

Sri Lanka Embassy in Brussels celebrates Thai Pongal



The Sri Lanka Embassy in Brussels celebrated the Thai Pongal festival at the Embassy premises, on 16 January 2009. Members of the Sri Lanka Tamil community in Belgium participated in the event. This celebration was held according to the practice instituted by the Mission to conduct commemorative events to celebrate festivals of the four great religions of Sri Lanka – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

Addressing the gathering Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha said Thai Pongal is a thanks giving festival to the Sun God, who makes the universe prosper. 'Thai' means the first month of the Tamil calendar. So it is the belief that prosperity comes along with the first month of the year on the Pongal day. He added that the prayers offered on Pongal day are not confined to Hindus but to all living beings in the Universe.

The traditional oil lamp was lit by the Ambassador and traditional pooja was conducted by Pandit Harinath Sharma. The religious rituals ended with the offering of Pongal to Lord Ganesh and other deities.

At the reception that followed the religious ceremony, the refreshments served included an array of food traditionally associated with Thai Pongal.