



High Commission of India
Colombo, Sri Lanka

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PRESS RELEASE

Launch of Jataka Tales Audio Book on sacred Poson Poya

Marking 75th anniversary of India-Sri Lanka diplomatic relations, Jataka Tales Audio Book in Sinhala was launched at the Ruwanweli Maha Seya premises in Anuradhapura on the sacred Poson Poya, on 14 June 2022. The Audio Book contains 50 Jataka Tales, selected from *Jatakattakatha* under the theme of 'Good Advice' and primarily caters to the visually impaired. The first Audio Book was offered to the Venerable Mahasangha by Dr. Sushil Kumar, Counsellor, Technical Cooperation and Head of Chancery of the High Commission of India.

2. The Audio Book was a joint collaboration between Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) and the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS), University of Colombo. Supervised by Most Ven. Rambukana Siddhartha Thero, several others including Dr. Rewant Vikram Singh, Director SVCC, Prof. Upul Ranjith Hewawitanagamage, Director of CCIS, Dr. W. A. Abeysinha and Ms. Wathsala Samarakoon, a popular TV and Radio presenter contributed towards the initiative.

3. Speaking at the event in Sinhala through a video message, High Commissioner Gopal Baglay offered the Jataka Tales Audio Book as a *dharma daana* from the people of India to the people of Sri Lanka. He highlighted in his message that Buddhist heritage, including the Jatak Tales formed an important civilisational bond between India and many countries, of which Sri Lanka has a very special place as one of the first countries to receive the gift of Buddhism from India two millenia ago. Further, similar initiatives would help in strengthening the shared cultural heritage and people-to-people bonds between the two neighbours.

4. It may be recalled that the Government of India has taken a number of steps in the recent past to deepen linkages between India and Sri Lanka in the sphere of Buddhism. These include, a special grant of USD 15 million for the promotion of Buddhist ties; inaugural international flight to the sacred city of

Kushinagar from Sri Lanka on the auspicious 'Wap Poya' day in October 2021; multi-city exposition of the sacred Kapilvastu Buddha relics from the Rajaguru Sri Subhuthi Maha Vihara of Waskaduwa, in India in October 2021, among others.

Colombo

17 June 2022

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