

Norway and FAO welcome findings of Nansen survey

The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) and the Institute of Marine Research, Norway (IMR), held an event to launch the main research findings of the survey carried out by the Norwegian Research Vessel *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* in Sri Lanka during the past year.

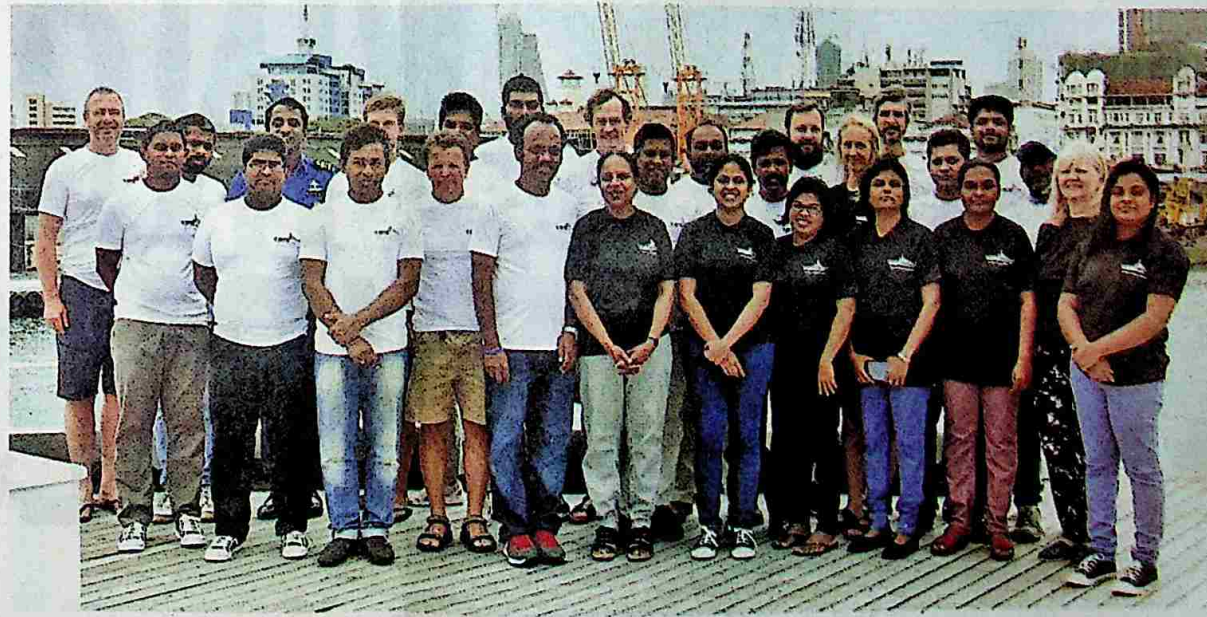
The research vessel completed an ecosystem survey in the coastal waters of Sri Lanka from June 23 to July 16. The survey was part of the EAF-Nansen Programme implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), in close collaboration with the IMR and funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. The survey was a result of the Sri Lanka-Norway bilateral agreement to provide technical assistance to improve the management of the fisheries sector in Sri Lanka; and it provided training for Sri Lankan scientists, as well as post-survey data analyses.

The aim of the survey last year was to carry out a marine resources sur-

vey around Sri Lanka, with the expectation that the survey would provide Sri Lanka with up-to-date data which would be useful for future management of the country's fisheries resources.

Welcoming the research findings, Ambassador of Norway to Sri Lanka and Maldives, Thorbjørn Gaustadsæther stated that Norway is committed to bilateral cooperation on oceans and to helping Sri Lanka put in place data-based management of ocean resources, which will enable Sri Lanka to better monitor its fish stocks.

Ambassador Gaustadsæther also highlighted the importance of sharing these research findings with other Sri Lankan stakeholders, both in the public and in the private sector, to make informed decisions related to oceans and fisheries. He also reiterated the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources to achieve Sri Lanka's economic growth. Nina Brandstrup, FAO Rep-



Participants in the RV *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* survey.

resentative in Sri Lanka said, "The successful completion of this programme in Sri Lanka is a testament to the longstanding relations between

FAO, the Government of Norway, and Sri Lanka. The findings of the survey will be an important baseline for FAO in supporting Sri Lanka

achieve sustainable management of fisheries resources amidst mounting pressures such as climate change and pollution."

The visit of *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* was also an opportunity to highlight the longstanding development cooperation between Sri Lanka and Norway, especially in the field of fisheries, which started in 1971. The Norwegian fisheries cooperation with Sri Lanka includes fisheries management, research and education, and private sector development. From 2013 to 2017, NOK 11.1 million (approximately USD 1.3 million) has been disbursed for these activities.

Agriculture, Rural Economic Affairs, Livestock Development, Irrigation and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development Minister P. Harrison and Fisheries and State Aquatic Resources Development Minister Dilip Wedaarachchi also highlighted the importance of the resource survey and its findings to take necessary management decisions.

Agriculture Ministry Secretary K.D.S. Ruwanchandra, government officials, as well as representatives of the IMR, NARA, National Aquaculture Development Authority were present at the event.