



News & Views



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NEWS LETTER OF THE SRI LANKA HIGH COMMISSION IN OTTAWA, CANADA. November 2010

The High Commissioner and the Staff wish all Sri Lankan Tamils living in Canada a Happy Deepavali

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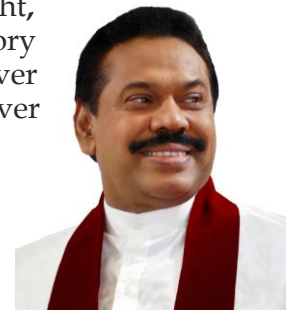
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DEEPAVALI, A CELEBRATION OF SPIRITUAL RICHNESS - PRESIDENT

The significance of Deepavali, known as the Festival of Light, is the expression of the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.



Celebrated by Hindus the world over, Deepavali is a celebration of the spiritual richness of people as it marks the progress that humans have made in the constant struggle for a better life in keeping with the great spiritual values of Hinduism.

With peace restored in the country, Hindus can now celebrate this festival with freedom and in the spirit of unity that is marked by the increased harmony and understanding among communities irrespective of ethnic, religious and other differences that have kept them apart for a long period.

Sri Lanka is now at the beginning of a new era of development and prosperity where the suffering faced by all our people due to terrorism is over. Hindus can now join with their fellow believers the world over in the joyous spirit of Deepavali, sharing the spirit of the festival with other communities and looking forward to living in harmony in the comfort and tranquility of peace.

May the light of goodwill and peace of Deepavali lead our people to the joy of enlightened harmony. I wish all Hindu devotees a happy and peaceful Deepavali.



DEEPAVALI CELEBRATIONS IN TORONTO



The Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa, Canada and the Consul General's Office in Toronto together with the Sri Lankan community celebrated the Deepavali festival on a grand scale on 7th November, 2010 at the Korean Cultural Centre in Toronto. Religious dignitaries of the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian clergy participated in the event. Five Members from the Federal Parliament of Canada including Members of the Municipal Councils and over 300 Sri Lankans participated in the celebrations.

A significant feature this year was the involvement of the Tamil community in organizing and coordinating the event. At the entrance to the hall, the members of the youth group "Sri Lankans Without Borders" assisted in welcoming the guests according to the Hindu tradition. A member of the Tamil community Mr. Ignatius Selliah was the Master of Ceremonies who



conducted the entire event in all three languages. The celebration began with a special pooja to invoke blessings which was conducted by Siva Shri

Thiyagarajah Kurukkal, the Chief Hindu Priest of the Sri Durka Hindu Temple.



The Deepavali Message of President Mahinda Rajapaksa was read in Tamil and English. Mr. Ajantha Gnanamuttu and Mr. Sivam Vinayagamoorthi, two members from the Tamil community spoke on the significance of Deepavali, which was followed by an address by the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Canada Mrs. Chitrangane Wagiswara.





The High Commissioner spoke of the prevailing peace in Sri Lanka which provided a conducive environment for the Tamil population to celebrate

Deepavali with all the religious observances and cultural aspects associated with the event. While touching briefly on the current developments in Sri Lanka,

especially in the North and East, she requested all the Sri Lankans living in Canada to unite and work together for continued peace and prosperity of their motherland. The official ceremony was followed by cultural performances depicting religious and Tamil traditions performed by Tamil and Sinhala artists.



While touching briefly on the current developments in Sri Lanka, especially in the North and East, she requested all the Sri Lankans living in Canada to unite and work together for continued peace and prosperity of their motherland. The official ceremony was followed by cultural performances depicting religious and Tamil traditions performed by Tamil and Sinhala artists.



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The official programme ended with the distribution of door prizes. The first prize was a London/Colombo/London air ticket donated by Sri Lankan Airlines and handed over by Mr. Lalith Wickremasinghe, Manager, Sri Lankan Airlines and the second and third prizes donated by the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council were handed over to the recipients by Mr. Kula Sellathurai, President, and, Mr. Ganeshan Sugumar, Vice President of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council, respectively.



The official and cultural segment of the celebration was followed by a reception hosted by the High Commission and the Consul General's office with traditional food and sweets associated with Deepavali.

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NEW DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Neomal Perera was appointed as the new Deputy Minister for External Affairs by HE the President in November 2010. At a ceremony held at the Ministry, he stated that among his responsibilities of the Ministry of External Affairs, trade and migrant workers will play a key role.



