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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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 University of Sri Jaywardenepura

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor



Dear International Community and Our Partners,

As the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, I am delighted to extend a warm greeting to our international students, faculty members, alumni, and worldwide stakeholders through the first edition of the Newsletter of our International Affairs Division. The University of Sri Jayewardenepura continues to flourish as a center of academic excellence, cultural exchange, international cooperation, and global networking. I am especially proud of the significant international achievements that we could achieve during the period of June 2023 and June 2024.

Over the past year, we have seen a steady increase in the enrollment of foreign students, which speaks to our university's growing reputation and the dynamic, inclusive environment we offer. These students bring diverse perspectives that enrich our campus and enhance the learning experience for all. International collaboration remains central to our mission. We have signed numerous Memoranda of Understanding with prestigious foreign universities and institutions, enabling joint programmes, research initiatives, and academic exchanges. These partnerships not only broaden our academic horizons, but also contribute to addressing global challenges through shared knowledge and innovation. Furthermore, our active engagement with foreign embassies has significantly expanded our international network. These collaborations facilitate student and faculty exchanges, scholarships, and various cultural programs, further enriching the educational experience at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Looking to the future, we are excited about the many opportunities that lie ahead. We remain dedicated to cultivating an environment where international students feel at home and where academic excellence and cultural diversity are celebrated. Thank you for being a part of our vibrant international community. Together, we will continue to build bridges across cultures and create a brighter, more interconnected world.

Warm regards!

Senior Professor M.M. Pathmalal
Vice-Chancellor
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Director of International Affairs Division



Dear International Community and Our Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the opportunities ahead, I am delighted to share our progress and achievements from the International Affairs Division and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in terms of the international collaborations. Over the past year, our team has worked tirelessly to foster collaborations and strengthen relationships across borders. We have successfully expanded partnerships in new regions, hosted successful international conferences, facilitated cultural exchanges and many more. These efforts have not only enhanced our global presence, but also enriched our understanding of diverse perspectives and cultures.

Looking ahead, we are excited about launching new international projects, enhancing cross-cultural communication, expanding our global network as well. With your continued support and collaboration, we are confident in our ability to make a meaningful impact on a global scale.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team and valued partners for their unwavering commitment and enthusiasm. Together, we will continue to promote international cooperation and create opportunities for mutual learning and growth.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.

Warm regards!

Dr. Ruwini Prasadini Dharmawardene
Director, International Affairs Division
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

The International Affairs Division (IAD) University of Sri Jayewardenepura



We are excited to share the latest developments from our International Affairs Division. Our team has been diligently working to foster global partnerships and enhance our international presence. **“One World, One USJ”**, the newsletter of the International Affairs Division presents you with the highlights of our recent activities and accomplishments from June 2023 to June 2024.

We have successfully established new collaborations with key institutions in Europe and Asia, aimed at promoting cross-cultural exchange and joint research initiatives. These partnerships are set to open numerous opportunities for our university, including exchange programs, collaborative projects, and international conferences.

Our goal is to provide comprehensive and accessible learning opportunities for all. The outreach programmes of the university have expanded to include community engagement projects that promote cultural understanding and global citizenship. These initiatives are instrumental in building bridges between diverse communities and fostering a spirit of global cooperation.

We are proud of the progress our International Affairs Division has made and look forward to continuing our work in advancing global collaboration and understanding. We encourage all members to stay engaged with our activities and take advantage of the opportunities we offer.

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Table of Contents

International collaborations and Events

1. Fostering Transcontinental Collaboration in STEM Education and Research with QUT, Australia
2. Strengthening Collaboration in Medical Education and Research between Kursk State Medical University and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura
3. Building Bridges in Medical Education: Exploring Collaborative Opportunities between Grodno State Medical University and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura
4. RUDN University's Ecology Olympiad Awards Scholarships for MSc to Outstanding Undergraduate Students of the Department
5. Collaboration with the Ural State University of Economics, Russian Federation
6. Meeting with delegates of the International Business University, Toronto, Canada
7. Master of Economics – Enrolling the First Batch of 63 Chinese Students at USJ
8. USJ strengthening ties with the University of Sydney: Collaboration between the University of Sydney, Australia and the Department of History and Archaeology, USJ
9. Exploring Collaborative Opportunities between Gomel State Medical University and University of Sri Jayewardenepura
10. Seminar for Diplomats in Developing Countries
11. "Illumino 2.0" – A unique opportunity for interaction between students and industry experts
12. Inauguration of the training programme on Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gases and RUDN Summer school programme
13. Building Bridges between USJ and INTI International University, Malaysia
14. Promising partnerships with the Beijing Forestry University, China
15. Enhancing partnerships with Texas, USA and USJ, Sri Lanka
16. Initiating partnerships with the School of Agriculture, Meiji University, Japan
17. Delegations to USJ from Kobe International University, Japan
18. "Path to Progress in Education, Innovation and Startups": Exclusive Guest Lecture by Renowned Inventor, Businessman, and Diplomat – Dr. Bandula Wijay
19. Successful Collaboration Unfolds: Recap of the 2024 Sri Lanka International Study-Abroad Project Inspection Tour
20. Faculty visits and collaborative discussions of Yude Education Group, China
21. Collaborations between USJ and Rajagiri Business School (RBS), of Rajagiri College of Social Sciences Society in India
22. JICA Team to Collaborate with USJ Polymer Science Department to Find Solutions to Plastic Management
23. Collaboration of Andhra University India and USJ for the "Celebration of Buddha Poornima" and Vesak Dhamma Discussion Programme
24. Celebrating International Children's Book Day
25. New Partnerships with Shinawathra International University, Thailand
26. Third Study Tour of the Edith Cowan University, Australia
27. Collaboration with Zhejiang Shuren University, China
28. 'Basel objects back to Sri Lanka' – Human skeletons and cultural objects belong to the Vedda community that were taken to Switzerland during the British colonial period

