

NEWS LETTER 9

JANUARY 2025



UAE Travel Agencies Join "Sri Lanka is Ready" Campaign

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi worked with Travel Agencies on the "Sri Lanka is Ready Campaign". The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi, UAE, hosted a tourism promotional event and briefing session for UAE outbound tour operators actively engaged in sending travellers to Sri Lanka. The session focused on strategies to accelerate tourism flows to Sri Lanka, highlighting new opportunities, the growing interest among UAE travellers, and the strong potential the country holds as a welcoming destination.

During her remarks, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Arab Emirates, Prof. Arusha Cooray, presented detailed insights into Sri Lanka's natural beauty, cultural diversity, and unique tourism offerings. She made an earnest appeal to travel agents to promote Sri Lanka as a safe destination for UAE travellers, emphasising that major tourist sites continued to operate smoothly.

Mr. Nalin Jayasundara, Managing Director of Aitken Spence Travels, also joined the session virtually and highlighted that Sri Lanka remains fully open to tourists despite the recent effects of Cyclone Ditwah. The Embassy looks forward to working closely with UAE based travel agents to strengthen people-to-people ties and promote Sri Lanka as a safe, diverse, and attractive tourist destination.



Almsgiving Ceremony Held at Sri Lanka Embassy Ahead of New Year's Eve Sermon

The Embassy staff offered an afternoon almsgiving to the Buddhist monks who were preparing for the all night Dhamma sermon held at the Sri Lanka Embassy premises in Abu Dhabi on December 31.

දෙසැම්බර් 31 වන දින රාත්‍රියේ අබ්බඩාබේ හි ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාල පරිශ්‍රයේ පැවැත්වීමට නියමිත සර්වරාත්‍රික පරිත්‍රාණ ධර්ම දේශනාව සඳහා වැඩිමවා වදාළ ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේ උදෙසා තානාපති කාර්යාල සේවක මණ්ඩලය දහවල් දානය පූජා කරන ලදී.



Sri Lankan Embassy in Abu Dhabi Ceremonially Commences Work for 2026

H.E. the Ambassador and the staff of the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi officially commenced work for the year 2026 on 02 January 2026 with the hoisting of the National Flag, followed by the National Anthem at the Chancery.

In her address, H.E. the Ambassador highlighted the key goals for the year and outlined the annual plan aimed at further promoting Sri Lanka in the United Arab Emirates.



Sri Lankan Delegation Participates in 16th IRENA Assembly in Abu Dhabi

The Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Arab Emirates, Dr. Arusha Cooray and Ms. Priya Nagarajah, First Secretary of the Embassy attended the 16th Session of the Assembly of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) held from 10 - 12 January 2026 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

On the sidelines of the Assembly, Dr. Arusha Cooray also met with H.E. Dr. Amna Al Dahak, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of United Arab Emirates and the Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates to IRENA.



Sri Lankan Ambassador and Abu Dhabi University Explore Academic Cooperation

H.E the Ambassador Professor Arusha Cooray had the pleasure meeting the leadership team of Abu Dhabi University. The discussions opened up several avenues for mutual cooperation in business, economics and international relations.





First-Ever Collaborative Thaipongal Event Held at Sri Lanka Embassy premises in UAE

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates together with the Sri Lankan Tamil community, celebrated Thaipongal at the Embassy premises.

This marks the first time the Embassy has collaborated with the Sri Lankan community to host a Thaipongal celebration.

Dr. Arusha Cooray, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Arab Emirates, highlighted in her remarks the significance of Thaipongal and the importance of unity among Sri Lanka's multi religious and multi ethnic communities.





එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ අබුඩාබි හි ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකා දෙමළ ප්‍රජාව සමඟ එක්ව තානාපති කාර්යාල පරිශ්‍රයේ දී තෛපොංගල් උත්සවය සැමරීය.

එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාලය ශ්‍රී ලාංකික ප්‍රජාව සමඟ එක්ව තෛපොංගල් උත්සවයක් සංවිධානය කළ පළමු අවස්ථාව මෙය වේ.

එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති ආචාර්ය අරුණා කුරේ මහත්මිය සිය අදහස් දැක්වීමේදී තෛපොංගල් උත්සවයේ වැදගත්කම සහ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ බහු ආගමික සහ බහු වාර්ගික ප්‍රජාවන් අතර එකමුතුකමේ වැදගත්කම ඉස්මතු කළාය.

එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ අබුඩාබි හි ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකා දෙමළ ප්‍රජාව සමඟ එක්ව තානාපති කාර්යාල පරිශ්‍රයේ දී තෛපොංගල් උත්සවය සැමරීය.

එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති කාර්යාලය ශ්‍රී ලාංකික ප්‍රජාව සමඟ එක්ව තෛපොංගල් උත්සවයක් සංවිධානය කළ පළමු අවස්ථාව මෙය වේ.

එක්සත් අරාබි එමීර් රාජ්‍යයේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා තානාපති ආචාර්ය අරුණා කුරේ මහත්මිය සිය අදහස් දැක්වීමේදී තෛපොංගල් උත්සවයේ වැදගත්කම සහ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ බහු ආගමික සහ බහු වාර්ගික ප්‍රජාවන් අතර එකමුතුකමේ වැදගත්කම ඉස්මතු කළාය.

ஐக்கிய அரபு அமீரகத்தின் அபுதாபியில் உள்ள இலங்கை தூதரகம், இலங்கைத் தமிழ் சமூகத்துடன்

இணைந்து, தூதரக வளாகத்தில் தைப்பொங்கல் விழாவை கொண்டாடியது.

இலங்கை சமூகத்துடன் இணைந்து தைப்பொங்கல் விழாவை நடத்துவது இதுவே முதன்முறையாகும்

என்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது.

ஐக்கிய அரபு அமீரகத்திற்கான இலங்கைத் தூதுவர் பேராசிரியர் அருஷா கூரே, தைப்பொங்கலின்

முக்கியத்துவம் மற்றும் இலங்கையின் பல இன மத சமூகங்களுக்கிடையிலான ஒற்றுமையின் அவசியம்

குறித்து தனது உரையில் சுற்றிக்காட்டினார்.

Delegation from the Sri Lanka Air Force visit Abu Dhabi

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chief of the Presidential Court for Special Affairs and Chairman of the Council for Intelligent Autonomous Systems, ADNEC Group in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence held the Seventh Session of the Unmanned Systems Exhibition (UMEX) and the Simulation and Training Exhibition (SimTEX) 2026, from 20-22nd January 2026 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Air Vice Marshal, Mr. A. Hettiarachchi, Group Captain, Mr. I. Chandrathilake and Wing Commander, Mr. K.J.C. Peiris attended the Exhibition from Sri Lanka. The Ambassador, Dr Arusha Cooray, met with a delegation from the Sri Lanka Airforce during their visit to Abu Dhabi.



Sri Lanka Strengthens Economic Ties with UAE Through Major Dubai Investment Forum

A high-level Sri Lankan delegation including the Governor of the Central Bank, Hon. Mr. Chaturanga Abeysinghe, the Deputy Minister of Industries and Entrepreneurship Development, the Chairman and Deputy Director of the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Director, CEO, and Senior Vice President Marketing Colombo Stock Exchange, as well as senior leadership from the Colombo Port City project, undertook an official visit to the United Arab Emirates.

As part of this mission, an investment forum was convened in Dubai on 22 January, bringing together potential investors, business leaders, and key stakeholders. The event aimed to highlight the current state of the Sri Lankan economy, emerging opportunities in Sri Lanka, strengthen economic ties with the UAE, and encourage greater foreign investment into the country's rapidly developing sectors.



Sri Lankan Embassy and Bankers Association Host Major Financial Forum in Dubai

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in the United Arab Emirates in partnership with the Sri Lankan Bankers Association in UAE successfully held a Financial Institutions Forum on 23 January 2026 in Dubai.

