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COLOMBO PORT CITY ECONOMIC COMMISSION BILL

NO PROVISION FOR FOREIGN INFLUENCE

- CABRAAL



By Uditha Kumarasinghe

State Minister of Money and Capital Market and State Enterprise Reforms Ajith Nivard Cabraal assured that there is no provision

in the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill to let China or any other country to have influence over 'Sri Lanka's City of the Future'. This law is only to set up the Commission which will act as a single window facilitator for foreign investors to ensure ease of doing business in the country, he

said. He said this law will help attract a large number of investors into the country. "This is merely a single window facilitation law and it is being used by the Opposition to create a bogey and to deprive the people of getting 83,000 job opportunities. I am surprised that they use these

petty things to achieve their own ends and then deprive the people of their jobs, the State Minister told the *Sunday Observer* yesterday." Minister Cabraal said if there is any provision in this law to have a separate state or a separate colony of any other country, they can challenge it in courts, if they so wish.

If there is any danger to the unitary state, then the JVP's comment will be upheld by the Supreme Court and they will strike down this Bill. They can test whether there is anything constitutionally in this law which will provide for a separate state or a separate colony. **SEE PAGE 2**

TO COUNTER PEOPLE SMUGGLING AND CRIME

Australia gifts aerial drones to Sri Lanka

The Australian Border protection officials and the Federal Police gifted the Sri Lankan Police aerial drones to counter people smuggling through sea routes and other crimes. The Commander of the Joint Agency Task Force Rear Admiral Mark Hill, along with the Australian Federal Police gifted the five aerial drones at a virtual ceremony held recently. The Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders is supporting the Sri Lankan Police to set up an aerial drone surveillance capability to support crime fighting... **SEE PAGE 2**

Army builds 740 houses in Jaffna

By Ananth Palakidnar

The Army has constructed 740 houses for people in the North since the end of the battle against LTTE terrorism more than a decade ago. Apart from the houses, the Army has also provided basic furniture including refrigerators to the beneficiaries.

Army Chief Gen. Shavendra Silva speaking at an event to hand over a newly constructed house to a young widow in Puthukudiyiruppu called upon the Tamil Diaspora to refrain from making any adverse comments that could disrupt efforts that are being made to strengthen peace and reconciliation in the country. While elaborating on the humanitarian assistance provided by the Army in the North, Gen. Shavendra Silva also said... **SEE PAGE 2**



The traditional oil anointing for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year was held at Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's official residence at the auspicious time of 7.16 a.m yesterday. Viharadhipathi of the historic Madanwala Rajamaha Vihara Rajakeeya Panditha Shasthrapathi Ven. Wellagiriya Sumangala Thera performed the traditional oil anointing on the Prime Minister at the auspicious time and invoked blessings on him. The Premier's wife Mrs. Shiranthi Rajapaksa was also present

SLPP to take action against MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe

The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) will take action against the outbursts of MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe who criticised the proposed Port City Bill as an attempt to create a Chinese colony within Sri Lanka. Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said it was not fair by the MP to raise his concerns before the media, without discussing it at the recent Government parliamentary group meeting where his fears could have been allayed. Minister Rambukwella told the media at the... **SEE PAGE 2**



PEOPLE URGED TO COOPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES

Efforts under way to check Covid-19 in Jaffna

By Ananth Palakidnar

Efforts are being made to check the spread of Covid-19 in the Jaffna peninsula as the number of cases had crossed the 115 mark with a dozen fatalities, a senior

most regional official said. Government Agent Jaffna K. Mahesan said since the outbreak of the pandemic over a year ago some 5,042 persons from 784 families had been quarantined in the Jaffna Peninsula. **SEE PAGE 2**

"PORT CITY, NOT A MONEY LAUNDERING HAVEN"

Cabraal decries US envoy's statement

By Uditha Kumarasinghe

State Minister of Money and Capital Market and State Enterprise Reforms Ajith Nivard Cabraal said there is ab-

solutely no truth in the remarks made by US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives Alaina B Teplitz that the Colombo Port City would be a money laundering haven. **SEE PAGE 2**



There will be no issue of the *Junior Observer* today

All set for 42nd Observer SLT Mobitel Schools Cricketers of the Year

The stage is set for the 42nd Observer SLT Mobitel Schools Cricketers of the Year 2020 at the BMICH on Tuesday, starting at 5.30 p.m.