1. Fostering Transcontinental Collaboration in STEM Education and Research with QUT, Australia



A delegation from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Australia paid a visit to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The warm welcome was extended to the delegates by Prof. Upul Subasinghe, the Acting Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences at USJ. Prof. Subasinghe, along with Prof. Laleen Karunanayake from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, hosted the meeting. The primary objective of the meeting was to explore and strengthen partnerships in the field of STEM disciplines between the two universities. During the meeting, Ms. Marina McKeague, the client manager of the QUT International Office, provided an introduction to the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). She shared information about QUT's programs, achievements, and international initiatives. Additionally, Professor Troy, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science at QUT, discussed the state-of-the-art facilities available within the faculty. Professor Les Dawes and other delegates also contributed to the discussion by presenting key details about the Faculty of Engineering and its affiliated schools. Their presentations likely covered areas such as research strengths, academic offerings, and notable achievements within the respective faculties. Academic representatives from Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology, and Faculty of Engineering participated in the meeting, where they presented their current status, capabilities, achievements, and future initiatives. The meeting provided a platform for showcasing their respective strengths and discussing potential areas of collaboration and joint projects. By focusing on deepening partnerships, the universities aimed to enhance knowledge exchange, research cooperation, and academic advancements in STEM fields.

2. Strengthening Collaboration in Medical Education and Research between Kursk State Medical University and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura



A delegation from Kursk State Medical University (KSMU) in Russia visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The warm welcome was extended to the delegates by Prof. Upul Subasinghe, who serves as the Acting Vice Chancellor of USJ. During the meeting, Assoc. Prof. Mohamad Toufic Chahine, the Director of the International Medical Institute at Kursk State Medical University, took the lead in guiding the discussion. He provided an informative overview of Kursk State Medical University and clarified the purpose of their visit. The esteemed position of Kursk State Medical University in Russia was highlighted, setting the stage for potential collaborations. Assoc. Prof. Chahine expressed a keen interest in partnering with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura to establish exchange programs for medical students and to support research initiatives within the medical faculty. The benefits of network education were also discussed. It was emphasized that the curriculum provided at Kursk State Medical University is the same for both local and international students, with a mix of clinical students from various backgrounds. Additionally, Prof. Aloka Pathirana, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences identified specific areas where research opportunities could be provided. Furthermore, he highlighted the overall understanding of medical faculties in Sri Lanka, giving particular emphasis to the esteemed standing of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura within the country. Lastly, Prof. Aloka Pathirana shed light on the types of research that the students at USJ are currently involved in, demonstrating their active participation in meaningful scientific endeavors.

3. Building Bridges in Medical Education: Exploring Collaborative Opportunities between Grodno State Medical University and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Delegates from Grodno State Medical University, Russia visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. They were welcomed by Prof. Upul Subasinghe, the Acting Vice Chancellor of USJ, Mr. Anuruddha Weliwita, the Registrar of USJ, Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene, Director of the International Affairs Division, and the academic representatives of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The primary objective of the visit was to explore potential opportunities for Grodno medical students to receive medical training at USJ. Prof. Shalindra Ranasinghe, and Dr. Varuni Tennakoon in their capacity as representatives from the Medical Faculty, provided a comprehensive overview of the fee-levying basis elective programs available at USJ. The delegates from Grodno State Medical University expressed keen interest in the elective programs and were impressed by the offerings and facilities at USJ. The discussions focused on fostering collaboration between the two institutions and creating avenues for medical students from Grodno to gain valuable educational experiences at USJ. The visit served as an important platform for knowledge exchange and establishing a strong foundation for future partnerships between our universities. The warm reception and fruitful discussions further reinforced the mutual commitment to academic excellence and international cooperation.



4. RUDN University's Ecology Olympiad Awards Scholarships for MSc to Outstanding Undergraduate Students of the Department

From June 11th to 15th, 2023, RUDN University's Faculty of Environmental Engineering hosted an Ecology Olympiad for undergraduate students in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science. Six outstanding students secured full scholarships for their Master of Science (MSc) studies at RUDN University, while five others earned half the scholarships. The certificate awarding ceremony was organized on October 23rd, 2023, at the new Senate Boardroom, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Winning the scholarship at RUDN University's Faculty of Environmental Engineering opens doors to a world-class education, empowering students to become environmental science and sustainability leaders.



5. Collaboration with the Ural State University of Economics, Russian Federation

Enhancing partnerships between the Ural State University of Economics (USUE), Russia, and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ), a delegation visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura on 24th July 2023. The warm welcome was extended to the delegates by Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, USJ. Taking the initiative in guiding the discussion, Prof. Heenkenda provided a brief introduction to the university, followed by an introductory video of the university. Representing USUE, Associate Professor Roman Krasnov, the Vice-Rector for Social Affairs and Youth Policy provided an informative overview and clarified the purpose of the visit. Emphasizing the opportunities for potential collaborations, he expressed a keen interest in partnering with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura to establish exchange programmes for students, establish cooperation between the two universities, establish a Russian language and cultural centre, introduce short courses such as certificates or diploma catering tourism industry, and online joint programmes. In addition, he highlighted that the subjects based on the tourism industry such as Economics, ICT, Finance, and Tourism would be highly practical in coping with the curriculum. Furthermore, he indicated specific areas where opportunities could be provided. He demonstrated the chance for students to enroll in any federal institution in Russia upon the completion of the course. The benefits of network education were also discussed, while Ms. Wathsala Madhuwanthi, lecturer in Russian Language explained the current status of Russian language teaching and the challenges and discussed the possible collaboration for Russian teacher training and staff exchange with Russian higher education institutes, scholarship opportunities for the students for language stays in Russia, and the promotion of cultural events. The undergraduates from the Department of Languages, Cultural Studies, and Performing Arts also joined the meeting.



