



NewZ Lanka

Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 23 Autumn 2004

From the President....

Show of Solidarity

Outraged Sri Lankans in Auckland took to the streets on Saturday the 28th February, showing their disappointment over the biased media coverage on Sri Lanka. This coverage in print and electronic media portrayed a picture that we are a society where child sexual abuse, majority by close relatives is accepted as a norm. We salute everyone who stood up and supported this protest campaign. What was pleasing to note and commendable was the show of solidarity by all patriots at individual and organisational level joining hands to stand up to the powerful media and the other forces behind the saga of the alleged Sri Lankan rape victim. Elsewhere in this newsletter we publish two articles of interest, one the press release by Prof Harendra De Silva, Chairman of the National Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka and the other, the recommendations and future actions suggested by Ariya Randeni at the public meeting held after the march. These two articles lead us to two important conclusions. The press release by the Professor clearly suggests that the biggest damage to this child done by the media and a few individuals who have vested interests. Ariya's recommendations tell us that the saga is not over, we need to be vigilant also suggesting it is time to take a step back and reflect on us as well.

Getting back to Foundation activities, we have had a number of successful events during the past few months. The Lanka Nite 31st night dinner dance was a fantastic hit enjoyed by over 450 people. Anusha and Cream, the Auckland based Sri Lankan musical group played to a packed audience. The Cricketfest held in Hamilton on 14 March, was a huge success enjoyed by many Auckland and Hamilton families. We have also participated by invitation at the Taranaki Multicultural Extravaganza held in New Plymouth on 27 March. Over 20 participants from Auckland took part in the parade and a number of colourful dancing items were performed by young girls with the sponsorship of Foundation.

Next few months will be exciting time for the Sri Lankan community. Sinhala/Hindu New Year is round the corner and the Wesak festival in May. On 7 June Gypsies will be performing in Auckland with the sponsorship of Foundation.

We wish all our readers a Happy Sinhala/Hindu New Year.

Jayasiri Basnayake



The Taranaki Multi-cultural festival held on the 27th March 2004 at New Plymouth. The members of the NZSLF along with Dr. Hiran Fernando joined the street parade. The dances were organised by Thesara Jayawardena and was enjoyed by all.

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Next Event:

Gypsies Musical Show- A event not to be missed...

New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation is proud to present Gypsies Musical Show on 7 June 2004 at Dorothy Winstone Centre, Auckland Girls Grammar.

Gypsies super star Sunil Perera will lead the Group supported by Cumaran Peiris, Dushan Sherwantha, Derrick Hepponstall, Niresh Perera, female vocalist Judith Anne and popular comedian Ronnie Leitch.

Presently they are on month long tour to Abu Dhabi, Canada, UK and France. They will also entertain the fans in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane before their visit to Auckland.

All seats will be reserved, please contact any committee member to avoid disappointments.

Calendar of Events:

24 Apr 04: Employment Workshop

07 Jun 04: Musical Show – Gypsies

24 Jul 04: AGM

LankaNite 2003

The night of the 31st December 2003 was another of those wonderful LankaNite dances organized by the NZSLF during which our members and well-wishers danced the night away to meet the New Year 2004. Last years dance was held at the hall of the Auckland Normal Intermediate School, which was decorated with a beautiful blue, and silver theme with balloons, ribbons and sashes and blue and silver candles swathed in gauzy silver as table decorations.

After a welcome speech by the Vice President of NZSLF, Lionel De Silva, over 450 people who were present, swayed to the music provided by Anusha and Cream, the Sri Lankan husband and wife musician duo to dance the night away in style. A raffle draw was held every hour and the mid night raffle prize was a return ticket to Australia provided courtesy of Go Holidays International. There was a baila competition, which was won by Sumith and Srimathie De Zoysa.

There were prizes and surprises; there was tasty food to suit every budget and people tucked away at the delicious food stalls, which provided Indian food, Kottu Roti and finger foods, hoppers and watalappan and Smak drinks all the way from Sri Lanka. NZSLF this year wanted to keep costs down so that more people could attend and enjoy the function and the huge number of participants proved yet again that our instincts were right.

