

# MARITIME MUSEUM



Sri Lanka Ports Authority

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# AYUBOWAN

As an overseas visitor you tread the path of the ancient Mariners, Traders, Scholars and distinguished visitors and Empire Builders who came to fulfil their divergent purposes.

As a Sri Lankan visitor you imbibe the greatness of the island that was a meeting point of the ancient world that drew succor from its treasures, culture and people - most importantly a unique spot in the routes of the seafaring world.

A warm welcome to the Maritime  
Museum of the Port of Colombo  
*Long Life and Best Wishes to You !*



## THE MUSEUM BUILDING

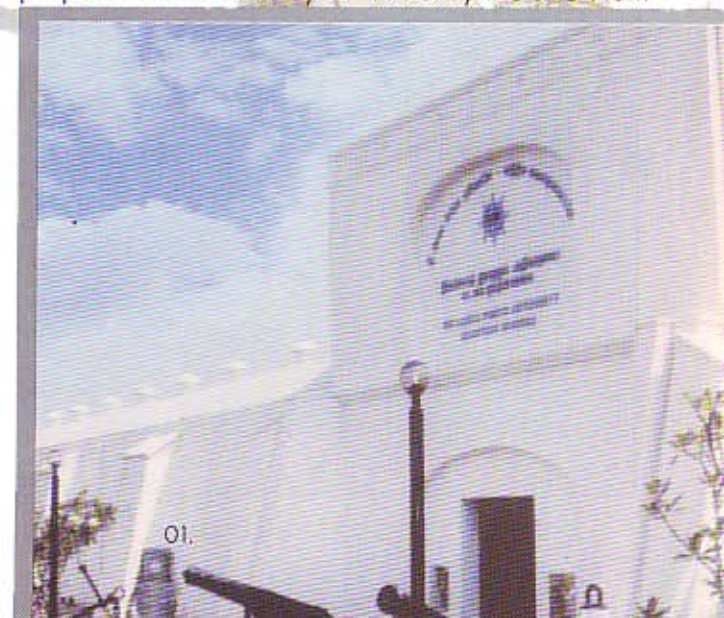
This unique Old Dutch Warehouse (PAKHUIZEN) having a barrel roof was built by the Dutch in 1676 A.D. which year has been engraved at the Old Entrance, situated in the East side of the building.

This Warehouse was used by the Dutch for storing varieties of cured meats, supplies of butter, cheese and other food stuffs, not forgetting their gin and wine, which came from abroad. Also Cinnamon along with other spices bound for Amsterdam, timber and arrack barrels to Batavia in Indonesia, arecanut and jaggery for the Corramandel coast were stored in this building.

A part of this building was used as a "WINKEL" or storehouse for ship requirements. Nails, planks, ropes, sails and masts along with other paraphernalia for ships also were stored in this place. In addition a provision made for storing long Masts by having a large orifice for them to protrude out of the warehouse.

The museum building was saved by the then Governor General of Ceylon Viscount Soulbury in 1951, when the renovation of the port entailed the demolition of all old buildings. According to R L Brohier in his "Changing Face of Colombo" Lord Soulbury had in his morning rambles seen this. He had stopped the demolition and thereby the old Dutch warehouse was saved for posterity.

The Sri Lanka Ports Authority renovated this building and established a Maritime Museum on a proposal made in the year 1998 by the late Hon. M.H.M. Ashraff, P.C., Minister of Port Development, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Founder Leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, in order to protect this building; specially for the benefit of the future generations of Sri Lanka.





THOSE WHO SET FOOT ON THE  
SRI LANKAN SOIL WITH THE TIDE OF  
ANCIENT TIMES LEADING UPTO THE  
19TH CENTURY.....

Pearl of the Orient and Granary of the East to the ancient world, Island of Gems to the Chinese, Tabrobane to the Greeks, Ceylan to the Portuguese Ceylon to the British - now, Sri Lanka to visitors of the new Millennium, yet, still the exciting, intriguing and beautiful island that it was, with a uniquely hospitable people and an economy blending with the modern globalised world.



Arrival of Prince - VIJAYA  
5th Century B.C



Legend recognises Vijaya as the founder of the Sinhala Race. Mahawansa the great chronicle begins with the arrival of this Prince. Banished by his father, Singhabahu, King of Singhapura in North India, along with 700 of his followers, landed on the North Western Coast of the island after a hazardous sea journey.

