



# Insight



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## A Land Like No Other



**AYUBOWAN!** The traditional national greeting from Sri Lanka means, "May you live long and be healthy", invites you to a splendor and climate that only is offered on the planet by this land like no other.

Sri Lanka is an island of no great size, located at Latitude 5° 55. to 9° 50. north, longitude 79° 42. to 81° 52., and 650km north of the equator, yet it has an extraordinary number of facets. The island nation spans 430km north to south and 225km east to west occupying a land mass of 65,525 sq km.

As **Sir Arthur C Clarke** remarked: "The Island of Sri Lanka is a small universe; it contains as many variations of culture, scenery, and climate as some countries a dozen times its size, find it hard to believe that there is any country which scores so highly in all departments, which has so many advantages and so few disadvantages." Lovely beaches, beautiful landscapes, impressive ruins, a vibrant culture and charming people.

The nation is divided into 9 provinces; Central, North Central, North Eastern, ctd on page 2

## Welfare For Stranded Lankans



On a special arrangement made by visiting Lankan Deputy Foreign Minister, Hussein Bhaila, free meals are being given to stranded Sri Lankan workers who are roughing out under the Kandahar Bridge in Jeddah. On instructions from Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Bhaila was in Jeddah leading a four-member team to look into the welfare of the stranded Sri Lankans staying under the bridge.

The delegation comprised officials from the Sri Lankan Employment Bureau and Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare. Bhaila said that as a relief measure, he had made arrangements to deliver lunch and dinner packets daily to around 260 Sri Lankans which included 50 women, until their departure to the government deportation camp.

Visiting Deputy Minister Bhaila, who met the workers under the bridge, confirmed on Friday Nov 20, that accommodation facilities had been offered to them at the Consulate, but they rejected the offer since they feel staying under the bridge will give them an opportunity to get immigration clearance soon and they would be sent back at the expense of the Saudi government. Around 3,000 Asian workers, including Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indonesians and Sri Lankans, gathered under this bridge claiming they are Umrah and Haj over stayers.

The Jeddah governorate, in co-operation with the Immigration Department, deports these expatriates at its own expense to clear the backlog of stranded workers in the Kingdom. Bhaila said that none of the Sri Lankans had any valid documents to vouch for their stay in the Kingdom. Most of them had run away from their sponsors and sought refuge on the grounds that they are Umrah overstayers. The Minister said that officials could easily identify workers who had given their fingerprints on arrival at the airport. There were 30 such workers in the group, the Minister contended that stranded workers staying under the bridge was a regular feature. ctd on p4



## Welfare for .. from p1

"It is nothing new to the Saudi government nor to the labor exporting countries, but this is the first time a government has sent a high-level delegation to work out a scheme for the welfare of such workers," the deputy minister said. These workers are taken in batches to the deportation center where temporary travel documents are made in coordination with the respective foreign missions in Jeddah."

The deputy minister also stressed that those workers who have genuine grievances always report to the mission for negotiations with their sponsors. The Consulate had sorted out most such cases."

Lankan Consul General in Jeddah, Abdul Latiff Lafeer said that 80 percent of the Sri Lankans squatting under the bridge had come from outside the Western Region, meaning they had come from Riyadh and Eastern regions as well. "From 2008 until today 6,239 — 4,360 men and 1,879 women — have been deported," he added.

Only about 100 Sri Lankans, including 89 women, directly reported to the consulate after running away from their sponsors for alleged harassment, abuse or nonpayment of salaries.



## A Land like.. ctd from p2

thousands of years, an island of vivid intensity where ancient customs and traditions blend perfectly with modern life, where the customs, traditions and religious beliefs brought in over the centuries add not only variety, but also spice to the island life, blending the best from the East and the West.

The Island has an unbroken expanse of beautiful golden beaches from soft brown sands and warm blue waters of the Indian Ocean on its South and West Coast, to the world renowned beauty of its unspoiled expanses of beach on the East Coast.

No less than seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites are located in Sri Lanka. They include the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the cave temples at Dambulla dating back to the 1st Century, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy and Sigiriya, the rock fortress in the sky said to be the 8th Wonder of the World. The Sinharaja tropical rain forest is designated a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site and the white-washed seaport of Galle with its impressive Fort is declared the only Living World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka. Every point on the island can be reached with just a few hours travel by car, bus or rail.

## Caves of Sri Lanka



The fascinating activity of caving is relatively new to Sri Lanka with an impressive array of caves located throughout the island. Known to experts as "speleology", caving involves the exploration, surveying, mapping and photography of caves.

