

A Platform For Sharing Defence Seminar 2012 Lasting Peace Through Stability



The Sri Lankan Armed Forces defeated the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE) on May 19, 2009, thereby making Sri Lanka the only country in the world to defeat terrorism in the 21st Century. During the 30 year long war there was instability and insecurity in every sphere, where no part of the country was left untouched by the terror of the LTTE. As such the post-conflict era brought about opportunities as well as challenges especially in the North and East of the country. Three years have passed and much has been done to ensure security and stability to the people of this country. The Armed Forces have played a key role in this regard. Post conflict development has progressed in line with the 5Rs – that is Reconstruction, Resettlement, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Reconciliation – and these will be the core subjects under discussion at the Defence Seminar 2012, themed 'Towards Peace and Stability' explains Lt Gen Jagath Jayasuriya, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army.

Following the success of the first Defence Seminar held in 2011 on 'Defeating Terrorism: the Sri Lankan Experience', where strategies, challenges and the modus operandi of success were shared with delegates from around the world, "a decision was made under the direction of Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, for the Defence Seminar to be an annual event, where Sri Lanka will share its experience with other countries grappling with similar issues and situations," explained Lt Gen Jayasuriya. Thus the Seminar will provide a platform for discussion, debate and dissemination of knowledge.

The three-day seminar organised by the Sri Lanka Army will focus on the post-conflict era, especially in the areas where Sri Lanka has progressed in the past three years. "In any post-conflict situation, the Army needs to engage in the process of post conflict development as they have the knowledge and the experience in the area. Similarly the Sri Lankan Army too has been a key component of post conflict recovery and infrastructure development as such we want to share our experience that we have gained with other countries. Therefore the seminar is designed to disseminate our learnings," stated the Commander. With the theme of 'Lasting Peace and Stability', Defence Seminar 2012 will focus on the core 5Rs of post conflict development, which are Reconstruction, Resettlement, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Reconciliation. The Sri Lanka Army has been playing a major role

in reconstruction of infrastructure, resettlement of displaced people, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society and creating the conducive environment for long lasting peace and reconciliation. The seminar also aims to show how the Sri Lanka Army and in retrospect the Military has transformed from a war-time fighting force to a peace-time agent of security and stability.

Speakers at the seminar will include local experts as well as international guest speakers, who come from countries with similar experiences. The line-up of eminent speakers will include both civilian and Military personnel.

The Ultimate Aim Of The Defence Seminar Is To Create A Conducive Environment For Knowledge Sharing, Interaction, Development Of Strategies And Technologies That Will Enable Countries To Overcome Similar Challenges And Situations.

The key-note address will be by Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa on the first day of the Seminar. During subsequent sessions on the three days of the Seminar, Prof G L Peiris, Minister of External Affairs; Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development; Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Plantations and Rajiva Wijesinghe will speak on Human Rights and Reconciliation; Lalith Weeratunga, Secretary to the President will speak on the progress made on the LLRC recommendations; S B Divaratne, Secretary, Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security on resettlement; Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal on economic progress; Maj Gen Mahinda Hathurusinghe and Maj Gen Kamal Gunaratne on the development work conducted in Jaffna and Vanni respectively; Imelda Sukumaran, former GA of Mullaitivu on her experience; amongst others will be speaking on the selected core areas.

Foreign speakers will include, “an official speaker from the US State Department arranged through the US Embassy in Sri Lanka. We are also expecting speakers from the UK, Pakistan, India and Dr Subramaniam Swamy from India who is yet to confirm and many more,” said Lt Gen Jayasuriya.

Delegates from 63 countries are expected at the event where senior officials from many invited countries are to be present. “The word has spread farther this year, and we have had many inquiries as well,” said the Commander, while further adding ‘delegates will be taken on a field visit to the North, East and Hambantota and they will also be given an insight to our culture and heritage thereby providing a total experience to the delegates visiting our country.’

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Defence Seminar 2012 will be held on August 8-10, 2012 at the Galadari Hotel Colombo. www.defseminar.lk