Vijaya set eyes on Kūveni, princess of the Yaksha tribe, which had much control over the country. Kūveni's assistance Vijaya became the first Aryan King of Sri Lanka. She bore to him two children, a boy and a girl. Vijaya still had the renegade qualities in him. He banished his queen and her children to their Yaksha tribe - now said to be represented by the aborigine Veddahs.

The North- Central province of the island became a powerful kingdom under Vijaya. The successor to Vijaya was sent by his younger brother in the form of his son Panduwasdeva. Gakanna or the present Trincomalee was the landing point of this Prince who ascended his throne in Upatissagama.

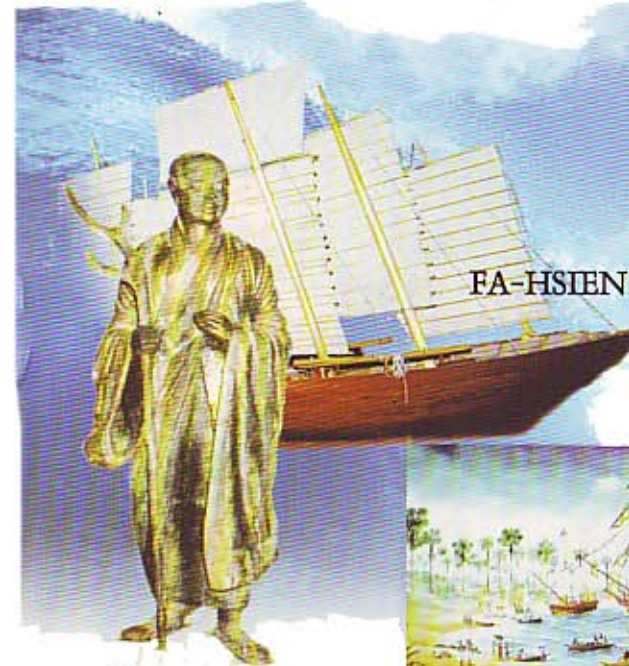


**THE BUDDHIST  
NUN SANGAMITTA'S ARRIVAL  
3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C.**



**B**uddhism was brought to Sri Lanka by Arahath Mahinda Thera the son of Emperor Asoka, during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. Arahath Mahinda by his sermons converted King Devanampiyatissa to Buddhism, which spread swiftly throughout the country. It was a tradition of the Kings of Sri Lanka to lend substantial patronage to Buddhism, leading to the development of the religion in Sri Lanka.

Buddhism was firmly rooted by the arrival of Sangamitta with the sapling of the Bo-tree under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment. She anchored ship at "Dambakola Patuna" an ancient Port, in a quiet corner of the Jaffna peninsula. There stands to date, a small shrine where she set foot. The Bo sapling which she brought was planted in Anuradhapura is now the oldest tree with a recorded history, in the world and is venerated by millions of devotees. Her gift is one of the greatest symbols of Buddhism in the country's written history, spanning over 2500 years.



**FA-HSIEN THE GREAT TRAVELLER  
BUDDHIST MONK  
05<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.**



**F**a-hsien was a Chinese Buddhist Monk and a traveller in Central Asia, India and Lanka. The record of his journeys and studies is a valuable source for establishing the veracity of the historical events of Buddhism and its strength in Central Asia, China and Northern India.

He spent 10 years transcribing Buddhist texts in India, Afghanistan, Ganges Valley and Lanka. These transcribed texts were translated into Chinese in about 414 AD.

Close to the town of Bulathsinghala a cave called "Pahingala" (Fa-Hisen's cave) is a popular tourist attraction. The oldest skeleton unearthed in Sri Lanka, said to be over twenty thousand years, was discovered in the cave.



**IBN BATUTA  
THE TRAVELLER OF  
THE MIDDLE AGES  
A.D. 1344**



Ibn Batuta is credited with the recording of the most comprehensive narrative of the Muslim world of the late middle-ages.

Born on the 25th of February 1304 he was a compulsive traveler, who toured North Africa, East Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South East Asia, China and invariably Sri Lanka - the port of call for many ancients. This was undertaken between the years 1325 and 1349.

Sri Lanka was called Serendib by the Arab visitors. The meaning 'unexpected happy discovery' conveys the pleasant realities and discoveries of the island. The Arabian Nights refer to Sri Lanka as Serendib.

