

Sri Lanka-China Friendship

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The Newsletter of Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association



Mutual respect for
territorial integrity and
sovereignty

Non-aggression

Equality and mutual benefit

Peaceful co-existence,

Non-interference in each
other's internal affairs



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Table of Contents

- | | |
|----|---|
| 05 | Special Photography Exhibition Commemorates 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China |
| 06 | SLCFA Unveils "Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama" book |
| 08 | SLCFA Collaborates with China Foundation for Rural Development to Provide Aid to Underprivileged School Children |
| 10 | SLCFA Celebrates 74th Anniversary with a Book Donation to the National Library |
| 11 | SLCFA EVP Aruna Goonatileke Reflects on Memorable Participation in CPAFFC's 70th Anniversary Celebrations in Beijing |
| 13 | Kunming Initiative of the 5th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum Highlights Green and Sustainable Development – Representation of SLCFA |
| 15 | History of SLCFA |

Sri Lanka-China Friendship



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From the President

It is my great pleasure to extend heartfelt congratulations on the inaugural issue of the “Sri Lanka - China Friendship”, a newsletter publication dedicated to celebrating and strengthening the deep bonds between our two nations. This magazine marks a new chapter in fostering people-to-people friendship, bringing our shared history, culture, and aspirations to life for readers in both Sri Lanka and China.

For over seven decades, the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA) has been committed to building bridges of understanding and cooperation. With each page of this magazine, we hope to inspire the spirit of mutual respect, highlight our enduring friendship, and showcase the collaborative endeavors that continue to enhance our connection.

May “Sri Lanka - China Friendship” be a beacon of goodwill, fostering greater unity, and may it serve as a source of pride and inspiration for generations to come.

Ananda Goonatileke, Attorney-at-Law, President SLCFA

Special Photography Exhibition Commemorates 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China



The Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA) inaugurated a special photography exhibition titled “After Liberation: China’s Development in 75 Years,” celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Hosted under the distinguished patronage of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Sri Lanka, the exhibition ran from October 28 to October 29 at the Exhibition Hall of the Public Library in Colombo, offering visitors a vivid journey through China’s transformation since 1949.

The opening ceremony was marked by the presence of Hon. Mr. Hanif Yusoof, Governor of the Western Province, as the Chief Guest, and His Excellency Qi Zhenhong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Sri Lanka, as Guest of Honour. The exhibition traced China’s impressive strides in economic reform, infrastructure, technology, and social development over the past seven decades, showcasing the deep-rooted friendship between Sri Lanka and China.

In his welcome address, Mr. Ananda Goonatilleke, President of SLCFA, underscored the organization’s commitment to strengthening ties between the two nations and thanked the Chinese Embassy for its support in bringing the exhibition to fruition. He acknowledged the event’s slight delay, initially scheduled for October 1, due to the Sri Lankan Presidential election.

Governor Yusoof’s Tribute to China

Governor Hanif Yusoof delivered a speech that celebrated China’s achievements and steadfast support for Sri Lanka. Reflecting on his memories of the iconic Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), a landmark gifted by China, he noted that “China’s support has always been invaluable.” He highlighted China’s timely assistance during recent Sri Lankan floods, describing it as “a gesture that solidified the friendship between our two countries.”



Ambassador Qi's Reflections on China's Resilience

In his address, Ambassador Qi Zhenhong reflected on China's transformative journey over the past 75 years, led by the Communist Party of China (CPC). He spoke of China's progress from a nation striving for stability to one that is now prosperous and strong, with reforms and modernization set to continue under the CPC's vision.

"China and Sri Lanka share a friendship that spans over 2,000 years," Ambassador Qi said, referencing the historic Rubber-Rice Pact as a testament to the nations' unity. He reiterated China's commitment to supporting Sri Lanka's

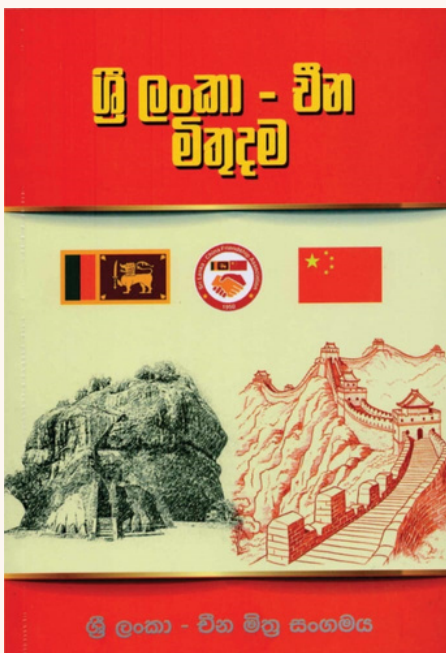
growth and resilience, adding, "The people of Sri Lanka are resilient and will overcome today's challenges, ushering in prosperity."

