

**Government of India
Ministry of Culture**

New Delhi dated September 10, 2014

Sub: Visit Notes of V.Srinivas, Joint Secretary to Government of India to Sri Lanka dated September 5-6, 2014

1. The undersigned visited Colombo from September 5-6, 2014 for bilateral meetings with Sri Lankan authorities and the Governing Board meeting of the SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo. During the visit bilateral meetings were held with the following officials of Government of Sri Lanka (a) Secretary Ministry of Culture and Arts Shri Wasantha Ekanayake, and (b) Secretary Sports Shri Anura Jayawickrama along with Mr. Ashley de Silva, Chief Executive Officer, Sri Lanka Cricket and Mr. Carlton Bernadus Head of Cricket Operations Sri Lanka Cricket. I also called on High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Shri Yashvardhan Sinha and Deputy High Commissioner Shri Arindam Bagchi. The First Secretary in the High Commission of India Smt. Esha Srivastava accompanied for the bilateral meetings. On September 6-7, 2014 I attended the meeting of the Governing Board of the SAARC Culture Centre.
2. In my bilateral meeting with Shri Wasantha Ekanayake Secretary Ministry of Culture and Arts, I extended an invitation to the Secretary and the Sri Lankan delegation to visit New Delhi for the SAARC Culture Ministers meeting dated September 24-26, 2014. I also briefed him on the Ministry of Culture proposal to have an exhibition on cricket, CRICKET CONNECTS in Sri Lanka at a time of mutual convenience, and the decision to conduct the SAARC Traditional Dance Festival in New Delhi from September 26-28, 2014. The Secretary Culture and Arts confirmed Sri Lanka's participation in the forthcoming SAARC Culture Ministers meeting and also in the Traditional Dance Festival. He commended India's efforts for strengthening SAARC Culture. He said the Ministry of Sports would be coordinating the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition.
3. In my bilateral meeting with Secretary Sports Shri Anura Jayawickrama the contours and timelines of the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition were discussed. I briefed the Secretary Sports and the senior officials of the Sri Lanka Board on the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition and the timelines. The Cricket Sri Lanka felt that April 2015 would be an appropriate time to conduct the exhibition. They also felt that the exhibition could be held at the Premadasa Cricket Stadium along with an on-field event and banquet dinner. They also indicated the several milestones in the India-Sri Lanka cricket relations over the past 30 years dating back to Sri Lankan participation in Gopalan trophy, to Test recognition and Sri Lanka's first Test in India and the

various cricketing events thereafter. There was discussion on the VVIPs who could inaugurate the event.

4. During my courtesy call on High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka ShriYashVardhanSinha, I briefed him on the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition, the SAARC Culture Ministers meeting in New Delhi and the SAARC Culture Centre's progress. The High Commissioner proposed that the Buddha Mahotsava conducted as part of Festivals of India in Vietnam and Thailand would find a lot of response in Sri Lanka. The High Commissioner also proposed a Festival of India in Sri Lanka in 2015 to further boost the cultural relations.
5. The Governing Board of the SAARC Culture Centre deliberated on the SAARC Culture Ministers meeting and other aspects of the agenda. They welcomed the initiative. A copy of the Governing Board's statement is at annex 1.

(V.Srinivas)
Joint Secretary to Government of India

**Government of India
Ministry of Culture**

Statement of V.Srinivas, Joint Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Culture in the Bilateral Meeting with Mr. Wasantha Ekanayake, Secretary Ministry of Culture and Arts, Government of Sri Lanka at Colombo dated September 5, 2014

Excellency,

I am visiting Colombo for the meetings of the SAARC Culture Centre Governing Board which commence tomorrow and have sought this bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the visit, to enable discussions on the bilateral engagement and the forthcoming meeting of the SAARC Culture Ministers scheduled in New Delhi.

As you are aware, the Culture Minister of India has extended an invitation to the Sri Lanka Culture Minister for participation in the SAARC Culture Ministers meeting in New Delhi on September 24-25, 2014. The broad agenda for the SAARC Culture Ministers Meeting covers the review of the SAARC Cultural agenda, the formulation of a road map for 2014-17 for SAARC Cultural activities and building a consensus for preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the SAARC region. We have received a confirmation of the participation of the Sri Lanka delegation and look forward to welcoming the Culture Minister of Sri Lanka Excellency Mr. T.B. Ekanayake and the Sri Lanka delegation in New Delhi.

Excellency, India is also hosting the SAARC Traditional Dance Festival on the sidelines of the SAARC Culture Ministers Meeting at Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi. The SAARC Traditional Dance Festival will attract over 100 artists from the SAARC Countries. India will be presenting Kathakali and Chenda Melam at the traditional dance festival. I am informed that Sri Lanka would be presenting the Kandian dance performance. We have requested the Sangeet Natak Akademy to present a fusion of the SAARC Traditional Dances on the last day of the Festival to embody the spirit of regional integration.

Excellency, India proposes to conduct the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition in Colombo on a bilateral basis. An Exhibition on India-Sri Lanka Cricketing Ties would be very successful in representing modern day people to people engagement. We seek your support in this initiative in terms of availability of venues and guest speakers. The BCCI has also agreed to conduct an on-field event, on the sidelines of the exhibition. Such an exhibition conducted in South Africa by the Ministry of Culture at Wanderers Cricket Stadium, Johannesburg was well received in July 2014.

