



*Sri Lanka
shines*



in Türkiye....



*News & Events
January – February
2023*



*Embassy of Sri Lanka
Türkiye*



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JANUARY 2023

Ceremonial commencement of work at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara - 01/01/2023



On the sidelines of the International Ombudsman Conference 2023, the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) of Sri Lanka and Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye has entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 11 January 2023 in Ankara.



The Memorandum of Understanding between the Office Ombudsman of Sri Lanka and Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye signed by Justice (Retd.) K. T. Chitrasiri, Ombudsman of Sri Lanka Parliament and Mr. Şeref Malkoç Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye in the presence of the Speaker of the Parliament of Türkiye, Mr. Mustafa Şentop and the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye, Ms. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake.

Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) of Sri Lanka and the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye - 11/01/2023

The main objective of the MoU is to focus on the role of the two institutions in Sri Lanka and Türkiye in the field of protection of human rights and remedies for injustices while protecting citizens from injustice and discrimination.

The International Ombudsman conference 2023 under the theme "The future of Human Rights in the 21st Century" was funded by the European Union. More than 70 Ombudsmen participated from different regions Asia, Europe, Africa and Middle East and shared the legal framework of Ombudsman in their

own respective countries and their insights on protection of human rights.

Key note address of the conference was delivered by the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Ambassador meets Ambassador Ayda Ünlü, Director General of Overseas Promotion & Culture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye -12/01/2023



Ambassador of Sri Lanka met Ambassador Ayda Ünlü, General Directorate of Overseas Promotion & Culture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye and discussed on further strengthening bilateral relations focused on cultural diplomacy between Sri Lanka & Türkiye.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka calls in the Governor of Ankara - 12/01/2023



The Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye, S. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake paid a courtesy call on Governor of Ankara, H.E Vasip Şahin recently and had a fruitful discussion on strengthening bilateral relations between Türkiye and Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Dissanayake recalled Sri Lanka's long standing bilateral formal relations which have begun with the appointment of an Honorary Consul to Sri Lanka in 1864 with residence in Galle during the Ottoman Empire.

The Governor Vasip Şahin stressed on the strategic location of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka's importance to Türkiye in terms of Trade and strengthening bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Türkiye. In this context, the Governor and the Ambassador agreed that while it is important to consider the historical relations, enhancing bilateral relations beyond economic cooperation, would mutually benefit both countries.

Further the Ambassador extended her appreciation of Türkiye's generosity by providing humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka in the aftermath of 2004 Tsunami and the recent donation of medical supplies in 2022. The increasing opportunities in Türkiye, particularly in the hotel and construction sector for Sri Lankans, too were appreciated.

The Governor assured his assistance and fullest cooperation to the Ambassador on all her initiatives during her tenure in Ankara.

The Ambassador of Sri Lanka visits the Middle East Technical University – 19/01/2023



The Ambassador of Sri Lanka visited the Middle East Technical University (METU) recently to discuss about possible collaborations in the field of archaeology that would eventually contribute to promoting heritage tourism in both countries. She had discussions with Prof. Deniz Burcu Erciyas, Chair of Settlement Archaeology Department and other senior staff members from connected Departments.

This specific visit and discussion as based on the fact that both countries have much focus on heritage tourism, which brings substantial income to the economies of the two countries. Ambassador Dissanayake, who also has a strong academic background in archaeology, explained the Sri Lankan archaeological heritage and its significance, pioneers of archaeological excavations and studies in the country and how the archaeological knowledge contributes immensely to its tourism industry, noting that six (06) out of eight (08) UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka are archaeological and cultural heritages. She further noted that Türkiye has 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites inscribed for its archaeological and cultural significance.

Ambassador proposed for extensive long term collaborations and further proposed to organize a South Asia Day as well as a separate Sri Lanka Day, with an introductory presentation on Sri Lanka, its art, architecture & archaeology, biodiversity and environment, economics and political aspects and opportunity to understand Sri Lanka through Sri Lanka Food, a movie, music and or dance.

The Ambassador meets Ambassador of Ukraine in Ankara - 20/01/2023



Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye, Ms. S. Hasanthi Dissanayake is also accredited to Ukraine.

Ambassador called on the Ambassador of Ukraine in Ankara and conveyed her deepest condolences to the

Government of Ukraine on passing away of Hon. Denys Monastyrski, Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and other civilians due to the tragic helicopter crash in Bovary.