With some of Sri Lanka's caves dating back to more than 500 million years, this is, truly, an exciting adventure into the prehistoric. Caves are flound at the following locations:

- ANDRILENA CAVES, Udagama
- BATADOMBALENA CAVE, Kuruwita
- BATATOTALENA CAVE, Sudagala
- BELILENA CAVE, Kitugala
- BOGODA CAVE, Jangulla
- PANNILA CALCARIOUS CAVE, Rakwana
- RAWANA ELLA CAVE, Ella
- STHRIPURA CAVE, Welimada
- WAULPANE CAVE, Palebedda

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## A Land..

ctd from p1

North Western, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Uva, Western, and Eastern Province. The weather is typically tropical throughout the year, with a northeast monsoon (December to March) bringing unsettled weather to the north and east, and a southwest monsoon (June to October) bringing bad weather to the south and west. Population consists of Sinhalese 73.8%, Sri Lankan Moors 7.2%, Indian Tamil 4.6%, Sri Lankan Tamil 3.9%, other 0.5%, unspecified 10% (2001 census).

Having been a Colonial dominated island under the Portuguese from 1505-1640, the Dutch from 1640 to 1815 and thereafter, the British until 1948, the nation is now an independent and sovereign one.

Seductive beaches and tempting water sports, magnificent landscapes featuring lazy lagoons, fertile wetlands, ecologically-wondrous types of forest, imposing mountains, bounteous rivers and waterfalls, an abundance of wildlife - much of it endemic - unique ecosystems, inspiring heritage sites from ancient cities to colonial forts, a vibrant culture including fine arts and crafts and grand festivals, and a people of diverse ethnicity and religious persuasion, charming and hospitable.

Contemporary tourist attractions such as luxurious Ayurveda spas and broad-based shopping opportunities have evolved, and Sri Lanka has become one of the world's most popular destinations to get married and enjoy a honeymoon.

Sri Lanka is an island of endless enchantment, a tiny tropical paradise where you could discover almost anything from golden sun-kissed beaches, mist-shrouded mountains, awe-inspiring ancient monuments and sprawling wild life parks to impenetrable rain forests and rushing white waters to get the adrenaline flowing.

Travelers have a right to dream, and in Sri Lanka they would discover their dreams could become a reality....

It is an Island of tranquil hospitality and spellbinding sights and sounds, a culture and a heritage cover ctd on p4

## Geocycle Set Up At Katunayake EPZ

### Holcim Commissions Rs. 200 m Waste Management Unit



The pre-processing facility - Geocycle, a business unit of Holcim (Lanka) Ltd was commissioned on November 17, 2009 with an investment of Rs. 200 million as a dedicated waste management organization at the Katunayake Export Processing Zone (KEPZ).

Lack of appropriate methods for the treatment of industrial waste in Sri Lanka has caused socio-economic and ecological problems. In this context, the cement industry is obliged to offer the services of its kilns to develop sustainable industrial waste management solutions, employing a globally proven and accepted technology- cement kiln co-processing, said Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion Minister Anura Priyadharshana Yapa.

More industrialists have shown concern regarding environment preservation and a waste management facility of this nature would promote green environment. The initiative by Holcim is important at a time when the world is facing environment challenges such as climate change and global warming, he said.

The state-of-the art technology in waste management has the capacity to cater to a large volume of industrial waste in an environmentally friendly manner. Geocycle intends to give priority to those based in the zone, while gradually extending its services to other industrial customers as well.

With the pre-processing facility in operation, 16 percent of the energy requirement of Holcim could be met and this will provide a total solution to the solid waste generated by KEPZ customers.

A large number of industrial customers around Colombo and the suburbs would have the service to dispose their waste in an environmentally friendly manner. The pre-processing facility consists of a solid waste receiving and processing facility and a scheduled waste pre-processing facility.

Two separate treatment yards to offer a pre-process facility and solid waste and liquid waste will be fully utilized to cater to the scheduled and non-scheduled waste generated by industrial customers in the country.

The facility will provide the services of transportation of waste oil and noxious liquid in specialized vehicles, impregnation of waste oil and sludge with saw dust, pre-processing of waste from customers prior to delivery to the Puttalam Cement factory, create a homogenization waste derived fuel or raw material for co-processing in cement kilns, storing of waste and expansion of operations of Geocycle to serve a wider range of waste and waste generators.

