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## UN report put off till September - Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein

(ColomboGazette.com) - The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has agreed to defer a report on Sri Lanka which was to be submitted to the Council during its 28th session next month, to September. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and the team appointed to compile the report after investigating the war in Sri Lanka, had recommended that the report be delayed. Al Hussein today explained his recommendation to the Human Rights Council to delay the consideration of the long-awaited report into alleged human rights violations during the conflict in Sri Lanka for six months until September 2015. The High Commissioner stressed that the deferral of the report was "for one time only," and guaranteed that the report would be published by September. His request for deferral was granted by the

Council on Monday afternoon. "This has been a difficult decision," Zeid said. "There are good arguments for sticking to the original timetable, and there are also strong arguments for deferring the report's consideration a bit longer, given the changing context in Sri Lanka, and the possibility that important new information may emerge which will strengthen the report." "In addition, I have received clear commitments from the new Government of Sri Lanka indicating it is prepared to cooperate with my Office on a whole range of important human rights issues - which the previous Government had absolutely refused to do - and I need to engage with them to ensure those commitments translate into reality." The High Commissioner noted that the three distinguished experts, who were appointed by his predecessor Navi Pillay

to advise the investigation, had informed him that, in their unanimous view, a one-off temporary deferral would be the best option to allow space for the new Government to show its willingness to cooperate on human rights issues. "Taking all this into account, I have therefore decided, on balance, to request more time to allow for a stronger and more comprehensive report," Zeid. "I am acutely aware that many victims of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, including those who have bravely come forward to provide information to the inquiry team, might see this as the first step towards shelving, or diluting, a report they have long feared they would never see. I fully understand those fears and deep anxieties, given the history of failed or obstructed domestic human rights



inquiries in Sri Lanka, and the importance of this international investigation being carried out by my team at the UN Human Rights Office." "There should be no misunderstanding," the High Commissioner continued. "I give my personal, absolute and unshakable commitment that the report will be published by September. **SEE P8**

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## Lanka signs first nuclear agreement with India

(Island.lk) - Sri Lanka today signed its first ever civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India here today in the presence of visiting President Maithripala Senanayake and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two sides also signed an agreement and two memoranda of understanding to mark Sirisena's first overseas visit to India after assuming office. The nuclear agreement will facilitate cooperation in the transfer and exchange of knowledge and expertise, sharing of resources, capacity-building and training of personnel in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including use of radioisotopes, nuclear safety, radiation safety, nuclear security, radioactive waste management and nuclear and radiological disaster

mitigation and environmental protection. Prime Minister Modi described the agreement as "yet another demonstration of our mutual trust." He noted that this is the first such agreement Sri Lanka has signed. It opens new avenues for cooperation, including in areas like agriculture and healthcare. Titled "Agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy," it was signed by Sri Lankan Minister of Power and Energy Patali Champika Ranawaka and Ratan Kumar Sinha, Secretary in India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). In addition, the two countries also signed an agreement of cultural cooperation, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that will enable Sri Lanka to participate in the

Nalanda University project that is coming up in Nalanda in India's Bihar state, and another MoU for agricultural cooperation. The agreement on cultural cooperation was signed by Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Secretary Ms Chitranganee Wigiswara and Ravindra Singh, Secretary in India's Ministry of Culture. The three-year agreement seeks to enhance the level of cooperation in a wide variety of fields such as performing arts, visual arts, libraries, museums, archives and cultural documentation, archaeology, handicrafts, publications and professional exchanges. The MoU related to the Nalanda University was signed by the two Foreign Secretaries, Ms. Chitranganee Wigiswara ... **SEE P8**

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