

British Tamils Forum United Kingdom

22nd of January 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TAMIL HERITAGE & THAI PONGAL CELEBRATION IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

Following with tradition, the British Tamils Forum (BTF) celebrated its 2023 Thai Pongal Event on 17 January in the Jubilee Room in the UK Parliament.

It was the seed of Thai Pongal & Heritage celebration that the BTF planted in 2011 in Harrow Council, that have grown vastly not only in the United Kingdom but around the world receiving significant recognition today. It is a pleasure to see Tamil Heritage Month and Thai Pongal is celebrated globally with several Tamil cultural events.

Based on its strenuous research, time and effort in collating facts, the BTF launched a new video “**Tamil Heritage Pioneered Maritime Expedition & Globalisation**” as a part of this event. This video depicts how courage the Tamil people were even circa 1,000 years ago. Their long-distance sea-faring naval expeditions without receiving logistical support from land in those days is incredible. The research provides, that only after 500 years the European expeditions started on long sea-faring voyages to establish their empires around the world.

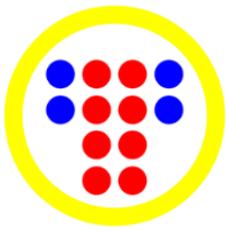
Twenty-three members of Parliament from the three major parties in the UK, Councillors, and a member of the House of Lords and several well-wishers participated in this colourful event that exhibited the richness of the Tamil Heritage and ancient culture of Tamils.

The event started with a minute silence as a mark of respect for the lives lost during the Tamil genocidal war staged by the Sri Lankan government.

The members of Parliament, the Lord and the audience were elated to watch a wide variety of programmes of the event. Tamil cultural programmes delighted the audience with orchestras of Veena, Thavil and Naathaswaram, vocal music, Tamil folk and traditional dances with participants wearing colourful Tamil traditional costumes that received great applauds from everyone. It was great to see Tamil youths’ coordination and participation in the event.

By praising Tamil peoples’ contribution to the world at large, especially to the United Kingdom, all these distinguished guests of the Members of Parliaments and the Councillors collectively voiced that the international community must intervene and save Tamil people who are being subjected to genocide in Sri Lanka.

All those participated members of Parliament including the members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils (APPGT), affirmed their stand with Tamil people for their rights in Sri Lanka. Their speeches contained the following salient points.



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- Tamil peoples' enormous contribution to British institutions such as National Health Service commercial and business sector and the like
- Tamil people have been and are being targeted and tortured for several decades in Sri Lanka
- The Mullivaikkal war in 2009 can only be classified as the genocidal war
- The Tamil people must have their right to self-determination
- Sri Lankan state is now trying to talk to the Tamil political leaders
- To reach a successful negotiation, an international arbitration mechanism with chairs of the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, India is crucial
- Sri Lanka's hardship is now felt by the whole country mainly because of appalling corruption, over-spending on defence, unfunded tax-cuts and horrific behaviour of the Sri Lankan government
- Our thoughts must be about those people in Sri Lanka suffering with hardships while we celebrate here in London
- Although it is good news that President Ranil Wickremasinghe is talking to leadership of Tamil people in Sri Lanka about a political solution, the sceptical and suspicious nature of Tamil people on the Colombo government is understandable due to their bad experiences in the past including the Norwegian efforts
- Exerting international pressure on the Sri Lankan government to deliver human rights and justice for Tamil people is crucial
- Praised the Canadian government who recently passed sanctions against former Presidents Gotabhaya Rajapaksa and Mahinda Rajapaksa
- The UK Parliament and the UK government to follow the lead of Canada and sanction these outrageous individuals who have caused so much damage to everyone in the island of Sri Lanka

The members of Parliament thanked the BTF and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils, for supporting the British Tamil community and the Tamil people in Sri Lanka as a whole.

The members of Parliament participated in the event:

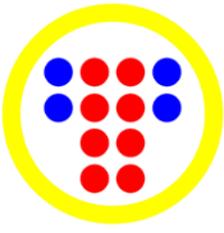
1) Rt Hon Theresa Villiers, 2) Rt Hon Sir Ed Davy, 3) Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms 4) Steve Baker, 5) Catherine West, 6) Janet Daby, 7) Louie French, 8) Sarah Olney, 9) Sarah Jones, 10) Bambos Charalambous, 11) Dawn Butler, 12) Yasmin Qureshi, 13) Ruth Margaret, 14) Ben Everitt, 15) Sarah Champion, 16) Chi Onwurah, 17) Bob Blackman, 18) Gareth Thomas, 19) Stephen Morgan, 20) Paul Bristow, 21) James Grundy, 22) Tan Dhesi, 23) Fiona Bruce and Lord Mann.

The Councillors participated in the event:

1) Sarmila Varatharaj (Deputy Mayor, Wandsworth Council), 2) Krishna Suresh, 3) Sasi Suresh, 4) Chrishni Reshekaron, 5) Ellily Ponnuthurai, 6) Sharmila Sivarajah, 7) Paul White, 8) Kuha Kumaran.

This event is an important part of the British Tamils Forum's objective to bring the ongoing genocide and extermination of Tamil people in Sri Lanka and to solicit support for justice, peace, prosperity and equal rights for them. The attendance of more members of Parliament this year than in the past indicates that the UK parliament recognises the BTF's veracious efforts on Tamil peoples' legitimate aspirations in Sri Lanka.

The BTF conveys its sincere gratitude to the Lord, members of Parliament, Councillors, artists and volunteers for taking part and making this event successful.



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For More Images: [Thaipongal & Tamil Heritage Month Parliament-2023 January – British Tamils Forum](#)

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=859174542059398

For More Videos : <https://youtu.be/PAWP1gCdSrK>

: <https://youtu.be/Jazn-7vjp0I>

: <https://youtu.be/4uzTTWImoyw>

: <https://youtu.be/Ty5VIXAGweU>

: <https://youtu.be/t3EhF7HMB3g>

: <https://youtu.be/atxw7mMIkEk>

: <https://youtu.be/LpQsCPWcSeo>

: <https://youtu.be/SJ2TuYzZfyE>

: <https://youtu.be/RRPZkiQcf8E>

: <https://youtu.be/F9WsJNY3upA>

: <https://youtu.be/ggEdCJM2Z08>

: <https://youtu.be/S7RzERBuIOk>

: <https://youtu.be/Cp5-OHyFHNk>

: <https://youtu.be/QzGneGTgs1U>

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Notes to Editors:

British Tamils Forum exists to harness the skills and the knowledge of the members of the forum, well-wishers and significant others including mainstream decision makers in the UK with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Tamils community in the Island of Sri Lanka and to further their right to self-determination within a democratic frame work under pinned by international law, its covenants and conventions. For more information info@britishtamilsforum.org and/or visit: www.britishtamilsforum.org