## INSIGHT WISHES A HAPPY EID AL ADHA

## Teaching Kindness to Animals



### Compassion for Animals Leads to Empathy for People, Planet

There is a relationship between kindness towards animals and kindness towards people. Humane education programs can help children learn the virtue of kindness.

"Children trained to extend justice, kindness and mercy to animals become more just, kind and considerate in their intercourse with each other. Character training along these lines will result in men and women of broader sympathies, more humane, more law abiding – in every respect more valuable citizens."

In our more recent history, there have been some scientific studies which have shown a link between cruelty towards animals and cruelty towards human beings. Sociologist Clifton P. Flynn has explored the link between family violence and animal abuse. In a survey of college students, he found that those who abused animals were three times more likely to approve of a husband slapping a wife than those who had never committed animal cruelty.

Case studies of mass murderers and serial killers also show that these people started by killing animals as children. Serial killers, Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy, were known to abuse animals as children. Many police officers are trained to watch for abuse of animals as an indicator of criminal activity.

There are also recent studies which show that caring for pets develops compassion in children. The late Aline Kidd, a professor of psychology, studied 550 children and found that pets help children learn about care giving and compassion.

## HAJJ: A Journey Of A Lifetime



The Hajj, is a pilgrimage to Mecca (referred to as Makkah by the Arabs). It is currently the largest annual pilgrimage in the world—and is the fifth pillar of Islam, a moral obligation that must be carried out, at least once in a lifetime by every able-bodied, healthy, Muslim who has the financial means to fulfill it. The Hajj, within all its rituals, acts, and requirements, is a demonstration of the solidarity of the Muslim people, and their submission to their Creator, Allah. It also requires great physical, mental, and emotional sacrifice in carrying out all of its mandated acts that need to be performed correctly in order to fulfill it.

The pilgrimage occurs from the 7th to the 13th day of the twelfth Islamic Hijri Month of Dhul Hijjah the last month of the Islamic Lunar Calendar.

This year, 2009, the Islamic Lunar year of 1430, Hajj begins on November 24 and will end on November 30.

The Hajj is associated with the life of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, 7<sup>th</sup> Century BC, who brought Islam to the world and who was born in Makkah and died in Madinah, in Saudi Arabia.

The ritual of the pilgrimage, however, is considered by Muslims to stretch back many thousands of years to the time of Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic).

Millions of Pilgrims commence the pilgrimage in Makkah and join the processions of multitudes of people from across the globe, coming from every walk of life, princes and peasants, all dressed in the white two piece unstitched towels, called Ihram, which represent simplicity, humility, and equality. On establishing this garb, at the point of entry at the many border entry points to Makkah referred to as

the "Miqat", with the intent of pilgrimage the individual has to conform to a predefined and specific code of conduct and purity, where he or she cannot clip any hair on the body, pair nails, or engage in conjugal relations with their spouse. This remains in force until the tenth day when the pilgrim removes his garb and dons normal clothing.

Each pilgrim starts the Hajj with the self proclaimed intention of executing it, which is the primary requirement before commencement of the journey. They then walk counter-clockwise, seven times around the Ka'bah, the cube-shaped brick building, draped in black satin cloth, which has been revealed in the scripture to be the Muslim direction of prayer; runs back and forth between the two hills of Al-Safah and Al-Marwa, signifying the running of Prophet Abraham's wife, Hagar, in search of water for her son Ishmael (Ismail in Arabic) when she was left in the desert by the Command of God. They then drink water from the Well of Zamzam, located underneath the Ka'aba, and then moves to the plains of Mina on the eighth day of the month of Dhul Hijjah. The ninth day is spent on Mount Arafat where the pilgrims stand in vigil and offer noon prayers in congregation which is followed by a sermon by the Head of the Saudi Arabian Religious Authority (Ulema); then moves to a plain called Muzdalifah by sunset to spend the night there in the open and also pick up pebbles to enact a ritual on the following three days.

The tenth day, the Day of Eid (festival) the pilgrim rejoices the culmination of the state of purity by taking off the Ihram clothing and donning normal clothes as before. They then move to the three pillars where they throw the pebbles collected at Muzdalifah at each of them on three consecutive days, re-enacting the act of Prophet Ibrahim who did so when Satan was trying to dissuade him from obeying the Commands of God. The pilgrims then shave their heads, perform a ritual of animal sacrifice, the meat of which are distributed to the poor across the globe after freezing and shipping by Saudia, and celebrate the three day global festival of Eid Al Adha, or the Festival of Sacrifice.