



Lanka Link

2024 Edition 3

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The Sri Lanka Canada Friendship Association of Edmonton (SLCFA) is an organization that warmly welcomes and values all Canadians, regardless of their origin. Our primary goal is to create and strengthen relationships between Canadians of Sri Lankan Origin and other Canadians. We invite you to enjoy our newsletter, discover the beauty of Sri Lanka and its people, and consider joining our association and participating in our activities!

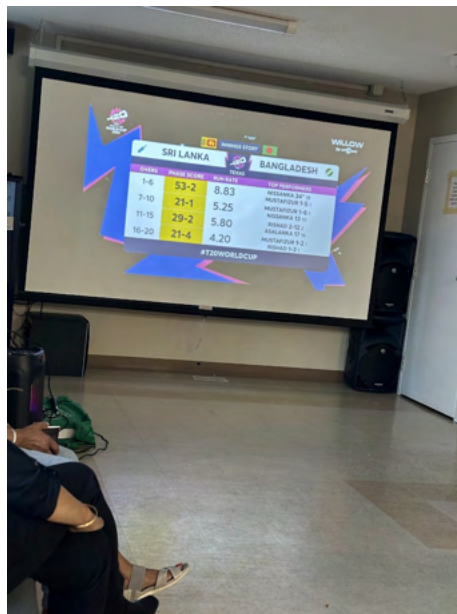
Fall is upon us all in Edmonton, and we are happy to have enjoyed many events in the Festival City. The association's summer events were sparse because of other activities and festivals like K-Days. The colours of fall are beautiful. Winter will come as hockey. Schools have started with new children enjoying birthdays, making friends, and starting tests. We were to start the association's dance classes, which began on Sundays, and we would love to introduce our new teacher, Darsha Tharangani Gunasekara.

Please enjoy our community with these new members and show us kindness and effort to help all of us:

- 1. Keerthi & Chandrika Wijesinghe**
- 2. Prasana & Kaushali Munasinghe**
- 3. Harsha & Hirumi Perera**
- 4. Brent Warren**
- 5. Clyde Fernando**
- 6. Thilina & Darshana Tharangani Gunasekara (Our new Sri Lankan Teacher)**

First Friday Event - June 7th

The first Friday was a potluck event with fun activities, including watching Sri Lanka versus Bangladesh at T20 World Cup. There were approximately 40 members on this occasion.



Sunday, June 9th - Senior's Event

The elders were given a fantastic meal of string hoppars, curries and desserts. It was a special occasion, and former members of the SLCFA who moved to Calgary were present in remembrance of Mark Perera, who passed away and was with Padmani and their family.



Sri Lanka Picnic at Laurier Park

This is a fantastic writing piece by Ramona Fernando on the rewards of the SLCFA's picnic. It was a perfect summer day for canoeing on the Saskatchewan River, and everything aligned beautifully. The instructions were clear and easy to follow, ensuring everyone had a smooth and enjoyable experience.

The picnic location at site number 8, conveniently near the boat launch at site number 9, was perfect. Chandani and Shyama did an excellent job with the food planning, offering a fantastic array of summer drinks, tea appetizers, a BBQ meal, and sweet treats. Kudos to the volunteer chefs for their fantastic BBQ skills. The Bocce Ballgame added a fun, competitive edge, keeping everyone engaged and entertained. The music was just right, encouraging some to show off their dance moves. It truly was one of the best summer days this season.



July 12 - Karaoke Event

Our karaoke events are well attended, and an enjoyable monthly activity was held on the third Friday of every month to share music, talk, and food. It was pretty special to see Jay Withanachchi, an original member of the SLCFA who is a steadfast supporter of all of our activities and shows his musical talents with the assistance of his wife, Chitra.



Glory of Sri Lanka - September 8th

Often, with the efforts of our Director of Cultural Activities, Shyama Fernando, this activity was mainly for the public, and we aimed to attract a considerable number of people interested in and excited about the beauty and culture of our great country. In this respect, we would love to thank many of the SLCFA who volunteered their time and effort to make this a success. The main goal is to enlighten the facts about our association, nation, and people in Edmonton, Canada, and beyond.



First Friday, September 13th

We have again been recommencing the Fall with Karaoke, Food and Fun on this day, and as always, we have enjoyed this activity for many years at the Hall.



Friday, September 20th Karaoke

Special new events, such as Karaoke, are loved, and I hope everyone enjoys using these events on the third Friday of every month as they continue into 2025. Our new President of SLCFA, Pandula Wickramarachchi, was hoping to invigorate the Association, and it was found to be a great success idea for attracting new members.



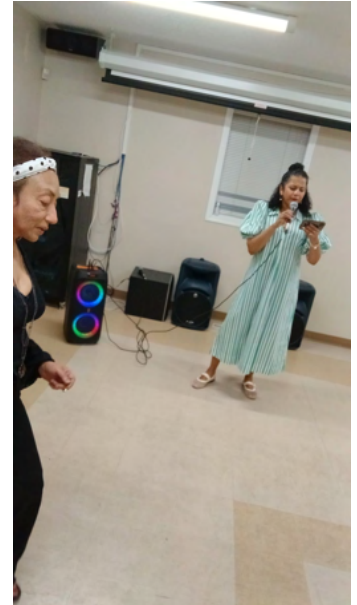
Saturday Super September 21st - Seniors Event

The seniors' event was popular. Shirani kindly invited Elsa to teach us about yoga and its health benefits for seniors. It was both educational and fun. Lakshman was also kind enough to present a Sinhalese movie. As always, a delicious meal was served with the kindness of volunteers Shirani Samarathunga, Chandra Samarasinghe, Maya Silva, and Namalee De Silva.