Former Sri Lanka captain and ex-Chairman of selectors Sanath Jayasuriya, fresh after his last month's performance for Sri Lanka at the Legends World Cup final where he top scored for his team,

will be the chief guest.

Minister Keheliya Rambukwella will be the guest of honour.

Adding colour to the event will be many entertainment items. Derana Dream Star 2020 winner Falan Andrea will lead the colourful team along with ever-popular Randhir Witana who had collaborated with Sri Lankan hip hop duo Bhathiya and Santhush featuring



on their first hip hop remix song *Siri Sangabodhi*.

Two other popular artistes Te-

hani Imara and Madhuvy Vaithialingam are among the others lined top for the evening and the Gayan Dance Troupe will be in attendance. The two-and-a-half show is coordinated by the leading event organiser Funtime under the direction of Imran Saibo.

Evergreen Clifford Richards and Sonali Perera will once again present the Mega Show.

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Could Japan cancel Olympics over coronavirus?

Recent comments from a high-ranking Japanese politician have driven speculation that the Summer Games could be called off as Covid-19 infections rise in Japan and public support for the games is dropping there.

One of Japan's most influential political leaders on Thursday had to walk back comments he had made about canceling the Tokyo Olympic Games if the coronavirus pandemic cannot be brought under control.

The damage had already been done, however, and the comments by Toshihiro Nikai — secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party — indicate that discussions are taking place behind the scenes for a potential course of action should a worst-case scenario come to pass.

"If it seems impossible to go on with the games, they must definitely be canceled," Nikai said in an interview with Japan's TBS television station.

"If there is a surge in infections because of the Olympics, there will be no meaning to having the Olympics."

Asked to clarify whether that meant canceling the Games with less than 100 days to go before the July 23 opening ceremony, Nikai replied, "Of course."

Earlier, Nikai had released a written statement in which he said there

has been no change in the party's official policy that the games will go ahead, and that the priority is to ensure all those involved remain safe and secure.

In a press conference in Tokyo on Friday, Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto attempted to play down Nikai's comments, claiming that they merely indicated he is "concerned" about the event.

"The fact that he is concerned is a point that we need to take seriously and make sure that we can deliver a safe and secure games," she said.

"His comments remind us how important it is for us to feel confident and fully prepared to deliver the games so consumers can feel reassured that the games are safe."

Covid-19 infections rising

The discussion timing is unfortunate for organisers who have been kept this week to play up the 100-days to open countdown milestone passed on Wednesday.

Infection numbers have once again begun to climb in what is the fourth wave of the pandemic to hit Japan.

There were 4,576 new cases of the virus across the Japan on Thursday — the second consecutive day that number were above the 4,000 threshold.



Tokyo saw 729 new infections, marking the first time the figure has risen above 700 since February 4. Nationwide, there were 35 deaths, bringing the total official death toll to 9,506.

Alarming, the UK variant of the virus — which was first detected in western prefectures in January and is more infectious than the original strain — appears to have taken a firm hold in Tokyo, accounting for nearly 48% of all cases.

Infections have risen rapidly since early April, and are increasingly

sickening younger people, who were more resistant to the original strain.

"Clearly, the mutation is spreading fiercely," said Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, who on Thursday called on people not to travel into the city unless they are medical or other essential workers.

She has also requested that companies encourage staff to work from home in order to bring the number of commuters into the city down by 30 percent, while restaurants and bars are subject to a strict curfew.

To compound the problem fur-

ther, just 2 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been administered so far in a nation of 126 million people, with elderly pensioners only receiving their first doses from the beginning of this week.

Japan's handling of the vaccine lags well behind most other advanced nations and has been the target of fierce criticism, with more than 70 percent of the population polled this week saying that the government's response had been inadequate.

Nikai spoke too soon?

