



सत्यमेव जयते

# SANDESH

January - March 2015





High Commission of India, Colombo  
January - March- 2015 issue

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:

### Information Wing

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: [cpiccolombo@gmail.com](mailto:cpiccolombo@gmail.com)



Front Cover:

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with President of Sri Lanka Mr. Maithripala Sirisena at Hyderabad House, New Delhi. Photo courtesy: Photo Division (February 16, 2015)

States of  
America to  
India  
[January 25-27, 2015]



ACC. NO.	6731
	808.4



सत्यमेव जयते

### 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: [cpiccolombo@gmail.com](mailto:cpiccolombo@gmail.com)  
website: [www.hcicolombo.org](http://www.hcicolombo.org)  
facebook: [www.facebook.com/hcicolombo](http://www.facebook.com/hcicolombo)

### Assistant High Commission of India

No. 31, Rajapihilla Mawatha, PO Box 47, Kandy,  
Sri Lanka  
Tel: +94 81 2222652  
Fax: +94 81 2232479  
E-mail: [ahc.kandy@mea.gov.in](mailto:ahc.kandy@mea.gov.in)

### Consulate General of India

No. 103, New Road, Hambantota, Sri Lanka  
Tel: +94-47 2222500, +94-47 2222503  
Fax: +94-47 2222501  
E-mail: [cg.hambantota@mea.gov.in](mailto:cg.hambantota@mea.gov.in)

### Consulate General of India

No. 14, Maruthady Lane, Jaffna, Sri Lanka  
Tel: +94-21 2220502, +94-21 2220504,  
+94-21 2220505  
Fax: +94-21 2220503  
E-mail: [cg.jaffna@mea.gov.in](mailto:cg.jaffna@mea.gov.in)

find us on

facebook

[www.facebook.com/hcicolombo](http://www.facebook.com/hcicolombo)  
[www.facebook.com/indianculturalcentre](http://www.facebook.com/indianculturalcentre)



## Visits

Official visit of the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to India 1

Official visit of United Nations Secretary General to India 2

Official visit of Prime Minister of Bhutan to India 4

Visit of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mr. Mangala Samaraweera to India 5

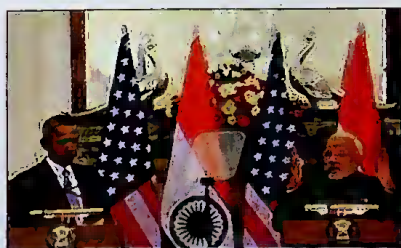


State Visit of President of the United States of America to India 6



President Obama at India's Republic Day Parade 16

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Media Statement during Joint Press Interaction with President of United States of America 17



Media Statement by President Barack Obama during Joint Media Interaction with Prime Minister 18

India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship 20

President Obama at India's Republic Day Parade 21

State Visit of the President of the Republic of Singapore to India 22

State Visit of the President of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to India 23



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Media Statement during the State Visit of President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to India 25



Sri Lanka and India Signed Four Agreements/MoUs 26

Visit of External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj to Sri Lanka 27



Remarks by External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj at the Dinner hosted by Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in Colombo 28

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Seychelles 29



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Visit to Mauritius 30

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka 31



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka 32

On Arrival Visas for Sri Lanka's Visiting India - Prime Minister Modi 35

Text of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's address to the Sri Lankan Parliament 36

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's statement to the media during visit to Sri Lanka 39



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's remarks at the Banquet hosted by the President of Sri Lanka 41

A New Page in Indo-Lanka Cooperation - President Sirisena 42


## Bilateral Beats

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's message to Heads of Indian Missions 43

Delhi-Colombo Bonding: New Frontiers 44







# State Visit of the President of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to India

February 15-18, 2015

President of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, H.E. Maithripala Sirisena paid three-day state visit to India from February 15-18, 2015. This was the first overseas visit by President Sirisena after assumption of office last month.

During his visit, President Sirisena met with Indian President Shri Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The President also met several political leaders and other dignitaries.

A special welcome ceremony accorded by Indian President Shri Pranab Mukherjee was held at Rashtrapati Bhawan on Monday, to ceremonially welcome President Maithripala Sirisena and his delegation. The welcome ceremony was followed by a meeting between the two Presidents.

Speaking at the occasion, President Shri Pranab Mukherjee said Sri Lanka occupies a special place in India's worldview and the relationship between the two countries is not merely geographic.

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee noted that in contemporary times, the relations have become multi-faceted, encompassing trade and investment, science, education, security and defence, and above all, people-to-people exchanges.

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee said India takes pride in the strengthening of democracy in Sri Lanka, and stands ready to continue to extend all necessary support for the island nation in its new chapter.

Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that "the Indian government is most keen to make Sri Lanka among the closest friends of India in the economic sector and Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena's official visit to India give great strength to this," when he

met with the President Sirisena at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Feb.16.

President Sirisena was warmly welcomed by the Indian Prime Minister at the Hyderabad House, where four agreements were signed to further strengthen economic, power and energy, fisheries and cultural affairs between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who expressed his great satisfaction at President Sirisena's decision to make India the venue of his first official visit abroad said this was an occasion that gave rise to a common voice between the two countries and would be most beneficial to the friendship between India and Sri Lanka.

During the discussion among the two leaders with regard to cooperation in matters of regional cooperation, Indian Prime Minister pointed out that it should be useful for Sri Lanka to have an exchange of views with the Maldives.

Both leaders who discussed the issue of fisheries that prevail between India and Sri Lanka, were of the view that both countries should work towards a solution that would bring about the best results to each other.

President Sirisena said Sri Lanka is eagerly waiting to extend a warm welcome to Prime Minister Shri Modi when he undertakes a state visit to Sri Lanka in March.

President Maithripala Sirisena in a Media Statement after the signing of MoUs at Hyderabad House in India said that this first official visit to India by him has been most successful and fruitful and has contributed to the developing and ensuring friendship between the two countries.



“By the signing of MoUs we have already established a good beginning towards future progress, he further said.

Sri Lanka as a country that has a very strong influence of Buddhism and Hinduism, the historic relationship between our two countries extends through culture, economics, commerce and trade, defence and clearly spreads through all these sectors, he added.

