



Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya
Greater Toronto Area and Suburbs

Newsletter

December 2025 Issue

“Sarvasva Locanam Sasthram”

Knowledge is the Eye unto All

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The past years have reminded us of the enduring value of connection, community, and shared experiences. In a world still adjusting to the lasting impacts of the pandemic, the Peradeniya Alumni Association of GTA & Suburbs has worked tirelessly to create opportunities for alumni to come together—to laugh, to celebrate, and to strengthen the bonds that unite us with each other and our alma mater.

2025 was a year defined by energy, enthusiasm, and memorable moments. Welcoming new members during this tenure was a significant achievement for the association. Alumni turned out in impressive numbers for events ranging from a spirited cricket tournament in Brampton—where the Peradeniya team proudly finished as runner-up—to a sun-filled summer outing at Kinkardine Beach. Over sixty members joined a scenic 6 km trail hike at the Terra Cotta Conservation Area, while the Town Hall in Mississauga welcomed new alumni with trivia, career talks, and lively conversation. Each of these gatherings reaffirmed that the Peradeniya spirit is alive and thriving across the GTA & Suburbs among alumni community.

Looking ahead, 2026 promises to be equally vibrant. Our flagship *Back to Hanthana 2026* event is set to be a unique and unforgettable celebration, and we warmly invite all alumni in the GTA and surrounding areas to join us. Every participant, every talent, and every shared experience strengthens our community and ensures that the bonds we form today will endure for years to come.

As we reflect on the past year and anticipate the next, we are filled with gratitude for the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of our alumni. Together, we continue to celebrate friendship, achievement, and the enduring pride of being part of the Peradeniya family.

We welcome and encourage contributions from alumni and their families, including children, for publishing in the Newsletter. Please see guidelines on the last page.

Cyclone Ditwah Brings Worst Flooding – Peradeniya University Submerged



Cyclone Ditwah unleashed some of the most severe flooding ever recorded at the University of Peradeniya on 27–28 November 2025, before moving back over the Bay of Bengal. Torrential rainfall and rapidly rising water levels caused extensive inundation across the campus, marking one of the most challenging events in the university's history.

Nestled in one of Sri Lanka's most picturesque landscapes, the university lies along the Mahaweli River, which overflowed dramatically under the intense weather conditions. The usually serene surroundings celebrated for their natural beauty, historic architecture, and lush greenery were transformed as floodwaters swept across university grounds. Access roads, laboratories, academic buildings, student hostels, the gymnasium, playgrounds, and even the iconic Sarath Chandra Open-Air Theatre ("Wala") were severely affected, disrupting daily operations and academic activities.

The storm also inflicted significant environmental damage. Several long-standing trees, integral to the campus's distinctive character, were uprooted or destroyed, altering the visual identity of areas cherished by generations of students and staff.

At the time of the disaster, nearly 10,000 residential students were housed in campus hostels. Four hostels located near the river were immediately identified as high-risk zones, prompting swift relocation of students to designated safe areas as part of the emergency response.

Assessment of the full impact is ongoing. The university community, alumni, and emergency authorities are working together to manage recovery efforts and plan for restoration.

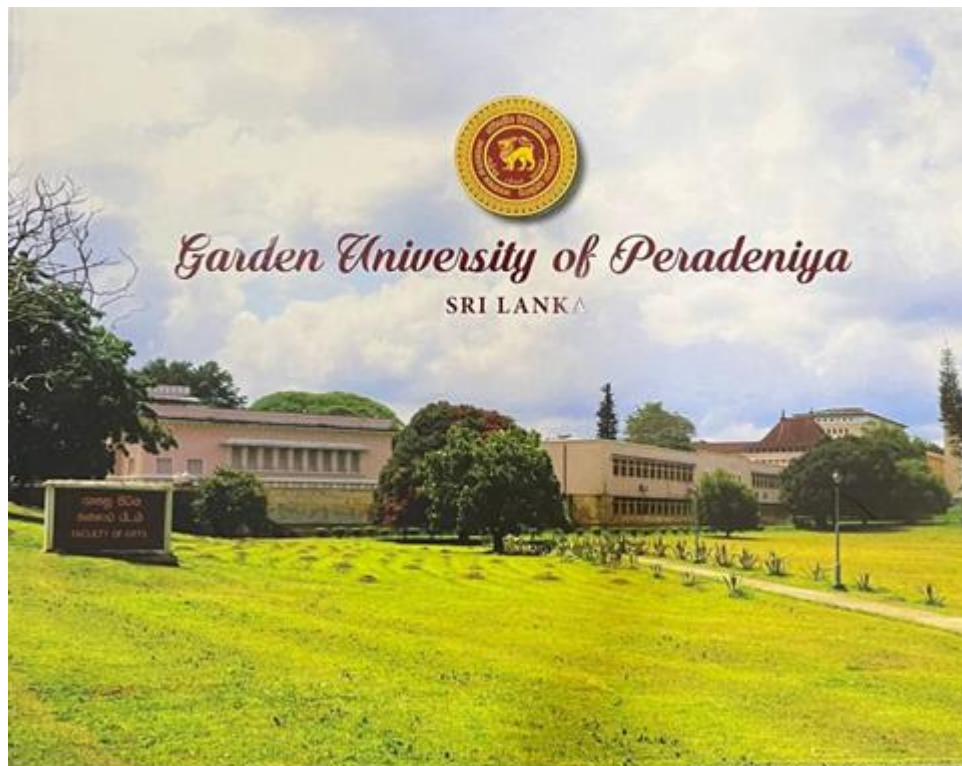
Historical Evolution of Love and Artistic Diversity in Sri Lankan Culture – Back to Hanthana 2026

