

58TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

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Exploring Sri Lanka

Today, the CPA delegates and participants will be in a lighter mood and throw their cares away as it were, and join in the fun and adventure of discovering Sri Lanka. All delegates, participants and spouses will be joining the conference excursions programme to discover some of the areas of scenic beauty in our country.

Koggala

Some participants have opted to enjoy the azure sea and the beautiful sunny beaches of Koggala.

Sigiriya

The more adventurous, younger, and the young at heart, have decided to take the long cross country bus ride, do a rustic trek and climb Sigiriya, the Lion Rock Fortress built in by King Kashyapa 1 (447 – 495 AD) which is world famous for its frescos of beautiful young women.

They represent 'apsaras' or celestial nymps, a common motif in the religious and royal art of Asia.

Kandy

The Temple of the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha in Kandy, one of the most sacred shrines etched in the hearts of Sri Lankan

Buddhists, is yet another destination. Visitors to this sacred place of veneration should be in suitable attire and not wear revealing clothes when they enter the temple.

Ladies should cover their arms (perhaps with a shawl in case you are wearing a sleeveless blouse) and wear a long skirt or a pair of slacks. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to enter the temple.

The participants will also visit Pinnawela to see the elephant orphanage.

Colombo City Tour

Then there is the Colombo City Tour that covers the National Museum, Kelaniya Temple, World Trade Centre, St. Lucia's Cathedral at Kotahena, Odel Fashion Store, and the Laksala Handicrafts Centre. Lunch will be at the beach front colonial style Galle Face Hotel which still retains the old world charm and is one of the oldest Hotels in Colombo.

Northern Province

A tour to the Northern Province has also been arranged. The Province includes 3 Administrative Districts,

viz; Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu. The delegates will be able to witness the post-conflict development activities in the area. Due to the long distance from Colombo to Jaffna, arrangements have been made for the Delegates to travel by air.

We at the CPA Branch Office Colombo hope that you will enjoy yourselves today.

Have a great day !



Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT)



The meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table was held in BCIS Auditorium at Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall yesterday.





City Tour of Spouses : Independence Square, Gangarama Temple, Parliament Complex



KANDY

Kandy was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings, and is a World Heritage Site. It was established in the 15th century and situated in the Central Hills of the country. The distance from Colombo to this scenic city is 115 kms. Famous for the Temple of the Tooth and many other historic temples the city could be called the cultural capital of the island.



and no head gear) In Kandy at present wet weather prevails.

in Pinnawala. When you visit the Pinnawala elephant orphanage,

Rajadhi Rajasinghe. Thereafter, the groundwork for a botanic garden was formed by Alexander Moon in 1821 during the colonial period. The Botanic Garden at Peradeniya was formally established in 1843 with plants brought from several parts of the Island, mostly with endemic species.

The classical Avenue of Palms is located in this Garden. One tree with a significant history is the Cannonball Tree planted by King George V of the United Kingdom and Queen Mary in 1901. The tree is bent with its fruits, which look like cannonballs. During the Second World War, the Botanic Garden was used by Lord Louis Mountbatten,

the supreme commander of the allied forces in the South Asia, as the headquarters of the South East Asia Command.



please refrain from wearing high heels.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Peradeniya is situated about 110 km from Colombo, close to the city of Kandy in the Central Province of Sri Lanka that attracts about 1.5 million visitors annually. It is renowned for its collection of a variety of orchids, and it includes more than 300 varieties of orchids, spices, medicinal plants and palm trees. Attached to it is the National Herbarium, the total area of the botanic garden is 147 acres (0.59 km²), at the elevation of 460m above sea level, and located in the tropical wet zone.

The origins of the Botanic Gardens date as far back as 1371 when King Wickramabahu III ascended the throne and kept court at Peradeniya near Mahaweli River. This was followed by King Kirti Sri and King

The main attraction of the city is the Temple of Tooth where one of Buddha's teeth is being kept. The Temple was built in the 16th century but improvements and additions have been done to this structure from time to time until the Kingdom fell in 1815. Daily traditional rituals are conducted at various times by Buddhist monks and temple officials. Kandy pageant of the temple is held either in July or August each year. The final night procession is the most spectacular event of the country. More than fifty elephants parade the city accompanied by drummers, dancers and chieftains.

