



# RSSL NEWS

May/June 2009 | THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

## NOTE JUNE MEETING CHANGE

**The General Meeting for the Month of June 2009 will be held on SUNDAY the 28th at 10.00 a.m. at Otters to enable outstation members to attend. The venue is the Balcony Hall of the Otter Aquatic Club 380 / 1 Baudhaloka Mawatha Colombo 7. It's not far from the BMICH towards Borella. at the Wijerama Rd / Baudhaloka Mawata junction.**

**The Meetings for July: 29<sup>th</sup> July : As always the last Wednesday of the month if not otherwise notified. We have also made arrangements to provide tea, so come for the meeting and enjoy tea with us while talking Amateur Radio.**

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Please note that unless otherwise notified, monthly General Meetings will be held at Otters Aquatic Club at 6.00 P.M. on the **last Wednesday of the month**. Please also monitor the RSSL net regularly on 145.625 MHz at 0900 P.M. for RSSL announcements. You can contact any Council member if you need to verify the date of the meeting. Membership and ID Card applications can be obtained at the meetings. Membership renewals are also accepted by the Treasurer at the monthly meetings.

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### **RADIO AMATEUR EXAMINATION 2009: and onwards: NEW REGULATIONS FOR AMATEUR RADIO ISSUED BY THE TRCSL.**

#### **EDITORIAL:**

The DGT TRCSL issued a Gazette Notification dated 12<sup>th</sup> February, in effect, an announcement calling in for applications for the examination to grant an Amateur Radio License.

As mentioned before in the April Newsletter in future there will be 3 classes of licensing.

1. Novice which will grant VHF, and limited HF operation of 3.5-3.6, 21000-21200, 28000-25.5000 operation. Call sign 4S5XXX (Three letter suffixes)
2. General Class as before Call sign 4S6XXX
3. Advanced Class as before requires 5WPM Morse. Call sign 4S7XXX

**It has to be clearly stated that the RSSL at no point agreed to the above changing of regulations simply because the stated, discussed and voted stand taken at a special general meeting was that no change is required.**

In 2004 Mr. Helasiri Ranatunge Deputy Director TRCSL who oversees Amateur Radio, even

without consulting the RSSL thought it fit to ask public input regarding Amateur Radio in their web site promising to list all such responses in their web site, **but never carried out his promise and the document too disappeared from the web site.** The RSSL sent in a detailed submission giving reasons as to why it was not advisable to change, as it was the view of the members after proper resolutions and voting had taken place. In addition 62 Amateurs signed a petition and gave the DGTRCSL saying "No Change Required"

The issue was in cold storage until suddenly without any indication or responding to any of the submissions the Regulatory Commission decided to remove the Morse Requirement other than for the Advanced Class examination somewhere last year. **The RSSL was not informed despite a clear minute by the DG TRCSL stating that interested parties should be informed.** The RSSL has never received any written information regarding any of these changes despite many written submissions by the RSSL to the Deputy Director in charge. The simple notice changing the Morse requirement was about to be gazetted when the RSSL found out and pointed out that by doing so, the TRCSL would put themselves into embarrassment due to many contradictions in the proposed changes.

While the RSSL never agreed to the changes, it was gracious enough to advise the TRCSL as to how they could get about it without embarrassment if they wished to go ahead with changes. The RSSL when it realized that for some strange sinister reason, best known to the TRC, was determined to go ahead with changing the requirements despite the notification of the National Body's opposition, the RSSL clearly stated that to safeguard the interests of existing license holders and their fundamental rights, that a different and distinct call sign should be issued and recommended 4P5XX Novice, 4P6XX general class, and 4P7XX advanced Class. However, again for some sinister reason the TRC decided to issue 4S5XXX, 4S6XXX and 4S7XXX as the new call signs. It is believed that the TRC is under the wrong notion that 'S' stands for Sri Lanka. The TRCSL also doesn't seem to understand that a mere 3 letter suffix is no distinction between a no

code and code class license when many countries resort to 3 letters when they run out of 2 letter suffixes. Such is the ignorance of the TRCSL regarding matters of Amateur Radio.

Only less than 30 countries out of nearly 200 member ITU countries have eliminated the Morse requirement for the issuance of a General Class license. **All the other 170 countries will refuse to accept the new General Class license as a valid General Class license in reciprocal arrangements. Besides, by eliminating the opportunity for Sri Lankan citizens to take up a license on par with the world they have been deprived of their fundamental rights.** Today the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is very strict about granting clearance for equipment and certain people have been refused equipment clearance though licensed stating security reasons. As such the RSSL can not understand the urgency and the secrecy involved in changing regulations. **For whose benefit is it being done on whose advise?** There are serious allegations of corruption, bribing of officials by equipment manufacturers in the international arena to eliminate Morse to increase the number of Radio Amateurs. We do not suggest that such happenings are taking place in Sri Lanka, but questions are being asked. This is a time when officials and even Ministers have taken short-sighted arbitrary decisions which have been overturned by the Supreme Court. It is very clear that the decision of the TRCSL is mala-fide and is open to serious question. **When the Members of the Commission were asked to change the regulations was it made clear that the RSSL was opposed to it? And only 25 countries had dropped the Morse requirement & the majority of them being CEPT (EU) Countries? And Radio Amateurs in SL were concerned that the SL License would be made inferior in the eyes of the rest of the world? Did the Commission know that 62 licensed radio amateurs in SL also submitted a petition that no change be made?** And yet the TRCSL recommended change? For whom and under whose advise? These are serious questions that are being asked. We strongly feel that the Director General is being misled, misinformed through sheer lack of knowledge of amateur radio by who ever is so determined to carry through change.

