

Estate pay hike gazette issued

The gazette notification on increasing the daily wage of Estate Workers to Rs. 1000 was published yesterday by the Secretary to the Ministry of Labour.

The daily wage of plantation workers will thus be increased with effect from March 5. This decision was effected through the Wages Boards.

Commissioner General of Labour Prabath Chandrakerthi told the media that the decision to increase the daily wage of plantation workers was adopted by both Wages Boards for the Tea and Rubber Growing and Manufacturing Trade and was approved by Labour Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva.

This will comprise Rs.900 as the Minimum daily wage and Rs.100 as a Budgetary Relief Allowance. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

PCOI RECOMMENDATIONS ON EASTER SUNDAY TERROR ATTACKS

MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT FOR PERPETRATORS

676 PEOPLE ARRESTED, 202 IMPRISONED, 66 DETAINED

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The Government will implement the recommendations made by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) into the Easter Sunday attacks and all those directly or indirectly responsible will be apprehended, Public Security Minister Rear Admiral (Retired) Dr. Sarath Weerasekera told Parliament yesterday.

Addressing Parliament yesterday during the debate on the Report of the

PCoI appointed to investigate the Easter Sunday attacks, he noted that the Government will bring about the maximum punishment against the perpetrators of the attacks to mete out justice for the innocent victims.

"So far 676 people have been arrested in connection with the Easter Sunday attacks on April 21, 2019. Out of them, 202 have been imprisoned and 66 are being detained. Although 408 of them have been released on bail, investigations

are still being carried out on them," he briefed the House.

"We also emphasize that all children in Sri Lanka should be educated from the age of 5 to 16 in accordance with the Government Education Policy and all schools which do not comply with this order should be banned. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



Speaker postpones Motion for Leave of Absence for Ranjan

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena postponed the Motion for Leave of Absence for MP Ranjan Ramanayake until the Appeal Court verdict is given on the motion filed by MP Ramanayake.

He said that the Motion for leave of absence for Ramanayake cannot be accepted at this point, until the Appeal Court decision is given.

The Opposition accused the Speaker of being biased as he had postponed the motion for leave of absence for Ramanayake presented by MP Lakshman Kiriella. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



The newly edited Hindu Encyclopaedia was launched parallel to the Maha Shivaratri Day with the participation of Prime Minister and Buddha Sasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Chief Guest at Temple Trees on Tuesday evening. The Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs Department has edited the Encyclopaedia which contains 12 Volumes. The Encyclopaedia was started in 1988. Prime Minister Rajapaksa presented the newly edited Encyclopaedia first to Hindu religious leaders. Parallel to the event, 50 selected Kovils were granted Rs 50,000 each to celebrate the Maha Shivaratri Day under the health guidelines. *Picture courtesy Prime Minister's Media Unit*

Over 700,000 Sri Lankans receive AstraZeneca jab No serious side effects reported so far

RUKSHANA RIZWIE

Over 700,000 Sri Lankans have received the AstraZeneca jab also known as Covishield as of yesterday. However no serious side

effects or fatalities have been reported so far despite the fear over immunizations, epidemiologist Dr. Samitha Ginige told a media briefing. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Easter blasts: IGP directed to probe five suspects

DILSHAN THARAKA

Attorney General Dappula de Livera has directed the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to investigate five suspects who were mentioned in the final Report of the Presidential **▶ TO PAGE 02**

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AG directs IGP to probe import of sword consignment

DILSHAN THARAKA

Attorney General Dappula de Livera has directed the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to conduct investigations into the import of swords, daggers & other such weapons into the

country before and after the Easter Sunday terror attacks.

Coordinating Officer to the Attorney General, State Counsel Nishara Jayaratne said that the directive was given in relation to the Writ Appli-

cation filed by Colombo Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith.

She further said the Attorney General also directed the IGP to take necessary action against the suspects in accordance with the law. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Over 1,000 SEC employees recruited outside approved cadre between 2015 and 2019

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

One thousand and forty six employees (1,046) had been recruited to the State Engineering Corporation (SEC) outside the approved cadre between 2015 and 2019, said Rural Housing and Construction and Building Material Industries State Minister Indika Anuruddha yesterday.

Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa was the Housing and Construction Minister during the period under question.

He added the approved cadre for the institution is 2,339 and by December 31, 2015 there had been 2,524 permanent employees and only 65 casual employees.

State Minister Anuruddha added since then, these 1,046 casual and contract employees have been recruited under the concept of 'all persons to security and short persons to the labourers' pool'.

He also said that it was revealed that most of them are from the Hambantota district. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Hirunika granted bail after surrendering to Court

DILSHAN THARAKA

Former UNP MP Hirunika Premachandra was released on bail after she surrendered to the Colombo High Court yesterday.

The Colombo High Court earlier yesterday issued a warrant on former UNP Parliamentarian Hirunika Premachandra for not appearing before the Court over the case of her alleged involvement in the abduction of a youth using a Land Rover Defender vehicle. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



'Rewatha' killed by electric fence, suspect arrested

Anuradhapura Additional Corr. AMILA PRABATH WANASINGHE

A suspect (48) has been arrested by the Wildlife Officers in connection with the death of the giant Tusker 'Rewatha'.

Officers at the Ganewalpola Wildlife Office said the suspect is a resident of Kekirawa. He was to be produced before the Kekirawa Magistrate's Court yesterday. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



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Two arrested with 68 Kgs of heroin

The Police yesterday arrested two suspects in Deiyandara, Matara with 68 Kilogrammes of heroin.

Police Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said the arrests were made during an operation conducted in Denagama in the Deiyandara Police area by the Matara Divisional Crime Detective Bureau.

The suspects were arrested following the search of a car, which was thereafter seized. A 32-year-old man from Katana, Negombo, and a 38-year-old woman from Kandy were arrested. Further investigations are being conducted.

"It has been observed that areas such as Weligama, Midigama, Matara, Imaduwa, and Gandara are becoming a hub of heroin distribution in the country. Therefore, operations will continue and stern action taken against the perpetrators," he said.

Rishad lodges CID complaint against Wimal

All Ceylon Makkal Congress (ACMC) Leader and Samagi Jana Balawegaya MP Rishad Bathiudeen yesterday lodged a complaint at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) alleging that Industries Minister Wimal Weerawansa had made "defamatory allegations" against

him. He requested the CID to investigate the matter. MP Bathiudeen said Minister Weerawansa had stated on March 9 that his brother had called Zahran.

"In response, I wish to say that I, Rishad Bathiudeen and my brother, Riyaj Bathiudeen, have never in our

lives, for any reason whatsoever, contacted Zahran Hashim who was involved in the Easter attacks. I feel it is unfair and unjust for Wimal Weerawansa to make such a false and misleading statement of this nature," Bathiudeen said in his letter.

No serious side... From page 01

Dr. Ginige was speaking at the first ever media dialogue hosted by the Media Centre for National Development (MCND) which was held yesterday at the Government Information Department.

"The side effects in keeping with what is common for any vaccine are to be expected post-inoculation. There are zero reported fatal casualties as a direct result of the vaccine," he said.

He added the data from the Epidemiology Unit suggests that there could be a correlation between the decline in COVID-19 cases and the rise in numbers that have been vaccinated. However, it is too early to confirm because it cannot be proven. "The monitoring process strin-

gently collates data on every positive testing of COVID-19 vaccinated citizens and follow up on the situation," he said. When asked of the optimal time frame to receive the second dose of the vaccine he recommended that according to data, the optimal window to receive the second dose is 10-12 weeks after the first. This method has been adopted in several countries.

Meanwhile Senior Advisor to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Lalith Weeratunga who also spoke on the panel said that money was the least concern of the Government and that the vaccination programme has been facilitated by friendly countries, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank on account of the human-

itarian need. "Currently, it costs approx Rs.1000 per person but an existing Treasury Fund is being utilised," Lalith Weeratunga said. When questioned on an alleged list of individuals who were supposedly deemed as being Very Important Persons, he dismissed the allegation adding that every Grama Niladhari Divisional Secretariat which serves the public is a VIP centre for the Government. "There are no VIP centres or lists, everyone is important to us. For non-senior citizens, the distribution of the vaccine is on a first come, first served basis and no partiality will be shown in its dispensation."

He also added the President reaffirms his gratitude to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the

Measures to repatriate more Lankans stranded in Kuwait

IRANGIKA RANGE

The Government has taken steps to bring back stranded Sri Lankans in Kuwait who are being housed in a temporary detention facility and a centre run by the Sri Lankan Embassy there.

Accordingly, the first batch of 100 workers had returned to Sri Lanka by Kuwait Jazeera Airways on Monday. The repatriation process was initiated

based on the request made by both Ministers Namal Rajapaksa and Prasanna Ranatunga from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Accordingly, 148 Sri Lankans at the detention centres in Kuwait, 160 Sri Lankans at immigration detention centres and another 250 Sri Lankans detained at a Police station are awaiting repatriation. Ministers Rajapaksa

and Ranatunga had intervened to seek the repatriation of Sri Lankans in Kuwait on the request made by the SLPP branch in Kuwait.

Around 6,000 Sri Lankans have registered with the Embassy to return to Sri Lanka and 3,221 of them have already returned to the country. So far, around 80,000 Sri Lankan migrant workers have been repatriated from a number of countries.

Charge Sheets against 12 SLFP PS members

MAHINDA P. LIYANAGE,
Galle Central Special Corr.

Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) General Secretary Dayasiri Jayasekara has issued charge sheets against 12 members of the Pradeshiya Sabha representing the SLFP in the Galle District, Galle District Leader of the SLFP and Galle District MP Shan Wijelal de Silva told the media.

Wijayal de Silva stated that they have been charged with acting in an indiscipline manner and not acting in accordance with the party's decisions during the last General Election.

"The General Secretary of the party has instructed the members of these Pradeshiya Sabhas to answer the charges within 07 days," the MP further said. A female member of the Galle Munic-

ipal Council, two members of the Nelawa Pradeshiya Sabha, four members of the Imaduwa and Habaraduwa Pradeshiya Sabhas, one member of the Niyagama Pradeshiya Sabha, two members of the Karandeniya Pradeshiya Sabha and a member of the Welivitiya Pradeshiya Sabha have been served with the respective charge sheets.

Estate pay hike... From page 01

All estate owners and Plantation Management Companies have been instructed to ensure that the Rs.1,000 pay hike is provided to estate workers from the stipulated date.

Over 1,000 SEC... From page 01

He added that the excessive cadre is a burden to the State Engineering Corporation. He made these observations in response to a query made by Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MP Amarakeerthi Athukorala during the round of questions for Oral Answers.

AG directs IGP to... From page 01

Through this petition, Colombo Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith is seeking an order in the nature of a Writ of Mandamus directing the IGP and the CID Director to conduct an inquire into the importation of the several consignments of swords and other weapons into the country, as well as the individuals and entities involved in the incidents.

'Rewatha' killed... From page 01

The largest tusker to roam the Kala Wewa Forest Reserve known as 'Rewatha' was found dead on Tuesday near a cultivation at Aliyawetunuwewa in Kekirawa. The postmortem conducted by Anuradhapura, Pandulagama Veterinarian Dr Chandana Jayasinghe found that the cause of the death was electrocution. It is suspected that the animal had been electrocuted after coming into contact with an electric fence set-up in an improper manner in the Kala Wewa Forest Reserve to protect Chena cultivations.

Wildlife officers said the Tusker might have been roaming the area in search of food. The electric fence has been constructed by a private party.

The Tusker was about nine feet in height and 45 years old. Its pair of tusks was about three and half feet in length. 'Rewatha' was popular among tourists who came to Kala Wewa and Ritigala. Further investigations continue.

Easter blasts:... From page 01

Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) probing the Easter Sunday Terror Attacks that took place on April 21, 2019.

Accordingly, investigations will be carried out into Abu Hind, Ahamed Thalib Lukman Thalib, Lukman Thalib Ahmed alias Abu Abdulla, Rimzan and Mahendran Pulasthini alias Sara Jasmine who were named in the 17th chapter in the PCoI Final Report.

Coordinating Officer to the Attorney General State Counsel Nishara Jayaratne said that the Attorney General briefed His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith about the progress of the legal matters and investigations pertaining to the Easter Sunday attacks at a meeting held on Monday.

During the meeting, the Attorney General stressed the importance and the need to study all evidence recorded by the PCoI during its proceedings and informed His Eminence that the final report of PCoI was focused on the individuals who failed to prevent the attacks and it did not specifically mention information about the real 'masterminds', conspirators and individuals who directly and indirectly aided and abetted the blasts, she said.

She said a special team of 12 legal officers of the Attorney General's Department has been assigned to study the recordings of evidence in the PCoI final report.

Accordingly, Investigations of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) must be completed and all evidence recorded by the PCoI must be studied by the Attorney General before serving indictments against all those who were responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks, she added.

Speaker postpones... From page 01

Accordingly, Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena yesterday maintained his stand with regard to imprisoned Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Ranjan Ramanayake.

Responding to the Opposition leader's query as to why Ramanayake was not allowed to attend Parliament sittings, he told the Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa that Ramanayake cannot be brought to Parliament as he has been convicted by the country's highest court, the Supreme Court without provision for bail. Therefore, he asked the Opposition Leader to be patient until the verdict is delivered, adding that there was time to resolve the issue as the time frame to decide on MP Ramanayake's Parliament seat concludes in April.

Therefore, the Speaker said that there was a legal issue in allowing an imprisoned MP without clearance for bail to attend Parliament proceedings. Raising the issue regarding SJB-MP

Ranjan Ramanayake in parliament yesterday, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa questioned the Speaker as to why MP Ramanayake was not permitted to attend Parliament sittings.

He accused the Speaker of not allowing the Opposition to submit a motion on behalf of MP Ranjan Ramanayake. He said the Speaker was obstructing the party from submitting the Motion under a Standing Order, accusing him of acting in an impartial manner.

MP Sajith Premadasa said the Speaker's actions were against Parliamentary traditions and accused him of acting in favour of the Government, pointing out that the Speaker is required to maintain impartiality.

He said, based on the court order, it was the legal responsibility of the Speaker to allow MP Ramanayake to attend Parliament proceedings.

Meanwhile, Leader of the House Minister Dinesh Gunawardena intervening in the issue, raising the question

on whether Premadasa was raising questions on other matters, at a time when the debate on the report on the 2019 Easter Sunday terror attacks is about to commence, with the intention of diverting attention from the Easter issue. He said that the Opposition Leader's questions could not be raised during yesterday's session as it was not included in the Parliament agenda.

"This may be an attempt by the Opposition to sabotage the debate on the report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry, scheduled to be debated in Parliament," Minister Gunawardena charged.

Meanwhile, responding to MP Premadasa's comments, Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena said the matter raised by the MP is currently before Court.

He said it is believed that the Court will issue its verdict on MP Ranjan Ramanayake's Parliament seat by the end of this month.

Hirunika granted... From page 01

When the case was taken up before Colombo High Court Judge Amal Ranaraja neither the accused Hirunika Premachandra nor a lawyer appeared for her.

Accordingly, the High Court Judge ordered that a warrant be issued on her. Following that, accused Hirunika Premachandra appeared before the Court through her lawyer.

Attorney-at-Law Abhimani Randeniya appearing for accused Premachandra, stated that her client Premachandra had

appeared in a case before the Court of Appeal at the time and that she (the accused) was nursing her 1 1/2 month old infant outside the Court and had inadvertently missed the time to appear in Court.

The lawyer apologised and gave an undertaking to Court and ensured that such an omission would not happen again.

She pleaded with the Court and prayed for the withdrawal of the warrant issued against the accused on humanitarian

grounds. After considering the facts, the Colombo High Court Judge ordered to withdraw the warrants on the accused Hirunika Premachandra. The case will be taken up again on June 17.

On a previous occasion, the eight other accused, except Hirunika Premachandra, who pleaded guilty for their involvement in the abduction had been given a suspended prison sentence by the Colombo High Court.

The accused; Kelum Niranjana,

Referring to Premadasa's comparison of Ramanayake's case against MP Premalal Jayasekara's case, the Speaker pointed out that MP Premalal Jayasekara who was convicted of murder was allowed to attend Parliament as he had appealed his verdict and as per the laws of this country, when a case is appealed, the convicted prisoner is regarded as a remand prisoner and is accorded the same privileges. Hence, the Speaker noted that Jayasekara was awarded the privilege of attending parliament based on that legal provision. Therefore, he said that Ramanayake's case cannot be compared with that of Jayasekara.

Therefore, the Speaker said that due to this legal issue with regard to MP Ranjan Ramanayake's Parliament seat, the Parliament will inevitably have to wait until the Court's decision is given in order to announce his stance.

Maximum punishment... From page 01

We also intend to monitor all Madrasa schools."

He noted that steps have already been taken to revise the contents related to Islamic fundamentalism in school textbooks. "Certain syllabuses and textbooks from Year 1 to Year 13 refer to revolts against other religions and subtly incorporate the fundamentalist principles of Wahab and Salab in a way that is detrimental to religious harmony. Measures have been taken to remove them from the syllabus. We also contemplate banning the wearing of Burqas," the Minister said.

He added that the Justice Ministry would amend existing laws regarding underage marriages and divorces for children and women, so that a common law that affects the entire population will prevail.

Further, he noted that no sooner intelligence agencies identify that any individual is inclined towards fundamentalism, he or she will be directed to a mandatory rehabilitation process.

He said that questions such as the motive for the attacks, who directed the attacks, who got the funds for it, and the local and foreign relations involved have been answered and legal action would be initiated against those involved in the near future.

The Minister pointed out that the investigations amply show that the attacks could have been easily prevented, but no action had been taken by the previous

Government. The Minister said that the relevant suspects could have been arrested and the attacks could have been prevented had the suspicious events which took place before the suicide bombings been properly analyzed.

"However, the assassins were able to launch this attack easily as the intelligence services were completely inactivated, the morale of the military was destroyed, the CID was politicized and national security was reduced to zero," he commented.

He pointed out under the incumbent Government, 99 persons directly and indirectly involved in the Easter Sunday attacks were arrested in Sri Lanka, while another 35 Sri Lankans residing abroad were also arrested and investigated.

"Fifty out of the 54 suspects arrested in connection with the attacks by five foreign countries have been brought to Sri Lanka by the State Intelligence Service in coordination with foreign intelligence agencies. The other four would be brought back to Sri Lanka once the investigations in that country is completed. These people have nurtured extremism in those countries while funding extremist propaganda meetings in this country. According to local information and investigations, action has been taken to classify and prosecute them based on their connection with the attacks," he added.

He also noted that the State Intelligence Service has now developed a specific methodology to liaise with the relevant foreign intelligence services to monitor

the activities of such expatriate Sri Lankans.

"The Government has identified 11 extremist organizations operating in the country that directly or indirectly created the background for the attacks and measures will be taken to ban them soon," the Minister said.

He also alleged that the former Government had lost eight opportunities to prevent the attacks due to its lethargic attitude towards national security and lack of coordination.

"After the present Government came to power, the intelligence services were strengthened again and national security was given priority. Steps were taken to strengthen the intelligence services without any political interference," he commented.

He said that in early 2020, Sri Lankan intelligence revealed information about a female unit trained under the suicide killer Zaharan.

"Seventeen such trained women have taken an oath of Baiyath (Islamic pledge) for suicide attacks. At present five of them have died, three have been charged and remanded and seven are in custody. Investigations are underway to arrest the other two," he explained.

"Also, in 2015, a Sri Lankan company imported 1,440 swords from China. In 2018, under the guidance of the Dematagoda Ibrahim Brothers, 300 of those swords had been given to people in Slave Island, Kattankudy and Beruwela, Another

27 swords have been made in factories in Negombo and Kurunegala areas," the Minister said.

"We also uncovered information about eight training camps conducted in Medawachchiya, Malwana, Lewella, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya and Hingula areas to mobilize the youth for an Islamic State and measures have been taken to arrest those involved," he noted.

"From 2018, the Dematagoda Ibrahim brothers Insaf and Ilham had provided money and vehicles required for Zaharan's activities. They had given nearly Rs. 50 million funds from their businesses from 2018 until the Easter Sunday terror attacks. In addition, the two brothers had joined ISIS and had paid a sum of Rs. 4.5 million in November 2018 to the father of Nilam who died as a terrorist in Syria," the Minister said adding that the TID had also traced that money.

"Ibrahim Ilham, who blew himself up at the Shangri-La Hotel, took Rs. 37 million from his business and gave part of it to Zaharan's brother Rilwan to plan the attack and provide for other facilities. Five days after the attacks, Rs 5 million of that money had been found from a house in Saindamarudu," the Minister remarked.

Meanwhile, he said that telephone conversations have been identified between suicide bombers and individuals of various ranks who are currently in custody, and they have maintained contacts through communications software such as Viber and WhatsApp.

MAHA SHIVARATHRI MESSAGES

Maha Shivaratri celebration has enriched our society since ancient times - President



The colourful and vibrant cultural celebration of Maha Shivaratri by Hindu devotees has enriched our society since ancient times, states President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in his Maha Shivaratri Day message.

The President's message: "Sri Lankan Hindus and their brethren across the globe since ancient times pay obeisance to Lord Shiva on this Maha Shivaratri, with utmost reverence and expectation of dispelling darkness of ignorance and acquiring wisdom.

"Hindus believe that the blessings of the Lord Shiva, who they consider as the most powerful deity of the universe,

will help to achieve social and economic prosperity and good health, as well as to nurture spiritual development of the devotees.

"Maha Shivaratri is the day Hindu devotees all over the world undertake a fast and offer prayers through the day and night and indulge in various cultural activities to pay homage to Lord Shiva and seek his blessings for salvation. Hindu devotees believe that by meditating and venerating Lord Shiva with a tranquil mind they could embark on the path to attain spiritual enlightenment.

"In the previous year, the

Hindu devotees were compelled to observe and celebrate the Maha Shivaratri day adhering to health guidelines due to COVID-19 pandemic. Even though, there is some relaxation of certain restrictions, I believe that they will celebrate Maha Shivaratri day this time too adhering to the health guidelines as they did last year.

"Finally, I wish as the spirit of light illuminate your life, the blessings of Lord Shiva bestow upon us to achieve our objectives of establishing peace, reconciliation and happiness in the society," the President states in his message.

A meaningful and joyous day for all - PM



Hindu devotees in Sri Lanka have a long tradition of living in harmony with all ethnic groups, states Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in his Maha Shivaratri Day message.

The Prime Minister's message: "Devotees of the Hindu faith will fast on the day of the festival as they believe that spiritual liberation will manifest through

the fast. They believe that fasting and engaging in holy rituals will lead to enriching their spiritual lives. They believe that observing a pure and holy fast will bless them with the spiritual strength of God. I trust that the pure and holy fast of the Hindu devotees world over will be blessed by Lord Shiva and that all that is good and

pure will come to pass. May Maha Shivaratri be a meaningful and joyous day for all those celebrating in Sri Lanka and around the world!" the Prime Minister states in his message.



Sri Lanka has received 10 state-of-the-art railway passenger coaches from India as part of the supply of 160 coaches to Sri Lankan Railways by the Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES). "Indo-Lanka cooperation in the transport sector continues to expand with the arrival of 10 state-of-the-art railway passenger coaches at the Colombo Port. This is a part of the supply of 160 coaches to SL Railways by RITES which is being financed through an Indian Line of Credit," Indian High Commission in Colombo tweeted yesterday.

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Former Govt's inability to prioritise National Security, main reason behind Easter attacks: *Aluthgamage*

The main reason behind Easter attacks was the previous government's inability to prioritise national security, Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage said.

Joining the debate on the Presidential Commission Report on the Easter Attacks in Parliament, yesterday, he said, "Especially in 2015, Western influences helped the previous government to come to power. They are the ones who carried out their contract," he said.

"The then government also acted according to the agenda of these



Western powers. During our government's tenure, we gave priority

to national security as the country can progress only if national security is assured," he added.

The minister said that after the previous regime won the 2015 election, they co-sponsored the UNHRC Resolution against the Forces.

He added that it was the previous President that had appointed the Presidential Commission to investigate the Easter Attacks. In addition, a Parliament Committee was appointed to safeguard their disciplines.

He noted that when President

Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected on November 15, 2019, he immediately met the Cardinal and asked if he was satisfied with the members appointed to this Committee. The Cardinal had then said he was not satisfied.

Aluthgamage alleged that MPs Rauf Hakeem and Rishad Bathiudeen were directly connected to the extremists behind the attacks. Furthermore, under the latter's supervision, Lanka Sathosa faced losses that stood at Rs.48 billion, he added.



SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL AND AMALI MALLAWRACHCHI

Importation of competitive products affects local manufacturers, economy: *Dr. Gunawardena*



The importation of competitive products has a negative impact on local manufacturers and in turn, affects the national economy, Trade Minister Dr. Bandula Gunawardena said in Parliament, yesterday. He was responding to a question raised by Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Parliamentarian Buddhika Pathirana during the oral questions round.

The minister asserted that the situation had worsened during the Good Governance Government's tenure as it allowed the importation of anything without control, including turmeric and pepper, which affected local farmers and manufacturers.

"However, the incumbent government has banned the importa-

tion of certain products for the first time after 1977 to encourage farmers and local manufacturers. Farmers and manufacturers have a new hope," Dr. Gunawardena said.

There was an era where farmers were barely able to sell their crops. Today, although the government has given certified prices, the private sector offers higher prices, the

minister said, adding that it is due to the constructive economic policies the government was maintaining.

He said a special programme has been introduced to procure commodities for Sathosa. The minister added that all Sathosa branches would be computerised within a month.

'Ten public institutions owe Rs.9 million to Air Force over air travel services in 2003/18'



Ten public institutions owe Rs.9 million to the Air Force over air travel services between the period of 2003 and 2018, Irrigation Minister Chamal Rajapaksa said yesterday. He was responding to a

question raised by Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Parliamentarian Heshu Withanage during the oral questions round in Parliament, yesterday.

When MP Withanage asked as to why another backup helicopter is sent with the President's Helicopter, and whether President Gotabaya Rajapaksa would remove it to save money, the minister said that another helicopter accompanies for security purposes. He added that it was the protocol for all the former Presidents as well.

Minister Chamal Rajapaksa said that the President has taken many steps to prevent the waste of money. He said the President is living in his own house, and that his security detail consists of only three vehicles.

When MP Withanage said he had evidence that the amount owed to the Air Force by public institutions was higher than Rs.9 million, Minister Rajapaksa demanded the evidence, adding that if he were to hide it, it was an offence under the Right to Information.

Easter Attacks Report copies sent to AG, State institutions - *Johnston*

The content of the Presidential Commission Report on the Easter Sunday Attacks have been directed to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Terrorist Investigation Division (TID), the Attorney-General, and other relevant institutions to take necessary action, Chief Government Whip Minister Johnston Fernando said in Parliament, yesterday.



He said so in response to a question raised by Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Parliamentarian Niroshan Perera during the adjournment debate on the report of the Presidential Commission on the Easter Sunday Attacks, where the latter said that copies of the report had not been sent to any government institutions, including the Attorney-General.

MP Niroshan Perera urges Government to take action against Easter attacks perpetrators

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Parliamentarian Niroshan Perera yesterday urged the government to take legal action against those involved in the Easter Sunday attacks without levelling allegations against the Opposition.

He was speaking at the Adjournment Motion Debate on the Easter Sunday attacks

Report that was taken up in the Parliament, yesterday.

The MP urged the government to investigate Zaharan's contacts in the intelligence services. It should be investigated whether the previous government funded the perpetrators as well, he said, adding that regardless of their party affiliations, all those responsible

must be brought to book. MP Perera said the nation demands justice for the victims of the attacks.

He added that the masterminds behind the attacks were yet to be revealed, even after two years. Moreover, the Attorney-General has not yet made a statement saying he had received the report, he added.



Easter Sunday attacks have become a political slogan: Field Marshal Fonseka

Seeking justice for the victims of the Easter Sunday attacks has turned into a political slogan, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka said in Parliament, yesterday. He was speaking at the Adjournment Debate on the report submitted by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry that investigated the attacks.

Fonseka said, "Many groups have expressed their disappointment over the report. This report has turned into a post-mortem. Those who are now in



power turned the Easter Sunday attacks into an election promise. They promised to seek justice for those who were victimised

in the attacks within two months, yet no such thing happened. These have become mere political promises."

The Field Marshal added that even if some were trying to cover up the truth by saying that Zaharan was the real mastermind behind the Easter Sunday attacks, it was not the truth. "Zaharan was only a local who contributed to it. We never used a person called Zaharan as an intelligence agent for our missions against the LTTE. There was a lethar-

gic attitude towards the country's national security during the previous government. The former President did not even care to return immediately from abroad when the attack took place."

"I questioned him at the Parliament Committee as to why he did not use a SriLankan Airlines flight to reach the country during such a crisis situation. He told us that there were no more seats available. That was not true; we checked the flight schedule," he added.

Easter victims await justice - *Dr. Fernandopulle*

Victims of Easter Sunday attacks are still awaiting justice, State Minister Dr. Sudharshani Fernandopulle said in Parliament, yesterday.

The only way the victims could find peace is to witness the culprits being brought to justice, she said during the Adjournment Debate on the Easter Attacks Report.

Dr. Fernandopulle said, "Nearly 115 people in my electorate died in these attacks. Many more are still receiving treatment. Although it is not appropriate to blame each other, we have to remember that this terrorist attack was due to the inefficiency of the previous government."

"According to this report, the previous government did not give priority to national security. This is not

the first time a UNP government has done this. Despite being informed 97 times, this crime was not stopped. My husband was killed by the LTTE. Therefore, I am well aware of the pain of these victims. We should not entertain party politics while seeking justice for this carnage," she added.