The Kandy Lake built by the last Sinhala king Sri Wickrama Rajasinha in 1798 brings splendour to the city.

All visitors to the temple are expected to wear decent, casual attire (below-knee length pants or skirts, shoulder covered tops

THE ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE AT PINNAWALA

Pinnawala Elephant orphanage is designed to afford care and protection to the many baby elephants found in the jungle without their mothers and this place is situated in Rambukkana which belongs to Kegalle District. It was established in 1975 by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Department on a twenty five acre coconut property on the verge of Maha Oya river at Rambukkana. It is also breeding place for elephants; the first elephant baby was born in 1984. Between 1975 and 2012, 67 animals were born at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage. Pinnawala has now become one of the bigger orphanages and is quite well known worldwide. By Now, there were 88 elephants, including 37 males and 51 females from 3 generations, living

CWP Women's Anthem

All across the Nations
All around the World
Women are longing to be free
No longer in the shadows
Forced to stay behind
But side by side
In true equality

So sing a song for women
For women everywhere
Let it ring around the world
And never never cease
So sing a song for women everywhere
Equality development and peace

Women can't be silent
When all around the world
People hurt and hungry children cry
We will sing out now for Justice and development
And hold the rights
Of all the People high
So sing a song.....

Women now are working
To build a better world
Where the love of peace
Can rest on every shore
Where men lay down their weapons
And learn to love and share
And people work
To bring an end to war
So sing a song



Workshop on 'Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs'

Hon. Dale Allison Graham, MLA (New Brunswick) Chaired the above workshop held at the BMICH yesterday. The Discussion Leaders were Senator Stephen Parry (Australia), Senator Ian Gorst (Jersey), Senator Raynell Andrechuk (Canada) and Hon. Michael A. Peart (Jamaica).

In his presentation Senator Ian Gorst explained how best adequate Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs could be ensured. He said it was difficult to define the exact meaning of the phrase 'Parliamentary scrutiny.' He focused three key questions concerning Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign affairs.

- What are the areas of foreign affairs that Parliaments would wish to scrutinize?
- Is there a way it can be done together?
- Is there a way to work more in parallel as issues and policies develop, as opposed to conducting retrospective inquests?

Furthermore he pointed out that Parliaments' scrutiny of foreign affairs generally tend to concentrate on policy and administration.

Senator Raynell Andrechuk pointed out the importance of national and international policy for ensuring Parliamentary scrutiny. She explained how to implement certain policy structures. It was essential to rethink and restructure foreign policy. She stated that

Parliamentarians have an expanded role at national and international level to build up a strong foreign policy.

At the discussion that followed it was pointed out that at the level of policy making there should be external relations with different nations. Parliamentarians and party groups should be responsible in the decision making process. Oversight Committees, Parliamentary questions and discussions were the main component of Parliamentary scrutiny. Relationships should be developed between ministers and communities.

Members discussed questions regarding their own countries and shared their experiences with regard to foreign affairs.

Members of Society of Clerks-at-the-Table



Work shop on “Should the Commonwealth Establish a Commissioner for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights”

The work shop under the topic of “Should the Commonwealth Establish a Commissioner for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights” commenced at 11.00 a.m. yesterday in the committee room ‘B’ of BMICH.

The Discussion was Chaired by Hon. Marwick Khumalo, MP of Swaziland and the Discussion Leaders were Senator Farogh Naseem of Pakistan and Mr. Hugh Bayley of United Kingdom.

Hon. Hugh Bayley of United Kingdom came up with several recommendations. One was to establish a Human Right Commission within CPA to ensure human rights, democracy and the rule of law. During the discussion he said that many countries of CPA have implemented co- values such as democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law and already some member countries have included a chapter on Human Rights to their constitutions.