The Colombo harbour according to him was a hive of activity, during his visit and about 500 Arabs were engaged on various sailing crafts: Their leader was named Jalasthi.

On his return to Morocco he caused the recording of his travels by scholars. This work was completed in the year 1357.



**Arrival of THE PORTUGUESE  
A.D. 1505**

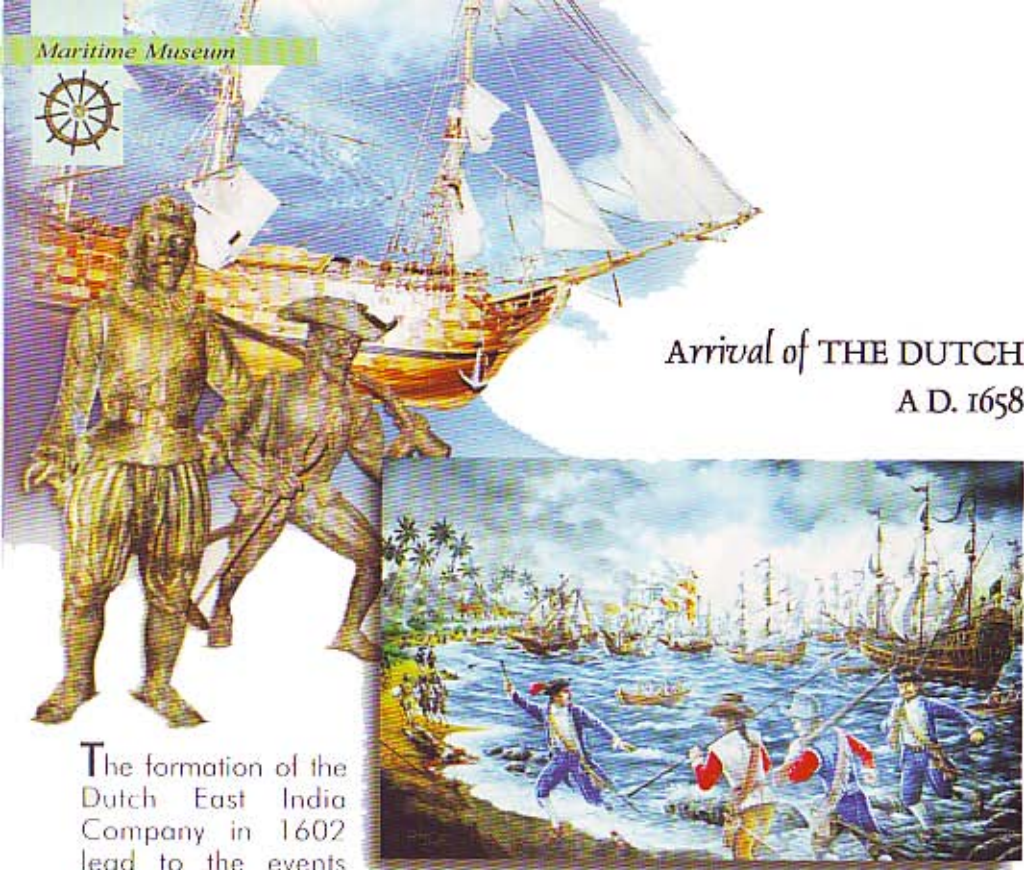


The coastal inhabitants of Portugal were mainly seafaring people. In the 16th century the competitive trade for spices so badly needed in Europe, made them turn to the East.

Early in November in the year 1505 the Viceroy of Goa in India sent his son Dom Lourenco de Almeida with a fleet of nine vessels to attack the moorish spice vessels sailing for the red sea. The adverse winds drove him to the coast of Ceylon in the proximity of Galle. On 15th November 1505 the fleet anchored off Colombo.

The Portuguese made a treaty with the King of the Island who gave them the permission to trade in Cinnamon. At the turn of the century, they formally took over the sovereignty of the coastal areas of the Island in the name of their King Phillip II of Spain.

During their stay in the island, some of them intermarried with the Sinhalese and Tamils. Some of their customs were integrated in the low country and their Roman Catholic religion had thousands of followers. After around 150 years the Dutch displaced them. - (1505 - 1658 A.D.)