KILINOCHCHI HOSPITAL OPERATION THEATER RENOVATED

The operation theater of the Kilinochchi hospital which was renovated by the Northern Provincial Council to provide effective health service for the people of the area has been opened this month.

The Northern Provincial Council allocated 1.5 Million rupees for the renovation, while another one Million rupees was allocated to enhance infrastructure facilities including a cafeteria.

Mr. ESP Nagaratnam donated Rs. 300,000/= to construct a library for the use of the Medical staff and patients of the Kilinochchi General Hospital.



TEA LOUNGE AND EDUCATION CENTER IN COLOMBO

The first Tea Lounge and Education Centre in Colombo was opened at Elevelitigala Mawatha Colombo by Russels Tea. Six leading tea companies in the country namely Akbar Brothers, Bogawanthalawa Plantation, Ranfer Pvt Ltd, Empire Teas, Amazon Teas and Imperial Tea Exporters have joined in this venture.

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Sixty types of local and foreign tea grades and samples from countries like China and Kenya are on display. The history of James Taylor and his life style in Sri Lanka is also displayed at the centre.



The *Tea Pride* magazine and educational book published by Russels Tea is available at hotels and travel agents. Jetwing hotels will promote the Tea Lounge and Education Center as part of its tourism promotion.



"DEAYATA SEVANA" TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME



In parallel to the 1.1 million tree planting programme "Deayata Sevana" to commemorate the 65th Birthday and the inauguration of the second term in office of His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapaksa, a sapling of 'White Spruce' (*picea glauca*) was planted by Mrs. Chitranganee Wagiswara, High Commissioner at the premises of the official residence belonging to the Government of Sri Lanka.



The 'White Spruce' is a hardy evergreen tree which is indigenous to Canada. The plant can grow up to 40 meters in height and one meter in diameter.

The High Commission wishes to thank Mr K B Hippola for his advice in selecting the White Spruce tree.



NEW CONSUL GENERAL IN TORONTO



Mr. Karunarathna Paranawithana assumed duties as the new Sri Lanka Consul General in Toronto on 25th November 2010. Mr Paranawithana has obtained his BA at the University of Colombo and MA at the University of Bradford UK. Prior to being appointed as the Consul General, Mr Paranawithana has worked as the Chief Executive Officer at the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Cooperation.

He has vast experience in the field of media and has held several posts, including the post of Director/Editorial at Lake House, Director General of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Media Consultant at the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, etc. He has also been a visiting lecturer on Mass Communication Theory at the University of Kelaniya. In addition, Mr Paranawithana, has been responsible for several peace initiatives in the North.



INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIR AT DFAIT

The High Commission participated at the 2nd International Food Fair organized by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) on 16 November 2010. Six regional groups as well as Israel and the United States participated at this event. The Food Fair was held in support of the annual Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign.



"SAMADHI" MONTHLY JOURNAL

The First edition of "Samadhi" the Monthly Journal, published by the Ottawa Theravada Buddhist Vihara & Cultural Centre was presented to HE the High Commissioner by the Chief incumbent Venerable Kekanadure Hemalankara Thero on 29th November 2010 at the High Commission. Articles are published in both Sinhala and English. The Journal is edited by Venerable Pallegama Dahammadinna Thero.



AGRICULTURE FACULTY FOR JAFFNA

Plans are underway to open an Agriculture Faculty at the Jaffna University. It is reported that by the end of next year, all students will be following all courses in the English language.



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NEW INDIAN CONSUL OFFICE OPENED IN JAFFNA AND HAMBANTOTA



The new office of the Indian Consul at Kanthermadan Palaly Road in Jaffna and in Hambantota was opened during the visit of the Indian External Minister Shri S M Krishna to Sri Lanka.

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*Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.
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MENIK FARM ZONE-2 CLOSED AND VAVUNIYA IDPS DROP TO 15, 676

The Government has closed the Northern IDPs Zone-2 welfare centre of the Menik Farm relief village in Vavuniya on 22 November 2010 due to the completion of resettlement of IDPs sheltered there.

With the closure, it is reported that only four zones are remaining in Menik Farm currently sheltering IDPs.

