two countries agreed on the proposal.

The nearly Rs 4,000-crore India-Sri Lanka grid interconnection project would see exchange of up to 1,000 MW power.

"Final submission of the feasibility study report, incorporating all the aspects ... such as funding and recovery of the investment, economic and financial analysis, legal and institutional aspects etc., is to be completed by December 2011," according to a Power Ministry document.

In June 2010, a memorandum of understanding was signed among the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments as well as the Power Grid Corporation and Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) for conducting the feasibility study.

The date for submission of feasibility study was decided by the task force and steering committee after their meetings in August.

The task force and steering committee set up for the proposed India-Sri Lanka electricity grid interconnection comprises members from both Governments and State-run entities of the two nations.

According to the document, the feasibility study envisages "laying cable at a depth of 25 metres below the mean sea level for 500 m span while crossing the Sethusamudram Canal."

Noting that this would require dredging of about 15 metres below sea-bed in the Canal section, the Power
According to Axis Chairman Adarsh Kishore the bank’s Sri Lankan business will focus on the opportunities arising in Sri Lanka in trade and other areas. The bank further looks forward to participating in small and medium enterprises/agriculture, retail, banking, infrastructure projects and remittances. He further said that “With its presence in the major financial hubs in Asia, the bank is in a position to complement the business aspirations emanating from Sri Lanka both in respect of domestic business as well as international trade and investment and participate in and contribute meaningfully in the economic growth of the country.”

Axis has over 1,456 branches (including extension counters) in India and is represented overseas with branches in Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai and Colombo. It also has representative offices in Shanghai and Abu Dhabi.

Axis fifth Indian player in SL banking industry

The fifth Indian bank to enter the Sri Lanka market opened its doors at Galle Road, Kollupitiya, on Friday, 21 October when Axis Bank, India’s third largest private sector bank, was formally inaugurated by Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal. High Commissioner Ashok K. Kantha also graced the inauguration. Axis joins the State Bank of India, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and ICIC Bank to become the newest Indian entrant into Sri Lanka’s banking industry. Axis’ entry was formally approved earlier this year but had been pending for quite some time, well informed official sources said.

Cairn Lanka drilling second well in Mannar basin

According to newspaper reports, Cairn Lanka Private Limited has commenced the exploratory drilling for a second well in the first block of the Mannar basin. The first well, CLPL-Dorado-91H/1z in block SL 2007-01-001, the first of three blocks released to Cairn yielded a discovery of natural gas earlier in the month. The find was the country’s first hydrocarbon discovery. Upon its discovery, the company stated that the discovery was “predominantly gas-bearing with some additional liquid hydrocarbon potential.” However, currently, the commercial viability of the find remains unknown until further drilling operations are completed. Meanwhile, Cairn Lanka has also advertised for contractors to acquire and/or process 3D marine seismic data and gravity magnetic data acquisition for work to be conducted in the first and second quarters next year. Generally, drilling operations are initiated a year after surveys are conducted, therefore exploratory drilling for the third well would likely start between the year 2013 and 2014. Interest in the Mannar basin has been steadily growing after Cairn’s initial discovery.

Indian Navy to buy 80 interception boats from Sri Lankan builder

According to PTI, India signed a deal worth over US$ 61 million to purchase 80 high speed interceptor boats from a Sri Lanka-based ship manufacturer. The Indian Navy aiming to increase the security in the coastal areas around the country has decided to equip the patrolling wing Sagar Prahari Bal (SPB) with the purchase 80 fast-interception craft (FICs) from Solas Marine Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. The boats are scheduled to be delivered in the next three years. Reportedly, the Sri Lanka-based firm was selected after a global tendering process by the Navy in June. According to Indian naval officials the FICs with speeds between 45-50 miles per hour are planned to be used for coastal security duties and to engage any suspicious craft or activities in the coastal areas. Dubai based multinational company, Solas Marine Services Group established the Solas Marine Lanka (Pvt) Ltd under Sri Lanka Board of Investment. The company is located along the Hamilton Canal at Wattala, near Colombo.
Shri Kapil Sibal Launched ‘AAKASH’, Low Cost Access Device

Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resourced Development launched ‘Aakash’, a low cost access cum computing device, on 5th October 2011. This device was also distributed among 500 children on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion the Minister underlined that Aakash will help in eliminating digital illiteracy. For this he also emphasized the need for having high quality study content to be made accessible to students. He also called for support and partnership from all so that the device could cost further less, while praising the team which had worked towards the creation and production of this device.