The flagship cultural event “Back to Hanthana” will be presented on stage with the arrival of early spring on April 4, 2026. This signature gathering reflects our commitment to fostering engagement within the alumni community while offering a meaningful platform for cultural enrichment and entertainment for alumni, their families, and friends.

This year’s theme, “**Historical Evolution of Love and Artistic Diversity in Sri Lankan Culture**,” highlights the exceptional creative legacy of distinguished Sri Lankan artists and poets. The program will celebrate a wide spectrum of aesthetic traditions – ranging from literature and performance to music and theater - tracing how expressions of love, emotion, and cultural identity have evolved across time.

The evening’s presentation will feature renowned Sri Lankan poet, novelist, and public presenter **Mahinda Prasad Masimbula** whose dynamic stage presence will anchor the event. He will be complemented by the artistry of acclaimed vocalist, actress, theatrical performer, and actress **Indika Upamali**, together with talented members of the Peradeniya alumni family, delivering a rich and memorable cultural experience.

Back to Hanthana – 2026 promises an inspiring celebration of heritage, creativity, and community – an opportunity to honor our shared history while showcasing the artistic excellence nurtured within the Sri Lankan tradition. [Save the date and be part of this unforgettable experience.](#)



GENERAL MEETING – Alumni Association of the university of Peradeniya Greater Toronto Area & Suburbs

The University of Peradeniya Alumni Association - GTA and Suburbs held its General meeting on November 8th, 2025, at Renaissance by the Creek, Mississauga. The event attended by around 80 members provided the opportunity to review the past term and welcome new leadership.

Review of the Past Term

The meeting opened with greetings from Assistant Secretary Chatumal Perera, followed by Secretary Duminda Perera's comprehensive update on activities over the past 2 years. Members were reminded of the successful Town Hall sessions, the popular "Hanthana Whistles and Bells" and a range of wellnesses summer programs that strengthen community engagement. Treasurer Priyantha Kulasekara presented 2023-2025 financial report outlining the Association's final position.

Leadership Reflections

Outgoing President Ranjith Perera expressed gratitude for the continued support of the membership and highlighted collective achievements of the Board during its tenure.



Election of the New Board of Members

The election of office bearers was officiated by Dr Ajith Samarajeewa from Ottawa Chapter. Kamal Munasinghe was unanimously elected President, with Chatumal Perera elected as Secretary, all other new Board were confirmed by the membership. As new president was unable to attend, vice president Hasintha Kekulawala delivered his message. She thanked the outgoing Board for their service and emphasized the new Board's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

Constitutional Amendments

Upul Herath, Chair of Constitutional Amendments Committee presented proposals for amendments, all of which were unanimously approved.

Closing Remarks

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from incoming Secretary Chatumal Perera, who acknowledged the contributions of the outgoing Board and called for continuous support from all members as the new team begins its term.

Membership News

- ❖ Alumni members can e-transfer 2024 membership fees to the association via: peraalumnigta@gmail.com
(Full \$20, Associate \$10, Life \$200)
- ❖ Your active participation and engagement are essential to sustain and grow our Association.

Hanthana Night 2025

Dinner Dance with a Difference at Renaissance by the Creek Mississauga
Saturday November 8th, 2025

The biennial **Hanthana Night 2025** dinner dance brought together nearly 300 Peradeniya alumni families and well-wishers for an evening filled with music, elegance and fellowship.



A ward and Joyful Start

Pubudu Edirisinghe welcomed the gathering setting the tone for a night of celebration and camaraderie.



Special Highlights

A graceful performance by a Canadian ballet group added a unique touch to the event, delighting the audience and making the event more memorable.

Celebrating Peradeniya Style

The evening concluded with heartfelt togetherness, warm conversations and shared memories – reflecting the true Peradeniya spirit that continues to thrive with the Greater Toronto and Suburbs Alumni Community.

Entertainment that Never Stopped

The band Matrix, together with lively DJ kept the dance floor vibrant throughout the night, guests enjoyed continuous music, enthusiastic dancing and an atmosphere that remained energetic until the very end. Attendees were treated to a well-prepared dinner, excellent refreshments, and cash bar for responsible enjoyment - helping keep the evening relaxed and enjoyable for all.



BUS TRIP TO KINCARDINE – PERADENIYA SPIRIT AT LAKE HURON August 9th, 2025

The Alumni Association’s summer bus trip to Kincardine was a joyful celebration of togetherness, energy and the unmistakable Peradeniya spirit. From that moment on the Go-bus carpool in Brampton, the atmosphere was lively and nostalgic - reminiscent of classic university outings.