“Within a very short time since my election as President of Sri Lanka I chose India or Maha Bharatha for my first foreign visit. The relationship between Sri Lanka and India extends through a very long period. It is a history of several thousand years. Speaking as a Buddhist we see that the philosophy of the Buddha and the philosophy of Hinduism have a very close relationship,” the President said.

He also visited the National Museum in New Delhi.

President Maithripala Sirisena also met the former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Congress Party leader Sm. Sonia Gandhi.

During the meeting both Indian leaders congratulated President Sirisena on his great election victory. They also commended the President for the progress so far of the 100 day programme to develop Sri Lanka.

President Sirisena asked India’s assistance for the steps taken for the reconciliation and national development.

A veteran Congress leader Dr. Karan Singh too called on President Sirisena.

President Maithripala Sirisena also visited Bodh Gaya and Tirupathi shrines on Feb.17.





# Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Media Statement during the State Visit of President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to India

February 16, 2015

It is a great pleasure and privilege to welcome President Maithripala Sirisena and Mrs. Sirisena to India.

We are honoured that you have chosen India as your first overseas destination.

Let me congratulate you on behalf of the people of India for your historic victory. The election reflects the strength of democracy in Sri Lanka.

Your mandate carries the collective voice of Sri Lanka. It represents the aspirations of your people for a united, inclusive peaceful and prosperous nation.

India is Sri Lanka's closest neighbour and friend. The goodwill and support of the people of India will always be with you.

The timeless links of history, religion and culture provide a solid foundation of our partnership.

We also share a broad range of interests - economic development for our countries; peace and prosperity in South Asia; maritime security in the region.

Indeed, I believe that our destinies are inter-linked. Our security and prosperity are indivisible.

President Sirisena and I had excellent discussions today on our bilateral relations and international issues.

President and I are committed to unlock the vast potential of our economic cooperation.

We are pleased to be Sri Lanka's largest trading partner. I know that India enjoys a huge trade surplus. I expressed my support for a more balanced growth in trade in both directions.

I conveyed our readiness to promote greater flow of Indian investments and tourists into Sri Lanka.

We discussed expansion of cooperation in energy sector, both conventional and renewable.

Our Commerce Secretaries will meet soon to review our bilateral commercial relations.

We also intend to further improve air and sea connectivity between India and Sri Lanka.

The bilateral agreement on civil nuclear cooperation is yet another demonstration of our mutual trust. This is the first such agreement Sri Lanka has signed. It opens new avenues for cooperation, including in areas like agriculture and healthcare.

President and I also agreed to expand our defence and security cooperation. We welcomed the progress in our maritime security cooperation, including in the trilateral format with Maldives.

The Indian assisted projects for Internally Displaced Persons in Sri Lanka have made excellent progress. This includes the Housing Project, under which more than 27,000 houses have already been constructed. President and I expressed satisfaction with the progress.

I assured President Sirisena of India's commitment to its development partnership with Sri Lanka. This will continue to cover a broad range of areas, including infrastructure. In this context, I am also pleased with the MoU on cooperation in agriculture.

President and I attach the highest importance to the fishermen's issue. It affects livelihood on both sides. We agreed that there must be a constructive and humanitarian approach to the issue.

We will encourage the fishermen's associations on both sides to meet again soon. They should find a solution that can be taken forward by both governments.

Like cricket, culture provides a strong bond between us. The Programme of Cultural Cooperation signed today will nurture those ties and promote contacts between people.

I am also delighted that Sri Lanka is now part of the Nalanda University Project.

It recalls a link forged 2300 years ago, by Prince Mahindra, known as Arahata Mahinda in Sri Lanka, and his sister Sanghamitra. They went to Sri Lanka as apostles of Buddhism.

Sri Lankan nationals visit the National Museum in New Delhi in large numbers to pay homage to the Kapilavastu relics. We have decided to reduce the fees for them.

I thanked the President for his invitation to me to visit Sri Lanka. I am eagerly looking forward to visiting his beautiful country in March.

I would like to once again welcome President Sirisena to India. We are at a moment of an unprecedented opportunity to take our bilateral relations to a new level. His visit today has set us firmly in that direction.

Thank you.



# Sri Lanka and India Signed Four Agreements/MoUs

February 16 2015

Sri Lanka and India signed four agreements/MoU during President Maithripala Sirisena's state visit to India, Feb. 15-18, 2015.

Mr. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Power & Energy on behalf of Sri Lanka and Mr. Ratan Kumar Sinha, Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy for India signed an agreement on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

The agreement would facilitate cooperation in the transfer and exchange of knowledge and expertise, sharing of resources, capacity building and training of personnel in peaceful uses of nuclear energy including use of radioisotopes, nuclear safety, radiation safety, nuclear security, radioactive waste management and nuclear and radiological disaster mitigation and environmental protection.

Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi Mr. Sudharshan Seneviratne and Secretary, Ministry of Culture for India Mr. Ravindra Singh inked an agreement for a Programme of Cultural Cooperation between Sri Lanka and India for the years 2015-18. The Programme

of Cultural Cooperation for 2015-18 seeks to enhance the level of cooperation in a wide variety of fields such as performing arts, visual arts, libraries, museums, archives & cultural documentation, archaeology, handicrafts, publications and professional exchanges.

Mrs. Chitrangane Wagiswara Secretary Ministry of External Affairs on behalf of Sri Lanka and Dr. S. Jaishankar Foreign Secretary on behalf of India inked a MoU on the establishment of Nalanda University.

Mr. Sudharshan Seneviratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and Mr. Ashish Bahuguna, Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation signed a Work-Plan 2014-2015-MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture between India and Sri Lanka.

The Work Plan would facilitate bilateral cooperation in Agro Processing, agricultural extension, horticulture, agricultural machinery, training in farm mechanization, livestock diseases, etc. between relevant institutes and organizations from both countries.





# Visit of External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj to Sri Lanka

March 07, 2015

Indian External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj paid an official visit to Sri Lanka from 06 to 07 March 2015. This is the first visit to Sri Lanka by Ms. Swaraj in her capacity as Minister of External Affairs.

