



# CCIS

## Center for Contemporary Indian Studies

### University of Colombo

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## Introduction

The Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS) is a multidisciplinary research centre which promotes activities connected with developing knowledge in Sri Lanka on contemporary studies in India and strengthening Indo-Lanka relationship through an institutionalized network between the two countries. It was established in 2012 under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka and the University of Colombo. The Centre functions under the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) for academic and administrative matters and it is also linked with other faculties through its Advisory Board and Management Board. India and Sri Lanka are connected through social, religious, linguistic, cultural, economic and strategic ties that date back several centuries. However, less importance has been placed on the study of contemporary developments and changes in India. By realizing that such research and study undertaken at Sri Lanka's seat of higher learning will play an important role in guiding and strengthening the social and economic development of the country and existing bonds of friendship between India and Sri Lanka, the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies serves to deepen the understanding of contemporary India in Sri Lanka.

## Vision of the CCIS

To evolve and grow as an academic hub for promoting research and knowledge on contemporary India.

## Objectives

The chief function of the Centre is to provide an intellectual forum for academic staff and postgraduates working in the field of contemporary Indian studies and offer a base for research for its members in collaboration with other institutions. It hopes to nurture a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars, and to provide a forum for public dialogue among the academic, business, and foreign policy communities. Therefore, the Centre aims to serve as a focus for lectures, seminars and other research events in the field, including collaborative research projects. The CCIS welcomes links with other scholars, nationally and internationally.

## Advisory Board of the CCIS – 2015

H.E. Mr. Y. K. Sinha	High Commissioner of India} Co-Chairs
Senior Prof. Lakshman Dissanayake	Vice Chancellor } Co-Chairs
Mr. Arindam Bagchi	Deputy High Commissioner of India
Ms. Esha Srivastava	First Secretary (PIC)
Dr. Ranjan Hettiarachchi	Rector   Sri Palee Campus
Prof. Athula Ranasinghe	Dean   Arts
Prof. Sunil Chandrasiri	Dean   Graduate Studies
Prof. W. Chandradasa	Dean   Education
Mrs. W.I. Nanayakkara	Dean   Law
Dr. R. Senathiraja	Dean   Management & Finance
Prof. K.R.R. Mahanama	Dean   Science
Prof. Jennifer Perera	Dean   Medicine
Mr. Rajan Asirwatham	Council Nominee
Mr. K. Kanag-Isvaran	Council Nominee
Prof. Savithri Goonasekara	Council Nominee
Prof. Nayani Melegoda	Senate Nominee
Prof. S.A. Nobert	Senate Nominee
Prof. Sandagomi Coperahewa	Director   CCIS

# Annual Report - 2015

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## APPOINTMENTS

**Prof. Sandagomi Coperahewa**, the Founder-Director of the CCIS was appointed again on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 as the Director of CCIS for a period of two years.

**Ms. Chathurika Karunanayake** was appointed as the Secretary of the CCIS for a term of one year with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015. She replaced the former Secretary, Ms. Lakmali Manamperi who joined the Indian High Commission, Colombo.

**Mr. M. V. Premaratne**, being the Office Assistant of the CCIS received an extension of his service for a one year with effect from 01<sup>st</sup> August 2015.

## CCIS BOARD MEETINGS

The following board meeting was held during the year. His Excellency Mr. Y.K. Sinha and the Vice Chancellor, Senior Professor Lakshman Dissanayake co-chaired the meeting.

Meeting	Date
4 <sup>th</sup> Advisory Board Meeting	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2015 at 3.00 p.m. “College House” Senate Hall, University of Colombo

## VISITING PROFESSORS | SHORT TERM CHAIR



**Prof. Ashwani Sharma**, Associate Professor in International Relations in the University of Delhi, and Fellow and Member of Governing Council of the Developing Countries Research Centre of the University of Delhi served as the Short-term Chair of the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies of the University of Colombo for a period of four months starting

from February to June 2015. During his stay in Sri Lanka, he took part in the academic activities conducted by the CCIS such as contributing as the Resource Person for the CCIS forum for Higher Educational Research Opportunities in India. He also worked closely with the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo by working as a Visiting Professor for the Certificate Course in International Relations and the Master of Arts in International Relations. He also conducted Guest Lectures at the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI), Colombo 07 and Defense Services Command and Staff College, Sapugaskanda. Prof. Sharma also had press interviews with *Daily News*, *Island* and the *Sunday Observer*.