855 IDPs, sheltered in Zone-2 are being resettled in Theravil, Pudukudirippu in Mullativu.

Currently, the total number of IDPs in Vavuniya relief villages has dropped to 15, 676 as of 23 November 2010. According to the Ministry of Resettlement, only 6529 IDPs remain in Kadirakamar relief center while 6677 IDPs remain in Anandakumaraswami Zone 1. Two batches of IDPs; 930, 2395 are remaining in Ramanadan and Arunachalam in zone 4 and zone 3 in the Menik Farm relief village. Out of these 10, 923 IDPs are moving freely outside camps. Including the 1158 IDPs remaining in Jaffna, the total number of IDPs remaining in the North is 17, 183.

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TUTICORIN-COLOMBO FERRY SERVICE

The ferry service between Tuticorin and Colombo is expected to resume in the near future. Additional infrastructure facilities are created at the Tuticorin port in India and are expected to be completed before the end of the year.



Amenities were put in place at the Port Trust during 2003-04 to facilitate passenger traffic but the decision on resumption of the ferry service was put on hold due to security threats.

According to reports security surveillance would be increased with the instillation of a passport reader, scanner, exclusive counters for customs and immigration facilities, cabins for officials and a helpline. A child care centre and a cafeteria is to be put in place for the convenience of the passengers.

The Minister of Ports and Aviation of Sri Lanka and its Indian counterparts had finalized the details of a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the two countries. All efforts were being made to begin the ferry service at the earliest.



EPF OFFICE OPENED IN JAFFNA

Employees Provident Fund office was opened in Martin Road, Jaffna. Before the opening of this office the government servants in the area were greatly inconvenienced and now they could transact their businesses directly. It is reported that Rs 117 million was collected through its membership.



THREE-WHEEL AND TWO WHEEL REPAIR TRAINING FOR THE 4TH BATCH OF EX-COMBATANTS

Under the program initiated by the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation to provide vocational training for ex-LTTE combatants who surrendered themselves to the security forces, the fourth batch of three-wheel and two wheel repair course commenced at the

David Peries Motor Company Training Complex in Bandaragama on 24 November 2010.

The training will impart skills in three-wheel and two wheel repair for ten days under professionally qualified instructors and provide industrial training as well. On completion of ten day comprehensive theoretical and practical training sessions, each beneficiary will be given an internationally recognized certificate.



Earlier, 90 ex-combatants had received the same training at the David Peries Motor Company.



LESSONS LEARNT AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (LLRC)



The Lessons Learnt and the Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), since its establishment has held approximately 35 Public sessions in Colombo where over 85 persons have given evidence.

The LLRC, on 13th September 2010, submitted an interim communication to HE the President containing recommendations covering five key areas needing urgent attention, based on the representations made by the public; namely detention, land issues, law & order,



administration and language issues and socio-economic/livelihood issues.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

European Union is to provide Euros 10 million as humanitarian assistance to the people who had been displaced by the conflict in the North of Sri Lanka. Last year the Commission allocated Euros 13 million. The new funding will provide assistance in the areas of shelter, food, water and sanitation, as well as the financing of de-mining and specially assistance to female-headed households, the disabled, the elderly and children.



FITCH FORECASTS 7.2% GDP GROWTH

Fitch ratings forecasts Sri Lanka's GDP growth to average 7.2% during the 2010-2012 period compared to an average of 5.1% recorded during the last 20 years.



TASK FORCE TO CURB ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Ministry of Justice and Law Reforms has decided to establish a 44 member Task Force to curb illegal migration from and through Sri Lanka. The Task Force is to comprise of representatives of a number of institutions related to illegal migration. Meanwhile the navy has established a new command centre in the North Western coast tasked with preventing the use of sea and land routes by unauthorized persons.



SRI LANKA AMONG TOP 20 IN GENDER EQUALITY

The Global Gender Gap Report 2010 compiled by the World Economic Forum, has ranked Sri Lanka at 16th place. Sri Lanka ranks above developed countries such as United States, Netherlands, Canada, Australia and many European countries.

Sri Lanka is ranked first in the world in the Health and Survival indicator, and 6th in the political empowerment indicator.

The Global Gender Gap Index introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 is a framework capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities.



GULF AIR RECOMMENCES FLIGHTS TO COLOMBO



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the carrier with the largest Middle East international network, recommenced its services to Colombo.



MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE IN JAFFNA

A "Mobile Library Service" funded by the European Union was launched in Jaffna. The project is to be operated by the Public Library and the mobile unit is expected to visit each educational zone once in every four weeks. Thousands of children in over 100 schools in the 5 educational zones are expected to benefit from this project.



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(Photographs by Mr. Nimal Egoda Gedara)

Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.

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