

## **Sri Lanka's Participation at the First Asian Cultural Festival in Stockholm, Sweden**

The Sri Lankan Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden participated at the first Asian Cultural Festival held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 at the Iraqi Cultural Center in Stockholm. This event was organized by the Network of Asian and North African Cultural Representatives in Sweden (NACR). The Embassies of Iraq, Iran, China, Pakistan & Sri Lanka based in Sweden showcased their cultural richness in many ways by participating at this festival in Stockholm.

The first Asian Cultural Festival organized by NACR highlighted the rich histories, arts and traditions of China, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Sri Lanka through an assortment of cultural performances and other activities. There were traditional handicrafts, food, music, songs, exhibitions, dance performances, workshops, paintings, cloths, cultural displays unique to each country and that was an Asian marketplace. A goal of this cultural festival was to promote, educate, and share many diverse aspects of Asian cultures with the people in Sweden.

Sri Lankan stall was filled with traditional handicrafts such as wood crafts, silver ware, brass and copper products, coir products, batik decorations, ceramic products, rush & reed ware, soft & wooden toys etc. The eye catching oil paintings which showed natural beauty drawn by Sri Lankan artist Ms. Dileepa Gunathilka attracted many visitors to the stall. The staff of the Embassy arranged some delicious traditional Sri Lankan food for the visiting crowd. In addition, Sri Lankan spices were also displayed while world famous Ceylon Tea was served to quench the thirst of the visitors at the event. Furthermore, brochures on tea, gems & Sri Lanka tourism were also distributed at the Sri Lankan stall.

In addition, on the stage, the Sri Lankan flag was raised highly by 7 years old Isla Oceani Fernando, a Sri Lankan child lives in Sweden with her traditional, folk dancing and singing items. The crowd was overjoyed by her performances. This festival has created many opportunities to Sri Lanka as the visitors were very interested on Sri Lankan cultural materials, handicrafts, gems and demand for Ceylon tea was at very high level among the visitors as they were fascinated by the taste of pure Ceylon tea. It has provided a platform to establish future business links with Sri Lankan suppliers. Furthermore, Sri Lanka Embassy in Sweden has used this great occasion to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination as well.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Embassy of Sri Lanka, Sweden