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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள், வெளிநாட்டு வேலைவாய்ப்பு மற்றும் சுற்றுலாத்துறை அமைச்சு
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM

Media Release

Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan Launch New Framework for Enhanced Bilateral Cooperation through Inaugural Political Consultations

The inaugural round of Political Consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Republic of Uzbekistan was held on 09 July 2026 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, marking a significant milestone in the longstanding and friendly relations between the two countries.

The Consultations commenced with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), establishing a formal framework for regular bilateral dialogue and enhanced cooperation between the two Ministries. The MoU reflects the shared commitment of both countries to further deepen engagement and strengthen institutional linkages across areas of mutual interest.

The Sri Lankan delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Aruni Ranaraja, while the Uzbek delegation was headed by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Aloyev Bakhrom.

Foreign Secretary Ranaraja underscored Sri Lanka's strong interest in expanding its engagement with the Central Asian region, particularly with Uzbekistan, recognizing the country's strategic location as a vital link between Asia and Europe, its ongoing economic transformation, and its growing contribution to regional connectivity and integration. The Consultations provided an important platform to review the current status of bilateral relations, exchange views on matters of mutual interest, and identify new avenues for cooperation and partnership.

During the discussions, both sides highlighted trade, tourism, logistics, and education as key sectors with significant potential for enhanced cooperation. Recognizing the importance of broadening economic engagement, the two delegations emphasized the need to diversify bilateral trade, increase trade volumes, and promote mutually beneficial investment opportunities.

Highlighting the importance of educational cooperation, Foreign Secretary Ranaraja referred to the strong historical links between Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan in this field, noting that many Sri Lankan students had pursued higher education, particularly in medicine and engineering, in institutions in the former Soviet Union, including Uzbekistan. She emphasized the value of revitalizing and expanding academic exchanges and educational partnerships between the two countries.

Foreign Affairs
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The two sides also acknowledged the considerable potential for strengthening tourism cooperation and welcomed the commencement of seasonal charter flights from Uzbekistan to Sri Lanka as a positive development that would facilitate greater tourist flows and enhance people-to-people connectivity. In this regard, an invitation was extended to Sri Lanka Tourism to participate in the Tashkent International Tourism Fair, the largest tourism exhibition in Central Asia, scheduled to be held in September 2026.

On the sidelines of the Political Consultations, Foreign Secretary Ranaraja held discussions with Deputy Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shokhrukh K. Gulamov where both sides agreed to formulate targeted and practical measures to expand and diversify bilateral trade. Particular attention was given to exploring cooperation in areas such as apparel manufacturing, tea packaging, seafood exports, and the gem and jewellery industry.

Foreign Secretary Ranaraja also held meetings with Deputy Minister of Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan Avaz Karimov, Chairman and Adviser of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan Dr. Alisher Shaykhov, and Deputy Chairman of the Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan Sandjar Tadjiev, to discuss opportunities for further collaboration in sports, trade and investment, and tourism.

The Consultations concluded with both sides agreeing to convene the Second Round of Political Consultations in Colombo in 2027, reaffirming their shared commitment to maintaining regular dialogue and advancing bilateral cooperation.

The Sri Lanka delegation included Director General of the South East and Central Asia Division Chamari Rodrigo and Counsellor of the Sri Lanka Embassy in Moscow Mihiravi Dissanayake.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism Colombo

13 July 2026

Foreign Affairs විදේශ කටයුතු වෙනිதாட்டு அதுவல்கள்	 Republic Building, Colombo 1 ජනරජ ගොඩනැගිල්ල, කොළඹ 1 சுடியரசுக் கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1	 2 325 373/5, 2 207 200/7	 cypher@mfa.gov.lk
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Tourism සංචාරක சுற்றுலாத்துறை	 No 03, Times Building, Bristol Street (Sir Razik Fareed Mw), Colombo 1 අංක 03, ටයිම්ස් ගොඩනැගිල්ල, බ්‍රිස්ටල් වීදිය (සිර් රාසික් ෆරේඩ් මාවත), කොළඹ 1 இலங்கைத் தைம்ஸ் கட்டிடம், பிரிஸ்டல் தெரு(சர் ராசிக் ஃபரீத் மாவத்தை), கொழும்பு 1	 2 381 798, 2 321 222	 secretary@tourismmin.gov.lk