Namal To Revive Hambantota Convention Centre

Namal Rajapaksa, Cabinet Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs.

Kris Balthazaar, Member of Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia Municipal Council, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna.

Chandra Wickramasinghe, Chairman, CDC Events and Connaissance de Ceylan.

Following the opening of the Southern Expressway ex- tension to Hambantota, Magam Ruhunupura International Convention Centre (MRICC) has now become an attraction for conventions, exhibitions and events, which the Government would like to pursue. According to Namal Rajapaksa, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, the property, which was built in 2013, has become a significant piece of infrastructure with the extension of the Southern Expressway to Hambantota. With this facility the travel time to Hambantota has been re- duced to one and half hours.

This has brought an advantage for those to travel to work from Colombo to Hambantota or Hambantota to Colombo and get back home within one and half hours.

Hambantota is the only city in Sri Lanka which has a port, an airport and a convention center all together other than the capital Colombo. This makes Hambantota the second most important commercial region in Sri Lanka. All these three major infrastructure facilities are of international standards. Mainly the convention center, which is on par with any major convention and exhibition center in the world.

The Hambantota center was partly funded by the Korean Government and designed with the expertise of the Koreans while it was built by the UDA.

Today the facility, which is almost eight years old, is maintained by the Security Forces and the UDA. The facil- ity, which was underutilized up to date is now poised to attract many trade as well as consumer events. Minister Namal Rajapaksa is inviting trade fair organizers and con- ference organizers to use this facility to promote the MICE industry in Sri Lanka.

Imran Hassan, Managing Director of CDC Events and Travels, carried out a site in- spection in order to draw a floor plan for trade fair organizers to conduct many fairs in the center. CDC Events, one of the main trade fair organizing companies in Sri Lanka has Seylan Bank opened an off- site ATM at the Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC), Ingiriya Road, Padduka, con- tinuing their commitment to support the financial needs of their customers. The ATM was ceremoniously opened by Chief Guest Ramesh Jayasekara, Senior DGM, Seylan Bank. The ATM will provide convenience to students who are studying at SLTC, ensuring easy access to those who wish to carry out cash withdrawals at any given time. This expansion will mark the 216th ATM opened by the Bank, further strengthening their ATM network across the island, enhancing customer convenience. Seylan Bank, the Bank with a Heart, operates with a vision to offer the ul- timate banking experience to its valued customers through cutting-edge technology, in- novative products, and best- in- class service. The Bank has a growing clientele of SMEs, retail and corporate custom- ers and has expanded its footprint with 173 branches and an ATM network of 215 units across the country. planned to conduct the first major international trade fair and conference in the facility early next year.

The Chairman, CDC Events and veteran businessman Chandra Wickramasinghe said the event will be named as ‘Hambantota International Trade & Agri-Export Fair 2021 (HITAF)’ for which Minister Namal Rajapaksahas pledged his fullest support, stated the convener of this project, Kris Balthazaar. He also said that the Government expected other trade fair organizers in the country to follow. He also added that exhibitors and visitors can drive down from Colombo in a matter of one and half hours or fly down direct to Mattala. The location has all facilities and activities awaiting them from star class accommodation to the world’s best national parks and sacred religious sites.

Minister Namal Rajapaksa, who was elected with a record number of preferential votes in the district, added that he will ensure that Hambantota will become the most pre- ferred destination for events of the this nature in the com- ing years in Sri Lanka.