



News & Views



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MAHA SHIVARATHRI MESSAGE -PRESIDENT

I am pleased to send my good wishes to Hindus in Sri Lanka who observe Maha Shivarathri, the festival in honour of Lord Shiva, which seeks to dispel all evil and enhance good in society.

In the freedom that prevails in Sri Lanka, our common aspiration is for a virtuous society. It is my belief that the many rituals such as night long vigils at temples, fasting and chanting of devotional songs, observed by Hindus at this festival, and their praying for a better society, will help fulfill this aspiration.

Religious values are foremost in removing mistrust among ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, all religions have a great responsibility to instil moral values among people, helping society to be rid of evil.

May every lamp lit by Hindus to Lord Shiva on this Maha Shivarathri help dispel the darkness of ignorance and bring the light of stronger unity among all our peoples.



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MAHA SHIVARATHRI DAY 106 EX-LTTE COMBATANTS RELEASED

One hundred and six ex-combatants who successfully completed their rehabilitation period were released and handed over to their relatives to mark the Maha Shivarathri festival¹.

Many of them have qualified in a vocation during the period of rehabilitation, and received certificates for the successful completion of their vocational training. All female rehabilitated cadres received their pre-school teaching certificates at an event held in Vavuniya.

The security forces detained 11,696 ex-combatants including 594 child soldiers at the end of the conflict. At present 4,500 ex-LTTE combatants are undergoing rehabilitation while 5,764 ex-cadres who underwent an extensive rehabilitation program have been reunited with their families.

Further, former LTTE combatants who were already released received loans amounting to Rs. 1 million on 23 March through a special scheme initiated by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Around 45 former LTTE cadres in Batticaloa received loans ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000 through state-owned Bank of Ceylon (BOC) to commence their livelihood. BOC is prepared to provide individuals with loans up to Rs. 500,000 if they were backed by viable business plans. The loans carry an interest rate between 8 to 12 percent and would help the former combatants start up ventures in electronics and wiring, motor mechanics, mobile phone repairs and agriculture.

The Central Bank was able to facilitate the disbursement of loans amounting to around Rs. 2.5 billion in 2010. Around 21,000 loans were granted in the North and 20,000 in the East.



SHIVARATHRI CELEBRATIONS IN TORONTO



Consul General Karunaratna Paranawithana participated in Shivarathri celebrations at the Periyasivan Temple and Sri Durka Temple in Toronto.



**NEW PERIYASIVAN TEMPLE
MAHAKUMBAVISHAGAM**



The new Periyasivan Temple Maha Kumbavishagam was held on 20 March 2011 at the auspicious time between 12 and 12.39pm. The High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara took part in this special event together with the Consul General Mr Karunarathna Paranawithana. The Periyasivan temple which was earlier located at Ellesmere rd, was moved to 1148 Bellamy Road Scarborough, Toronto.



The Periyasivan Temple is the oldest and most important of Canada's Hindu Temples and is dedicated to Lord Siva. The temple was established by Sivanadiyar Vipulanda. In 1993 he published the "Matham" magazine and in 1995 he

established the Hindu Tamil religious school and pilgrim services for seniors.



MEETING AT AL JANNAH MASJID TORONTO



High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara met with some members of the Sri Lankan Muslim community at the Masjid Al Jannah on 20 March 2011. She also attended the evening Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes in Toronto. Mr Karunarathna Paranawithan, Consul General of Toronto also participated in the events.



**WATER SUPPLY PROJECT AND ELECTRICITY TO
THE NORTH AND THE EAST**

An agreement has been signed to provide water to Jaffna from Iranamadu tank with financial aid from the Asian Development Bank, the



Government of France and Sri Lanka. It is estimated that 60,000 families will benefit from this project when completed in 2016. The cost of the first phase of the project is Rs 22 billion and a sewerage system is also to be constructed parallel to this project.

In keeping with Government's policy to provide electricity to all, the Government of China has granted a soft loan, of Rs. 400 million for development of the Power sector in the Northern Province.

Further, the Ministry of Resettlement has allocated Rs. 250 million to promote the living standards of conflict affected people in the North and East.



51 DIVISION NEW HEADQUARTERS RE-LOCATED AFTER VACATING JAFFNA'S FAMOUS 'SUBASH' HOTEL



The Sri Lanka Army released the last of the Army-held private buildings in the High Security Zone (HSZ); the Subash Hotel in Victoria road Jaffna after re-locating its 51 Division in Kopay.