The state minister said, "Extremism is extremism regardless of race or religion, and we have been plagued by it for decades. The country cannot move forward with such ideologies. It is because of extremism that the well-reconciled Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims were at loggerheads. It is a grave mistake to allow extremism to grow for narrow political gains."



"We have a great responsibility towards our future generations. The Attorney-General has the power to take legal action against those responsible for the Easter attacks. The government has a responsibility to eradicate any form of extremism as well," she added.

Government moves Adjournment Debate on Easter Report

The Government moved an Adjournment Debate in Parliament yesterday on the report submitted by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry that investigated the Easter Sunday attacks. The Motion was moved by MP Jayantha Weerasinghe, PC, and was seconded by MP Nalin Fernando.

Commencing the debate, MP Weerasinghe observed that every person responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks should be brought before justice despite their position or rank. He said, "The report states that the previous gov-

ernment should be held responsible. I request the Prime Minister to forward this Commission's report to the Attorney-General so that the AG can take legal action against all those responsible."

"We have no animosity towards our Muslim community. However, we reject Islamic extremism. According to the report, several witnesses have said that the previous government was not in favour of taking action against extremism as it relied on political parties of the minority," he added.

Loans for low-income families to repair electricity poles

DINULI FRANCISCO

The Samurdhi State Ministry stated in a communiqué yesterday that a loan scheme would soon be provided to low-income families under the 'Electricity for All' Project.

The communiqué stated that loans would be provided through the Samurdhi Department for the repairing of damaged electric-

ity poles and other technical issues. Furthermore, loans would be issued at an interest rate of 4%, subject to a maximum of Rs.20,000, the statement read.

It is expected to provide electricity to all households without electricity by the end of this year under the project, the State Ministry added.

Man gets 34 years' RI over sexual assault on minor

SHAVINI MADHARA

Colombo High Court Judge Damith Thotawatte yesterday sentenced a person to 34 years of Rigorous Imprisonment over three counts of sexual assault on an underage girl.

The Judge also ordered him to pay a fine of Rs.10,000, as well as a compensation of Rs.200,000 to the victim. The court

observed that the accused would have to serve an additional five-year jail term in default of the payments.

The Attorney-General filed four indictments before the Colombo High Court against the accused, alleging that he had taken an underage girl to a bathroom and sexually assaulted her.

Jailer suspended for allowing MP to use mobile phone inside prison

The Prisons Department has suspended the services of a jailer attached to the Angunakolapelessa Prison for allowing Par-

liamentarian Harshana Rajakaruna to bring his mobile phone into the prison premises, Prisons Commissioner-General

Thushara Upuldeniya stated yesterday.

SJB Parliamentarian Harshana Rajakaruna on Monday

arrived at the Angunakolapelessa Prison to meet Parliamentarian Ranjan Ramanayake and had taken a selfie

using his mobile phone. MP Rajakaruna later posted the photo on his Facebook page, he added.

Obituaries

JAYAWARDANA NIRMALEE (nee DIAS) gone to rest with Jesus. Beloved wife of Asoka, loving mother of Kaushi, Harshi (USA) and Asitha, loving mother-in-law of Sajeevan, Suresh (USA) and Lizelle, darling grandmother of Nethmie, Devangie, Talia and Kiana, loving sister of Swarna, Felix, Rohan and Nelum, sister-in-law of Robin, Liz, Noelle, Fred, late Lakshman & late Mala, late Shanthi & late Ainsley, late Dawn & Raja, Raja & Gena, Srikanthi & Mervyn, late Shiromi and Lal. Her remains lie at A.F. Raymond's Funeral Parlour. Cortège leaves the Parlour at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday 11th March for Cremation at 3.00 p.m. at the **General Cemetery, Borella (Old Crematorium)**. 019046

JESUDAS, VIOLET SOUNDARAM ANNAPPOORANAM. Safe in the arms of Jesus. Deeply beloved wife of the late M.A. Jesudas, loving mother of Shanthi, Jeyanthi, Suganthi (Australia), Jayakumar (Canada) and Leelakanthi (Sri Jayawardenepura General Hospital), mother-in-law of the late Suri Williams, the late Rev. S. Ariaratnam, the late Harry Arabindan, Rev. Peter Kossen (Australia) and Loretta Jesudas (Canada), grandmother of Miriam, Premjit, Andrew, Priya, Anna, Rebecca, Daniel, Timothy, Niven and Rajeevan, and great grandmother of Naren, Mina, Augie, Ezi, Josh, Ren, Prani and Reni. Remains lie at **A.F. Raymond's Funeral Parlour, Borella**, from 9 a.m. on Thursday, 11th March. Funeral Service at 3 pm. followed by Burial at General Cemetery, Kanatte (General Christian Section). 018920

LIYANAGE MRS. A.U.I. (former Executive Officer, Airport and Aviation Services). Beloved wife of S.P. Liyanage, loving mother of Hiran Liyanage (USA) and Nilusha Thevarapperuma (Canada), mother-in-law of Rasika Thevarapperuma (Canada) grandmother of Yenuli Thevarapperuma, deceased after a brief illness. Remains lie at Mahinda Funeral Parlour, Mt Lavinia. Cortège leaves at 1.30 p.m on 11th Thursday for Mt Lavinia Cemetery for Cremation. Residence - **No. 76, 2nd Lane, Ratmalana**. 019108

SAMARANAYAKE LAKSHMI SUNITA, wife of Dixon, loving mother of Ajit and late Ushani, mother-in-law of Dilmi and grandmother of Ajay and Anila passed away peacefully at her residence on the 7th March and Cremated soon after in **Private Family**, according to her expressed wishes. 018908

CBCSL calls for swift justice on perpetrators behind Easter Attacks

'Justice delayed is justice denied'

The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka (CBCSL), in a media statement, urged that the judicial mechanism to prosecute the perpetrators of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks be set in motion with immediate effect. The CBCSL issued the statement following a special meeting on Tuesday.

"We assessed the present situation of the aftermath of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks. Almost two years have lapsed and those affected are still longing for justice. The CBCSL, along with the Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, has studied the Commission of Inquiry (COI) Report. We welcome the find-

ings of this report and the specific recommendations that have been made. We urge the Government to take immediate action in the implementation of these recommendations, and as a matter of priority with regard to those individuals against whom criminal charges have been levelled," the statement read.

"We therefore, appeal that the Attorney-General be given full power and the freedom to prosecute the perpetrators immediately, including those who aided and abetted the perpetrators, and those who were found to be negligent in carrying out their duties. We urge that the judicial mechanism be set in motion with immedi-

ate effect for this purpose," the CBCSL stated. "It has come to our attention that 22 sensitive documents have been withheld from the Attorney-General; we feel that these documents should be given to him as soon as possible. We are all waiting for an immediate and transparent process of justice that

should be carried out with a sense of urgency," the statement read. "In the name of truth and justice, and for the sake of peace and security of all people in our country, we urge all those concerned to act without delay on this crucial matter. We wish to reiterate that justice delayed is justice denied," they added.



A herd of wild elephants recently destroyed crops and home gardens in Mendiriya, Ududumbara. Residents said that wild elephant invasions were on the rise in the area, and that drivers are afraid to travel at night from Ududumbara to Kalunthanna. Picture by Ududumbara Group Corr.

Garnier Francis indicted over false statements on abduction, assault

SHAVINI MADHARA

The Colombo High Court yesterday indicted Swiss Embassy official Garnier Banister Francis on charges of making a fabricated statement to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) about being abducted by unidentified men.

The indictments filed by the Attorney-General were handed over to the accused, who appeared before the court when the case was taken up on Tuesday. Accordingly, the Colombo High Court ordered the accused be released on bail. The case is set to be heard on June 4.

Garnier Bannister Francis, a Sri Lankan woman from Maligawatta who works at the Swiss Embassy as a visa officer, lodged a complaint that she was abducted and assaulted by five men at Cinnamon Gardens on November 25, 2019. She alleged that they had sexually assaulted and detained

her for several hours after questioning her about the issuance of a visa to former CID Inspector Nishantha Silva.

A second official of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Switzerland lodged a written complaint with the Acting Inspector General of Police on November 27, 2019 and the CID commenced an investigation on the instructions of the Inspector General of Police.

The complaint stated that the woman had been abducted while going to her child's school. During the investigation, Francis was summoned to the CID for questioning, but on her failure to do so, the Colombo Chief Magistrate imposed a travel ban on her and ordered her to appear before the CID before December 9.

On December 16, 2019, on the instructions of the Attorney-General,

Garnier Banister was made a suspect in the case, and the CID subsequently produced her before the Colombo Chief Magistrate's court. She was then remanded and later released on bail on December 30, 2019.

Ekanayake files FR challenging Commission on Political Victimisation

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

Saman Ekanayake, then Secretary to former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, filed a Fundamental Rights petition in Supreme Court yesterday challenging the recommendations made by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry appointed to probe incidents of political victimisation.

Filing this petition through Counsel Manjula Balasuriya, the petitioner is seeking an order to quash the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and the decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers dated January 18 to implement those recommendations.

The petitioner stated that the

Commission has suggested the establishment of a Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry to make recommendations to Parliament on imposing punishment on former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and 21 others for violating the Constitution.

The petitioner further said the Commission had named the

petitioner as having violated the Constitution, along with Mangala Samaraweera, Patali Champika Ranawaka, Rauff Hakeem, Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka, R. Sampanthan, M.A. Sumanthiran, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, J.C. Weliamuna, Malik Samarawickrama, and Dr. Jayampathy Wickramaratne.

Dam Street body identity confirmed

The DNA test conducted on the female body on Tuesday was confirmed as the relative of the man and woman who claimed to be her brother and mother.

The postmortem report revealed that the victim had been dismembered after death.

The body was found in an abandoned suitcase on Dam Street on March 1. Investigations are continuing.

'SLBJP has no connection with Indian Barathiya Janatha Party'

RASULA DILHARA GAMAGE, Northern Province Special Corr.

The new political party called the 'Sri Lanka Barathiya Janatha Party' (SLBJP) has no connection with the Barathiya Janatha Party in India, SLBJP Chairman Welusami Muttusami said at a press conference yesterday.

Muttusami said that the party also has no ethnic or religious differences. He added that BJP

in India is an extremist party, and that he does not wish to create such a party.

The party leader also said that if the word 'Barathiya' would become a problem when registering, the party's name would be changed to the 'Sri Lanka People's Party'. He added that the party's Policy Statement was launched in Jaffna recently.



SLBJP Chairman Welusami Muttusami addressing the gathering. Picture by Rasula Dilhara Gamage, Northern Province Special Corr.

India seeks integrated South Asia Energy Grid

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Wednesday pushed for an integrated regional energy grid in South Asia, which he said, would attract investment, result in the creation of infrastructure and strengthen sub-regional cooperation.

Addressing the South Asia Group on Energy at the New Delhi-based Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) Research Institute, Shringla said that although there were challenges

in setting up an integrated energy grid, it was possible, citing examples of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Gulf Region.

Analysts say the push for a South Asia grid by India comes against the backdrop of Chinese entities financing power projects in countries along India's periphery - Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

The move is seen as aimed at keeping South Asian countries within India's sphere of influence. Efforts to form such a grid

in the past at the level of members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in the past have failed because of Pakistan's unwillingness to come on board.

Besides regional prosperity and development, South Asian regional power cooperation could also attract higher investments and result in complementary infrastructure creation for transmission and transit, the harmonisation of policy framework across borders and a robust market place for best price dis-

covery for both buyers and sellers, he said.

India was discussing the possibility of interconnection of grids with Sri Lanka, Shringla added.

There were many projects being pursued in Sri Lanka, including the establishment of a LNG-based power plant at Keralapitiya with an initial capacity of 300 MW.

There is strong potential for collaboration in harnessing wind energy in Mannar region, he said.

TUESDAY Draw No.: 3547
Date: 09.03.2021 Colour: LIGHT BLUE

Total Value of Prizes
Rs. 4,238,640/-

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05 14 46 73

English Letter
B

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English Letter & Winning Numbers
Draw No: 700 Colour: PINK
Date: 09.03.2021 Tuesday

W 01 10 49 54

Total Value of Prizes
Rs. 2,743,640/-

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Rs. 77,103,415/-

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Date : 09-03-2021
Draw Number : 3098
Colour : Red

Super Jackpot has been won
Rs. 2,230,396.40

Winning Numbers
08 10 30 48

Sagittarius

TOTAL VALUE OF PRIZES
Rs. 13,203,336.40

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TUESDAY
Date: 09.03.2021
Draw No.: 1217
Colour: LIGHT BLUE

Total Value of Prizes
Rs. 5,884,640/-

Winning Numbers
12 26 36 63

English Letter
Z

Winning tickets are valid only for six months

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For Interactive Voice Response Service - Call 0114 825 825

SUPER BALL
Draw Number ▶ 1391 Colour ▶ Light Blue
Draw Date ▶ 09.03.2021 Date ▶ Tuesday

Winning English Letter and Numbers
M 11 49 64 70

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Daily News



The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited, LAKE HOUSE P. O. Box 1217 No. 35, D.R. Wijewardene Mawatha, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka Telephone : (011) 242 9211 Fax: (011) 234 3694 E-mail : editor.dailynews@lakehouse.lk news.dailynews@lakehouse.lk Thursday, March 11, 2021

Encouraging signs

Encouraging signs are emerging that the COVID-19 vaccine is having a positive outcome based on research carried out locally on those already vaccinated. According to Prof. Neelika Mavilge of the Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine at the University of Sri Jayawardhanapura, research carried out on blood samples of those who have been administered the vaccine against COVID-19 have so far shown good results.

However by the Professor's own admission there are still grey areas such as ascertaining how long the immunity will last and how the vaccine will work against new Coronavirus variants. True, the vaccine could react in different ways in different people. From the very outset there were medical opinions which maintained that the vaccine's reliability depended on a range of factors such as age. Hence, only the complete findings of the research will tell us how in fact the vaccine reacts and the potential drawbacks. However the Jayawardhanapura Research team has succeeded in allaying fears of those who may have had misgivings about taking the jab. The positive results that had emerged from the research would now encourage those who hitherto entertained fears, to receive the needle. It will also cause hopes to soar that we are at last about to turn a corner putting back the nightmare.

However, it is yet too early to jump to conclusions since the full effects of the vaccine are not known yet. We are still not out of the woods and placing total faith in the vaccine could open the public to further risk through complacency. As State Minister Dr. Sudharshani Fernandopulle has admitted, it is not the vaccine alone that has caused a drastic drop in the number of Coronavirus cases over the past weeks but also compliance with the health guidelines in force by the public at large. Overconfidence in the vaccine could turn the clock back.

Certainly, it is also true that the gravity of the situation has now sunk deep into the public consciousness given that there have not been any mass round ups by the Police of violators of the restrictions as before and that by and large the public have been paying heed to the repeated warnings of the health authorities on the precautions to be taken. Yet one has also to mention that the over-eagerness to obtain the jab has made many people forget the distance rule as seen by the milling crowds at vaccination centres, which could bring to naught the whole exercise. This situation should be remedied urgently.

Besides, there is no shortage of the vaccines (the consignments keep rolling in) with a Minister even predicting that the full vaccination programme will be completed before May-June. So what is the need for the rush? In any event, there could be a long interval before the first dose of the vaccine takes hold and rushing to obtain the jab would not help in any case. It is also difficult to understand the desire of VIPs and politicians to be ahead of the queue for the same reasons since the second dose could be a while in coming.

The PHIs too have warned the public that the vaccine is not the panacea for all ills and the drop in the number of cases did not mean that the danger is over and the country is now free of the pandemic. As Health Officers working at the grassroots the PHIs would certainly know what they are talking about. The situation in countries where a surge in the virus has been reported, even after the advent of the vaccines, also may have cautioned the authorities against placing over-reliance on the vaccine alone. As already stated, there is also the risk of people feeling secure after just one dose of the jab and dropping guard despite all the advice to the contrary. One recalls the stampede in a village in Kegalle where a shaman was distributing his 'miracle potion', with all caution thrown out of the window. It needs only one careless act for the virus to have a domino effect once again going by past experience which should keep the concerned authorities on high alert.

In the USA, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released new guidelines for those who have both doses of the vaccine, such as mingling maskless indoors. Still, the CDC has cautioned that all precautions should be taken by all, vaccinated or not. Israel, which leads the world in terms of vaccinations, has introduced a "Green Pass" paper and smartphone token which allows vaccinated persons to enter dining and entertainment venues. China has floated the idea of Vaccine Passports, to enable those who have had the jab to travel abroad. The European Union has also warmed up this idea. But one must remember that people in hundreds of countries have not been vaccinated yet and as the saying goes "no one is safe until everyone is safe". It is time for the First World to ensure that vaccines are equitably shared among all countries, so that the entire world can defeat the virus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Vaccination and other essential preventive services must be delivered close within communities. - Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus



A scene from the Black Sunday protest.

Debate continues on Easter PCol Report

The fallout from the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) probing the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks of 2018 continues with the limelight falling on the political futures of former President Maithripala Sirisena and, to a lesser extent, on former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The PCoI, which recently handed over its final report to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has recommended that criminal proceedings be initiated against former President Sirisena, stating that negligence on his part in the discharge of his duties contributed to the disaster which cost 269 lives.

There is a clamour for the Government to act promptly on the PCoI findings. Leading these calls is Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith who called for a 'Black Sunday' protest on Sunday, urging churchgoers to attend in black to express dissent against delays in dealing with those responsible.

Addressing the media at the St. Sebastian's Church at Katuwapitiya which was one of the targets of the Easter attack, Cardinal Ranjith noted that the PCoI had recommended action against 'certain people'. "This action should be taken without delay," the Cardinal observed.

"It is also essential to carry out further investigations to determine who facilitated the attackers and who got them to carry out the Easter Sunday attacks," Cardinal Ranjith said. "We hope to see practical steps in this regard by April 21 this year," the Cardinal noted.

Cardinal Ranjith's views were endorsed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference on Tuesday. In a strongly worded statement, the Conference said it welcomed the findings of the PCoI, the specific recommendations that have been made and urged that judicial mechanisms be followed.

"We therefore appeal that the Attorney General be given full power and the freedom to prosecute immediately the perpetrators, those who aided and abetted in this dastardly terrorist act and those who were found to be negligent in carrying out their duties," the Conference said in its statement.

Former Prime Minister Wickremesinghe has candidly expressed his views since the contents of the PCoI report became public. He maintains the position that he was not made aware of vital intelligence that had been provided to the Government a few weeks prior to the attack by Indian authorities.

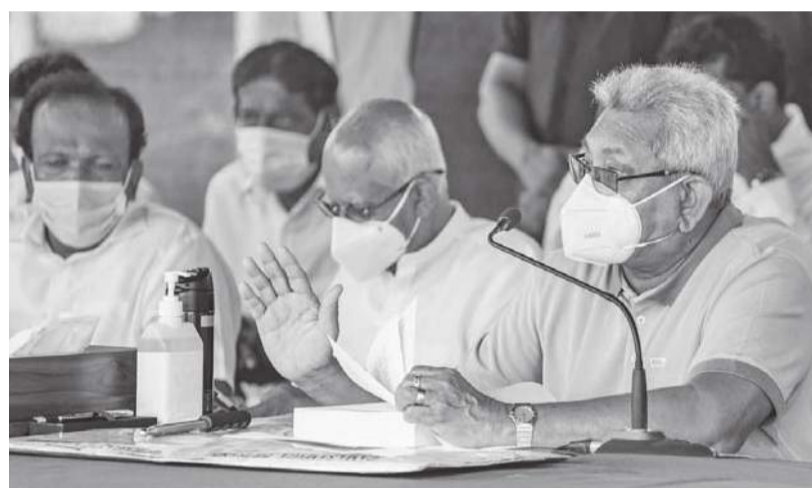
This was due to differences of opinion between Wickremesinghe and Sirisena at the time, following the failed constitutional crisis of October 2018 which concluded in December that year. Since then, the relationship between the then President and then Prime Minister had deteriorated considerably.

In interviews given to various media outlets since the PCoI report was made public, the former Prime Minister claims that it was his direction in the absence of President Sirisena who was overseas at the time of the attacks - that led to the apprehension of suspects within a few hours of the attacks.

The PCoI, while faulting the then President for not inviting the Prime Minister to meetings of the National Security Council (NSC) and for keeping him in the dark about these intelligence concerns however criticised Wickremesinghe as well for not raising the issue of not being invited for these discussions.

State security

While the PCoI is not complimentary towards Wickremesinghe for his conduct prior to the attack in remaining aloof about issues related to State security, it has also stopped short of recommending any action against him - a fact



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa explains a point from the Easter PCol Report during the recent Conversation with the Village programme in Kurunegala.



Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe



Minister Chamal Rajapaksa

A Cabinet committee headed by Minister Chamal Rajapaksa is now scrutinising the findings of the PCoI. Views expressed by Government leaders publicly suggest that the PCoI recommendations will be implemented with due respect to legal processes and the sensitivities of all communities.



that the former Prime Minister is now citing in his favour.

The political consequences for the former Premier from the PCoI report are negligible, though. That is because the United National Party (UNP) which he still leads was wiped out at the August 2020 General Elections and reduced to just one National List seat in Parliament - which has not been filled.

There was speculation that Wickremesinghe would step down from the UNP leadership soon after the party's disastrous performance at the poll. Then, it was suggested that he would hand over the mantle at the dawn of the New Year. Three months in to 2021, Wickremesinghe continues to lead the UNP.

With no representation in Parliament and having lost almost all of its stalwarts to the newly formed Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB), Wickremesinghe states that the UNP is being "restructured". Nevertheless, most observers feel that it is seeing its final days unless it merges with the SJB.

At almost seventy-two years of age, out of Parliament and leading a party with limited prospects of winning Government in the near future, five-time Prime Minister Wickremesinghe therefore has little to lose because of the PCoI findings, especially when no action has been recommended against him.

For former President Sirisena though, the scenario is quite different. He is still a Member of Parliament and a vital resource for the ruling coalition which is dominated by the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP). The PCoI has strongly recommended initiating criminal proceedings against him.

Despite intense pressure, the former President has chosen not to comment on the PCoI findings. It is believed that this is based on legal advice as any comments by him could further complicate any legal proceedings that may be insti-

tuted against him, if the PCoI recommendations are implemented.

Sirisena is also the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the second largest party in the ruling coalition. The SLFP commands 14 seats in Parliament. The findings of the PCoI, appointed by Sirisena himself, have now put his political future in some jeopardy.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, in his most recent 'Gama Samaga Pilisandarak' (a dialogue with the village) at Giribawa in the Kurunegala district, made it very clear that the law would take its course in respect of the recommendations of the PCoI saying he had no intention of 'hiding the report'. "The people did not get to see the reports of some Presidential Commissions appointed in the past. We released this report within a month. Our Government will take the responsibility of punishing the perpetrators. We will leave no room for separatist terrorism or Islamic extremism," he said.

Alluding to the sentiments expressed by Cardinal Ranjith, President Rajapaksa said that he was aware that the Cardinal was aggrieved because of the attacks. "Several churches were attacked. His Eminence has to speak for those who suffered. It is only fair for him to speak out", the President said.

Legal action

Referring to calls for the death penalty for those responsible for the attacks, the President noted that this was a matter for the Courts. "Our Government will not influence the judiciary and impose the death sentence. We will take legal action; the Courts will determine their punishments," he said.

"When reading this report it can clearly be seen who is responsible for this vicious incident. It is the responsibility of our Government to punish culprits. We will fulfill our duty in this



Former President Maithripala Sirisena



Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris

regard without failure. We will consider not only this report, but other reports as well," President Rajapaksa said.

These sentiments were echoed by Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris who is also the Chairman of the SLPP. Implementing the recommendations of the PCoI will be a priority for the Government, Prof. Peiris said. This will be done with the possible exception of banning the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), he said.

The PCoI observed that the actions of the BBS are likely to have contributed to the growth of Muslim extremism in the country, alienating sections of the Muslim community from the mainstream. "This particular recommendation to ban the BBS is not acceptable to the government," Prof. Peiris said.

Although the government has at no time officially endorsed the BBS, it is a fact that the SLPP derives its major support base from the Sinhala Buddhist majority in the country. A segment of this same demographic generally identifies itself with some of the sentiments expressed by the BBS.

These comments by the President and Minister Peiris indicate that the government is keen to pursue the PCoI findings to its logical conclusion. This would cloud former President Sirisena's political prospects. Already, this appears to have been sensed by at least a section of his own party, the SLFP.

Reports emerged this week that a faction of the party, with the support of some members of its Parliamentary Group were seeking to oust Sirisena from the party leadership. This is on the basis that the PCoI has categorically recommended instituting criminal proceedings against Sirisena.

However, the former President has moved to act promptly. Sirisena was endorsed as Party Leader and Dayasiri Jayasekara as the General Secretary of the party once again. However, the fact that a section of the party moved quickly to make an attempt to oust him, must be a sobering thought for Sirisena.

The above events which unfolded last week suggest that the findings of the PCoI will become a major focus of debate and discussion in the country in the coming months. If acted upon promptly, they will also have significant political implications, particularly for former President Sirisena and the SLFP.

A Cabinet committee headed by Minister Chamal Rajapaksa is now scrutinising the findings of the PCoI. Views expressed by Government leaders publicly suggest that the PCoI recommendations will be implemented with due respect to legal processes and the sensitivities of all communities.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF TOHOKU EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI: COMMEMORATING THE PAST AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

JESSIE CARBUTT

Houses ripped up from their foundations, boats washed miles inland, streets buried in rubble and smoke rising from electrical fires - these were the other-worldly scenes beamed around the world almost 10 years ago after Japan was hit by one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded.

It was 2.46 p.m. local time on March 11, 2011, when the magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake struck off Japan's east coast, triggering a tsunami up to 56ft high that washed inland and destroyed everything in its path. By the latest count, 15,899 people lost their lives with another 2,572 people missing and presumed dead. More than 6,000 were injured, with whole towns wiped from the map.

With families, homes, businesses, economies and infrastructure shattered in an instant, the people of Tohoku were faced with the near-impossible challenge of reconstructing their lives and communities. Ten years on, that journey still continues and, while Japan's scars of grief and loss can never truly heal, the affected communities must nevertheless work towards the future. Today, Japan battles to ensure long-term economic and cultural prosperity for the disaster-stricken areas, and is turning its focus to the next generation of leaders who must now take on this mammoth task.

How do you breathe life back into cities and towns that must build their economies up from scratch? Angela Ortiz, CEO and founder of Place to Grow - a nonprofit organisation that works with young people in disaster-stricken Tohoku communities — explains that one of the initial obstacles was financial support. "Companies and



Twelve and half metre breakwaters have been constructed across much of the Tohoku region's coastline.

governments donated to the 'safest bet' towns," she says. "For example, the towns that didn't lose as many fishing boats were the first ones to get grants from the government," she explains. "That caused huge financial gaps between towns — gaps which are still obvious today — with some towns years behind others in terms of revitalization."

"On top of this, many smaller villages just didn't have enough people left to rebuild," Ortiz continues. Japan already faces the nationwide problem of an aging population and young people are increasingly migrating to larger cities such as Tokyo and — in the Tohoku region — Sendai, where there are more study and employment opportunities. "Any kind of crisis just accelerates a country's underlying social issues and the Tohoku disaster accelerated Japan's," says Ortiz. "Many small hamlets lost too much of their population because of the disaster or just didn't have enough people left who were passionate enough to rebuild. So governments simply merged these places into another

town, meaning their specific festivals and culture are now being forgotten."

For towns like Minamisanriku, where Place to Grow bases much of its charity efforts, the situation today is critical. Although the city hall was preparing for the eventual aging of its population, it couldn't have foreseen such a sudden loss of life caused by the disaster. "Within 20 years, they could lose their high school," Ortiz explains. "If that happens, the town is pretty much done because no families will want to move there."

Hope and resilience

However, for cities with larger populations or those who received larger grants, the past ten years have been a somewhat different story, making the hopes of a prosperous future seem more tangible. One example is Rikuzentakata, a coastal city in Iwate Prefecture. The tsunami virtually wiped out the city and it quickly became an international symbol of the devastation caused by the wave. But a solitary tree enduring amongst the rubble — dubbed the "Miracle Pine" — became a striking image of hope and resilience.

Subsequently, the city evolved into a hotspot for "Creative Reconstruction" a term coined by the Mayor of Hyogo Prefecture after the Great Hanshin earthquake in 1995. For Rikuzentakata, this involved ambitious plans to raise the land 12.3 metres above sea level, build a memorial museum, sports fields, land for sustainable farming, a large hotel and more.

The long-term aim was to encourage tourism, businesses and residents back to the area, as well as to prepare for the influx of visitors ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Although these goals were stunted by the postponement of the games and the Coronavirus pandemic, the Takatamatsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park is now open. It serves two vital purposes: commemorating the disaster and educating the younger generations about the importance of disaster preparedness and resilience.

Over the next five years, the Japanese government estimates to spend a further ¥1.5 trillion on Tohoku reconstruction, but some people feel it is still not enough. "In the past ten years, the government has poured trillions of yen into reconstruction work already," says Seiji Komatsu, a former Morioka resident who has since moved to Tokyo, "but, from 2021 onwards, this budget will be severely reduced. People are concerned about forgetting about the disaster and that the process of reconstruction will become slower."

"From a business perspective," he continues, "city halls along the coast are unsure whether companies will return to start their businesses there. There's residential housing under construction, but it's risky for companies to return to some of the most badly affected areas because there's still not a strong community."