6. Meeting with delegates of the International Business University, Toronto, Canada

The delegate, Mr. Jason Gangaram, the Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Partnerships in the International Business University (IBU), Toronto visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) on 23rd August 2023. Dr. Dushan Chaminda, the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, USJ, Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene, Director of the International Affairs Division, and Dr. Sandamali Galdolage, scholar and the Coordinator of the International Affairs in the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce graciously welcomed him. IBU is a private, non-profit, student-focused university in Toronto, Canada that offers a growing set of undergraduate and graduate academic and professional degree programs. It combines academic excellence with curricula geared to the needs of the students in the 21st Century in the sphere of World Business Education. The key objective of this visit was to explore the potential higher education opportunities for collaborative educational partnerships between the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and International Business University. The intention was to discuss the comprehensive business disciplines that IBU offers, designed to support a vast array of industries so as to foster collaborations between the two universities. Understanding collaboration opportunities in the realm of business education, discussing potential partnerships in research, curriculum development, and faculty exchanges, exploring avenues for student exchange and internship programs, and establishing a roadmap for future engagement and cooperation were among the foremost emphasis of discussions. Academic representative from USJ, Dr. Sandamali Galdolage provided a comprehensive overview of the degree programs available in the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the USJ and the potential for collaborations between the two universities. Mr. Jason Gangaram from IBU expressed a keen interest in the elective programs and was impressed by the current degree programs offered by USJ. The visit served as an important platform for knowledge exchange and establishing a strong ground for future partnerships between the two universities. The fruitful discussions further reinforced the mutual commitment to academic excellence and international cooperation.



7. Master of Economics – Enrolling the First Batch of 63 Chinese Students at USJ

Under the direction of Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Department of Economics at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura introduced an innovative one-year postgraduate program in Economics as M.A. in Economics. With particular emphasis on bringing in foreign students, the first batch of 63 Chinese students was enrolled. This initial international batch will be led by a renowned panel of lecturers for a period of one year. In order to provide students with a coherent experience, the Department of Economics and the Faculty of Graduate Studies will work collaboratively to operate the program. This specialized curriculum seeks to provide students with a thorough understanding of economic theories and principles while giving them the skills they need to succeed in the profession. By following the M.A. in Economics postgraduate degree at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, graduates will be well-equipped to address complex economic issues and contribute to national and international development. Students can explore a range of sub-disciplines in economics, such as microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, business economics, and international economics while focusing on research and their practical applications. The degree comprises a total of thirty credits and, is aligned with the Sri Lanka Quality Framework at Level 09, which will ensure the students succeed in this competitively globalized world. English is used as the medium of instruction so as to promote the students for global scale opportunities. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Master of Economics degree program was held at the Sri Sumangala Auditorium of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, on 02nd August 2023.



8. USJ strengthening ties with the University of Sydney: Collaboration between the University of Sydney, Australia and the Department of History and Archaeology, USJ



Professor Patrick Faulkner, Associate Professor in Archaeology and the Project Director of the University of Sydney, Australia donated valuable research equipment to the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) on the 25th of August 2023. This event took place concurrent to the ongoing research project in Bundala, Pathirajawela archaeological site. Professor Patrick Faulkner is an outstanding scholar in Archaeology who has also contributed to the historically valued research project “Long-term human-environment interactions in Sri Lanka.” This remarkable event was graced by Senior Professor M.M. Pathmalal, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Rev. Dambara Amila Thero, Senior Lecturer and the Head of the Department of History and Archaeology, Dr. Oshan Wedage, Senior Lecturer and the Project Director and Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene, Director of the International Affairs Division representing USJ. The event was also witnessed by a group of undergraduates from the Department of History and Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in USJ. The Department of History and Archaeology of USJ and the University of Sydney, Australia, are willing to enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding in near future, with the aim of fostering international educational and research collaboration between the two institutions. Building on this partnership, both the universities intend to contribute to the archaeological arena in both countries. The rich experiences that might be gathered during the fieldwork, combined with conceptual insights will lead to a vast area of History and Archaeology while providing a precious opportunity for USJ students to explore diverse research findings in other parts of the world.

9. Exploring Collaborative Opportunities between Gomel State Medical University and University of Sri Jayewardenepura

In today's rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, collaboration and innovation are crucial for the advancement of medical education and research. Enhancing partnerships between the Gomel State Medical University (GSMU), and University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ), the Vice-Rector of International Affairs at the Gomel State Medical University, Professor Svetlana A. Anashkina, accompanied by Dr. Lasantha Amarakoon visited University of Sri Jayewardenepura on 04th September 2023. The warm welcome was extended to the delegates by Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Prof. Aloka Pathirana, the Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Prof. Shalindra Ranasinghe, coordinator of international affairs of Faculty of Medical Sciences and Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene, Director of the International Affairs Division.



This discussion aimed to strengthen the ties between our institutions, leverage our unique strengths, and foster innovation in medical education. By building bridges in medical education through collaborative efforts, Gomel State Medical University and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura can play a vital role in shaping the future of healthcare, advancing medical research, and preparing students to meet the complex challenges of the healthcare industry with excellence and compassion. Taking the initiative in guiding the discussion, Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal, the Vice-Chancellor of USJ provided a brief introduction to the university. Discussions also revolved around identifying future avenues for partnership. This includes elective programs, collaborative research projects, and student exchange programs. The Vice-Rector of International Affairs at the Gomel State Medical University, Professor Svetlana A. Anashkina expressed a keen interest in elective programs offered by USJ and was impressed by the quality of offerings and facilities available. Prof. Aloka Pathirana and Prof. Shalindra Ranasinghe, representing the Medical Faculty at USJ, provided detailed information about fee-levying elective programs, underlining the opportunities available for international students. The visit served as an important platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, setting the stage for future collaborations. The warm reception and fruitful discussions during the visit reaffirmed the mutual commitment of both institutions to academic excellence and the advancement of medical education and research.

10. Seminar for Diplomats in Developing Countries



The Director, Dr. Ruwini Prasadini Dharmawardene of the International Affairs Division in the University of Sri Jayewardenepura represented the University at the Seminar sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China held from 14th September to 26th September 2023. The seminar was held at the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, China in order to widen the international collaboration with Young and Middle-aged diplomats in 15 developing countries while increasing the participants' awareness in China's foreign policy, security policy, strategic studies, and international relations in the Asia-Pacific region. As an outcome of this meeting, student/staff exchange programme is in progress in Business Economics between UIBE and the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce at USJ.

