



News & Views



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

April 2010

The High Commissioner and the staff of the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa wish all Sri Lankans in Canada a peaceful and a prosperous New Year

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THE UPFA RE-ELECTED WITH A MAJORITY MANDATE

The 2010 Sri Lankan Parliamentary election was held on April 8 and April 20, 2010, to elect 196 members to Sri Lanka's 14th Parliament. The United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) secured a landslide victory.

United People's Freedom Alliance	4,846,388	60.33%
United National Party	2,357,057	29.34%
Democratic National Alliance	441,251	5.49%
Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi	233,190	2.90%
Up-Country People's Front	24,670	0.31%
Thamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal	20,284	0.25%
Sinhalaeye Mahasammatha Boomiputra Pakshaya	12,170	0.15%

A 39 member Cabinet was appointed by H E the President . Prof G L Peiris was appointed as the Minister for External Affairs while Mr Geethanjana Gunawardena was appointed as the Deputy Minister for External Affairs.



NEW YEAR MESSAGE - HE THE PRESIDENT MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA



“It is my belief that these New Year festivities should seek to further unite our people in heart and mind. The New Year celebrations by Sinhalese and Tamils alike are most appropriate in recognizing the kinship among us. This is the continuance of strong cultural traditions that strengthen the bonds among the people of our land“, stated President Mahinda Rajapaksa in his message for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

Full text of the message could be accessed on http://www.president.gov.lk/Writings_New.asp?Id=86



EASTER, MOST IMPORTANT FESTIVAL IN CHRISTIAN CALENDAR - HE THE PRESIDENT MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA

“The celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after His crucifixion and death is the significance of Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar”, states President Mahinda Rajapaksa in an Easter message.

Full text of the message could be accessed on http://www.president.gov.lk/Writings_New.asp?Id=85



HON G.L PEIRIS NEW MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



Prof. Gamini Lakshman Peiris, was appointed as the new External Minister by H E the President Mahinda Rajapaksa on 23rd April 2010.

Professor Peiris, was Professor of Law, Dean of the Faculty of Law and later Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo before he took to politics. He has Fellowships from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London. He was a Rhodes Scholar of the University of Oxford (1968-1971) and All Souls College also of the University of Oxford in 1980-1981.

He was a visiting fellow of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London in 1984, distinguished Visiting Fellow of Christ College, University of Cambridge and SMUTS Visiting Fellow in Commonwealth Studies at the Cambridge University (1985-1986). He was also Associate member of the International Academy of Comparative Law in 1980 and Senior British Council Fellow in 1987.

Professor Peiris entered politics from the National list in 1994 and had held the following positions since: Minister of Justice, Constitutional Affairs,

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Ethnic Affairs and National Integration; & Deputy Minister of Finance & Planning (1994), Minister of Industrial Development and Constitutional Affairs; & Deputy Minister of Finance & Planning, Government of Sri Lanka (2000 – 2002), Chief Negotiator in the Government’s Peace Process (2002 – 2004), Minister of Enterprise Development, Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion; & Minister of Constitutional Affairs Government of Sri Lanka (2002 - 2004) and Minister of Export Development and International Trade (2007-April 2010).

Professor Peiris during his lustrous carrier has served as Commissioner in the Law Commission of Sri Lanka, Vice Chairman, Janasaviya Trust Fund, Member of the Presidential Commission on Youth, Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Member of the National Education Commission, Member of the Academic Council, Institute of Fundamental Studies, Member of the Executive Committee, International Association for the Advancement of Teaching & Research in Intellectual Property.

He has studied at S. Thomas’ College – Mt. Lavinia and is married with one child.



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER CALLED ON HON. PETER MILLIKEN, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA

High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara accompanied by Mr Sumith Dassanayake, Minister Counsellor called on Hon. Peter Milliken, M.P. and Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada.



The Speaker welcomed the High Commissioner and spoke of the close contacts that have been maintained between the Parliamentarians of Canada and Sri Lanka, especially through regular meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The speaker recalled his visit to Sri Lanka in 2003 and the most recent CPA meeting in India at which he had the opportunity to meet with many Parliamentarians from Sri Lanka.

The discussion between the Speaker and the High Commissioner was centered on current political and economic developments in Sri Lanka. The need to maintain and further develop contacts between the political leadership at the highest level including links with the Parliamentary Friendship Groups in both countries was highlighted.