As a result, much of the coastal landscapes of Tohoku

With families, homes, businesses, economies and infrastructure shattered in an instant, the people of Tohoku were faced with the near-impossible challenge of reconstructing their lives and communities. Ten years on, that journey still continues and, while Japan's scars of grief and loss can never truly heal, the affected communities must nevertheless work towards the future.

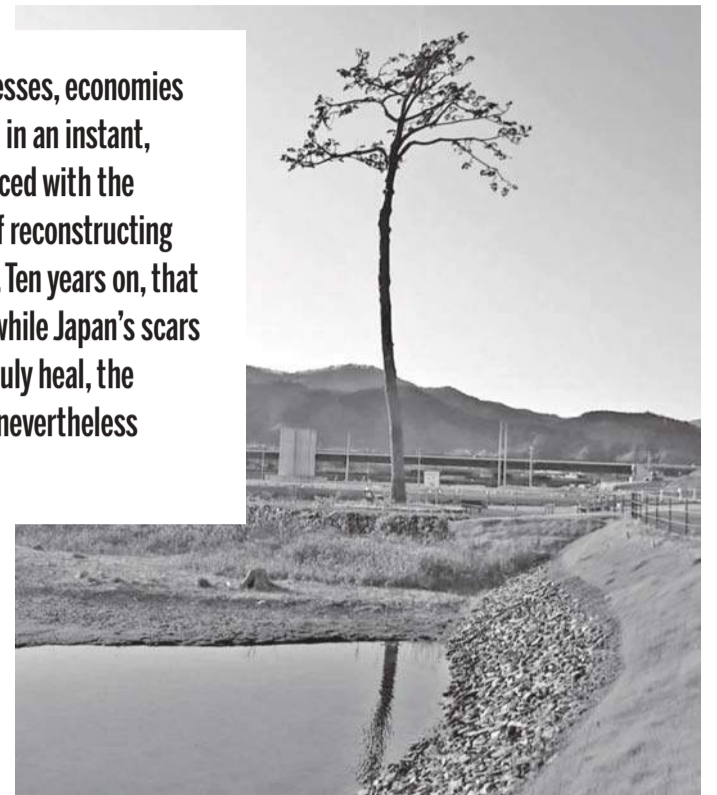
remain eerily barren despite huge efforts to build breakwaters, raise land to safer altitudes and construct new highways to connect towns. Large plots of land reserved for housing and businesses remain vacant while long stretches of road, dipping and rising into the horizon where the land has been raised, are quiet.

Reconstruction efforts

Miyata Toshirou, vocalist from the Japanese band BRAHMAN, remains skeptical of the reconstruction efforts. "We built 12.5-metre breakwaters along the coastline and poured tons upon tons of sand for over a decade to raise the land," he begins. "But it doesn't fundamentally solve anything. Proper investigations need to be conducted so future generations can be educated and make the right actions to protect themselves. We need conversation about this disaster more than we need construction." The members of BRAHMAN were just one of thousands who rushed to help in the aftermath of the disaster. The band performed charity gigs and continues to support the communities today through the Tohoku Livehouse Project.

"The project intends to build live houses along the coast. So far, we have three venues in Miyako, Ofunato and Ishinomaki," Toshirou explains. "Music isn't essential like food or housing, but it isn't just for dancing and fun, either. Music can heal you, it can stand by your side. Initially, we were doing it for the people who needed music at what was the toughest time in their lives, but now the live houses are giving people a reason to visit the areas again, helping local tourism and industry."

"The Government and news only report numbers," he continues "but these statistics can



Named the "Miracle Pine," this solitary tree stands besides the Takatamatsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park.

only brush the surface of the trauma these people went through. I have spent a lot of time just listening to the locals; sometimes people just need someone to listen to what they are going through. They told me their stories and we cried together and shared their pain. Over the years, our ties have become strong like a real family. Whenever I leave, they always say 'Please remember' instead of 'See you again' or 'Please come back.' For them, March 11 is not a day which marks more than 10,000 deaths. It's the day they lost their loved ones."

It's a poignant reminder that no amount of sand, concrete or tar can replace what was lost, and it's why Ortiz believes that 'recovery' is the wrong word to use. "When you think of recovery, you think about getting better, getting back to what you used to be," she says. "But after a natural disaster, there's no going back to what it used to be. The town is completely different. I think 'rebuilding' is a good word and 'revitalization' is a very accurate and positive word."

Younger generations

Miho Kasahara, a high school teacher in Morioka, worries about the pressures of the younger generations who are now taking on this task of revitalization. "My concern is whether the hearts of those who were children 10 years ago are healed or not," she explains.

"The students who experienced the disaster when they entered high school seemed more mature and melancholic to me compared to all the other years. Suddenly they couldn't be kids anymore and had to stand strong."

Ortiz feels agrees that there is now a great deal of pressure on the younger generation to be the "poster children of recovery," but also that this generation is one of hope and strength. "It's important for the people of Tohoku not to live under this stigma of the 'victim.' At some point you choose to say 'I'm a survivor.'"

"I believe that all volunteers, not just us [Place to Grow] have helped this generation come to the point where they use the term *jiritsu* — self-sufficient. They want to be the leaders, they want to rebuild and redefine their own futures. Through the support of [Japanese and international] volunteer groups and projects, they've made all these amazing connections to companies and countries and cities. We're talking about partnerships that their parents would have had no idea how to maintain, or their former leadership — or even with some of the current political leadership. I think that they still need partners, people and companies to go up there to chat with them, advise them. We need to connect them to good ideas and encourage them towards a bright future."

- Metropolis Japan



Ruins of Shizugawa main street, Minamisanriku after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011.



This building in Rikuzentakata has been left untouched since the disaster, in memory of the tragedy.

SRI LANKAN WOMEN BATTLE UNEQUAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES

BANSARI KAMDAR

Only 10 countries in the world offer full legal protections to women, according to the "Women, Business and the Law 2021" report, published recently by the World Bank. Sri Lanka scores just 65.5 on the index falling behind its neighbours India, the Maldives, and Nepal, and other nations like Saudi Arabia and China. One area where it scores low is assets, partly due to gender differences in land ownership and inheritance.

"There are large gender disparities in access to and control over resources (e.g. land, water and inputs), access to markets and access to skills training, all of which are critical for agricultural production and livelihoods," writes the Food and Agriculture

Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. Only 16 percent of all privately owned land in the country belongs to women, according to the FAO.

Social structures and traditions

Land ownership can often serve as a safety net for women and help navigate changing social structures and traditions. Lack of land ownership often limits female farmer's ability to obtain agricultural assets, services, and benefits. For instance, irrigation organisations accept registration only from farmers who own land for growing paddy rice. Hence, women without titles to the land have no formal access to government provided water. "Because women's land rights are not pro-

ected by the law, they are inadvertently vulnerable and unable to access formal institutions. They have to rely on informal credit institutions with higher interests, leading to higher debts for women," Sathya Karunaratne, research executive at Advocata Institute, a policy think tank in Colombo, Sri Lanka, told The Diplomat.

Sri Lankan law is a highly complex mix of legal systems made up of Roman-Dutch civil law, English common law, and customary laws — Kandyan, Thesawalamai, and Muslim Laws. The lack of a uniform law to govern women's land rights and contradictory and complex legal provisions are a further problem. Region, ethnicity, and religion all play a part in whether a woman inherits family land in Sri Lanka.

"Despite the Sri Lankan constitution being non-discriminatory regarding land ownership, several aspects of the general and customary laws allow for unequal inheritance and land ownership practices to continue and limit women's access to land," said Karunaratne.

In the general law, Schedule 3 of the colonial-era Land Development Ordinance prescribes an order of inheritance giving precedence to male heirs over female heirs when the owner dies. Women can be ousted by male relatives even when they were cultivating the land due to the bias in this statute. A man's remarriage would also leave the first wife with no claim to the land although they might have jointly cultivated it.

In customary laws like the Kandyan Personal Law that applies to the Kandyan Sinhalese population, women's inheritance right is influenced by the origin of the property in question. While sons and daughters inherit their parents' property in equal shares, a daughter who marries into a "deega" family arrangement — a patrilineal arrangement in which the married couple reside with the

husband's family — must transfer any immovable property she inherited from her father to her brothers, unmarried sisters, or sisters who have married into a matrilineal family arrangement after the death of her father. For the Sinhalese who are not Kandyan or who opt out of the Kandyan Act, widows inherit one half share and the other half is shared among descendants (sons and daughters) under the Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance.

Discriminatory practices

Under Muslim Law, even though women may own property, her husband may use this property to earn an income without sharing any part of the earnings with his spouse. Other discriminatory practices include a daughter receiving a lesser share of inheritance than a son; a widow inheriting half the portion that a widower would inherit; and the mother of the deceased being entitled to half of the share of the father of the deceased.

In the Thesawalamai Law that applies to Sri Lankan Tamils in the country's North, a women's guardianship passes from father to husband. Married women require their spouse's permission to dispose of any property — even the land they may have brought into the marriage.

The applicability of this law in the post-war context of Sri Lanka is particularly troubling as women who have become heads of the household after the arrest or disappearance of their husbands are unable to sell their property without the husband's consent. While women can apply to the District Court for an order to vest the relevant property in their names, legal barriers like loss of documentation (marriage certificates), high cost of litigation, limited mobility, and delays in the justice system act as major deterrents in their pursuit.



Landlessness due to natural calamities and war remains high in Sri Lanka. Many land title records were also lost during the Sri Lankan civil war and significant disputes over property ownership remain a decade after the war. Over two-thirds of returning refugees who fled the war are landless and nearly 30,000 people are still considered internally displaced, according to the news outlet Al Jazeera.

The idea of "guardianship" of the women and their assets by men in these personal laws is a major hurdle for women's empowerment. Sociologist Elisa Scalise also finds that the practice of dowry in South Asia is a major impediment to land ownership and inheritance for women. Families often view their daughter's dowry, given to her husband and his family, as her inheritance. Despite being prohibited by law in some countries, the cultural practice remains prevalent in the region.

"It is oppression that you have such laws. It is dehumanizing," said Karunaratne. "We live in 2021 and women are still made to feel vulnerable by the legal system."

(Bansari Kamdar is a Boston-based multimedia journalist and researcher.)

- The Diplomat



Women need legal protection in land ownership issues.



MAHA SHIVARATRI: NIGHT OF THE DIVINE

The Hindu festival of Maha Shivaratri (Literally the “Great Night of Lord Shiva” in Sanskrit and many other Asian languages) is observed with much fervour by Hindus across Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and many other countries.

Among all the 12 Shivaratris that occur in a calendar year, Maha Shivaratri, the one that occurs in February/ March is of the most spiritual significance. Maha Shivaratri, which is being celebrated today, falls once a year during the months of February and March. However, Shivaratri falls on the 14th day of each month of the lunar calendar. Maha Shivaratri is celebrated in various forms depending on the perspective.

Shiva, (Sanskrit: “Auspicious One”) also spelt Siwa or Siva, is one of the main deities of Hinduism, whom Hindus worship as the Supreme God. Among his common epithets are Shambhu (Benign), Shankara (Beneficent), Mahesha (Great Lord), and Mahadeva (Great God). Shiva is represented in a variety of forms: in a pacific mood with his consort Parvati and son Skanda, as the cosmic dancer (Nataraja), as a yogi, accompanied by a dog (Bhairava), and as the androgynous union of Shiva and his consort in one body, half-male and half-female (Ardhanarishvara). He is both the great ascetic and the master of fertility, and he is the master of both poison and medicine, through his ambivalent power over snakes.

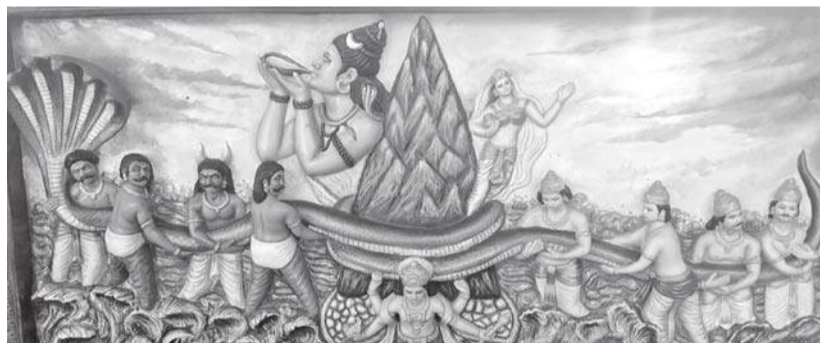
Shiva is usually depicted in painting and sculpture as white (from the ashes of corpses that are smeared on his body) with a blue neck (from holding in his throat the poison that emerged at the churning of the cosmic ocean, which threatened to destroy the world), his hair arranged in a coil of matted locks (jatamakuta) and adorned with the crescent moon and the Ganges (according to legend, he brought the Ganges River to earth from the sky, where she is the Milky Way, by allowing the river to trickle through his hair, thus breaking her fall).

HISTORY

Maha Shivaratri is one of the major festivals in Hinduism dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is also known as ‘Padmarajathri’ in India. As per the Hindu calendar, Maha



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The churning of the cosmic ocean

Shivaratri is celebrated on the new moon day in the month of Maagha. On this day, devotees worship Lord Shiva, observe a strict fast, and engage in various religious activities to please Lord Shiva. Devotees further believe that by pleasing Lord Shankara on the auspicious Shivaratri day, a person is absolved of past sins and is blessed with Moksha or Salvation.

Maha Shivaratri celebrations are associated with several stories about Lord Shiva who is also known as ‘The Destroyer’ within the Hindu Trinity.

Generally, Maha Shivaratri is celebrated as the anniversary of the union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, but there are many other stories in various texts and scriptures describing why Maha Shivaratri is celebrated. It is said that after the death of Sati, Lord Shiva went into deep meditation. Sati reincarnated as Parvati to become the consort of Lord Shiva. Hence, Maha Shivaratri marks the union of Shiva and Parvati on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Phalgun.

According to Indian Purana (ancient) texts, Shivaratri is celebrated as the day Shiva saved the world from the pot of poison that emerged during the great mythical churning of the ocean by Devas and Asuras called Samudra Manthan. (The next time you go to the Swarnabhoomi Airport in Bangkok, check out the massive sculpture depicting this event).

Yet another story goes on to say that Shivaratri marks the day Brahma and Vishnu got involved in an argument about their supremacy. It is believed that the angry Lord Shiva punished them by taking the form of a massive fire that spread across the length of the universe. Vishnu and Brahma then got into the race to find the end of the fire and prove their prowess. However, Brahma is believed to have resorted to a lie, and angered Shiva greatly who cursed that no one would ever pray to him.

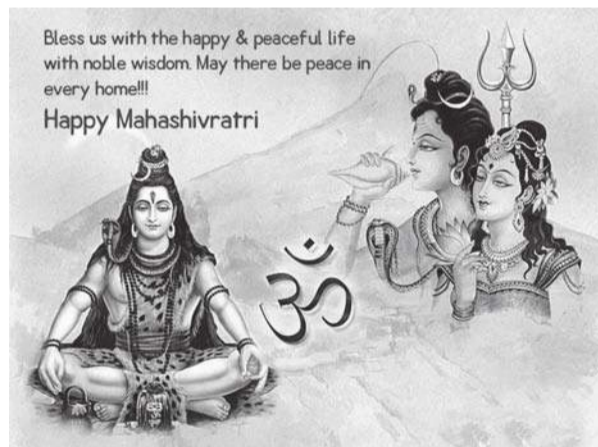
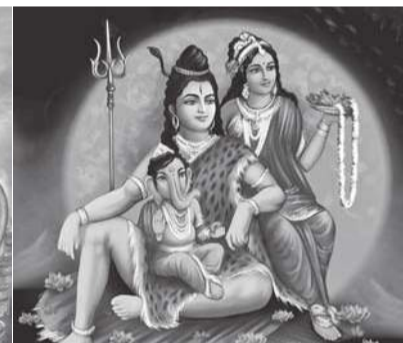
In the Shivaism tradition, this is the night when Shiva performed the glorious dance of creation.

SIGNIFICANCE

On this day, followers of Lord Shiva observe the special Maha Shivaratri vrat (fast). Devotees throng Kovils across the country, perform late evening pujas, offer milk to the Shivalingam and also pray for Moksha (Emancipation). Many spend the night chanting verses and hymns in praise of Lord Shiva. Women also pray to be blessed with a good husband and a happy married life. Some temples organise fairs and other cultural programmes on this day.

In India, Shivaratri has a great significance for the Kumbh Mela. The festival marks the end of the mega holy event which is celebrated every 12 years. It is believed that the people who fast on this day and offer prayers to Lord Shiva are blessed with good luck. The most popular Maha Shivaratri celebrations take place in Ujjain, India, which is believed to be the most sacred abode of Lord Shiva. Large processions are carried out throughout the city, with people thronging the streets to catch a glimpse of the revered idol of Lord Shiva.

Devotees of Shiva stay awake the entire night on this auspicious night of Shivaratri. Some perform pujas, chant Vedic mantras or Rudram, practice sadhana and meditation. These sacred practices bestow a sense of peace within us and oneness with the world.



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It is believed that whoever worships Lord Shiva on this day receives the grace of the Lord and attains Salvation. Fasting on this day can equal the benefits of a whole year's rigorous prayer. The scriptures quote Lord Shiva as promising that whoever worships Him, and fasts on Maha Shivaratri will be dearer to him than his own son Kartikeya.

On the occasion of Maha Shivaratri, devotees observe a day-long fast and worship Lord Shiva with great ardour. The Maha Shivaratri fast begins on the morning of the festival and ends the following morning. Fasting rules are the same for all Shivaratris, including the Maha Shivaratri. So, are you all set to soak deep in Bliss by fasting and praying on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri?

Here are a few fasting tips to help you stay healthy, hydrated, detoxified, and rejuvenated: physically and spiritually.

1. Prepare yourself mentally

Since you are observing a fast towards a sacred and pure cause, staying happy, calm and prayerful will help



you sail smoothly through the day. Be stress-free and happy, so you can feel energetic and keep your prakruti (innate nature) in balance - this will help you maintain your fast more easily.

2. Keep yourself well hydrated

Drink at least eight glasses of water while you are fasting to purify your body - it will help wash away toxins and waste. If you are fasting on water alone, increase the amount of water to match your body's requirements. This will also help you stay energized and avoid getting tired and hungry. However if your pitta (acidity) levels are too high, it would be better to follow a light diet along with water since this body type tends to release toxins too quickly.

3. Avoid heavy or strenuous physical activity

While you are fasting, it would best to avoid a heavy workout or any physically challenging work or activity to maintain your rate of metabolism and stay active all day. Instead, choose more sedentary pastimes such as working at your desk, reading spiritual books, listening to devotional music or, simply, meditating to rest your body and mind.

4. Choose liquids for detox

Fasting with a variety of liquid foods is a healthier option for people who find it tough to go hungry, or have health issues to consider. For example, pregnant women, and people with diabetes, digestive issues, severe weakness and such ailments.

You could include juices, milk, milkshakes, herbal tea, yoghurt, or buttermilk in your diet to help you get through your fast successfully.

5. Eat light (if you must)

If you choose to include fruits and light meals to your fast, make sure the food is soft and in limited quantities. It would help to avoid raw, chewy foodstuff, or simply too much food or fruits. This is because the physical act of chewing sends a signal to the stomach to activate the digestive system and release digestive juices initiating hunger pangs.

Pulses, rice, wheat, and table salt may be replaced with potatoes, yams, fruits such as bananas, papaya, and melons in your Shivaratri fast. Use rock salt to maintain taste in your diet. Do check with an Ayurveda doctor to know if your body type is suitable for fasting or not.

Before you enter the fast, make sure you have small and frequent meals in preparation. When you are about to break your fast, ensure that you choose to eat small portions of easily-digestible food that is high in fibre and protein, and low in calories. These healthy fasting tips can enable you to cleanse yourself inside out. Your focus can then be on the crux of your fast - achieving a focused meditative state to, ultimately, be one with the Divine.



'SHOOT ME INSTEAD': Myanmar nun pleads with junta forces



A nun pleading with Police not to harm protesters in Myitkyina in Myanmar's Kachin state, amid a crackdown on demonstrations against the military coup. - AFP

MYANMAR: Kneeling before them in the dust of a northern Myanmar city, Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng begged a group of heavily armed Police officers to spare "the children" and take her life instead.

The image of the Catholic nun in a simple white habit, her hands spread, pleading with the forces of the country's new junta as they prepared to crack down on a protest, has gone viral and won her praise in the majority-Buddhist country.

"I knelt down... begging them not to shoot and torture the children, but to shoot me and kill me instead," she told AFP on Tuesday.

Her act of bravery in the city of Myitkyina on Monday came as Myanmar struggles with the chaotic aftermath of the military's February 1 ouster of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

As protests demanding the

return of democracy have rolled on, the junta has steadily escalated its use of force, using tear gas, water cannon, rubber bullets, and live rounds.

Protesters took to the streets of Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin state, on Monday wearing hard hats and carrying homemade shields.

As police started massing around them, Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng and two other nuns pleaded with them to leave.

"The police were chasing to arrest them and I was worried for the children," she said.

It was at that point that the 45-year-old nun fell to her knees.

Moments later, as she was begging for restraint, the police started firing into the crowd of protesters behind her.

"The children panicked and ran to the front... I couldn't do anything but I was praying for

God to save and help the children," she said. First she saw a man shot in the head fall dead in front of her - then she felt the sting of tear gas.

"I felt like the world was crashing," she said.

"I'm very sad it happened as I was begging them."

Monday was not Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng's first encounter with the security forces - on February 28 she made a similar plea for mercy, walking slowly towards police in riot gear, getting on her knees and pleading for them to stop.

"I have thought myself dead already since February 28," she said of the day she made the decision to stand up to the armed police.

On Monday, she was joined by her fellow sisters and the local bishop, who surrounded her as she pleaded for mercy for the protesters.

"We were there to protect our sister and our people because she had her life at risk," Sister Mary John Paul told AFP.

The city has seen frequent crackdowns from authorities since the coup, including a violent dispersal of peaceful teachers last month that sent several into hiding.

So far, more than 60 people have been killed in anti-coup demonstrations around the country, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners monitoring group.

Fear runs deep for Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng, but she said she must be brave and will continue to stand up for "the children".

"I can't stand and watch without doing anything, seeing what's happening in front of my eyes while all Myanmar is grieving," she said.

- AFP

China and Russia to launch lunar space station

RUSSIA: Russia and China unveiled plans Tuesday for a joint lunar space station, as Moscow seeks to recapture the glory of its space pioneering days of Soviet times, and Beijing gears up its own extraterrestrial ambitions.

Moscow was once at the forefront of space travel - it sent the first man into space - its cosmic ambitions have dimmed thanks to poor financing and endemic corruption.

The Russian space agency Roscosmos said in a statement that it had signed an agreement with China's National Space Administration (CNSA) to develop a "complex of experimental research facilities created on the surface and/or in the orbit of the Moon".

The CNSA, for its part, said that the project was "open to all interested countries and international partners" in what experts said would be China's biggest international space cooperation project to date.

This year, it celebrates the 60th anniversary of Russia's first-ever manned space flight - it sent Yuri Gagarin into space in April 1961, followed by the first woman, Valentina Tereshkova, two years later. In the meantime, China - which has sought closer partnership with Moscow - has started a successful space programme of its own. Last year, it launched its Tianwen-1 probe to Mars that is currently orbiting the Red Planet.

And in December, it successfully brought rock and soil samples from the Moon back to Earth, the first mission of this type in over 40 years.

- AFP



Russia and China are joining forces to establish a research base on the moon that will rival NASA's Lunar Gateway.

AT LEAST 39 MIGRANTS DROWN OFF TUNISIA

TUNISIA: At least 39 migrants drowned off Tunisia when two boats capsized on Tuesday, the defence ministry said, as numbers risking the dangerous crossing to Europe continue to rise.

Rescuers pulled 165 survivors from the floundering boats out of the sea to safety.

Defence ministry spokesman Mohamed Zekri said later that the search had been "temporarily suspended due to nightfall and bad weather".

Since the beginning of 2021, 94 migrant boats



Migrants from one of the two capsized boats swimming to safety off the Tunisian coast.

have been intercepted, according to a count

of 2020. Meanwhile, 1,736 people have been arrested for attempting the crossing, around double the number in the same period last year.

Between January 1 and March 7, 5,685 migrants arrived on Italian coasts illegally by sea, according to the UN refugee agency, including more than 1,500 via Tunisia, and 3,500 via neighbouring Libya. According to the UN, at least 252 migrants have died in the Mediterranean since January 1, and around 1,200 perished

last year. - AFP

FBI releases new footage of Washington pipe bomb suspect

US: The FBI on Tuesday released new images of the man suspected of placing homemade pipe bombs in Washington on January 5 - the night before the assault on the US Capitol - in an effort to gather identifying information about him.

The video, published on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's official YouTube channel, shows several angles of surveillance footage of the suspect as he walks along streets in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of the city.

Dressed in dark pants, a light-colored hoodie and gloves, the man's face is obscured by glasses and a mask as he carries a bag in one hand.

The FBI had already released still photos of the suspect - including ones that showed identifying details of his Nike sneakers - offering \$100,000 for any informa-



This screengrab made from surveillance footage released by the FBI shows the person suspected of placing pipe bombs in Washington, DC, on January 5, 2021.

tion leading to his arrest. The man is suspected of planting the homemade bombs near the headquarters of both the Republican and Democratic parties, which are near the Capitol.

Five people died in the course of the Capitol attack January 6, and more than 300 people have been arrested for their participation so far, including some charged with conspiracy. - AFP

MASSIVE VEHICLES AUCTION SALE

12th of March
MIHILAKA MEDURA, BAUDHALOKA MAWATHA, COLOMBO 07

BMICH

On View - **08th to 11th March 2021**
Between 9.00 am - 5.00 pm (Vehicles cannot be inspected on the day of Auction)

NO. 162, MAIN STREET, AMBALANTHOTA - KAVINDU 0475118080
NO. 42/5, GOTHATHUWA GAMSADHA RD, GOTHATHUWA - MAHESH 0773493535
NO. 260, GRANDPASS RD, COLOMBO 14 - HASITHA 0707951865
NO. 98 / 1, AVISSANELLA RD, MAHABUTHGAMUWA, WELLMPTIYA JAYANTHA - 0773242324
NEAR THE PEOPLE'S BANK, WIMMA MAWATHA, MAHUGAMA - PRAMODA 0775634245
NO 472 E., MALAWA, KURUMITA - ISHANKA 0772752097

(Please refer the Daily News On 05th of March 2021 For the Full List Of Vehicles)

14th of March
GALWETIYAYA ROAD, SAMPATH WATTA, DAMBULLA

HOTEL GOLDEN RAY

On View - **09th to 13th March 2021**
(Including salvage Cabins)

ETHABENDIWEWA ROAD, TALAKKIRIYAGAMA, DAMBULLA - CHAMINDA 066518181
NO 223, KANDY ROAD, AMPARA - SAMANTHA 053-378980/851
NO 363, MANKAR ROAD, VEPPANKULAM, VAUVINHA - THIMOTHY 0766582329
NO. 181A, NEPPELIPOLA ROAD, BADULLA - LAHIRU 0554549948

(Please refer the Daily News On 08th of March 2021 For the Full List Of Vehicles)

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SCHOKMAN & SAMERAWICKREME
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Head Office & Showroom: 34, Torrington Road, Kandy Tel: 081 222790 Fax: 081 2224773 Email: schokmankandy@lolc.lk

City Office & Showroom: No.6A, Fairfield Gardens, Colombo 8 Tel: 011 2671065, 011 2671106 Fax: 011 2673109 Email: schokme@schokme.lk

Web: www.lolcfinance.lk

09.03.2021 TOTAL PRIZE WINNERS PRODUCED BY NATIONAL LOTTERIES BOARD 749,893

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY DISTRIBUTED AMONG WINNERS 41,649,308.00

Super Prize Rs. 13,161,528.00 01 Rs.1,000,000.00 PRIZES 02 Rs.1,00,000.00 PRIZES 26

MAHAJANA SAMPATHA

DATE: 09-03-2021

WINNING LETTER **L** WINNING NUMBERS **8 2 7 1 0 5**

Prize structure - from right to left	Number of winners
Super Prize L 8 2 7 1 0 5 Rs.13,161,528/-	01
1st Prize 8 2 7 1 0 5 Rs. 2,000,000/-	12
2nd Prize 7 1 0 5 Rs. 100,000/-	131
3rd Prize 7 1 0 5 Rs. 10,000/-	1,293
4th Prize 1 0 5 Rs. 1,000/-	12,937
5th Prize 0 5 Rs. 100/-	127,631
6th Prize 5 Rs. 20/-	

Prize structure - from left to right

Prize	Number of winners
7th Prize 8 2 7 1 0 Rs. 10,000/-	14
8th Prize 8 2 7 1 Rs. 1,000/-	124
9th Prize 8 2 7 Rs. 100/-	1,313
10th Prize 8 2 Rs. 50/-	12,798
11th Prize L Rs. 20/-	50,953

Value of prizes won in this draw - Rs. 22,865,108.00

Prizes of Rs.500,000/- or over are liable to Govt. taxes. Winners must produce the National ID card and claim prizes. Winning tickets are valid for a period of six months from the date of the draw.

