

## Media Release

### State Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasantha Senanayake visits Australia

State Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasantha Senanayake met Australia's Foreign Minister Julie Bishop on 26 March during a visit to Australia on the invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The two Ministers discussed bilateral issues ranging from the strong people to people links and growing economic relations, to cooperation in countering transnational crimes. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop conveyed Australia's appreciation to Sri Lanka for its cooperation in combatting people smuggling. State Minister Senanayake thanked the Foreign Minister for Australia's long-term development assistance to Sri Lanka and support to eradicate dengue, which was announced during Minister Bishop's visit to Sri Lanka in July 2017. The two Ministers also discussed political and maritime issues of relevance in the region that are of mutual concern, and the keen interest shown by Australian companies to invest in Sri Lanka in mining and energy sectors. Given Australia's interest in Sri Lanka's reconciliation and reconstruction the State Minister briefed on recent developments and thanked Australia for the pragmatic approach taken on these issues.

Minister Senanayake also met the Minister for International Development Concetta Fierravanti Wells, and was hosted to lunch by the Chair of the Australia Sri Lanka Parliamentary Group Scott Buchholz at Parliament House. Other invitees to the lunch included a delegation from the Sri Lankan Women Parliamentarians' Caucus that was also visiting Australia under a different programme as well as Australian Parliamentarians. Other meetings in Canberra included luncheon engagement at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Electoral Commissioner and the Australian National University where the State Minister had the opportunity to meet Australia Awards scholars following post graduate studies. The Minister also found time to visit the Sri Lankan Buddhist Vihara in Canberra.

Minister Senanayake concluded his visit in Perth, where he had meetings with the West Australian Minister for Asian Engagement, Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre, and delivered a speech at the Perth USAsia Centre on Sri Lanka's Foreign perspectives and relations with regional organisations.

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Australia Somasundaram Skandakumar was associated with the State Minister at the meetings.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Colombo  
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