## Arrival of THE DUTCH A.D. 1658

The formation of the Dutch East India Company in 1602 led to the events that forced the Portuguese to capitulate. In the guise of trade both these Western Nations had established themselves as rulers by out manoeuvring and defeating the weaker military strength of the local Kings. They agreed with Rajasinghe II to drive out the Portuguese in return for trading rights. In 1658 they took Colombo. This was permanently occupied and the Coastal Areas became their kingdom. The Dutch rule was systematic, with Laws, Courts and severe Taxation.

In the 1760's the Dutch invaded the up country kingdom and made a treaty with the brother-in-law of the last Sinhala King of Kandy. This prevented the trading with other nations except the Dutch. While the Kandyan Kings were inclined to experiment further with the French and the British, the Napoleonic wars ended Dutch rule.

The Dutch left two major legacies - the Roman Dutch Law, which remains as a highly respected basic of the legal system, and the Dutch Burger community.

They were finally ousted by the British after about 150 years of rule. (1658 - 1796)



## Arrival of THE BRITISH A.D. 1796

The British went further than the Portuguese and the Dutch. They captured the Kandyan Kingdom in the year 1815. Intrigues of his ministers and the Kandyan nobility, finally paved the way for the capture of Kandy by the British and the deposing of the King. Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe the last King of Kandy.

The British East India Company surpassed the achievements of its predecessors, by laying claim to greater wealth and power.

From the year 1798 the island was ruled by British Governors appointed by the King in England. Independence from the British was gained in the year 1948.

The indelible mark of the British are to be found in the economic, social and political changes they effected. The Plantations and their attendant services, Schools, the Legal Systems, Religion, Banks and trading systems, are some of the remaining influences of their rule.

While the English language is a stepping stone to international knowledge, their archaeological exploits revealed the glorious ancient past of the island.



## THE FISHING VILLAGE

Fishing Villages are found in different parts of the coastal belt, in its 1700-Kilometer length. Legally Sri Lanka has a 530,000 Sq. Mile asset of the sea, which has an abundance of varied sea life. There are two Monsoons. One called the SouthWest Monsoon, which starts in May and another in the East, call the NorthEast Monsoon, which starts in September each year. Some of the fishermen migrate during the different monsoons to the side of the island where the sea is calm.

A fishing villoge consists of people who live in huts made of coconut palm leaves or "Cadjans". They live a very dangerous and difficult life, constantly battling with the sea for the survival of their families. These people were greatly influenced by the Christian religion of the various Western invaders and most of them are devout Catholics.

From birth, the salt and the sea are integrated with their life. The "Catamaran" or the wind powered boat still exists along with different models of boats, powered by Diesel and Kerosene engines. The industry is now grown to a lucrative business with both government and private sector participating at different points of the trade, including the manufacture of boats and nets.

Down the southern coast fishermen on "Stilts" can be observed. They fish with rod and line and do not use boats. Though less hazardous their life too is very hard and demanding.

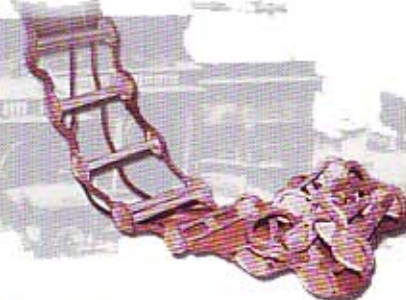
A carefree lot, they form a very important part of the economy of the island and it's culture.



## SOME ARTEFACTS

### 1. ROPE LADDER

A ladder made of rope, traditionally used to board smaller vessels in the harbour after anchorage. Even used to descend into the Hold of the ship.



### 2. SLINGS

Used to unload and load goods in gunnies and boxes. Has a capacity of 01 Ton



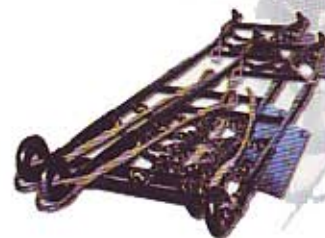
### 3. MANILA ROPE SLINGS

2 1/2 Ton capacity can accommodate 50-60 gunnies



### 4. VEHICLE SLINGS

A strong net out of wire that is used to unload vehicles to the Quay.



### 5. LEVERS

When an individual could not lift a box this was utilized for lifting. Used both in and out side the Hold. Machines have replaced this in modern times.