The Super Prize of next draw **Rs. 10,000,000.00**

NATIONAL LOTTERIES BOARD
32, Deshamanya N. W. J. Muddige Mawatha, Colombo 01.
Tel: 011-4607000, 011-2324324, Fax: 011-4665416, www.nlb.lk

OFFICIAL RESULTS

DRAW DATE: 09/03/2021

ENGLISH LETTER: **P** WINNING NUMBERS: **16 21 24 36**

COMBINATION	PRICE	NO. OF WINNERS
1 PRIZE IF ALL 4 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 1,000,000.00	01
2 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY 3 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 100,000.00	08
3 PRIZE IF ANY 3 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 2,000.00	180
4 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY 2 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 1,000.00	408
5 PRIZE IF ANY 2 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 100.00	10,132
6 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY NUMBER CORRECT	Rs. 40.00	6,626
7 PRIZE IF ANY NUMBER CORRECT	Rs. 20.00	166,604
8 PRIZE IF ONLY THE LETTER IS CORRECT	Rs. 20.00	30,586

TOTAL WINNERS OF THIS DRAW **214,545**

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY WON IN THIS DRAW **Rs. 7,790,040.00**

SUPER PRIZE FOR THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 72,176,407.60**

Winning tickets are valid for a period of six months from the date of the draw. Prizes over Rs. 500,000/- are liable to government taxes. To obtain prizes, Presenting National Identity card is a must.

TOTAL PRIZES WON IN THIS DRAW **Rs. 2,905,040.00**

Winning tickets are valid for a period of six months from the date of the draw. Prizes over Rs. 500,000/- are liable to government taxes. To obtain prizes, Presenting National Identity card is a must.

SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 3,046,932.40**

NATIONAL LOTTERIES BOARD
No. 32, Deshamanya N. W. J. Muddige Mawatha, Colombo 01.
Phone : 0114 607 000, 0112 324 324 Fax : 0114 663 416 Web : www.nlb.lk

Govisetha

OFFICIAL RESULTS

DRAW NUMBER: 2716 DRAW DATE: 09/03/2021

ENGLISH LETTER: **P** WINNING NUMBERS: **16 21 24 36**

COMBINATION	PRICE	NO. OF WINNERS
1 PRIZE IF ALL 4 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 1,000,000.00	01
2 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY 3 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 100,000.00	08
3 PRIZE IF ANY 3 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 2,000.00	180
4 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY 2 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 1,000.00	408
5 PRIZE IF ANY 2 NUMBERS CORRECT	Rs. 100.00	10,132
6 PRIZE IF LETTER & ANY NUMBER CORRECT	Rs. 40.00	6,626
7 PRIZE IF ANY NUMBER CORRECT	Rs. 20.00	166,604
8 PRIZE IF ONLY THE LETTER IS CORRECT	Rs. 20.00	30,586

TOTAL WINNERS OF THIS DRAW **214,545**

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY WON IN THIS DRAW **Rs. 7,790,040.00**

SUPER PRIZE FOR THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 72,176,407.60**

Winning tickets are valid for a period of six months from the date of the draw. Prizes over Rs. 500,000/- are liable to government taxes. To obtain prizes, Presenting National Identity card is a must.

TOTAL PRIZES WON IN THIS DRAW **Rs. 2,905,040.00**

Winning tickets are valid for a period of six months from the date of the draw. Prizes over Rs. 500,000/- are liable to government taxes. To obtain prizes, Presenting National Identity card is a must.

SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 3,046,932.40**

NATIONAL LOTTERIES BOARD
No. 32, Deshamanya N. W. J. Muddige Mawatha, Colombo 01.
Phone : 0114 607 000, 0112 324 324 Fax : 0114 663 416 Web : www.nlb.lk

Mega Power

OFFICIAL RESULTS

DATE: 09.03.2021

ENGLISH LETTER: **Z** WINNING NUMBERS: **09 02 34 50 55**

PRIZE STRUCTURE	PRIZE MONEY	NO. OF WINNERS
1st PRIZE If all 4 Numbers are correct	1,000,000.00	01
2nd PRIZE If any 3 Numbers with English Letter is correct	100,000.00	02
3rd PRIZE If all 3 Numbers are correct	5,000.00	95
4th PRIZE If any 2 Numbers with English Letter is correct	500.00	246
5th PRIZE Only 2 Numbers are correct	100.00	5,532
6th PRIZE If any 1 Number with English Letter is correct	40.00	3,625
7th PRIZE Only 1 Number are correct	20.00	90,293
8th PRIZE Only English Letter are correct	20.00	16,534

Next Mega Super Prize **Rs. 121,493,402.80**

Next Power Super Prize **Rs. 20,938,204.80**

Next Grand Super Prize **Rs. 32,869,777.60**

Total Prizes Won In This Draw **Rs. 3,252,540.00**

Prizes of Over Rs. 5 lakhs are subject to the government tax regulations.
Winners must produce National Identity Card to receive prizes.
Winning tickets are valid from the date of the draw for a period of 6 months only.

DHANA NIDHANAYA

Official Results

Date - 09/03/2021

Draw Number - 458

ENGLISH LETTER: **D** WINNING NUMBER: **02 21 24 76**

COMBINATION	PRIZE	NO. OF WINNERS
1 st Prize If all 4 numbers are correct	Rs. 1,000,000.00	01
2 nd Prize If (English Letter and 1 number) are correct	Rs. 100,000.00	04
3 rd Prize If any 3 numbers are correct	Rs. 3,000.00	96
4 th Prize If (English Letter and 2 numbers) are correct	Rs. 1,000.00	211
5 th Prize If any 2 numbers are correct	Rs. 100.00	5,443
6 th Prize If (English Letter and 1 number) is correct	Rs. 60.00	3,638
7 th Prize If 1 number is correct	Rs. 20.00	91,451
8 th Prize If only English Letter is correct	Rs. 20.00	17,296

Total prize money won in this draw **Rs. 4,836,580.00**
Number of Prize Winners in this draw **118,143**

Next Draw Super Prize **Rs. 86,936,991.60**

Prizes of Over Rs. 5 lakhs are subject to the government tax regulations.
Winners must produce National Identity Card to receive prizes.
Winning tickets are valid from the date of the draw for a period of 6 months only.

Red Cross warns of glaring gap in vaccine roll-out

SWITZERLAND: The Red Cross warned Wednesday of a glaring gap in the plans to roll out COVID-19 vaccines around the world, saying remote communities risked missing out.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is aiming to help vaccinate 500 million people against the disease.

The IFRC, which calls itself the world's largest humanitarian network, is planning to throw its expertise into the distribution and acceptance of vaccines among some of the hardest-to-reach communities.

But it said that while the procurement of vaccines and delivery to airport hubs was crucial, "too little thought" had been given to the next step: how those doses would be distributed within countries, including the "last mile" in getting to those furthest away.

The Geneva-based federation said

it needed 100 million Swiss francs (\$111 million, 92.5 million euros) to fill the logistics gap between vaccines reaching airports in capital cities, and remote settlements.

The IFRC is planning to bolster national vaccination efforts, including supporting logistics and countering misinformation about vaccine efficacy.

The Covax global vaccine-sharing facility shipped more than 20 million doses to 20 countries as the scheme aimed at ensuring poorer nations get access to jabs took off last week.

Covax is aiming to distribute another 14.4 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to 31 more countries this week.

"Initiatives like Covax ensure that vaccines will reach the tarmac of airports in the capital cities of participating countries," said Rocca.

- AFP



Red Cross volunteers advising a woman on taking precautions against the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa.



Nepal ruling party splits after losing name

NEPAL: Nepal's ruling party of ex-Maoist rebels and fellow Communists split on Tuesday after the top elections body ruled its name was unlawful, pushing the country into further political uncertainty.

The Himalayan nation has been roiled by months of turmoil after Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli dissolved Parliament in December and accused members of his Nepal Communist Party (NCP) of being uncooperative.

The NCP was formed in 2018 by a merger between Oli's Communist Party CPN-UML and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) of former rebel leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

But the party had no right to the NCP name, the Supreme Court ruled Sunday because another, separate communist faction was already using it.

On Tuesday the Election Commission con-

curred, and said it had "dismissed" Oli's NCP - which had held a rare two-thirds parliamentary majority - from the electoral register.

CPN (Maoist Centre) member Girirajmani Pokharel told AFP the dissolution had sparked discussions in his faction of the party about "whether to withdraw support from the government". No decision has been made, he added.

The NCP's triumph over the incumbent Nepali Congress party - the third major political force in the country - had been seen as the final step in Nepal's post-war transformation into a republic. Brittle alliances have been struck between Nepal's three dominant parties since 2008, and there was hope a majority government would bring stability and much-needed development to the nation.

- AFP



Nepali Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli.

Myanmar Security Forces target striking railway workers



Railway staff carry their belongings as they flee over the train tracks after Security Forces arrived at Mahlawone Railway Station to arrest workers involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), in protest over the military coup, in Yangon, Myanmar on Wednesday. - AFP

MYANMAR: Hundreds of soldiers and police swooped on a railway station in Yangon on Wednesday seeking to arrest workers on strike to protest against the military coup in Myanmar.

The country has been in turmoil since the military ousted and detained civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi last month, triggering daily protests around the country to demand the return of democracy.

Security forces have responded with an increasingly brutal crackdown involving tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets, as

well as isolated incidents of live rounds.

Close to 2,000 people have been arrested and the death toll has climbed to more than 60.

Thousands of Government workers across the country have been participating in a civil disobedience movement aimed at choking the state's institutions and paralysing the economy.

The movement has resulted in hospital disruptions, bank closures and empty ministry offices.

Hundreds of soldiers and police were deployed to Ma Hlwa Gone railway station

and its staff housing compound early Wednesday morning where about 800 workers are participating in strike action.

"We are united," railway workers chanted as authorities blocked off a road, according to a live feed on Facebook. It was another restless night in parts of Yangon Tuesday, with security forces setting fire to protesters' makeshift barricades at Thingangyun township.

The military has sought to stem the flow of news of its crackdown, throttling the country's internet every night and stepping up pressure on

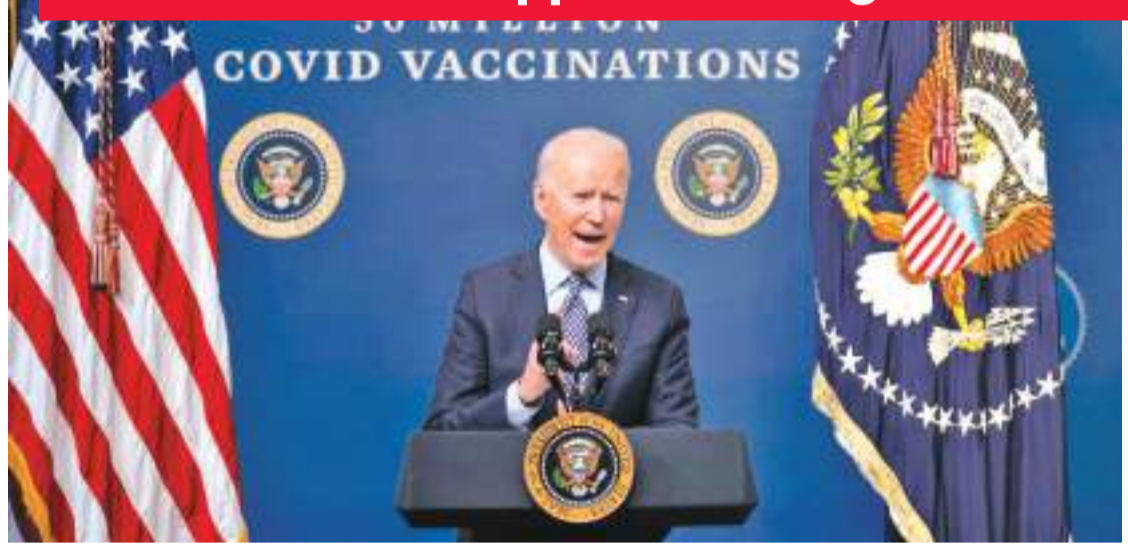
independent media. The offices of two media outlets, Mizzima and Kamaryut Media, were raided on Tuesday, after Myanmar Now was targeted the previous day.

Five media organisations also had their publishing licences revoked on Monday.

Reporters Without Borders condemned the ongoing media crackdown and characterised the raids as "a shocking act of intimidation".

It said at least 28 journalists had been arrested since the coup and about 11 were still in custody including an Associated Press photographer. - AFP

Biden has 60% approval rating, with 70% approval for his handling of COVID-19 - Poll



US President Joe Biden speaking about the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

US: US President Joe Biden is enjoying an early presidential honeymoon, with 60% of Americans approving of his job performance thus far and even more backing his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

At a moment of deep political polarization in America, support for Biden's pandemic response extends across party lines. Overall, 70% of Americans back the Democratic president's handling of the virus response, including 44% of Republicans.

Still, Biden faces more skepticism from Americans on the economy, which has been battered by the

pandemic. Fifty-five percent of Americans approve of Biden's approach to the economy thus far, and 63% say the U.S. economy is in poor shape, the AP-NORC survey shows. Republicans are also less likely to back Biden on the economy than they are on the pandemic, with just 17% supporting his fiscal stewardship.

Less than two months into his Presidency, Biden has made the pandemic his central focus, urging Americans to follow stringent social distancing and mask guidelines and vowing to speed up distribution of critical vaccines. He's also argued that until the spread of the virus is under control, the economy won't fully recover.

In a reflection of the partisanship that continues to rage in the U.S., many Americans' views of the economy have flipped since the new President was inaugurated. In December, 67% of Republicans and just 15% of Democrats described the economy as good. Now, 35% of Republicans and 41% of Democrats describe the economy positively. There's been little change in overall growth or unemployment over that time.

His promises of action have garnered him solid approval ratings on some of those fronts. For example, about 6 in 10 Americans say they approve of Biden's handling of health care and race relations.

- YAHOO NEWS

Queen vows to address Harry and Meghan racism claims



An arrangement of UK daily newspapers photographed as an illustration in Brenchley, Kent on March 9, 2021, shows front page headlines reporting on the story of the interview given by Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, wife of Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, to Oprah Winfrey, which aired on UK broadcaster ITV. - AFP

UK: Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday responded to explosive racism claims from grandson Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, voicing deep concern and sympathising with their troubles with royal life.

"The whole family is saddened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years have been for Harry and Meghan," she said in a statement.

"The issues raised, particularly that of race, are concerning. While some recollections may vary, they are taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately."

Buckingham Palace has come under mounting pressure to respond to the claims made in an Oprah Winfrey interview first broadcast on Sunday, which triggered a crisis unseen since the 1990s.

A YouGov poll of 4,656 people after the interview aired on British television on Monday indicated almost a third (32 percent) felt the couple was unfairly treated, the same proportion as those who thought the opposite.

Over 17 million viewers watched Winfrey's two-hour interview with

Harry and Meghan on US broadcaster CBS on Sunday night.

More than 11 million people then tuned in to watch it in full on Britain's ITV, the channel said.

The racism claims left interviewer Oprah Winfrey open-mouthed, but have so far not led to any official response from Buckingham Palace, which newspapers reported had been left in turmoil.

The Daily Mail, which devoted 25 pages of coverage to the "toxic" claims, headlined its front page: "What have they done?"

The Times newspaper said Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, wanted more time to consider her reply.

Prince Charles, meanwhile visited a COVID-19 vaccination centre at a northwest London church on Tuesday, in his first public appearance since the row erupted.

One worker told him she was from Nigeria, which the Prince said he had visited. "Lots of different ethnic groups," he said.

"Do give them my regards next time you speak to them."

But Charles did not respond to questions about what he thought about the interview, which has divided public opinion.

A YouGov poll of 4,656 people after it aired on British television on Monday indicated almost a third (32 percent) felt the couple was unfairly treated, the same proportion as those who thought the opposite.

But older people were more likely to side with royals, the poll suggested.

- AFP



Queen Elizabeth II.

China pioneers 'virus passports'



An airport worker assists travellers at China's Wuhan Tianhe International Airport.

CHINA: China has launched a system of "virus passports" to kickstart international travel, as Russia sealed its first deal on Tuesday to manufacture the Sputnik V jab in the European Union.

While other nations like Brazil and Mexico are still struggling to get the pandemic under control, Chinese citizens can download the new certificates and use them to enter and leave the country.

Hailed as the world's first virus passport - similar schemes are also under discussion in the United States and the EU - but the Chinese scheme is not mandatory.

Furthermore, as it is only available for Chinese citizens, it is not yet clear how it could work internationally.

Europe, by contrast, is still struggling to step up its rollout, even if officials promise 100 million shots will enter the EU each month from April to June.

The EU was given an additional boost, with an announcement that 10 million doses of the Sputnik V jab would be produced in Italy in the second half of 2021.

A day after International Women's Day, World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that violence against women "has been exacerbated by the pandemic" - although it was already "endemic in every country and culture".

Worldwide, nearly one in three women and girls over the age of 15 - around 736 million people - have suffered violence at some time in their lives, mostly at the hands of intimate partners according to a WHO report.

The virus and the severe restrictions imposed to battle its spread have crushed global economic growth and plunged millions into poverty.

- AFP

WORLD OF SPORTS

(March 11) LOCAL EVENTS CRICKET

(SLC T20 Tournament):
Negombo CC vs Galle CC at P. Sara Oval
Navy SC vs Sebastianites CC at NCC Grounds
Badureliya SC vs BRC at P. Sara Oval
Panadura SC vs Tamil Union at NCC Grounds

TENNIS

SSC Open Tournament at Maitland Place

FOREIGN EVENTS CRICKET

Afghanistan vs Zimbabwe (2nd Test) at Abu Dhabi (2nd day)
(Road Safety World Series):
England Legends vs South Africa Legends at Rajpur (Australian One-Day Cup):
Queensland vs Western Australia at Brisbane
South Australia vs Tasmania at Melbourne

TENNIS

Chile Open at San Carlos de Apoquindo
Open 13 Provence at Marseille, France
Dubai Duty Free Championship in Dubai

CYCLING

Paris-Nice Tour (Stage-5)

GOLF

Qatar Masters in Doha
The Players Championship in Florida, US

SL discard Lakshan fires Colts to victory

Sri Lanka discard Dhananjaya Lakshan hit a fine 63 in 47 balls inclusive of three sixes and one boundary as Colts CC beat Bloomfield by 20 runs in their SLC Twenty20 Cricket Tournament fixture played at the CCC Grounds in Maitland Crescent yesterday.

Colts CC were struggling at 69 for four after 11 overs but promising all-rounder Lakshan showed his batting prowess and helped his team to rebuild the innings. Bloomfield in reply, made a solid start through their openers Kasun Ekanayake (18) and Dilhan Cooray (15) but leg-spinner Saranga Rajaguru produced a tidy spell of three for 22 as Bloomfield were restricted to 126 for six wickets from their 20 overs.

Meanwhile, CCC beat Kandy Customs CC by four wickets while Chilaw Marians CC defeated Police SC by 34 runs.

In addition, Army SC recorded an easy seven-wicket win over Sebastianites CC at Katunayake.

Chief scores
At CCC Grounds (Colts CC won by 20 runs)
Colts CC: 146/8 in 20 overs (Sangeeth Cooray 33, Dhananjaya Lakshan 63)

Bloomfield: 126/6 in 20 overs (Sachin Jayawardena 32, Saranga Rajaguru 3/22).

At SSC Grounds (CCC won by four wickets)
Kandy Customs CC: 91 in 18.4 overs (Vishva Wijeratne 36, Lahiru Madushanka 3/25, Malinda Pushpakumra 4/9)

CCC: 92/6 in 15.3 overs (Lasith Abeyratne 53, Isitha Wijesundara 3/24, Sachintha Perera 3/13).

At Colts Grounds (Chilaw Marians CC won by 34 runs)
Chilaw Marians CC: 164/7 in 20 overs (Thikshila de Silva 54, Rumeshe Buddhika 36, Malith de Silva 3/2)

Police SC: 130/8 in 20 overs (Pulina Tharanga 3/23).

At Katunayake (Army SC won by seven wickets)
Sebastianites CC: 141/4 in 20 overs (Sameen Kandaneerachchi 55)

Army SC: 143/3 in 16.3 overs (Asela Gunaratne 58 n.o., Himasha Liyanage 51 n.o.)

At Katunayake (No result)
Saracens SC: 132/7 in 19 overs vs Navy SC.

At SSC Grounds (No result)
Nugegoda SC: 164/8 in 19 overs vs BRC. (D.R)



Dhananjaya Lakshan

Pathum, Ashen make ODI debut for SL

Pathum Nissanka and Ashen Bandara made their One Day International (ODI) debut for Sri Lanka during the first ODI against the West Indies worked off at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua yesterday.

Sri Lanka Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne won the toss and elected to bat

first in this match which is also part of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League.

The teams:
Sri Lanka: Dimuth Karunaratne (Captain), Danushka Gunathilaka, Pathum Nissanka, Dinesh Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Ashen Bandara, Kamindu Mendis, Wanindu

Hasaranga, Dushmantha Chameera, Lakshan Sandakan and Nuwan Pradeep.

West Indies: Shai Hope, Evin Lewis, Jason Mohammed, Darren Bravo, Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard (Captain), Jason Holder, Fabian Allen, Romario Shepherd, Alzarri Joseph and Akeal Hosein.

All-round Liyanage steers St. Peter's to easy win

Vinuda Liyanage produced a fine all-round performance as St. Peter's College defeated St. John's College, Jaffna by 141 runs in their Inter-Schools Under-19 limited over cricket encounter played at Bambalapitiya yesterday.

The Pateries scored 225 for eight from their allotted 50 overs and in reply, the visitors were bundled out for 84 runs in just 22.1 overs.

Liyanage top scored with 45 in 38 balls inclusive of three fours and a six and the right-arm medium paceman followed up with figures of three for 30.

Meanwhile, Thurstan

College took major honors in their traditional match against Ananda College, which ended in a draw at Ananda Mawatha yesterday.

Chief scores
At Bambalapitiya (St. Peter's won by 141 runs)
St. Peter's: 225/8 in 50 overs (Shenal Boteju 24, Shanshaya Gunatilleka 39, Lahiru Chetaka 38, Wanuja Kumara 22, Vinuda Liyanage 45, S. Anton 3/60)

St. John's: 84 in 22.1 overs (Dinoshan Theiventhiram 34, Vinuda Liyanage 3/30, Christian de Zilva 2/13, Wanuka Kumara 2/22, Chamelka de Silva 3/14).



Vinuda Liyanage

At Ananda Mawatha (Match drawn)
Ananda: 149 and 62/4 (Nethma Karunaratne 23 n.o., Vihase Thewmiha 2/21)

Thurstan: 222 (Tharindu Harshana 54, Vihanga Jayanama 34, Bhavantha Jayasinghe 50, Saviru Bandara 6/75, Shakthi Udara 2/51). (D.R)

Royal-Thomian golf encounter ends in a tie

The Annual Royal-Thomian golf encounter played for the Fred De Saram Trophy, ended in an exciting tie at the Royal Colombo Golf Club (RCGC) on Sunday.

There were 30 4-ball flights during the championship with 28 (18-hole) encounters and two (nine-hole) encounters for seniors.

Interestingly the results

ended in a 29-all deadlock with 14 Royalists and 14 Thomian golfers sharing the spoils. The seniors shared one point after their deadlock.

However, by virtue of Royal winning the encounter during the last two events, the Royal Team led by Suresh Subramaniam carried away the Fred De Saram Trophy. (AN)



Jonny De Saram (right), Captain of S. Thomas' Team and the grandson of Fred De Saram, handing over the Trophy to Suresh Subramaniam

Hasal and Vishmi clinch U-18 tennis titles

Hasal Ahangama and Vishmi Serasinghe clinched the Boys' and Girls' Under-18 Singles titles respectively at the SSC Open Tennis Tournament, which continued at the SSC Courts in Maitland Place yesterday.

Ahangama of Ananda College defeated Ransath Peiris 6-0, 6-2 in the Boys' Under-18 final while Serasinghe from Ave Maria Convent, Negombo had the better of Anitha Dharmaratne 6-3, 6-1 in the Boys' Under-18 final.

The results:

Girls' Under-18 Singles final: Vishmi Serasinghe beat Anitha Dharmaratne 6-3, 6-1.

Boys' Under-18 Singles final: Hasal Ahangama beat Ransath Peiris 6-0, 6-2.

Boys' Under-18 Doubles semi-finals: Thehan Wijemanne and Methvan Wijemanne beat Hesara Kuruppu and Thushan Senanayake 4-1, 5-3 (3).



Vishmi Serasinghe celebrates with the trophy



Hasal Ahangama celebrates with the trophy

SLA to focus on Olympics and Asian Games

DHAMMIKA RATNAWEERA

Sri Lanka Athletics (SLA) will mainly focus on the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games and the Asian Games in 2022, according to Major General Palitha Fernando, President of SLA.

"We have a good plan to prepare for these two major events and already SLA has formed the new Elite Pool and the new National Pool, which was cho-

sen following the National Championships," he stressed.

"The Sports Ministry and the Sports Development Department have provided all facilities including nutrition and accommodation for these two pools and now the athletes' responsibilities are to develop their skills."

"There are 21 athletes (10 Men and 11 Women) training with the Elite Pool while 20

athletes (14 Men and six Women) are training in the National Pool," he elaborated.

"We are planning to conduct the selection trials from April 8 to 10 while the 99th National Athletics Championships is scheduled to be held from May 20 to 23.

"The April trials will be an opportunity for athletes to be selected for the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games by achieving

direct qualification standards, or by increasing their present World Ranking positions with a good performance," he explained.

Meanwhile, marathon runner Hiruni Wijayarathne, who is based in USA is also preparing for the Olympics while sprinter Yupun Abeykoon, who is based in Italy is in good form having set up a National and South Asian 100m record.



Major General Palitha Fernando

Asghar, Hashmatullah put Afghanistan in a strong position



Asghar Afghan plays a shot

Asghar Afghan and Hashmatullah Shahidi played contrasting knocks but put on an unbeaten 214-run stand for the fourth wicket to help Afghanistan to a strong position on the opening day of the second Test against Zimbabwe, in Abu Dhabi, yesterday.

The Afghanistan Skipper notched-up his maiden Test century in a stroke-filled innings, where he hit 12 boundaries and 2 sixes, heading to stumps unbeaten on a 135-ball 106.

He reached the mark by dispatching Victor Nyauchi's length ball to the mid-wicket boundary. Having stroked three half-centuries previously, Afghan showed no signs of nerves as he reached closer to the three-figure mark.

Before the boundary that helped him cross the 100-mark late in the day, he had hit the bowler for a six through the

backward square leg region for a six and followed it up by pummeling him for another boundary, pacing from 85 to 101 in only six deliveries of the 84th over of the day.

Shahidi, on the other hand, played a far more sedate and watchful hand, occupying the crease for 229 balls for his unbeaten 86.

Unlike his Skipper, he dug in the last hour of the day, adding only 13 runs to his score, which included only a solitary boundary.

Nonetheless, his role in the partnership was critical for Afghanistan to seize the advantage on the opening day even as for most parts even before that, they were in front of Zimbabwe.

Chief scores
Afghanistan: 307/3 (Asghar Afghan 106 n.o., Hashmatullah Shahidi 86 n.o., Ibrahim Zadran 72) vs Zimbabwe. (Agencies)



Western Province beat North Western Province 23-9 in the Dialog Netball Rising Stars Provincial Netball Tournament final played at the Torrington Grounds in Colombo on Monday. Pictured here are Amali Nanayakkara, Group Chief Marketing Officer, Dialog Axiata PLC and Anuradha Wijekoon, Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports, handing over the champions trophy to Chamudi Wickramaratne, Captain of the Western Province Team. Also in the picture is Limini Rajapaksa, wife of Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa

Daily News Business

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Lanka's foreign policy to be aligned to economic recovery - Prof. Jayanath



DINESH PERERA
Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Jayanath Colombage noted that Sri Lanka's foreign policy would be aligned to an economic recovery following the fallout caused by COVID-19.

Prof. Colombage was defending Sri Lanka and the government's track record on the Al Jazeera network. Prof. Colombage showed that military involvement in domestic affairs in Sri Lanka was on par with other countries. Colombage called on the international commu-

nity to realize the lack of popularity of the politicians that co-sponsored the UN resolution against the country.

Prof. Colombage said, "we are going through a very difficult time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has slowed down the world economy and it has impacted quite harshly on a small economy like Sri Lanka. We have a huge task to overcome the economic situation in the country. We have to give the injection to everyone and revive the economy. To do that we need foreign

direct investment." Prof. Colombage pointed to how Colin Powell with a military background was made Secretary of State in the US.

On his own appointment, Prof. Colombage said, "Just because someone serves in the military I do not think they should be limited from serving his country."

Prof. Colombage noted that many developed countries used the military when things got critical during COVID-19. Colombage was speaking to Al Jazeera on March 6.

The appointment of mili-

tary members in Sri Lanka was done to effectively combat COVID-19. Military officers in certain geographies were best placed to take control of the situation.

Prof. Colombage cited the Easter Sunday attacks as one of the worst failings of national security. He said, "The crux of the report is that the then government did not take any issue on national security. The religious extremists were able to carry out their dastardly act."

Prof. Colombage pointed to a lack of domestic legiti-

macy to the co-sponsored resolution at the UN. He said of the former ministers that brought the resolution, "Look at what happened to them? Not one of them is in politics today. They were all wiped out by the people."

He added on the resolution, "It was the greatest betrayal of the sovereignty of the country."

Prof. Colombage noted that a domestic mechanism for reconciliation existed and that Sri Lanka's statistics on the war remained impressive.