A Celebration of Enduring Friendship

Following the speeches, Mr. Prasad Wijesuriya, General Secretary of SLCFA, extended a heartfelt vote of thanks to all attendees and contributors, emphasizing the SLCFA's commitment to nurturing the longstanding friendship between the two nations. The exhibition's collection of photographs offered a rich visual narrative of China's journey, leaving attendees with a renewed appreciation for China's development and its impact on the world.

Among the distinguished attendees were Mr. Aruna Goonatileke, Executive Vice President of SLCFA; Vice Presidents Mr. D.M.P. Dissanayake and Mr. Thilak Botheju; Mr. Gamini Rajanayaka, Treasurer; Ms. Chinta Goonatileke, Assistant Secretary; and Mr. Tharindu Suresh, Assistant Treasurer, alongside numerous other dignitaries. The event underscored the deep and abiding friendship between Sri Lanka and China, celebrating shared achievements and mutual aspirations for the future.

SLCFA Unveils "Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama" book



The book cover of the "Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama" (Sri Lanka China Friendship)

The Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA) proudly launched the book "Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama" (Sri Lanka China Friendship) at a ceremonious event held on 16th May 2024 at the Auditorium of the National Library and Documentation Services Board of Sri Lanka. The launch event was graced by prominent dignitaries, including the former Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, who was the keynote speaker, and His Excellency Qi Zhenhong, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Sri Lanka, who was the guest of honour.

Mr. Ananda Goonatileke, Attorney-at-Law and President of the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association, chaired the event, reflecting on the enduring relationship between Sri Lanka and China.



The SLCFA, originally founded as the “Ceylon-China Friendship Union” on September 21, 1950, by the Ceylon Communist Party, stands as a pioneer in fostering people-to-people diplomatic ties between the two nations. The first president of the union was Madam Kusuma Gunawardena, mother of the current Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena.

In his welcome address, Mr. Goonatilleke introduced the book’s rich content, which encompasses a wide range of topics including historical ties, Buddhist connections, diplomatic relations, literature, economic and cultural cooperation, Chinese cuisine, China’s role and support in the war that defeated the LTTE, media, philatelic interests, photography, and more. He expressed gratitude to the authors who contributed invaluable articles and acknowledged the continuous support from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Sri Lanka.

Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, in his keynote address, highlighted the significance of the Rice and Rubber Pact, emphasizing its role in solidifying the profound friendship between Sri Lanka and China. He commended the SLCFA for its seven-decade-long dedication to nurturing people-to-people relationships between the two countries.

The highlight of the event was the formal presentation of the first copies of “Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama” by Mr. Goonatilleke to Hon. Karu Jayasuriya and His Excellency Qi Zhenhong. The event also saw the presence of notable figures such as Dr. G. Weerasinghe, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka; Mr. Aruna Goonatilleke, SLCFA Executive Vice President; Vice Presidents Mr. Thilak Botheju, Mr. Daya Lankapura and Mr. Premadara Dissanayake; SLCFA office bearers and various civil society activists and members of the public.

All attendees were presented with a complimentary copy of “Sri Lanka Cheena Mithudama,” marking the occasion as a memorable celebration of the enduring friendship between Sri Lanka and China.



SLCFA Collaborates with China Foundation for Rural Development to Provide Aid to Underprivileged School Children



In a heartwarming display of international cooperation and compassion, the Sri Lanka China Friendship Association (SLCFA) joined hands with the China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD) to extend a lifeline to 1,260 primary school students hailing from impoverished backgrounds. This noble initiative, undertaken between the 9th and 15th of November 2023, aimed to alleviate the struggles faced by vulnerable families in accessing basic necessities.

Two poignant ceremonies were organized at Seevali Central College and Veluwana College, serving as poignant reminders of the significance of collective action in addressing societal challenges. The presence of esteemed officials from the SLCFA added a touch of solidarity and commitment to the proceedings, reaffirming the organization's dedication to serving the community.