## VISITS

The following foreign academics, researchers and officials visited the Centre during the year:

- Dr. Ananda Gupta, United Kingdom.
- Professor Stephen Berkwitz, Missouri State University, USA.
- Mr. Radu Carciumaru, Heidelberg University, Germany.
- Ms. Shobhana Radhakrishna, Chief Functionary, Gandhian Forum for Good Corporate Governance, India.
- Mr. Ravi Chopra, the Founder Secretary, Centre for Gandhian Vision and Values, India.
- Dr. M. Rajeshwar, Professor of English, Kakatiya University, India.

## MONTHLY FORUMS | GUEST LECTURES

### THE ICCR INDIAN CHAIR LECTURE ON ‘POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE REGIME CHANGE IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA’

9<sup>th</sup> March 2015



A Lecture on *Political Economy of Regime Change in India and Sri Lanka* by CCIS Short Term Chair Prof. Ashwani K. Sharma was held at the M. B. Ariyapala Auditorium, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. The Lecture was followed by an interesting discussion.

### TAGORE AND RABINDRA MUSIC

4<sup>th</sup> June 2015



The Centre organized a Monthly Forum on **Tagore and Rabindra Music** at the M. B. Ariyapala Auditorium, Department of Sinhala, University of Colombo. Kalasoori Visharada Weerasena Gunathilaka, a Santiniketan Alumni and Professor Upul Ranjit Hewavithanagamage, Head of the Department of Hindi, University of Kelaniya contributed as the resource persons.

## **GUEST LECTURE ON ‘THE STRATEGIES OF SINHALA LITERATURE FOR SUPERSEDING INDIAN CULTURE 9<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES’**

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2015**



A Guest Lecture on “The Strategies of Sinhala Literature for Superseding Indian Culture 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Centuries” was conducted by Professor Stephen Berkwitz, Head of the Department of Religious Studies, State University of Missouri, USA.

## **GUEST LECTURE ON ‘PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI’S FOREIGN POLICY’**

**27<sup>th</sup> June 2015**



Mr. Arindam Bagchi | Deputy High Commissioner of India presented a lecture on “Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s Foreign Policy” to the Final year undergraduates of the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo. The event was a collaborative effort of the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies and the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo.

## **CCIS GUEST LECTURE – 146<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2015**



A CCIS Guest Lecture on the “Leadership Traits of Mahatma Gandhi for Transformational Change” was conducted by Mrs. Shobhana Radhakrishna, Chief Functionary of the ‘Gandhian Forum for Good Corporate Governance’. Mr. Ravi Chopra, the Founder Secretary of Centre for Gandhian Vision and Values also attended the lecture. The lecture was conducted in connection with the 146<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

## **MEMORIAL LECTURE – 126<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

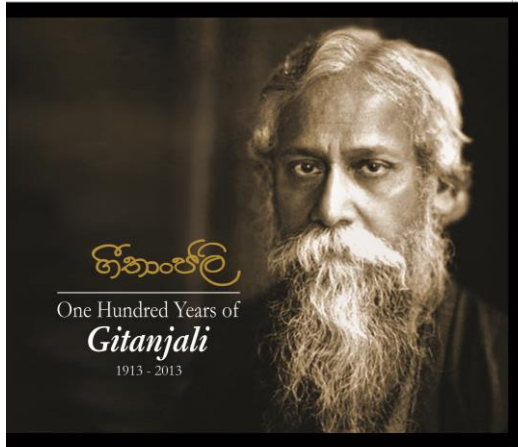


In connection with the 126<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru, a Memorial Lecture on “Nehru and Buddhism: Approaches to Fundamental Human Problems” was delivered by Professor Asanga Tilakaratne of the Pali & Buddhist Studies Unit, University of Colombo at the auditorium of the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Colombo. Mr. Arindam Bagchi, the Deputy High Commissioner of India presided over the function. The event was organized by the CCIS in collaboration with the ICC, Colombo.



