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SL-China sign 16 agreements

Chaminda Perera

China yesterday entered into 16 agreements with Sri Lanka to expand ties between the two countries in the economic field. The agreements covering transport, tourism, telecommunications and several other sectors which have a direct impact on the economy were signed by Sri Lankan and Chinese officials witnessed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa and National People's Congress Standing Committee chairman Wu Bangguo at the Presidential Secretariat on Monday. The two leaders held bilateral talks before signing the agreements. The two governments signed an agreement for visa exemption for persons who hold diplomatic passports or service and official passports. China is also providing concessionary loan facilities for infrastructure development and the implementation of the Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port Phase II. Agreements were also signed by Sri

Lankan Ports Authority and Chinese officials. The two countries also agreed to have closer cooperation in the maritime field. An agreement was signed by Defence and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and head of the State Oceanic Administration Liu Cigui. The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka signed a loan agreement for the construction of the Lotus Tower for which China will provide a loan of US\$ 88.6 million at a concessionary rate and is payable in 15 years. The tower, 350 metres in height, will be spread over 30,600 square metres. It will have modern facilities including an auditorium, food courts, supermarkets and observation areas. This proposed tower will also have facilities for telecommunication services. The state mobile company – Mobitel also

partnered with ZTE China to upgrade its mobile network into Fourth Generation (4G) status. Once the project is completed, Sri Lanka will be the first South Asian country to have 4G technology. China will invest US\$ 50 million in this project too. The two governments also inked an agreement for the railway electrification project from Veyangoda and Kalutara south. External Affairs Minister Prof G L Peiris, External Affairs Ministry Secretary Dr Karunathilake Amunugama, Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka Wu Jianghao and Chinese Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Zhang Zhijun were also present.



President Mahinda Rajapaksa meets National People's Congress Standing Committee chairman Wu Bangguo at the Presidential Secretariat on Monday. Picture by Presidential Media Unit

COLOMBO COLUMN
By Reggie Fernando - OUR MAN IN COLOMBO
Please see next weeks paper

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MONEY IN MINUTES TO SRI LANKA See Page 7

Sanga wins three major ICC awards

Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara grabbed three of the main awards at the annual LG-ICC award ceremony held at the Waters Edge, Battaramulla, on Saturday night. Sangakkara became the first Sri Lankan cricketer to win

the Sir Garfield Sobers award when he was chosen as the LG-ICC Cricketer of the year 2012. The stylish left hander also won the People's Choice Award and the ICC Test Cricketer of the year award. Sangakkara did Sri Lanka proud by retaining the people's choice award for the second consecutive year. He won the same Award at Bengaluru in 2011, following a great speech, delivered at Lords last year. Former Sri Lanka all rounder, turned an ICC Elite panel umpire, Kumar Dharmasena also became the first Sri Lanka umpire to be adjudged as the umpire of the year at an ICC award ceremony. Dharmasena, a key figure at Sri Lanka's triumph in 1996 World Cup, is a product of Nalanda College.



SEE PAGE 15

The High Commission of Sri Lanka
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20th September 2012
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