

Profile of Hon. Susantha Punchinilame

Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development

Hon. Susantha Punchinilame was born on 6th April 1961 in Ratnapura, the ancestral city of several of his generations as the eldest son of late Hon. G.V. Punchinilame who was a former Parliamentarian, Deputy Minister, Chief Minister, popular philanthropist and a businessman and Mrs. Kamala Deheragoda who is the only daughter of one of two Ceylonese Police Superintendants. Mr. Punchinilame had his primary education at Ferguson College, Ratnapura and secondary education at St. Thomas' Preparatory School, Colombo 03 and St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. As a school boy he was very famous amongst others as a leader with heroic qualities who stood against injustice and step motherly treatment caused to innocent fellow students.

Hon. Susantha Punchinilame is a gem merchant as well as a landed proprietor. He entered into active politics in the year 1988 during an era of extreme turbulence. Fear psychosis prevailed in the country due to brutal activities of a certain group which caused several politicians to resign from their posts. During this era he fearlessly took the decision to enter into politics on behalf of the people of Ratnapura.

Born in a sacred area dedicated to God Saman, he selected a partner from Kelaniya which is also a city of historical importance. On 18th January 1990, Hon. Susantha Punchinilame married Miss Lasitha Perera, the eldest daughter of Mr. Kapila Perera and Mrs. Greta Perera, an elite business family from Colombo. She was educated at Sirimavo Bandaranaike Balika Vidyalaya and was honoured by the title "*Deshakeerthi, Sasana Mamaka, Samaja Subhasadaka, Janijana Prasadani, Veera Matha*". This couple is blessed with two exemplary children, daughter Akshari and son Seniya, who are currently pursuing their higher studies.

His beloved father who had always been guidance throughout his life, passed away suddenly on 18th July 1993. The vacuum created by this sad incident within the Punchinilame family was filled by Hon. Susantha Punchinilame upon his victory at the General Elections held on 16th August 1994.

Since then Hon. Punchinilame won every election and held the posts of Minister of Small Holder Development, Deputy Minister of Rural Economic Development, Deputy Minister of Janatha Estate Management and Development and Minister of Nation Building respectively. Presently he holds the post of Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development.

During his tenure as the Minister of Small Holder Development in the years 2001 to 2004, he made a tremendous sacrifice to revitalize the tea industry which was in state of collapse. He made a financial contribution towards the formation of Tea Shakthi Fund and thereby for the first time in history he took steps to pay dividends to the Tea Small Holders who were in the verge of losing the monies invested. If not for the decisions taken by him, however within the strict Economic Policies of the Government by revamping Tea Shakthi factories by importing latest machinery enabling them to compete with the private sector tea factories and enhancing the necessary services and other facilities for tea plantation, there could have been a collapse of small scale tea industry.

Hon. Susantha Punchinilame who holds the Post of Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development since 23rd April 2010 is giving priority to the development of Northern and Eastern Provinces where the lives of people were collapsed.

Hon. Susantha Punchinilame as the Chief Organiser of Sri Lanka Freedom Party for Trincomalee Electorate and Co-Chairman of Trincomalee District Co-coordinating Committee is dedicated to the development of Trincomalee District. Hon. Punchinilame, who has a thorough knowledge of ethnic and religious anomaly in the area, dedicates himself to have well balanced development concept. He is the president of the Dayaka Sabha of historic *Seruwila Mangala Raja Maha Viharaya*. In appreciation of his services rendered to Nation, Religion and Society, *Sri Kalyanawansa Maha Nikaya* honoured him with *Sri Sannasa* in year 2009 and he was awarded the honorary degree of “*Samaja Subhasadhana, Dheshabimani, Manava Hithavadi, Asarana Sarana, Vishva Keerthi, Sri Janaranjana, Deshamanya, Sammana Acharya (Honourary Doctorate)*” on 01st September 2011 with the approval of Thrinikayaka Uththareethara Sanga Sabhawa.