It was a night enjoyed by everyone alike, in the company of their friends and family. In all respects it was a fitting finale to yet another year of success in Foundation's journey, year 2003. NZSLF Committee wishes to thank everyone who participated, advertised and helped organize this function and who contributed in many ways to its success.

CricketFest 2004

The annual get together with the Hamilton Friendship Society and cricket match were held in Hamilton this year. Several Aucklanders visited Hamilton on Sunday the 11th of February. Despite the rainy weather of the weekend, many members and friends braved the weather and the not so good forecast to make the journey to Hamilton and the weather gods smiled down on us and the cricket match and the get together was held without a drop of rain. Although the weather was not warm, it was excellent cricketing weather, England-style as some of the visitors from England commented to me.

Hamiltonians had organized the event in Raymond Park, Fairview Downs in Hamilton and had put up a scrumptious barbecue lunch. There was a cricket match between the Auckland and Hamilton teams and after a few years, Aucklanders managed to win the match and bring back the trophy to Auckland. There was a ladies cricket match, which was again won by the Auckland ladies.

Next years event will be held in Auckland and we hope more people will participate. NZSLF wishes to thank the Hamilton Friendship Society for their great hospitality and everyone from Hamilton and Auckland who participated and played for their support.

Employment Workshop in April

Our next workshop will be held at the Auckland Regional Migrant Resource Centre in Three Kings on Saturday the 24th April from 9.30 a.m. Note that pre-registration is necessary. The workshop is free and a range of presenters from the employment arena will present the workshop. Please contact Rukman (520 2616 a/h) and Asoka (579 8977 a/h) for registration or email nzslf@nzslfoundation.com for details.

Sri Lankan News...

Tax Amnesty Act violates Constitution

A Five judge bench of the Supreme Court has ruled that the Inland Revenue Tax Amnesty Act No. 10 of 2003 violates the Constitution.

The Supreme Court has made this ruling in accordance with the request made by the President to the Supreme Court to consider the legality of this Act and submit an opinion to her. It is stated in the Supreme Court's ruling that the Tax Amnesty Act is completely contrary to Article 12.1 of the Constitution, which specifies that all citizens should be accorded equal protection of the law and should be treated equally the Presidential Secretariat said yesterday.

Only one section of the people is accorded legal protection and amnesty by the Inland Revenue Tax Amnesty Act. This is a violation of the law of the country and it paves the way for big frauds, the Supreme Court has pointed out. It has also pointed out that State revenue will drastically decrease and as a consequence the Government will also have to incur a big revenue loss.

The Supreme Court has stated that this Tax Amnesty Act will affect ten areas of taxation - Inland Revenue, Customs, Excise, Turnover Tax, National Security Levy, GST, Stamp Duty, Exchange Control, Import and Export Control, save the Nation Contribution Levy and Finance Act.

(Courtesy of Sunday Observer)

The Gypsies Show in Auckland - The Countdown Starts...



The GYPSIES - labeled, as the 'BEATLES' of Sri Lanka will perform in Auckland on 7 June 2004 at Dorothy Winston Centre, Auckland Girls Grammar.

Complimenting the Gypsies will be none other than leading female vocalist 'Ginger' (Judith Anne) and comedian/singer Ronnie Leitch (known as *Thattaya*) Who is a crowd puller at any occasion with his unique rendition of *alice*.

The spotlight naturally falls on Gypsies leader - superstar Sunil Perera with his inimitable style that has won the hearts of Sri Lankans all over the world. He will be ably supported by veteran musicians Cumar Pieris (keyboards/vocal) of Super Golden Chimes/Friends fame and Derrick Hepponstall (bass guitar/vocals). Dynamic drummer Niresch Perera will enhance the sound effect of the tantalizing Gypsies and introducing the newest member of the group 23-year old Dushan Sherwantha (Keyboards/Vocals).

We have no doubt this will be yet another memorable event for all Sri Lankan music lovers in Auckland/Hamilton.

