

# Dutch forts in Sri Lanka

*An exhibition printed on 25 textile banners*

## Colophon

The banner exhibition 'Dutch Forts in Sri Lanka' has been developed in cooperation with the Departement of Archaeology of Sri Lanka, the Galle Heritage Foundation and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Colombo, with the support of the Foundation Netherlands-Sri Lanka, The Hague, and the Foundation Monuments VOC, Amsterdam.

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*Printing:* MediaWatch Advertising, Colombo

## Content

*Main body of 11 banners:*

1. Dutch forts in Sri Lanka
2. Ally against the Portuguese, 1638-1658
3. An occupied coastal area with many forts
4. Construction and maintenance
5. Administration and exploitation of a colony
6. Batteries and sentry boxes

*And seven specials of each 2 banners on:*

Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Colombo

## Summary

In 1636 the King of Kandy invited the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to help drive out the Portuguese from Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon. After the VOC had assisted in the final expulsion of the Portuguese in 1658, it established a colonial administration in the coastal areas it had occupied. As a result, the inland kingdom of Kandy remained economically excluded from the outside world and King Raja Sinha II was in fact a prisoner in his own country. The all-powerful VOC controlled both the profitable export, mainly comprising cinnamon, elephants and areca nuts, and the import of textiles and other products from India. Kandy did not profit at all from the international trade, which also strongly applied to the coastal population. The VOC was able to maintain its position thanks to the strong chain of forts along the coast.

The exhibition deals with the coastal forts and fortifications of Sri Lanka in the historical context of the Dutch colonial occupation of the coastal areas, also called the Dutch Period. On the basis of historical maps, plans, drawings, prints and watercolors, paintings and a few 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs, and with the help of many contemporary photos, the construction, maintenance, function and habitation of the forts covered are discussed.

The complete exhibition consists of 25 banners. In the six places outside Colombo, in addition to the *main body* of the exhibition (topics 1-6, 11 banners), only the *specials* of the relevant places will be on show, sometimes accompanied by the *special* from the same region (the South: Galle & Matara; the North: Jaffna & Mannar; the East: Trincomalee & Batticaloa).

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