He stated that although many recommendations had been submitted to establish a Commissioner for Human Rights, still it has not been implemented. He urged to appoint such a Commissioner for CPA countries.



Some of the Members opposed the establishment of a Human Rights Commissioner. They insisted that there were various voluntary organizations in the world including United Nations to ensure Human Rights, Democracy and the Rules of Law of the member countries. I was pointed out that such a move could create confusion among such organizations.

Some of the members supported the discussion leader but they proposed to establish a Human Rights Commission inclusive of several members rather than establishing a Commissioner for Human Rights.



Blue Lotus
Sri Lanka's National Flower

Participants of CWP Business Meeting and Session



KOGGALA

Koggala is located in the southern coast of Southern Province and it is a wide stretched village in Sri Lanka with beautiful beaches and some of the best surf spots on the Island. Attractive and tranquil Koggala lagoon is dotted with rocky islands and fringed with mangroves.

Koggala beach is a beautiful stretch of clear, soft, golden sand, perfect for long walks. The area is generally recommended for a visit to the Martin Wickramasinghe Folk Art Museum or for a ride to one of the islands on the Lake. There is, however, a lot more to Koggala. You can ride on a catamaran around the Lake with a local villager. Interesting places to visit in Koggala are Buddhist hermitages which are situated on a couple of islets on the Koggala lake.

Many little shops are close by, perfect for your daily needs. Little beach restaurants offer fresh seafood and provide excellent views overlooking the picturesque Bay.

MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE FOLK ART MUSEUM



The Folk Museum Complex was a lifelong dream for Sri Lankan famous author Martin Wickramasinghe, who was born in 1890. His books had been translated into many languages. The Museum is divided into five main sections, namely the house where he was born, the Hall of Life, the Samadhi, the Museum of Folk Culture and the restored environment. The various objects of folk culture acquired during his lifetime have been the starting point of the collection found in the museum, which was opened in 1981.

The Complex is surrounded by a restored ecosystem planted with hundreds of varieties of indigenous trees and shrubs in which bird life abounds. It is an ideal place to get to know the author better, to understand a little of what Koggala and its people meant to him.

The Hall of his Life is an extension of the house which celebrates the life and times of Martin Wickramasinghe through the display of photographs, paintings, sketches, souvenirs, awards and assorted memorabilia.

Copies of published works, as well as handwritten manuscripts are available for study there. Now a -

days, it is the home of various artifacts belonging to the Sri Lankan culture.

The house has been renovated in such a way that it preserves much of the original architecture, some of which is believed to be about a couple of hundred years old. The original furniture and many of Wickramasinghe's personal belongings are still in place recreating life as it was when the author was amongst the living.

The Museum is administered by The Martin Wickramasinghe Trust.



Regional Group Meetings

The four Regional Group Meetings of Africa, Asia, Australia, British Islands and Mediterranean were held on 11th September 2012 at the Committee Rooms A,C,D, & E of the BMICH, Colombo.

The Regional Group Meetings of Canada, Caribbean, India, Pacific and South East Asia too were held on 11th September 2012 at the BCIS and Committee rooms B & F of the BMICH, Colombo.

Regional Secretaries Meeting

A Breakfast Meeting of

Regional Secretaries was held on 11th September at Spices, Hilton Hotel.

Briefing of Delegates

A briefing was given for delegates, observers, secretaries and spouses followed by briefings for workshop Moderators, Discussion Leaders, Rapporteurs and Session Secretaries on 11th September 2012.

Visit to Parliament

The CPA delegation visited the Sri Lanka Parliamentary complex at Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte on 11th September 2012.

Today

13.09.2012

ALL DAY Conference Excursions -
Kandy / Sigiriya / Koggala / Colombo City Tour

Free Evening / High Commission Functions

Women's Agenda in Parliament

CWP Session on 'Is there such a thing as a Women's Agenda in parliament? If not, why not? If so, what should it be?' was held in the BMICH yesterday.