### **NEW 3 Letter Novice General / Advance Class licenses**

**In addition to the above the TRCSL started to issue General Class Licenses to examination candidates who have not completed part two (practical Morse) of examinations which was a gazetted**

**requirement, where candidates signed a declaration to abide by the rules. On whose authority or recommendation is this happening? Is it legal? Is the DGT aware of the correct situation or has he been misled? Has he been ill advised? The RSSL pointed out the above to the DGT/TRCSL via Fax on the 11<sup>th</sup> May and asked for an urgent meeting to clarify the position of the RSSL. The TRCSL has still not responded. Where in the world are candidates who pass and who fail to complete the same examination given the same benefit? AND FOR WHOSE BENEFIT? This the Council of Management finds to be a disgraceful situation.**

**The issue is not whether Morse is eliminated as a requirement or not but whether correct procedures are being followed. We feel even if Morse is eliminated as a requirement it can not be done retrospectively making examinations of this country a mockery.**

It is no secret that a dozen or so radio amateurs (Novice) who are unable to pass the Morse Test is behind this move. It's a shameful exercise by people who can not be man enough or woman enough (as school girls and retired men have passed Morse in addition to 30 others in the last 2 years and who sat the same examination under the same syllabus and conditions). These very same people are going around urging those who have passed the theory paper to rush to the TRC to get upgraded without telling them the background to the issue. A few unsuspecting novice radio amateurs have been duped by these self serving people to get upgraded under these shameful conditions. When the RSSL opposed this the TRCSL's website came up with a hurriedly got up text, but it does not state from when, retrospective from when these new upgrades are allowed. Even if it is legal (which the RSSL challenges) **Does the TRC and examinations department possess records going back to the first examination conducted to grant an Amateur radio license, so that even someone who only passed the theory paper in 1956 for example now can ask for a General Class license? Will the DG use his discretion and award posthumously licenses to those decent dignified ladies and gentlemen? If not, this is a grave injustice to those who respected legitimate conditions of examinations. We do not feel that the DG TRCSL has the moral right & the powers of discretion to grant licenses en mass to candidates who have not completed the examination and give them the identical privileges as those who respected examination conditions to pass the examination.**

The RSSL took the stand against changing regulations after many meetings and finally a special general meeting where adequate time and notice were given and the vote was unanimous. If these same members wanted change they should have got a clear vote to change. Having lost such support, to use other means to undermine the RSSL and Amateur Radio is a serious

situation about which I as secretary must inform the membership. These same people have gone from house to house, misinforming members and trying to canvas signatures to support this action by the TRCSL. That is not the ethical way to seek change. The RSSL's Articles clearly state procedures which members can follow without resorting to create disharmony in the RSSL and bring disrepute in the eyes of the public on the Radio Amateur Community and the RSSL in conflict with the TRCSL to gain immoral benefits for a few. The majority of Radio Amateurs take pride in their call signs and stand tall anywhere in the world as gained by legitimate means and not by default. These others will carry their call signs for ever as a clear indication as to how they obtained the calls and an appropriate stigma will go with it.. **These same people state that the TRCSL doesn't recognize the RSSL. Then who does the TRCSL recognise? A pack of bootleggers?** The RSSL is an incorporated body registered under the company's act, pays income tax, is recognized as the sole representative by the International Amateur Radio Union, and from its inception has had as its patrons the Minister of Telecommunications and the Director General Dept. of Telecommunications preceded by the TRCSL. The 1990 regulations were drafted by the RSSL. The RSSL was awarded international awards for its work in the Tsunami and personally thanked by the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka who is now our Executive President. Who then is worthier than the RSSL to speak and represent Amateur Radio in Sri Lanka?. There appears to be something really wrong and irregular. Someone who advises the DGT TRCSL doesn't know what he is talking about down to the Gazette notification which has grammatical errors. What a pathetic state we have reached today from the times when we had Engineers at the TRCSL and Dept of Telecommunications who were also Radio Amateurs and knew their grammar and amateur radio.

The RSSL is not the private property of the Board of Management but is bound by the decisions taken by the majority membership. As long as the majority of members come together to formulate a policy the Council is bound by that decision. That is the dignity and moral right of the citizens of this country. Public Servants are answerable for their actions and whether they have the right of using their discretion has to be guided by the laws of the land and proper procedures. No one has the right or authority to do so arbitrarily as clearly demonstrated by actions of Executive Presidents, Ministers, let alone Directors General which have been overturned by the Supreme Court of this Country as unlawful.

Let me summarise the above for your digestion.