**Background on the Device**

To ensure complete transparency and a level playing-field, the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) decided to task one of the IITs (IIT Rajasthan at Jodhpur) with the job of procuring and testing these devices based on the design and specifications that the Mission’s team had finalized.

It needs to be mentioned that this price does not include any subsidy from the Government and is a price that has been arrived at following a commercial tender process. The Government will also be providing price subsidy to the students on the price. The device will be distributed to students through the institutions at which they are studying.

The development of this device has been done in India in a plant at Hyderabad. This unique device is meant for students across India. Using this device, and the connectivity also provided under this Mission, learners will be able to access all the thousands of items of content available on the Sakshat portal and other educational web-sites

**Roadmap**

This current phase was a pilot to procure 100,000 devices. This pilot helped in sorting out the production related issues. These devices are now being distributed to students all over the country so that they can be extensively tested in various climatic and usage conditions. The feedback obtained from the testing will form an input into the design of the next version of the device. This is important, as the numbers that the Mission needs to procure are very large.

To achieve this, the team of experts working on this project would be broad-based. The production capacities of Indian manufacturers would also have to be substantially expanded to meet production requirements of a few million devices within a six-month time frame.

Broadly speaking, future efforts will move in two directions – to achieve the same functionality at a lower cost and to achieve added capabilities at the same cost.

MHRD invites collaboration, ideas and inventions from the community of academics and experts and inventors to achieve the cherished goals.

**Connectivity:**

It is expected that 416 Universities and 20,000 colleges all over India will be connected under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT). The Mission pays for fiber connectivity for each University to connect to the nearest NKN node. The Mission has placed a consolidated order for connecting all Universities and Colleges to BSNL and about 80% of the Universities and Colleges have been connected already.

**Content Creation**

The National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) has proposed 18 different line items for content creation. All content that is created under this Mission needs to meet the following criteria:

- It should be related to education delivery.
- It should involve faculty from different institutions.
India successfully launched monsoon research satellite

India has successfully launched a new satellite, the Megha-Tropiques, to study the patterns of the monsoon. The one-tonne satellite was one of four spacecraft fired into orbit on 12th October, 2011 from Sriharikota, about 80km from Madras. The Megha-Tropiques satellite is a joint venture with France. Its should give meteorologists fresh insight into how water moves through the atmosphere to produce the intense weather associated with monsoons.

India built the satellite platform and provided the launch rocket; France has provided its instruments. The Megha-Tropiques has been put on a low-inclination orbit around the equator (between 23 degrees North and South), meaning it will pass over India almost 12 times a day.

The launch is the latest in a series carried out by the Indian space agency (Isro), which is establishing closer ties with a number of its international counterparts. For example, data from Megha-Tropiques will be shared with the meteorological organisations in Europe and the US that acquire their weather satellite information.

ECONOMIC STRIDES

India to overtake China in 2014: Ernst & Young report - IBEF: October 25, 2011

New Delhi: India will overtake China in 2014, according to a forecast by the Ernst & Young’s report on Rapid Growth Markets (RGMs). In 2014, India is expected to grow at 9 per cent while China is expected to grow at 8.6 per cent.

India and China would probably be less impacted among the 25 Rapid Growth Markets (RGMs) in case of a deterioration of the Eurozone debt crisis. The overall outlook for India remains positive and economic growth will steadily accelerate during 2012.