During her visit, Minister Smt. Swaraj met with her Sri Lankan counterpart, Mangala Samaraweera and held an extensive and cordial discussion covering a wide range of areas relating to bilateral cooperation.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Swaraj and Foreign Minister Samaraweera also reviewed arrangements relating to the forthcoming official visit to Sri Lanka by Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi next week.

The two Ministers agreed to convene the Ninth Session of the Joint Commission, headed by them in Colombo at an early date. The successful completion of the Commerce Secretary level talks held on 04 March 2015

in Colombo was also noted. During the visit, External Affairs Minister Smt. Swaraj called on President Mathripala Sirisena and was hosted to a luncheon by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Foreign Minister Samaraweera hosted a welcome dinner in honour of the visiting Minister and her delegation on 06 March 2015.

Associated with the Foreign Minister Samaraweera were Foreign Secretary Mrs. Chitrangane Wagiswara and senior officials of key line Ministries as well as officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Swaraj had visited Sri Lanka previously as Minister of Telecommunications and as Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha.

*(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombo)*





# Remarks by External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj at the Dinner hosted by Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in Colombo

March 06, 2015

Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka and my dear friend Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, Hon'ble Governor of Eastern Province, Hon'ble Members of Council of Minister, Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Distinguished Guests

I am pleased to be in Sri Lanka. This is my first visit as External Affairs Minister of India. But Sri Lanka is not new to me. I have been here many times. I visited this beautiful country last in April 2012 as Leader of the Opposition leading an all-party Parliamentary delegation.

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka and Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

Today is Holi. As you know Holi is the Festival of Colors and celebrated in India with joyous abandon. The festival symbolizes the advent of spring, and is harbinger of joy, hope and fulfillment - a reflection of the current state of our bilateral relations. Holi also reflects the diversity and multi-cultural heritage of India.

The past year has been remarkable in the history of both our countries. People in both the countries have voted for change. This has brought new momentum to the bilateral relationship.

Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera was kind

enough to accept my invitation to visit India within a week after the new government was sworn-in. We had a very useful interaction in New Delhi on January 18.

His Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena visited India from February 15 to 18. It was a successful visit. Our countries signed four agreements and MoUs. Prime Minister announced a reduction of entry fees for Sri Lankan citizens visiting the National Museum to pay homage to the Kapilvastu relics. He also accepted President Sirisena's invitation to visit Sri Lanka.

My visit to Sri Lanka is part of the high-level engagement with the new Government of Sri Lanka. It also gives us an opportunity to close the gaps prior to the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka on March 13 and 14. As you are aware, the visit is the first bilateral visit of a Prime Minister of India since 1987.

Friends, India and Sri Lanka are bound by ties of history, geography and culture. Our partnership must therefore, progress in the spirit of being the closest of neighbors and friends, whose destinies are intertwined.

Let me raise a toast for India-Sri Lanka friendship and the well being and prosperity of the peoples of the two countries.

Thank you.







## Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka

March 16, 2015

Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a State Visit to Sri Lanka from 13-14 March 2015 at the invitation of President of Sri Lanka, H.E Maithripala Sirisena

Shri Narendra Modi was received on arrival by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe along with several dignitaries. The visit follows President Maithripala Sirisena's first overseas visit to India in February 2015.

The Prime Minister of India was accorded a ceremonial welcome on 13 March 2015 at the Presidential Secretariat including a Guard of Honour and the Gun Salute. The President of Sri Lanka, accompanied by the Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and several Cabinet Ministers and, officials engaged in bilateral talks with the visiting Prime Minister and the Indian delegation. President Sirisena hosted a Banquet in honour of the visiting Prime Minister. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe hosted a lunch in honour of Prime Minister Shri Modi at which most of the Members of Parliament were present. On Friday (13 March) the Indian Prime Minister addressed a Special Sitting of the Parliament, visited the Mahabodhi Society in Colombo, laid a floral wreath at the IPKF memorial and

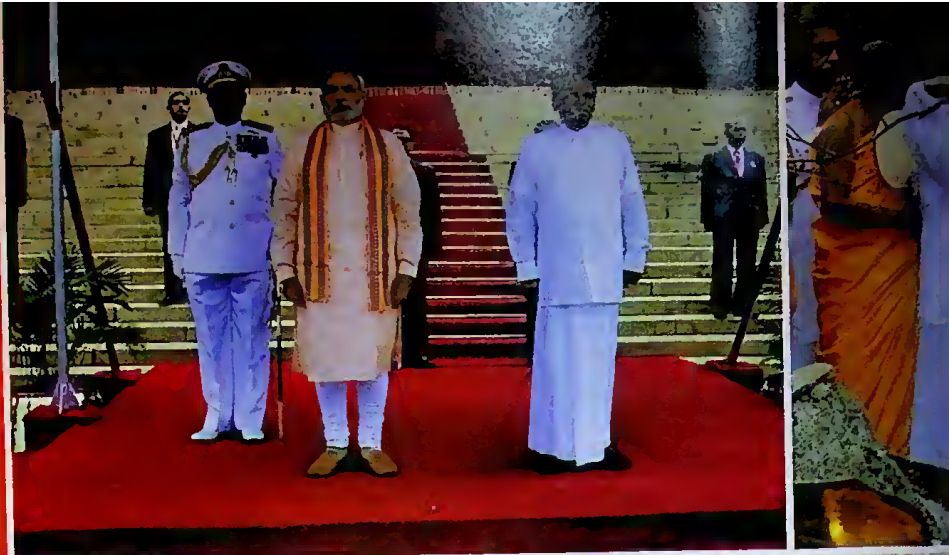
addressed a gathering of the Business Community.

The official discussions on 13 March between the two countries were marked by friendship, mutual respect and understanding. President Sirisena welcoming Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi emphasized the historic nature of the visit which is the first stand alone visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Sri Lanka in 28 years. He recalled his fruitful State Visit to India in February and reiterated his thanks and gratitude for the warmth and generosity accorded to him by the Government and people of India.

Characterizing the visit of Prime Minister Shri Modi as a great honour bestowed on Sri Lanka, President Sirisena said it further consolidates a relationship which spans thousands of years. He observed that the expanse and depth of the areas which at present straddle the bilateral relationship in the political, economic, cultural, and security related spheres and people to people contacts is a manifestation of a relationship which has matured into an excellent example of bilateral understanding.



# Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka











Tank Farms in Trincomalee; recommencement of ferry services; and, the establishment of the Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka and the Buddhist circuit in India to reinvigorate tourism and people to people contacts.

Prime Minister Shri Modi announced India's intention to extend a facility of 'on arrival' tourist visa through electronic system for Sri Lankan nationals which will be operationalized on 14th April to coincide with both the birthday of the Indian leader Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Sinhala

and Tamil New Year. He also announced the early commencement of Air India direct flights between New Delhi and Colombo; the 'Festival Of India'; and, holding the "Cricket Connect" exhibition which will coincide with the Indian Cricket Team's tour to Sri Lanka in August 2015.

Prime Minister Shri Modi in his remarks said he was proud that an Indian Prime Minister has undertaken a visit even after 28 years infusing a new energy and confidence to the relationship. He thanked the government of Sri Lanka for the historic opportunity to address the Parliament at its Special Sitting. While views on recent developments in the political sphere were shared, Prime Minister Shri Modi commended the Government for building unity and elevating the level of confidence within Sri Lanka which he said was important to India and the region. He also commended the efforts by President Sirisena to build an inclusive future for Sri Lanka. While assuring that India will not allow its territory to be used for any activities inimical to Sri Lanka the Indian Prime Minister emphasized that India would stand by Sri Lanka to build a future that accommodates all sections of society.

Signifying the continuing momentum of the bilateral engagement, four instruments relating to Customs Cooperation, the establishment of Rabindranath Tagore Auditorium at the Ruhunu University, Youth Development, and, Visa Exemptions for Diplomatic and Official passports holders, were signed.

The discussions also particularly focused on all matters of bilateral importance including the multifaceted areas of development cooperation, education, technology, fisheries, connectivity, culture, trade and economic relations, energy, defence and security, anti-narcotics, health, agriculture and Indian Ocean & Maritime Affairs. The two leaders agreed to take forward the discussions of the recent high level visits with concrete initiatives on all areas of mutual interest.

On Saturday (14 March), the Indian Prime Minister visited the sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi and Ruwanweliseya in Anuradhapura during which he was accompanied by President Sirisena. He also visited Talaimannar where he launched the new signaling system and the railway track and flagged-off the train between Madhu Road and Talaimannar Pier Station.

In Jaffna, Prime Minister Shri Modi, laid the foundation stone for the India funded Jaffna Cultural Centre. The Prime Minister was hosted for lunch by the Governor Palihakkara of the Northern Province.

While Sri Lanka's appreciation on India's development assistance valued at US \$ 1.6 Billion including in areas of housing, transport infrastructure, health, was reiterated by President Sirisena, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in turn expressed India's willingness to extend further cooperation on Sri Lanka's needs. The Indian Premier announced an additional credit line for the railway sector valued at US \$ 318 million. A currency swap worth US \$ 1.5 billion between the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Reserve Bank of India was also announced.

In Ilvalai, Jaffna, the Indian Prime Minister handed over several houses to beneficiaries of the Indian-funded housing units to former IDPs under the 50,000 houses programm.

During the visit, several political personalities in Sri Lanka called on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

The two sides have agreed to take forward the several bilateral initiatives at officials/experts level in the areas of ; Ocean economy; electricity grid connectivity, joint development of the upper Oil





# REPUBLIC OF INDIA VISAS

## On Arrival Visas for Sri Lankans Visiting India – Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

March 14, 2015

Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who was on a state visit, announced a special gesture of on arrival visas to Sri Lankans visiting India as a step to enhance people-to-people contacts. He said that the new visa system will come into effect on April 14, 2015, as a gift on the important occasion of Sinhala and Tamil New Year, which is also the birthday of the great Indian leader Dr Ambedkar.

After bilateral discussions between India and Sri Lanka, Shri Modi announced that the Reserve Bank of India will enter into an agreement with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to establish a currency swap worth US \$ 1.5 billion to ensure stability of the Sri Lankan Rupee.

Shri Modi announced a US\$ 318 Million credit line to assist development of the Sri Lanka Railways. India will provide rolling stock, develop existing rail tracks and provide other requirements of the railways.

The Indian Prime Minister emphasized that the Indian Ocean does not divide India and Sri Lanka, but unites the two countries. "Maritime security is important not only in this region but in other parts of the world too. The issue of protecting the oceans and the maritime areas of the related countries is common to Sri Lanka, India, Mauritius, Seychelles and the Maldives and all should be alive to the important issue of regional maritime security," Mr. Modi said.

He added that the space security will also become extremely important and these countries should have a common approach on this as well.

The Indian Premier expressed appreciation of the steps taken by the Sri Lanka government to bring about national unity in Sri Lanka. The Indian Government and people prioritize Sri Lanka's interest in national unity, he said. "When a neighbor becomes stronger, we are also strengthened. That is our hope," he added.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi appreciated President Sirisena's actions towards building unity in Sri Lanka, achieving a high level of confidence in a very short time. The steps taken include the initiatives such as giving back land to the people, transfer of governors and officials as required, the release of prisoners and other acts which are highly appreciative, he said.

Shri Modi said that he would expect the country to be stronger after the forthcoming elections having better relations with India.

"India will never allow any activities against Sri Lanka to be done in our territory," Mr Modi declared, and called on Sri Lanka to inform India of any such activities, and expressed India's readiness to share information on such matters. Responding to President Maithripala Sirisena's request for increased training of Sri Lankan defence personnel, the India Prime Minister readily agreed to increase the intake of Sri Lanka soldiers and other services personnel, He also agreed to provide technological services and intelligence sharing of defence matters.

In the bilateral discussions, two sides also discussed Indian assistance to build houses for displaced persons as well as the plantation sector and to improve urban housing. In the health sector, there would be cooperation in ensuring Sri Lanka of a regular supply of allopathic drugs with the Indian health authorities recommending suppliers of good quality drugs and taking steps to avoid delays.

