



New Zealand Lanka

Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 32 Winter 2006

From the President

We have now reached the end of a very successful term. We are holding our eighth Annual General Meeting on July 16 at 5.00pm at 19, Banff Ave, Epsom. Please keep this date reserved.

I am sure we all have some great memories about the good times we all had in the past year. Starting from the "Member's Night" in November, "Lanka Nite" in December, Beach BBQ at Long Bay Regional Park in January, "Desmond live in Auckland" in April and the "Cultural Event" in May, bringing fun and joy to all of us. As you can see, we have had many events spreading over the year for your enjoyment. We have had new members coming on board the Foundation having seen the results of our good work!

We have given a new look to our cultural event by offering a greater opportunity for the children to perform on stage. This is a great inspiration and an encouragement for our younger generation to learn and talk about our culture. Our parents can look forward to and guide their children to take part in this activity every year.

We have been successful in getting some funding from the Auckland City Council to assist with our activities, and we have put them into good use and for the benefit of our members and the community. We purchased some out door sports equipment and few other items, which will complement the operations for the Foundation in the future. We also managed to offer little bit of extra financial support to our Badminton Club.

We have maintained a healthy relationship with our sister organisations, working together on the matters of our common interest. The NZSL Buddhist Trust thanked the Foundation for organizing the clean up at the Otahuhu Temple. Many of our members attended the "Working Bee" held in February.

Another milestone during this term was making a final decision on the Tsunami Project Funds. We have finally decided to co-sponsor the "Project Ice" in Welipatanvila through MJF Charitable Foundation. The Moratuwa Health Project considered for funding earlier had to be rejected due to logistical problems and the resource limitations of the Foundation... *continued pto...*



Children singing "We are the world" at The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation's Celebrating Unity Cultural Day at St Aidens Church on Saturday 20th May 2006.

The Committee

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Next Event:

"Annual General Meeting"

Ninth Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation will be held on **Sunday 16 July 2006 at 5.00pm** at **Our Saints Church community Hall, 19 Banff Avenue, Off Pah Rd, Epsom.**

Main business of the AGM will be the election of office bearers for the year 2006/2007. All members are cordially invited for this important event.

Please bring a plate to share with friends of the foundation. We strongly encourage all life members to be present.

Calendar of Events:

Sunday 16 July 2006 –Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Presidents message cont....

I am happy to say that the past Presidents were very helpful and took an active part in the decision making process.

All these success stories were the result of teamwork from your highly dedicated and motivated working committee. I thank the committee and their family members for their dedicated and loyal support throughout the year. Our committee member Farry, and his family, moved across the ditch couple of months ago. We wish them the very best in all their endeavours.

I appreciate and thank the past presidents, the members, business community and well-wishers for the excellent support and advice given to me during the hour of need. That shows our unity and consolidates our "family" approach to resolving our issues in the Foundation.

While thanking the outgoing committee members and their families for their unreserved support given to me over my term as the President, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the incoming committee all the very best in the coming year. Long live the Foundation!

Lionel de Silva

Celebrating Unity through the eyes of Children...

The Cultural day on Saturday, 20th May 2006 was inspired to bring out the deserving talent of all our children, the future generation of our nation. Hence the children of the Foundation were chosen as beacons of our vision for Unity of the cultures from Sri Lanka living in New Zealand as people of one nation. The children showed us how well we can work together towards a common goal of UNITY.

The Sinhalese community consists of Buddhists and Christians faiths. The Tamil community consists of Hindu and Christians faiths and the Muslim community are of Islamic faith. The cultural day signified working in harmony with the three main communities through children. What better way of bringing together our future generation to work towards Unity through Song, Dance and Recitation. Keeping with our motto, mutual respect and serving the community.

The aim of Foundation is to have a diverse ethnic committee so it can bring a balanced perspective on decisions. This helped tremendously in the organising of the Cultural day. Friends, relatives and members of the committee graciously offered to help in various aspects of the event. Some of them giving up their valuable time to make delicious food and decorate stalls representing each community.

The parents trained their children in various cultural dances and tirelessly rehearsed speeches and words for the theme song "we are the world" to achieve perfection. Each group of children performed their cultural dance, song and recitation with confidence and to the highest standard.

The day's items were all prepared and managed by children and their parents, except for one outside speaker invited by the Foundation to speak on "Unity in Islam: He was Hady Usman, an up-and-coming lay preacher on Islamic topics.

It was a very relaxing evening and a good experiment for those seriously interested in fostering and promoting communal harmony and peace.

The highlight of the culmination was a social evening organized to treat the participants with traditional food of the three communities. There was an array of palate titillating dishes.

The Muslims had their traditional sweet dish called "Wattilappam", in addition to the pattie and Samoosa, the Buddhists their "Kiri-Bath" (milk rice), kavun and dodol and the Tamils their famous "Murukku" and "Vadey", not too unfamiliar to New Zealanders.

Thank you to the dynamic committee, friends and members for making this event another memorable one for the Foundation. If you would like more information on our organisation or membership enquires and its activities please visit our website <http://www.nzslfoundation.com>

Omar Fahmy

The vision of the Foundation...