Ladies Night by Director of Social and Recreation Chandani Devapura

These association activities are starting to blossom like a lotus, and we are celebrating their efforts with some time with gifts, music, games, and dancing! Women often share all their efforts in cooking, volunteering, and taking care of the children. This event was a unique idea by Chandani to celebrate their part as the backbone of the association!



Sunday, September 21st - Dancing Classes for Children



We are happy to inform you that SLCFA will be starting cultural dance classes for children who have obtained the services of Darsha Tharangani, who graduated in performing arts from a university in Sri Lanka and is now a resident of Edmonton. While the association will pay her instructional wages, an attendance fee of \$10 per month per child will have to be paid in advance directly by the participants to the instructor. Please tell all your friends in Edmonton and the surrounding area who are interested in the beauty and skills of Sri Lankan dance. My brother, I, and many relatives were blessed to join activities with

the Association, especially volunteerism. I hope, especially the high school members of the area, to consider joining our activities because it has enriched their lives forever. Please enrich your children with our nation and make us hopeful and proud in Edmonton and worldwide!

SLCFA Casino on September 25th-26th At Pure Edmonton Yellowhead Casino

With the efforts of Chris Seneratne, our Casino Chairman and Director of Projects and Fundraising, we have again gained funds for our Association to give back to some vital charities we have shown need. We are essential for Edmonton and Alberta and care for our hall and activities. The volunteers of this Casino showed time and effort all day and till late at night to succeed at our goal. We would love to appreciate the efforts of all of them who are too numerous for all the volunteerism of this association because after COVID, it has been an effort to maintain this association, and I hope that 2025 will be a year with more members, activities, and joy and prosperity for this association and the entire world.

Editor's Note of The Lanka Link:

As Sri Lankans, we are scattered among the diaspora from many nations from the Middle East, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, the USA, and Canada. I have been, in many ways, a person in two worlds. I have more relatives in Sri Lanka than in Canada, and even though I came to Canada in 1982 and was only two years old, I have been instilled in the efforts of my Mother and Father to be proud of my heritage. I have been a member of the Sri Lankan Association almost from inception. I was lucky to be Canadian, but I greatly hope for Sri Lanka. In 1987, when my brother was just one year old, I fell in love with that nation, its people, its tastes, and its beautiful weather and scenery.

Although we have had a fractured nation of civil war, hatred, and fear for thousands of years, many religions and two races—the Sinhalese from Northern India, who were sailors habituated in South Sri Lanka, and the Tamils of Southern India—have become distrusted each other because colonialism was inflamed by the various European nations battling for a small country with an abundance of resources. However, a nation is not just about its resources; its most precious resource is its people, who are resilient, intelligent, and hardworking.

However, in April 2019, Sri Lanka's democracy was in danger of economic failure because of tax cuts to the wealthy, improper usage of natural fertilizer caused our crops to fail, and increased debt load by foreign nations like India and China. Indeed, many Sri Lankans left, and as inflation increased, they suffered. During the storming of the Presidential Palace in July 2022, the people of Sri Lanka had had enough of the mismanagement, nepotism and lack of insight in its leaders.

I saw that the 2024 presidential election on September 21st was well organized and without violence. I hope that in 2024, at least a new Sri Lanka will be born from the Phoenix of the Flames—a rebirth with the latest debt restructuring of the International Monetary Fund. Under the new president, Anura Kumara Disanayake has a lot of work to do. Still, I think the people of Sri Lanka are no longer fighting but are more hopeful since the civil war, such as the International Airport in Jaffna and Infrastructure for all Sri Lankans. There is much to be done with both the Sinhalese and Tamil people. Still, hope is possible in a fantastic nation with compassionate, understanding, and knowledgeable people, and I will see the pearl of the Indian Ocean be an influx of its intelligent people of our diaspora coming back to show and fix our nation.

Great Glorious Love for Lanka
Lasith R Witharana

A nation so strong, generous with kindness and caring
Sharing with delicious fares, hospitality and generous hearts
My parents became Perideniyaya Paradise for education and for sharing
My Amma and Thatha showing Kandy their love was its start

I have butterflies in my heart always even thinking of my family
Monsoon rains on the mount of butterflies, crystal waterfalls of beauty
Sri Pada, or Adam's Peak, a mountain I climbed in my youthful place
Deniyaya near the stream playing cricket were days of grace

The day I met my beloved on Galle Face in past
Joyful kindred love shining smiles with caring holding hands
Dehiwala Zoo She brings me to watch the elephants in the stands
Dreams are gone, but the memory will live forever lasts

Land of bountiful life and love, filled with fauna
The joy of the monkeys munching mounds of food
As those birds chirp and fly free, colours of rainbow's aura
Human hearts shine with the smiles of pure good