1. It is wrong to change regulations, deliberately not consulting the National Body of the Country representing Amateur Radio. WE ASK WHY?
2. If the TRCSL still wishes to change regulations (for whose benefit we do not know) then it has to be from a date and not retrospectively.
3. To Grant Novice/General Class/Advanced Class licenses applying the new regulations to candidates who did not complete the

examination is wrong and is an injustice to those who completed the examination..

4. If regulations are changed those candidates who did not complete the examination they sat, have to be given a date to complete the Morse/CW test. The alternative for those who do not complete is to be asked to sit the examination under the new regulations and pass. **Such examinations should be under a revised syllabus.**
5. If the TRCSL wants to save face and keep the dignity of the Amateur Radio License in SL then let it issue a new class of license(Technician Class) with at least a reduction in transmitter power or reduced privileges to those who have been granted a license under default 4S5XXX, 4S6XXX and 4S7XXX in the last two months despite objections by the RSSL.
6. The RSSL demands that until internationally the majority of countries eliminate Morse Code for a General Class License the citizens of Sri Lanka should not be deprived that opportunity of getting a General Class License with Morse Code. Every Sri Lankan who passes the Novice/General/Advance Class theory papers should be given the opportunity to take up a CW/Morse test. The RSSL has helped the TRCSL to conduct the Morse test free of charge in the last many years.
7. Why was 5WPM Morse retained for Advanced Class if the TRCSL thought Morse is not necessary for General Class which enjoys identical privileges other than for power of transmitter? Then shouldn't the no code new General Class also have at least less power privileges by the same token? The RSSL believes that change is required to meet changing world situations, but they have to be well thought of, properly done and not by ignorant incompetent officials as they have clearly demonstrated so by their own actions and subsequent cover up actions which have brought disrepute to the office of the DG TRCSL.. They have created a right royal mess of amateur radio licensing by their ignorant and high handed actions. There are many discrepancies that have resulted by their actions.

The Radio Society of Sri Lanka is your society and works for the benefit of Amateur Radio in Sri Lanka, for the benefit of all and not a few self seeking people. Its Council Is elected by the membership and governed by such resolutions as passed by members and not on the whims of officials. It is time to take a stand for what is right and not for personal gain and destroy the dignity of Amateur Radio in SL in the eyes of the world. It is up to the members of the RSSL to advise the Council as to what action they wish it to take to safeguard the rights and the dignity of their license in the eyes of the world. It is the right of every citizen of this country.

**RSSL CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNALLY DISPLACES PEOPLE IN THE NORTH**

At the May General meeting a unanimous resolution was passed to donate goods worth Rs. 10,000 towards the relief fund of the ITN to represent the members of the RSSL

**DONATION OF LAND TO BUILD HOUSES FOR DISABLED SOULDIERS**

We feel it is our duty to recognise a great act of "Dana" by one of our very senior members 4S7CF Calvin when he donated land belonging to him towards building houses for disabled troops. Calvin forwarded some fine photographs taken by the authorities at a special ceremony, and we understand that a newspaper article is to follow. Congratulations Calvin. It is not everyone who has the strength of character to give to others.

**CONTEST INFORMATION- de 4S7NI Nishantha**

Canada Day Contest -- CW/Phone from 0000Z-2359Z Jul 1. Exchange: send RS(T) and serial number. Logs due Jul 31 to canadaday@rac.ca.

Venezuelan Independence Day Contest -- CW/SSB, from 0000Z Jul 4-2400Z Jul 5. Exchange: RS(T) plus serial number. Work any station, not just YV. Logs due Aug 31 to [contestyv@cantv.net](mailto:contestyv@cantv.net).

IARU HF World Championship -- from 1200Z Jul 11-1200Z Jul 12 (see Apr QST, p 102, or [www.iaru.org/contest.html](http://www.iaru.org/contest.html)).

CQ WW VHF Contest -- all modes from 1800Z Jul 18-2100Z Jul 19. Frequencies: 50 and 144 MHz bands. Exchange: Call sign and 4 digit Maidenhead grid. Logs in Cabrillo format due Sep 1 to [cqvhf@cqww-vhf.com](mailto:cqvhf@cqww-vhf.com).

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RSGB Islands-On-The-Air Contest -- CW/SSB from 1200Z Jul 25-1200Z Jul 26. Exchange: RS(T) and serial number, Island stations add IOTA reference number. Logs due Sep 1 to [iota.logs@rsgbhfcc.org](mailto:iota.logs@rsgbhfcc.org).

**Procedure involved concerning the import of ham equipment: If a licensed Radio Amateur wants to import equipment the following steps have to be adopted:**

- 1. Get the specifications pages and circuit diagram of the equipment and submit it to the TRC along with a request for clearance. If the equipment is amateur band and within power limitations of your license. TRC will submit your application to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) On receiving permission you will be notified & you have to apply for an import license.**

- 2. If you intend hand carrying equipment you need to apply for clearance but don't need an import license but a letter from TRC to customs to release it.**

E-mail newsletters: If anyone likes to receive the newsletter and rssl notices by e-mail you are welcome to contact the editor at [victorg@swt.lk](mailto:victorg@swt.lk)

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