### 6. HAND CART

A Cart of wood used to transport goods, which could not be handled by the Lever.







### 7. SEA LANTERNS

Before the use of electricity in ships this was an integral part of the ship lighting. An array of different Lanterns can be seen.



### 8. ELEPHANT SLINGS

Elephants and other large animals were loaded and unloaded with these. A mattress cover prevented injury to the animals.



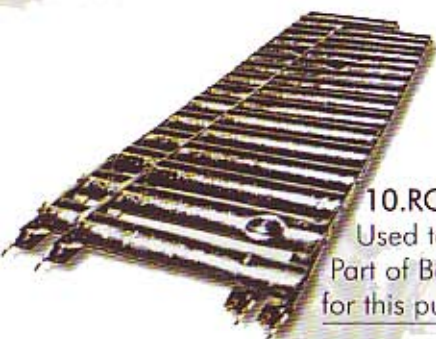
### 9. BUOY LAMP

A buoy which protects the ship while anchored in the harbour had a Buoy Lamp to permit its identification and location in the dark.



### 10. ROLLERS

Used to stack things like tea boxes. Part of Boomconveyor used for this purpose.



### 11. DIVING SUIT

In use in 1926 for diving in the Harbour. Extremely heavy. Helmet weighs 65 Lbs, Shoes Lbs 56 balance weights of lead 28 and 32 Lbs respectively. Includes Diving Mask, Belt and Knife, Lead Weights and Torch for cutting metal. Telephone and cable used for communication is also on display.



### 12. LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT

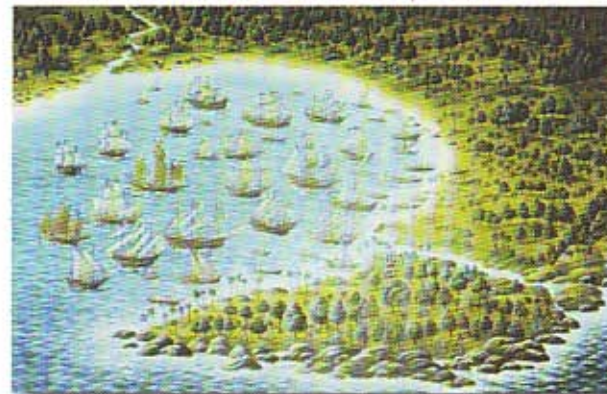
To rescue those who would have fallen overboard.



## ANCIENT AND MODERN COLOMBO PORT

(Through drawings)

### BEFORE THE PORTUGUESE (Colombo Port 1300 AD)



Whenever a Port was constructed it was a natural phenomena in ancient times to build a Fort, alongside . This was due to the fact that the protection of the monopoly of trading was fundamental to the conquerors. They always expected an attack from a rival invader.

The picture shows the Colombo Port before the Portuguese. At that time it was a trading center. A large Cinnamon plantation, which produce was heavily traded by the Arabs, existed close to the Port .

### COLOMBO PORT WITH THE PORTUGUESE FORT (1510 AD)

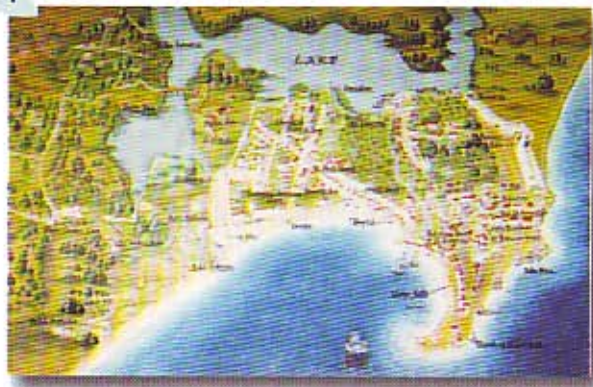
What is shown is the Port erected by the Portuguese in the years 1518-19. They first landed in Galle Fort by accident. They took 15 days to arrive in



Colombo. One of the remaining artefacts of Portuguese presence, is their seal with a cross on a large Boulder. The find was made while building the South West Breakwater.