A Fun-filled Journey

The bus ride was a highlight on its own, featuring cheerful singing and spontaneous music sessions that set the perfect tone for the day. The return trip was even more vibrant, with “Huron Spirit” in full swing and a contagious energy that delighted everyone on board.



Beach Side Engagement

At Lake Huron, members enjoyed warm waters, fun water activities, and a friendly volleyball game that brought one together. Both seasoned swimmers and enthusiastic beginners made the most of the beautiful weather and stunning lakeside scenery.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make the day truly unforgettable—especially those who organized the event, kept the refreshments flowing, and added extra flavor with the delicious BBQ. Our talented musicians set the tone, leading the music and lifting spirits throughout the celebration. Members returned home with warm memories, renewed friendships, and a shared sense of pride—once again proving that the Peradeniya spirit shines brightly in the GTA and Suburbs.

Inter Alumni Cricket Tournament and Family Get Together July 5th, Earnscliffe Park



The annual Inter-alumni cricket tournament and family get-together brought alumni of six Sri Lankan universities and Institutions creating a vibrant day of sport, family fun and camaraderie at Earnscliffe ground, Brampton, nearly 200 participants attended, making it one of the most energetic gatherings of the year.

Joining young new faces to Peradeniya team is significant this year. All teams played exiting cricket throughout the tournament supported by lively cheering, music and warm spirit of friendship among alumni communities. The final match featured Peradeniya and Jayewardenepura in close contest game. With exceptional

effort and determination, Peradeniya team delivered a remarkable performance and proudly finished as runner-up.

Alumni Trail Walk 2025 – TERRA COTTA CONSERVATION AREA June 14, 2025

The Alumni Association kicked off its summer activities with a refreshing trail walk at the TERRA COTTA conservation Area, bringing together alumni families and friends for a day of outdoor enjoyment.

Participants choose between a 6 km long distance walk and 2 km shorter route, ensuring an enjoyable experience for both young members and seniors. The scenic landscape and peaceful surroundings offered a perfect backdrop for relaxation and connection.

Following the walk, attendees gathered to share refreshments, strengthening bonds within the community. The event was joyful, well attended and a wonderful opportunity to appreciate nature while celebrating the enduring Peradeniya spirit.



Brampton – Mississauga – Etobicoke Town Hall Meeting April 5th, 2025

The regional Town Hall meeting offered an excellent platform for newcomers to connect with the Peradeniya alumni community and for the association to welcome new members across GTA.

President Ranjith Perera opened the session by underscoring the value of regional gatherings in strengthening fellowship among Peradeniya peers, he also shared updates on past activities and outline plans for future events.

Participants enjoyed a potluck dinner and refreshments complemented by the warm and familiar Peradeniya musical spirit.

The evening concluded with renewed friendships, meaningful conversations and genuine sense of community capturing the true essence of Peradeniya experience.





Chandrarathne Bandara Wins Top Literary Awards – 2025

Peradeniya alumnus Chandrarathne Bandara has earned two Sri Lanka's highest literary distinctions for 2025, receiving both the **Swarna Pusthaka Award** and the **State Literary Award** for his novel **Piyasara Samaya**. These accolades highlight his longstanding contribution to literature and journalism over a career spanning nearly 35 years.

Bandara, a former professional journalist in Sri Lanka and current editor of the **Yathra** newspaper in Canada, has been recognized repeatedly throughout his literary journey. His debut novel **Meru** was shortlisted for a State Literary Award in 1992, and he won **D. R. Wijewardena Award** in 1993 for **Wanasapumala (Hostage City)**.

His rare achievement of winning the **Swarna Pusthaka Award twice** – Premaanismsa in 2022 and Piyasara Samaya in 2025 – cements his place among the most celebrated contemporary Sri Lankan authors.

With more than 20 published works, Chandrarathne Bandara continues to write actively. The English translation of Premaanismsa, which also won the **Vidyodaya and Godage National Awards**, is slated for publication in Canada, along with Tamil translation planned in India.



Summary of the Objectives of the Association

(Pursuant to ARTICLE THREE of the Constitution)

- ❖ Mobilize and drive alumni
- ❖ Support and promote University of Peradeniya
- ❖ Provides services and benefits
- ❖ Support professional and personal development of members
- ❖ Support Peradeniya Alumni newcomers to Canada
- ❖ Recognize achievements
- ❖ Communicate and interact
- ❖ Contribute to advancement of higher education in Sri Lanka
- ❖ The Association shall not engage or promote or participate in any political or religious activities or any social activity that can directly or indirectly lead to engagement, promotion or participation of any political or religious activity and/or conflict with the above objectives. Any exception will be evaluated by the board of management based on merits. However, this principle does not aim at restricting any individual choices.



Upcoming Events >>

- ❖ **Back to Hanthana: Saturday April 4th, 2026**
- ❖ **Inter Alumni Cricket Tournament: Saturday July 4th, 2026**
- ❖ **Day Trip to Kincardine Beach: Saturday August 22nd, 2026**



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