11. "Illumino 2.0" - A unique opportunity for interaction between students and industry experts

"Illumino 2.0," was an enlightening installation organized by the official Japura Tourism Club of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. This prestigious event featured distinguished guests, including the Chief Guest, Dr. Shweta Chandra, Manager of Learning and Development at Taj Samudra Colombo; Mr. Chandana Gamage, the Financial Controller of Berjaya Hotel, Colombo; and Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The event was held on 17th October 2023. In addition to these esteemed individuals, the event hosted a representative from the Cultural Section of the Russian Embassy of Sri Lanka, Japanese representatives, a representative of the Chinese Language and Cultural Center, a representative from Mr. Dumpling, and a representative from Lumbini Confucius Classroom. The Director of the International Affairs of USJ, Dr. Ruwini Dharmawadene also participated in this event. "Illumino 2.0" offered a unique opportunity for interaction between students and industry experts. Attendees had the chance to gain valuable knowledge from industrial experts and, in turn, share their industry insights with students. This event was a remarkable platform for the exchange of ideas and expertise, fostering a dynamic learning environment.

12. Inauguration of the training programme on Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gases and RUDN Summer school programme

In a successful collaboration between the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science and RUDN University, Russia, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) training course unfolded from October 23-25, 2023, leaving participants enriched with valuable insights. The course proved to be a valuable platform for knowledge exchange among Russian industrialists and environmental enthusiasts. The course started with introductory sessions, offering participants a comprehensive understanding of GHG reporting. Mr. Rishan Sampath, Sustainability Assistant Manager at MAS Holdings, shared his expertise on greenhouse gas inventory principles, requirements, and quantification. Participants explored the MAS Bodyline Factory. Dr. Thilak Chandrathilaka conducted a session in the forest field station in the Yagirala. This practical exposure provided a firsthand look at environmental practices in both industrial and forestry settings. The focus turned to climate projects according to ISO 14064-2:2019. Senior Professor Hemanthi Ranasinghe led sessions covering these projects' planning, monitoring, and documentation. The international standards were discussed, providing participants with a global perspective on climate initiatives. Dr. Chaamila Pathirana coordinated the overall program from the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science.



13. Building Bridges between USJ and INTI International University, Malaysia

It was a great privilege to have the delegate visit and discussion on potential partnership opportunities between the INTI International University, Malaysia and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ). The delegates were welcomed by Dr. Dushan Jayawickrama, the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), Dr. Sandamali Galgodalage, the coordinator of International Affairs at FMSC/ Head of the Department of Marketing Management and Dr. Janaka Fernando, Head of the Department of Business Economics. The event took place on 24th October at the office of the Dean, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce. Representing the INTI International University, Malaysia Associate Professor Asokan Vasudevan from the Faculty of Business and Communication visited USJ. The discussion led to exploring possibilities and opportunities to inquire about international collaborations and networking. The international collaborations can bring numerous benefits for both institutions and contribute to global knowledge-sharing and educational opportunities. The main objectives of this partnership include staff and student exchange programs, collaborative research opportunities, and other potential partnerships such as research publications and conferences. These objectives reflect a common goal of enhancing academic and cultural exchange between the two institutions. The interest in participating in research conferences and symposia at USJ, as well as in INTI offering opportunities for studying at INTI University, was a positive step toward fostering meaningful connections. In addition, both parties believe that the understanding between people and institutions is the essential foundation for long term mutual beneficial partnerships.



14. Promising partnerships with the Beijing Forestry University, China



Beijing Forestry University (BFU) is a national public university centered in Beijing, China. It is the top university in China for ecological and environmental education. Beijing Forestry University provides a wide range of courses such as Automation, Biology, Artificial Intelligence, Computer science, Economics, Electronics, Environmental Science, Forestry, Languages, Laws, Management, Mathematics, Physics and Psychology. The delegates of Beijing Forestry University visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) on 25th of October with the intention of entering a Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. XIE Xuwen- Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Secretary, Party Committee at BFU, Mr. YANG Xiaodong – Director, Logistics Support Department, Mr. LI Liang – Deputy Director, International Relations Office, Mr. WANG Chuping – Section Chief, University Office, Mr. Gong Rui – Director of TTESC and Ms. Xue Xiao – Interpreter of TTESC joined as the delegates representing Beijing Forestry University. Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal-the Vice-Chancellor of University of Sri Jayewardenepura warmly welcomed them. Senior Prof. Pradeep Jayaweera-the Dean of the Faculty of Urban and Aquatic Bioresources, Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda – the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Renuka Nilmini – the Dean of the Faculty of Technology, Prof. R.K.D.N.K.Rajapakshe-Head of the Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts, Ms. Thilini Bhagya Ranasinghe – Lecturer (Probationary), Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts, and Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene-Director, International Affairs Division, USJ organized the event. Delegates from both the institutions discussed on how the universities can collaborate and incorporate for educational purposes. There, joint research opportunities, scholarships, staff and student exchange programmes and other potential opportunities such as research conferences were discussed. Prof. Renuka Nilmini, Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda and Senior, Prof. Pradeep Jayaweera added their inputs to the discussion incorporating the subject disciplines of respective faculties. With the aim of working together to promote collaborative work between the two universities, both parties entered into an agreement. After the meeting between BFU and USJ, the delegates from BFU had a tour around the university premises as well.



