

# Tours Showcasing Sri Lanka's Cultural Attractions Await CACCI Conference Delegates

Delegates of this year's 27th CACCI Conference will have the opportunity to see and experience first-hand some of the major tourist attractions of Sri Lanka by joining one of the two optional tours being organized by the host chambers of this year's 24th CACCI Conference that will take place on July 5-7, 2010 in Colombo. One can register for either the day-tour to Kandy, considered one of the most beautiful cultural cities in the world, or a tour of Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital city.

## Day Tour to Kandy



Kandy is Sri Lanka's hill capital, the last stronghold of the Sinhala Kings. It is 488 meters above sea level and located 129 kms. From Colombo. Nestled amidst low hills, valleys, rivers, lakes and cascading waterfalls, Kandy is still the home of the arts and crafts, music, dance and song which flourished during the reign of the king. Kandy is an example of Buddhism's influence in Sri Lanka today. Temples, shrines and monasteries keeping alive Buddhist traditions are everywhere. The city is famed for the Temple of the Tooth, resting place of the country's most precious Buddhist relic – the sacred tooth that was said to have been snatched from the funeral pyre of the Buddha.

The tour participants will leave for Kandy in the morning of July 8. En route to Kandy, the delegates will visit Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage. Started in 1975 to house the abandoned and the wounded, the orphanage has grown to be a big family today. The number of elephants has increased to more than 60

now, including baby elephants brought from various parts, as well as the babies born, as a result of the captive-breeding programme. This is certainly a unique experience never to be missed.

From Pinnawela, the delegates will start a city tour of Kandy, including Upper Lake Drive, Market Square, Arts & Crafts Centre, Gem Lapidary and Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

After lunch, there will be a visit of the Royal Botanical Gardens – Peradeniya. Some 147 acres in extent, the Peradeniya started in 1374 as a pleasure garden of the Kings of Kandy. Today, there are more than 5,000 species of trees and plants, including some rare and endemic flora from the tropical World. The Spice Garden and Orchid House are popular with tourists.

The tour group will also visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. Ever since the 4th Century A.D, when the Buddha's Tooth was brought to Sri Lanka hidden from sacrilegious hands in an Orissan princess' hair, the Relic has grown in repute and holiness in Sri Lanka and throughout the Buddhist world. It is considered Sri Lanka's most prized possession.

From the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, the group will return back to the hotel in Colombo.

## Tour of Colombo



Those who prefer to experience the sights and sounds of the country's capital can join the tour of Colombo. A drive through the city will take the tour group to the busy commercial areas as well as the tree-lined residential area of Cinnamon Gardens; visit the Fort, the former British administrative

center and military garrison; go to the Sea Street - the Goldsmith's quarters in the heart of Pettah, the Bazaar area, where there is also a Hindu Temple with elaborate stone carvings, and the Dutch Church of Wolfendhal dating back to 1749. The group will also visit the BMICH, see the replica of Avukana Buddha and Independence Square.

Lunch will be followed by shopping in Colombo. This will include a visit to ODEL Unlimited which provides ample opportunity to indulge, not only in shopping for designer wear apparel for the whole family, but also take taste buds on a voyage of discovery.

Thereafter, the group will proceed to Paradise Road, a store from the land of make believe - a trip into Aladdin's cave where delegates can potter around, feel and absorb the beauty of the pieces displayed. Exotic twisted steel candle holders, dainty porcelain plates, hand painted ceramic ware, perfumed candles and the ever popular incense sticks and aromatic oils in variety of fragrances are available here. The concept is ingenious and the display is excellent.

The group can then discover Barefoot, where they can find toys, bags, clothes, handloom fabric, sarongs, sarees, household linen, art, photography, books, furniture, and Gallery Café.

The next stop will be the House of Fashion, a large four-storey mall which has a wide variety of apparel, handbags, luggage and home decor at very reasonable prices. Their lingerie department is worth a visit. Soft clingy bits and pieces in vibrant shades of tangerine, violet and turquoise vie for attention with similar items in pale pastel shades mauves, baby pink and pale cream. Many of the malls have the latest designer creations from Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Longchamps and Prada to name just a few.

CACCI members attending the Colombo Conference are encouraged to join either of the two optional tours and get a glimpse of Sri Lanka's past and present. ■