



Sri Lanka Embassy News Thailand

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Global Ceylon Tea Party: Bangkok



The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Bangkok joined the Global Tea Party to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Sri Lanka's Tea Industry, organized by the Ceylon Tea Traders' Association together with Sri Lanka Tea Board and the Foreign Ministry. With the Mission's tea party at Anantara Siam Hotel, Bangkok, the celebrations commenced at 5 pm Bangkok time on 6 July to join the chain of parties organized at 37 Sri Lankan diplomatic missions as well as partner tea companies, cafes and homes around the world.



Tea importers of Thailand, members of the Thai business community, representatives of the Thai government, members of the diplomatic corps in Bangkok and media personalities were

among the attendees who joined Sri Lanka in celebrating this important milestone.

The main attraction of the event was of course the seven regions' tea of the Sri Lanka Tea Board. Servers wearing different coloured sashes each corresponding to the respective region of tea, offered a chance for all invitees to taste the different types at leisure. Ambassador Kshenuka Senewiratne for the edification of the guests introduced the range of teas on offer and the nuances of their flavors and features.



This introduction was complimented by the remarks of the Ambassador who outlined the beginnings of the tea industry of Sri Lanka and its growth into the world's largest exporter in Orthodox black tea. She emphasized the 150 year dedication of the industry to achieving and maintaining world renowned standards in quality, thereby being ISO certified. The medicinal quality of tea was another feature that was brought to the fore by the Ambassador in order to encourage the demand for Sri Lankan tea, while acknowledging it as the purest world over. These aspects were seen as vital to set Ceylon tea apart from the deluge of teas from other

countries, which are ubiquitous in the Thai market. The Ambassador's observations were summarized in Thai by a well-known Thai TV presenter for better understanding among the Thai guests at the event. The tea party in Bangkok was also produced as a segment in The Diplomat programme, which was publicized on the Travel Channel as well as TNN, a Thai cable network.

The tea was accompanied by an array of Sri Lankan and Thai food together with snacks associated with the high tea concept of the Western hemisphere. They included milk rice with seeni sambol, wade, patties, penipol pancake, purple chicken dumplings, scones and jam, cucumber sandwiches and other finger food. A highlight of the Sri Lankan food introduced to the guests were milk and treacle hoppers straight off the pan served in wicker baskets spread on banana leaf, which was a perfect hit to the hot tea judging from the accolades received. Tea was also served in its iced form with a slice of lemon together with a hint of cinnamon, as a welcome drink.



This party was seized as an opportunity to introduce the superior quality variety of tea available in Sri Lanka to the decision makers of both the government and commercial sectors of Thailand, particularly to the Thai tea importers, who trade within quotas allocated to them by the government. The objective was also to encourage the importers to begin or increase trade with the Sri Lankan tea industry within their quota allocation.

Having offered space to the sponsors from the Sri Lanka tea industry to exhibit their tea products, Dilmah, Stassen and Mlesna tea brands, who are represented in Thailand, seized this opportunity to display their product range for the information of guests. Brochures of the Sri Lanka Tea Board were availed of by the attendees to differentiate between the giveaway teas they received on their departure from the event.

Continuing its journey around the globe, the Ambassador handed over the Tea Party to the Sri Lanka Tea Board & Tea Traders' Association on Skype, to begin the celebrations in Colombo.

Rice from Thailand

Thailand has once again proven an ally to Sri Lanka in its ready cooperation to supply rice for purchase on a government to government basis.

As the 2nd world's largest exporter of rice, Thailand's product has achieved world acclaim for quality. Enjoying bumper rice harvests at the end of 2016 as well as in 2017, Thailand immediately responded to Sri Lanka's call for assistance in importing rice to Sri Lanka to stem the rise in prices and shortage of stocks.

President Maithripala Sirisena and the Thai PM Prayuth Chan o Cha engaged in discussions on the matter. Subsequently, a delegation from Sri Lanka visited Thailand for discussion on the details of the purchase. The team was led by the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, and included representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Industry & Commerce, Department of Agriculture, and the CWE.

Negotiations on the rice purchase, including types and the desired quality were conducted with officials of the Department of Foreign Trade of Thailand and the Thai Rice Exporters Associations over 2 days. The related formalities are being pursued.



Assistance to control dengue outbreak

The services of two experts in the field of dengue control were readily made available by the Thai Ministry of Public Health to assist the National Dengue Control Unit of Sri Lanka to manage the dengue outbreak.



Officials from the Department of Disease Control of Thailand - Mr. Jeeraphat Sirichaisinthop, a Senior Expert in Prevention Medicine and Ms. Siripen Kalayanarooj, an Expert Consultant to Department, undertook a week long mission to Sri Lanka to support the efforts of the Sri Lankan authorities.

This visit was the result of the immediate response by the Minister of Public Health of Thailand to a request for assistance made by Sri Lanka's Health Minister Rajitha Senarathne. They also carried 120 bottles of Dextran 40, as a further token of goodwill.

Dextran 40 is an essential component in alleviating hemorrhagic fever caused by dengue. The Mission has been facilitating the purchase of bottles of Dextran 40 by the State Pharmaceutical Corporation (SPC) for the last few years, with a high quantity of such medicine being dispatched to Sri Lanka within the first six months of this year with the rise in the number of incidents of dengue in many parts of the island.

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News in Brief

Thais to attend Facets Sri Lanka 2017

Following representations by the Embassy, the Thai Gem & Jewellery Traders' Association has agreed to send a delegation to attend Facets Sri Lanka 2017.

Exports in precious and semi-precious stones dominate the trade profile from Sri Lanka to Thailand, with 33.64% of the total export value generated from this sector. Sri Lanka and Thailand are also seeking to increase cooperation in this field with a MoU that is being processed at present. A team of Sri Lankan designers also attended a short term course in gem & jewellery designing in 2016.

The Thai delegation to Facets has also expressed the wish to explore opportunities in trade, investment and sharing of technology in the gem & jewellery sector in Sri Lanka.

Improving Colombo city transport system

Pursuant to a request from the Ministry of Transport & Civil Aviation, the Mission has initiated the process to launch a pilot project by ESCAP in Colombo to improve urban transport systems, under the Sustainable Urban Transport Index (SUTI).

Discussions are now underway on the Ministry hosting a 2 day capacity building workshop in the last quarter of this year in Colombo supported by ESCAP to be conducted by experts in this sector. The workshop is to be attended by transport sector officials from Indonesia, Nepal and Vietnam.

Capacity Building Initiatives for government officials

In an effort to contribute to the capacity building of government agencies in various sectors, the Mission has been identifying partner institutions in Thailand to conduct capacity building programmes tailor-made for specific projects undertaken by Sri Lankan government agencies.

Having identified the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) of Thailand as one such partner institution, the Mission has been instrumental in coordinating meetings between AIT representatives and the Ministries of Primary Industries, Health, Agriculture and Higher Education & Highways, as well as Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA). On a direct request from the Minister of Education, the Mission also facilitated the coordination between AIT and the Ministry to initiate capacity building workshops for educational personnel.