Given the scale of the challenges as the Olympics draw closer, it is perhaps not surprising that Nikai has reservations, said Yoko Tsukamoto, a professor of infection control at the Health Sciences University of Hokkaido.

However, Tsukamoto believes Nikai should have kept his concerns to himself.

"I get the impression that he just said what came into his head without really thinking of the implications," she told DW.

"But there must be discussions going on within the party about what happens if the situation continues to get worse and the risk of going ahead with the Games is just too great. He is just saying that out loud."

Better communication needed

Tsukamoto admits to having serious reservations about the games herself — but says that if the government is utterly committed to going ahead, then it needs to do a better job of communicating more specific plans.

She mentioned seeing a recent statement from the organizers about every athlete taking part in the Games having a PCR test every day — "but there was no explanation of how that was going to happen beyond the promise being made," she said.

"The government needs to make it absolutely clear how they are going to keep us all safe if they want the public to support them," she said.

"As a medical professional, I believe we should have the knowledge and capability to successfully stage the games in spite of the pandemic, but we are not getting that message across," she added.

A poll conducted by Japan's Kyodo news agency released on Monday showed that 39.2 percent of Japanese people believe the Olympics and Paralympics should be canceled outright.

A further 32.8 percent said they think it should be delayed again. Just 24.5 percent replied that the games should go ahead as planned.



An oil anointing ceremony for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year was held at Gangaramaya temple at the auspicious time of 7.16 am yesterday. Here Ven. Dr. Kirinde Assaji thera of Gangaramaya temple anointing oil on the temple elephant with blessings for a healthy year. (Pic by Rukmal Gamage)

Over two million families receive Rs. 5,000 grant

BY UDITHA KUMARASINGHE

State Minister of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self Employment and Business Development Shehan Semasinghe said the Government has given Rs.5,000 cash allowance to over two million families by the end of Thursday (April 15) spending nearly Rs.10 billion.

"We are planning to give Rs.5,000 allowance 2.8 million to three million families depending on the requests which come. There is still space for those who are qualified to have this cash allowance from the Samurdhi Banks within early this week, the State Minister told the *Sunday Observer* yesterday.

He said at present we are successfully continuing this program. There are certain unions who were driven by political motives. Though they stepped down, we were successful in providing this cash allowance to the most vulnerable people in Sri Lanka.

Semasinghe said: "I am very sorry to say the union leaders went against the most vulnerable people. That is not a fair enough decision they took. However, we managed to give the Rs.5,000 in a more organised manner than the union leaders thought."

Actually, we cannot say the exact amount of families that will be given this cash allowance. It depends on the calculation of the AGAs in their respective divisions. We don't have any financial issue of granting this Rs.5,000 cash allowance to deserving families.

Following a circular issued by the Prime Minister's office, Rs.5,000 allowance is given for Samurdhi beneficiary families, low-income earning families, families comprising of recipients of the Elders Allowance, families comprising kidney patients who receive allowances, families comprising centenarians who receive the Elders Allowance and families that have filed appeals and are eligible under any of the aforementioned categories.

SLPP to take action against... From page 1

...Information Department yesterday that "If he (MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakse) raised those issues at the group meeting, we could have responded with facts and shown that those fears are unfounded."

But the Minister said, instead, he had chosen a different path. "The par-

ty will have to take 'some action,'" he said because he was misleading the public and making false allegations on a key project of the Government.

The Port City project is expected to attract high-end investors from all over the world and give an impetus to boost the country's pandemic-hit

economy so that the general masses will benefit immensely.

He added that the Port City Act will be in keeping with the Constitution and if the Supreme Court finds any provision in the Bill to be inconsistent, the Government will change it promptly.

Efforts under way to check... From page 1

At least seven persons including two police officers are the most recently confirmed Covid-19 cases in the region, according to the Director, Health Service in Jaffna Dr. A. Ketheeswaran.

He also added that efforts were being made to increase the Poly-

merase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and the Jaffna Medical Faculty laboratories.

Officials have called upon people to be extremely cautious and supportive towards the health sector in Jaffna to check the Covid-19 menace.

