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Friends,
As the new Editor of NAAL, I sincerely thank you for selecting me to be your information partner. While appreciating the committed inputs given by the previous Editor Mr Sarath Jayathilake, who was appointed as a Vice President of NAAL, I kindly request all of you to contribute, in whatever the way you can, to make this newsletter very informative, innovative and useful. You can reach me by email lintonfernando@gmail.com or by phone +91712306999 for your fruitful comments, suggestions and of course your creations to publish.

Cheers!
Linton Fernando
The Editor, NAAL



The only source of knowledge is experience. - Albert Einstein
Share it !

NAAL reached its golden age

NAAL reached the Fiftieth Golden Year in Sri Lanka. NAAL is the only Netherlands Alumni Association (NAA) in the world to reach 50 years of successful and active operations. With a membership of more than seven hundred, NAAL work on the development of relationship between The Netherlands and Sri Lankan people. During this golden year NAAL has planned several activities which will connect the members, other NAAs in the region and the Institutions in which the members have followed their programmes. Though some initial programs planned had to be postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic situation, NAAL will conduct many memorable events which will be informed to the members and relevant institutions in due course. The next newsletter will be fully dedicated to celebrate this golden jubilee. Await for more news!

NAAL conducts the 49th AGM

NAAL conducted the 49th AGM on 23rd August 2020 at the auditorium of the Organization of Professional Associations, Colombo, followed by a fellowship lunch. Her Excellency, Ms Tanja Gonggrijp, The Ambassador of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honor. The new Executive Committee's photograph is shown below.



Standing from left to right - Mr. Mahinda Padmasiri, Mr. K M N S Fernando, Mrs. Karuna Speldewinde, Mrs. Indira Samarasinghe, Mrs. Tamara Mallawarachchi (Assis. Secretary), Mr. Linton Fernando (Editor), Mr. W A M G S Abeysinghe, Mr. O M Weerasoorya, Mr. T G Wijerathne Banda (Assist. Treasurer), Mr. G. Sumithra Fernando, Mr. Nihal Fernando (Social Secretary)

Seated From left to right - Mr. Siri Hettiarachchi (Treasurer), Mr. Sarath Jayathilaka (Vice President), Mrs. Tanja Gonggrijp (Her Excellency, The Ambassador of Netherlands, Sri Lanka and The Patron) Mr. S P C Kumarasinghe (President), Mr. S M S B Niyangoda (Vice President), Mr. W H Munasinghe (Secretary)

Not in the Picture : Mr. Sunil Rodrigo



...more on the NAAL AGM



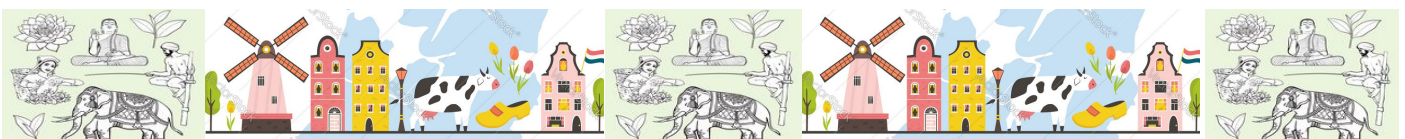
Normally, the NAAL AGM is coupled with an outing and an networking event for the members and their families. Due to the limitations of COVID 19 health concerns, NAAL AGM was attended by the members only. NAAL wishes to extend its sincere appreciations to all members who were present at AGM to make it a success. The picture shows some of the very active general membership who were present.

The President, Mr S P C Kumarasinghe's Remarks

He said *"The very existence of NAAL reaching the 50th year, is significant on two counts. Firstly the commitment of its members to furthering cause of the organization. Achievements during the 50 years are the second."* Further he mentioned that, NAAL has been surviving with a small number of active members who are doing more with less. The President, Mr Kumarasinghe, showed that NAAL, being acknowledged as the best alumni in the world, has achieved many considerable and successful memories including various useful projects for developing the relationship between the Netherlands and Sri Lanka. Now, he said, with the classification of the country in the "middle income threshold" both countries have the privilege of working on economic development projects and requested the members to come up with viable proposals. Thanking the members for appointing him for eighteen consecutive years, he wished the NAAL blessings to reach the Diamond Jubilee in the same spirit.

Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka, Ms Tanja Gonggrijp's comments

She congratulated NAAL on reaching a very productive and effective fifty years in Sri Lanka and appreciated the contributions made by NAAL in maintaining and developing a very fruitful connection with both countries. Though she was new to the present position in Sri Lanka, she said that the information received from the relevant parties proved that NAAL members had been the ambassadors of Netherlands in various capacities and requested members to further strengthen the good work carried out. She informed the members that she would like to know their experiences in the Netherlands and requested members to create a forum to discuss the positive as well as the negative impacts of the Dutch presence in Sri Lanka from the time they arrived. The importance of knowing the negative impacts was highlighted by her excellence and mentioned that it is necessary to address the issues in order to rectify the feelings. Thanking the present membership for the hard work done to bring NAAL to the highest levels, she showed that there are many "very young" generation who are studying and who have completed various programs at many institutions in the Netherlands with their own funds who can be of real value to take NAAL forward. She promised the gathering that the Embassy will take necessary steps to connect them once the pandemic situation allows people to move freely. She requested members to make use of the facilities the embassy is offering to develop the economic relationship of both countries.



NAAL misses the company of two very enthusiastic Vice Presidents



During the previous year, two Vice Presidents of NAAL, Mr. J Paranamaana (left) and Mr S G Punchiheva (right) left their beloved friends, and family members and NAAL members, for eternal rest. At the AGM, NAAL observed two minutes silence in respect of them as well as other members who reached their eternal destiny. May they attain the Supreme Nibhana as they wish.