Two countries agreed to look into short term and long term steps required to solve the fishermen issue. Prime Minister Modi asked Sri Lanka to see this as a humanitarian problem and look at it sympathetically. Sri Lankan side emphasized the need to prevent bottom trawlers being brought to Sri Lankan waters. There was agreement to hold further discussions on this matter.





# Text of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's address to the Sri Lankan Parliament

Mar 13, 2015

Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Chamal Rajapaksa ji, Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Shriimaan Ranil Wickremesinghe ji, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Nimal Siripala De Silva, Honourable Members of Parliament, Distinguished Guests,

I am truly delighted to visit Sri Lanka – a land of beauty, culture and friendship.

I am deeply honoured to be in this Parliament. I am conscious of its rich history.

This Parliament represents one of Asia's oldest democracies; and, one of its most vibrant.

Long before many others in the world, Sri Lanka gave every individual a vote and voice.

To the people of Sri Lanka, ayubuvan, Vanakkam.

I bring the greetings of 1.25 billion friends; and millions of fans of Sri Lankan cricket.

I bring the blessings from the land of Bodh Gaya to the land of Anuradhapura.

I stand here in respect for our shared heritage; and, in commitment to our shared future.

Last May, when I took the oath of office, I was honoured by the presence of South Asian leaders at the ceremony.

Their presence was a celebration of democracy's march in our region. It was also recognition of our common destiny.

I am convinced that the future of any country is influenced by the state of its neighbourhood.

The future that I dream for India is also the future that I wish for our neighbours.

We in this region are on the same journey: to transform the lives of our people.

Our path will be easier, the journey quicker and destination nearer when we walk step in step.

As I stand here in Colombo and look north towards the Himalaya, I marvel at our region's uniqueness – of our rich diversity and our common civilisational links.

We have been formed from the same elements; and, from our interconnected histories.

Today, we stand together as proud independent Nations – sovereign and equal.

India and Sri Lanka do not have a land boundary, but we are the closest neighbours in every sense.

No matter where you look in India or Sri Lanka, the many strands of our links – religion, language, culture, food, customs, traditions and epics – come together into a deep and strong bond of familiarity and friendship.

Ours is a relationship that is beautifully defined by the journey of Mahindra and Sanghamitra. They carried the message of peace, tolerance and friendship more than two millenniums ago.

It is evoked by Kannagi, the central character of the great Tamil epic Silapathikaram, who is worshipped as goddess the Pattini in Sri Lanka.

It lives in the Ramayan trail in Sri Lanka.

It expresses itself in devotion at the dargah of the Nagore Andavar and the Christian shrine of Velankanni.



It is reflected in the friendship of Swami Vivekananda and Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society in Sri Lanka and India.

It lives in the work of Mahatma Gandhi's followers in India and Sri Lanka.

Above all, our relationship thrives through the interwoven lives of ordinary Indians and Sri Lankans.

Our independent life began at about the same time.

Sri Lanka has made remarkable progress since then.

The Nation is an inspiration for our region in human development. Sri Lanka is home to enterprise and skill; and extraordinary intellectual heritage.

There are businesses of global class here.

Sri Lanka is a leader in advancing cooperation in South Asia.

And, it is important for the future of the Indian Ocean Region.

Sri Lanka's progress and prosperity is also a source of strength for India.

So, Sri Lanka's success is of great significance to India.

And, as a friend, our good wishes, and our support and solidarity have always been with Sri Lanka.

And, it will always be there for you.

For all of us in our region, our success depends on how we define ourselves as a Nation.

All of us in this region, indeed every Nation of diversity, have dealt with the issues of identities and inclusion, of rights and claims, of dignity and opportunity for different sections of our societies.

We have all seen its diverse expressions. We have faced tragic violence. We have encountered brutal terrorism. We have also seen successful examples of peaceful settlements.

Each of us has sought to address these complex issues in our own ways.

However we choose to reconcile them, to me something is obvious:

Diversity can be a source of strength for Nations.

When we accommodate the aspirations of all sections of our society, the Nation gets the strength of every individual.

And, when we empower states, districts and villages, we make our country stronger and stronger.

You can call this my bias. I have been a Chief Minister for 13 years; a Prime Minister for less than a year!



Today, my top priority is to make the states in India stronger. I am a firm believer in cooperative federalism.

So, we are devolving more power and more resources to the states. And, we are making them formal partners in national decision making processes.

Sri Lanka has lived through decades of tragic violence and conflict. You have successfully defeated terrorism and brought the conflict to an end.

You now stand at a moment of historic opportunity to win the hearts and heal the wounds across all sections of society.

Recent elections in Sri Lanka have reflected the collective voice of the nation – the hope for change, reconciliation and unity.

The steps that you have taken in recent times are bold and admirable. They represent a new beginning.

I am confident of a future of Sri Lanka, defined by unity and integrity; peace and harmony; and, opportunity and dignity for everyone.

I believe in Sri Lanka's ability to achieve it.

It is rooted in our common civilisational heritage.

The path ahead is a choice that Sri Lanka has to make. And, it is a collective responsibility of all sections of the society; and, of all political streams in the country.

But, I can assure you of this:

For India, the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka are paramount.

It is rooted in our interest. It stems from our own fundamental beliefs in this principle.

Hon'ble Speaker and Distinguished Members,

My vision of an ideal neighbourhood is one in which trade, investments, technology, ideas and people flow easily across borders; when partnerships in the region are formed with the ease of routine.



In India, the growth momentum has been restored. India has become the fastest growing major economy in the world.

The world sees India as the new frontier of economic opportunity.

But, our neighbours should have the first claim on India. And I again repeat, the first claim on India is of our neighbours – of Sri Lanka.

I will be happy if India serves a catalyst in the progress of our neighbours.

In our region, Sri Lanka has the potential to be our strongest economic partner.

We will work with you to boost trade and make it more balanced.

India's trade environment is becoming more open. Sri Lanka should not fall behind others in this competitive world.

That is why we should conclude an ambitious Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

India can also be a natural source of investments – for exports to India and elsewhere; and to build your infrastructure. We have made good progress today. Let us get together to harness the vast potential of the Ocean Economy.

Our two Nations must also take the lead in increasing cooperation in the South Asian Region and the linked BIMSTEC Region.