BOC takes Business Revival Clinic to Northern Province

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Cathay Pacific posts record \$2.8 bn loss for 2020

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways has reported a record annual loss of US\$2.8bn (£2bn) for 2020.

Its poor results were due to a sharp downturn in travel during the pandemic along with major restructuring costs.

Cathay Pacific had previously warned it expected its second-half losses to be worse than the record first-half loss of \$1.3bn. Last year's loss compared with a profit of \$220m in 2019, when profits were hit by political turmoil in Hong Kong. (BBC)

Commercial Leasing & Finance profits up by 47% in first 9M

Commercial Leasing & Finance PLC (CLC) delivered a powerhouse financial performance despite the wider economic and industry volatility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for the first nine months of the financial year ending December 31, 2020, despite challenging market conditions.

Its Profit Before Tax grew to Rs. 2.3 billion as at December 31, 2020, over the first nine months of the financial year under review. CLC recorded Profit After Tax of Rs. 1, 922 million, reflecting an increase of 65% over the previous year. Cost of funds reduced by 23% while overheads increased by only 3%. The Company's performance is a result of excellent management of its Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) and cost of funds, while sustaining revenues by maintaining its product mix optimally.

Further, CLC's total assets exceeded Rs. 72.2 billion during the period under review, making it one of the largest Non-Banking Finan-



Commercial Leasing and Finance Director/CEO Krishan Thilakarathne and Chairman Priyantha Fernando



cial Institutions in Sri Lanka. Equally significant is the growth of its deposit base by 19% during the period under review which reflects public confidence in the Company's financial stability. CLC's capital base exceeded Rs. 21 billion as at December 2020, recording a 19% increase, which is far above the regulatory requirement with a Tier One capital ratio of 20.95% against Central Bank of Sri Lanka's mandatory level of 6.5% and with Tier Two capital at 20.13% as against

the regulatory requirement of 10.5%. Executive Director, CEO Krishan Thilakarathne said, "Our excellent nine-month performance is a result of top notch credit quality maintained over the years. Looking ahead, we plan to further expand our branch network by 15 more branches in the next financial year in order to leverage the high equity and brand value enjoyed by CLC across the country."

As a further testimonial

to its robust financial performance, CLC was reaffirmed as SL (A) stable by ICRA Lanka Ltd., which reaffirms its stability for customers.

CLC Chairman Priyantha Fernando said, "CLC has recorded exceptional Profit Before Tax (PBT) and Profit After Tax (PAT) over the last 10 years – and in the same vein, we expect to close the 2020/21 year with a PBT between Rs.3.2 billion to 3.5 billion, which is an impressive achievement under the dismal market conditions – as indicated by these sound nine-month results."

During the period under review, we strengthened the risk management framework which has helped us to proceed on a more targeted path under the able leadership of the CEO and the management team."

Supporting customers in the time of need, CLC granted over 64,000 moratoriums during the year to those whose livelihoods were affected due to COVID-19.

Female apparel workers demand dignity and recognition

Female apparel workers commended the efforts taken by the country's apparel industry to ensure the well being of the workforce which makes the biggest contributions to Sri Lanka's economy. The female representatives of the Sri Lanka Chamber of Garment Exporters (SLCGE), member of Joint Apparel Association Forum, expressed these views during a press conference held in Colombo on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

A female apparel worker said that the garment industry in Sri Lanka has become a leading partner in the flow of women's employment, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for women and giving them the opportunity to play a leading role in the country's economy. Women make up about 85% of the workforce in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, especially in the rural areas and is one of the key employment generating sectors to strengthen the economy of women.

It was also noted that the apparel industry itself is significantly contributing to the uplifting of the living standards of women involved in it while working towards enhancing their lifestyle.



Some SLCGE members at the event. Picture by Saliya Rupasinghe

Many women delegates who attended the press conference were of the view that women in the garment industry have a high standard of living and play a dignified role in strengthening their economy and uplifting themselves of their family members.

"The media, tele dramas etc. always showcase the female workers in the apparel industry as an underprivileged and less fortunate group of people. This is not entirely true," a representative said. "The women in the garment industry have the opportunity to successfully strengthen their future by receiving promotions and pay raises based on the quality of their work, and the opportunities and privileges available to them are immeasurable," an apparel worker said. In the garment industry, which is mainly dominated by females, employers pay

special attention to their problems and make a significant contribution to making their economy self-sufficient by providing incentives, attendance allowances and other benefits in addition to the monthly salary, free uniforms, transportation, etc.

A spokeswoman for the apparel industry said that the entertainment, annual outings and free meals were a big boost. The speakers also commended the management of the garmenting industry for taking necessary steps to address the day-to-day economic problems of their employees and taking steps to pay the salaries and other incentives on time, even during the COVID-19 pandemic which has greatly affected the industries around the world.

The women delegates who participated in the event highly commended the employers for focusing more on the health of their

employees, adhering to the rules and regulations imposed by the Ministry of Health during the pandemic times, and for setting the stage for the continuation of the manufacturing process and securing their jobs.

The garment workers also expressed their gratitude to the management for setting up special quarantine centers for their employees who have been infected with COVID-19, and also their close associates.

The importance of creating an institution in the garment industry for women to pursue higher education relevant to their occupations was also emphasized.

On media all you see is the condemning of the professional dignity of women entering the garment industry. Though works of art and other means of media, it is necessary to give a correct picture and take steps to avoid that situation," they added.

Sri Lanka Savings Bank: Ratings reaffirmed; Stable outlook assigned

ICRA Lanka Limited has reaffirmed the Issuer Rating of [SL] BBB- (for Sri Lanka Savings Bank (SLSB)), while revising the outlook to Stable from rating watch with development implications. The rating action factors the 100% government ownership of SLSB, where the Bank is now a subsidiary of state-owned National Savings Bank (NSB; rated [SL] AAA; Stable by ICRA Lanka).

The rating takes note of the comfortable risk-weighted capital adequacy ratios (CAR) characterised by a Tier 1 and total CAR of 70.73% each as of September 20. However, SLSB would have to

enhance its core capital to Rs 7.5 billion by December-22 from Rs 4.6 billion as of September-20 in order to meet the minimum core capital requirement for Licensed Specialised Banks (LSBs), as stipulated by the CBSL. The timely capital support from the parent entity will be a key monitorable, going forward. The rating, however takes cognizance of SLSB's modest scale of operations (total assets of Rs 8.8 billion as of September-20) and the limited franchise (4 branches as of September-20). The rating also considers the Bank's risky exposure profile, where micro-lending accounts for

bulk of the lending portfolio (27% of total gross advances as of September-20).

Further, the rating is constrained by the weak asset quality indicators with Gross NPA ratio of 22.96% in the active portfolio (i.e., excluding the legacy Prumukha Savings and Development Bank-PSDB portfolio) as of September-20. ICRA Lanka expects the asset quality to remain under pressure in the near term as the Bank's core segments are yet to recover from the recent challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic and slowdown in the macro-economic situation.

HSBC and People's Bank support procurement of first 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine



HSBC joined People's Bank in assisting the government's efforts to slow down the spread of Covid-19 and accelerate the country's return to normalcy. The Trade Loan extended by HSBC to People's Bank supported the import of 500,000 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine to Sri Lanka.

"We are very proud to partner with the People's

Bank with whom we have had a longstanding relationship spanning multiple decades, in this national drive to control the spread of COVID-19. A successful and timely vaccination programme is critical for improving mobility of our economically active population which in turn will help strengthen the country's economic sentiment as Sri Lanka looks to build

back stronger," said Mark Prothero, CEO HSBC Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Currently, the vaccine is being rolled out in areas most affected by the second wave of COVID-19. According to HSBC Global Research, Sri Lanka is among the top three countries in Asia in terms of vaccines administered per capita.

TVET graduates suffer from COVID-19 impact in SL

The COVID-19 impact on the labour market resulted in significantly reduced working hours during the first wave in the early stages of the pandemic (March-June 2020).

Most technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates could not work at all or could only work less than 5 hours per week during March-June 2020. While working hours had returned to pre-COVID-19 levels by the November 2020 tracer study, some TVET graduates lost their jobs or faced reduced incomes, especially those in the tourism and hospitality sector and the self-employed.

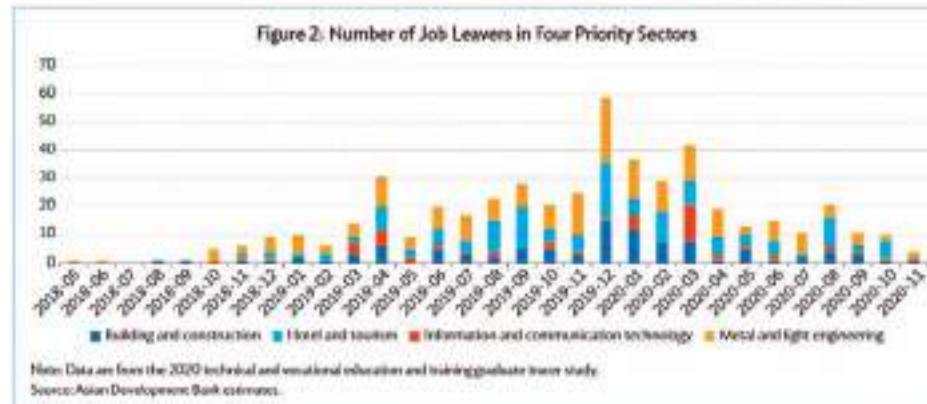
The job placement rate of TVET graduates in 2020 was 48.2%, a reduction of 2.8 percentage

points from 2019 (51.0%). This reduction, however, might not be entirely attributable to the pandemic because compared with the job placement rate in 2016 (54.5%), placement has been on a declining trend possibly because of the Easter Sunday attacks in April 2019. Among industries, the tourism and hospitality sector was the hardest hit in terms of employment. Also, the decline in median monthly income was particularly severe for self-employed TVET graduates. Nevertheless, some of the laid-off workers started their own businesses during the pandemic, rather than waiting for wage employment opportunities to come back.

The TVET institutions have made efforts to ini-

tiate or expand online training delivery during the pandemic but face many challenges. First and foremost, TVET instructors and students do not always have access to the internet and hardware devices for online training. Second, practical hands-on training is very difficult to provide online. Third, the online platform is far from a student-centered approach because instructors have to provide lecture notes and assignments through social media such as WhatsApp.

TVET instructors struggle to deliver online lectures, in contrast to higher education institutions in Sri Lanka where use of online collaboration technology tools such as Zoom has significantly accelerated during the pandemic. (ADB)



TRAVEL/AVIATION

Tourism stakeholders honour SLTDA Chairperson Kimarli Fernando

DINESH PERERA

Tourism stakeholders recently honoured the Chairperson Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Kimarli Fernando on International Women's Day. Fernando spoke of her journey and tried to pave the way for more female participation in the tourism industry.

Fernando was the first and only female at the time in the country to complete a six-mile sea swim. She placed six in a pool of around 56 men. Fernando was speaking to students of the Center for Excellence in Travel Tourism & Hospitality and Sri Lanka Technological Campus on 8 March.

On her confidence to be able to compete in such a difficult event she said, "I trained with all the boys, so I don't see why I couldn't do it." Fernando praised her parents for giving her self-belief and not limiting her potential. Fernando called on society to recognise the work of women. She said, "We are all multi-tasking multiple roles. I am no different to every other woman who has achieved something."

Fernando noted that work currently undertaken by females was not solely confined to professional careers. She said, "Career doesn't mean you have



to sit in a boardroom. A career can be that you are an amazing mother, teacher, dancer etc."

Fernando's career was mostly involved in banking with a significant proportion at Deutsche Bank. Fernando was the first Asian to be transferred to Germany. At the time it was unusual as Germans are sent to Asia. Asians aren't sent to Germany. During her time in Germany, she relished the opportunity to work at all levels of the bank and thereby gain exposure to all the operations. Fernando said, "You need to volunteer to do things. You get exposed to new areas. Never be shy to do something below your level." Fernando

called on women to more proactively network at workplaces. Fernando was invited to join Viyathmaga and considered it an honour to help formulate the current policy on pepper, milk, and tea. Viyathmaga facilitated bottom-up decisions that involved all stakeholders.

Fernando said, "The president's intention was good and he has a desire to make a difference in the country." Fernando does not draw a salary or any compensation for the work she does. Like other members of Viyathmaga, she considers it an honour to be of service to the country.

To her detractors, she said, "I know what people think. They judge me based on their standards. They think if you take a job you do it to rob. Some of us are different. It is difficult to understand. Some of us work for the love of our country and the respect for the President."

Fernando said, "People will try to bully you. We have a habit in our society to say what is wrong is right." She added, "I am a staunch Buddhist and a vegetarian for many years. Many people like me would like to leave a legacy. I would like to see a change that I and most of us voted for. The journey is going to be tough."

'Ocean Diamond' opens for corporate, families events in Mid-Sea

Plans to form Yacht Club in Colombo



Sail Lanka Yachting Group (SLYG) is now offering their Ocean Diamond superyacht for special events for corporate and families in the middle of the ocean. Newly appointed Managing Director of the Kausal Rajapaksa who is also the Chairman and Managing Director of the Kalhari Group said: "The 'Ocean Diamond' is an 80 feet Catamaran with a passenger capacity of 22 and 10 cabins with attached bathrooms. It is an affordable luxury and in fact a floating boutique hotel."

"We are planning to have a Yacht Club in Colombo to cater to a high-level membership interested in sailing. They will most likely be businessmen, entrepreneurs, sportsmen and top executives. They will be people who like outdoor life, adventurous and hanging out with friends." "Colombo is not our only target. We are planning to educate Sri Lankans all over the island on the marine diversity in the coastal waters. We will harness the talents of some of the most passionate marine explorers to build up a sustainable mechanism to create more awareness about the ocean resources around us and the need to protect it in a sustainable way. We are planning to set up a voluntary organization to rope in the youth and also the corporate sector in a big way."

The Sail Lanka Yachting Group was created in December 2014 by combining the commercial entities of the Building a Future Foundation "BAFF" to develop the leisure-boat industry in Sri Lanka. The

group has the combined experience in three key fields of expertise necessary to develop the yachting industry in Sri Lanka: boat building, boat chartering and infrastructure.

Sail Lanka Charter, the yacht chartering arm of the Sail Lanka Yachting Group is the market leader offering luxury sailing facilities all-round the island's coast. "Sail Lanka has a partnership with the Colombo Port City and is now offering various cruises including sunset cruises, dolphin watching and cruises to Mount Lavinia and Negombo from the marina at the Port City. In addition, we offer cruises to and from Mirissa," said Rajapaksa.

"Our vision is based on sailing boats built, owned, and operated in Sri Lanka and the region as a positive complement to the Sri Lankan tourism industry," says Pierre Pringiers, Chairman and Founder of SLYG. "The objective is to maximize the socio-economic returns and benefits to the nation and its people. My desire is to create and promote cruising as a new and ecologically sustainable tourist activity in Sri Lanka and the greater Indian Ocean region."

"We also have cruises around the islands off the Jaffna peninsula. One of the most popular is the seven-hour cruise to the Delft Island where passengers can explore and visit places of interest dating back to the Dutch era." "We have a joint-venture with Grand Large Yachting and are now looking to sell our catamarans to the Asian market."

BMICH recognises long service associates



BMICH, Sri Lanka's iconic landmark, recognized its longstanding associates at a staff ceremony held recently in the Sapphire Banquet hall. Subsequent to the blessings bestowed by Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim clergy, the long service tenure awards were presented to those associates who completed 25 years of service.

"We were recognized as South Asia's Leading Convention Centre 2020 by South Asian Travel Awards. We strongly believe that credit should be given to our very competent and committed staff who played a significant role in helping us achieve this

milestone" said Sunil Disanayake Chief Executive, BMICH.

The recipients of the 25 years tenure awards were W.M.C.S. Wijesinghe from Human Resources, A.A.D. Nandana Adikari from Landscaping and G.R.P. Gamlath from Finance.

BMICH is Sri Lanka's largest and Asia's very first purpose-built convention center with ultra-modern facilities and is South Asia's Premier Integrated MICE Complex with all facilities required to host any type of convention, seminar, exhibition, conference, event or wedding including multi-day international conventions and conferences.

Singapore Airlines first in world to pilot IATA's travel pass app

Singapore Airlines (SIA) will be the world's first airline to pilot the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Travel Pass mobile application for digital health verification, starting with passengers travelling from Singapore to London from March 15 to 28 2021.

This marks the second phase of SIA's digital health verification process trials, which is based on the IATA Travel Pass framework. Passengers with mobile phones running on Apple's iOS operating system will be invited to download the IATA Travel Pass app, and create a digital ID comprising their profile photo and passport information. They can also insert their flight information into the app. Subsequently, they can book their pre-departure Covid-19 test at one of seven participating clinics in Singapore via a dedicated online portal. They can then register at the clinic using the digital ID and flight information in the app. They will be able to view their test results, as well as confirmation status to fly, directly on the app. IATA's Timatic registry will provide the back-end information on the Covid-19 testing and entry requirements.

Participants will need to show their confirmed status in the app to the check-in staff in Changi Airport before flight departure. In line with current regulatory requirements, they will also need to bring a physical copy of their health certificate that is issued by the clinic where they took their Covid-19 test. By consolidating the verification of health credentials into a sin-



gle app, participants can expect a faster and more seamless check-in process.

If successful, the pilot will pave the way for the integration of the entire digital health verification process into the SingaporeAir mobile app from around mid-2021, again using IATA's Travel Pass framework.

SIA will continue to work closely with its partners in Singapore and around the world in the facilitation of these trials, and towards the eventual restoration of a seamless travel experience for its customers. JoAnn Tan, Acting Senior Vice President Marketing Planning, Singapore Airlines, said: "The first phase of the trials helped to support SIA's drive towards a secure and convenient industry standard for the verification of Covid-19 test results."

Nick Careen, IATA's Senior Vice President Airport, Passenger, Cargo, and Security said: "Our partnership with Singapore Airlines for the first full deployment of the IATA Travel Pass will help get the world flying again. In the immediate term, it is the solution for travellers to safely and securely manage their travel health credentials."

Airline direct distribution platform 'AvtraDirect' wins National ICT Awards



The Proavos Labs team

Proavos Labs, a Sri Lankan based airline and travel services IT provider offering complete and new generation software solutions globally, was recently named the Gold winner under tourism and hospitality in the consumer category at the National ICT Awards - NBQSA 2020. Taking part in this for the first time, the company was also able to bag the overall Silver award for best quality innovative product.

This was in recognition of Avtra Direct; a revolutionary airline direct distribution platform built using latest web, mobile and cloud technologies. It offers an all-in-one solution for airlines, encompassing all direct channels. Nasly Yoosuf, Proavos Lab's CTO said that Proavos Labs is fully dedicated to exceptional customer service, intelligent aviation technological evolution and the delivery of advanced software solutions that power airlines globally.

Avtra Direct comprises multiple smart modules such as various booking engines for travel agents, airline call center and head office, and corporate passengers, REST/SOAP API that comply with Open-Travel Alliance Standards and IATA NDC standards, Internet Booking Engines (IBE), and cross-platform mobile apps. Estab-

lished in 2017 by technology and aviation domain experts, Proavos Labs' journey began with a Passenger Service System designed from the ground-up to support airlines of all sizes and operating models (LCC, FCC, and Hybrid). Today, it delivers world-class solutions incorporating the latest open technologies in the market. Its portfolio now includes a Departure Control System (DCS) designed for airports, Frequent Flyer Programme (FFP) for airline's loyalty program and a comprehensive Online Travel Agent (OTA) platform for agencies.

Proavos Labs is able to offer consultancy and support to help airlines achieve efficiency better and faster. It also hosts the state-of-the-art development center of AvtraSoft Limited, its global efforts trading company headquartered in Cyprus which supports its global sales and marketing teams across UAE, Malaysia, Cyprus and Serbia. Proavos Labs today connects with many full service carriers to low cost carriers, airports, and travel agencies from around the world. It engages with airlines and airports from the Middle East, North Africa, East Asia, South America, and the CIS region.

Emirates Economy Class offers customers option to purchase empty adjoining seats

Emirates' Economy Class customers can now enjoy even more personal space and privacy onboard with the ability to purchase up to three empty adjoining seats on their flight.

These seats will be offered to all Economy Class customers holding a confirmed booking. Customers will not be able to pre-book empty seats, as these are subject to availability. Empty seats will only be offered for purchase at the airport check-in counter prior to flight departure, and costs range from AED 200 to AED 600 (US\$ 55 to US\$ 165) per empty seat, plus applicable taxes depending on the flight sector. Emirates has introduced this new seat product on the back of customer feedback, addressing the needs of a range of customers seeking extra privacy and space while still flying in

Economy Class. This includes couples who wish to have the entire row to themselves (maximum of three seats in the same row), parents travelling with in-lap infants, or those who simply want the added assurance of more space while travelling during pandemic times.

In addition to the new empty seats option, Emirates currently offers a variety of seat products for Economy Class customers to choose their favourite seat based on their travel needs. Emirates has also introduced generous discounts on excess baggage rates, to help customers flying on essential trips take home what they need most. Emirates customers flying for essential reasons can travel with the assurance that the latest health and safety measures are in place at every step of the journey.



The airline has also recently introduced contactless technology to ease customers through Dubai airport. Emirates continues to lead the industry with innovative products and services that address traveller needs during a dynamic time.

Melheim Beach Hotel Kalpitiya to add more rooms, facilities

The newly opened Melheim Beach Hotel, Norochcholai Kalpitiya is re-investing to add more rooms and facilities to meet future demands, as the domestic tourism sector is picking up and tourists are trickling back to Sri Lanka.

Owned and operated by Melheim Resorts they also manage two other properties, The Melheim boutique resort located in Beragala and Melheim Kandy Villas. Chairman Harin De Mel, a diversified entrepreneur, said that they invested in the leisure sector as they wanted to introduce a different theme. "We built boutique properties in areas where there were no hotels mainly to usher economic prosperity to the area

through job creation and indirectly helping in other ways to the community. Another objective was to include areas such as Norochcholai and Beragala to the international tourism map, a dream which is now a reality."

He said that they also wanted to offer beach, nature, culture, adventure and also a cool climate and this is the reason they decided on three geographical locations to build these properties.

De Mel said that when they opened the two properties in Norochcholai and Beragala there were no other star class hotels and today other hoteliers have invested in these areas. He said that Melheim Beach Hotel, Kalpitiya now a 3.5 star property offers 6 beach front luxury rooms and we now want to build four large interconnected family rooms on two floors.

As there is a growing demand from corporate to host MICE events we will invest to add more conference facilities. The management hopes to invest around Rs. 60 million for these in 2021. "We plan to add more 'keys'



Resident Manager Jerome Bell

to Melheim Beach Hotel, Kalpitiya in the coming years as the demand is picking up."

Resident Manager Derrick Jerome Bell said that the hotels adopt strict safety measures spelt out by the health authorities. "We also follow industry cleaning and disinfection practices of Safe Travels (WTTC - Global) and Intertek Cristal (3rd party expert - Global)." Another plus point is the diversified cuisine that is prepared by experienced chef, S. Regis which is drawing several walk-in guests for meals. The hotel in two areas also has a larger garden area, private beach,



pool with kiddie's pool and a bar, lounge, hot and cold water, AC, safety lockers, mini bar, 24-hour room service and laundry facilities and large restaurant.

"The boutique hotel is located in an ideal place for those who love the ocean as well as for adventurous water-sports enthusiasts." Jerome Bell with over 40 years' experience hav-

ing worked in Afghanistan, Maldives and Oman in global hotels chains said the hotel is also a transit point for Wilpattu Safari and Kalpitiya Dolphin, Whale Watching tours for which we arrange excursions through specially selected coordinators."



Anverally and Sons win Gold at NCE Annual Export Awards

Anverally and Sons (Pvt) Ltd., one of Sri Lanka's oldest exporters of tea whose brews delight consumers in more than 100 countries, won the Gold award in the 'Extra-Large' category of the 'Tea and Tea Products' sector at the 2020 Annual Export Awards of the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka (NCE).

Themed 'Resilient Exporters,' the 28th edition of this awards ceremony was especially significant to Sri Lankan exporters in the backdrop of the severely affected international trade environment due to the global pandemic, as it ventured to showcase their success stories and achievements to business counterparts in overseas markets.

This is the second major award won by Anverally and Sonsthis year. In January, the Company received the Export Brand of the Year – Bronze award at the 2020 Brand Excellence Awards presented by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM).

Commenting on the Company's triumph at the NCE awards, Anverally and Sons Chairman Mr Mohamed Anverally said: "We are elated to once again win this award, and espe-



Anverally and Sons General Manager HR and Operations Suranga Liyanarachchi, General Manager Exports and Logistics Upul Disanayake and Senior Manager Production Niranjana Samarawira with the NCE award

cially so because we have progressed from Silver last year to Gold in a year that was tumultuous and full of challenges. The industry as a whole faced a turbulent time in 2020, but the Company was able to maintain its number one rank in several Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Libya. We value this award as a testament to our resilience and ability to

maintain quality standards and retain customers, even in times of adversity."

The NCE Export Awards are designed to recognise and reward outstanding performance of exporters in the country. The event has achieved national recognition over the past 28 years due to its professionalism and high standards. This

prestigious award is meant to enhance the visibility of the exporter in the global market and help it gain prominence and ease of access into various international markets. In bestowing this award, the Chamber recognises various important aspects of a business with emphasis on the triple bottom line of People, Planet and Profit. Further, special awards are given for Innovation, Value Additions and Research & Development, keeping abreast with the economic focus of the Sri Lankan Government.

Anverally and Sons is a company with a history of more than 130 years. Established in 1890 by the great grandfather of the present Chairman, Anverally and Sons employs more than 1,000 people today and exports Ceylon Tea to over 100 countries. The Company's selection of teas ranges from black, green, herbal, organic, iced, health and fruit teas in packing options of bulk, tea bags, packets, metal caddies, bottles, pouches, tea gifts, and more. The Company has established a range of international brands such as Anverally Tea, Al-Otuor, Sultan, Tea4U, and Taj – that represent the regional preferences of tea.



BOC takes Business Revival Clinic to Northern Province

As part of BOC's continuing efforts to help small-scale entrepreneurs emerge from the financial and operational challenges experienced on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, the bank took their Business Revival clinic to Kilinochchi in late February. The program held on February 23, in conjunction with the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Kilinochchi District and, a large numbers of the bank's micro, small and medium scale fisheries based customers were present.

The entrepreneurs received an opportunity to participate in a day-long program conducted by BOC, with a series of sessions allowing for direct interaction with the bank's and Executive Management personnel and area plus branch managers, to voice their business concerns. The bank's Executive Management was represented by V. Sivananthan, Assistant General Manager Northern Province and the event also drew the participation of K. Mohanakumar, Assistant Director Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Kilinochchi District. Other lead forum participants included S. Nethanathan, Area Manager Jaffna East, K. Alan Jayeharan, Manager Kilinochchi Branch and S. Sivaran, Manager Mulankavil Branch.

During the clinic, fisheries-focused customers from Kilinochchi and surrounding areas presented their entrepreneurial challenges to bank officials, with attention paid to identifying the reasons for business failure and subsequently receiving customized solutions to address exact concerns. Topics ranging from capital expenditure, operating expenses, to specialist loans were discussed as part of the program, with advice given to help entrepreneurs revive their businesses amidst the ongoing pandemic-affected economy.

As part of the program, the bank raised awareness among entrepreneurs on fisheries-specific loan facilities offered through BOC's Divi Udana scheme, which carries specialized individual loans for business tasks ranging from the purchase of fishing nets to building of tanks.

The bank's Business Revival and Specialist Loan clinics across the island have been well-received by entrepreneur communities across sectors such as fisheries, prawn farming, and pea cultivation, further strengthening BOC's position as the industry-leader in facilitating development loans, with particular emphasis currently on boosting Sri Lanka's vibrant yet hard-hit Micro and SME sector.

Nominations called for IET Young Woman Engineer 2021

For the third consecutive time, Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Young Professionals (YP) Sri Lanka network is to crown the best candidate as the 'Young Woman Engineer of the Year' 2021.

The event launch for the IET Young Woman Engineer - 2021 was held on March 8, in parallel to celebrating the international women's day.

The IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year (YWE) award ceremony was initiated in Sri Lanka in 2017 by IET, YP Sri Lanka Network with Dr. Idah Riddihough (Country Director of World Bankin Sri Lanka) as the Chief Guest.

Eng. Seshika Fernando (Vice President and General Manager, Open Banking at WSO2) was crowned as the Young Woman



Engineer of the Year 2017. The Second IET Young Woman Engineer award ceremony was held in Sri Lanka in 2019 with Eng. Premala Sivaprakasapillai, the first lady engineer of Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest.

Eng. Zahra Marzook (Electrical Engineer at Ceylon Electricity Board) was crowned as the Young Woman Engineer of the Year 2019.

This event honours the remarkable achievements of young women in the engineering profession and aims in pro-

moting engineering and technology among young women engineers as well as to increase the participation of women in the field of engineering.

Any young female engineering professional (below 35 years old at April 30, 2021) practicing engineering in private/public sector organization or as an entrepreneur in Sri Lanka could apply for 'IET Young Woman Engineer 2021' award before April 30, 2021.

To download the application and the application guideline, could be obtained from, www.theiet.lk or www.ietypslwye.blogspot.com or Facebook and LinkedIn page of IET Young Professional Sri Lanka Network. More details could be also obtained from iet.sln.ywe@gmail.com and iet.yw.srilanka@gmail.com.