The Subash Hotel was taken over by the Army on lease on 2nd December 1995, following escalation of LTTE violence in the Jaffna township. The famous Gnanam Hotel too was formally released to its owners at the end of the conflict.

The establishment of the new 51 Division Headquarters coincided with the government's policy of establishing permanent military

*Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.
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installations for national security island-wide while simultaneously vacating any private property, still being held by the Army.



HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT



High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara met Hon. Noël Kinsella, Speaker of the Canadian Senate this month.



MOBILE CONSULAR SERVICE IN MONTRÉAL



The High Commission in Canada held a Mobile Consular Service in Montréal for the convenience of the expatriate Sri Lankan community living in an around Montréal on Sunday 20 March 2011.

A considerable number of Sri Lankans benefited from the Mobile Service and the activities of the



day included, the renewal of passports, processing applications for new passports, Police Clearance Certificates, Registration of Births, issuance of visas, and certification of documents etc; The officials also addressed various matters pertaining to Sri Lankan pensioners living in Montréal and provided information on many other Consular services available which could be availed of by the Sri Lankans living in Canada.



Many of those who visited the Mobile Consular Service appreciated the services rendered by the High Commission and suggested that periodic Mobile Services would benefit a large number of Sri Lankans living in Montréal.

The Mobile Consular Service was conducted at the Office of the Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka in Montréal.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Sri Lanka's Ministry of External Affairs celebrated the International Women's Day on 8 March 2011, marking the economic, political and social achievements of women across generations.



US\$ 4.2 MILLION FOOD AID FROM THE US FOR SRI LANKA'S IDPS



The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has donated USD 4,200,000 (approximately Rs 462 million worth) of food aid to support the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Sri Lanka.

This donation is in addition to the flood relief assistance of US\$ 2.9 million (319 million Rupees) given by the United States Government earlier this year to support families in areas severely affected by the heavy rains in North Central and Eastern provinces.

To date, the US has provided nearly USD 33 million (Rs 3.6 billion) in food aid to Sri Lankans during the period of 2010 and the first months of 2011.



QUANTITY SURVEYORS REMITTED OVER RS 8.4 BILLION LAST YEAR

Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors working overseas remitted over Rs 8.4 billion to the country last year. This is the highest amount of foreign



remittances made by one particular Sri Lankan professional expatriates group to the country. It is reported that there are over 1000 Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors working in the Gulf region, Singapore, Australia etc. They earn more than two to three million rupees a month and have reinvested their money in the stock market real estate sector, tourism and industries in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka will host the Pacific Association of Quantity Surveyors Annual Global Conference from July 25 to 27 in Colombo.



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR WILPATTU



A development program to elevate the Anuradhapura Wilpattu national sanctuary to international level has been launched.

The development program includes the preservation of Kuwenis Palace at Kalivilluwa and Thambapanni area called Kadiramale where Prince Vijaya is supposed to have disembarked. There are about 40 shallow lakes (Villus) in addition to 50 small scale tanks in the Wilpattu sanctuary.

Since the opening of the Wilpattu sanctuary last March nearly 30,000 local and foreign travellers have visited Wilpattu and the income from entrance tickets and renting the bungalows has reached around Rs seven million.



5,000 LANKANS, INDIANS AT KACHCHATIVU FEAST

Over 5,000 Indian and Sri Lankan Catholic pilgrims attended the feast of St Anthony's, Kachchativu with the assistance of the Sri Lanka Navy.

The Katchativu island is located 17 Nautical Miles South West of Delft island and 15 Nautical Miles North of Thalai Mannar and it has long-served as Tamil Nadu, Mannar and Jaffna fishermen to dry nets and to take a rest. It also serves as a refuge in times of emergency. The Katchativu church comes under the parish of Neduntheevu island of Jaffna district.



REMARKABLE GROWTH IN CSE JAFFNA

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) Jaffna branch which was opened last year April recorded an average daily turnover of Rs 2.6 million in 2010. The Jaffna branch has improved its daily turnover for this year to Rs 4.6 million as at end February.



The total number of new Central Depository System (CDS) accounts opened last year was 640 and indicating its improvement, the total number of new accounts opened as at end February accounted to 427.



