

# 58TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Colombo, Sri Lanka  
07-15 September 2012



## NEWS BULLETIN

Issue - No. 4

Tuesday, 11 September 2012

### OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 58<sup>TH</sup> COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

Today, at the Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre

Amidst a large gathering of over 600 distinguished delegates and observers representing 54 Commonwealth countries, the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will be officially opened by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Vice - Patron of the CPA at the magnificent Nelum Pokuna (Lotus Pond) Theatre, Colombo this morning.



#### Message of the Hon. Speaker and President of the CPA

At a time, when Sri Lankans are privileged to have been bestowed with the golden opportunity of enjoying the resumption of their life pattern to that of the one they had enjoyed well over 30 years ago, we as legislators of this small Island too are today very proud to host the 58th CPA conference in Sri Lanka from 7 to 15th September, 2012.

I am happy to extend a cordial welcome to all delegates, observers and spouses who have arrived in our small Island to participate in this significant event of the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The Sri Lankan branch hosted its first conference in 1974 and subsequently in 1995. Your visit to Sri Lanka would no doubt make our small nation a tenacious memory for you. The extensive cooperation that has been consolidated by our parliamentarians in sharing of experience among commonwealth nations which is apparent at this colourful event is commendable.

Not only has past conferences enabled us to understand various

approaches to parliamentary democracy but they have also provided our country with a great deal of benefits.

At this conference we are scheduled to exchange our views on a plethora of topics relevant to the welfare of the people that we represent. As a whole it is of paramount importance for us to review and address the issues common to all Commonwealth nations participating in this conference.

We as members of the Commonwealth can be proud of the strength of our unity as a group of nations. We should work tirelessly together to bring about peace and harmony and a better quality of life for the people we represent.

Ours is a beautiful country and I hope that amidst your deliberations, you will be able to get a glimpse of its natural beauty, its past and its culture. I sincerely hope that your stay with us in Sri Lanka would be a pleasant and an enjoyable experience.



**Chamal Rajapaksa, MP**  
**Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka and**  
**President of the Commonwealth**  
**Parliamentary Association**

## WELCOME MESSAGE



In Asia, Sri Lanka is committed to preserve and promote democratic traditions. I am proud to state that our country's democracy has survived and prospered against all odds.

The CPA conferences provide an ideal forum to share our experiences. Moreover, we would be able to strengthen our links.

We have selected a timely theme for the current conference, that is, Ensuring a Relevant Commonwealth for the Future.

On behalf of the staff of Parliament, I wish to state that we are happy to host all of you in our beautiful country.

I am certain that your stay in our country would be enjoyable.

**Dhammika Dasanayake**  
Secretary- General of Parliament  
Parliament of Sri Lanka

I am honoured to welcome the delegates from the member countries of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am glad that the opportunity to host the 58th CPA conference has been awarded to the Parliament of Sri Lanka. As one of the oldest parliamentary democracies

## Issue of Commemorative Stamp

Sri Lanka Philatelic Bureau of the Department of Posts is issuing a new Commemorative stamp in the denomination of Rs.5.00 today (11 September 2012) to commemorate the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference being held in Sri Lanka from 07th to 15th September 2012.



At the First Plenary Session



At the Opening Session



Rt Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst, MP - Chairperson of the Executive Committee addressing the Opening Ceremony of the 32nd Small Branches Conference

Meeting of the Executive Committee .....



## Third and Fourth Plenary Sessions of the Small Branches Conference

Subsequent to the first and second Plenary Sessions held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2012, the third and fourth Plenary Sessions of the Small Branches Conference of the CPA were held yesterday at the Ballroom, Galadari Hotel.

### 3rd Plenary Session

Ms. Paula Biggar (Prince Edward Island) chaired the 3rd Plenary Session on the theme 'Strategies to increase Women's Representation in Parliaments in Small States'.

The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Maria Payet-Marie (Seychelles), Councillor Anthony Arthur Green (St. Helena), Hon. Lovitta Foggio (Burmuda), Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya (Commonwealth Secretariat)

Mr. D.D.V.N. Dhammage was the Rapporteur of the meeting. While all four discussion leaders made presentations on the above theme the conference aimed to identify strategies for increasing women's representation in parliament.