15. Enhancing partnerships with Texas, USA and USJ, Sri Lanka

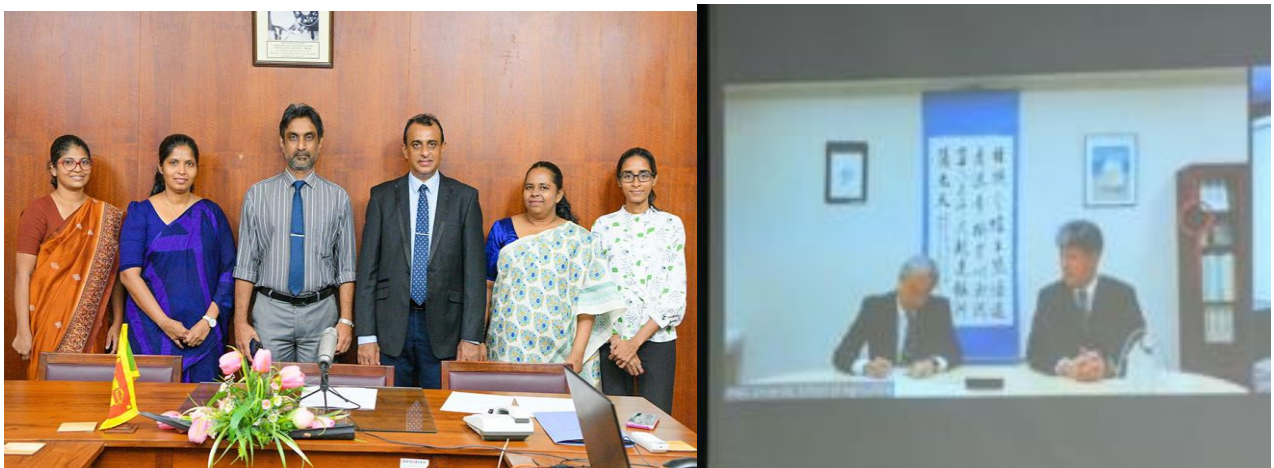


Through long-term understanding and recognition between Texas and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ), Honourable County Judge Mr. K.P. George visited USJ on 13th November. With the graceful presence of Senior Professor Sampath Amaratunga, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka the event was enlightened. The Vice-Chancellor of USJ, Senior Professor M. M. Pathmalal extended his warm welcome to the chief guest Mr. K.P. George highlighting the recognition between Texas and USJ. The event was enlightened by the presence of the deans of the faculties, senior academic staff members and students. This chief guest focused on having an interactive session with the academic staff and the students at the university. Building strong partnerships between institutions across different regions can lead to valuable exchanges of knowledge, culture, and expertise. The deans of the faculties, senior academic staff members and students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura participated in this fruitful discussion. The research team from the Interdisciplinary Center for Innovation in Biotechnology & Neuroscience (ICIBN), University of Sri Jayewardenepura also presented the research collaborative activities between the University of Houston (UoH), Texas and USJ.



16. Initiating partnerships with the School of Agriculture, Meiji University, Japan

Enhancing partnerships involves strengthening relationships and collaboration between individuals, organizations, or entities. Whether in business, academia, or any other field, effective partnerships can lead to mutual benefits and success. It requires ongoing effort, commitment, and a focus on building strong, collaborative relationships. Regular communication, a clear understanding of goals, and a commitment to mutual benefit are keys in achieving success in any partnership. To promote collaborations, the School of Agriculture, Meiji University, Japan and the Department of Urban Bioresources of the Faculty of Urban and Aquatic Bioresources, University of Sri Jayewardenepura entered into a mutual understanding to engage in collaborative research approaches, engage in guest lectures, talks and conferences. As a result of the visit of Prof. Takashi Ikeda, Professor in the Department of Agriculture, School of Agriculture, Meiji University, Japan and the Director of the Advance Plant Factory Production Center of the University from the 21st of March to the 24th of March 2023, the initiations were made to establish a collaboration between the two institutes. Based on his experience gained while working in the Ministry of Agriculture, Japan, he joined Meiji University and currently, he serves as the Associate Dean of the School of Agriculture, at Meiji University. He is an expertise in the areas of production systems, horticulture and instrumentation engineering. This captivating opportunity provided a vast array of partnerships for future collaborations between the two universities. Therefore, the foundation was created to enter into an agreement between the two universities. Concurrent with the ongoing partnership, a discussion was held between the two universities on 01st December on a virtual platform. With the graceful presence of Senior Prof. M. M. Pathmalal, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Senior Prof. Pradeep Jayaweera, Dean of the Faculty of Urban and Aquatic Bioresources, Dr. Surani Chathurika, Head, Department of Urban Bioresources, Dr. Udari Rathnathunga, Senior Lecturer, Department of Urban Bioresources and the Academic Coordinator of International Affairs at the Faculty of Urban and Aquatic Bioresources, and Dr. Anusha Ekanayake, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Urban and Aquatic Bioresources, Prof. Takemoto Tamotsu, Dean, School of Agriculture and Prof. Takashil Ikeda, Associate Dean, School of Agriculture, Meiji University, this discussion was a huge success.



17. Delegations to USJ from Kobe International University, Japan



Miss Miho Wakasugi, South Asian coordinating officer of the Kobe International University (KIU), Japan visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) on 05th December 2023. It is a private university established in 1968 by its founder, Rev. Hinsuke Yashiro, Prime Bishop of the Anglican Church in Japan, based on the spirit of Christianity and advocating the spirit of its motto – “Stand in awe of God, but fear no man, and serve mankind”. To create an education encompassing the total person, KIU aims to develop human resources equipped with rich knowledge and expertise capable of contributing to international society and the construction of a peaceful world. KIU widely accepts a variety of students regardless of their religious beliefs and strives for religious tolerance. Mr. Thishantha Kathriarachchi, the Chairman of the Global One Consultants accompanied Miss Miho Wakasugi to USJ along with Mr. Sahan Dissanayake, the Managing Director and Miss Yuhansa Minsandi, Senior Executive of Global One Consultants. Having collaborations with more than 13 countries and 30 international universities, Kobe International University aims to initiate possible partnerships with the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Industry-government-academia collaboration and Foreign Nursing Care Worker programmes were focused in the discussion. Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal, the Vice-Chancellor of USJ, Prof. D. I. Uluwaduge, the Dean of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Dr. M.R.S. Jayathilake, Head/ Senior Lecturer of the Department of Nursing, Dr. K. A. A. Dilhari , Senior Lecturer of the Department of Basic Science and Faculty Coordinator of the International Affairs, Dr. Ruwini Dharmawardene, the Director of the International Affairs Division and academic representatives from the Department of Nursing of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences joined the event.

**18. “Path to Progress in Education, Innovation and Startups”
Exclusive Guest Lecture by Renowned Inventor, Businessman, and
Diplomat – Dr. Bandula Wijay**

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura was fortunate to experience a unique and enlightening guest lecture featured by a distinguished personality who seamlessly navigates the worlds of invention, business, and diplomacy. It was a captivating and insightful lecture conducted by Dr. Bandula Wijay who is a renowned figure whose journey reflects the convergence of innovation, entrepreneurship, and international relations. With roots in Sri Lanka and a thriving presence in the United States, he has emerged as a trailblazer, leaving an indelible mark in various domains. Having made groundbreaking contributions to the field of innovation, Dr. Bandula Wijay stands as a beacon of cardiovascular innovation. As a successful entrepreneur, he has demonstrated business acumen and played a pivotal role in fostering diplomatic relations between nations. The academic staff members and undergraduates representing several disciplines actively engaged in this thought-provoking discussion. Dr. Bandula Wijay is a living testament to the power of vision, innovation, and global collaboration. With an impressive background as an inventor, he has not only achieved remarkable success but has also become a legend of inspiration for those aspiring to make a meaningful impact. During this guest lecture, Dr. Bandula Wijay delved into Innovation highlights, Business Strategies and Diplomatic Endeavors. This momentous occasion was glamoured with the presence of the Vice-Chancellor Senior Professor M.M. Pathmalal, Deans of the faculties, senior academic staff members, and the students of the university.