It was pointed out that in the present world although there are about 20 women Heads of State, public policies reflect that there

Fernandopulle, MP (Sri Lanka), President CWP, Senator Helen Polley (Australia), Hon. Myrna Driedger, MLA (Manitoba) and Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya (CPA, Secretariat).

The session focused on the following key points:

- That any women in the public arena must be prepared to work as equal as a man,
- Specific attention should be given to increase women's representation up to a minimum of 30 per cent.
- The need to increase youth representation in the legislature,
- Steps should be taken to change the attitude in the early age to create a mindset that women too should enter parliament.
- Political parties should be encouraged and motivated in order to achieve the goals.

The session was Chaired by Hon. Alix Boyd-Knights (Dominica), Chairperson, CWP. The discussion leaders were Hon. (Dr.) Sudarshini

Singing the CWP Women's Anthem



Workshop on 'Empowering future generations through access to health, education and vocational training'



Hon. Annette King,
Member of Parliament,
New Zealand

Hon. Manoharan Malayalam,
Member of Legislative
Assembly, Selangor,
Malaysia (Federal)



Today's weather

Colombo



Kandy



Galle



Jaffna



Workshop on 'Empowering Future Generations through Access to Health, Education and Vocational Training'

Prof. Carlo Fonseka, President of Sri Lanka Medical Council and the Chairman of National Authority on Tobacco & Alcohol addressing the above workshop pointed out the importance of empowering the future generation through access to health. The workshop was held yesterday at Committee Room A, BMICH. It was chaired by Hon. Chandiana Weerakody, Deputy Speaker of the Sri Lanka Parliament.

Referring to the quotation that a 'wealthier nation could be a healthier nation' due to the high income level, he presented a cross country comparison of Physical Quality of Life (PQLI) which expressed life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy and maternal mortality. According to that way of thinking, a high income country has high PQLI and a Low income country has a low PQLI.

Quoting Morris D. Morris who introduced PQLI, Prof. Fonseka explained that Morris had pointed out that Sri Lanka provided the most dramatic example of a country that has been able to achieve remarkable life quality results at staggeringly low levels of income. If other countries could duplicate Sri Lanka's experience, 1.6 billion people would be affected.

Prof. Fonseka explained that there were three main reasons for the progress of the health care system even with the middle level income of Sri Lanka. The first reason was historically Sri Lanka had inherited a tradition of state intervention in providing access to health. Secondly, after receiving universal franchise in 1931 people shrewdly used their voting power to extract more and more social welfare from competing governing elite and it included greater access to healthcare, free education, subsidized food and transport. Thirdly, during World War II, as part of the war effort there was massive state intervention in food distribution and delivery of healthcare and this practice was continued even after the war ended.

He stated that the living condition of the country can be influenced politically, economically and socially and in his opinion the most influential factor was the political factor since the progress of the health care system depended on the level of government intervention.

Dr. Sunil Jayantha Nawaratne, Secretary Ministry of Higher Education Sri Lanka stated that the education system in Sri Lanka was unique since it provided free education for all up to university level. It was not only education but other

facilities too were provided free such as Mahapola scholarships, bursaries, free books, free uniforms and concessional transport. Dr. Nawaratne mentioned that the objective of our next massive leap forward was to transform Sri Lanka into a strategically important economic centre of the world.

In his presentation Prof. Dayantha Wijeyesekera Chairman, Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission & Chancellor of University of Vocational Technology focused on the achievement and challenges of tertiary education. He defined tertiary education as post secondary education which included higher education and professional education. Dr. Wijeyesekera stated that the main challenges of tertiary education were GCE Ordinary Level and Advanced Level. The degree syndrome had to be aggressively eliminated and we needed a mindset change among Secondary School Students and to get Parliamentarians to play a positive interactive role.

The discussions that followed mainly focused on the exchange of regional experiences on progress and challenges on health care system, education and vocational training based on the presentations of Sri Lankan professional panellist.

Workshop on 'Empowering future generations through access to health, education and vocational training'