We miss you, Dear Parane and Punchi!

Dear Members,

This page is for you.

Please feel free to express your views and share your experiences when you were in the Netherlands.

Yes! you can tell others about "how was the stay?", "what were the impacts"/ and "what are the opportunities you had to contribute what you learned from your study program"?. Whether it is non-productive, happy/sad, hilarious/ serious, we like to know the real happenings. Kindly send your brief story to the mail lintonfernando@ymail.com at a convenient time.

Thank you for your contributions

Linton - The Editor

First hand experience from The President NAAL, Mr S P C Kumarasinghe;

My Experience in the Netherlands

Before going to the Netherlands, although I was qualified in Agriculture, I was asked to handle agricultural machinery at R V D B. and also later at the Department of Agriculture. So I did my work with pleasure. When I went to the Netherlands on the fellowship for Diploma in farm Mechanization It was a good opportunity to learn more theoretical part of what I did in Sri Lanka. We had practical in the field in the morning and lectures in the afternoon. A group of 11 trainees from 11 countries. Most of them were Senior Administration Officers or Engineers. The trainee from Africa living adjoining to my room in the hostel are

used come to my room in the evening when we return to the hostel to get a briefing specially on mechanical operations we did in the morning. Gradually after a few weeks this number increased up to about 6 or 7 trainees from different countries. I was happy to help others. At the final exam it was not necessary for me to study for the final exam because by teaching others everything we learn was firmly registered in my memory and I faced the final exam. At the graduation it was announced that I have scored the highest marks for last 10 years they had this one year diploma course in that institute.

Yes! next time It is you... be ready!

Know your Executive Committee members....

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The Forum (Het Forum)

Editor's note: Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka, Ms Tanja Gonggrijp, in her comments at the AGM mentioned that she would like to discuss *“the positive as well as the negative impacts of the Dutch presence in Sri Lanka”*. This page will be dedicated to create a fruitful discussion forum for members and those who are interested in commenting on the subject matters. Please make sure that you mention the correct sources of your articles and ensure that the professional ethics are maintained to make this a successful forum. NAAL EXCO will select the articles/comments to publish. Welcome to express your findings, views!

Some food for thought...

Dutch rule in Sri Lanka (1658–1796)

[Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sri-Lanka/Dutch-rule-in-Sri-Lanka-1658-1796>]

Dutch rule in Sri Lanka was implemented through the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie; commonly called VOC), a trading company established in 1602 primarily to protect Dutch trade interests in the Indian Ocean. Although the VOC first controlled only the coastal lands, the Dutch gradually pushed inland, occupying considerable territory in southern, southwestern, and western Sri Lanka. In 1665 they expanded to the east coast and thus controlled most of the cinnamon-growing lands and the points of exit and entry on the island.

The link between trade and agriculture, which strengthened considerably during this period, was evident especially in the increased production of two new cash crops, tobacco and coffee—the cultivation of which was encouraged by the VOC. Tobacco, which thrived in the Jaffna Peninsula, found good markets in the kingdom of Travancore in south India as well as in Southeast Asia, especially at the port of Aceh (Acheh) in northern Sumatra and at various ports in the southern Malay Peninsula. Production of coffee, grown extensively across Sri Lanka, rose sharply in the first half of the 18th century; the island's coffee found markets in Europe, the Middle East, and the neighbouring subcontinent.

Although the Dutch tried to promote trade with neighbouring countries, it was under a strictly controlled system. They sought to monopolize the export of major commodities, but this effort led to a decline in trade with India, which, in turn, resulted in a shortage of essential goods, such as rice and textiles. In the early 18th century some relaxation occurred, and private traders from India were admitted into the island's trade system. Nevertheless, the Dutch retained their export monopolies in some areas, and they continued to control trade commodities and prices through a system of passes and inspection.

There were three major courts of justice, in Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna; appeals were heard by the Colombo court. In the

various districts, the provincial head (the dissava) presided over the circuit court, called the Land Raad. Native chiefs were invited to hear cases involving local custom. The customary law of the land was administered in the courts, unless it clashed violently with Dutch jurisprudence. Increasingly in the 18th century, Roman-Dutch law was used in the Sinhalese areas of the southwest and south. This had important social consequences. Private property rights in land spread more widely in these areas, and property **transfers were** subject to Roman-Dutch law. Moreover, where Sinhalese society had been polygynous to some degree, a gradual shift toward monogamy occurred under the influence of the new legal system. Some attempt was made to codify customary law. The Thesawalamai—laws and customs of the Tamils of Jaffna—was codified in 1707. Because of the difficulty in codifying Sinhalese law and custom in view of its regional diversity and complexity, Roman-Dutch law was increasingly applied to the Sinhalese of the cities and the seacoast, especially to those who professed Christianity.

During the period of Dutch rule in the coastal areas there was a revival of **Buddhism in the Kandyan kingdom and in the southern part of the island**. While the Dutch felt great antipathy toward Catholicism, they indirectly contributed to the revival of Buddhism by facilitating transport for Buddhist monks between Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Arakan (Rakhine) region in southwestern Myanmar (Burma). Such services helped the Dutch maintain good relations with the king of Kandy. Representing a new strand in the traditions of both Sinhalese and Tamil literature, Christian writings began to appear during the Dutch period. Although most of these new works were translations of basic canonical texts, some were polemics that targeted both Buddhism and Hinduism. The 18th-century writer Jacome Goncalves was among the most notable figures in Sri Lankan Christian literature. The VOC's establishment in 1734 of the first printing press in Sri Lanka - used to meet the needs of missionaries as well as administrators - aided the proliferation of Christian texts.

Please send your comments, ideas, findings to publish here. Make sure that all are related to the subject discussed above.

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