Mr. WAN Silva – Cricket Coach Par excellence



As cricket loving Sri Lankans, we have all watched and cheered for one of the most stylish batsmen of our times, Aravinda De Silva. Have you ever wondered about the people who have been instrumental in the making of such a stalwart in Sri Lankan cricket? Recently I had the privilege of meeting the cricket coach who coached young Aravinda as a schoolboy.

Mr. WAN Silva was visiting Auckland and I had the pleasure of meeting him at a friend's place and he agreed to be interviewed for NewZLanka.

Mr. Silva hails from Kolonnawa and he said that he studied at Kolonnawa Vidyalyaya which was founded by a stalwart of the Suriyamal movement in Ceylon, Mr. Terrance de Silva (for the benefit of those readers who belong to a younger generation, Suriyamal movement was started in Ceylon as an anti-imperialistic movement to oppose the poppy movement in the 1940's). The young WAN Silva studied at this school upto standard 7 and then joined Zahira College, Colombo where his cricketing career began. He was a member of the Zahira first eleven team and he represented his school for four years until 1949. As his father passed away around this time, after leaving school he started working at the Bank of Ceylon as a junior clerk.

He continued to play cricket for a club called Nott's. As bank staff had to work on Saturdays, he could not play cricket after he joined the bank. This made him pass the local government exams and he joined the Colombo Municipality and later in 1957 joined the Prisons Department as a Social Welfare Officer. He later joined the Moors cricket club and then Bloomfield's Cricket Club. He captained Bloomfields in 1957 and his team won the coveted P. Sara Trophy in club cricket in 1971. He gave up cricket in 1972.

How Mr. Silva started his coaching career is an interesting story. The founder principal of D S Senanayake College Mr. Alles approached Mr. Silva to help him find a cricket coach for DS. Mr. Alles, being the ultimate of perfectionists, had a long list similar to a "job description" for this future coach. Although Mr. Silva had suggested two prospective coaches, they did not work out and finally Mr. Alles suggested that Mr. Silva coached his schoolboys. He coached the DS boys for the next 10 years. His most famous student is Aravinda De Silva who started his cricketing career at age 9. Mr. Silva brought back old memories of the author when he spoke fondly of his famous pupil. Young Aravinda lived down the same lane as my family in Ratmalana and I remember him walking up the road to go to school or for cricket fully clad in cricket gear including pads and carrying a bat far too big for his small frame. Even then, this dark boy had the makings of a great cricketer even when playing on the street with friends from the neighbourhood.

Mr. WAN Silva was one of the people who were instrumental in the starting of the Cricket Board in Sri Lanka with others such as Abu Fuad. He remembers the first tournament for the Ali Bhutto trophy which was played against Pakistan when Ranjan Madugalle and Daud Miyandad captained the two teams.

In 1957 while working for the Prisons Department, Mr. Silva won a scholarship to go to the UK for further studies. During his stay in the UK, he sat for all the cricket coaching exams conducted by the National Cricket Association in England. He

passed the highest exam conducted by the association, which is the Enhanced Coaching Certificate. He was the first Sri Lankan to obtain this qualification and only two more have obtained it since then.

He returned to Sri Lanka in 1980 and the country did not have test status at the time. In this year, a Sri Lankan cricket team was sent to England under the captaincy of old Nalandian and later Sri Lankan captain, Bandula Warnapura. Old Anandian Ajith De Silva and old Thomian Roy Dias were also in this team. Mr. Silva had the opportunity to be the Assistant Manager of this team and to tour with them. This team played very well and Mr. Silva says that this trip was instrumental in getting the test status to Sri Lanka. He remembers with pride how our cricketers beat the MCC President's Eleven and also how an ICC meeting was held to discuss the awarding of test status to Sri Lanka. He also fondly remembers some of the people who helped us obtain test status such as Abdul Haffiz Cader.