The China Foundation for Rural Development, a distinguished non-governmental entity with a profound focus on poverty alleviation, has been instrumental in extending its reach beyond borders since its inception in 1989. With a laudable track record spanning over three decades, the Foundation's commitment to humanitarian causes has transcended geographical boundaries, offering aid and assistance to those grappling with adversity across the globe.

Since venturing into international realms in 2004, the CFRD has been at the forefront of disaster response and development endeavors. From extending a helping hand in the aftermath of the Indonesian tsunami to addressing the dire consequences of drought in the Horn of Africa, the Foundation has exemplified the spirit of solidarity and compassion in times of need.



By collaborating with organizations like the SLCFA, the CFRD continues to pave the way for transformative change, one act of kindness at a time.

Through its extensive network and unwavering dedication, the CFRD has spearheaded numerous initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development and empowering marginalized communities.

As the distribution of dry rations symbolizes a beacon of hope for countless families grappling with hardship, it also serves as a testament to the power of international partnerships in effecting positive change. In the spirit of camaraderie and empathy, the SLCFA and the CFRD have set a commendable precedent, reminding us all of the profound impact that collective action can have in building a brighter, more equitable future for generations to come.



SLCFA Celebrates 74th Anniversary with a Book Donation to the National Library



The Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA), Sri Lanka's oldest people-to-people friendship organization with China, proudly commemorated its 74th anniversary with a meaningful event held at the National Library and Documentation Services Board. The event, which was attended by members of the SLCFA's National Executive Committee and distinguished guests, also included the donation of valuable books to the National Library, symbolizing the association's ongoing commitment to education, cultural exchange, and mutual respect between the two nations.

Since its founding in 1950, the SLCFA has played a pivotal role in fostering friendship, understanding, and cooperation between the people of Sri Lanka and China. This year's anniversary marks a continuation of the association's mission to promote people-to-people ties, which have been further strengthened through cultural, educational, and humanitarian initiatives over the decades.

The event, held in an intimate gathering with 20 participants, highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing and cultural exchange.

The donated books, which cover various aspects of Chinese history, philosophy, and the rich history of friendship between the two nations, will be made available to the public through the National Library. The donation is aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of China's rich heritage and its long-standing relationship with Sri Lanka.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Ananda Goonatilleke, the current President of SLCFA, remarked, "This 74th anniversary not only marks a historical milestone but also reaffirms our commitment to promoting educational and cultural ties between Sri Lanka and China. We are proud to contribute to the National Library's collection and hope these books will serve as a resource for the next generation, fostering a deeper appreciation of the special relationship between our two countries."

At the event, Dr. Rathnapala Wickramasinghe, Board Director of the National Library and Documentation Services Board of Sri Lanka (NLDSBL), highlighted that the relationship between Sri Lanka and China dates back many centuries.

SLCFA EVP Aruna Goonatilleke Reflects on Memorable Participation in CPAFFC's 70th Anniversary Celebrations in Beijing



Aruna Goonatilleke, Executive Vice President of the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA), recently returned from an exceptional visit to China as part of the 70th-anniversary celebrations of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). His participation highlighted the enduring ties between Sri Lanka and China, with Mr. Goonatilleke sharing heartfelt reflections on his experiences.