"India’s consumption-led economy continues to make the country a highly attractive investment destination in the short to medium term. Its domestic demand-driven growth model has helped the country weather the volatility in the global markets, providing significant growth opportunities to businesses," according to Farokh Balsara, Partner & India Markets Leader, Ernst & Young India.

Indian Ports Global being set up to acquire foreign ports

India is setting up a special purpose vehicle for foreign port acquisitions. The proposed corporate entity will be similar to the model adopted by Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) and Dubai Ports.

The Indian petroleum sector already has such an entity in ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), a wholly owned subsidiary of government-controlled Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). Since its inception in 1989, OVL has succeeded in acquiring 33 properties in 14 countries.

Indian Ports Global (IPG), is likely to be set up as a private company. Major ports can hold up to 50 per cent equity in the company, and financial institutions and other investors the rest.

Though the structure is yet to be finalised, the Shipping Ministry wants 50 per cent equity to be non-government. The government could also consider private companies as partners later.

"There should be synergy between the interest of the new company and private port operators, some of whom have already made investments in port facilities in Australia, Indonesia and some African countries," Shipping Ministry Secretary K Mohandas told Business Standard newspaper in an interview published on 8th October, 2011.
According to Indian Ports Association (IPA), major ports will contribute to the equity of the company from their own reserves, though Kolkata Port Trust and Kochi Port Trust will not be able to do so because they are in the red at present.

Indian Ports Global (IPA) will eye both national and international opportunities. "It can help us make strategic investment in countries we get raw materials from. The company can, thus, help us in completing the logistics chain," says IPA Managing Director Janardhana Rao.

Among private companies, the Adani Group-owned Mundra Port and Special Economic Zone had earlier this year acquired Abbot Point Port in Australia for A$1.8 billion (INR 90 billion). The government wants to promote the Indian flag in overseas port facilities.

"India has a lot of expertise in this sector and it should leverage this by venturing abroad. It will help in increasing our footprint internationally and raise our standards as well," says Michael Pinto, former shipping secretary.

Singapore’s PSA has spread its wings in different parts of the world by an instrument called PSA International. Similarly, Dubai Ports has expanded its presence through consolidated company DP World. Some European ports too have done likewise.

The shipping ministry has prepared an initial draft for forming Indian Ports Global. It is also in the process of discussing the concept with IPA, an organisation representing all the 12 major ports in the country, and some experts in shipping.

Kanya – A combination of Sri Lankan and Indian classical and fusion dance by Chandana Wickramasinghe and the Dancer’s Guild of Sri Lanka

Kanya, a combination of Sri Lankan and India classical and fusion dance, was organized at the Indian Cultural Centre on 14th October as a tribute to Rabindranath Tagore, in whose institution Chandana Wickremesinghe perfected his art of dancing “Kanya”, by Chandana Wickramasinghe.

Chandana learned his first steps of dancing from Vajira Chithrasena at the age of 06. At the end of his studied in School, he joined the Sama Ballet troupe, as a dancer when he worked for 8 years. He went to India in 1994 and joined the prestigious university of Vishva Bharathi Santi Niketan to study Kathakali and Manipuri style of dances.

KATHAK Mahotsav

The fifth Kathak Mahotsawaya organized by renowned Kathak exponent Moksha Samarasooriya (also teacher at the Indian Cultural Centre) was held on October 25 at the Tower Hall theatre with the aim of popularizing Kathak classical dance in Sri Lanka. The High Commissioner graced the event as the Chief Guest in which more than 70 students took part.
**Mahatma Gandhi Oration - Mahatma Gandhi beyond all the barriers by Prof. Sarath Amunugama, Vice Chancellor, University of Kelaniya**

The Sri Lanka India Society organized “Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Oration” on 17 October at the India Cultural Centre in which Prof. Sarath Amunugama, Vice Chancellor, University of Kelaniya delivered the lecture titled “Mahatma Beyond All Barriers”. Ashok K. Kantha, the High Commissioner of India graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Dr. A.T Ariyaratne, Basavashree Award Winner was felicitated at the function.

