

---

## President outlines two challenges: Rehabilitation livelihood renewal

Monday, 15 June 2009

Last Updated Monday, 15 June 2009

Sri Lanka - Myanmar sign MoU on tourism promotion: President Mahinda Rajapaksa currently on a State visit to Myanmar said that his latest challenge is to rehabilitate the war torn region and bring normalcy to the lives of the people. The 30 year old cruel war against terrorism cost 100,000 lives, he said. Expressing satisfaction at being able to successfully conclude the humanitarian operation against terrorism, the President said his visit to Myanmar is the first one after the victory.

The President said that he was able to create a free and independent society in which everybody could live together in equality and harmony in accordance with the teachings of Buddhism. President Mahinda Rajapaksa arrived in the Union of Myanmar in a special SriLankan Airlines flight yesterday morning on a two day official visit. The visit is a goodwill gesture to the South-East Asian nation. President Rajapaksa's visit follows an invitation from the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe and a promise made to the Prime Minister of Myanmar during his visit to Sri Lanka in 2007. The visit also commemorates the completion of 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. President Rajapaksa and the Sri Lankan delegation were received at the Nay Pay Taw airport by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, Senior General Than Shwe, followed by a guard of honour on arrival. President Rajapaksa thanked the Government of Myanmar for its assistance in preventing drug trafficking and other crime in that part of Asia and also expressed his gratitude for the donation of US\$ 50,000 that Sri Lanka received from Myanmar for the welfare of the IDPs in the north. Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe explained to President Rajapaksa the political and social changes that has taken place in the country since independence. President Rajapaksa and his delegation held bilateral talks with Prime Minister General Thein Sein and other officials at the latter's office. Both sides agreed to work together at international fora with mutual understanding and cooperation. The Head of State of Myanmar accepted an invitation extended to him by President Rajapaksa to visit Sri Lanka. The two leaders also agreed to update the Air Services Agreement between the two countries which was signed in 1950. It was also decided to provide training at the Kotalawela Defence Academy to two Myanmar Security Forces Officers annually as agreed upon by an MoU signed in 2007. On being informed of the intention of the Sri Lankan Government to erect nine Dagabas in the nine provinces the Myanmar leaders promised to explore the possibility of supplying marble for the Dagabas. President Rajapaksa also thanked Myanmar for presenting a tusker to Sri Lanka as a gesture of friendship. The foreign Minister of Myanmar is expected to visit Sri Lanka in the near future. The two delegations also signed an MoU on tourism and promotion. The Sri Lanka delegation comprises Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama, Transport Minister Dullas Alahapperuma, Labour Minister Mervin Silva, National Freedom Front Leader Wimal Weerawansa (MP), Additional Secretary to the President and Chief of Staff-Gamini Senarath and President's Coordinating Secretary Sajin Vass Gunawardena. Courtesy : Daily News Courtesy: Defence.lk