In 1981, the Late Minister Gamini Dissanayake became the president of the Sri Lankan Cricket Board to start a golden era of Sri Lankan cricket. Mr. Silva was appointed as the first Director of Coaching to the SLCB. His main duty was to train coaches from all over the island. He trained over 250 coaches and was involved with all the training camps held in Sri Lanka. During this period, he had the opportunity to meet some famous icons of world cricket such as Sir Garfield Sobers, Yardley and Dennis Lily etc. He also had a lot of international exposure during his tenure as the Director of Coaching from 1982 to 1991. A highlight of his career was to accompany the "Dream Team" under the captaincy of Arjuna Ranatunga which won Sri Lanka the World Cup. He has traveled in a technical capacity with the Sri Lankan test team to many countries including Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Zimbabwe several times.

Mr. WAN Silva has been coaching some of our young cricketers in Auckland during the time he spent in Auckland. I wish that his expert coaching skills would be available to our youngsters when he returns to Auckland next which would maybe lead to Sri Lanka producing another cricketer the caliber of Aravinda and who knows, one of our boys may even play for the Black Caps someday!

It was indeed a pleasure getting to know you Mr. Silva and I wish to thank you on behalf of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation and wish you good health and the good fortune to be doing what you are doing for many years to come.

Asoka Basnayake

The Sri Lankan Protest Meeting – 28 February 2004.

We debated, we marched and we said it loud and clear. Is this the end? No. This is just the beginning. The knock-on effects of the media publicity on the deportation case are not over. How do we move forward from now onwards?

Finding ways is the challenge to all Sri Lankans gathered here. But challenges also offer new opportunities: opportunities to turn the negative publicity to positive publicity. Let us seize this chance. Let us raise our profile in the New Zealand society.

What happened produced some thing good for our community. It united us. People belonging to different associations and groups started to talk about getting together and working together. And finally we walked together. This unity in diversity is a great strength. Let us build on this for the good of

the whole community. With regard to the present crisis, we propose the following course of action.

Step One: Formal Complaint to regulatory authorities

Depending on the outcome of our complaint to the TVNZ, we shall be ready to take the next step. That is lodging a complaint with the Broadcasting Standards Authority. It could be done individually as well as collectively. We also plan to lodge complaints with other relevant regulatory authorities, as the events unfold from now onwards.

Step Two: Formal Complaint to Race Relations Commissioner
We shall not stop there. If we are not satisfied with the outcome from these actions, we propose to go to the Race Relations Commissioner because of the racial undertones involved in this whole episode.

It is time for us to take a long-term view, and think about what we can do to improve our image in New Zealand. For the future, we have identified some issues, which we as a community need to address in order to go forward. These are the views of a handful of people, now we must have a wider discussion and invite new ideas. I shall outline them in point form.

Action One: Contacts

We need to do more to raise our visibility in the New Zealand society, using all forms of media. The easiest and the most common way of getting contact details is to look up the telephone directories. I tried it this morning. Unfortunately, the contact details of our community are not easily and readily available.

I appreciate that there are financial and logistical problems involved in providing permanent contact points for our associations. But, we have to explore the ways of overcoming these obstacles. There are much smaller immigrant communities who have permanent offices with permanent contact details (e.g. telephone numbers). These are funded largely by various grants available. Let us explore these options.

Are we using electronic media? Today people surf the Internet for information. It is high time for our associations to have Websites. New Zealand-Sri Lanka Foundation has already initiated action to have their website. NZSL Foundation website URL is www.nzslfoundation.com

Action Two: Information dissemination

This is an extension of the earlier Action Point mentioned. Our associations will have to be ready to provide any kind information both for our own community and other New Zealanders - at least to direct them to the proper source. We should not forget the wider New Zealand society when we disseminate information. We have to be proactive, rather than reactive, in this regard. That will help in preventing misinformation about Sri Lanka and its people.

Action Three: Raise Awareness Among the New Zealanders about Sri Lanka and its Culture.

This I believe is largely a matter for all our associations, but individually we all can play a critical role. While we have to serve our own community (our primary focus), we should not lose sight of the importance of wider community participation in our cultural activities.