## LAUNCH OF THE BOOK “ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GITANJALI 1913-2013”

27<sup>th</sup> March 2015



The Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies in collaboration with the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo launched the volume titled *One Hundred Years of Gitanjali, 1913-2013* edited by Prof. Sandagomi Coperahewa. This collection of essays written by Indian and Sri Lankan writers, provide new insights to understand and rediscover Tagore's *Gitanjali* from different

perspectives. The focus of this volume is mainly on the impact of *Gitanjali* on Sinhala literary scene but it also contains articles related Tagore's poetic vision. H. E. Mr. Y. K. Sinha the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. Mr. Arindam Bagchi, the Deputy High Commissioner of India also attended the ceremony. The book launch was followed by a 'Gitanjali-Re-lived-A Musical Rendition' by Dr. Ananda Gupta and the group.



## **FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIA**

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2015**



The Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies conducted a forum on Higher Educational Research Opportunities in India for the young lecturers (permanent/temporary) of the University of Colombo. The forum was facilitated by the Prof. Ashwani K. Sharma, Visiting Short Term Chair, and Director | CCIS also added his thoughts to the discussion. Eighteen participants from the disciplines of International Relations, Political Science, History Demography, Economics and Sinhala were among the gathering.

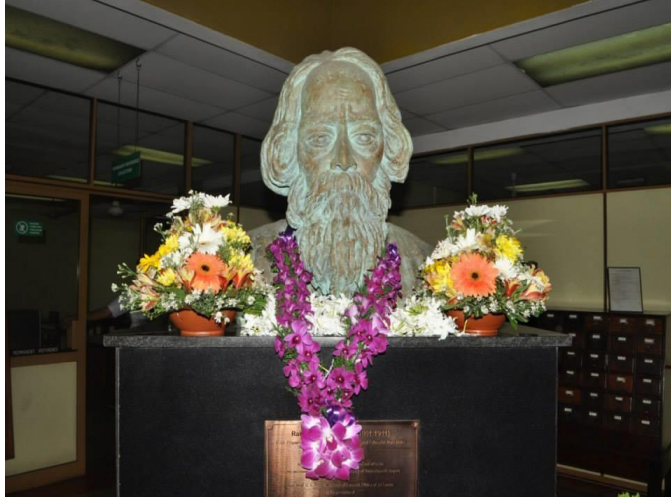
## **INTERPRETERS FOR PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA**

**13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

The Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies together with the Indian High Commission, Colombo arranged volunteered interpreters for Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Sri Lanka. There were fourteen volunteers from the University of Colombo including the Secretary | CCIS, undergraduates and the temporary lectures from the IR, English and Sinhala Departments of the University.

## GARLANDING OF THE BUST OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

7<sup>th</sup> May 2015



To commemorate the 154<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, H. E. Mr. Arindam Bagchi, Deputy High Commissioner of India garlanded the bust of Tagore at the Main Library of the University of Colombo in the presence of the academic community and Tagore aficionados. This bronze bust of Tagore was gifted by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India in connection with the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2012. This event was jointly organized by the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies of the University of Colombo and the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo.

## PUBLICATIONS

During the year the Centre took steps to publish the volume titled *Anagarika Dharmapala and India – Sri Lanka Relations* which based on the International Symposium held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at the Senate Hall, University of Colombo to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala. The book launch is scheduled to be held in February 2016.

# ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

26<sup>th</sup> October 2015



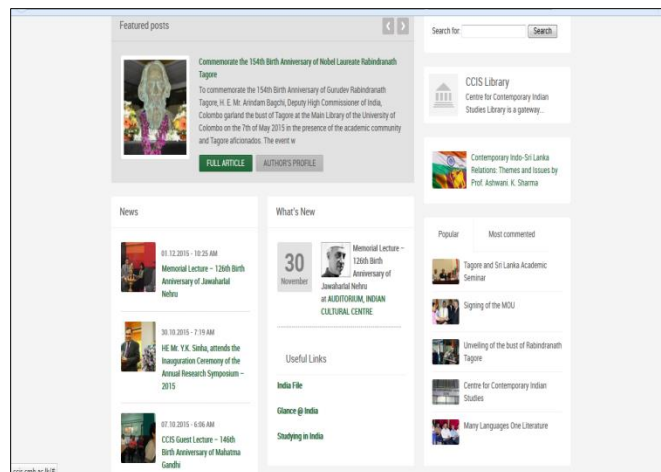
His Excellency Mr. Y. K. Sinha, the High Commissioner of India participated as the Chief Guest of the Inauguration Ceremony of the Annual Research Symposium of the University of Colombo which was held at the College House, University of Colombo. In his address at the inauguration ceremony, he mentioned the close link the Indian High Commission, Colombo shares with the University through the CCIS and emphasized potential of the Centre to operate as an academic hub for studies on contemporary India.