The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe, Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, and Hon. Mr. Chathuranga Abeyasinghe, Deputy Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development of Sri Lanka.

The Governor of Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Hon. Deputy Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development shared valuable perspectives on Sri Lanka's economic direction and the nation's ongoing efforts to strengthen political stability. A meaningful gathering that brought together bankers committed to supporting Sri Lanka's growth and resilience.



Farewell to Father Roy Clarency

It is with deep sadness that we bid farewell to Father Roy Clarence, who dedicated so much of his life to serving and uplifting our community. His compassion, commitment, and quiet strength have left a lasting impact on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

To honour his service, Mr. Swaminathan, President of the Sri Lanka Business Council, hosted a farewell dinner in his name. The Ambassador Dr. Arusha Cooray and Head of Chancery Priya Nagarajah, attended the event.

Welcome Father Gabriel Gunasekaran

We also warmly welcome Rev. Gabriel Gunasekaran, whose presence and leadership will no doubt continue to strengthen and inspire our community.

Minister Wasantha Samarasingha Attends Gulfood

Minister Wasantha Samarasingha visited the Sri Lanka Country Pavilion at Gulfood, organized by the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB). Sri Lanka had the largest-ever participation this year at Gulfood with 62 exhibitors, occupying a total area of 510 square meters.

H.E. the Ambassador, Dr Arusha Cooray and Head of Chancery and First Secretary, Priya Nagarajah, together with Consular General Mr Alexi Gunsekera and Counsellor, Subhashini Silva attended the Gulf Food Expo, where Sri Lankan entrepreneurs and brands demonstrated a strong presence on the international stage. The showcase of high quality products reflected the capability of Sri Lanka's business sector.

The attendance of Hon. Wasantha Samarasinghe, Minister of Trade Sri Lanka, highlighted the country's strategic focus on strengthening global trade partnerships and supporting the expansion of local industries into new markets.





Meeting with Sharjah Chamber

The Hon. minister Wasantha Samarasinghe met with Chairman: H.E. Abdallah Sultan Al Owaisof the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss opportunities for trade and investment cooperation.

During the meeting, the Minister extended an invitation for the Sharjah Chamber to lead a business delegation to Expo Sri Lanka 2026.

The Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the UAE, Dr. Arusha Cooray, Consul General Alexi Gunasekera, Counsellor Subashini Silva, and other officials attended the meeting.





Meeting H.E. Dr Thani during the visit of H.E. Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe

Held a positive and constructive meeting with H.E. Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade during the visit of Hon. Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe, Minister of Trade of Sri Lanka. Discussions focused on strengthening and expanding trade relations between Sri Lanka and the UAE.







Hon. Minister Dr Anil Jayantha attends Abu Dhabi Dialogue

In line with the ongoing expansion of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and its growing importance as a platform for regional labour mobility cooperation, Minister Dr. Anil Jayantha participated in the latest sessions of the Dialogue. The Hon. Ministers presence signals Sri Lanka's commitment to strengthening partnerships, enhancing safe and productive migration pathways, and contributing meaningfully to the shared priorities of member states.

The Minister of was accompanied by Mr. L. T. G. D. Darshana, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour of Sri Lanka and Ms. Sewwandi De Silva, Director Middle East, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism of Sri Lanka. The Ambassador Dr Arusha Cooray, also attended the meetings.



Consul General Joins Sri Lanka Catholic Society at St. Francis of Assisi Church

The Consul General attended the Holy Mass organized by the Sri Lanka Catholic society at Jabel Ali St Francis of Assisi church to welcome 2026. Celebrated by Rev Fr Roy Clarence



Sri Lankan Consulate Meets Pakistan Business Council to Drive Portfolio Investment

The Consul General of Sri Lanka to Dubai and Northern Emirates, Mr. Alexi Gunasekera together with Ms. Subhashini Silva, Counsellor, at the Consulate General met with Mr. Muhammad Shabbir-Chairman, Mr. Kamran Ahmed Riaz , Senior Vice President and Mr. Shahid Iftikhar - Manager of the Pakistan Business Council 05 January 2026 to discuss the Invest Sri Lanka Forum held on 22 January 2026 in Dubai.