A discussion followed on the current situation in Ukraine and Sri Lanka.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka calls on the Governor of Istanbul – 20/01/2023



Ambassador was warmly welcomed by the Governor Ali Yerlikaya and the Deputy Governor (Ms). Ozlem Bozkurt Gevrek.

Ambassador referred to historic connections Istanbul has with Sri Lanka, with the Istanbul and Sri Lanka been international trading hubs for centuries. During the meeting, Ambassador Dissanayake highlighted some of the key products, both traditional and non-traditional, some of the investment opportunities and vast potential for promoting tourism. Ambassador underscored that increase in tea export itself could contribute to enhancing Türkiye's target of reaching 500 million USD worth of bilateral trade with Sri Lanka, which is currently hampered to a certain extent by high taxes imposed for value added luxury teas entering the Turkish market.

The Governor appreciated Ambassador Dissanayake's ideas to prosper not only commercial but also cultural and educational relationships between two countries, noting that historically Istanbul has been not only a trade Centre, but a cultural melting pot.

Ambassador Dissanayake suggested that as a mean to celebrate 75 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries, a sister city relationship could be

established between the Governorate of Istanbul and Southern Province, as it was Galle that the first Hony. Consulate of the Ottoman Empire was established and both Istanbul and Galle being trading ports for centuries.

He also mentioned that Chambers of Trade and Industries in Istanbul are very strong and entrepreneurial and the Governorate encourages and will support strongly wherever possible that would increase bilateral trade.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Ankara meets with the Coordinator of Asia-Pacific Business Councils of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Türkiye - 24/01/2023



Ms. Selma Bardakçı, Coordinator of Asia-Pacific Business Councils of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) of Türkiye visited the Embassy and had a mutually beneficial discussion with the Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

Upon its establishment in 1986, DEİK was assigned with tasks of organizing and managing the foreign economic relations of the Turkish private sector, in particular with respect to foreign trade, international investments, services, contracting and logistics; to analyze investment opportunities at home and abroad; to help boost the country's exports, and to coordinate similar business development activities. In summary, DEİK is Turkey's window to the world; its global representative of country's values, vision and potential.

Ambassador expressed Sri Lanka's desire to enhance the trade and investment relations with Türkiye and recalled Turkish President's desire to increase the bilateral trade to 500 Mn USD during her first meeting with the President. Ms. Bardakçı said that given the mandate of DEİK, indeed they would support this target by way of information sharing seminars, online meetings followed by exchange of visits by business delegations.

Ambassador updated Ms. Selma on the current

economic situation, prominent products of the country, including spices, and product differences in terms of quality with some other producing countries.

FEBRUARY 2023

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara celebrates 75th Anniversary of Independence Day of Sri Lanka - 04/02/2023





The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara celebrated 75th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on 04 February 2023 at the Embassy premises with the participation of the Sri Lankan community and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Türkiye, who braved the heavy snowing in the capital.

Ambassador Oguzhan Ertugrul, Director General of South Asia, Mr. Ali İhsan İzbu, Deputy Director General of South Asia and Mr. Burak Bingöl, Desk Officer for Sri Lanka at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye were among special invitees.

The Ceremony commenced with hoisting of Sri Lankan national flag followed by singing of the national anthem of Sri Lanka in Sinhala and Tamil followed by two minutes silence observed to commemorate those who have sacrificed their lives for the motherland.

Blessings of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamic faiths were invoked by representatives of those faiths, to wish prosperity, determination and resilience for Sri Lankan people as well as for the people of Türkiye. This was followed by reading of the Independence Day Messages of the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

H.E the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye, Ms. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake thanked the guests who attended the event despite the severe weather conditions and stressed on significance of the event, also noting that in 2023 we also celebrate the 75th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Türkiye, with Türkiye being one of the earliest countries which recognized Sri Lanka after its independence.

Ambassador appreciated the roles played by her predecessors. She also appreciated the valuable contributions extended by the Honorary Consuls for Sri Lanka covering regions of Izmir, Adana, Antalya, Nevşehir, Gaziantep, Bursa, Erzurum and Trabzon, since her arrival 03 months ago.

In partnership with the Honorary Consuls, she expressed her confidence that the Embassy would be able to achieve greater targets, for the mutual benefit. Furthermore, Ambassador emphasized that there is vast potential for bilateral cooperation in investment, trade and tourism and assured that she would be working with the team at the Embassy and the Honorary Consuls, towards realizing the same.