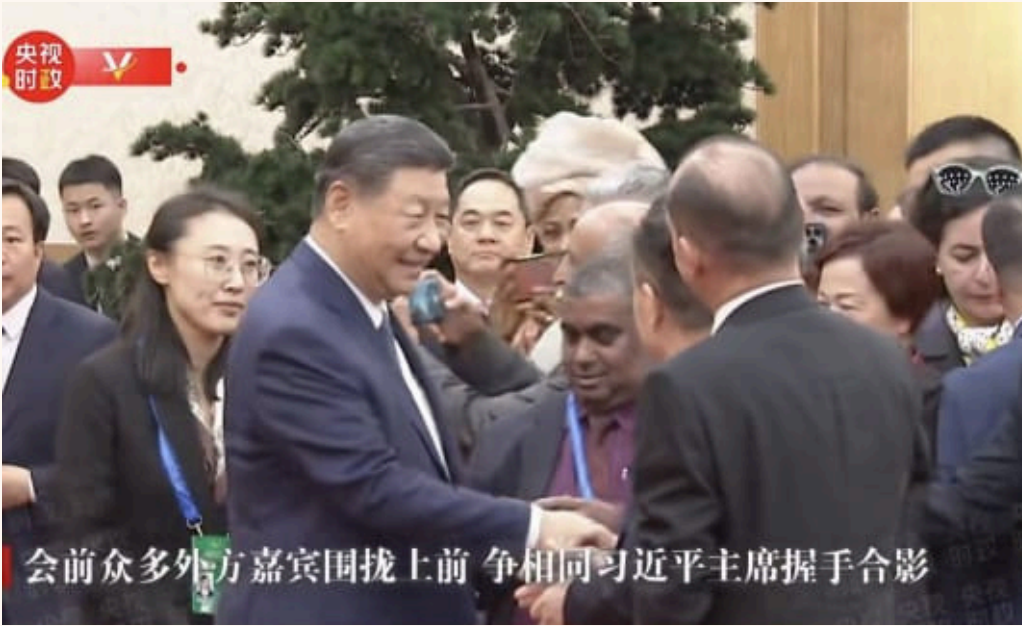
The China International Friendship Conference in Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary (1954-2024) was held in Beijing, China, from October 9 to October 13. Hosted at the prestigious Regent Hotel in Beijing, Mr. Goonatilleke attended a welcoming banquet with nearly 300 international dignitaries, underscoring CPAFFC's commitment to promoting global friendship and diplomacy. This grand gathering provided a unique platform for cross-cultural interactions, reflecting CPAFFC's dedication to building international partnerships.

A standout moment of the visit was Mr. Goonatilleke's trip to the Xiongan New Area, an ambitious urban development initiative set for completion by 2035. He praised the project's visionary approach to sustainable urban planning, which he believes showcases China's forward-thinking leadership and commitment to environmentally conscious development.

A monumental highlight was Mr. Goonatilleke's opportunity to meet and shake hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping, making him the only Sri Lankan to receive such an honor at the ceremony. Describing it as one of the proudest moments of his life, he expressed immense gratitude for the experience, which he sees as a symbol of the profound friendship between the two nations.

Additionally, Mr. Goonatilleke was impressed by the grandeur of the Beijing Library, home to over seven million books and an architectural marvel that reflects China's dedication to education and cultural heritage. He noted the visit as an inspiring testament to China's commitment to preserving knowledge and fostering learning.

Reflecting on the broader significance of his visit, Mr. Goonatilleke emphasized the importance of President Xi Jinping's vision for the "rejuvenation of the Chinese people," a theme present throughout the tour. He was deeply moved by the national pride and ambition behind this vision, which he believes resonates far beyond China, inspiring global aspirations for unity and progress.



This is the moment that Mr. Goonatileke had the opportunity to meet and shake hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Credits to www.chinanews.com

Expressing his appreciation for the exceptional hospitality provided by CPAFFC, particularly by Ms. Vivian and the team, Mr. Goonatileke thanked them for their care in ensuring his comfort and well-being during the tour. He concluded his remarks by voicing optimism for continued collaboration, affirming the lasting friendships formed during this historic visit and looking forward to future initiatives promoting peace, cooperation, and shared prosperity between Sri Lanka and China.



Invitation to Strengthen People-to-People Friendship between Sri Lanka China

As the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA), the pioneer of China-friendly organizations in Sri Lanka, marks an illustrious 74-year journey, we extend a heartfelt invitation to all regional friendship associations and other friendly organizations in China to join hands with us. Together, we can deepen the bonds of friendship, understanding, and cultural exchange between our two nations.

Let us work collaboratively to build on this foundation, fostering enduring people-to-people ties that strengthen our shared aspirations and celebrate our long-standing partnership. We look forward to your support and collaboration as we continue this meaningful journey toward closer cooperation and mutual prosperity.

- National Executive Committee, Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association

Kunming Initiative of the 5th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum Highlights Green and Sustainable Development – Representation of SLCFA



Mr. Prasad Wijesuriya, Acting General Secretary of the Sri Lanka - China Friendship Association, addressing the 5th CSACF forum

On July 24, 2024, the 5th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum (CSACF) convened in Kunming, Yunnan Province, under the theme “Building Consensus for Regional Development.” The forum drew distinguished leaders and delegates from China and South Asia to strengthen regional ties and collaboratively address pressing issues, with a central focus on promoting sustainable development.

Among the notable speakers, Mr. Prasad Wijesuriya, Acting General Secretary of the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association (SLCFA), delivered a powerful address on “Jointly Promoting Green and Sustainable Development.” Representing Sri Lanka and its commitment to green growth, he called for unity in achieving a sustainable future, underscoring that “the concept of green and sustainable development is not merely a goal but a necessity” amid the escalating global environmental crisis.