Sri Lankan Consul General Briefs Indian Business Council (IBPC) on Investment Opportunities

The Consul General of Sri Lanka to Dubai and Northern Emirates, Mr. Alexi Gunasekera met with Mr. Siddhart Balachandran, Chairman of Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC), Mr. Amitava Banerjee, General Manager of IBPC and Senior Officials on 05 January 2026 discussed the Invest Sri Lanka Forum held on 22 January 2026 in Dubai. The IBPC Chairman and the team was briefed on key trade and investment events organized by the Sri Lanka Consulate General in Dubai with a view to fostering bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.



Sri Lanka and NRTC Group Collaborate to Enhance Fresh Produce Supply Chains

Mr. Ali Nassar Al Refaj, CEO of the NRTC Group in the UAE and his team met with Mr. Alexi Gunasekera, Consul General of Sri Lanka to Dubai & Northern Emirates and Ms. Subhashini Silva, Counsellor at the Consulate General to discuss expanding the export of fresh fruits and vegetables from Sri Lanka to the UAE. The NRTC is the largest importer of fresh fruits and vegetables in the UAE and the discussions provided an opportunity to reflect on enhancing Sri Lanka's exports and strengthening bilateral trade between the two countries. Mr. Sudesh Sudar CEO of SMD International Hospitality Group (UAE/USA/INDIA/SRI LANKA/ITALY) facilitated the said meeting.



Sri Lankan Mission Secures Strategic Backing from Dubai Chambers for Investment Forum

Mr. Alexi Gunasekera, Consul General of Sri Lanka to Dubai & Northern Emirates and Ms. Subhashini Silva, Counselor met with H. E. Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, the President and the CEO of the Dubai Chambers and the Senior Officials and briefed them on the Invest Sri Lanka Forum held on 22 January 2026 in Dubai. The Investment Forum was organized by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka and Colombo Stock Exchange in coordination with the Sri Lanka Missions in the UAE, Port City Colombo and relevant Associations in the UAE to promote portfolio investments in Sri Lanka. The officials were briefed on key trade and investment promotion events organized by the Sri Lanka Consulate General in Dubai.



Department of Commerce and Consulate Partner to Boost Sri Lankan Exports to UAE

At a networking session organized by the Sri Lanka Consulate General in Dubai with the support of the Department of Commerce Sri Lanka, the Hon minister met with members of 9 Sri Lankan Professional associations, the Pakistan Business Council and major importers and distributors in the UAE to discuss the promotion of Sri Lanka exports to the UAE market and diversification of Sri Lanka export products. The Minister invited them to organize a delegation to the Sri Lanka Expo to be held in 2026 June and facilitates more export products to the UAE.



IBPC UAE to Explore Major Business Delegation to Colombo this June

Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe met with the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) UAE to discuss potential cooperation aimed at boosting trade and investment between Sri Lanka and the UAE. IBPC is a leading chamber with a strong and diverse membership base. The meeting was organized by the Consulate General at the Consulate General's office. During the discussion, the Minister invited IBPC to organize a business delegation to Expo Sri Lanka 2026.



Minister Wasantha Samarasingha Explores Direct Export Routes at Gulfood 2026

During his visit to Gulfood 2026, Hon. Wasantha Samarasingha held discussions with SAFCO International General Trading Co. L.L.C., alongside Emirates SkyCargo, to explore opportunities to strengthen Sri Lanka's food exports to the UAE. SAFCO is a leading food service distributor, importer, and exporter of premium food and non-food products across the UAE, the Middle East, and global markets.



Sri Lankan Catholic Community Welcomes Rev. Fr. Gabriel Gunasekaran to Dubai

The Catholic Community in Dubai, UAE, organized a Holy Mass at Oud Metha Catholic Church to warmly welcome the new Sri Lankan priest, Rev. Gabriel Gunasekaran. The Holy Mass was attended by members of the community, including Alexi Gunasekera Consul General of Sri Lanka in Dubai.