300MW OF COAL POWER ADDS TO THE NATIONAL GRID



Sri Lanka's first coal power plant 'Lakvijaya' at Norochcholai in the Puttalam District was opened on 22 March by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. This is the first phase of the 900MW Coal-Fired Power Plant. It is the largest single machine in Sri Lanka and will run as a base load machine. The coal power plant was built using a US \$ 450 million loan from China's EXIM Bank.

REPUTED UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SRI LANKA

Reputed universities and Higher Education Institutions from 10 countries have come forward to set up branches in Sri Lanka. Higher education institutions from Canada, United Kingdom, India and several other countries are among them. In keeping with the Government policy to make Sri Lanka the centre of knowledge and education in the Asian region a Parliament bill to set up Private Universities is to be passed. Each private university set up in Sri Lanka is expected to reserve 20 percent of opportunities free for the Sri Lankan students.



*Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.
News & Views – March*

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF UNWTO IN SL



The 23rd Annual Conference of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) of South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific was held in Colombo from March 24 to 26.

Several Ministers and top officials from the region attended the conference. The conference focused on the theme 'Mainstreaming Tourism in the Media.' The World Tourism Organization has 400 affiliated members in 154 countries.



NEW SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ASSUMES DUTIES



Mr Karunatilaka Amunugama assumed duties as the Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs on 28th March 2011 at the Ministry at a simple ceremony. Mr Amunugama joined the Sri Lanka Foreign Service in 1985 and has served in many Sri Lanka Missions. He has also served as Sri



Lanka's Ambassador in Bangkok, Tokyo and Beijing, prior to his appointment as the Secretary, External Affairs.



SIR IAN BOTHAM TO LAUNCH SPORTS PROJECT IN NORTH



Former England Test captain and sports commentator Sir Ian Botham will join Sri Lankan cricketers Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas and Kumar Sangakkara in launching a community initiative in the heart of Northern Sri Lanka. The project, created by the Sri Lankan based Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, aims to build a new sports complex near Mankulum which will allow sport to be used to help regenerate the communities and encourage reconciliation in the area.



INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE JOINT VENTURE OR LONG TERM LEASE OF KANTALE SUGAR INDUSTRIES

The Ministry of State Resources and Enterprises Development (MSRED) has called for Expression of Interest (EOIs) globally for a joint venture or long-term lease to develop the Kantale Sugar Industries. For more information visit www.srilankahcottawa.org.



*Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.
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AYURVEDA EXPO-2011, JULY 15-17, 2011, COLOMBO

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka will organize a Ayurveda Expo-2011 in July 15-17, 2011 in Colombo. The month of July 2011 is designated as "Visit Sri Lanka -Ayurveda". The Expo is associated with a number of events such as mega exhibition, business meetings, and symposium on Ayurveda and indigenous medicine. Details of Flight and accommodation packages are available on the Ayurveda Expo 2011 website www.ayurveda-expo.com.

EXHIBITORS' PROFILE

- ✓ Ayurvedic and Other alternative Products Exporters and Importers
- ✓ Beauty Culture Agents, Beauty Care Products Manufacturers & Herbal Cosmetic Product Producers
- ✓ Ceylon Tea
- ✓ Health Food & Beverages
- ✓ Health Resorts and Health Spas
- ✓ Ayurvedic Hospitals/Clinics/Educational Institutions
- ✓ Yoga, Acupuncture, Homeopathy etc.
- ✓ Gym & Spa Equipment
- ✓ Healing Gem & Jewellery
- ✓ Astrology

SYMPOSIUM ON AYURVEDA & INDIGENOUS MEDICINE

A series of workshops and plenary sessions on special topics related to Ayurveda and Indigenous Medicine addressed by world renowned professionals will be held on 16th and 17th July 2011. Reservations for participation at these specialized seminars and workshops are on "First Come First Served" basis. Please make your reservation early to avoid disappointment.

ONE-TO-ONE BUSINESS MEETINGS

One to one Business Meetings One of the main objectives of "Ayurveda-EXPO 2011" is to increase the volume of trade and investment on Ayurveda and native healthcare sector in the world. A special area with all facilities will be allocated at Ayurveda 2011 for the Sri Lankan Ayurveda professionals, businessmen, industrialists and investors to meet their overseas counterparts and also the professionals, businessmen and industrialists in Ayurveda from one country to meet their counterparts in other countries.

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