19. Successful Collaboration Unfolds: Recap of the 2024 Sri Lanka International Study-Abroad Project Inspection Tour



The “2024 Sri Lanka International Study Abroad Project Inspection Tour” brought together 18 distinguished Chinese delegates, representing a spectrum of educational agencies. Their primary objective was to participate in discussions and activities centered on the theme, “Building New Development in China Sri Lanka International Education and Promoting Cooperation in China Sri Lanka Study Abroad Projects.” The Chinese delegates engaged in meaningful conversations with the Deans of the faculties, including Humanities and Social Sciences, Management Studies and Commerce, Engineering, and Dental Sciences. Additionally, senior academic staff members from the faculties of Applied Sciences, Allied Health Sciences, and Management Studies and Commerce participated in these discussions. The meeting was led by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Senior Professor M.M. Pathmalal, and the Director of the Beijing International Education Group, Mr. Yu Dejin. Their leadership set the tone for a collaborative and insightful exchange of ideas. This event was organized by the International Affairs Division of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Through the mutual understanding of Dr. Dushan Jayawickrama, the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, and Dr. Kelum Gamage, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) with the Chinese delegates, USJ had the opportunity to have this meeting. The participants delved into the overarching theme of enhancing international education and fostering cooperation in study-abroad projects between China and Sri Lanka. The deliberations aimed to build new avenues for development and strengthen the educational ties between the two nations. The meeting yielded promising outcomes, with agreements and initiatives discussed to pave the way for meaningful collaborations. The shared commitment to advancing international education was evident throughout the deliberations. The event took place on 02 nd January at the Senate Boardroom. Following the productive meeting, the Chinese delegates had the opportunity to explore the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The tour provided them with a firsthand glimpse into the vibrant academic and cultural environment that our institution offers.

20. Faculty visits and collaborative discussions of Yude Education Group, China

Faculty of Dental Sciences and Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

On 29th January, collaborative discussions between Yude Education Group of China and USJ took place at the university premises. The Dean of the Faculty of Dental Sciences – Senior Professor Surangi Yasawardene, the Dean of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences – Professor Inoka Uluwaduge and senior academic staff members from both the faculties joined the discussions representing USJ. Mr. Yu Dejin, the Director of Yude Education Group and its coordinator Ms. Kiko Lin joined the meeting as delegates. Curriculum development and potential partnership approaches were discussed during the meeting.



Faculty of Medical Sciences

The Yude Education Group met the Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences – Prof. Manor Gamage, all the heads of the departments and senior academic staff members of the faculty. The interests were mainly focused on Immunology, Tropical Medicine, Family Medicine and short courses. This meeting was held on 31st of January 2024.



21. Collaborations between USJ and Rajagiri Business School (RBS), of Rajagiri College of Social Sciences Society in India

The Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), University of Sri Jayewardenepura entered into partnering with the Rajagiri Business School (RBS), of Rajagiri College of Social Sciences Society in India on 06th May 2024 at Hilton, Colombo. Representing the University of Sri Jayewardenepura Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Dushan Jayawickrama, Dean, FMSC, and Dr. Sandamali Galdolage, Director- International Affairs, FMSC participated the event. Rev. Dr. Saju M D, CMI, Executive Director, Dr. Binoy Joseph, Associate Director, RBS, Professor Manoj Mathew Dean, HR Development, Director – Corporate Relations, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences represented the Rajagiri Business School during the proceedings. The collaboration is committed to promoting and advancing student exchange programmes, faculty exchanges, co-teaching and cross-teaching, student field education, collaborative research, publications, consulting, and training programmes, corporate academic initiatives, and mutual engagement.



22. JICA Team to Collaborate with USJ Polymer Science Department to Find Solutions to Plastic Management

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has initiated a significant step towards addressing plastic waste management challenges in Sri Lanka. Through its 'Project for Strengthening Plastic Management Capacity', launched in September 2023, JICA conducted a comprehensive survey shedding light on the current state of plastic waste management in the country, previously unexplored. Key findings from the survey highlight that plastic waste constitutes approximately 10 percent of the waste collected by local authorities, with packaging plastics like Single-Use Plastics (SUP) comprising a significant portion. Despite the presence of 49 recycling facilities nationwide with a combined capacity to recycle 152 tons of plastic per day, the actual recycling rate stands at around 100 tons daily. In response to these findings, JICA recently engaged with the Faculty of Applied Sciences of University of Sri Jayewardenepura, the sole institution in Sri Lanka housing a Polymer Science Department. During lectures delivered by JICA officers and experts, both faculty members and students exhibited remarkable interest in the insights on plastics management, signaling unprecedented enthusiasm for collaborative efforts. Recognizing the necessity for a multi-stakeholder approach involving industry, government, and academia, JICA emphasizes continued proactive dialogues to devise effective solutions to the plastic waste predicament in Sri Lanka.

