

A place where you can see the night sky during day time : PLANETARIUM

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A planetarium is a place built primarily for presenting educational and entertaining shows about astronomy and the night sky, or training for celestial navigation. Historically, Archimedes was the first person to construct a planetarium, which though primitive could predict movements of the sun, the moon, and the planets. The oldest but still functioning planetarium in the world could be seen in the Dutch town, Franeker. It was built by Eise Eisinga (1744-1828) in the living room of his house. It took seven (07) years to put up this planetarium, and was completed in the year 1781.

The Planetarium of Sri Lanka has been functioning under the Ministry of Science and Technology since 1998. It was built in 1965 and was initially placed under the Ministry of Education.

Sri Lanka Planetarium is located in the old Race Course, Colombo 07. Anyone can reach the planetarium by traveling along the Stanley Wijesundara Mawatha, Colombo 07.

The Planetarium has been specially designed and constructed in the shape of a flower. The State Engineering Corporation was responsible for the construction of this massive building structure for the planetarium under the direction of late Dr A.N.S. Kulasinghe, who was then the Chairman of the State

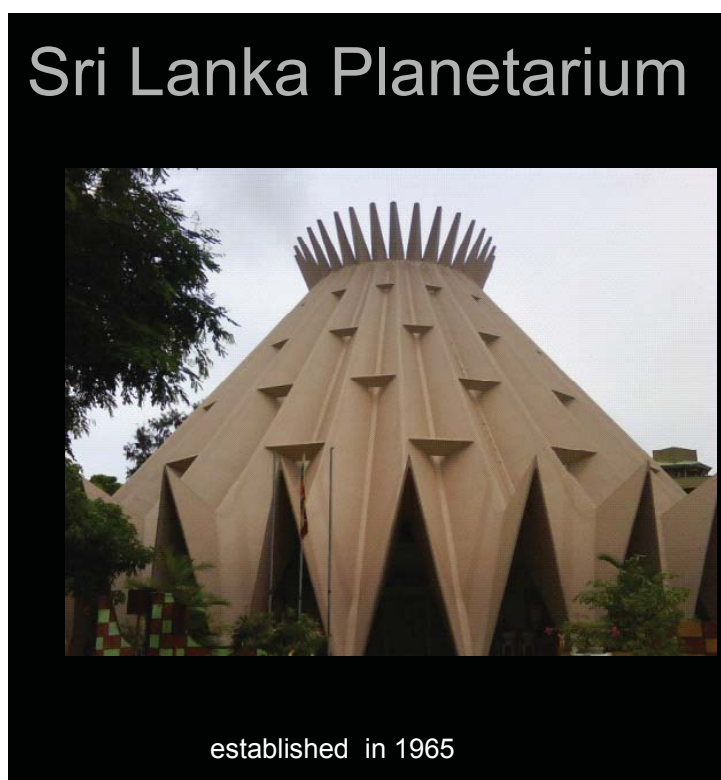
Engineering Corporation, and who was also responsible for its unique design. This building consists of interior bent pillars that rise to a height of nearly 100 feet from ground level.

The Sri Lankan Planetarium has seating capacity for 570 visitors. This shows that our planetarium is much larger than the planetariums in some other countries (which have seating capacities of 100-250). The giant universal

projector is located in the centre of the planetarium. It projects images on to the hemispherical screen to demonstrate the natural events in the universe. This giant universal projector can project stars and planets that are visible to the naked eye. To demonstrate and explain events related to solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, thunder, lightning and comets etc, several additional projectors are used.

It is significant to note that natural astronomical events, which occurred several days, weeks,

months, years or even about 25,000 years ago as well as those likely to happen in 25,000 years time can be shown in the planetarium. One can see the sky of Sri Lanka as seen from any place on the earth, may be even from the North Pole or from the South Pole. Models of the solar system and photos of the celestial objects such as planets, comets, and satellites can be observed as they are in their natural state.



Star Projector



Carl Zeiss Jena projector
from West Germany in 1965

This information is useful for their school projects. Planetarium has organized computer training programmes for school children free of charge, which are selected on the basis of requests made at the end of year. Further, facilities are also available to clarify any confusing facts regarding astronomy.

Mobile planetarium facilities can be arranged, and students who are in remote areas can obtain this service from the planetarium. Night sky observation camps can also be arranged by the planetarium, and those who are interested in organizing this type of events should make a request in advance.

Natural phenomena such as solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, planetary transits, meteoric showers, comets, etc. are announced through mass media, in order that the general public would be made aware about such events. When there is such an event, usually the planetarium organizes special observation camps, which are open to the general public.

Lectures are arranged in relation to particular locations or events of the solar system, galaxies, seasonal changes, asters, nebulae, sun and zodiac, ecliptic etc. These themes are included in the curricula of school children, and therefore these lectures are beneficial for them.

School children can collect information in the fields of astronomy and space science from the internet unit of the planetarium.

Mobile Planetarium



The planetarium is closed on Sundays, Mondays and on public holidays. There are two shows per day. The morning and afternoon shows are arranged at 10.00 am and 2.00 pm respectively. These shows should be booked in advance.

The planetarium is open for the general public on Saturdays. School children can also attend the shows arranged on Saturdays.

Enjoy the Planetarium Shows!

	Morning	Afternoon	Charges	
			Adults	Children
From Tuesday to Friday	10.00 am	2.00 pm	10/-	5/-
Saturday	10.00 am	2.00 pm	30/-	15/-

For more information call, 011 2586499 (Telephone/Fax)
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