In a separate development, the

Jaffna market areas which were closed for the past several weeks on account of the Covid-19 threats have re-opened in keeping with strict health and hygienic guidelines.

Schools and private tuition centres are also expected to re-open tomorrow Monday (April 19).

Army builds 740 houses... From page 1

...that 1,600 young men and women in the North have shown an interest in joining the Sri Lanka Army during the past three months. Army Spokesman Brigadier Nilantha Perera said the interest shown

by the young men and women in the North to join the Army is very encouraging and currently the process is being carried out to accommodate the successful candidates into various categories in the Army.

Commenting on the houses built by the Army for homeless persons, Brigadier Nilantha Perera said that several donors have also made contributions towards this end.

Australia gifts aerial drones to... From page 1

...in the country, a media release from the Australian High Commission stated.

The drones will be used in a wide range of activities including natural disaster scene assessment and recovery, transnational crime investigations and to counter maritime people smuggling.

Commander Hill said Australia values highly the cooperation of our international law enforcement partners in combatting transnational crime.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sri Lankan Police for their continued efforts to deter and disrupt illegal maritime people smuggling activities in Sri Lanka," Rear Admiral Hill said.

"Working together, Australia and Sri Lanka send a strong message that people smugglers and potential illegal immigrants consid-

ering illegal travel to Australia by boat have zero chance of success."

IGP C. D. Wickramaratne said that "As Sri Lanka and Australia, geographically speaking are regional neighbours we value and treasure our coordination and friendship along with the numerous forms of support rendered to us by the Government of Australia"

"We have been honoured yet again by a lavish donation of sophisticated drone technology to the Sri Lanka Police Force.

This donation has a vast scope of application in the fields of traffic monitoring, search and rescue, surveillance, and operations relating to counter people smuggling, crime and environmental protection

AFP Senior Officer Sri Lanka, Rob Wilson said the new drones will be used in a range of ways to

enhance the operational capabilities of the Sri Lankan Police.

"These drones will provide a strong capability boost to help identify people smuggling ventures in otherwise hard to access areas, while also providing assistance for search and rescue operations, surveillance and crime scene observation." SO, Wilson said.

"We're proud to have strong domestic and international partnerships that provide policing support to the region."

The threat of maritime people smuggling continues as people smugglers find different ways to exploit vulnerable people.

The partnership highlights the strength of Australia's relationship with Sri Lanka, who has been a valuable partner in preventing and responding to maritime people smuggling.

No provision for foreign... From page 1

He said, "What the Opposition is uttering is an absolute lie. This is just like another diabolical lie such as the 'Golden Horses'."

Cabraal said this Port City project is a turning point in our country. That is why all these Opposition politicians are disturbed and running around. They know with this law, we could attract investments to Sri Lanka and that will be the end of their politics.

That is why they are now gasping for breath and somehow hope to disturb the passage of this Bill so that their ulterior motives will be achieved.

Responding to the Opposition claim that the Colombo Port City has been removed from the purview of the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC), State Minister Cabraal said the entire Port City will be administered by the Colombo Port City Commission. You cannot have two or three people administering a particular area.

That is why it has been removed from the CMC because it is being administered by another authority which has even more powers. So, we don't have any problem with that because that is the way it should be.

Otherwise, investors have to go from pillar to post. We don't want that to be encountered by new investors who are coming to Sri Lanka. All actions that have to be taken by the CMC will be channelled through this Colombo Port Commission.

Minister of Mass Media Keheliya Rambukwella told a media conference yesterday that the Opposition

is engaged in a futile attempt to create some sort of controversial situation regarding the Port City Bill.

It was under the leadership of the then President Mahinda Rajapaksa who took over the challenge to construct the Colombo Port City.

When this project was launched, JVP Leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake told Parliament that the Port City would create an issue with regard to the country's sand and metal deposits and vowed that they will somehow stop this project.

The Minister said when the future success of the Port City project is evident; the hypocrisy of these Opposition politicians comes to light. They attempt to create a situation by which they can stop the project displaying their hypocrisy.