To conclude, Excellency, let me thank you for your time and once again extend a warm and hearty invitation to you and the members of the Sri Lanka delegation to New Delhi in September 2014.

Thank you.

**Government of India
Ministry of Culture**

**Statement of V.Srinivas, Joint Secretary to Government of India, in the
Bilateral Meeting with Mr.Anurajayawikrama, Secretary Ministry of Sports,
Government of Sri Lanka at Colombo dated September 5, 2014**

Excellency,

I am visiting Colombo for the meetings of the SAARC Culture Centre Governing Board which commence tomorrow and have sought this bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the visit, to brief you on the Indian proposal for conducting the CRICKET CONNECTS Exhibition in Colombo and Galle at a time of mutual convenience in 2015. I am delighted to meet the officials of CRICKET Sri Lanka, and their presence can enable develop a mutual consensus for taking the initiative forward.

CRICKET CONNECTS is an exhibition developed by the National Council of Science Museums of India to depict the manner in which Cricketing ties between Nations have enhanced people to people contacts. The NCSM exhibition was on display for 2 months in South Africa. The Exhibition comprises of 5 parts, the political backdrop to cricket relations, the legends section, the important tours, world cup achievements and a digital exhibition. There are 5 walls comprising of 500 pictures and 10-12 digital exhibits which are interactive in nature. The Exhibition was well received in South Africa.

Excellency, Indian-Sri Lanka Cricket relations date back to Gopalan Trophy and BuchiBabu Trophy when Sri Lankan teams participated in the events held in Tamil Nadu. The 1982 Test recognition and the first visit to India by the SidathWettimuny team and the twin centuries by DuleepMendis are well remembered by Indian Cricket lovers. Since then there have been a number of significant events, most prominent are the India-Sri Lanka matches in the two world cups – Eden Gardens Kolkata 1996 and the Wankhade Stadium, Mumbai in 2011. RameshRatnayake's six wicket haul to earn Sri Lanka their first test victory over India and the exploits by Aravinda De Silva are part of legend in the cricket history between the two nations. Given this backdrop, we do believe that a cricket exhibition depicting India-Sri Lanka cricket ties would be well received in Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of Culture has requested the High Commission of India in Colombo to take up with the authorities in Sri Lanka the possibility of conducting such an exhibition and the timelines for the exhibition.

BCCI has indicated its willingness to host an on-field event on the sidelines of the exhibition. We also propose a key note speaker at a banquet hosted by the High Commissioner of India at the launch of the Exhibition.

Excellency, we seek your support in taking this initiative forward.

Thank you.

**Government of India
Ministry of Culture**

**Statement of V.Srinivas, Joint Secretary to Government of India, at the
Governing Board meeting of SAARC Culture Centre at Colombo dated
September 6, 2014**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present India's views on the activities undertaken by the SAARC Culture Centre in 2013-14 and our views on the 2014-15 program of activities.

SAARC Culture Ministers Meetings in New Delhi:

There are two important developments that I would like to draw the attention of the members to:

1. The SAARC Culture Ministers meeting preceded by the Senior Officers meeting has been convened in New Delhi from September 24-26, 2014;
2. The SAARC Traditional Dance Festival would be hosted by India on the sidelines of the SAARC Culture Ministers meeting from September 26-28, 2014.

Culture Minister of India has already extended invitations to his counterparts in SAARC member countries and we are encouraged by the response received. The agenda for the meeting has already been circulated. The SAARC Culture Ministers will revisit the SAARC agenda for culture last adopted in 2006 and they will adopt a Delhi resolution to take the program of action for 2014-17.

SAARC Culture Centre Colombo:

SAARC Culture Centre Colombo has come a long way since its establishment in 2010 to take the SAARC agenda for culture forward. We compliment the Cultural Centre on the wide range of activities undertaken in the last year. A significant achievement has been that most of the arrears have been received by the Culture Centre making it easier for activities to be conducted.

The agenda reflects the following areas of concerns:

1. Budget Freeze has resulted in restrictions on the cultural activities being undertaken;
2. Procedural rigidities of interacting with Member Countries have resulted in very poor responses to many of the proposed initiatives of the Cultural Centre;
3. There seem to be time overruns in the Research Activities of the Cultural Centre.

India proposes that the number of activities to be undertaken by the SAARC Culture Centre be scheduled in accordance with the budget availabilities. India also seeks procedural simplifications to enable the SAARC Culture Centre to interact with concerned Institutions so that procedural delays can be avoided.

India proposes that high emphasis be given to SAARC Cultural Festivals so that dissemination of SAARC Culture in member countries can be expedited. It will also provide immense international opportunities for several artists in member countries to display their skills in foreign lands.

The Research program needs to be expedited to avoid time and cost overruns. We also propose that the recommendations of the audit report be accepted and adopted.

With these observations, India broadly supports the program activities listed by the SAARC Cultural Centre for 2015-16.

We wish the Director and his dedicated team of officials all success in their challenging policy endeavors.

Thank you.