We must try to bring in the leaders from the local community (e.g. community board members, elected members to local and central government), Maori leaders and representatives from other immigrant communities to our cultural events. We must also engage New Zealand businesses, especially those

that are having relations with Sri Lanka. I know that this is happening right now to some extent, but my feeling is that we can do more to interact with the local communities.

Equally, as a community, we need to participate actively in local community activities. We need to help them. We need to be proactive in integrating into the New Zealand society. That helps in raising our image and profile in the New Zealand.

Action Four: Networking with Media

In any country media is powerful in swaying public opinion. That is the reality.

We are right in protesting against distasteful and unethical journalism. But, eventually, we need to put what happened behind and find ways of working in partnership with media in the future. This is critical in my view in restoring our dignity and reputation as a cultured community.

We need make a conscious effort to let media understand our country of birth, our culture and our community. We have to reach out to media and develop networking. I have no ready answers to this issue, and we need to explore how we can work closely with the New Zealand media in the future.

Ariya Randeni

Press release - National Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka...

The NCPA is disturbed by the distorted and damaging news items appearing in the media in New Zealand in relation to the repatriated Sri Lankan girl and the grand mother. From the quotes in the newspapers it is obvious that some if not all of this misleading and unethical news appear to be sourced by the lawyers appearing for the two Sri Lankans who were deported. The grandmother whose only intention is to get back to New Zealand may be the original source of these distortions. However these purposely distorted picture of Sri Lanka and our child protection system is damaging to us. It is also possible that third parties interested in damaging the image of Sri Lanka may fund this whole process, because we are at a loss to understand the source of such huge funding needed for such an operation. I usually do not respond to wild allegations, since I have more important things to do. However, in the interest of the NCPA and Sri Lanka I am forced to answer these damaging allegations.

The work of NCPA has been applauded not only in the Region but also the world. My work as the Chairman has also been appreciated by regional bodies and Worldwide. I was awarded the "Outstanding Asian Paediatrician" award at the Asian Congress of Paediatrics in November 2003, and the Senior Ashoka Fellowship by the Ashoka Foundation of Washington in 2003 for the outstanding work against child abuse including the pioneering work against the use of child soldiers in Sri Lanka.

First I want to make a few points clear.

Once the girl has alleged that she has been raped in Sri Lanka, it would be mandatory for the legal system to investigate such an allegation since it is a penal (criminal) offence not only against the victim but also against society. If the victim wants she may not appear in court. However, the Sri Lankan authorities cannot allow a rapist to roam about since he is a potential abuser as well.

Under Sri Lankan law the identity of a victim of sexual abuse cannot be divulged since it would stigmatize the girl in whatever community she lives. (Stigma is not confined to developing countries only). The punishment would include a jail sentence of 2 years to the journalist if found guilty. On this count, the New Zealand TV crew that visited Sri Lanka divulged not only her name but also pictures. Although The NZ

press has tried to make out that Sri Lanka is a 'primitive' country, this will illustrate how sensitive we are to the issue of child abuse. Sensationalism is a strategy used by the media to sell their products. I understand that they also have to live. However sensationalism at the expense of an allegedly raped girl for commercial gain is primitive behaviour. I hope there is legislation in New Zealand to make unethical promoters of secondary victimization of victims of abuse, accountable.

The problem of sexual abuse is universal. The incidence of sexual abuse of girls in the West is as high as or higher than in Sri Lanka. I hope somebody brings to light the incidence of sexual abuse in N. Zealand. However, it should not justify the offence but authorities to act to reduce its incidence. It is primitive for media persons to sling mud at another community with false accusations, while not looking at their own house for undue commercial advantage.

The Newspapers also have given an impression that no woman is safe in Sri Lanka and that their fathers rape most girls. The TV interview of a N.G.O person in Sri Lanka who is not an authority on the subject may give false impressions. Smart editing of a recorded interview could also distort the actual meaning of an interview.

Specific replies to comments in the New Zealand Herald on the 4th of March 2004.

I must point out that the NZ Herald report is totally unprofessional since the allegations brought against me, my organization and the country were all third person statements, which would not be acceptable by any civilized society.