Siyapatha Finance donate IT equipment to Newbridge Boys' Home

Siyapatha Finance PLC has taken the initiative to donate a stock of computers and other IT equipment to the Newbridge Boys' Home in Wevaldeniya.

This was initiated as part of the organization's efforts to facilitate the wellbeing and educational progress of the youth of Sri Lanka, through a CSR initiative.

The Newbridge Boys' Home in Wevaldeniya currently provides shelter to 21 children between the ages of 6-18. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic saw the shift of education to virtual platforms making it difficult for these children to continue their studies. While many children struggle to continue with their studies remotely, the need for electronic devices and connectivity that facilitates this has become a nation-wide issue.

By providing the boys at New-

bridge Boys' Home with the necessary computers and IT equipment to facilitate their learning online, Siyapatha Finance is prioritizing education and the futures of the children. As a responsible organization the company is setting an example for initiatives that can fill the need gap in society at large.

Expressing his views on this community service oriented gesture, Managing Director Ananda Seneviratne said, "The pandemic has severely impacted the children of our country. They are not used to having to learn without their peers. In addition, the sudden shift to online work has left them unequipped for online learning. In order to ensure that these children are afforded a similar opportunity to excel, we decided to invest in their futures. They are, after all, the future of our country."



IT Equipment handed over to Sugath Goonesinha Manager Newbridge Boys' Home by Ananda Seneviratne Managing Director, Bandara Medagoda Senior Regional Manager, L.H.M. Danushka Assistant Regional Manager, Ashoka Rupersinghe Branch Manager Nittabuwa and Madonna Samasundera Assistant Manager Branding

Pizza Hut, ChildFund & Department of Social Services join hands to empower People with Disabilities in Sri Lanka

Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. presently the single franchisee for Pizza Hut and Taco Bell in Sri Lanka has partnered with ChildFund Sri Lanka and the Department of Social Services in Sri Lanka, to improve the economic engagement of Youth with Disabilities, especially girls with disabilities, in quality vocational training programmes in a safe and conducive environment. This partnership has led to the inauguration of an industrial food technology unit and renovation of the accommodation facilities for Girls with disabilities at the Vocational Training Centre, Amunukumbura, on the 11th of February 2021.

This mega-project is being executed under the concept of 'An Equal Slice For Everyone', which is the Social Purpose of Pizza Hut International. The iconic brand is committed to equity, opportunity and unity taking a locally led yet globally connected approach, with a clear-cut focus on its people, customers and communities. Pizza Hut focuses on caring for all who are part of its journey – the people who work for the business, the customers who patronise the brand and the communities within which it prospers. This project promotes the spirit of togetherness and creates a bigger vision of being much more than just a food and beverage brand.

To contribute to this collective vision, ChildFund Sri Lanka has enrolled girls with disabilities and has widened the streams available for training and quality of teaching. The Department of Social Service intends to make the Persons with Disability (PWD) community, active stakeholders, by unlocking their fullest potential to aid national economic development.

Pizza Hut Sri Lanka has established an industrial food technology unit at the vocational centre with a state-of-the-art kitchen consisting of the latest equipment, with the prime objective of providing these individuals a comprehensive curriculum, ranging

from food and beverage, hygiene & food safety standards to proficiency in English. This would be a 2-year programme where they would be trained under the leadership and guidance of skilled trainers and the staff of Pizza Hut. Upon the successful completion of the 2-year course at this food technology unit, graduates will be employed within the Pizza Hut chain or with other socially responsible entities in the country, with whom discussions have already been initiated.

Mr. Amar Raj Singh, Managing Director of Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. said, "Social and economic inclusion go hand in hand. It is very critical that the efforts and investments being made by the Government and NGOs, are given the last mile opportunity by businesses across Sri Lanka, to create employability, add value and provide economic upliftment to those with difficulties and the marginalized sections of society. We at Gamma Lanka are very happy and privileged to be partners in this great effort across the country. 'An Equal Slice For Everyone' is a symbol of shared opportunity through focused skills development and understanding. It is very encouraging to see the positive response we have received across the industry and from our own employees. We look forward to rolling this programme across Sri Lanka."

Neelam Makhijani, Country Director of ChildFund India and Sri Lanka said, "We are excited to launch this very unique project which highlights our partnership with the private sector and the government, on the same platform. Together, we have combined our resources and skills to ensure greater opportunities for youth with disabilities, to support the first batch of 30 young women who will benefit from this new pizza making module as part of their vocational training course. Thereafter, 20-30 young women with disabilities will be enrolled annually for the course. The newly renovated buildings, accommodation and sanitation facilities and support through soft skills training

provided by ChildFund Sri Lanka will also contribute to eliminating employment barriers for these youth with disabilities and improve their lives. ChildFund is thankful to Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka and the Department of Social Services for their collaboration to equip these young adults with skills to overcome challenges and inspire positive change creating a better future not just for themselves, but for their families and communities."

The inauguration of the food technology unit at the vocational training centre at Amunukumbura is the first step of many to come. Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. envisions being a part of this journey with more centres being planned in the near future right across Sri Lanka, providing the community with a definite sense of achievement, pride and social inclusion.

Yasa Nadaraja, CEO of Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. added, "Pizza Hut's Social Purpose theme 'An Equal Slice for Everyone' exemplifies our involvement to help people with

disabilities to be gainfully employed, thus bridging the gaps the community currently faces. This initiative, in partnership with equally passionate, like-minded organizations is a step in the right direction to create a positive change in the community. We are extremely humbled and privileged to inaugurate this project and look forward to implementing more such initiatives in time to come."

Kaushal Mendis, Director of Human Resources of Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. said, "Access to employment is recognized as a fundamental human right in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Sri Lanka, the proportion of persons with disabilities participating in the labour market is at a bare minimum level for various reasons. As a responsible corporate citizen, our focus is to create social impact by enabling the PWDs through formal vocational education. We will also create inclusive work environments where, PWDs will be empowered and won't feel different



Representatives of Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. (Pizza Hut), ChildFund Sri Lanka, Department of Social Services, Voice Area Federation & Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine (University of Kelaniya) at the press briefing. (From left) Kaushal Mendis (Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. (Pizza Hut)), Dinantha Thambavita (ChildFund Sri Lanka), Chandana Ranaweera Arachchi (Department of Social Services), Wasantha Pushpakumara (Voice Area Federation) & Isuru Dharmarathna (Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya)



First pizza being made by one of the trainees, at the newly inaugurated industrial food technology unit



Secretary to the State Ministry of Primary Health Care, Epidemics and COVID Disease Control Dr. Amal Harsha, District Secretary of Gampaha Sunil Jayalath, and Director of Department of Social Services Chandana Ranaweera Arachchi opening the newly renovated accommodation facility for girls with disabilities

at work. We firmly believe that our efforts will not only improve the quality of life of persons with disability but also promote and safeguard equality, self-determination, dignity and social inclusion of such persons. We thank ChildFund Sri Lanka and the Department of Social Services for collaborating with us in taking a giant step for the progress of this initiative. We keenly look forward to continuing this partnership in time to come."

Chandana Ranaweera Arachchi, Director of Department of Social Services added, "Under the guidance of

the Hon. Minister and Secretary, State Ministry of Primary Health Care, Epidemics and COVID Disease Control the Department of Social Services conducts vocational training for persons with disabilities, in order to socially integrate them as a dignified citizen. Towards achieving this partnership arrangement, Child Fund Sri Lanka and Gamma Pizzakraft Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., has collaborated with the Department of Social Services and marks a milestone today. In this special occasion I would like to express my gratitude and heartfelt wishes for all who have contributed."

Daily News

TENDER AND OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS

Arpico Finance Co. PLC

Gigantic Auction Sale OF

39 Nos. Diesel & Petrol Motor Vehicles on Monday 22nd March 2021

To Be Held At our Vehicle Yard

No. 17/1 Pinhena Junction, Horana Road, Kottawa.

Commencing at 10.00 am

CAR		THREE WHEELERS	
NCGE-78XX	MAZDA	FAMILIA	1997
CPCAV-30XX	HONDA	VEZEL	2016
CPCBA-12XX	SUZUKI	DAA-MK425	2015
NWKA90XX	CHEVROLET	CRUZE	2003
NWKS20XX	TOYOTA	PRIUS	2009
NWKO05XX	TOYOTA	UA-NZT260	2008
SGCBB-45XX	SUZUKI	SPACIA	2018
SPCAD-99XX	HONDA	CR-Z	2011
SPCAR-53XX	TOYOTA	PRIUS	2016
SPCAX-44XX	NISSAN	CLIPPER	2015
SPCBE-24XX	SUZUKI	WAGONR	2018
SPKB-95XX	NISSAN	MARCH	2003
SPKX-68XX	TOYOTA	PRIUS	2012
WPCAA-36XX	HONDA	HONDAFIT	2012
WPCAA-52XX	BMW	520D	2013
WPCAX-31XX	SUZUKI	SPACIA	2015
WPCA2930X	HONDA	NWAGON	2015
WPCA2-01XX	SUZUKI	DAA-MR415HUSTLER	2015
WPCBB-09XX	SUZUKI	WAGONR	2017
WPCBB-93XX	SUZUKI	WAGONR	2018
WPCBC-27XX	SUZUKI	WAGONR	2018
WPEA-01XX	TOYOTA	1996	SP PS-63XX
WPKN-14XX	TOYOTA	PRIUS	2010
			WP LD 85XX

Viewing - 18th & 19th March 2021 at the Venue of Auction (Between 9.00 am - 4.00 pm)
(Vehicle cannot be inspected on the day of Auction)
0719 919 986 / 0712 591 067

Conditions of Sale
• Entrance : By a non refundable Ticket of Rs. 2000.00 per person on day Auction.
• Payment : Non-refundable initial deposit of 25% in Cash at the fall of the Hammer & Balance 75% & Removal latest by 3.00 pm on Friday 26th March 2021 to be paid to Arpico Finance Co. PLC, No.146, Havelock Road, Thimbrigasyaya, Colombo 05.
• The management has the right to withdraw any vehicle (s) from the Auction without prior Notice.
• The decision of the Auctioneer will be Final.

Special Note: Please note that only 100 persons who come first to auction premises are allowed to enter considering prevailing Covid 19 pandemic situation strictly adhered to health and quarantine rules issued by the government.
Head Office
Arpico Finance Company PLC
No.146, Havelock Rd, Thimbrigasyaya, Colombo 05.
Tel: 0115 553663

Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) Notice Under Section 33

My No. Udu 2/2/10/97
L.M. No. : 13/97/FR/319

I, Sujani R. Wijetunga, Divisional Secretary of Udumbara, Kandy District do hereby inform that I have deposited a sum of Rs. 1000.00 (Rupees Thousand Only) for the case No. LAD 114/18, in the Teldeniya Judicial District Court vide Section 33 of the Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) as compensation to be paid to the claimants, for the land acquired of which the description is given in the schedule below.

01.03.2021

Schedule	
Name of Land	: Winchfield Park Watta.
Plan No.	: P.P. Maha. 5693.
Lot No.	: 1
Extent	: 0.8775 Hec.
Situation	: Land called Winchfield park watta, situated in the Grama Niladhari Division of Karambakatiya, in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Udumbara.

Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) Notice Under Section 33

My No. Udu 2/2/10/101
L.M. No. : 13/97/FR/114

I, Sujani R. Wijetunga, Divisional Secretary of Udumbara, Kandy District do hereby inform that I have deposited a sum of Rs. 1000.00 (Rupees Thousand Only) for the case No. LAD 152/20, in the Teldeniya Judicial District Court vide section 33 of the Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) as compensation to be paid to the claimants, for the land acquired of which the description is given in the schedule below.

01.03.2021

Schedule	
Name of Land	: Winchfield Park Watta.
Plan No.	: P.P. Maha 5720
Lot No.	: 1
Extent	: 1.9501 Hec.
Situation	: Land called Winchfield Park Watta, situated in the Grama Niladhari Division of Karambakatiya, in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Udumbara.

Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) Notice Under Section 33

My No. Udu 2/5/2/57
L.M. No. : 13/97/FR/246

I, Sujani R. Wijetunga, Divisional Secretary of Udumbara, Kandy District do hereby inform that I have deposited a sum of Rs. 961500.00 (Rupees Nine Hundred Sixty One Thousand Five Hundred Only) for the case No. LAD 151/20, in the Teldeniya Judicial District Court vide Section 33 of the Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460) as compensation to be paid to the claimants, for the land acquired of which the description is given in the schedule below.

01.03.2021

Schedule	
Name of Land	: Kobonilla Watta.
Plan No.	: V.P. 504 Sheet No.02 Sup. 02.
Lot No.	: 118 ^{2/3} -119, 120, 121 ^{1/2}
Extent	: 7.7862 Hec.
Situation	: Land called Kobonilla Watta, situated in the Grama Niladhari Division of Karambakatiya, in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Udumbara.

Replies to Classifieds & Casual Advertisements published C/o the

Daily News

should only be sent by ordinary post. Replies sent under registered cover will not be accepted.



NIBM POWERING GREAT MINDS

National Institute of Business Management (NIBM)

WANTED A BUILDING

National Institute of Business Management (NIBM) requires a Building (around 20,000 Sq. Ft. or more) to conduct its academic programmes for a period of 03 years

Requirements :

- Around 20,000 sq.ft. or more
- Vehicle parking (Minimum 20 vehicles)
- Water Supply and overhead tank
- Electricity (3 phase)
- Wash Room Facilities
- AC facilities or Non AC facilities
- Power Generator
- Elevator facilities (minimum 8 persons) more than three storeyed building
- Easy access to the Main Road,

Owners of buildings conforming to the above requirements in the vicinity of the NIBM Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07 (around 5km distance from the NIBM Head Office) are requested to submit sealed quotations along with above documents and the photograph of the Building to reach the **Addl. Director - HRM & Administration**, National Institute of Business Management, 120/5, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07 **on or before 29th March 2021**. Please indicate **"Quotation for a Building"** on the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

For more details, contact Addl. Director - HRM & Administration.
Tel: 2678263 / 5644278 / 5321000
Director General, National Institute of Business Management, 120/5, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07

LEASING OF ASSETS FOR THE YEAR 2021

PUBLIC MARKET COMPLEX POLPITHIGAMA PRADESHIYA SABHA

Sealed Tenders are invited by me from the date of application of this advertisement for Leasing of Assets mentioned in the schedule below for the year 2021. Tenders received after this date will not be accepted for whatever reason.

Last Date and Time for Issuing Tender Forms : 22.03.2021 at 2.30 p.m.
Last Date and Time for Accepting Tenders : 23.03.2021 at 10.00 a.m.
Date and Time for Opening Tenders : 23.03.2021 at 11.00 a.m.

Tender Forms issued by us in two copies should be duly completed and inserted in separate envelopes, clearly marked with the name of the asset applied for on the top left-hand corner of these envelopes and sent by Registered Post to the Chairman, Pradeshiya Sabha, Polpithigama. Persons who wish to hand deliver Tenders could do so by inserting the relevant Tenders in the Tender Box kept in this Office. The Bid Security of those who fail to submit Tenders after obtaining applications and of those who quote prices below the minimum bid price or of those who violate procurement conditions will be forfeited by this Sabha.

Tender Forms could be obtained after paying the fees as mentioned in the Schedule in cash only, to the Sabha. Further details could be obtained by calling over at this Sabha during office hours or by calling on Telephone No. 037-2273135.

01 Schedule

Nature of Assets	Non Refundable Form Fee (Rs.)	Extent (Length/Width) Sq.Meters	Bid Security Amount (Rs.)	Minimum Bid for Leasing Year 2021 (Rs.)
Section 01 - Market Complex	2000.00	2730.00	10,000.00	125,000.00
Section 02 - Market Complex	2000.00	253.66	2,000.00	20,000.00

N.B. :
The Tender Board retains the right of the final decision regarding tenders received.

L.R. Ranjith Wijenayaka
Chairman
Pradeshiya Sabha
Polpithigama.

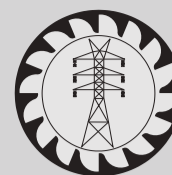
At the Polpithigama Pradeshiya Sabha.
On 08.03.2021

For classified advertisements and for replies received in response to advertisements published under Lake House box numbers

Please Contact → **MANAGER FRONT OFFICE** → Hotline 1949



INVITATION FOR BIDS



ලංකා විදුලිබල මණ්ඩලය
இலங்கை மின்சார சபை
CEYLON ELECTRICITY BOARD

1	2	3	4	5	6
Division and Branch Province	Bid No. / Item Description & Quantity	Bid Closing Date & Time	Place of Purchase of Bidding Documents & Contact TP. Nos.	Price of Bid Document (LKR)	Type of Bid ICB/ NCB
MaTeRIaLS					
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0038 Purchase of Portable SF6 Gas Analyzer for Lakvijaya Power Plant	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Procurement Division, 4th Floor, Admin Building, Lakvijaya Power Plant, Ceylon Electricity Board, Narakkaliya, Norochcholai 61342. TP : 032 226 8972 071-5777171 Fax: 032 226 8975	1,000.00	NCB
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/U2A/2021/0069 Procurement of Insulation & cladding materials for "A" level maintenance of Turbine unit 02 in Lakvijaya Power Plant	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,000.00	NCB
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0064 Purchasing of Furniture for Club House at Daluwa Housing Complex	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	2,000.00	NCB
Transmission (Communications)	TR/CMN/VHF/ICB/2020/001/D Bid for Supply & Delivery of UHF Radio Equipment	06/05/2021 10.30 hrs.	Deputy General Manager (Communications), Ceylon Electricity Board, Communications Control Centre, New Kelani Bridge Road, Wellampitiya. Tel/ Fax: 011-2424582 / 011-2441935	15,000.00	ICB
DD 01 (Colombo City)	DGM(CC)/EE(MM)/PPC/2021/001 Supply & Delivery of Concrete Tiles for LV,UG Cable Protection	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of Deputy General Manager (Colombo City), 4th Floor, Lakshmans Building, 340, R.A. De Mel Mw, Colombo 03 until 30.03.2021 011-2575930.	3,500.00	NCB
DD 01 (Colombo City)	DGM(CC)/EE(MM)/PPC/2021/010 Supply & Delivery of Insulation Tubing and Insulation Boots	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (Colombo City)	DGM(CC)/EE(MM)/PPC/2021/011 Supply & Delivery of Cast Resin Branch Type Jointing Kits.	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,500.00	NCB
DD 01 (Colombo City)	DGM(CC)/EE(MM)/PPC/2021/015 Supply & Delivery of Black Adhesive Insulating Cloth Tape (3/4") 19mm	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (Colombo City)	DGM(CC)/CE(C&CS)/PPC/2021/017 Disposal of Unserviceable Empty Cable Drums at Provincial Stores Pamankada of Colombo City.	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/M/21/006 Supply & Delivery of 8.3m 100kg poles	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	The Office of the Deputy General Manager (NWP -2), Ceylon Electricity Board, No.25, Rajapihilla Road, Kurunegala. T.No: 037- 2065498 Fax : 037- 2065497	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/M/21/007 Supply & Delivery of 6m 50kg poles	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 02 (P & D)	DD2/P&D/NCB/2020/054/D Supply and Delivery of Bolts and Nuts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolts & Nuts - Ungalvanized 40 x 16mm • Bolts & Nuts - Ungalvanized 50 x 16mm • Bolts & Nuts - Ungalvanized 200 x 16mm • Bolts & Nuts - Ungalvanized 230 x 16mm • Bolts & Nuts - Ungalvanized 280 x 16mm 	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	DGM (P&D-DD2), Ground Floor, Ceylon Electricity Board, No 205/3, Kandy Road, Pahala Biyanwila, Kadawatha. +94- 11- 2348470 / +94- 11- 2433117	12,500.00	NCB
DD 02 (P & D)	DD2/P&D/ICB/2020/072/D Supply & Delivery of DDLO Switches – Cut Out with isolating Blades –11kV / Switches – Cut Out with isolating Blades –33kV	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,500.00	ICB
DD 02 (P & D)	DD2/P&D/ICB/2020/089/D Supply and Delivery of ACSR (Raccoon) - 7/4.09mm	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	12,500.00	ICB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/DSP/2021/110 Sales of Unserviceable Transformers of Provincial stores (Western Province North) – 22 nos.	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	DGM(WPN)'s Office, CEB, No. 280, Kandy Road, Kiribathoda Tel.011-2911071/72	1,000.00	NCB
DD 03 (P&D)	DD3/P&D/ICB/2020/030/D Bid for supply & Delivery of Fuse Switch Disconnecter Insulated 4 Pole - 125 A – 160 A - 5,000 Nos. / Operating rods	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of the DGM (P&D – DD3) ,CEB DD 3 Head Office, 3rd Floor, No. 644, Sri Jayawardanapura Mw , Ethul kotte. T.P No. 011-2880601, 2880610	12,500.00	ICB
DD 03 (P&D)	DD3/P&D/ICB/2020/062/D Supply & Delivery of Stay Wire – GS 7/3.25mm – (Grade – 700) – 100,000 Nos. / Stay Wire – GS 7/4.00mm – (Grade – 700) – 25,000 Nos.	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,500.00	ICB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM(UVA)/CE(COM)/C1/2K21/019 Design, Supply, Installation and Maintenance for five years of Private Automatic Branch Exchange (PABX) for Uva Province, Distribution maintenance office Complex	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Office of the Deputy General Manager (Uva), Chief Engineer (Commercial) Unit, Ceylon Electricity Board, No. 04, Spring Valley Road, Hindagoda, Badulla. Tel : 055-2222474	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM(UVA)/CE(COM)/C1/2K21/020 Supply and Delivery of 600 Nos. of Insulator tension SET 36kV with Hardware Raccoon	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM (UVA)/CE (COM)/C1/RC/2K21/023 Supply and delivery of 1000 Nos. of 6m/50kg Reinforced Concrete Poles	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM (UVA)/CE (COM)/C1/RC/2K21/024 Supply and delivery of 500 Nos. of 8.3m/500kg Reinforced Concrete Poles	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM (UVA)/CE (COM)/C1/PS/2K21/025 Supply and delivery of 1000 Nos. of 8.3m/100kg Pre-stressed concrete Poles	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM (UVA)/CE (COM)/C1/PS/2K21/026 Supply and delivery of 500 Nos. of 11m/350kg Pre-stressed concrete Poles	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	DGM (UVA)/CE (COM)/C1/PS/2K21/027 Supply and delivery of 400 Nos. of 11m/500kg Pre-stressed concrete Poles	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Sab)	SAB/CE(COM)/T/2021/18 Supply & Delivery of 1,000 Nos. of 8.3m/100kg Pre-Stressed Spun Concrete Poles	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Office of Deputy General Manager (Sabaragamuwa), Chief Engineer (Commercial) Unit, Ceylon Electricity Board, No.09, New Town, Rathnapura. Tel. No. 045-2225891-95 Fax: 045-2226084	2,500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Sab)	SAB/CE(COM)/T/2021/19 Supply & Delivery of 1,000 Nos. of 6m/50kg Pre-Stressed Spun Concrete Poles	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	2,500.00	NCB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2020/015/D Supply and Delivery of Aerial Bundled Conductor Alu. (ABC) 230/400 V 3x95+70 sqmm – 65,000 m.	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of the DGM(P&D)-DD4,C.E.B., 4th Floor, No. 25, Council Lane, Dehiwala. 011-4204015	13,500.00	ICB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2020/046/D Supply and Delivery of Switches - Load Break SF6, 36kV, with Remote Operation, 400A (Pole Mounted) – 60 Nos. with Communication Modules & Spares	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	12,500.00	ICB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2020/047/D Supply and Delivery of Switches - Load Break SF6, 36kV, with Remote Operation, 400A (Gantry Mounted) - 48 Nos. with Communication Modules & Spares	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	12,500.00	ICB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2020/051/D Supply and Delivery of Fuse Switch Disconnecter Insulated 4 Pole 125A – 160A – 5,000 Nos.	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	14,500.00	ICB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2020/055/D Supply and Delivery of Fuse Links Expulsion 11kV (K' Type) & Fuse Links Expulsion 33kV (K' Type)	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of the DGM(P&D)-DD4,C.E.B., 4th Floor, No. 25, Council Lane, Dehiwala. 011-4204015	3,500.00	ICB
DD 04 (P&D)	DD4/P&D/ICB/2021/001/D Supply and Delivery of Stay Clamps – Ungalvanized – 19,000 Nos. / Strut Brackets – Ungalvanized – 9,500 Nos.	21/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,500.00	ICB
CoNsTRuCTIoN					
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0001 Industrial Waste Water line blockage Cleaning work.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Procurement Division, 4th Floor, Admin Building, Lakvijaya Power Plant, Ceylon Electricity Board, Narakkaliya, Norochcholai 61342 TP : 032 226 8972 071-5777171 Fax: 032 226 8975	1,000.00	NCB
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0011 Concreting the Access Road for Car Park in Engineer's Dormitory at Daluwa Housing Complex	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	2,500.00	NCB
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0070 Concreting the Access Roads and Car Park in Workers Dormitory No.07 at Daluwa Housing Complex	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	2,500.00	NCB
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0065 Paving Interlocking Concrete Block Around the Club House at Daluwa Housing Complex	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	2,000.00	NCB
Transmission (O&M)	TR/O&M/N/NCB/2020/064/D Hiring of Three Vans with Fuel & Driver for Transmission O&M – North Central	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Tr.O&M-NC), Office of the Chief Engineer (Tr.O&M-NC) Ceylon Electricity Board, Bandaranyake Mawatha, Anuradhapura. Tel/Fax: 025-2235269	200.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2020/148 Renovation of Drain lines and toilets in Bolawaththa Consumer Service Center.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Commercial) Branch, CEB, Narammala Road, Kuliyapitiya. 037-2281892	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2020/308 Rehabilitation of Thimbilla Quarters building for Chilaw Consumer Service Center-Stage 1	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 03 (WPS II)	WPSII/T/2021/021 Construction of Manhole Type Pump House, Supply & Installation of Wet Well Submersible Sewerage Pumping Set, Electrical Panels, DI Pipes, Specials and All Other Accessories for Distribution Control Center and Call Center Building of CEB - Ethulkotte	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of DGM (WPSII), CEB, 1 st Floor, 644, Sri Jayawardanapura Mw, Ethulkotte.	3,500.00	NCB
DD 03 (WPS II)	WPSII/T/2021/032 Renovation of Provincial Main Stores (WPSII) – Store No.02 at Kolonnawa	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	3,500.00	NCB