Ambassador Hasanthi Dissanayake emphasized that the President Ranil Wickremesinghe has prioritized climate change as an important element that Sri Lanka needs to focus on and is in the process of setting up of the world's first university dedicated to studies of climate change.

"This is in the context of the projections of the 6th Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which projects that the countries with a coastline will be hard hit and both small island nations and nations with densely populated coastal cities will be the most affected. That's where our livelihoods that depend on ocean will be challenged such as fisheries, port and shipping, agriculture and tourism. These circumstances are forcing countries to come together to minimize and at least adapt to evolving situations as climate change impacts are transboundary", Ambassador noted.

In addition she mentioned that, Sri Lanka can be proud about the contributions it has made over the decades, of course sometimes through trial and error, to preserve its high biodiversity, genetic resources and

to increase its potential to absorb carbon, which also contribute for the common good of the people of the planet earth, not just only those in Sri Lanka.

In 2018, Sri Lanka took the lead to head an Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods under the commonwealth Blue Charter. Our country is the first in the world to develop policy, guidelines and strategic action plan for conservation and sustainable utilization of mangroves.

In 2019 Sri Lanka submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions to the UNFCCC mechanism which has 03 key features, in comparison with several similar countries. They are that Sri Lanka commits to achieving net zero carbon by 2050, to generate 70% electricity from renewable energy sources and that Sri Lanka will not build any more coal power plants. In 2019 Sri Lanka also launched an international initiative to halve the Nitrogen Waste globally by 2030.

In 2022, Sri Lanka, supported by 24 countries brought in a Resolution at the UN to declare 1st of March as the World Seagrass Day to highlight the significance of seagrass as feeding and breeding areas for a number of fish species, and moreover, as a massive carbon sink.

"Sri Lanka is globally recognized for its advancement and commitment in contribution to mitigate climate change impact and the efforts to sustainably manage unparalleled ecosystems, diversity and the high endemism our greater assets. Such efforts locally are being recognized now more and more, locally and globally" she noted. She concluded remarking that at 75, as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, Sri Lankans are poised to work together as a nation with one identity.

After the conclusion of the official ceremony of the event, the participants enjoyed Sri Lankan traditional delicacies and Ceylon tea.

Aftermath of the earthquake in Türkiye – 06/02/2023





The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara is deeply saddened by the devastation that has resulted in due to massive earthquakes and tremors that has affected over 110,000 km² area in southern Türkiye, with massive loss of life and property.

On 06 February 2023, Kahramanmaraş Province in South-eastern Region of Türkiye was hit by 7.7 magnitude earthquake at 04:17 hrs and followed by two (02) after-quakes of 6.4 and 6.5 magnitudes which hit Gaziantep Province. Further, later on the same day at 13:24 hrs, another earthquake of 7.6

magnitudes in Elbistan city hit the in Kahramanmaraş Province.

Embassy immediately took steps to ensure that Sri Lankan citizens in the affected areas were safe with the assistance of the Hony. Consuls in Gaziantep and Adana.

Further, with the strong support of our Honorary Consuls for Sri Lanka in Gaziantep and Nevşehir the Embassy was able to evacuate three (03) university students from Kahramanmaraş and Sanliurfa to Ankara. Currently these three (03) students are accommodated at a hotel which is owned by the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Nevşehir, Mr. Mahmut Uluer.

However, it is with much regret that the Embassy informs that one Sri Lankan lady lost her life in Hatay.

Meanwhile, in solidarity with Turkish nation, the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara cancelled the diplomatic reception to celebrate Sri Lanka's 75th Anniversary of Independence which was to take place in the evening of 6th February 2023.

Further, four (04) other Sri Lanka events to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka combined with Sri Lanka promotional events comprising of traditional dance performances, photo exhibition highlighting Sri Lanka's biodiversity and achievements in environment and climate change front, food festival and a gem and jewellery exhibition in Ankara, Izmir, Antalya and Istanbul cities between 7th and 16th of February 2023 were postponed. 03 of these events were to take place in hotels of Anemon Group, owned by the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka for Izmir, Mr. Oguz Akcura. The Embassy of Sri Lanka lowered its flag early on 6th February 2023 and is continued to fly at half-mast for a week, in solidarity with Turkish people.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka visits Adana, the logistics hub for mobilizing assistance for the earthquake affected areas – 16/02/2023



Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye visited Adana on 16th February 2023 to receive the first donation from the government of Sri Lanka to Türkiye, a consignment of tea organized by the Sri Lanka Tea Board which came via Turkish Airlines to Istanbul and then to Adana. Adana has become a hub for distribution of emergency cargo coming from all over the world. Adana too was affected by the earthquake.