Connecting this vast region by land and sea, our two countries can become engines of regional prosperity.

I also assure you of India's full commitment to development partnership with Sri Lanka. We see this as a responsibility of a friend and neighbour.

India has committed 1.6 billion U.S. dollars in development assistance. Today, we have committed further assistance of up to 318 million dollars to the railway sector.

We will continue our development partnership. We will be guided by your Government. And, we will do so with the same level of transparency that we expect in our own country.

Last month we signed the agreement on cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

More than anywhere else in the region, I see enormous potential to expand cooperation with Sri Lanka in areas like agriculture, education, health, science and technology, and space. Indeed, we are limited only by our imagination.

We hope that Sri Lanka will take full benefit of India's satellite for the SAARC Region. This should be in Space

by December 2016.

People are at the heart of our relationship. When we connect people, bonds between nations become stronger. That is why we have decided to extend the visa-on-arrival facility to Sri Lankan citizens.

We will also increase connectivity between our countries. We will strengthen ties of culture and religion. Last month we announced reduction in fees for Sri Lankan nationals visiting National Museum in Delhi to see the Kapilavastu Relics. We will bring our shared Buddhist heritage closer to you through an exhibition. Together, we will develop our Buddhist and Ramayana Trails. My birth place Varnagarh was an international centre of Buddhist learning in ancient times. Excavations have revealed a hostel for 2000 students and in plans to redevelop the centre.

Mr. Speaker,

A future of prosperity requires a strong foundation of security for our countries and peace and stability in the region.

The security of our two countries is indivisible. Equally, our shared responsibility for our maritime neighbourhood is clear.

India and Sri Lanka are too close to look away from each other. Nor can we be insulated from one another.

Our recent histories have shown that we suffer together; and we are more effective when we work with each other.

Our cooperation helped deal with the devastation of Tsunami in 2004. As a Chief Minister, I was pleased to share our experience in reconstruction after the Bhuj earthquake in 2001.

Our cooperation is also integral to our success in combating terrorism and extremism.

For both of us, local threats remain. But, we see threats arising in new forms and from new sources. We are witnessing globalisation of terrorism. The need for our cooperation has never been stronger than today.

The Indian Ocean is critical to the security and prosperity of our two countries. And, we can be more successful in achieving these goals if we work together; build a climate of trust and confidence; and we remain sensitive to each other's interest.

We deeply value our security cooperation with Sri Lanka. We should expand the maritime security cooperation between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives to include others in the Indian Ocean area.

I often say that the course of the 21st century would be determined by the currents of the Indian Ocean. Shaping its direction is a responsibility for the countries in the region.



We are two countries at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean. Your leadership and our partnership will be vital for building a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous maritime neighbourhood.

In our deeply interconnected lives, it is natural to have differences. Sometimes, it touches the lives of ordinary people. We have the openness in our dialogue, the strength of our human values and, the goodwill in our relationship to resolve them.

Mr. Speaker,

Sri Lanka and India are at a moment of a great opportunity and responsibility – for realising the dreams of our people.

This is also a time for renewal in our relationship; for a new beginning and new vigour in our partnership.

We have to ensure that our proximity always translates into closeness.

We were honoured that President Sirisena chose India as his first destination last month. I am honoured to be

his first guest here.

This is how it should be between neighbours.

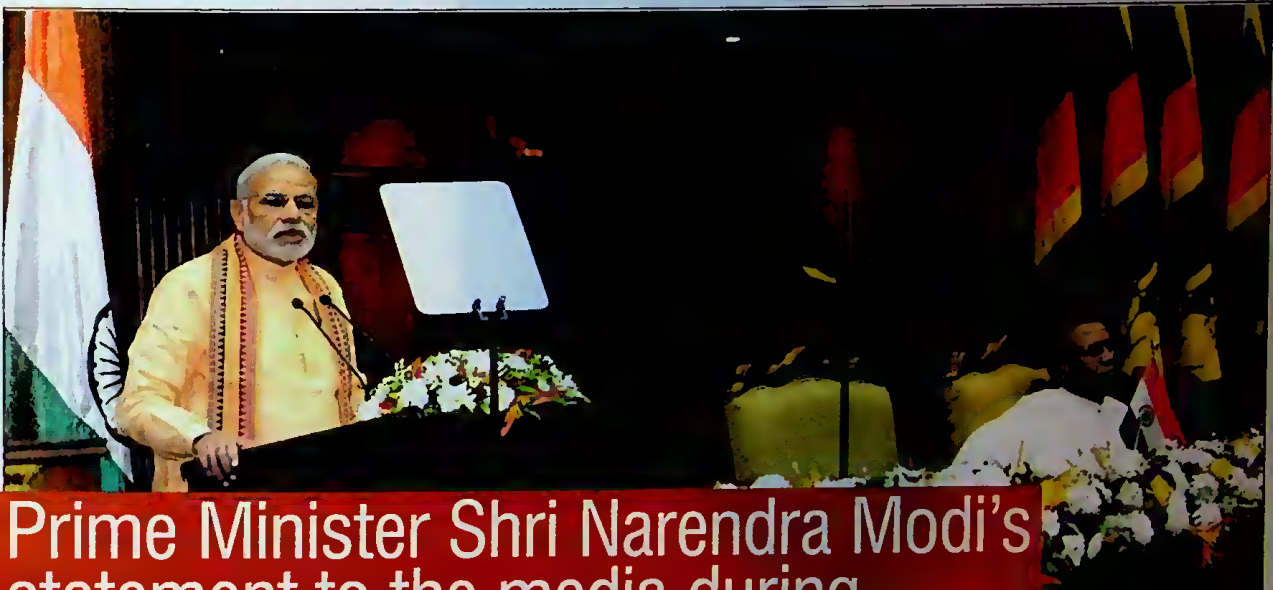
Tomorrow I will go to Talaimannar to flag off the train to Madhu Road. This is part of the old India –Lanka rail link.