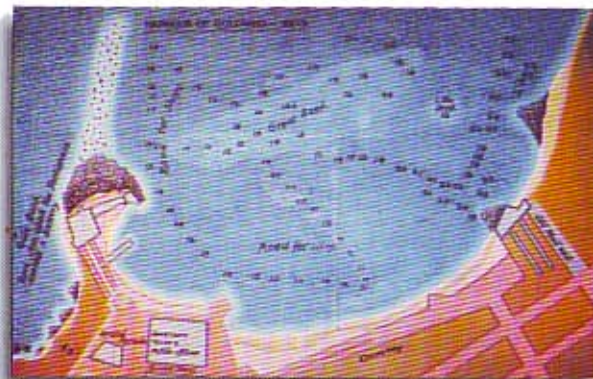
### COLOMBO PORT WITH THE DUTCH FORT (1656 AD)



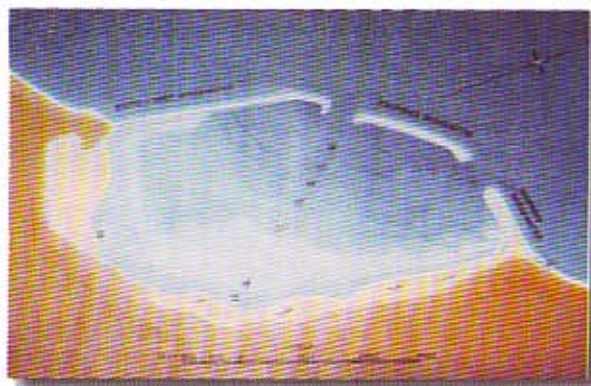
With Colombo Port as the background this shows a building plan of the Portuguese changed to suit Dutch needs.

### COLOMBO PORT IN BRITISH TIMES BEFORE ERECTION OF THE BREAKWATER (1803 AD)

The British first set foot on the island in Trincomalee on October 12th 1782. They defeated the Dutch in 1796 and made the Colombo Fort their headquarters. The drawing shows Colombo Port before the construction of the South Western Breakwater.



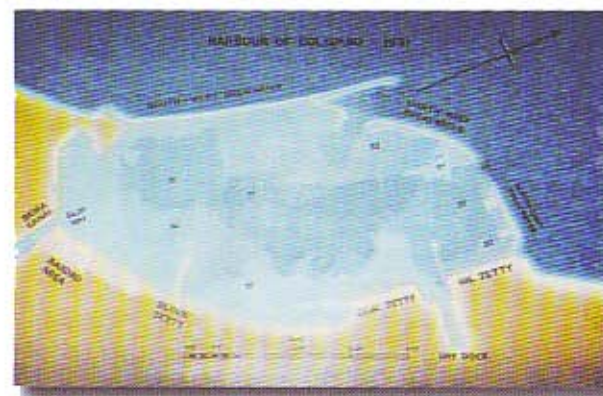
### COLOMBO PORT AFTER THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH WESTERN BREAKWATER IN BRITISH TIMES (1892 - A.D.)



Although the construction of the Breakwater officially began in the year 1872 under Governor Sir William Henry Gregory it was harnessed in the period 1875-1884.



### COLOMBO PORT AFTER THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH WESTERN AND NORTH WESTERN BREAKWATERS IN BRITISH TIMES



Having a length of 330 Meters the North Western Breakwater was added by the British during the period 1894- 1898.

### THE PORT OF COLOMBO WITH THE OLD PORT COMMISSION BUILDING (1913 - A.D.)

The old Warehouse buildings and the old Port Commission building seen in a picture of the old Port of Colombo.



### COLOMBO PORT WITH THE ELIZABETH QUAY- (1954 - A.D.)



After the construction of the Elizabeth Quay, the roadway and buildings are seen.