In his presentation, Councillor Anthony Arthur Green mentioned that possible strategies should be used to uplift women's status in Small States. His presentation focused on increasing women's representation and identifying challenges faced by women in Small Branches.



## Shopping in Colombo - The Laksala

The state run-handicrafts emporium in Sri Lanka is called Laksala and has a number of branches all over the country. The one in Colombo is the biggest and the best and is located on 60 York Street. It is open from 09:00 in the morning to

17:00 in the evening. On Saturdays it closes an hour earlier and is closed all day on Sundays. You can pick up anything here and objects made from brass and silverware, wooden artifacts, buffalo horn,



natural fibres, and even made from coconut shells, cane, and bamboo. There are also products as well as toys, pottery, artificial flowers and costume jewelry.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Sessions of the Small Branches Conference (contd....)

Hon. Lovitta Foggo emphasized that female representation should be increased in the legislatures of Small States in order to empower women. She pointed out that women's

constitution too was an important factor. She explained that Political Parties have a responsibility to encourage female



representation had an impact on the policy-making process which helps democratic discussions. She stressed that political parties, NGOs and other institutions have a responsibility to increase female representation. Hence, all organizations should come together for this purpose. Hon. Foggo shared many of her region's experiences with Members.

In the final presentation, Discussion Leader Hon. Kemi Ogunsanya who represented the Commonwealth Secretariat, discussed the situation of women in the Commonwealth region. She stressed that democracy was very important to achieve Millennium Development Goals. She emphasized that civil society groups played a vital role in the social matrix and that civil society groups and the media have a strong responsibility to enhance women participation in each sector. A gender sensitive

representation through the structural process.

After the presentations by Discussion Leaders, Members of the Small Branches explained their country situation with regard to women's representation and what kind of steps should be taken to increase women's participation in parliament. Members stated that the equality of women's rights were ensured by constitutional provisions and that since of late the participation of women candidates had increased due to the quota system. However, still there were some challenges at the ground level. Finally, the presentations were followed by an active discussion with Members sharing their own experiences with regard to women's equal representation in

Small States. Participants showed great interest and enthusiasm in gender issues at the national and regional levels.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session

Hon. David De Lisle (Guernsey) chaired the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session on the theme 'Measuring Progress and well being beyond GDP in Small States'. The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Claudius James Francis (St. Lucia) and Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne (Anguilla). The Rapporteur of the meeting was Ms. Arlene Bussette.

The two Discussion Leaders made presentations based on the above topic. Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne pointed out that even if the GDP shows economic progress that it does not reflect the social progress since there are several factors to be taken into account such as peace, happiness and satisfaction when considering well-being. It was a challenge to increase GDP in a Small State since it had an environmental and a social cost. Specially limited



capacity, lack of resources, fashion of international markets and global influences were some of the obstacle to achieve higher GDP level in Small States.

Hon. Webster-Bourne stated that an increasing GDP would continue

the development of a country and that the legislative process should encourage the development of the economy as well as improve social well-being.

Responding to questions she explained that GDP was a necessary and important factor of economic progress but it was an inadequate factor to measure social progress and well-being of Small States since they show some progress beyond GDP.

Hon. James Francis (St. Lucia) making his presentation mentioned that progress and well-being were not being necessary linked to the size of the country's GDP. It may be a good measure of determining the size of an economy but it is not an adequate factor to measure the progress of people's well-being. In his conclusion, he said that GDP of Small States have immensely contributed to world order, whether politically, socially, academically or in the sporting arena.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion. Some members of Small Branches gave their views according to the main theme and presentation. Members identified GDP as a type of projection which targeted economic progress and it helped to trigger the country's economic perception based on that projected figure.

However, the concept of well-being was difficult to measure quantitatively. Increasing the GDP as well as increasing state revenue were crucial factors since it provides facilities such as health care, education and other basic needs which help to increase the people's well being through the state budget.



The Lion's Paw



Moat built around the rock

**Sigiriya** - the 8th Wonder of the World a UNESCO heritage site One of the Asia's most visited large archaeological site. Built by King Kashyapa during the fifth century A.D., Sigiriya consists of a well designed palace complex on top of the rock, moats and ramparts, pleasure gardens around the rock. Also, famous for paintings on the western side of the rock.