Mr. Wijesuriya’s speech highlighted the urgency of sustainable development in response to challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. He emphasized the need to shift from a traditional growth model towards a circular economy that encourages recycling, resource conservation, and ecological preservation. This shift, he argued, requires collective global action.

Drawing from China’s cultural philosophy of “harmony between man and nature,” Mr. Wijesuriya illustrated how ancient Chinese principles align with green development. This philosophy has profoundly shaped modern China’s approach to ecological sustainability, with initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative incorporating renewable energy and green infrastructure to promote regional environmental well-being.



China's progress in renewable energy, reforestation, and green urban planning provides a roadmap for sustainable growth, making it a valuable partner for South Asia.

In his speech, Mr. Wijesuriya praised Sri Lanka's own efforts, including its National Sustainable Development Strategy and Blue Green Development Strategy, both of which target climate resilience and environmental preservation. These initiatives are part of Sri Lanka's broader commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sustainable Sri Lanka 2030 Vision, which sets an ambitious path toward balancing ecological health and economic progress.

Mr. Wijesuriya underscored four key areas where China-South Asia collaboration could make a significant impact:

1. Technology and Innovation: Leveraging China's advancements in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture can accelerate South Asia's shift towards green development.
2. Policy and Governance: Collaborative policy frameworks can strengthen environmental regulations and create a cohesive approach to issues such as pollution and water management.
3. Education and Awareness: Joint programs between China and South Asian countries can enhance public understanding of sustainable practices and foster ecological consciousness.
4. Economic Collaboration: Supporting green investments and creating eco-friendly business opportunities can drive economic growth while safeguarding the environment.

The 5th CSACF also welcomed high-profile dignitaries, including His Excellency Mr. Wang Yubo, Governor of Yunnan Province; Her Excellency Madame Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China; and His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Discussions focused on key initiatives to deepen cooperation, foster green development, and promote regional peace.

This year's forum underscored the importance of South Asia-China collaboration in addressing regional environmental challenges and enhancing sustainable development. As Mr. Wijesuriya expressed, "Together, we can create a world that thrives in harmony with nature, ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for all."

The 5th CSACF concluded with a shared commitment to building a resilient and sustainable region, underscoring the forum's role as a pivotal platform for regional cooperation.



History of SLCFA



Inauguration

The Sri Lanka–China Friendship Association (SLCFA) holds a unique place as the pioneer people-to-people diplomatic organization in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), established to foster friendship with the People's Republic of China.

Originally organized as the "Ceylon–China Friendship Union" on 21st September 1950, the founding date coincided with the first anniversary of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). This strategic timing aligned with China's formation of a new state power, where Mao Zedong presided as the Chairman, just days before the proclamation of the People's Republic of China.

The Union's first President was Madam Kusuma Gunawardena, Member of Parliament and representative of the VLLSP, a party in alliance with the Ceylon Communist Party (CCP). Notable founding figures also included Madam Theja Gunawardena, the Union's Organizer—a respected social worker, writer, journalist, and prominent scholar, well-regarded for her understanding of international relations and her collaboration within the International Communist Movement. Dr. G.V.S. De Silva, an economist and a senior CCP official, served as the first Secretary.

Reorganization and Evolution

Due to limited progress, the Union was restructured on 22nd September 1952, becoming the "Ceylon–China Friendship Association" under the dynamic leadership of Madam Theja Gunawardena, with former President Kusuma Gunawardena as Vice President and Basil de Silva as Secretary. This reorganization marked a renewed focus on fostering deeper connections with China.

In October 1952, the newly organized Association established a formal relationship with the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA). A goodwill message from CPIFA President Zhang Xiruo, sent via the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi, India, symbolized this budding friendship.

Transition to Sri Lanka–China Friendship Association

Following Sri Lanka's proclamation as a republic in 1972, the Association adopted a new name to reflect the nation's evolving identity. At its 20th Annual General Meeting on 27th January 1973, the organization was officially renamed the Sri Lanka–China Friendship Association (SLCFA). This renaming marked a new era of strengthened relations, honoring over two decades of continuous efforts to build a close and enduring friendship between the people of Sri Lanka and China.



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This newsletter is a periodical publication, which is published electronically. It is issued six months, and it contains a variety of content related to people-to-people friendship of Sri Lanka and China.