The child was given the option for the examination and consented to the examination. The grandmother subsequently said she had her periods and was told by us that they could come on another day. However, they (grandmother and youth) subsequently said the examination could go ahead. This was done because the NCPA had no document about this from New Zealand Authorities and since the girl made a statement of abuse, it was necessary to confirm the injuries. The statement of the girl, accused her uncles who have to be brought to justice. It is **totally false** to state the Sri Lankan authorities are "embarrassed by their failure to protect her in the first place", because it has not been brought to the notice of the authorities. I must emphasize that child abuse is like an 'iceberg' in whatever country and in a MAJORITY of cases it never is reported including in New Zealand.

Either the grandmother or the NZ Herald report regarding the examination is **TOTALLY FALSE** since:

The grandmother has **signed the form giving consent for examination**, and it was clearly informed that any evidence revealed could be used in a court of law, which is standard procedure and is not 'outdated' as apparently remarked by Ms. Cunningham. It could be that she is smarting from the telephone conversation with me and my comment "do not interfere with the criminal justice system of Sri Lanka". The comment by her about "stripping of the girls dignity" is probably for the benefit of the gallery audience since this is a procedure used all over the world. I could prove that the grandmother signed the consent form.

The report that 2 men examined her is also a distortion for the sensationalism of the New Zealand audience for sympathy. Ms. Cunningham is surely a fantastic dramatist more than a lawyer, which may work in some courtrooms. There is only one female forensic doctor in Sri Lanka and it would be impossible for her to cater to all the women in Sri Lanka. I would categorically ask the question whether male doctors in New Zealand do not do forensic examination? Most of the experts in the Western world on examination of sexual abuse of girls are MEN. It may be interpreted as 'primitive' if there were female

doctors to examine all the females and vice versa as in some countries with extreme religious views. The report does not state that there was a female nurse inside the examination room right throughout the process. I think it is shameful for lawyers and reporters to behave like this!

I interviewed the grandmother and the youth for about 2 hours and was sensitive to the feelings of both. However, I categorically made it clear at the beginning of the interview that my mandate was NOT to facilitate them to go back to New Zealand. I also understand that they were interviewed for 12 hours in New Zealand, which has not been commented on.

The female official who spoke to the grandmother was our legal officer. She is a qualified lawyer who knows her ethics and obligations, and not a "commercial" lawyer who lies and distorts the truth for financial gain. I inquired from her today and she totally denied this allegation. She is also surprised by the grandmother's statement, because on a subsequent day, the grandmother had spoken to her for a personal favour to advise and facilitate getting a passport for herself to replace the passport she destroyed when she entered N. Zealand. I am referring to this, since this is a known fact.

I do have an intercom in my room and I called the office peon. I am lost to understand how the grandmother can come up with such a distorted claim that people were listening. This is a totally false allegation with probably sensationalism and sympathy as the bottom line objective.

The NZ Herald also quotes Lindsay Freer who herself is quoting the nuns in Sri Lanka that the girl was subjected to "a pretty ghastly medical examination". I asked the nuns who have totally denied this statement. In fact the nun said, "Professor, how can I say that when I was not there". I can produce documentary evidence to this and I am not making statements without facts (unlike the press in NZ and the lawyers)

What the grandmother, the lawyers and the press have not said is the fact that the youth has had a session with the psychologist and is due for further therapy. When Ms. Cunningham states that the Sri Lankan system is "behind a quarter of a century", what authority or expertise has she to assess a protection system? Childhood sexual abuse came to the attention of professionals as a major social/criminal problem only in the mid eighties and 25 years ago the West and N. Zealand professionals were hardly aware of the problem, which clearly demonstrates Ms. Cunningham's ignorance of the subject she pretends to be and expert.

However, all I can see is that persons, including the grandmother, lawyers and the some sections of the media are exploiting this child's situation for their own benefit. What is happening is damaging the young woman more and more in terms of stigma and psychological trauma. She is being pressurized by the grandmother and the lawyers rather than the protection system in Sri Lanka.