One of the caves



A Guard Point



Pond on the top of the Rock



Dinner hosted by the Hon. Speaker for the members of the Executive Committee



Dinner hosted by the Hon. (Prof.) G L Peiris, Minister of External Affairs



# Today's Events

11.09.2012

- 07:00- Breakfast Meeting of Regional-Secretaries  
08:00 *Venue: Hilton - Spices*
- 08:15 Delegates Assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 08:30 Depart Hotels for Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre
- 09:00 All Delegates and Invitees seated
- 09:30- Official Opening of the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa,  
10:30 President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Vice Patron, CPA  
*Venue: Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre*
- 10:30- Refreshments  
11:15 *Venue: Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre*
- Group Photograph  
*Venue: Main Entrance - Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre*
- 11:15 Depart for BMICH
- 11:30- Briefing for Delegates, Observers and Secretaries followed by  
13:00 briefing for Workshop Moderators, Discussion Leaders, Rapporteurs and Session Secretaries  
*Venue: BMICH – Committee Rooms / Lobby*
- 13:00- Lunch  
13:45 *Venue: BMICH Auditorium*
- 13:45- Regional Group Meetings: (BMICH)  
14:30 Africa: *Committee Room A*  
Asia: *Committee Room C*  
Australia: *Committee Room D*  
British Islands and Med: *Committee Room E*  
Canada: *BCIS*  
Caribbean: *BCIS*  
India: *Committee Room B*  
Pacific: *BCIS*  
South East Asia *Committee Room F*
- 14:30- Opening Plenary:  
15:45 Address by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Secretary General of the Commonwealth followed by Question and Answer Session  
*Venue: BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre*
- 15:45- Refreshments  
16:00 *Venue: BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre - Lobby*
- 17:00 Close  
Depart for respective Hotels

## FOR DELEGATES, OBSERVERS, ACCOMPANYING PERSONS AND SPOUSES

- 18:15 Assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 18:30 Depart Hotels for Parliamentary Complex
- 18:50 Arrive at Parliamentary Complex
- 18:50- Visit Parliamentary Complex  
19:20
- 19:20 Depart Parliamentary Complex for Dinner
- 19:30- Dinner - (by invitation)  
22:30 Jointly hosted by Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Leader of the House and Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Leader of the Opposition  
*Venue: Water's Edge Hotel*
- 22:30 Depart for respective Hotels

## Spouses' Programme :

- 11:30-13:00 Briefing for Spouses / Partners  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room-B*
- 13:00-13:45 Lunch  
*Venue: BMICH Auditorium*
- 13:45 Spouses assemble at the entrance of the BMICH Auditorium
- 14:00 Leave BMICH for City Tour :
  - Independence Square, National Museum
  - Town Hall, War Memorial Monument at Kotte
- 15:00 Arrive at the Parliament, Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte
- 15:00-16:00 Tour of Parliamentary Complex  
Refreshments  
*Venue: Members' Dining Room, Parliamentary Complex*
- 16:00 Leave Parliamentary Complex for City Tour :
  - Gangaramaya Temple, Galle Face Green
  - Old Parliament Building, World Trade Centre
- 17:30 Arrive at respective Hotels

## FOR SOCIETY OF CLERKS-AT-THE TABLE PARTICIPANTS, SECRETARIES AND SPOUSES

- 18:15 Assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 18:30 Depart Hotels for Mt. Lavinia Hotel
- 19:00- Reception - (by invitation)  
19:30 Hosted by Dr. William F. Shija, CPA Secretary-General  
*Venue: Mt. Lavinia Hotel – Regency Room*
- 19:30- Dinner - (by invitation)  
22:30 Hosted by Mr. Dhammika Dasanayake, Secretary-General of Parliament of Sri Lanka  
*Venue: Mt. Lavinia Hotel – Beach Hut*
- 22:30 Depart for respective Hotels