Giving the history of the Foundation in New Zealand: "In the 1990s a group of people had a vision to get all Sri Lankans in New Zealand to stand together as equals and friends irrespective of race, religion, profession, social status or seniority."

"This was a period where there was mutual suspicion, division along ethnic, religious and intra-community political lines. Well meaning Sri Lankans thought an association encompassing all diverse groups, where people were comfortable with one another and where personal glory was something one never thought about, was sorely needed

The result was the birth of the Foundation. The Foundation was inaugurated on the 15th of August 1998 in a church hall in Remuera. A handful of like-minded people who had the dream of an organisation which all New Zealand Sri Lankans could join and work together harmoniously irrespective of race or creed, religions, languages spoken or any other barrier helped make this dream a reality.

All great successes started with a small group. Similarly, the Foundation, which started with a small group of dreamers, snowballed into a large organisation in double quick time.

When people realized that the Foundation consisted of unselfish individuals and they meant to serve the community in New Zealand selflessly and show mutual respect to each other, there was no question, there was an increase in enthusiastic membership".

Omar Fahmy was elated when he described the community's participation in all events in large numbers. He said, "Their participation was our motivation and their appreciation was our supreme satisfaction".

He paid a special tribute to the founders, the persons who drove their dream to reality, Upali Mahaliyana, Anne Perera, Jayasena Widanagamage, Sarath Pannila, Jayasiri Basnayake, Narasingham Kokulan, Vinod Perera and Indunil Arambawela.

He also paid a tribute to the dedicated members and supporters by saying, "Over the subsequent eight years the Foundation has gone from strength to strength thanks to the many dedicated members and supporters. The diverse activities of the Foundation have contributed in many ways to the enjoyment, education and uplifting of the Sri Lankan Community in New Zealand."

The Sri Lanka Foundation has also provided an opportunity for the committed members to serve our fellow Sri Lankans in New Zealand. To bring our values and vision to Sri Lankan New Zealanders, "NewZLanka", our newsletter was born as the waka which took the message of the Foundation to the public", said Fahmy.

MCM Hassan

A doctorate, master's degree and triplets...

The Tharmaseelan family have juggled an extraordinary load since they migrated – just the two of them – from Sri Lanka five years ago.

The hard-working couple can expect a big cheer when they take their places at the Massey University Auckland campus graduation in the first week of April.

At graduation Nithya gets her PhD from the College of Business. Her husband, Seelan, graduates with his Master of Management.

What is likely to be the busiest saga in their lives, began when the couple decided to come to New Zealand in search of educational opportunity but for themselves and a family they were then yet to have. In Sri Lanka Mrs Tharmaseelan was a senior lecturer in business administration at the University of Jaffna. Mr Tharmaseelan was a science graduate working in the promotion and development of industry.

"We came here for opportunity but we never expected to have triplets," says Mrs Tharmaseelan. She says the support of the staff in the Department of Management and International Business and a scholarship have been invaluable. Her thesis title was: *Careers in Cross-Cultural Context: A Study of Sri Lankan Immigrants in New Zealand*.



Nithya Tharmaseelan, eldest daughter Sweta, Seelan Tharmaseelan and triplets Surabhi, Swathi, and Surithi

Mrs Tharmaseelan started on her PhD three months after she arrived in New Zealand. Soon after, she became pregnant with Sweta, now three-and-a-half years old and a regular attendee at the Early Childhood Centre. Just one month after the triplets were born last June, she had her oral examination.

Massey University News: March, 2006

Is privatization the answer to Sri Lankan problems?...

Another crisis is looming on the horizon. The CEB trade unions are threatening to plunge the country into darkness if the government goes ahead with the proposed reforms which they consider an attempt to privatize the institution. Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is in a similar plight with unions on the warpath. The Lanka Indian Oil Company (LIOC) has warned that it will be compelled to wind up operations unless the government settles its dues. It has already stopped selling petrol and kerosene, triggering panic buying which will result

in an artificially created (made in India') scarcity. The deteriorating situation in the power and energy sector bodes ill for the national economy.

The government vehemently denies it intends to privatize state institutions. But the workers and the Opposition insist all reforms are aimed at privatisation. Monopolies, be they state owned or private, are not desirable as the consumer has no alternative but stomach shoddy treatment meted out to him or her. The pre-1977 CTB is a case in point. Even after economic liberalization, the people didn't get a fair deal in many a sector. The Colombo Gas Company was another example: the gas cooker became a luxury and one had to go on all fours behind those in authority to obtain a cooker and a cylinder. Time was when cement was issued only for permits, which had to be obtained after wasting hours in queues. Getting a telephone connection was second only to winning a sweep ticket.

As we have said umpteen times, we, as a nation, are notorious for leaping first and thinking later. Successive governments have been managing the state assets exactly the way a drug addict administers his family silver by disposing of them for a song. But has privatization made any difference? Exorbitant prices have made the gas cooker a luxury once again, and the telephone bill takes a sizeable bite off one's income. One may wonder whether cement is mixed with gold to be so expensive. Only the packaging has improved and we pay much more for the same old products. Don't blame inflation but the treachery of politicians and our collective folly.