Division and Branch Province	Bid No. / Item Description & Quantity	Bid Closing Date & Time	Place of Purchase of Bidding Documents & Contact TP. Nos.	Price of Bid Document (LKR)	Type of Bid ICB/ NCB
seRVICes					
Generation (Lakvijaya)	LV/T/2021/0061 Get Leased Accommodation Premises for LVPP Employees 2021-2023	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Procurement Division, 4th Floor, Admin Building, Lakvijaya Power Plant, Ceylon Electricity Board, Narakkaliya, Norochcholai 61342. TP: 032 226 8972 071-5777171 Fax: 032 226 8975	Free	NCB
Generation (Mahaweli)	MC/UKTPS/TEN/MEC/2021-006 Hiring a 12-Seater Passenger Van with Driver and Fuel for Upper Kotmale Power Station	31/03/2021 14.30 hrs.	Office of the Chief Engineer, Upper Kotmale Power Station, Ceylon Electricity Board, Eng. Shavindranath Fernando Mawatha, Niyangamadora, Kotmale TP: 0512233211 / 0777253216 / 0777253098, Fax: 0512233168	1,000.00	NCB
Generation (Thermal Complex)	KPS/50DG/Procurements/RMS Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Remote Monitoring System for Four Diesel Power Plants of Kelanitissa Power Station.	07/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of Deputy General Manager (Thermal Complex) Ceylon Electricity Board, Generation, Headquarters, New Kelani Bridge Road, Kolonnawa 10600, Sri Lanka. Tel: 011 2423897	5,000.00	NCB
Transmission (O&M)	TR/O&MS/NCB/2020/17/D Hiring A Vehicle for Electrical Superintendent Transmission Operation And Maintenance – Western North	25/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Office of the Chief Engineer, (Tr. O&M) Western North, St. Francis Lane, Dalugama, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Tel: 011-2905261, Fax: 011-2905262	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2020/348 Hiring of a Three Wheeler for Bolawaththa Consumer Service Center.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Commercial) Branch, CEB, Narammala Road, Kuliyaipitiya. 037-2281892	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2020/357 Hiring of a Van for Electrical Superintendent (Commercial)-II of Electrical Engineer (Wenappuwa) Office.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2020/360 Hiring of a Van (Loss Reduction Program Unit) of Chief Electrical Engineer (Energy Management) Unit.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP1)	DGM/NWP1/CEECM/T/2021/02 Hiring of a Car for Electrical Engineer-II of Chief Electrical Engineer (Distribution Maintenance) Unit.	07/04/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/HV/21/001 Hiring a Crew Cab for Wariyapola Consumer Service Center	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	The Office of the Deputy General Manager (NWP -2), Ceylon Electricity Board, No.25, Rajapihilla Road, Kurunegala. T.No: 037- 2065498 Fax : 037- 2065497	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/HV/21/002 Hiring a Car for the official use of Electrical Engineer (Narammala)	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/HV/21/003 Hiring a Van for Chief Engineer (Kurunegala) Office	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/HV/21/004 Hiring a Crew Cab for Maintenance unit of Electrical Engineer (Maho) Office	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 01 (NWP-2)	CEB/NWP2/NCB/HV/21/005 Hiring a Crew Cab for Pothuhera Consumer Service Center	01/04/2021 10.00 hrs.	Same as above	1,000.00	NCB
DD 02 (Central 2)	CP2/CE(COM)/PPC/2021/029 Hiring of a Motor Car for Electrical Engineer (Commercial - CP 02) for a Period of 02 Years.	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Commercial)-CP2, CEB, Quarry Road, Eriyagama, Peradeniya. T.P 081-4949160	1,000.00	NCB
DD 02 (Central 1)	CP1/CE(COM)/PPC/2021/021 Tender for Refurbishment of IT Sub Unit – Central Province-1.	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Commercial), CEB, No. 04, Asgiriya Road, Kandy. T.P 081-2234324 / 081-2234000	1,000.00	NCB
DD 02 (Central 1)	CP1/CE(COM)/PPC/2021/041 Painting Works, additional work and repairs etc. at DGM Office Complex - Central Province-1	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Engineer (Commercial), CEB, No. 04, Asgiriya Road, Kandy. T.P 081-2234324 / 081-2234000	1,000.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/KEL/CE/TC 01/2021/02 Lease out a Building for ES Quarters (Kirillawala) for 02 Years. The building should be located Kirillawala, Kadawatha, Mahara, Kiribathgoda	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Chief Electrical Engineer's Office, CEB, 624, Kandy Road, Kirillawala, Kadawatha. T.P. 011 2925880 Fax - 011 2925885	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/P&D-V08/2021/111 Hiring of a Van for Chief Engineer (Planning & Development)'s Unit	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	DGM(WPN)'s Office, CEB, No.280, Kandy Road, Kiribathgoda Tel.011-2911071/72	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/V-V126/2021/112 Hiring of a Van for Chief Electrical Engineer's office - Veyangoda	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/DM-V112/2021/113 Hiring of a Motor Car on Wet Lease basis (with driver) for Site Engineer I (Distribution Maintenance)	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/DM-V22/2021/114 Hiring of a Motor Car on Wet Lease basis (with driver) for Chief Engineer (Distribution Maintenance)	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/J-V72/2021/115 Hiring of a Van for Area Maintenance Unit - II Chief Electrical Engineer (Ja-ela)	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/J-V124/2021/116 Hiring of a Crew Cab for Area Maintenance Unit - II Chief Electrical Engineer (Ja-ela)	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/J-V147/2021/117 Hiring of a Crew Cab for Consumer Service Centre - Ragama	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/V-V152/2021/123 Hiring of a Van for Consumer Service Centre - Pasyala	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (WPN)	WPN/NCB/DM-V25/2021/60 Hiring of a Van for Distribution Maintenance Unit - Veyangoda Site	24/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Same as above	500.00	NCB
DD 02 (PHM)	PHMDD2/DGM/CE(LC&M)/QD/2020/04 Rent Out/Leasing a House for Naula Nalanda Site Office - Chief Engineer (Line Construction & Maintenance) Projects & Heavy Maintenance - DD2 in between Gampaha & Kadawatta near to main Road. Floor area of the building should be about 2000 sq.ft. Parking facility for 3 vehicles.	31/03/2021 14.00 hrs.	Deputy General Manager (P&HM) DD2, Ceylon Electricity Board, P.O.Box. 18, Lamagaraya Road, Kandy. 081-2222286 / 081-2204298	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	කිසැ(උවාව) පුලු(වැනිව) කිල කිට්ටය(සී6) 2021/01 Lease out a house for Badulla Sub Unit of the Chief Engineer – Distribution Maintenance (Uva) Unit (2 years)	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Office of the Deputy General Manager (Uva), Chief Engineer (Commercial) Unit, Ceylon Electricity Board, No 04, Spring Valley Road, Hindagoda, Badulla. Tel : 0552222474	500.00	NCB
DD 03 (Uva)	කිසැ(උවාව) පුලු(වැනිව) කිල කිට්ටය(සී6) 2021/03 Lease out a Building for Dambagalla Consumer Service Center around Dambagalla Town (2 Years)	31/03/2021 15.00 hrs.	Office of Area Electrical Engineer (Moneragala), Ceylon Electricity Board, Wellawaya Road, Moneragala Tel : 0552277350	500.00	NCB
DD 04 (PHM)	DD4/PHM/NCB/2020/018/D Preliminary and Profile Surveying of 33kV Express Tower Line Routes A – Baddegama GSS to Baddegama Gantry (4.5km) B – Baddegama GSS to Indigasketiya Gantry (1.5km) C – Baddegama GSS to Existing D/C (Galle Side) (5.0km) D – Baddegama GSS to Existing D/C (Gonapinuwala Side) (4.0km) Pre Bid Meeting: 10.30 a.m. on 22nd March 2021.	31/03/2021 10.00 hrs.	Office of Deputy General Manager (Project and Heavy Maintenance) – Distribution Division 04, Ceylon Electricity Board, Sri Devananda Mawatha, Piliyandala.	1,000.00	NCB

Chairman of the above Procurement Committees, on behalf of the Ceylon Electricity Board, now invites sealed Bids from potential Suppliers for the above mentioned items on the basis of International /National competitive bidding. Bids should be submitted only on the bid documents purchased from the CEB.

Bidding Documents will be issued only to the prospective Bidders or their accredited Agents. Wherever necessary they should get registered in terms of the Public Contracts Act No.3 of 1987.

Bidding Documents could be purchased by any prospective bidder or their accredited Agents on submission of a written request to the respective Deputy General Manager/Chief Engineer of the CEB upon payment of the amount indicated in Column 6 of the above table for each set of Bid Documents, between 0900 hrs. and 1500 hrs. on any working day till the day prior to the bid closing date. Payment shall be made in cash or bank draft drawn in favour of the General Manager, CEB.

Foreign Diplomatic Missions / Trade Commissions may obtain information copies of the Bidding Documents, free of charge on submission of a written request. Bidding Documents may be inspected by the prospective bidders or their Agents at the office of the respective DGM/CE free of charge.

Bids will be opened immediately after the closing time of the bidding in the presence of Bidders and their authorized representatives at the locations indicated in Column 9. Late Bids shall be rejected.

All clarifications shall be sought two weeks before the Bid closing date, from the respective DGM/CE of the CEB who issued the bidding Documents.

* ICB – International Competitive Bidding, NCB – National Competitive Bidding.

General Manager

Enrich Life through Power



The Information copy of the Bid document may be downloaded from the CEB Corporate website www.ceb.lk

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NOTICE

RECRUITMENT FOR VACANCIES AT THE HOMEOPATHY MEDICAL COUNCIL

Applications will be received from Sri Lankan citizens, to fill the vacancies existing at the Homeopathy Medical Council, maintained under the supervision of the State Ministry of Indigenous Medicine Promotion, Rural and Ayurvedic Hospitals Development and Community Health.

POST OF MEDICAL OFFICER

- 01. Post :** Homeopathy Medical Officer
- 02. Nature of Appointment :** Permanent post with entitlement to Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Trust Fund benefits.
- 03. Salary Method :** Code Number and monthly salary scale relevant to the Service Category : MM 1-1-2016 - Rs. (53,175 - 10x1375 - 15x1910 - 95575/=).
- 04. Qualifications required :** Obtained a Degree in Homeopathy Medical Science after following a Degree Course of not less than five and a half year duration from a local or overseas university recognized by the Sri Lanka University Grants Commission.
or
Followed a full time Diploma in Homeopathy Medical Science Course of not less than four years duration from a University recognized by the Sri Lanka University Grants Commission with 03 years professional experience after obtaining qualifications and
Obtained a minimum of one year Internship Training. Registered at the Homeopathy Medical Council as a Homeopathy Doctor.
Obtained a minimum of one year professional experience (in Medical Clinical Section) at either a local or overseas hospital (This fact should be substantiated by a list of names of patients treated and a certificate issued by the Institution Heads confirming his servicing at their Institutions with the original seal placed. If it is a Private Institution, a certificate from the Divisional Secretary of the area where the firm is established should be submitted in proof.
- 05. Age Limit :** Should be not below 25 years and not above 50 years.
- 06. Other :** Every applicant should -
 - i) Be a Sri Lankan citizen.
 - ii) Be physically and mentally fit so as to discharge the duties entrusted to the post in a perfect manner as well as to serve in any part of the island.
 - iii) Possess an excellent character.

Method of Recruitment : Recruitment will be done in the order of skills, based on the results of structural interview conducted by a Board appointed by the Appointing Authority.

Qualifying Date : To accept the applicant as has fulfilled the required qualifications to apply for the service / post, he should have completed the required qualifications stated in Sections 4, 5, and 6 above, in every way, as on the closing date of acceptance of applications.

Identity of the Applicants : Applications submitted should in every way, be complete and accurate and should submit duly certified copies of the educational and other certificates in proof of the required qualifications stated in Sections 4 and 5 above.

POST OF MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT

- 01. Post :** Management Assistant - Grade III
 - 02. Nature of Appointment :** The post is permanent and is entitled to Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Trust Fund Benefits.
 - 03. Salary Method :** The Code No. and monthly salary scale relevant to the Service Category : MA 1-1 - 2016 : Rs. (27,910 - 10x300 - 7x350 - 4x495 - 20x660 - 48,450/=)
 - 04. External Applicants :**
 - Educational :** (a) Should have passed G.C.E. (O/Level) Examination in six (06) subjects in one sitting with credit passes for four subjects including
 - I. Sinhala / Tamil
 - II. English
 - III. Maths
 - (b) Should have passed G.C.E. (A/Level) Examination with minimum of three (03) subjects (excluding the General Common Paper).
 - Other Qualifications :** Basic knowledge on Computer Word Processing.
 - 05. Internal Applicants :**
 - (a) Employees having Primary Grade / non-skilled and semi-skilled service categories can apply for this.
 - (b) Should have passed G.C.E. (O/Level) Examination in six (06) subjects in one sitting, including,
 - I. Sinhala / Tamil
 - II. English
 - III. Maths
- and should have obtained credit passes for at least three subjects. (Followed a course in Computer Word Processing / Typewriting which is recognized by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission or having any other equivalent level qualifications will be considered as additional qualifications).
- (c) Should hold permanent appointments in the service and should have been made permanent in the posts.
 - (d) Should have completed a continuous satisfactory service period of at least five (05) years in a permanent post, immediately prior to the schedule date.
- 06. Age Limit :** Should be not below 18 years and not above 45 years. The upper age limit is not applicable to internal applicants.
- 07. Other :** Every applicant should -
 - (i) Be a Sri Lankan citizen.
 - (ii) Be physically and mentally fit so as to discharge the entrusted duties of the post in an efficient manner and to serve in any part of the island.
 - (iii) Possess an excellent character.

Your candidature will be subjected to be cancelled if any detail stated by you in the application submitted is found to be false or in accurate before the appointment is made.

You will be dismissed from service, subject to relevant procedures, if any detail submitted by you is found to be false or inaccurate after the recruitment is made.

The final appointing authority will be the Homeopathy Medical Council and its decision in this regard shall be the final.

A self-prepared application containing all details should be forwarded to the undermentioned address, to be received on or before 25th March 2021, by Registered Post :

**Registrar
Homeopathy Medical Council,
94, Shelton Jayasinghe Mawatha,
Welisara, Ragama.**

**M.A. Perera
Registrar,
Homeopathy Medical Council.**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 9 (2) of the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007.
Name of the Company: QUANTITY SURVEYOR FOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS (PRIVATE) LIMITED
Company No: PV 00234807
Registered Office: No. 44/48, Sri Indrajothi Road, Ratmalana.
Date of Incorporation: 13th February 2021

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 9(1) of the Companies Act No. 7 of 2007, that,
Name of the Company: PREMIUM GREEN SOLAR (PVT) LTD
Registered Office: No. 48, 27th Lane, Colombo 3.
Incorporated Date: 02nd March 2021.
Registered No. PV 00235775

PUBLIC AUCTION

Gold articles unredeemed during the agreed period of mortgage with Softlogic Finance PLC shall be sold by Public Auction on 26th March 2021, 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at No. 85, Kolonnawa Road, Dematagoda, Colombo 09.

GOLD LOAN CENTRES

- Anuradhapura
- Badulla
- Borella
- Chilaw
- Chunnakam
- Dematagoda
- Embilipitiya
- Galle
- Gampaha
- Hatton
- Jaffna
- Kurunegala
- Kaluthara
- Kandy
- Kochechikade
- Kottawa
- Kadawatha
- Matale
- Mawanella
- Matara
- Nuwara eliya
- Negombo
- Grandpass
- Polonnaruwa
- Bambalapitiya
- Ratnapura
- Kotahena
- Tissamaharama
- Welligama
- Wattala

The Company reserves the right to cancel, amalgamate or postpone any of these auctions without future notice.

REVOCATION OF POWER OF ATTORNEY

I, Akbar Al Baker, Group Chief Executive of Qatar Airways Group (Q.C.S.C.) of No. P.O. Box 22550, Doha, Qatar do hereby inform the General Public of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka that the Power of Attorney granted by me to Yu Cha An (holder of Hong Kong Special Administrative Peoples Republic of China Passport No. K30733457) dated 09th April 2019 executed in the presence of Attache for Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan Embassy - Doha Qatar on 20.05.2019 and registered in the book of written authorities maintained by the Office of Registrar General, Battaramulla in Day Book No. 8806 Folio 99 Volume 275 on 04.06.2019 is hereby cancelled and revoked with effect from 6th day of October 2020 and we will not be responsible for any act or deed done by the said Yu Cha An in his capacity as our Attorney.

Akbar Al Baker

BOARD OF INVESTMENT OF SRI LANKA (BOI)

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

IMPROVEMENTS TO WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) AT MAWATHAGAMA EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE

CONTRACT NO.: BOI/NWRO/MWEPZ/2020/09.03.011

- The Chairman, Procurement Committee, on behalf of the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for Improvements to Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at Mawathagama Export Processing Zone. The Construction period is 180 days.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedure.
- To be eligible for contract award, the successful bidder shall not have been blacklisted and shall meet the following requirements:
Required CIDA Registration
Specialty. : Water Supply & Sewerage
Grade : C9 to C5
- Qualification requirements to qualify for contract award include:
Experience as a main Contractor, it should be successfully completed at least one work of a similar nature and complexity equivalent to the proposed works over the period of last 5 years.
- Interested bidders may obtain further information from Director (North Western Province), North Western Regional Office, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, MAS Fabric Park, Kurunegala Road, Thulhiriya over Tel. No. 037-2277035 or Fax No. 037-2277036 and inspect the Bidding documents from the same address between 09.00 hrs and 16.00 hrs. on working days.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application to Director (North Western Province), North Western Regional Office, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, MAS Fabric Park, Kurunegala Road, Thulhiriya from 11.03.2021 to 29.03.2021 during 09.00 hrs. to 15.00 hrs. upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs. 2,500.00 + VAT. The method of payment will be by cash.
- Sealed Bids shall be delivered in duplicate to "The Chairman, Department Procurement Committee, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, C/o Director (North Western Province), North Western Regional Office, MAS Fabric Park, Kurunegala Road, Thulhiriya on or before 30.03.2021 at 14.00 hrs. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened soon after closing in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
- Bids shall be valid up to 30.06.2021.
- All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid-Security of Rs. 150,000.00. Bid Security shall be valid up to 30.07.2021.
- A pre bid meeting has been scheduled to be held at 10.00 hrs. on 26.03.2021 at the BOI Office of Mawathagama Export Processing Zone at Kandy Road, Mawathagama.

Chairman
BOARD OF INVESTMENT OF SRI LANKA

CORRECTION NOTICE

My No : EP/LD/09/4/6 ii

Land Ministry Ref. No. J/63/64/E/296

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT

Notice is hereby given for the information of the General Public that the title compensation inquiries under Section 09 of the Land Acquisition Act pertaining to the undermentioned lands which have been vested in state under the said act will be held by me at the Divisional Secretariat Elpitiya on 28.04.2021. Those who have interest over the said lands are required to appear at the said inquiries. Please see Government Gazette Extraordinary No. 2212/15 dated 26.01.2021 for further details.

- District : Galle
 - Divisional Secretariat : Elpitiya
 - Basic Plan No. : F.V.P. 595
 - Lot Nos. : From 269 to 276
 - Extent : 4 Acres 08 perches
 - Name of the Village : Indipalegoda
 - Grama Niladhari Division : No. 30B, Indipalegoda
 - Name of the Land : Dikhen Pollawwa Pansala Addarawatta, Dikhen Pollawwa, Dikhen Pollawwa Millagahahena Watta, Millagahahenawatta, Millagahahawatta Ketiya
- Suseema Kariyawasam
Divisional Secretary
Elpitiya
- Divisional Secretariat, Elpitiya.
25.02.2021

The Housewives' companion

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Daily News

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Classifieds



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58-3540 Mazda
Brown, 1991, van for highest offer.
Vallibel Finance PLC. No. 310, Galle Road, Colombo-03.
Tel: 0714-542958.
018921

Notice under Section 7 of the Land Acquisition (Chapter 460) as amended by the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act.No. 28 of 1964

Laggala Divisional Secretary's Ref. No. 11/3/3/1/13E
Land Ministry's Ref. No. LD/052009/MV/177

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for the State, purpose of Moragahakanda and Kaluganga Development Project. For further particulars see Gazette Extra Ordinary No. 2214/72 dated 12.02.2021 of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

SCHEDULE

- District : Matale
- Divisional Secretary's Division : Laggala
- Grama Niladhari's Division : E 397 E Guruwela
- Name of Village : Guruwela (According to the Preliminary Plan)
- Name of Land : As per the above number Extra Ordinary Gazette Notice
- Plan No. : Topo PP 13, Supplementary No. 137, Sheet No. 303
- Extent : 2.5497 Hectares
- Lot Nos : 10921, 10924, 10925, 10926
- S. Vijayakumar
Divisional Secretary,
Laggala.
- Divisional Secretariat, Laggala.
Date : 23.02.2021

Marriage Proposals
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Sunday Observer
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SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA TOURISM PROMOTION BUREAU
Ministry of Tourism

Notice of Extension to Invitation for Bids

Date :	10.03.2021
Title :	Selection of a Digital Marketing Company For the Global Communication Campaign 2021-2025 of Sri Lanka Tourism
Bid No :	SLTPB/GCC/2021/003

Reference is made to the paper advertisements on the "Dinamina", "Daily Mirror" and "Thinakaran" on 16.02.2021 and "Daily News" on 17.02.2021 calling Invitation for Bids for the above project". It has been decided to extend the deadline for submission of Bids until 3.00 p.m. On 31.03.2021

The Chairman
Standing Cabinet Appointed Procurement Committee
Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau
No. 80, Galle Road,
Colombo 03
Sri Lanka

T/ nG

To re-ignite the passions of town & country folk

FEATURES EDITOR : (011) 242 9216 Fax : (011) 234 3694
E mail : features.dailynews@lakehouse.lk



Zero in on your passions

RUWINI JAYAWARDANA

She gains sufficient self-motivation to juggle four roles - that of a working woman, wife, mother and beauty queen. Her passion to perform the duties required for each role is her success mantra. It brings out the best version of herself.

"I believe that everything depends on your perspective and what you focus on. I have understood that certain responsibilities lie with each title for me to work on when my presence demands. I focus on each role 100 percent. I am passionate about the work demands of each of these roles since they give me deep joy. I understand my priorities well and that is how I manage to juggle my roles well," says Mrs Sri Lanka for Mrs Universe 2020 Deepthi Jayaratne.

She notes that she saw the notice calling for applications for Mrs Sri Lanka Universe 2020 on the social media and decided to apply. She was called for an audition at Galadari Hotel and was selected for the final 12.

"I realized that this event will be a platform for me to showcase my talents and values in an international level if I get selected for Mrs Universe. Becoming Mrs Sri Lanka was the first step. So I decided to take part in the beauty pageant," she explained.

She terms the moment she heard that her name has been chosen for the international pageant as a 'proud and happy episode'. She strongly believes that her passion was her success formula.

"Your commitment, focus and believing in yourself matters. I adore supporting children who need a gentle push to showcase their talents and skills. I believe in supporting them in whatever way I can. That is one of the duties I look forward to most that go with my crown," Deepthi mused.

Apart from the Mrs Sri Lanka Universe 2020 title Deepthi also clinched the Mrs Intelligent mini title. Her ideas about Sri Lankan tourism, empowering women and global warming won over the judges.

"Sri Lankan tourism plays a major role in the Sri Lankan economy. Our tropical climate, beautiful beaches and unique cultural values can be promoted more to attract tourists to the island. We need to identify and use our resources differently and virtually during the pandemic. This is the time to develop our products and showcase them to the world. Strengthen the domestic tourism sector. We also need to enhance the standards of our hotels so that they would be on par with those of internation-

al standards," Deepthi opined. "Women should be equally treated in leadership roles. They should be encouraged to determine their own choices and the right to influence social changes for themselves and as well as others," she expressed.

Mrs Universe 2020 was held virtually due to the pandemic. Around 90 contestants from countries across the world took part in it. Throughout the event priority was given to the E-voting system. Mrs Kazakhstan Zhuldiz Abdurakimova bagged the crown.

"Showcasing my strengths virtually amid the pandemic was really tough. I appreciate the fact that they decided to hold the pageant online without cancelling it that year. 2020 was already a rough year. We needed all the motivation we could get," she said.

She has been involved in a number of social service activities due to her career. Being attached to a multinational organisation, Deepthi has engaged in a number of environmental projects and programmes related to children. She had also taught children by putting her flair for teaching to use after completing her schooling. She had supported disabled children by being physically available for them.

"This is an important time to re-think about the mental wellbeing of children as well since they were away from school, sports ect for a long span. Their parents must be suffering from financial difficulties as well. This would definitely effect a child's mental health. The kids have been stuck with digital devices throughout the year. This has taken a toll on their creativity. Children are our future. When they are happy they tend to be more creative. I conducted a volunteer programme for children recently as a means of supporting their mental wellbeing," Deepthi revealed.

She advises to drink lots of water, eat less junk food and have peace of mind. She believes that each and every woman is beautiful in her own unique manner.

"Taking care of yourself is what matters most in enhancing your outer and inner beauty," she pointed out.

Coming from a family of four Deepthi has a sister who is also involved in the banking field. Her husband, H A N D Gunathilake, has been in the hotel industry for many years. She has a seven-year-old son, Jenul, who studies at an international school.

The auditions for Mrs Sri Lanka for Mrs Universe 2021 are due to be held on March 21. Deepthi is hoping to be part of the event as the current title holder. She is also involved in a few projects these days.

"I hope we would be able to overcome all the difficulties we faced in 2020. Most of the industries were effected due to the pandemic. We need to adapt to the new normal and look at things in a different angle to achieve success. My wish is that may each one of us should possess a strong mindset to get ready for a better tomorrow," she concluded.

Glit Chat

Short questions

- Full Name: Deepthi Shanika Jayaratne
- Ambition: To contribute more to the social service sector and to start my own brand in the textile field which am working on right now
- Favorite food: Cheese and cream crackers
- Greatest weakness: Being too kind at times
- One thing you would like to change about yourself: The time I spend in the kitchen involved in cooking - I would

like to extend that

- The place you would like to visit most : In Sri Lanka I like to go to Ella
- Three things that inspires you: My friends circle who possess positive attitudes, adventure and music. I also get inspired when I support someone who needs my help
- Favorite style icon: Megan Markle
- Favorite global beauty queen: Priyanka Chopra
- Most treasured moment in life : The moment that I gave birth to my son, Jenul



Pictures by Kasun Shanaka Bandara, Amesh Sulochana and Malith Gayan

At an event she organized to enhance children's mental wellbeing after being crowned as Mrs Sri Lanka Universe 2019





My loving teacher Reshanthi

I remembered my parents brought you into my life when I was in Grade 2. I came to your house to learn English. You thought I can learn a lot of things. I didn't know how to talk with you in English then. I was afraid of speaking in English and making mistakes. My mother told you that I do not make the effort to speak English. You told my mother, 'don't worry she will do it'. After a few days I lost my fear of speaking in English. You told me several times to talk in English. Do you remember my hand writing? It was very ugly. I was glad that you taught me to write neat hand writing. I always remember that. You always helped us learn everything. You also taught us about life. You are a very important teacher to us. When I come to your classes, I was

very excited and very happy. You were tired after teaching us everything. You have to be strong and brave. You are my best teacher. Thank you, teacher, for all of these things you are doing online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your work keeps you busy till 10.30 pm. I know you go to sleep only at midnight.

Kavidhi Samadari Rathnayaka,
Grade 5B,
Louvre College, Pannipitiya



Follow good health habits

Habits which lead to a healthy life are known as good health habits. When one follows good health practices, it generates a healthy and balanced life. Good health habits must be formed in childhood itself because it is difficult to form such habits in adulthood.

There are several health habits which must be followed by everyone in society.

They are washing hands before and after meals, bathing daily, brushing teeth morning and night, daily exercise, trimming nails twice a week and many other such habits.

On the whole, everyone must reject bad habits and form good health habits because it ensures a long life free from illnesses. Such hygienic habits are especially important during the time of the pandemic.

All those who wish to have a healthy life must form good health habits from their childhood itself.

R Sharugi,
Grade 9,
K/ Hindu National College,
Pussellawa



My favourite character in a book

My favourite fiction book character is Nancy Drew. The author of this book series is Carolyn Keene. Nancy Drew is an 18 year old girl who solves difficult mysteries that even the police can't solve. Most of the time she gets help from her two best

friends, Bess Marvin and Georgia Fayne. Nancy and her father live in River Heights, California with their housekeeper.

This amateur detective has caught thieves, kidnapers and various kinds of criminals. I like Nancy Drew because she is a very exciting character.

Ashanthi Perera,
Grade 7,
Hillwood College, Kandy



Anger is not good

Sometimes we get angry. But anger is not good. It is a bad habit to get angry very often. We should be kind to other people. When we are angry, it will increase our blood pressure too. It will make us ugly. People do not like to talk with angry people. Anger will harm to us a lot. We should always be happy. We need to be pleasant to others. Then other people too will like us.

Samanthika Enderamulla,
Grade 6,
Kegalle Balika Vidyalaya,
Kegalle

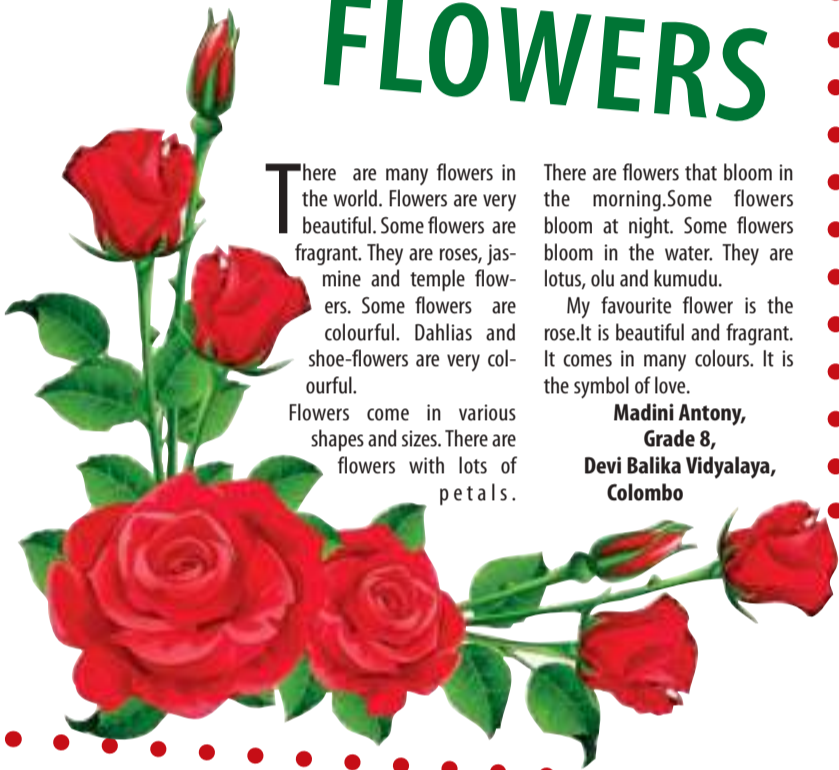
FLOWERS

There are many flowers in the world. Flowers are very beautiful. Some flowers are fragrant. They are roses, jasmine and temple flowers. Some flowers are colourful. Dahlias and shoe-flowers are very colourful. Flowers come in various shapes and sizes. There are flowers with lots of petals.

There are flowers that bloom in the morning. Some flowers bloom at night. Some flowers bloom in the water. They are lotus, lotu and kumudu.

My favourite flower is the rose. It is beautiful and fragrant. It comes in many colours. It is the symbol of love.

Madini Antony,
Grade 8,
Devi Balika Vidyalaya,
Colombo

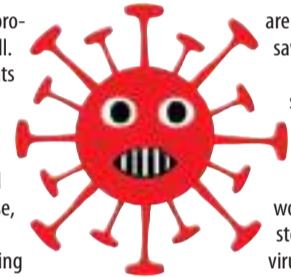


The Covid-19 pandemic

Covid-19 is a disease caused by the coronavirus which makes people very ill. The coronavirus is a germ which floats in the air in tiny water droplets.

When a person with the coronavirus coughs, sneezes or breathes out, water droplets escaping from their mouth and nose can get into us through our nose, mouth and eyes.

Also we have to be aware of touching things like door knobs, switches, toilets and tap handles that have been used by many other people, because we do not know who is infected with the coronavirus. Doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and cleaners



are helping the community by saving many lives.