I recall the lines of a famous song ‘Sindu Nadiyin Misai’ composed by the great nationalist poet Subramanian Bharati in the early 20th century:

‘Singalatheevukkinor paalam ameippom’ (we shall construct a bridge to Sri Lanka)

I have come with the hope of building this bridge – a bridge that rests on strong pillars of our shared inheritance; of shared values and vision; of mutual support and solidarity; of friendly exchanges and productive cooperation; and, above all, belief in each other and our shared destiny. Thank you once again for the honour to be with you.

Thank you very much.



## Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's statement to the media during visit to Sri Lanka

Mar 13, 2015

Your Excellency Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka,

Members of the media,

I am delighted to be in Sri Lanka, in this beautiful city of Colombo.

I have eagerly looked forward to visiting one of our closest neighbours and a nation with which we share so much.

I am truly honoured by your warm welcome and

friendship.

I am conscious of the significance of this visit. It is the first standalone bilateral visit to Sri Lanka by an Indian Prime Minister since 1987.

Last month, President Sirisena honoured us by making India his first foreign visit as President. I am glad to be here so soon.

This is how it should be between neighbours. We should meet regularly.



It helps us understand each other better; find solutions to mutual concerns; and, move our relationship forward.

That is what we achieved in my meetings with President Sirisena today.

Economic ties are a key pillar of our relationship.

The progress we have made reflects our shared commitment to stronger economic cooperation.

Our trade has seen impressive growth over the past decade. I am aware of your concerns about trade with India. As I said in Delhi, we will try and address them.

The agreement today on cooperation between our customs authorities is a step in that direction. It will simplify trade and reduce non-tariff barriers on both sides.

We are not just looking at addressing problems. We are also focusing on new opportunities.

Today, Lanka IOC and Ceylon Petroleum Corporation have agreed to jointly develop the Upper Tank Farm of the China Bay Installation in Trincomalee on mutually agreed terms.

A Joint Task Force will be constituted soon to work out the modalities. India stands ready to help Trincomalee become a regional petroleum hub.

I also look forward to early commencement of work on the ground in the Sampur Coal Power Project. This landmark project would meet Sri Lanka's energy needs.

The ocean economy is a new frontier that holds enormous promise for both of us. It is a priority for our two countries. Our decision to set up a Joint Task Force on Ocean Economy is a significant step, especially because of our proximity.

People are at the heart of our relations. We have taken a number of decisions to encourage people to people contacts, improve connectivity, and increase tourism.

We will extend the facility of "Tourist Visa on Arrival – Electronic Travel Authorization" Scheme to Sri Lankan citizens from the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on 14 April 2015.

Air India will soon start direct flights between New Delhi and Colombo.

We will cooperate in developing a Ramayana Trail in Sri Lanka and a Buddhist Circuit in India.

We will organize a Festival of India in Sri Lanka later this year. Sri Lanka is where Buddhism has truly flourished. We will be organizing an exhibition showcasing our Buddhist heritage as part of this festival.

The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in youth affairs is an important long term investment in our relationship.

India is privileged to be a development partner for Sri Lanka.

We will provide a fresh Line of Credit of up to US\$ 318 million for the railways sector. This will be used to procure rolling stock, and to restore and upgrade existing railway track.

We are pleased to provide assistance for the construction of the Rabindranath Tagore auditorium at Ruhuna University in Matara.

Tomorrow, I will visit, some of the projects, being financed by India, including the housing project. I am pleased that more than 27,000 houses have already been built.

The Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka have agreed to enter into a Currency Swap Agreement of US\$ 1.5 billion. This will help keep the Sri Lankan rupee stable.

We discussed the fishermen's issue. This complex issue involves livelihood and humanitarian concerns on both sides. We should handle it from this perspective. At the same time, we need to find a long term solution to this issue.

It is also important that fishermen's associations of India and Sri Lanka meet at the earliest to find a mutually acceptable arrangement. It can then be taken forward by both governments.

I also took this opportunity to convey our admiration for President Srinisena's efforts to build an inclusive future for Sri Lanka.

I conveyed our sincere support and good wishes for Sri Lanka's new journey of peace, reconciliation and progress.

We stand with you in your efforts to build a future that accommodates the aspirations of all sections of society, including the Sri Lankan Tamil community, for a life of equality, justice, peace and dignity in a united Sri Lanka.

We believe that early and full implementation of the 13th Amendment and going beyond it would contribute to this process.

I also conveyed India's commitment to further strengthening our partnership in advancing peace and prosperity in our region, including our common maritime neighbourhood.

I would like to once again thank President Sirisena for the warm welcome and hospitality.

The meeting today has been very productive. It gives me great confidence and optimism about the future of our relations.

Thank you.



# Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's remarks at the Banquet hosted by the President of Sri Lanka

March 13, 2015



Your Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena, Mrs. Jayanthi Sirisena, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for your kind words. Thank you for your wonderful hospitality.

Since the time we arrived this morning, we have experienced the wonderful hospitality and the warmth of your welcome at every step. We are touched by the affection of the people. We can travel around the world. But, nothing compares with the feeling of comfort and belonging that I get in a neighbouring country

A country with the gifts of nature, a rich culture and warm and welcoming people is a blessed one. This is Sri Lanka, the paradise on earth. I thank you, Mr. President, your Government and the people of Sri Lanka.

Mr. President, it is a unique moment in the history of our relations.

We are grateful to you for visiting us so soon after your election. We were honoured that you chose India as your first destination. It is my privilege to visit Sri Lanka just a month later – and to be your first guest. Sri Lankans and Indians will always turn to each other with the natural instincts of friendship and kinship.

Mr. President, you won a historic victory in a remarkable election. Your mandate carried the collective voice of Sri Lanka; and, the aspirations of every section of this richly diverse nation.

You and the entire political leadership have shown great wisdom and courage in uniting behind a common purpose. And, together you have taken bold steps towards a future of a more united, more inclusive and

a more prosperous Sri Lanka.

You carry with you the good wishes and hopes of 1.25 billion friends across the Palk Strait. In South Asia, we all tend to be emotional about friendship.

So, we are grateful for the friendship you have shown us. The trust, confidence and friendship of Sri Lanka mean a great deal to us. To know that we live not only in proximity, but also in each other's hearts is very comforting.