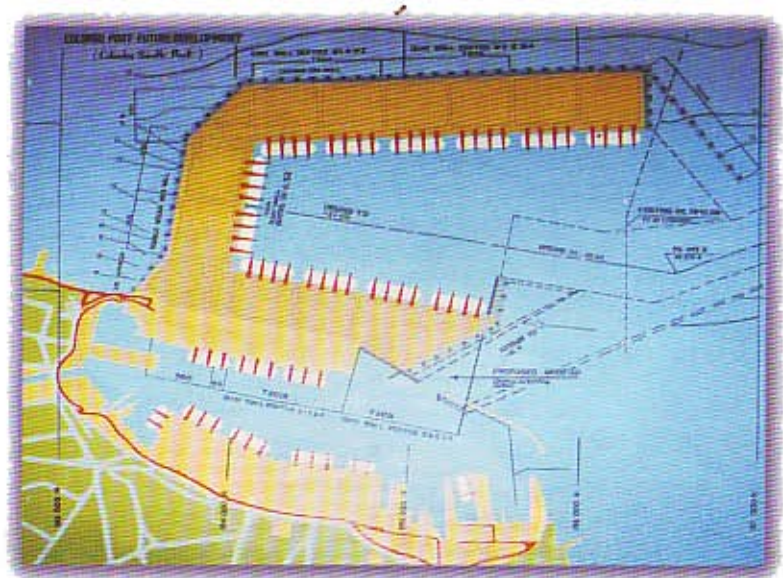
### MODEL OF THE COLOMBO PORT

This structure is Complete with Berths and Breakwaters



### PROPOSED COLOMBO SOUTH PORT

Plan shows the intended modern Port for bigger container vessels.

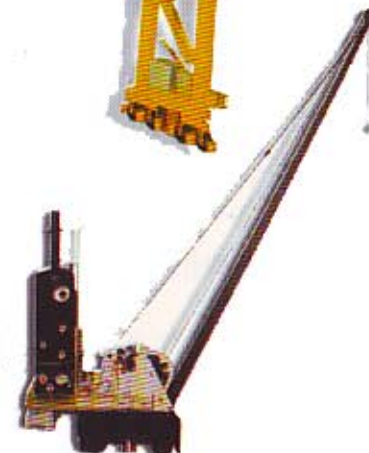


### Models of Equipment

MODEL OF TRANSFER CRANE



MODEL OF STEAM POWERED CRANE

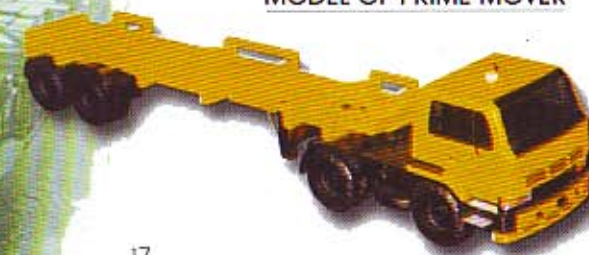


MODEL OF GANTRY CRANE

MODEL OF MOBILE CRANE



MODEL OF PRIME MOVER





COLOMBO PORT LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE  
TO BEING THE MOST EFFICIENT, COMPETITIVE  
AND THE BEST PORT SERVING THE ASIAN  
SHIPPING ROUTES

Compiled by  
The Welfare and Industrial Relation Division  
Kochchikade,  
Colombo - 13  
Tel.011-2321387



*Hand Painted Scenes Printed Post Cards are available at the Museum Office*



## INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

The museum is kept open on  
Weekdays,  
Weekends &  
Government Hollidays.

