



Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals

## 26<sup>th</sup> ASA Congress in Colombo – 25 to 29 April 2025

From April 25 to 29, 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka hosted the 26th ASA Congress. Held at the Cinnamon Grand Colombo, the event embraced the theme **Empowering Diversity Beyond Borders**, bringing together over 300 administrative professionals across the region for a dynamic mix of learning, networking, and cultural exchange.

### SAAP's Presence

A seven-member delegation from SAAP arrived in Colombo on April 24. Warmly welcomed by SLAAPS, the group quickly settled into the congress atmosphere. SAAP President Josephine Kwan and ASA Coordinator Margaret Chan Wee attended the Council of Presidents Welcoming Dinner at The Village, Cinnamon Grand.



**Day 1: April 25**, the ASA Council of Presidents gathered to discuss ASA's direction and collaborative initiatives.

The Opening Night Gala Dinner featured a vibrant cultural showcase and speeches by dignitaries, including Western Province Governor Hanif Yusoof and ASA President Azra Reyaldeen, who emphasized the evolving leadership role of administrative professionals.



**Day 2: April 26** featured an impressive line-up of keynote speakers:



Chevaan Daniel, Group Director of The Capital Maharaja Organization, spoke on leadership, innovation, and embracing diversity.

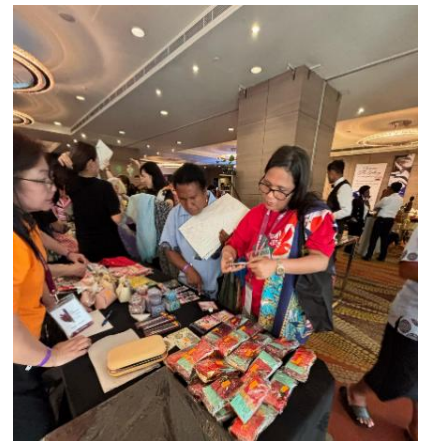


Balraj Arunasalam, 2014 Toastmasters World Champion, shared his journey of growth in business and philanthropy.



Professor Arjuna de Silva stressed the importance of well-being and cited Singapore's health policies as a global model.

That evening, the ASA Bazaar opened, where each delegation showcased and sold local items. SAAP's booth netted USD 400, second only to Bangladesh's APWAB, and all proceeds were donated to a charity designated by SLAAPS.





**Day 3: April 27**, the day began with a lively fitness session, as delegates donned ASA dry-fit T-shirts and exercised under the guidance of a spirited gym instructor.



After lunch, participants joined the City Explorer Tour of Port City Colombo, visiting cultural and religious landmarks such as the Red Mosque, Hindu Temple and colonial-era churches, reflecting the country's rich heritage.



The evening closed with a beachside celebration at the Port City Grand Marquee, where delegates relaxed and bonded by the ocean.

**Day 4: April 28** opened with an inspiring talk by Rosy Senanayake, Colombo's first female mayor and former Mrs. World, who spoke about leadership challenges and triumphs in public service. The second speaker, Asanka De Mel, an engineer-turned-fashion-entrepreneur, encouraged delegates to remain authentic while pursuing innovation.





The Council of Presidents Summary Meeting followed in the afternoon, outlining key takeaways and future ASA plans. The session concluded with gift exchanges and the handover of the ASA flag to Brunei (ASAP), which will host the 27th ASA Congress from September 25–29, 2027, coinciding with ASA’s Golden Anniversary.



Another agenda highlight was the ASA Virginia P. Elbinias Award, which recognizes an ASA member who has initiated a project benefiting the community through civic activities, social services, or efforts that promote the development and growth of Administrative Professionals.

This year, the Indian Association of Secretaries and Administrative Professionals (IASAP) emerged as the winner. Their outstanding project focused on empowering underprivileged women by providing training in practical skills such as cooking, baking, jewellery-making, and beautician techniques. A total of six ASA member-associations participated in this meaningful contest.



### Closing Ceremony

The final evening featured cultural performances by member associations. SAAP presented a Tea Ceremony, symbolizing Singapore’s cultural harmony and rich tea heritage. All delegates participated in the performance, which was warmly received.



### **Final Reflections**

The 26th ASA Congress was a truly enriching experience, filled with insight, inspiration, and international camaraderie. SAAP's participation underscored the growing influence of administrative professionals as strategic leaders and cultural ambassadors. As the ASA flag passes to Brunei, the spirit of empowerment and diversity continues to unite us across borders.

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