## SPONSORSHIPS



On the request of the ELTU of the University of Colombo, the Centre sponsored an Indian scholar who is carrying a perspective towards India to present his paper at the Faculty of Arts International Conference 2015. Accordingly Dr. M. Rajeshwar, Professor of English from Kakatiya University, Hyderabad, India delivered a speech on the sub-theme: “Language as an Agent of Change” at the International Conference which was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015. During his three day stay in Sri Lanka he made it an opportunity to visit the CCIS and had a brief meeting with the Director | CCIS.

## CCIS WEBSITE



The CCIS new website which launched on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 by Mr. Arindam Bagchi (Deputy High Commissioner) is now updated regularly with all the events related to CCIS. It is also linked to several academic institutes devoted to the study of India and South Asia.

## INVITED SPEAKER | KALINGA - LANKA SEMINAR

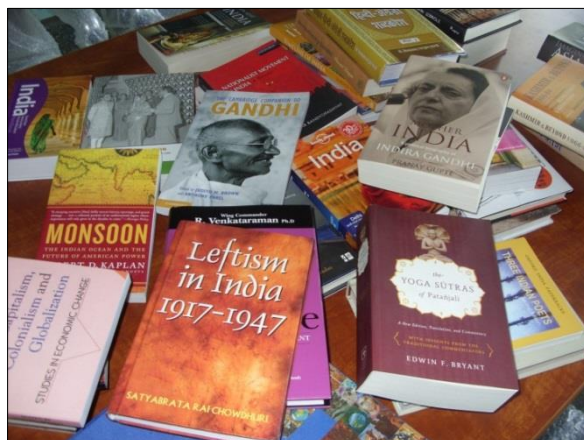
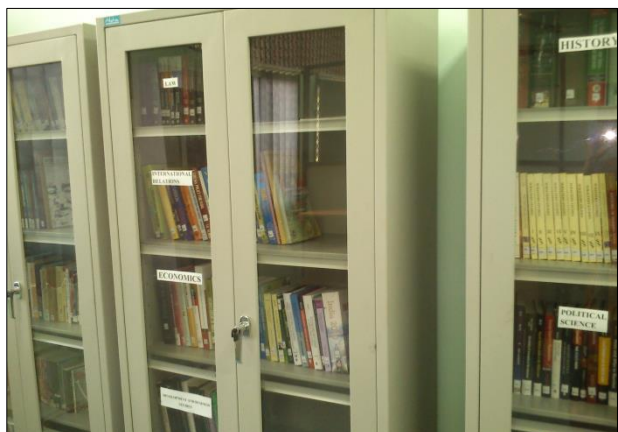
**6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

The Director | CCIS was invited to present a paper on “Origin of Sinhala and Kalinga - Lanka Linguistic Affinities” at the International Seminar on “Kalinga-Lanka: Reviving Old Linkages and Exploring New Opportunities” in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India organized by the Kalinga – Lanka Foundation. The two-day seminar in Bhubaneswar marked the first ever structured dialogue between the Kalinga and Sri Lanka regions on their shared past as also their common aspirations in the future.





## CCIS LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTRE



The CCIS Library is now a fully functioning library with over 600 books, both in English and Sinhala in the field of Contemporary India. The library is being utilized by the staff and undergraduates of the University of Colombo and it also provides internet and photocopy facilities to them. During the year several new academic books were added to the collection, and library also received book donations from the following institutes:

- **Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Colombo**

Upon her first visit to the CCIS, Ms. Rajashree Behera, the newly- appointed Director of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo expressed her willingness to donate a few books to the CCIS library. Accordingly, the Director | ICC visited the College House of the University of Colombo and symbolically made the donation to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo.

- **Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), Colombo**

The Ramakrishna Mission donated the CCIS library a set of books on Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

**Prof. Sandagomi Coperahewa**

Director | CCIS