SEMINAR -EXPORTING OF CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR TO CANADIAN MARKET



The Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) with the assistance of the Actg. Consul General/Toronto has organized a seminar on "Exporting of Clothing & Footwear to Canadian Market" and one to one consultations focusing on the opportunities and challenges in the Canadian market for Sri Lankan exporters is scheduled to be held on 6th May 2010.

The seminar is the outcome of an agreement signed between the Trade Facilitation Office of Canada and the EDB. Mr Abbey Lipman, Consultant for Garments & Textile and Mr Phil Zwibel, Consultant for Footwear of the Trade Facilitation Office of Canada will be the keynote speakers at the seminar.



PAYMENT OF PENSION TO SRI LANKAN PENSIONERS RESIDING IN CANADA

The Department of Pensions in Sri Lanka by its Pension Circular 16/2009 dated 25.09.2009 requested all pensioners living abroad to forward a Data Entry Form to facilitate the payment of pensions.

The Consulate General's office in Toronto and the High Commission in Ottawa has been facilitating the pensioners living in Canada to obtain their pensions from one of the Missions or from a designated bank in Sri Lanka.

The High Commission urges any pensioner who have not submitted a Data Entry Form to do so immediately. The forms are available in the www. Srilankahcottawa.org or www. slcg-toronto.com websites. Pensioners living outside Toronto and Greater Toronto areas are requested to forward their applications to the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa and others to the Consulate General's Office in Toronto.

The High Commissioner Ms Chitrangane Wagiswara met with some of the members of the Pensioners Association, during her visit to Toronto in March 2010 and had discussed concerns of pensioners.



CANADIAN TOURIST ARRIVALS TO SRI LANKA UP BY 135 PER CENT

Sri Lanka's March 2010 tourist arrivals has risen 53.7 percent to 52,352 from a year earlier with more visitors from Western Europe, Middle East and South Asia.

Visitors from Canada rose 135 percent to 1,743, and US arrivals were up 65.6 percent to 1,674. The total North American arrivals were up 95 percent to 3,417.

The tourist arrivals from Western Europe rose 48.6 percent to 21,797 in March 2010 from a year ago with arrivals from the UK up 30.1 percent to 8,559, France up 63.1 percent to 2,872 and Germany up 96.5 percent to 5,305 while South Asian tourist arrivals rose from 51.7 percent to 12,801.



Arrivals from India, one of the largest tourist markets for Sri Lanka, had shot up 72.1 percent to 8,607 in March 2010. Maldivian arrivals rose 26.3 percent to 3,160 and those from Pakistan went up 44.7 percent to 612 visitors. Visitors from the Middle-East rose 138 percent to 2,928, and arrivals from Africa had increased 55.2 percent to 135.



Eastern Europe arrivals were up 21.8 percent to 3,421. Arrivals from Russia the largest tourist market from the eastern block were up 10 percent to 1,324, while the total from other Eastern European countries like Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Ukraine rose 31 percent to 2,097.

From January to March 2010, Sri Lankan tourist arrivals rose 50.3 percent to 160,409.



108 FORMER LTTE COMBATANTS RETURN HOME

One hundred and eight former LTTE combatants after their successful rehabilitation at the Thelippalai Rehabilitation Centre turned a new leaf in their lives and joined their parents and guardians in Jaffna on 07/04/2010.

The rehabilitated youngsters had undergone training in different vocations such as carpentry, welding, Information Technology, electric work, masonry, clerical work, metal work, etc and were presented with certificates confirming their

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competency in various fields of vocational training. The vocational training programmes had been conducted by INGOs and NGOs as well as by government's vocational training center.



Among the hundred and eight, forty three who were qualified for university admission were handed over to the Vice Chancellor, University of Jaffna through their relatives.

The Thelippalai Rehabilitation Center handed over twenty rehabilitated ex-LTTE combatants to their parents and guardians earlier in January 2010.



JAFFNA LIBRARY TO BE INTER-LINKED WITH LOCAL UNIVERSITIES



The Jaffna Public Library, one of the main libraries in Sri Lanka is to be computerized and linked with local Universities in the country to exchange information under the Uthuru Vasanthaya (Northern Spring) project.

It is envisaged that a computerized environment will provide more opportunities to the students in Jaffna and other Universities in obtaining information for higher studies.

