Strengthening Iraqi Â€“ Sri Lankan Ties



The Embassy of Iraq in Sri Lanka is working towards reviving and further strengthening the decades long ties between the two nations. Kahtan Taha Khalaf, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Sri Lanka and Maldives, leads the administration.

Sri Lanka and Iraq are both Asian countries and both claimants to a noble ancient heritage, with connections spanning beyond the political and economic spheres. Now more than ever, as two nations determined on reconstructing in a postwar arena, a strong relationship between the countries is eminent.

With a population of over 30 million, Iraq should be a major export market for Sri Lankan produce, particularly tea. In return Sri Lanka remains an export market for Iraqi oil and other goods, especially dates. Now in a phase of rebuilding a nation torn by war, Iraq provides a potential avenue of foreign income earnings for skilled and non-skilled workers. “Sri Lanka has many good quality workers and can participate in rebuilding Iraq. It will provide important prospects for the Sri Lankan people as well,” said Ambassador Khalaf, adding that, “both countries have companies and expertise in different sectors, and are open to investments, these are mutually beneficial opportunities.”

March of 2011 saw a step towards strengthening Iraqi – Sri Lankan economic ties. A memorandum of understanding paved the path for a shopping centre carrying solely Sri Lankan export goods to be established in Iraq. Under the agreements commodities that are preferred with greater demand are to be exported into Iraq in bulk quantities. The future will also see the reopening of a Sri Lanka Embassy in Iraq.

As a new democratic nation, a complete change can be seen in Iraq. The Iraqi people now have the power to choose their representatives of Government; women have equal rights to men and Iraqis have the command of expression. “Now the situation is very good, security has been established, the Iraqi people have gained their freedom,” said the Ambassador.

The Iraqi policy of foreign affairs seeks to maintain open relations with all other countries, build friendships of peace and appreciate relationships built on respect for one another. With an economy fuelled by rich oil reserves and exportation capacity set to boom, with new thinking and strong global bonds, Iraq hopes to rebuild themselves. Two countries with immense potential, Sri Lankan and Iraqi relations have great potential for each country to grow and develop in collaboration, for each to transform into a commanding power in the Asian region.