



# මාධ්‍ය නිවේදනය ஊடக வெளியீடு PRESS RELEASE



Tel : 011 2 386572 Fax : 011 2 3337  
ජනාධිපති මාධ්‍ය අංශය, ජනාධිපති කාර්යාලය, කොළඹ  
ஜனாதிபதி ஊடகப் பிரிவு, ஜனாதிபதி அலுவலகம், கொழும்பு  
President's Media Division, President's Office, Colombo

## **New milestone in the judiciary in the country**

- 06 new Judges appointed to Supreme Court
- New President for the Court of Appeal
- 14 new Judges to Court of Appeal

## **President pledges to support independence of the judiciary and ensures its functioning is free of politicization and other forms of interference**

Marking a new milestone in the judicial system of the country 21 new Judges to superior courts were sworn in before President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Six new Judges to the Supreme Court and 14 new Judges to the Court of Appeal took oaths before President Rajapaksa at the Presidential Secretariat today (1).

### **Judges appointed to the Supreme Court**

1. Hon. Justice A. H. M. Dilip Nawaz
2. Hon. Justice Kumudini Wickremasinghe
3. Hon. Justice Anthony Lalith Shiran Gooneratne
4. Hon. Justice Janak de Silva
5. Hon. Justice Arachchige Achala Uthpalavarna Wengappuli
6. Hon. Justice Mahinda Abeysinghe Samayawardhena

Justice Arjuna Obeyesekera was sworn in as the President of the Court of Appeal.

### **Judges appointed to the Court of Appeal**

1. Ms Menaka Wijesundera
2. Mr D. N. Samarakoon
3. Mr M Prasantha de Silva
4. Mr M. T. M. Laffar
5. Mr C. Pradeep Keerthisinghe
6. Mr Sampath B Abayakoon
7. Mr M. S. K. B. Wijeratne
8. Mr S. U. B. Karalliyadde
9. Mr R. Gurusinghe
10. Mr G. A. D. Ganepola
11. Mrs K. K. A. V. Swarnadhipathi

12. Mr Mayadunne Corea
13. Mr Prabakaran Kumararatnam
14. Mr W. N. N. P. Iddawala

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa addressing the gathering pledged to support independence of the judiciary and ensured its functioning is free of politicization and other forms of interference.

“The judicial cadre of both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal has remained static since 1978. Although the necessity of increasing the number of judges in the superior courts has been mooted several times in the past, the number of judges in both courts has remained the same for over forty years. There have been many advancements in the law and litigation has increased exponentially in this time. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of judges”.

The efficient administration of justice is not only important in terms of upholding the rule of law, it is also vital to the economic development of this nation President said adding that reliable, efficient and effective dispute resolution through the justice system will foster the nation’s progress.

Chief Justice Jayantha C Jayasooriya, Secretary to the President P. B. Jayasundera, Principal Advisor to the President Lalith Weeratunga were also present.

### **Full text of the speech at the swearing in of Judges**

- Honourable Chief Justice of Sri Lanka
- Honourable Justices of the Supreme Court
- Honourable President of the Court of Appeal
- Honourable Justices of the Court of Appeal
- Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to address Your Lordships on the occasion of your elevation to the superior courts of our country. First of all, let me wish your Lordships a very successful tenure. In my view, this is the first time in judicial history that a mass swearing in of this magnitude has taken place. I consider it a signal honour to administer oaths to such a galaxy of men and women so learned in the law.

The judicial cadre of both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal has remained static since 1978. Although the necessity of increasing the number of judges in the superior courts has been mooted several times in the past, the number of judges in both courts has remained the same for over forty years. There have been many advancements in the law and litigation has increased exponentially in this time. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of judges.

It is therefore a matter of pride that our Government has redressed this long felt need through the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. Amongst the many reasons that prompted this change is the perennial problem of the law's delays.

There is a popular saying that "Justice delayed is Justice denied". Unfortunately, it is clear that while more and more cases were being instituted in the superior courts, there was insufficient judicial manpower to hear them fast and dispense justice. This was not a situation conducive to public confidence, nor to the proper functioning of the republic.

The efficient administration of justice is not only important in terms of upholding the rule of law, it is also vital to the economic development of this nation. Reliable, efficient and effective dispute resolution through the justice system will foster the nation's progress.

At present, it takes a long time to enforce a contract in Sri Lanka. We have been ranked 161<sup>st</sup> out of 189 countries for the enforcement of contracts, and the Sri Lankan legal system is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 8 in South Asia. These indicators must improve.

The Government understands the importance of a strong, efficient and independent justice system, and it is deeply aware of the need to enhance its capacity. Today's solemn swearing in ceremony took place against this backdrop, and as a key step taken by the Government to redress this issue.

Access to justice today is a fundamental right. It is the sacred duty and obligation of the state to provide an enabling environment to make that right real and not imaginary. Access to justice must be transparent if the people are to have confidence and faith in the judicial system.

Whether we perform our role within the Executive, the Legislature or the Judiciary, we are all custodians of that faith. We hold our office in trust for the people. As judges, the people look to you to uphold the immense dignities of your high office, to discharge your duties with integrity and independence, and to ensure that justice is dispensed equitably to all.

In this context, it is a matter of some concern that there has been an onslaught on the dignity and independence of legal systems. I am deeply committed to supporting the independence of the judiciary and ensuring that its functioning is free of politicization and other forms of interference. The judiciary must also rise and use its powers to fight this menace. Freedom of speech is not a license to defame and malign anyone, least of all judges.

We as a Government stand prepared to support you in every way necessary to achieve the objective of administering an efficient, equitable and independent judicial system. This commitment applies to the uplifting of the dilapidated courtrooms throughout the country, assistance in digitising laborious manual processes to enhance efficiency, and providing greater funding for training of personnel in the judicial system, together with other identified requirements.

Through this, and through your efficient and judicious discharging of your grave responsibilities, I am confident that we will be able to achieve a lasting beneficial transformation of the judicial system in Sri Lanka.

President's Media Division

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