The said donation was first made to the Turkish Embassy in Colombo and upon arrival of the consignment in Adana, Ambassador Dissanayake was present for handed over the donation together with the Hony. Consul for Sri Lanka in the Mediterranean Region, Mr. Beşir Uğur in the presence of Mr. Ozkan Durmaz, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara to Mr. Vehbi Kaplan, the AFAD representative in Adana.

Ambassador called on H.E. Zeydan Karalar, Mayor of Adana Metropolitan Municipality – 16/02/2023



Ambassador called on H.E. Zeydan Karalar, Mayor of Adana Metropolitan Municipality and expressed her heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka over the tragic loss of lives, injuries and devastation caused by a series of earthquakes in Türkiye on 6th February 2023.

The Mayor of Adana thanked the Ambassador for visiting Adana to receive the first donation of 1500 kg of Ceylon tea donated by the Government of Sri Lanka to the affected victims in affected areas which are being distributed to affected people.



Further, the Mayor also appreciated the role of Mr. Beşir Uğur, Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka for the Mediterranean Region, for donating over 80,000 kg from his company BETA teas to the affected victims. Mr. Beşir Uğur, founded the BETA tea company in Türkiye in 1985 and in 1987 he opened an office in Sri Lanka, and is considered as the pioneering Turkish business enterprise to enter Sri Lanka in after the Sri Lanka's economy was opened. BETA tea is a leading tea company that makes Ceylon tea known in Türkiye and several other surrounding countries in Central Asia and Russia where they export teas.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka meets the Director General of Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Türkiye - 22/02/2023



Ms. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Türkiye met with Mr. Öztürk Selvitop, Director General for Foreign Relations at the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Türkiye recently to discuss on mutually beneficial collaborations between the two countries.

Following general discussions on the current situation of the energy and natural resources sectors of both Sri Lanka and Türkiye, as well as the global trends of sustainability and renewable energy were discussed, in the context of responsibilities of nations to adhere to best practices which would minimize the impact of climate change.

Ambassador briefed on opportunities for investment in renewable energy sector in Sri Lanka particularly noting that Sri Lanka has committed to generate 70% of its electricity requirement by 2030 from renewable energy sources as well as having certain elements, such as graphite which is also used in manufacturing solar batteries.

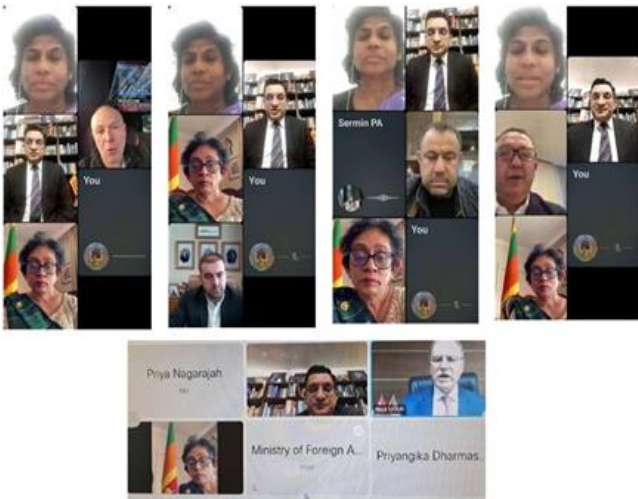
As suggested by the Director General Selvitop,

Ambassador agreed to share the relevant legislations, laws and regulations regarding the energy sector in Sri Lanka that can be then shared with the related enterprises in Türkiye. Ambassador also confirmed that the Embassy would share tenders and business proposals from Sri Lanka in the energy sector to be disseminated among the interested parties in Türkiye. Moving forward, it was agreed to start with online meetings between the government and sector representatives to discuss the avenues of cooperation in the field of energy between the two countries.