We owe it to our shared inheritance that is nearly as ancient as human life in these parts of the world - to the time of Prince Vijaya, or the five Isvarams, the five Abodes of Shiva in Sri Lanka, also revered in ancient India; or, the great age of Ashoka.

We love our cricket and we pray at the same shrines. We are nurtured by the same clouds. Today, we often battle similar challenges; and, we seek the same future for our people. We are two countries that have much to learn from each other; and, so much more to do together.

I have been blessed to experience so much today. Tomorrow, I am excited about visiting Anuradhapur, Jaffna and Talaimanar - places that are symbols of our multifaceted relationship. Sri Lanka's great Gandhian Shri Ariyaratne had spoken about blending science and technology and spiritualism for a nobler, more just and more peaceful world. India and Sri Lanka have their shared spiritual heritage and the tools of the modern world to make a difference.


After my discussions with President, Prime Minister and people from different walks of life, I am confident that we can do it. We are better placed and prepared to seize the opportunities and shoulder the responsibilities of our partnership – for the prosperity of our people; and, the larger good of South Asia and our wider maritime neighbourhood.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request you to join me in raising a toast

- to the good health of His Excellency, President Maithripala Sirisena;
- to the continued progress and prosperity of the Sri Lankan people; and
- to closer friendship and cooperation between India and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Thank you.





## A New Page in Indo-Lanka Cooperation – President Sirisena

President Maithripala Sirisena said the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka and his own recent visit to India have turned a new page in cooperation between our two countries. The agreements that we have reached today on a wide range of cooperation that covers economic and trade relations, health, education, regional security, sea and air transportation and especially the development of the country, he said.

Addressing the media after bilateral discussions with the Indian delegation headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, today, the President said India and Sri Lanka have a great historical link which has been strengthened with Buddhist philosophy for thousands of years.

The full text of statement:

India and Sri Lanka have a great historical link which has been strengthened with Buddhist philosophy for thousands of years. Similarly, there is also a long lasting relationship between the two countries on Hinduism, which shows a long historic background.

The great cultures of our two countries which were based on Buddhism and Hinduism have been together through thousands of years. We have seen the relationship between our countries weakened during the time of some regimes. As a result, it took 28 years for this visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Sri Lanka. We see this as a most fortunate event for the government and the people of Sri Lanka. We consider this visit of the Indian Prime Minister as a blessing both to the Government and people of Sri Lanka.

The achievements gained and the bilateral relations enhanced during my recent visit with my Ministers and other delegates to India, are being further strengthened and expanded due to the arrival of the Indian Prime Minister today in Sri Lanka, today.

The agreements that we have reached today on a wide range of cooperation that covers economic and trade relations, health, education, regional security, sea and air transportation and especially the development of the country, and my recent visit to India as well as Indian Prime Minister's visit to Sri Lanka has turned a new page in the cooperation between our two countries.

We are well aware that in the world of technology the Indian state and the Indian people are at a high level of knowledge, achievement and resources in modern technology. We are a developing country. It is therefore, valuable to achieve understandings on research, training and development of physical resources from countries advanced in modern technology, trade and modern commerce in the competitive world that prevails today.

While extending my best wishes to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his delegation for this visit to Sri Lanka, I trust it will help to further improve current relations between the two countries and assist in taking the relationships with minority communities to greater heights.

He will be traveling to several places in our country today and tomorrow. I see his visit to Parliament this evening and to pay homage at the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura tomorrow, as well as the later visit to the North as historic occasions.

We invited him to address our Parliament as the highest honor we can confer on him. I conclude my statement by wishing that this visit and the signing of agreements today will help further strengthen the great historical ties between our two countries, and also strengthen in the most humanitarian way, the democracy and freedom that prevail in India and Sri Lanka, and contribute to the most fruitful relationship between our two countries in the future.





# Delhi-Colombo Bonding: New Frontiers

March 12, 2015

By Manish Chand

## **New Beginnings, New Hopes and New Horizons.**

These expressions may sound like rhetorical hyperboles to some, but summarise the essence of the current transformational moment in relations between India and Sri Lanka, which has acquired a new bounce and energy after the formation of the new government in Colombo in January this year.

## **Four Visits, New Horizons**

In barely three months, there would have been four high-profile interactions, starting from the visit of Sri Lankan foreign minister to India, followed by the February 15-18 visit of President Maithripala Sirisena to New Delhi. President Sirisena's choice of India as his first overseas destination sent a clear message that the India-Lanka relations have moved into the fast lane, and will go on to acquire more strategic weight and economic substance in days to come.

Mr. Sirisena's visit was followed by India's External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj's trip to the island nation. Minister Smt. Swaraj's wide-ranging interactions have set the stage for the visit by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Sri Lanka on March 13-14. The symbolism and importance of Shri Narendra Modi's visit is clear from the fact that this will be the first standalone bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the island country after late Shri Rajiv Gandhi's trip in 1987.

## **Modi's Visit: What's on Agenda?**

All eyes in the region were on the meeting between Shri Modi and Mr. Sirisena as they unveil an ambitious roadmap for multi-pronged acceleration of bilateral ties across diverse areas, including trade and investment, development cooperation, defence cooperation and reconstruction of the island nation.

The talks are expected to focus

on the political reconciliation process in Sri Lanka and finding a lasting solution to addressing the aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils within the framework of the constitution of the country. The issue will also be in focus when Prime Minister Shri Modi visits Jaffna, home to a large population of Sri Lankan Tamils, and Shri Modi's meetings with the leaders and representatives of the Tamil National Alliance and other political leaders across the spectrum in Colombo. "Politically, I think we clearly want to promote and encourage the reconciliation process, support democracy and reform, and we do want to expand our people-to-people contacts including tourism, travel between the two countries," India's Foreign Secretary Shri S. Jaishankar said while outlining broad themes that will frame the prime minister's path-breaking visit to India's key island neighbour.

The fishermen issue should be among key issues on the agenda as this has strong political ramifications in both countries. The two sides will be looking to resolve the issue in a constructive and humanitarian manner. The highlight of the trip will be Prime Minister Shri Modi's address to the Sri Lankan parliament, which will flag off a long-term vision for India-Sri Lanka relations and a soaring vision of New Delhi's view of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and opportunity.