Scientists have developed several vaccines which have proven to be effective against the virus to a certain extent. Hopefully, there would be a medication that will stop people from getting the virus. Till then let's be very careful, wear masks, wash hands, practice social distancing and be safe.

Ubadah Fazil, Grade 4,
Royal International School,
Kegalle

LITERARY WONDERS

Text and pictures by

I L RIZAN,

Addalaichenai Central Cor

Five competitors from Oluvil Al-Madeena Vidyalaya in the Akkaraipattu Educational Zone have won five medals at the Addalaichenai Divisional Literary competition 2020.

The Cultural Affairs Department conducted the competitions among students from schools in the Addalaichenai Educational Division.

The winners:

A F Ithaha - First place in hand writing. Literary wonders

M S Zahra
Samha - Second place in folk songs

U L Abdul Ashrik,
M.F.Mihthab Iyman and **M I Hasnath Zaara** - Second place in hand writing

The ceremony to appreciate and honour the winners took place at the Addalaichenai Divisional Secretariat Auditorium recently with the Addalaichenai Divisional Secretary J Liyakath Ali as the Chief Guest while Ampara District Secretariat Cultural Officer T M Rinzan and Addalaichenai Divisional Secretariat Administrative Officer R M Naleel were the guests of honour. The function was held following health guidelines.

Teachers of the students praised by the school Principal K L Ameer and the school community for their success.



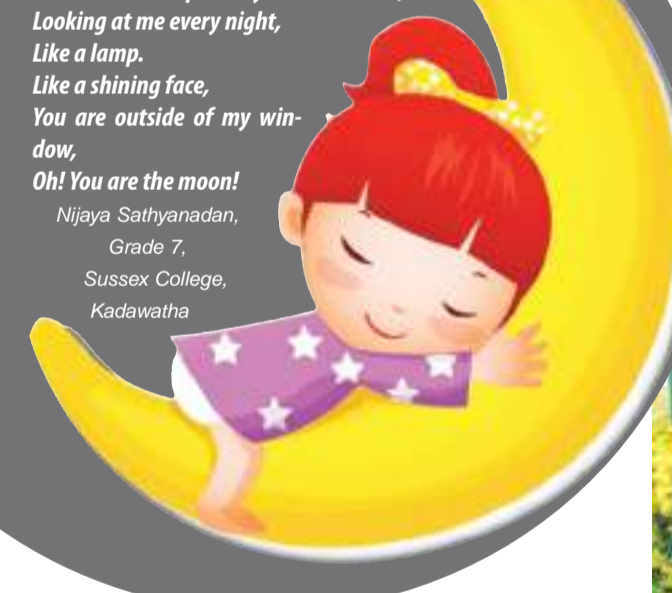
The moon

Someone in the sky looking bright,
It is round in shape and yellow in colour,
Looking at me every night,
Like a lamp.

Like a shining face,
You are outside of my window,

Oh! You are the moon!

Nijaya Sathyanadan,
Grade 7,
Sussex College,
Kadawatha



Setting an example

Text and pictures by

I L RIZAN,

Addalaichenai Central Cor

The Akkaraipattu Zonal Education Director A L M Cassim opened a model Grade One class room at Al-Mina Vidyalaya, Addalaichenai recently.

Addalaichenai Al-Mina Vidyalaya Principal M I M Riyas presided over the event. The Chief Guest was Akkaraipattu Zonal Education Director and he handed over the class room to the students.

The model class room project work was jointly conducted by the Akkaraipattu Zonal Education Office Primary Unit and the Addalaichenai Al-Mina Vidyalaya.

A variety of learning aids has been displayed in the class room. The Grade One class students benefited through the programme.

Akkaraipattu Education Zone

Assistant Education Director (Primary Education) S Amjathkhan emphasized the need to use learning aids for the betterment of the students.

The Education Department officials and Primary teachers discussed various aspects of teaching methods.

A modern children's park and netball court of the school was opened for the use of children by the guests on the same day.

The Akkaraipattu Zonal Education Director planted a tree in the school compound to mark the occasion. Trees were given to the class students too.

Akkaraipattu Education Zone Assistant Education Director S Amjathkhan, A M Nowferdeen and Addalaichenai Pradeshiya Sabha Member Jameela Hameed were also present.



UNDER THE SEA

Sachintha Iddamalagoda,
Grade 6,
Jennings International College,
Nainamadama



PATTERNS

Rukshan Gaffoor,
Grade 6,
Royal Institute International Girls' School,
Colombo



OUT FOR A WALK

Sansadi Nimalka,
Grade 8,
Holy Cross College,
Gampaha

ADDRESSING MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE CONCERNS

Fems, a leading feminine hygiene care brand owned by Hemas Consumer came to the fore in addressing the most pressing concerns related to menstrual health and hygiene in a groundbreaking, multi-partner awareness campaign which runs nationwide.

Fems "AYA", a timely initiative aiming to educate women on menstrual health and hygiene and provide equal access to high quality napkins for every woman was launched in line with the International Women's Day celebrations. The event was graced by Primary Healthcare, Epidemics and COVID Disease Control State Minister Dr. Sudarshani Fernandopulle as Chief Guest.

Fems joined forces with the ARKA initiative, Dilmah's Merrill J. Fernando Charitable Foundation, Sarvo-

daya Women's Movement and Sarvodaya-Fusion to educate a wider audience of Sri Lankan women on menstrual health and iron out the long-held myths and misconceptions. While addressing the knowledge gap, this initiative intends to encourage women to use sanitary napkins as researches have found out that majority of menstruating women are non-users of sanitary napkins.

The Arka Initiative is an organization working on sexual and reproductive health issues in Sri Lanka. It is led by a group of young doctors, psychologists, lawyers and researchers. One of the main objec-



tives of the Arka Initiative is to educate and equip young women with the necessary knowledge and tools they need, to ensure menstrual health and hygiene.

The partnership with MJF Foundation enables Fems to educate more than 10,000 plantation residents, with the due support from the ARKA initiative. The Dilmah's Merrill J. Fernando Charitable Foundation continuously engages in charitable initiatives to uplift the lives of Sri Lankans and extend support to various communities such as the students with special needs. Fems intends to expand this awareness campaign to rural villages through Sarvodaya Women's Movement which is a large network of women spread across the island. The Movement's years of experience in tackling women's issues and empowering



From Left To Right: Marketing Director Hemas Consumer Brands Fiona Juriansz Munasinghe, President Sarvodaya Women's Movement Wimala Ranathunga, Managing Director Hemas FMCG Sri Lanka Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne, Chief Guest, Primary Health Services, Pandemics and COVID Prevention State Minister Dr. Sudarshani Fernandopulle, Group CEO Hemas Holdings PLC Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson, CEO Dilmah / Managing trustee MJCF Dilhan Fernando and Founder/Director The Arka Initiative Manisha Dissanayake

women by uplifting their knowledge add the necessary momentum to drive this initiative forward. Sarvodaya-Fusion who works on ICT for development initiatives will be instrumental in conducting online awareness sessions on healthful living for women in this digital era.

Dr. Sudarshani Fernandopulle, State Minister of Primary Healthcare, Epidemics and COVID Disease Control, whose presence was a huge impetus for the event shared her thoughts.

"I am proud to see a leading private sector company like Hemas stepping up to lead a social endeavor that bridges a long-felt knowledge gap together with organizations that share a similar interest. This initiative will make further inroads to empower women which bodes well for the country as well as the economy. I take this opportunity to congratulate Hemas and the partner organizations to make this initiative a success."

Alongside the nationwide initiative, Fems launched a new sanitary napkin aiming to equip Sri Lankan women with an affordable napkin



Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson



Wimala Ranathunga

solution. Manufactured using a soft cotton top sheet to provide maximum comfort to the user, FemsAya napkin will soon be available in the market for an affordable price.

Commenting during the launch, Hemas Holdings Executive Group CEO, Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson said, "This is a timely initiative, as at present majority of women in Sri Lanka due to numerous reasons do not have access to sanitary napkins."

FemsAya initiative will address these concerns related to menstrual health, which prevent women from leading an active lifestyle, and reaching their true potential. As a socially responsible brand that focuses on promoting a healthful nation, Fems through its FemsAya initiative will work towards creating awareness on menstrual health and hygiene, and empower women in all walks of life."

-AK



Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne



State Minister Dr. Sudarshani Fernandopulle

Baurs celebrates the achievements of women in its board leadership

Expressing its commitment to gender equality and women empowerment, one of Sri Lanka's leading diversified business group A. Baur & Company (Pvt.) Ltd, also known as Baurs celebrated International Women's Day by recognizing its importance of having women in the board and executive leadership positions.

Various studies have found out that women are still under-represented especially the higher they go up in the corporate ladder. Baurs takes great pride in being one of the many companies challenging the status quo and understanding that gender disparity is a company-wide effort. And what better way than celebrating and recognizing the accomplishments of two of its Directors, Anoja Basnayake-Director IT and Director Finance Pavithra Samarasinghe.

Whilst staying true to its core values and purpose, Baurs continue to evolve with contemporary and emerging business landscapes. The company embraces and promotes a culture that speaks volumes on equality, diversity, inclusivity and innovation.

Anoja Basnayake's journey with Baurs spans over 12 years, having joined as Manager-IT in 2008. She now leads the group digital transformation strategy at Baurs as Director-IT. "In my journey with Baurs I have always been inspired by the fact that women are actively encouraged to take bold steps and take on every opportunity that will help build their self-confidence. One could always be assured that their views are well heard and contributed to decision making irrespective of their gender."

"I'm always excited to engage and work with the wonderful people at Baurs. The diversity



Baurs Director Finance Pavithra Samarasinghe (L) and Director Information Technology Anoja Basnayake (R)

and inclusivity is rich and they truly understand the strengths and contribution women bring in to the workplace. The mutual respect and care I find here always inspire myself to grow stronger. I was given the opportunity to take on more responsibilities and oversee more business functions and the continued guidance, training and development I received at Baurs helped me become who I am today."

Anoja has previously worked with Brandix, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Hayleys Group. She is a board member of Project Management Institute (PMI) Sri Lanka Chapter and SAP User Group, and a Member of the Sri Lanka Institute of Directors (SLID).

Celebrating her 20th anniversary with Baurs this year is Pavithra Samarasinghe. Pavithra is instrumental in leading the company's financial position, growth and long-term sustainability as Director- Finance. "I truly believe that diversity brings a lot of value to any company. I should know because I

work at Baurs. I've never been discriminated nor deprived of any opportunity or benefit throughout my long-standing career. I am no exception, everyone here is treated the same irrespective of their gender or status."

"Women are extremely good at building relationships, multi-tasking and negotiations. Many companies are realizing this and paving way for women to take on key leadership positions. There is nothing holding back women from unleashing their potential and reaching to the top with necessary competencies, integrity and the right attitude. Baurs believes in promoting a healthy work-life balance which in my opinion is pivotal for women in workforce. There is a lot of empathy and encouragement across all levels."

Pavithra Samarasinghe is a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) and associate member of CIMA UK and CMA Sri Lanka, and holds an MBA from the University of Colombo. She is also a member of SLID. -77

Acorn Group applauds and empowers women at work

Acorn Group takes pride in the leading role played by its female employees across its businesses. There is no better occasion than International Women's Day to highlight how women make an impactful contribution to the businesses of Acorn. Women make up close to 44% of the Group's workforce and have been an integral part of the organization.

Acorn Group CEO Malinga Arsakularatne, said: "The Acorn family is committed to providing equal opportunities at the workplace, across all businesses of the organization. The past year is a testimony to the immense contribution made by the women in the Group as we faced many challenges due to the ongoing global pandemic. We take pride in the accomplishments and achievements of



our female colleagues, and applaud their significant contribution to the growth and success of the Group"

"Creating a work environment which is conducive to women ethics flexibility and workspace cultures which can be fine-tuned to cater to the demands of everyday life. We take pride in being one of the few organizations that not only affords an extended period of maternity

leave but has made provision for paternity leave to ensure inclusivity across the board."

Commenting on the success of women in the Group, Dushy Jayaweera, Managing Director of Acorn Aviation, said "Our company has actively encouraged and groomed our female workforce on their career journey. The increasing numbers in leadership positions of

females within our organization is a result of empowerment and training that has helped to pave the way". She further stressed that "The global pandemic and the resultant 'work from home' has also added pressure to the women in the workforce. However, our female colleagues have taken this in their stride, with innovative ways of doing business also being manifested during the lockdown"

"Having a voice and being heard, irrespective of your title, we are always encouraged to bring new ideas to the table and take the initiative to execute them with no gender bias. This motivates us to do better everyday" said Assistant Manager Marketing for Acorn Travels Nathasha Ekanayake, .

-FM

PERFECT PERSPECTIVE

Vision Care focuses on the importance of women's eye care on International Women's Day

Vision Care, Sri Lanka's largest eye care solution-provider, is marking International Women's Day by bringing attention to the importance of proper eyecare among women.

Women are always known to prioritize the well-being of their family and while doing so tend to overlook their own health, including their vision, leading to potential long-term health problems. All women, especially those who are 40 and older, should get a dilated eye exam through a professional and continue to do so once a year as early detection is important to prevent vision loss. One of the dangers is Presbyopia, an eye condition which usually occurs around the age of 40, where your eye slowly loses the ability to focus quickly on objects that are close. With early detection there is a possibility that Presbyopia may



be corrected using eyeglasses, contact lenses, or surgery.

When it comes to your daily lives, accidents that can potentially injure your eyes happen every day but 90% of them are preventable. As a majority of eye injuries occur at home, a simple step such as wearing eye protection when using tools and dangerous chemicals can keep your eyes safe. At work, it is important to give your eyes a rest by stepping away from your computer for a few minutes every hour. While working on a computer, always remember to blink and look

away from the screen every few minutes. If your job involves tasks that can endanger your eyes, always use protections such as goggles.

Women are more likely to wear cosmetic contact lenses. If these lenses are not purchased without a proper prescription from non-professionals at shops, boutiques, and online stores, various vision problems can arise. If you wish to wear these fashionable lenses, always remember to consult with a licensed eye care professional first. Also, never trade or share your contact lenses with your friends. Along with all these precautions, proper nutrition is also an important factor that can affect the health of your eyes. Adding dark green vegetables to your meals have shown to potentially reduce the risk of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). According to scientific

research, most women's vision problems are age-related, such as cataracts and macular degeneration, some are caused by hormonal issues. Dry eye syndrome is more common in women after menopause, affecting those who are middle-aged and older. In younger women, a sudden surge in hormones during pregnancy may result in changes in vision including dry eye, refractive errors, diabetic retinopathy and puffy eyelids. While most of these conditions are temporary and will disappear post-delivery, expectant women should be aware of the signs and symptoms as they may indicate a serious problem.

While following simple eye care steps daily, also remember to get your eyes checked regularly by a professional who uses the latest technology, to make sure you're keeping them as healthy as possible.

Ayurvedic tips for healthy skin



Great skin makes a lasting impression. It is the first layer of defense against the outside world. Marinating a good skincare routine is important for your overall health as well.

Ayurvedic skincare routine focuses on balancing the whole body and supporting the digestive system with a healthy

diet while treating each individual according to his/her specific dosha.

How does your Dosha affect your skin

1. Vata Dosha - Thin and delicate skin that can be extremely dry. It is prone to wrinkles, fine lines, and fine pores.
2. Pitta Dosha - Mostly sensitive skin which frequently develops break-outs. Pitta Dosha can lead to oily skin which can even develop rashes.
3. Kapha Dosha - Oily skin with large pores with blackheads. Kapha Dosha leads to pimples which can turn to skin eczema as well.

Ayurveda skincare routine helps you achieve a healthy, clear, glowing skin by balancing doshas.

1. Daily routine to detox and stay healthy

- a) Get enough sleep and wake up with a relaxed mind
- b) Eat healthy, balanced diet with lot of green and fruits
- c) Stay hydrated - drink plenty of water, at least 2 1/2 liters per day
- d) Take 'Thripala tablets' twice a day to detox your digestive system
- e) Drink Ayur Flow, Ayur Detox or Ayur Cleanse tea daily during your tea time

f) Drink Asamodagam Spirit before 15 minutes of main meals

g) Stay physically healthy and fit - Do exercises, jogging, swimming or a 15 min walk everyday.

h) Follow yoga and meditation to relax your mind

2. Ayurveda Skin Care Routine

- a) Face and body scrub - exfoliate dead skin and dirt away with Siddhalepa Weniwelgata Scrubbing soap daily
- b) Apply Sujatha powder as a face mask for 15 minutes once a week, followed by Sujatha face cream to improve skin moisture and glow.
- c) Fomentation for body blow - makes

a pouch with cooked rice, dip in fresh milk and foment the skin. Apply Ayur Body Lotion to keep skin shine and radiant all day.

d) Apply Ayur body oil Dry Skin, Moisture and Relaxing and massage gently for 20 minutes for better absorption. It improved circulation, revitalizes and nourishes skin and keeps it healthy and shine.

e) Keep your feet clean and shine - Soak your feet with soothing Ayur foot salt and brush to remove impurities and flaky dead skin. Apply Ayur foot massage oil to keep your feet healthy and shine all day.



LAZY MORNINGS AT HILTON COLOMBO

Hilton Colombo is launching 'all day breakfast' on the 6th of March at Graze Kitchen. Themed "Lazy Jazz & All-Day Breakfast", guests can simply chill out and spend a lazy few hours grazing over breakfast on Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm, whilst enjoying light jazz. Executive Chef Robert Mujagic explains the menu as being one with variety, taste and colour. "My team and I have curated a menu which will include a cross section of breakfast items and more from different

parts of the world. Starting from our country, you will find the traditional Sri Lankan favorites like fresh crispy hoppers with various combinations like kiriappa, paniappa, string hoppers, pittu, milk rice, rotis and of course all the clay pot curries and condiments that go along with it. Our Indian corner will feature fresh Dosas prepared a la minute, Idly, poori, curries, rotis and even biriyani! From the West, a range of our home made artisanal sausages, different types of egg preparations, b a c o n ,

freshly baked croissants, Danishes, muffins, waffles, pancakes, breads, cereals, jams, cheese board and a whole lot more. There will also be a Japanese corner, Turkish cuisine, Asian favorites like curry Laska, dim sum on wheels to name a few inclusive of desserts ranging from a chocolate mini buffet to hot desserts, ice cream bar etc. When you are through it all, I can guarantee, you will not miss having lunch!"

For more information on what's happening at Hilton Colombo and for online specialties, visit www.shop.hiltoncolombo.lk.

KALA POLA 2021 GOES ONLINE!

Kala Pola - Sri Lanka's annual art fair showcasing and promoting visual art - went online for the first time in its 28-year history on sri.lankanartgallery.com/kalapola on February 21, 2021. The event showcases over 4,000 works by over 200 artists ranging from senior artists to amateur/student artists.

Kala Pola has provided unique opportunities for painters and sculptors to showcase and market their creations to increasing audiences each year since its launch in 1993. Presented by The George Keyt Foundation in association with the John Keells Group, Kala Pola has grown to become an event not to be missed in Colombo's annual cultural calendar. Due to restrictions on large scale gatherings following the COVID pandemic, the organisers sought to mitigate the health and safety concerns of the event which in recent years has drawn upwards of 30,000 people for the one-day event. Hence it was decided to host Kala Pola virtually this year as a month-long event from February 21 to March 21, 2021.

Kala Pola 2021 is hosted within www.sri.lankanartgallery.com, a platform previously developed by John Keells Foundation (the CSR entity of the John Keells Group) to supplement the traditionally one-day Kala Pola event, by creating a space for Sri Lankan artists to display their work on a digital platform throughout the year. Kala Pola 2021 also welcomed Nations Trust (NTB) as its Banking Partner and hosted NTB's Private Banking customers to an exclusive preview of the online event on 20th February, one-day prior to opening for the general public.

The online format echoes the physical format with the website putting the artist and buyer in contact to discuss, understand and negotiate individual transactions. The online event has also opened up a global platform for the event, enabling Sri Lankan artists residing overseas to enter their work while allowing buyers overseas to contact the artists and make direct purchases.

John Keells Foundation has also organized four fringe events to be featured during the online event to better engage collectors, artists, kids and art lovers as a whole. The features are 'A Collector's Guide - Start and build your own Art collection', two panel discussions on 'Digital Transformation in the Art Industry' and 'Do Artists have a Place?' featuring art experts and senior artists respectively and a workshop for kids on leaf



Workshop for kids on leaf painting and clay making with the Cora Abraham Art school



Workshop for kids on leaf painting and clay making

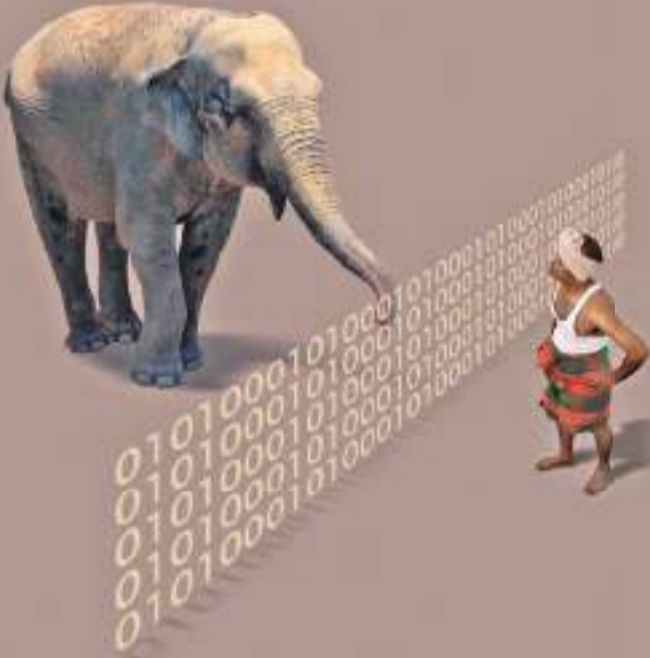
painting and clay making with the Cora Abraham Art school, all of which will be streamed live on the Kala Pola Facebook page.

The key objective of Kala Pola for the organizers - the George Keyt Foundation and the John Keells Group - is to develop sustainable livelihoods for Sri Lankan artists, build learning and networking opportunities available to artists and to enhance knowledge and appreciation for original art within the public. Over the past 27 years Kala Pola has enabled artists to build a steady clientele beyond the immediate sales during the event and has created sustainable market opportunities over time. While the event also facilitates learning and interaction among artists it has also become a reputed means of popularizing the appreciation and patronizing of visual art by the general public over the years.

At a time when many local artists have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, The George Keyt Foundation together with the John Keells Group remain committed to supporting and promoting Sri Lankan artists and hope that the online edition will further these objectives by showcasing the work of local artists to an international audience during the month long event.

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CREATING A PATHWAY FOR TECH SOLUTIONS TO CURB HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT SLT-MOBITEL 'ELEPHANT DECODER HACKATHON'



As the network that strives to find tech based solutions for social challenges, SLT-Mobitel has partnered with the Department of Wildlife Conservation to host 'The Elephant Decoder Hackathon' which aims to address the growing Human-Elephant conflict by way of seeking innovative and practical solutions to help curb its recurrence.

Through this initiative, SLT-Mobitel is inviting tech enthusiasts and anyone with innovative ideas to apply and register for the Hackathon and come up with a solution for an early warning system that could detect an elephant in a pre-defined area. With the lives of 122 humans and 407 elephants lost in year 2019 alone, Sri Lanka is ranked as the

country with the highest annual elephant deaths and the second highest human deaths. Hence, the human-elephant conflict is therefore, a lingering problem and one which requires immediate attention where the lives of affected villagers and these gentle giants can be maintained.

To enter 'The Elephant Decoder Hackathon', applicants can log on to www.sltmobitel-elfdecoder.com and submit their ideas and solutions. The hackathon will help pave the way for members of the public who display an interest in this issue to engage with the hackathon and present invaluable technological knowledge or ideas that might support the implementation of an early warning system that could detect the presence of an elephant in a pre-defined area.

SLT-Mobitel has appointed an eminent panel of mentors and judges with an array of knowhow and expertise. The panel will include resource persons who hail from appropriate policy-making government offices, who are hardware experts in the industry, etc. The selection panel will take up the initiative of evaluating ideas submitted by applicants and in line with the selection criteria. Once the selection panel shortlists a number of ideas/solutions, these will be regarded as eligible solutions to receive a private session with the selection panel and their concepts and ideas would then be further evaluated and refined through the expertise of the selection panel where the feasibility of the proposed solutions would be evaluated. Depending on the performance and feasibility level

of the solutions, the three most optimal solutions will then be selected by the panel and the winner would be announced at the end of the evaluation process. Winners will be awarded cash prizes.

The most optimal concept or solution which comprises the required standard will have an opportunity to be recognized and deployed in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Conservation, especially in areas that have been extensively impacted by the human-elephant conflict. This will be initiated under the guidance and expertise of the selection panel and team members of the selected solution. For more information on the competition, applicants can log onto www.sltmobitel-elfdecoder.com.

HELPAge SINHALA AND HINDU NEW YEAR AND BIRTHDAY CARDS

HELPING THE NEEDY

ANANDA KANNANGARA
The name of HelpAge Sri Lanka naturally comes to our minds when celebrating religious and cultural festivals or birthdays. HelpAge greeting cards are generally exchanged by individuals during festivals and birthdays.

Purchasing a HelpAge greeting card will directly benefit the less-privileged elderly citizens in our motherland.

The proceeds from sales are utilized to perform Cataract Surgeries free of charge at the state-of-the-art Help Age Eye Hospital at Sin-sapa Road, Wellawatta (Opposite Savoy Cinema). The HelpAge Hospital has so far performed over 38,000 free cataract surgeries.

HelpAge this year released 100,000 Sinhala and Hindu New Year and Birthday Cards. Poor elders are not in a sound position to get

their cataract surgeries done in private hospitals due to the high cost. HelpAge has come to their rescue by conducting 20 cataract surgeries daily free of charge at HelpAge Eye Hospital.

HASL, Manager Fundraising, Ruchilalini Batuwantudawa said the cards are designed beautifully and printed on imported high quality mat-finished board.

She requests everybody to extend their support towards this worthy cause by purchasing at least a single greeting card.

HASL, Executive Director, Samantha Liyanawaduge highlighted that most people among us have benefited from free education and health facilities, but do not focus much on the grievances of needy elders who have contributed to the society in their heyday to provide them with these facilities.

He said the proceeds will also be utilized to perform free eye care and mobile medical camps and also to provide the needy Senior Citizens with free disability equipment such as wheel chairs, crutches, hearing aids, spectacles etc.

The cards are sold at reasonable prices at leading Super markets including Arpico, Keells, Cargills and book shops in the Western Province. The cards can also be purchased from HelpAge Head office at no 102, Pemananda Mawatha, Raththanapitiya, Boralesgamuwa.



RECOGNITION FOR ROOTCODE FOUNDER

Founder and CEO of Rootcode Labs Wins 'ICT Entrepreneur of the Year' Award at the National ICT Awards 2020. Founder and CEO of Rootcode Labs Alagan Mahalingam was named 'ICT Entrepreneur of the Year' at the National ICT Awards (NBQSA 2020) which was held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall recently.

The gala awards ceremony was organized by the Sri Lankan chapter of the British Computer Society (BCS) - The Chartered Institute for IT - for the 23rd consecutive year, with the main aim of providing international recognition for the outstanding achievements of Sri Lankan people and organisations. The annual competition seeks to improve the standard and quality of local ICT products and services to facilitate their entry into the international market. National participants of the NBQSA are further nominated for the Asia Pacific ICT Awards (APICTA).

The National ICT Awards 2020 shone the limelight on Alagan Mahalingam's untiring efforts towards driving his brainchild Rootcode Labs to great heights. Elated at the announcement of the award, Alagan Mahalingam stated: "This award goes to my brilliant team who make me want to keep pushing myself even further."

Coming from a very humble background of teacher parents, Alagan had a strong desire and vision to build an international business in the future. As a student, he worked with several international research organisations - such as the Geoinformatics Center of the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand - and was also a Google Student Ambassador for South-East Asia, where he worked on University Empowerment and Coordination for the entire region.

He was also offered a student research position at The University of Tokyo, Japan, during his second year there, where he got the chance to work on Solar Panel Optimi-



sational algorithms with industry-leading professors like Prof. Gento Mogi. Alagan's first product Signify, an AI-based singing and learning app, won the Gold award in the Entertainment category of NBQSA 2016 and was further nominated for the Asia Pacific ICT Awards.

After the successful exit of Signify, he went on to establish Rootcode Labs - a software product engineering company that helps businesses worldwide build high-quality software. Rootcode Labs is known for going the extra mile to innovate while specialising in mobile and web app development as well as in Artificial Intelligence.

It is guided by the vision of making world-class software easy and affordable to any business. And Mahalingam shows great spirit when it comes to leading his incredible team on this very path. Primarily catering its products and services to Europe, North America and Asia, Rootcode Labs is on a mission to be the most trusted technology partner for businesses worldwide,

helping them create the best technological solutions.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Alagan identified and realised the potential of distance-based services which then led him to establish Expert Republic, an on-demand video consultation app that allows anyone to book a 1-1 video session with professional experts to learn, solve and improve in areas of their choice - including personal coaching, fitness training, counselling, yoga & meditation, technology consulting, startup consulting, public speaking, cooking & baking, interior design, vocal coaching and much more.

Expert Republic also secured a Silver Award under the 'Consumer Marketplaces' category at NBQSA 2020. Additionally, Rootcode Labs won a second award at the ceremony - a silver award for 'Startup of the Year' which is a testimony to the staggering growth witnessed by the company over the past year.