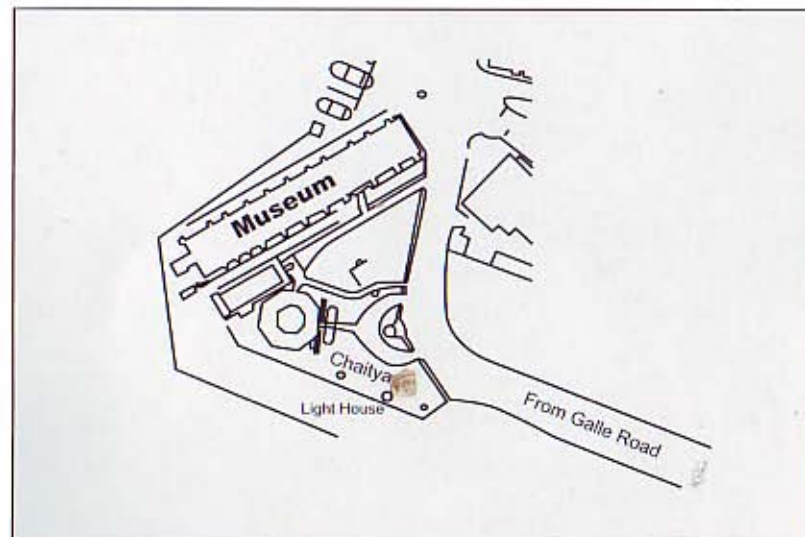
from  
10.00 Hrs -19.00 Hrs

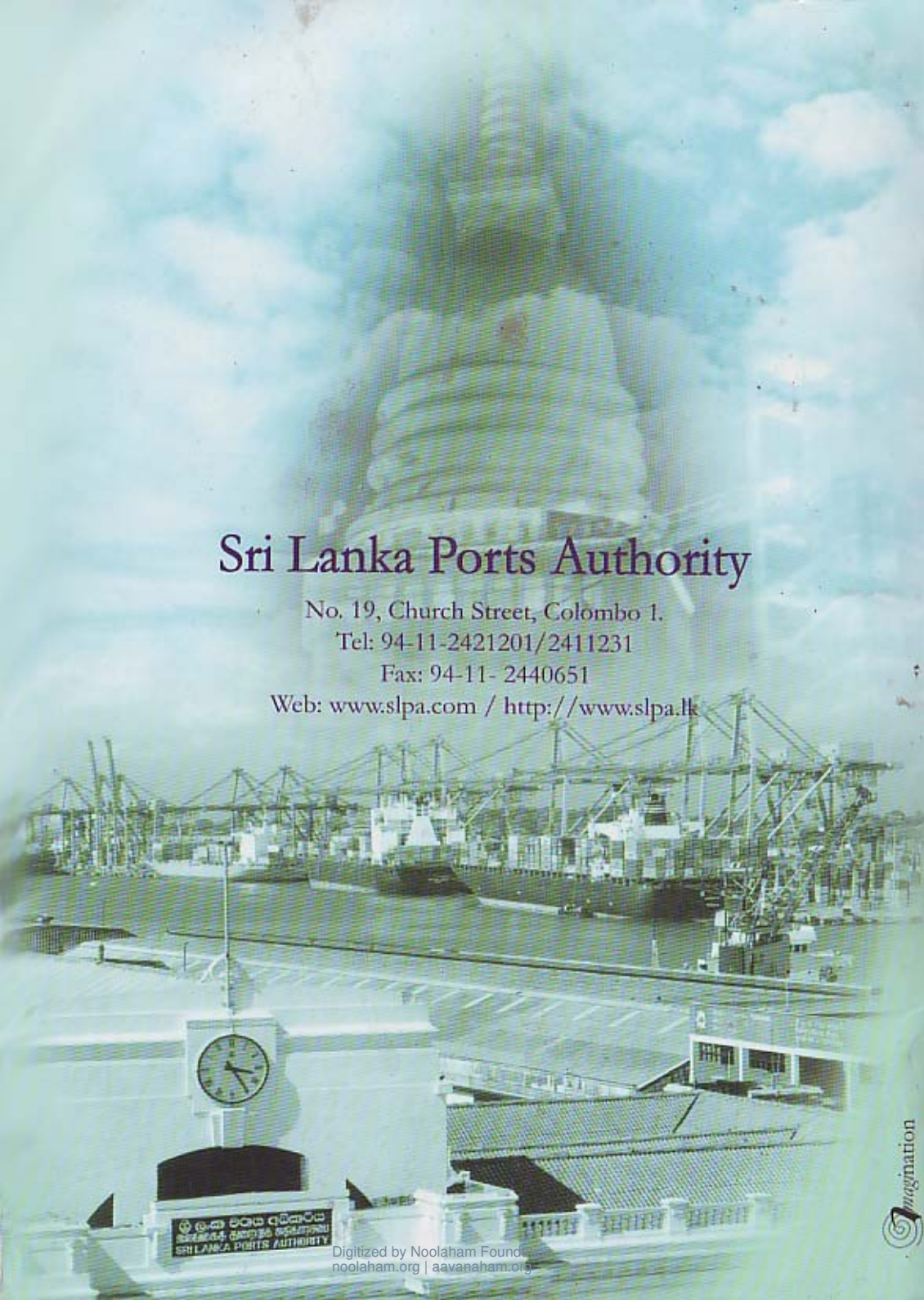
Inquiries :

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Sri Lankal Ports Authority  
No. 19, Chaitya Road,  
Colombo 01.

Chief Manager (Welfare & Industrial)  
Tel/Fax - 011 - 2321387  
Museum Curator  
Tel: 011 - 2483538

Directions to Museum





# Sri Lanka Ports Authority

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SRI LANKA PORTS AUTHORITY