Ambassador also explained during the meeting that the agreements such as on reciprocal promotion and protection of investments, avoidance of double taxation and customs cooperation between Sri Lanka and Türkiye are expected to be operationalized in the coming months, which will be an incentive for potential Turkish investors to invest in Sri Lanka, including in the energy sector.

Further she also apprised the Director General on the recent visit of a private sector delegation from Türkiye to Sri Lanka, arranged by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ankara, to explore opportunities in the energy sector, including renewable energy.

Hon. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, virtually meets with some of the Honorary Consuls for Sri Lanka in Türkiye – 23/02/2023



The meeting was to express personal condolences to the Hony. Consuls in Izmir, Gaziantep, Nevsehir, Adana and Antalya on the on the recent devastating earthquake and the role they have played in supporting the safety of Sri Lankan citizens in the affected areas and the assistance extended to the Embassy in organizing multi-dimensional events to promote Sri Lanka marking the 75th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence, all of which eventually postponed due to the earthquake.

It was also joined by the Ambassador and First Secretary from the Sri Lanka embassy in Ankara as well as the Director general for Europe from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka.

Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Türkiye meets with Ambassador Haldun Koç, Head of Department of Strategy Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye - 24/02/2023



The call was focused on the process of handing over of the contribution of the Diplomatic Corps in Ankara collected to be donated to the earthquake victims.

The initiative was the brain child of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka and with the blessing of the Diplomatic Corps.

Donation of the contribution from the diplomatic Community to AFAD





Ambassador of Sri Lanka along with a few Ambassadors handed over the contribution of 123,500 Turkish Lira raised from the Diplomatic Corps based in Ankara to be used for relief efforts for earthquake victims in Türkiye to AFAD President, Mr. Yunus Sezer today at the AFAD Headquarters in Ankara.

AFAD is the Turkish agency responsible for disaster and emergency management functioning under the Turkish Presidency.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yasin Ekrem Serim, President of AFAD Mr. Yunus Sezer, Director General of South Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Oguzhan Ertugrul and Ambassadors of Djibouti, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand and Sri Lanka were present at the meeting that preceded the handing over of the donation at the AFAD headquarters.

Considering the devastating earthquakes that Türkiye encountered on 06 February 2023, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Ms. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake launched the initiative among the Ankara-based diplomats to make a token contribution in solidarity with the host country and its people at a time of an unprecedented catastrophe that has affected millions of people in the country, directly or indirectly.

As the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Djibouti was much involved in ensuring safety of over thousand Djibouti nationals in the affected areas, with

his blessings and many other Ambassadors, Ambassador Dissanayake took the responsibility for coordination of the donation.

With much positive response and support from the diplomatic community, token contribution of 123,500 Turkish Lira was collected by the Diplomatic Corps based in Ankara.

At the meeting to hand over the donation at AFAD, Deputy Foreign Minister Yasin Ekrem Serim and President of AFAD Mr. Yunus Sezer thanked Ambassador of Sri Lanka for the initiative of a donation by the diplomatic corps and also thanked other Ambassadors who have positively supported the idea to help victims of the earthquake. Further, he indicated that Türkiye will never forget nations which are standing by them during this unprecedented tragedy that the country has faced in modern times.

Further, Ambassador Dissanayake recalled that Türkiye in deed has supported Sri Lanka during its difficult times, such as during aftermath of 2004 tsunami, and during extreme weather events, COVID pandemic and most recently last year with medical supplies when the country was facing shortage of the same, and said that her contribution by way of coordinating this donation was a very small gesture of reciprocity. Ambassador also added that Sri Lankan disaster response teams are ready whenever they are needed to come and assist Türkiye.

President of AFAD briefed the Ambassadors present that from 11 most affected areas by the earthquake more than 40,000 people have died more than 14 million people and over 10,000 settlements affects. Further temporary accommodation has been provided by now to more than one million victims.

Deputy Foreign Minister appreciated the role played by the international community with more than 80 countries sending teams for search and rescue operations alone, by both air and by land, which are coordinated by the Ministry of foreign Affairs. He expressed his gratitude for the UN Humanitarian Appeal and also explained that Türkiye is facilitating aid to reach Syria.

After the meeting Ambassadors were taken on a tour to the AFAD emergency coordination centre, where representatives of all relevant government agencies are working round the clock.

Ending the tour of the centre, President of AFAD and the deputy Foreign Minister were much thankful of the heart-warming gesture by the diplomatic community in Ankara.