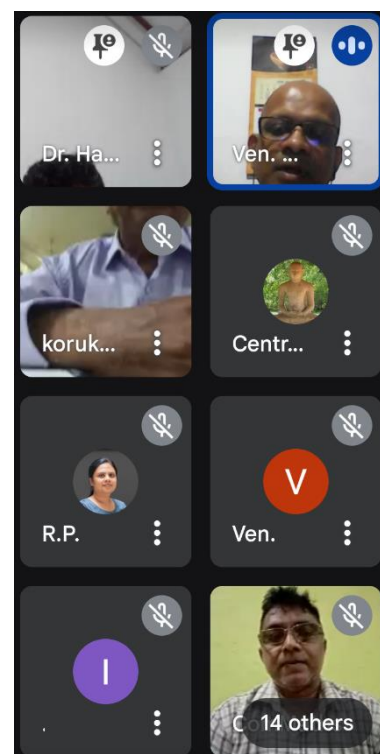


23. Collaboration of Andhra University India and USJ for the “Celebration of Buddha Poornima” and Vesak Dhamma Discussion Programme

The Andhra University of India along with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura organized the celebrations of Buddha Poornima on 23rd of May 2024. Followed by Vesak cultural activities, Buddhist meditation programme and a Buddhist Dansal, this programme was successfully organized by Prof. Thakshila Vithanage, the coordinator of the partnership between the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies in USJ and the Department of Yoga and Consciousness of Andhra University.

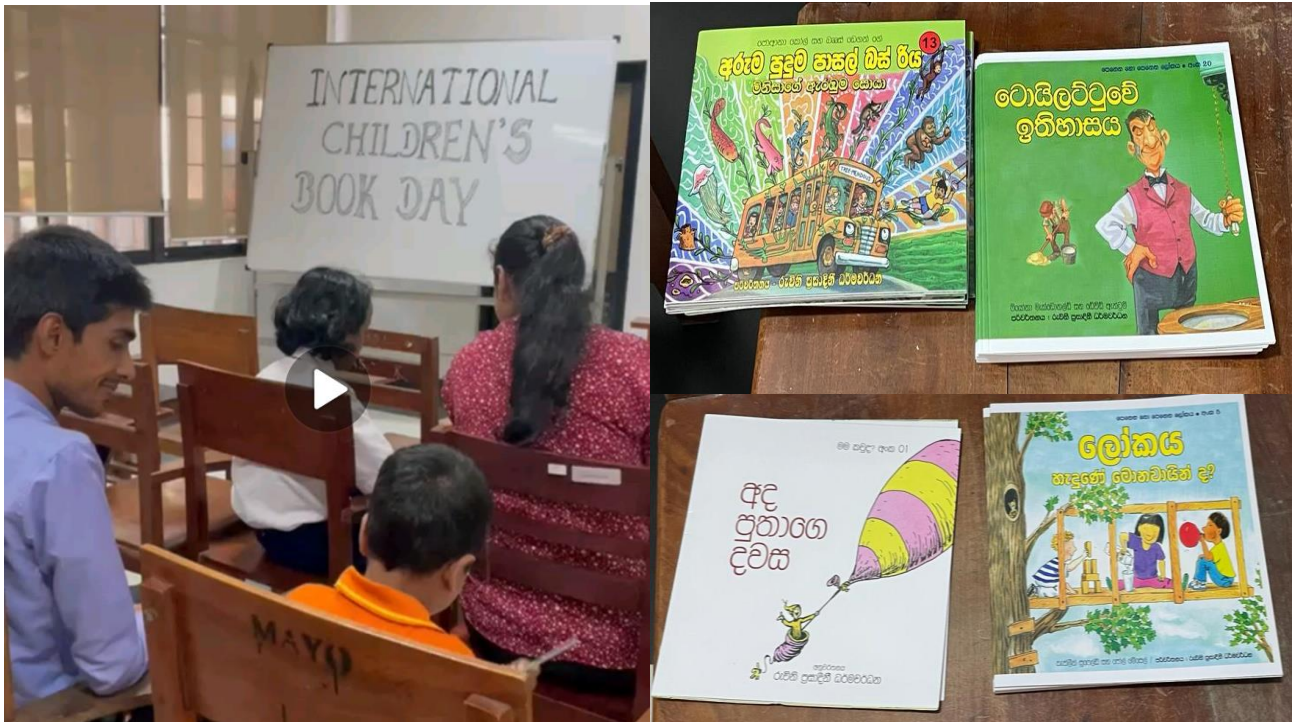


With the collaboration of Andhra University, India and Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka, the International Affairs Division of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was able to successfully conduct a Vesak Dhamma Discussion programme. The theme of the programme was ‘*Anichcha, Dukkha and Anaathma*’. This was held on 28th of May with the participation of Venerable Professor Medagamptiye Wijithadhamma thero, Professor in Pali at the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, USJ and Dr. Hasantha Samarasinghe, Acting-Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka as the resource persons. This programme was conducted in virtual platform where participants from India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar also joined.

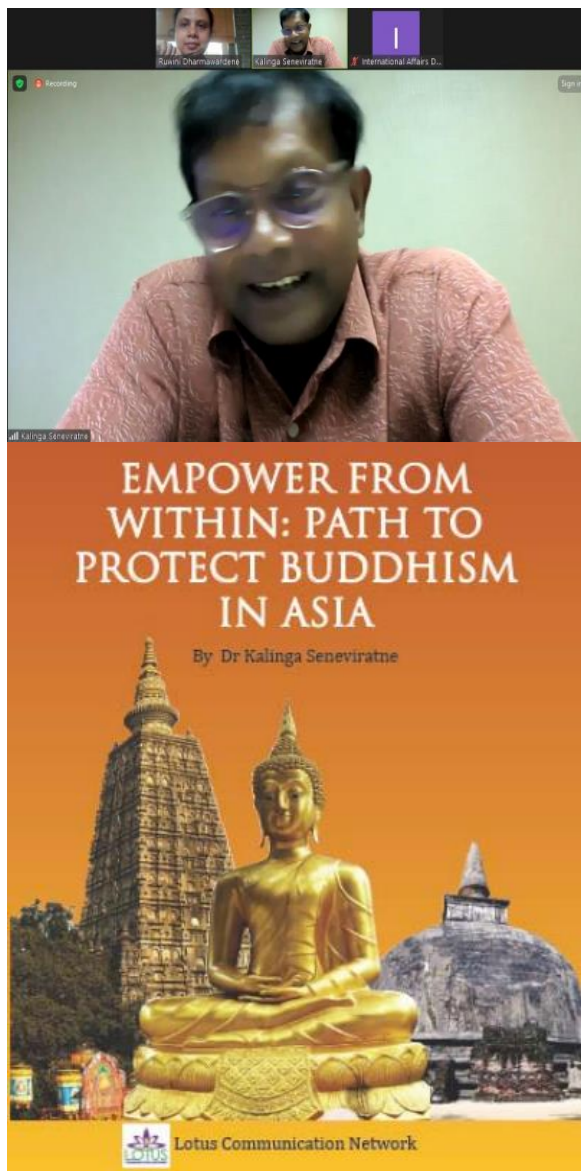


24. Celebrating International Children's Book Day

Celebrating the International Children's Book Day 2024, the International Affairs Division organized a session for the children of both Academic and Non-Academic staff of the University. Children of the age between 05 to 12 were participated the event. The Director of the division, Dr. Ruwini Dharmwardene was the resource person of the session. Both parents and children were allowed to participate in this session. All the participants were gifted with children's books according to their preference. These books were authored by the director of the division herself. It was first programmes of its kind and will continue to hold annually on International Children's Book Day.



