



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Media Release

National Seminar

on

'India-Sri Lanka Relations In Present Context: Is It Time For Reorientation of Policy?'

(28-29 August 2019)

The Indian Council of World Affairs organised a National Seminar on **India-Sri Lanka Relations in Present Context: Is it the time for Reorientation of policy?** on 29-30th August 2019 at Sapru House, New Delhi. The participants of the seminar included five former ambassadors, scholars from eleven universities and five think tanks, defence and intelligence personnel and journalists. Welcome remarks were delivered by Ambassador T.C.A. Raghavan, Director General, ICWA and the Opening Remarks were delivered by Ambassador Nirupama Rao, Former Foreign Secretary, Government of India and Former High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka. The seminar had five sessions covering historical linkages, reminiscences of India-Sri Lanka relations in 80s, political ties, economic and security aspects of bilateral relations.

The First Session of the seminar, **India-Sri Lanka Contemporary Dimensions of Historical and Civilisational Linkages**, was chaired by Ambassador Nirupama Rao. The panellists of the session were Dr. Niranjan Jena, Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Pali & Sraakrit, Bhasha-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal; Dr. N. Manoharan, Associate professor, CHRIST University, Bangalore; Dr. Umakanta Mishra, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Ravenshaw, University, Cuttack, Odisha and Mr. N. Sathiya Moorthy, Senior Fellow and Director, ORF, Chennai. This session emphasized the contemporary relevance of historical linkages between India and Sri Lanka and the need to revive history which was burdened with conflicting perceptions on both the Tamil and Sinhala linkages. This

session also touched upon reviving and promoting tourism based on historical linkages for better understanding of bilateral ties.

The Second Session: **The Shadows of the 80s. How Long? How dark?** was chaired by Ambassador Ronen Sen and the panellists of the session were Ambassador T.P. Sreenivasan, Director of the NSS Academy of Civil Services and Director General of the Kerala International Centre, Thiruvananthapuram; Lt. Gen. A. S. Kalkat, Former IPKF Commander & implementer of Indo Sri Lanka Accord 1987; Ambassador Ranjan Mathai, Former Foreign Secretary, GOI; Mr. T. Ramakrishnan, Associate Editor, The Hindu, Chennai; Air Marshal M. Matheswaran AVSM VM PhD, President, The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai; Mr. Pratap Heblkar, Former Special Secretary Government of India; Mr. S.V. Venkat Narayan, President of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia (FCC), New Delhi; Prof. R. Manivannan, Head, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Madras. This session was conducted under Chatum House rules.

The Third Session on Issues in **Contemporary Sri Lankan Polity: Implications for India-Sri Lanka Relations** was chaired by Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, Director General, ICWA and the panellists of the session were Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera, Professor, Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; Dr. S. Y. Surendra Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bangalore University, Bangalore; Dr. Shweta Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, South Asian University (SAU) and Dr. Sripathi Narayanan, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs. In this session, the speakers highlighted the need to study in depth the cultural, ethnic, religious linkages that exist between India and Sri Lanka that define the political cooperation between the two countries as also to understand the emerging non-traditional security threats in the region. Indian federalism and the Centre-State interface in shaping policy towards Sri Lanka was discussed. The rise of Buddhist nationalism and its impact was discussed as also the recent debate around a new Constitution in Sri Lanka.

Session Four was on **India-Sri Lanka Economic and Development Cooperation: Issues and Prospects**; this session was chaired by **Ambassador T.P. Sreenivasan**. The panellists of the session were Prof. Nisha Taneja, Indian Council for Research on Internal Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi; Prof. Biswajit Nag, Professor, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi; Dr. Jabin Thomas Jacob, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations and Governance Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SoHSS), Shiv Nadar University, Uttar Pradesh. This session discussed the present state of economic cooperation and trade and investment linkages between the two countries and China's approach of economic diplomacy with Sri Lanka.

The Fifth Session on **Security Dimensions of India-Sri Lanka Cooperation** was chaired by Ambassador Ranjan Mathai, Former Foreign Secretary, GOI. The panellists of the session were Mr. Mohan K. Tikku, Author “After the Fall: Sri Lanka in Victory and War”, New Delhi; Prof. A. Subramanyam Raju, Professor, UMISARC - Centre for South Asian Studies, School of Social Sciences & International Studies, Pondicherry; Dr. T.C. Karthikheyan, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Development Administration, Gandhigram Rural Institute (A Central Deemed to be University), Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu; Dr. Samatha Mallempati, Research Fellow, ICWA, New Delhi and Dr. Gulbin Sultana, Research Analyst, IDSA, New Delhi. This session discussed the security aspects of cooperation and the opportunities that exist in enhancing blue economy cooperation, tourism and connectivity. This session also discussed Sri Lanka’s foreign and defence relations and their possible impact on bilateral relations as well as Sri Lanka’s role in the emerging contours of Indo-Pacific.

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