Minister Rambukwella said that at present the entire world has faced an economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a result, the economic growth of all countries has more or less collapsed. As a small country, we have also been subjected to this pressure. Our tourism industry and foreign employment have also faced setbacks.

The only available option to rebuild the country is to attract foreign investors to Sri Lanka. Therefore, a decision was taken to give strength to the Port City project and bring investors to Sri Lanka through a systematic program.

However, we have not decided to bring this Port City Bill as an urgent Bill and it has been presented as an ordinary Bill. We have not bypassed the Executive, Legislature or

the Judiciary. All issues highlighted by the Opposition are two-hundred percent false. Therefore, we could debate this issue at any time.

He said one of the key issues raised by the Opposition is that this Port City land doesn't belong to us.

A Gazette notification had been signed by the then Minister Wajira Abeywardana on August 2, 2019 to integrate the Port City land into the mainland.

Thereafter, the then President Maithripala Sirisena had vested this land with the Urban Development Authority (UDA). Therefore, it is an absurd argument that the Port City is not a part of our map.

"We also categorically deny the claim made by SLPP MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakse that the Government attempted to move this Port City Bill as an urgent Bill.

At the same time, he said that 21 petitions have been filed at the Supreme Court regarding this Bill. Therefore, there is no validity in his argument. Actually, we have nothing to hide about this Bill. It was obvious Wijeyadasa Rajapakse spoke with hatred. It is regretted to note as a President's Counsel, he has not been able to grasp the reality," he said.

Minister Rambukwella assured that the President, Prime Minister and the Government will not resort to any move which would be detrimental to the country. Our sole intention is to take forward this Port City project which would definitely pave the way to strengthen our economy.

Cabraal decries US envoy's... From page 1

We have not made any changes to the money laundering laws. Those laws are in line with the international anti-money laundering laws. I am surprised that the Ambassador made such a statement, the State Minister told the *Sunday Observer* yesterday.

He said in the US itself, there is US\$ 1.3 trillion invested by Luxembourg which has a population of nearly 633,000 people. If that coun-

try can invest US\$ 1.3 trillion in the US, some people can allege that there are some money laundering opportunities.

Cayman Islands with a population of less than 65,000 has invested US\$ 1.8 trillion in the US.

How can a tiny country such as the Cayman Islands invest US\$ 1.8 trillion in the US? Then the question should be asked whose money is this?

Naturally, their checks and balances will have shown that these monies are not laundered money. If they can have checks and balances like that, why can't we. The money that is coming here is not huge money like billions. These are much more modest sums of money. Therefore, I am actually surprised by the irresponsible comment made by such a responsible person.

POLICE

BY LEON BERENGER

Log

Dog's mouth blown to bits

An irate man is alleged to have killed his neighbour's pet dog using a cruel method known as the *Hakka Pattas* or in English (Jaw Breaker).

This incident was reported from a village in Kekirawa earlier this week.

The man later confessed to police that the explosive device was meant for wild animals and that there was no intention to kill the dog that was named 'Brighty'.

However, the pet's owner damned this claim saying that his premises is surrounded by a high wall and access into his compound by wild animals was zero.

Having said that the owner was hoping that some law would be enacted at the earliest to punish those responsible for cruelty to animals.

Businessman taken to the cleaners

A businessman who sought to get richer the easy way but ended up losing Rs. 800,000 to a confidence trickster.

The suspect who played the role of a 'holy man' persuaded the businessman to participate in a 'Bahirava Pooja' (or an offering to deities) saying that his investment could be doubled.

The businessman agreed and the 'Bahirava pooja' was held in an abandoned house at a location in Chilaw.

As the pooja was in progress the suspect slipped into a fake trance and began yelling at the businessman that he had infuriated the Gods since he had secretly consumed meat.

The businessman was ordered to leave the place at once and return after a bath, but prior to that he was told to leave the cash at a make-shift alter.

The businessman complied without complaining and returned a short while later only to find that the 'holy man' had vanished along with the money.

The police were subsequently informed and the suspect was tracked down to a safe house at Uswetikeyawa and later remanded by a local Magistrate.

