

# Chekhov monument unveiled at Grand Oriental Hotel

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A monument of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, the Russian short story writer and novelist was unveiled at the Grand Oriental Hotel. This was as part of the celebrations to mark Chekhov's 150th birth anniversary.

The occasion also marked 120 years since Chekhov's visit to Sri Lanka. Chekhov had visited Sri Lanka in November 1890, when he arrived by the ship St Petersburg, and stayed at the Grand Oriental Hotel. He was in Sri Lanka for a week and made a trip to Kandy where he visited the Salvation Army camp. His experiences in Sri Lanka, led him to regard the country as 'paradise on earth'. The monument was created by Grigory Pototsky, the Moscow-based sculptor. It is often said that Chekhov's short story 'Gusev' was written in Sri Lanka. What is possibly true is that the idea was conceived here, while it was written in Russia. Besides the idea of a short story, Chekhov returned home with a polecat and a mongoose.

Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Petroleum, Wimal Weerawansa, Minister of Construction, Engineering Services, Housing and Common Amenities, Vladimir P Mikhailov, the Russian Ambassador for Sri Lanka and a delegation from the Writers Association of Russia were among those present during the occasion.