25. New Partnerships with Shinawathra International University, Thailand



Being a Buddhist monastery of ancient Sri Lanka, University has its roots that dates back to 1873 as Vidyodaya Pirivena. Later, being the second oldest university in Sri Lanka the University of Sri Jayewardenepura has been able to initiate partnerships with several Buddhist institutions and universities worldwide. As a new partnership, the USJ is working on a new potential collaboration with the Shinawathra International University in Thailand. As initial approach, USJ was able to have a virtual discussion with Dr. Kalinga Seneviratne of the Lotus Communication Network and the author of '*Empower from Within: Path to Protect Buddhism in Asia*' on 16th of May 2024.

The main objective of this initiation is to promoting Buddhist studies, staff and student exchange programmes, cultural exchange programmes and research collaborations.

26. Third Study Tour of the Edith Cowan University, Australia to USJ



From 20th November 2023 delegates from the Edith Cowan University, Australia visited the University of Sri Jayewardenepura as their third study tour to USJ. As a result of the ongoing partnership between the two institutions, students of both the universities had the opportunity of having new exposure on cultural exchange and student activities. The event was organized by the Department

of Sports Science and Management of the Faculty of Applied Sciences with Mr. Kevin Fernando as the main coordinator who is our faculty representative of international affairs. For two weeks in November/ December 2023, 13 Exercise Science students from the School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS) at Edith Cowan University (ECU) visited USJ. During the study tour, the Australian delegates visited Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, Tooth Relic Temple in Kandy and Damro Tea Factory and Plantation, embarking on a journey of discovery with Edith Cowan University, Australia Staff and Students as they engage themselves in the beautiful landscapes of Heritage Tea Factory and enchanting history of Sigiriya Rock. They had the opportunity to dive into the world of Adaptive Physical Education & Sport at the Deaf School, further a glimpse into the rich tapestry of cultural connections through Sri Lanka's vibrant Folk Games and Sports. Journeying through history at the National Museum and reaching new heights at the Lotus Tower and unique cuisines at Ministry of Crab, students and the staff of the Edith Cowan University aced their assessments, concluding the tour with a delightful closing ceremony and a musical evening.



27. Collaboration with Zhejiang Shuren University, China



Refreshing the mutual understanding between University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Zhejiang Shuren University, China, USJ representatives had the privilege of visiting the Chinese university from 28th May to 08th June. As the group of delegates from USJ, Senior Prof. M.M. Pathmalal, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Shirantha Heenkenda, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Dushan Jayawickrama, Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce were able to participate this memorable occasion. Undergraduates were also received the opportunity to visit the Zhejiang Shuren University and get the exposure of the Chinese culture as well as engage in educational programmes. Prof. Rukmal Weerasinghe from the Department of Entrepreneurship of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce coordinated this visit.



28. 'Basel objects back to Sri Lanka' – Human skeletons and cultural objects belong to the Vedda community that were taken to Switzerland during the British colonial period



A collaborative research project was initiated by Dr. Oshan Wedage in 2022 with Dr. Patrick Robers, Dr. Gayhard, Mr. Basil Thuring, and Uruwarige Wannilattho, the Chief of the Indigenous Vedda community of Sri Lanka. This project aimed to identify and repatriate the objects belonging to the Vedda community that were taken to Switzerland during the British colonial period. These items, currently housed in the Natural History Museum of Basel (NMB) and the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) in Switzerland, include human skeletons and cultural objects collected by the renowned Sarasin Brothers. With the tremendous support of Uruwarige Wannilattho, the research team confirmed that the human skeletons were indeed the remains of ancestors of the Sri Lankan indigenous Vedda community. Further, the cultural objects were identified as traditional items used by the Vedda people in the 19th century. The Vedda community, recognized as a living heritage of the South Asian region with continuous traditions dating back to prehistoric times, expressed a strong desire to preserve their cultural legacy, including the veneration of their ancestors. Consequently, they requested the return of these human remains and cultural artifacts to Sri Lanka. This request was formally submitted to the Swiss government through the Sri Lankan government. The research team employed digital media and presentations to educate and persuade the Swiss government and public about the importance of repatriating these objects. Their efforts were successful, and the Swiss authorities agreed to return the items. In the last week of May, Dr. Oshan Wedage and Uruwarige Wannilattho were invited to Switzerland for an official handover ceremony. During the event, held at the Cultural Museum in Basel and attended by the Governor of Basel and other dignitaries, 42 human skeletons and numerous cultural objects were formally and legally returned to Sri Lanka. To commemorate this cultural reconciliation between Switzerland and Sri Lanka, a trophy was presented to Dr. Oshan Wedage and

Mr. Uruwarige Wannilattho. The key institutions involved in this achievement included the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, Natural History Museum of Basel, Museum der Kulturen Basel, the Max Planck Institute for Geoanthropology in Germany, and Wariga Mahagedara of the Indigenous Vedda community of Sri Lanka. Upon their arrival in Sri Lanka, the artifacts and remains were handed over to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Over the next six months, these items will be conserved with the assistance of the university's Medical Faculty. Once the relationship between the objects and the Vedda community is scientifically established, they will be transferred to the 'Wariga Mahagedara,' the indigenous Vedda museum in Sri Lanka, where they will be properly exhibited. The University of Sri Jayewardenepura, the Solitary Institute, and the 'Wariga Mahagedara' will collaborate closely to ensure the successful preservation and display of these significant human skeletons and cultural artifacts.

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