The programme commenced with the songs by children of Sakhthi Illam, Colombo Hindu College, Ratmalana and was followed by a Gujarati Dance by the students of Kalalaya School of Dance and Music choreographed by Mrs. Rishanthini Sanjeevan. Around 160 guests attended the event.

**The Film South Asia Retrospective**

The Young Asia Television (YA TV) in partnership with Film South Asia Secretariat, Nepal and the India-Sri Lanka Foundation, Colombo organized “The Film South Asia Retrospective” in Sri Lanka from 20-22 October 2011. The inauguration held at the Indian Cultural Centre on 19 October was graced by Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India as Chief Guest. “The Film South Asia Retrospective” entertained film-lovers of Colombo through a festival of non-fiction films from South Asia. It showcased some of the best South Asian documentaries screened during the past Festivals of Film South Asia, Nepal. The festival took place at the Punchi Theatre, Borella, from the 20-22, October 2011 and was open to the Public free of charge with a lineup of exciting films, giving audiences an opportunity to sample a wide range of topics and themes, presentation styles and techniques.
T.M. Krishna’s Concerts

In Jaffna

In Kilinochchi

In Vavuniya
The Cultural Calendar for the month of NOVEMBER 2011

16/2, Gregory’s Road, Colombo 07, Tel: 2684698, E-mail: icrcolombo@gmail.com

NOVEMBER 12
Shankar’s International Children’s Competition 2012
Painting, Drawing and Essay Competition for children coinciding the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Venue & Time: ICC Auditorium 9.30 a.m

NOVEMBER 16
Lecture – Remembering Badal Sircar
Parakrama Niriella
Venue & Time: ICC Auditorium 6.30 p.m

NOVEMBER 12 - 17
India – Sri Lanka Foundation Public Lecture Series by Ambassador Shyam Saran

14 November – 2.30 p.m.
Venue: University of Jaffna, Jaffna
Theme: “India’s Neighbourhood Policy and India- Sri Lanka Relations”

16 November – 3.00 p.m.
Venue: University of Ruhuna, Matara
Theme: “Challenge of Climate Change: Adding a new dimension to India- Sri Lanka Relations”

17 November – 6.00 p.m.
Venue: BCIS Auditorium, BMICH, Colombo 7.
Theme: “India and Sri Lanka and the Asian resurgence”

NOVEMBER 22 - 28
Dance-drama based on Shaap Mochan of Rabindranath Tagore – Prabhu Amar Priyo Amar
Choreographed by Ashimbandhu Bhattacharjee & Bimbavati Devi

Tuesday 22 - 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Bishops College Auditorium, No11, Perehera Mw., Colombo 03.
(Admission by invitation, please contact the Indian Cultural Centre on tel # 2684698)

Wednesday 23 - 6.30p.m.
Venue: Hall de Galle, Baladaksha Mawatha, Fort, Galle
(Admission by invitation, please contact the Consulate General of India, Hambantota on tel # 047 2222650)

Friday 25 - 5.00p.m
Venue: Central Province Hindu Cultural Hall, No.348, Peradeniya Road, Kandy
(Admission by invitation, please contact the Assistant High Commission of India, Kandy on tel # 081 2222652)

Monday 28 - 3.00p.m
Venue: Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna
(Admission by invitation, please contact the Consulate General of India, Jaffna on tel # 021 2220502)

Published by High Commission of India, Colombo

The information and articles are collected from different sources and do not necessarily reflect the views of the High Commission

Suggestions regarding improvement of the “SANDESH” may please be addressed to

Birender S. Yadav, Counsellor (Press, Information & Culture)
High Commission of India
No. 36 -38, Galle Road, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94-11 2327587, +94-11 2422788-9
Fax: +94-11-2446403, +94-11 2448166
E-mail: cpciccolombo@gmail.com