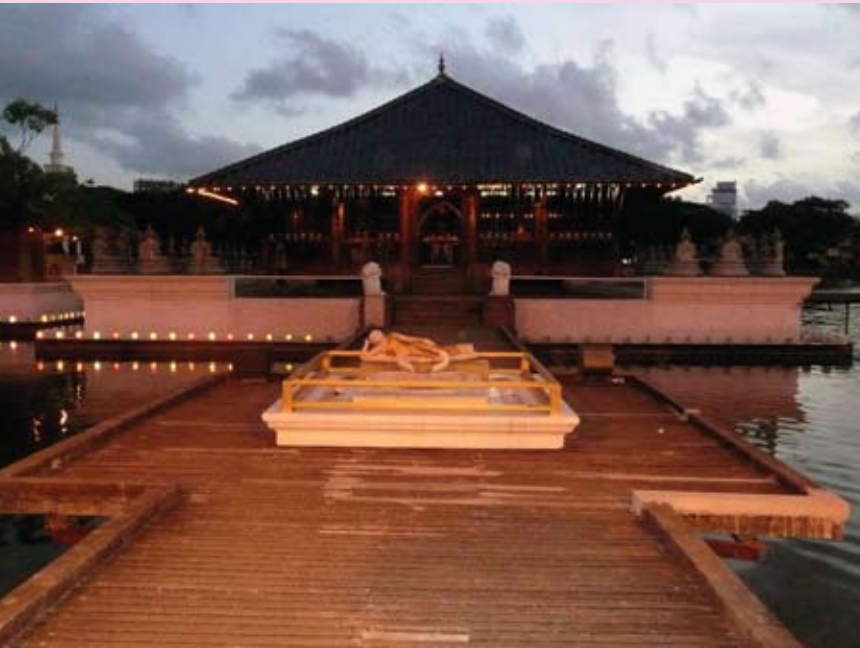
# Happy Birthday

Hon. Sir Alan Kemakeza,  
Speaker, Solomon Island



Today's weather in Colombo:

|                 | Night                | Morning                            | Afternoon                                    | Evening              |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Weather:        |                      |                                    |  |                      |
| Description:    | Mostly cloudy. Warm. | A few storms. Mostly cloudy. Warm. | Widely scattered storms. Partly sunny. Warm. | Mostly cloudy. Warm. |
| Temperature:    | 27 °C                | 30 °C                              | 29 °C  | 27 °C                |
| Wind Speed:     | 14 km/h              | 14 km/h                            | 19 km/h                                      | 14 km/h              |
| Humidity:       | 84%                  | 72%                                | 74%  | 84%                  |
| Visibility:     | 13 km                | 4 km                               | 6 km   | 16 km                |
| Chance of Rain: | 26%                  | 62%                                | 46%  | 26%                  |



## Gangaramaya Temple, Colombo

This picturesque temple is situated in the city of Colombo. The temple's architecture demonstrates an eclectic mix of Sri Lankan, Thai, Indian, and Chinese architecture. This Buddhist temple includes several imposing buildings and is situated not far from the placid waters of Beira Lake on a plot of land that was originally a small hermitage on a piece of marshy land. It was built in the 19th century.



## Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil

Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil or Nallur Murugan Kovil is one of the most significant Hindu temples in the Jaffna District of Northern Province, Sri Lanka. It stands in the town of Nallur. The presiding deity is Lord Muruga in the form of the holy Vel. The idol of the Nallur Devi or goddess was gifted to the temple in the 10 century by the Chola queen Sembiyan Mahadevi, in the style of Sembian bronzes.



## St. Lucia's Cathedral

ST. LUCIA'S CATHEDRAL, KOTAHENA in Colombo was built in 1760 by the Dutch. It is one of the earliest recorded churches in Sri Lanka. According to historical records, people had flocked to the church for safety during the battle between the Dutch and British before the British captured Sri Lanka, then Ceylon. On January 20, 1995 Pope John Paul met the bishops and clergy at a ceremony at St. Lucia's to beatify Fr. Joseph Vaz.

## Beautiful Landmark Mosque in Colombo



The Jami Ul Alfar Jumah mosque in Colombo 11, Pettah business area is one of the oldest mosques in Sri Lanka. Because of its unique and beautiful architecture it is one of the landmark buildings in Colombo city. During early 1900s sailors in ships that called at Colombo Port use to identify the port using this mosque building. This mosque is also referred as Second Cross Street Mosque.