Professor Harendra de Silva

MBBS (Cey), FRCP (Lond & Edin), FRCPC (UK), FCGP (Cey), FSLCP (SL), FCCP (Cey), MSc (Birm), DCH (Cey), FCPS (Pak), Chairman National Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka, Professor of Paediatrics, Ragma.

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Nutrition expert joins Crop & Food Research

Nutrition expert, Anne Perera, has returned from Singapore, where she worked as Nutritionist/Scientific & Regulatory Affairs Manager for F&N Foods, to Palmerston North to lead Crop & Food Research's Nutrition & Health Team.

Dr Perera has over 25 years experience working for food companies and universities in a number of countries. In New Zealand, she has worked with Hubbards, the former Kiwi Co-operative Dairies, Watties, Cerebos, Hansells and at Massey University over a period of 20 years.

Her international contacts come from time working and studying in Singapore, the United States, Brazil, India and Sri Lanka, and she is keen to link New Zealand food companies with opportunities in these countries.

"I believe there are excellent opportunities for New Zealand food companies to expand in off-shore markets, particularly in Asia. I am keen to facilitate this," Dr Perera says.

New Zealand has a good reputation in food technology and dietetics, she said. Graduates from the Massey and Otago University programmes hold prominent positions and are well respected internationally.

As Watties R&D Manager, Dr Perera oversaw the development of several award winning products including Pom Poms, toastable hashbrowns and stir-fry meals. She believes product development is a strength offered by scientists at Crop & Food Research's Food Industry Science Centre in Palmerston North.

Another strength at the Centre is the work for the New Zealand Food Composition Database. "Formerly at the receiving end of the database services, I am aware of the needs in the food industry," she says.

Food and nutrition trends and, particularly, cultural preferences are important, she says. Of the move to develop functional foods or nutraceuticals, Dr Perera believes substantiation of product claims is imperative. Crop & Food Research, with its expertise in the nutrition and health fields, is well placed to help companies do this, she says

The effect of nutrition on our physiology and mental health and the interpretation of this research for food companies meeting consumer demands are also areas of Crop & Food Research expertise, Dr Perera says. She has a particular interest in the relatively new area of the role nutrition plays in behavioural and cognitive functions.

Embracing the fresh perspective her new role offers she says, "I look forward to renewing contacts and working with friends and former colleagues in the Universities and in the food industry. I plan to draw on my experience and knowledge of the New Zealand and international food industries to provide Food and Nutrition related services to the current and future clients of Crop & Food Research Institute."

She began work at Crop & Food Research in January. Dr Anne Perera was the founder President of the NZSLF We wish Anne good luck and success in her new job

Iona Boase, Crop & Food Research Journalist

Announcements ...

The NZSLF Website

New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation has launched it's website.

The URL is: www.nzslfoundation.com and its official e-mail address is: nzslf@nzslfoundation.com.

The Foundation hosts this website to cater to the needs of the Sri Lankans living in New Zealand by providing a range of useful information and resources. The Foundation has always prioritized to cater to the settlement needs of new Sri Lankan migrants and the launching of this website is a major step towards fulfilling this objective.

The main features of the site will be a professional Trade directory listing for Sri Lankans to advertise their trade or businesses. It will be free for Sri Lankans during the first year and a nominal payment is expected after this. The site will also feature a news board that can be used by people who wants to buy or sell items and/or services. It will also display the best air travel deals or specials to Sri Lanka and other destinations and latest events. We envisage this site to offer networking opportunities for the Sri Lankan community.

The Job Search and Migrant information section will hopefully give invaluable information about finding a job in New Zealand and issues that a prospective job seeker may require. As we all know the employment market in New Zealand is very different to what most migrants have faced in their own countries and this section will not only offer hints on job search but will also have links with major employment websites and other organizations that would be able to help one in their job search. We also would like to expand this to offer networking opportunities to find employment.

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 Winter Issue by the end of May 2004 to the correspondence address below, Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to: nzslf@nzslfoundation.com

Correspondence: Editorial Committee, NZSLF, P O Box 41191, St Lukes, Auckland, New Zealand, www.nzslfoundation.com



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