Cop and brother held for assault

A policeman and his younger brother were arrested after the pair is alleged to have assaulted a neighbour and his 12-year-old son.

The alleged incident took place at a village in Hakmana in the Deep South following a festering dispute between the two groups.

The suspect policeman who is attached to a special unit in the Metropolis was on vacation at the time of the incident.

The policeman was arrested along with

his brother after the victims had sought treatment at the Tangalle Hospital.

Policeman assaulted in road-rage incident

A motorist on the Southern Expressway is alleged to have assaulted a traffic policeman because the officer had requested him to strap on his seat belt.

The alleged incident took place at the Kurundugaha Hathapama Interchange.

The suspect motorist was arrested on the spot.

The incident prompted a senior police official to say that motorists were being told to wear the seat belt, simply because it is required according to the law and also for one's own safety.

He said that some 14 policemen have been killed in the line of duty owing to road accidents during the past three months.

Facebook romance ends in disaster

It is said that social media breeds both the good and bad and in some cases it leads to disastrous results as a 13-year-old girl found out this week.

The girl had fallen in love with a stranger several years older than her during Facebook chats and before long the man was able to convince the minor to meet him in the city. So the girl lied to her parents and boarded a bus for Colombo where she met her lover and the pair booked in at a lodge in down-town Negombo.

The man is later alleged to have molested the girl before dumping her at the Central Bus Stand in Pettah and then vanished.

The police are now hunting for the man after the girl's family lodged a complaint with the local police in Galle.

PS chairman nabbed with stolen water meters

The Chairman of the Deraniyagala Pradeshiya Sabha was arrested over the alleged theft of 98 water meters, police said.

The police had begun investigations after an engineer with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) had complained that 477 water meters had gone missing. Following the complaint, a driver and a clerk were taken into custody and this led to the arrest of the PS Chairman. The water meters were found stashed inside the residence of the PS chairman.

Launch of Ape Ahaa Koheda Lily Mal

Ape Ahaa Koheda Lily Mal is the maiden publication of Poetess Ajana Ranagala. This book of poetry comprises mainly of love poems and can be presented as a collection of poetry overflowing with romance.

Ajana believes that poems are not just lines of words but words spilled upon a paper and allowed to flow freely thus creating meaningful pictures. With the advent of social media, especially Facebook, the emergence of poets and poetesses is commonly prevalent, but the rare poetic creativity of Ajana stands out amongst the rest.

The launch of *Ape Aha Koheda Lily Mal* will be held at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel on April 24, at 4 p.m.

Popular writer Sunethra Rajakarunany-



ake, popular writer Saman Athaudahetty and President's Counsel Kalina Indatissa will participate at the ceremony.

Rear Admiral Senarath Wijesooriya honoured in send-off salute

Relinquishing duties to which he was committed more than 34 years, Rear Admiral Senarath Wijesooriya retired from naval service on April 9, 2021.

The retiring naval officer received warm wishes from Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne flanked by the Board of Management, before he was accorded a Guard of Honour in accordance with naval traditions.

Thereupon, fellow naval officers made their formal farewells to the outgoing senior officer appreciative of his service rendered to the organisation. Subsequently, he was

sent off in a motorcade from the Navy Headquarters. Rear Admiral Senarath Wijesooriya joined the Sri Lanka Navy as an officer cadet of the 15th intake in 1986 and had commanded various ships and establishments, during his distinguished naval career.

Among the key appointments held by the senior officer were Commandant Naval Recruit Training Centre - Sampoor and SLNS Shiksha, Security Coordinator Poonewa, Deputy Area Commander Northwestern, Western and Northern Naval Areas, Director Naval Welfare and Commander Southeastern and Northern Naval Areas.