The private sector participation may not have anything wrong intrinsically and it might work if a truly competitive environment is created without allowing monopolies or cartels to be formed. In this country, the privatization remedy has gone the wrong way and proved to be worse than the malady. Given the raw deals that the people continue to get from the state sectors that were hastily privatized, the CEB and the CPC unionists, despite the fact that they themselves have to share the blame for the state of those ventures to some extent, might be able to endear their cause to the public.

What would have been the situation in the country, if there had been no Ceypetco filling stations? There would have been utter chaos! Imagine how perilous the situation would be if the government by any chance lost control over the entire power and energy sector completely. The entry of LIOC, no doubt, shook the CPC awake. Earlier most filling stations were like byres and courtesy was alien to the pump operators. Now the CPC is making an effort to improve its filling stations thanks to competition. But good looks are not everything in essential services. Prices and the long term interests of the country are of greater import.

As regards the future of state ventures, decision making is too serious a matter to be left to politicians alone. Politicians may come and politicians may go but the people have to live with the outcome of their hasty deals. Chandrika, who was instrumental in privatizing the Gas Company, is now living in clover in Britain, and we are paying for her costly blunder.

Loss incurring institutions are naturally a problem for any government as they are a drain on the state coffers. But the question of privatisation may not arise if they are rid of corruption and political interference and, above all, managed professionally with the trade unions motivating their members to step up productivity.

Courtesy of LankanNewspapers.com

Mega projects in Hambantota in top gear

DEVELOPMENT: The construction work of the Weerawila International Airport, proposed Hambantota harbour project, and the extended railway line up to Kataragama, the three major infrastructure development projects in the Southern province, are now in top gear.

Government Agent Hambantota, M. A. Piyasena said nearly 2,000 acres have been earmarked for the Weerawila International Airport. "Alternative land for resettlement and agriculture has been identified and the work of the airport will commence from September," he said.

The Minister of Aviation Mangala Samaraweera was in Weerawila last week and discussed the land allocation for the Weeraweila Airport.

Director General Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce, Azmi Thassim said that when these three projects are completed they would bring unprecedented development to the region. "Hambantota district would then not be called an under privileged district," he said.

"There have been several plans and pledges to develop the Hambantota district and they have all been confined to plans. However things are now moving," he said. He said that these developments would result in resources in the area being fully utilised. The projects would create new employment and increase money flow in the area resulting in accelerated development.

The construction of the railway line from Matara has already commenced and it would be extended to Kataragama with a link to Ratnapura. In addition to providing passenger transport the railway line would also transport agricultural products, which would minimise waste. Over 500 acres have been identified for the mega Hambantota harbour development project and the Government is now looking out for alternative land to relocate the 350 families who would be displaced.

The harbour project would also include construction of an oil purification plant for export with a separate jetty being constructed for the purpose. As a by-product LP gas too would be manufactured. In addition electricity too would be generated from this project and would be channelled to the national grid.

The present Hambantota fisheries harbour too is being developed with Asian Development Bank assistance. Project Director, Coastal Resource Management Project, H. N. R. Perera said that the project would be completed by February 2007.

The investment for the total project would be Rs. 400 million. The development would include two breakwaters, an ice plant, an administrative block, net mending facility and many other infrastructure development programmes.

Shirajiv Sirimane, Daily News, SL

SLT join hands with Intel Corporation...

AGREEMENT: Sri Lanka Telecom, signed an agreement with international chipmaker, Intel Corporation to deploy a Co-Marketing program for the new wireless broadband solution, WiMAX. Intel is developing computer chips for WiMAX customer premises equipments (CPEs).

Speaking after the signing, SLT CEO, Shuhei Anan said that this technology can provide the platform for the next generation of internet expansion throughout the island. "Sri Lanka will experience high speed connectivity and before long, we will be a broadband island," he added.

The WiMAX network would be part of the telecom giant's overall strategy to connect the entire island with Next Generation Network (NGN), with its new CDMA network, fibre backbone and other infrastructure, all used to service the different needs of the end consumer.

Currently SLT has been allocated test frequencies for its trial wireless network, with pilot base stations in several locations.

SLT WiMAX project manager Tilak De Silva added that SLT has the confidence for deployment of WiMAX at any time once the Telecom Regulatory Commission (TRC) clearance obtained for frequencies.

Under the agreement with Intel SLT will get the advantage of obtaining the updated knowledge of WiMAX by different events and knowledge bases of Intel. In return SLT will have to provide WiMAX services to customers with the equipments made with Intel chips also.

Indika de Zoysa, Intel representative in Sri Lanka said that Intel's WiMAX silicon delivers the features needed to provide cost-effective, high-speed wireless modems for homes and businesses. He added that as a standards-based, high-speed Internet access solution, WiMAX can prepare the industry for the next wave of wireless technology.

Courtesy of Daily News Online

Views expressed in articles are those of the contributing authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of the NZSLF

Contributions

This newsletter is published quarterly. We thank everybody who sent contributions to this newsletter and apologize for not being able to publish all contributions due to the limitation of the available space. Please send your contributions to the Spring Issue by the end of August, 2006 to the correspondence address below. Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to:
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