Rear Admiral Senarath Wijesooriya with Navy Commander Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne

New Year sweetmeats for Covid-19 patients



The staff at the Colombo East Base Hospital, Mulleriyia led by Director Priyantha Karunaratne organised New Year sweetmeats for the Covid-19 patients currently undergoing treatment at the hospital in isolation, away from their family and loved ones. Here some of the nursing staff, busy safely packing the sweetmeats into boxes. Pix by Sulochana Gamage

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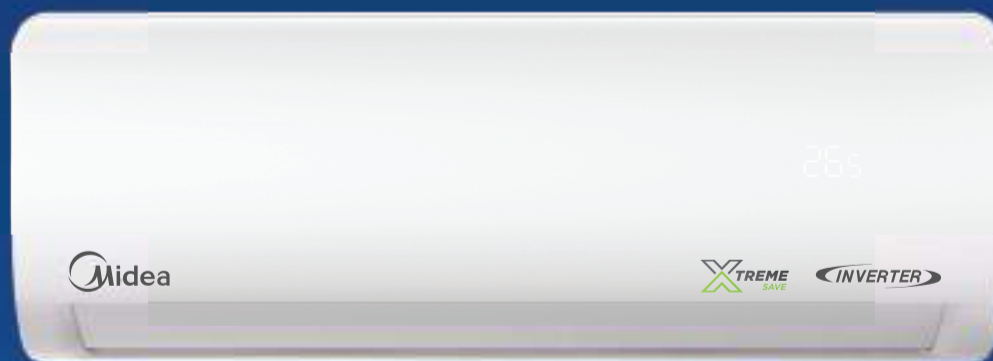
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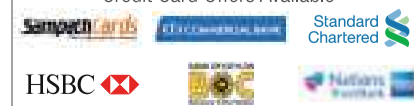
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CHANGES WILL BE MADE, IF NECESSARY

Govt committed to Maha Sangha

– Shehan Semasinghe

“RANJAN RAMANAYAKE ENDED UP WITH NOBODY”

By
**Uditha
Kumarasinghe**



State Minister of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self-Employment and Business Development Shehan Semasinghe said that the Government is obliged to listen to the Maha Sangha and the leaders of other religions and even committed to make any changes if necessary.

The State Minister in an interview with the Sunday Observer said the Government's intentions are very clear and it wants to turn the country into a developed nation which will successfully move forward.

Therefore, if there are any areas which we have to improve, we will certainly look into it. He said if the Government is doing something wrong, a responsible Opposition should be in a position to point it out in a more productive manner.

However, the present Opposition doesn't have any strength, unity or a capability to show that. Whatever is beneficial for the people but if it doesn't politically benefit the Opposition, they make use of it to create a wrong impression and mislead the people.

Excerpts

Q: How do you view the false propaganda campaign carried out by the Opposition against the Government similar to what they did in 2015?

A: This will end up in failure. They don't have any strategy and they are just based on day today news creating activities. If the Government is doing something wrong, a responsible Opposition should be in a position to point it out in a more productive manner. However, the present Opposition doesn't have any strength, unity or a capability to show that.

I feel very sorry for the people of Sri Lanka because not even a single country has an irresponsible Opposition like this. Whatever is beneficial for the people but if it doesn't politically benefit the Opposition, they make use of it to create a wrong impression and mislead the people.

Ultimately, the people are misled and they don't get anything as their interests are not being looked after. The Opposition's interest is only looked after. So, it is a very pathetic Opposition which we are having in Sri Lanka and it doesn't whatsoever help take the coun-

try or not even the Opposition itself forward.

Q: The Opposition Parliamentarians staged a protest in Parliament following the Speaker's announcement that SJB Parliamentarian Ranjan Ramanayake's parliamentary seat had fallen vacant. Your views?

A: That was a deliberate effort by them to cover up the mistake they made. Ranjan Ramanayake is convicted because of the act of the United National Party (UNP) and the SJB. They made use of Ranjan Ramanayake and certain things which he spoke were not legal.

They made use of Ramanayake to express the ideas of the then Opposition and the Government. It is not only the then Opposition, the Government which was in power in 2015 used Ranjan Ramanayake to destroy the independence of the judiciary in Sri Lanka.

In any country, if the people lose their faith in the judiciary and any Government attempts to intervene in the judicial system, that country will end up in a catastrophe. So, they were trying to destroy the independence of the judiciary which is one of the most highly recognised and respected judiciaries in the world. They knew where they should hit.

Even after a lapse of eight months, the UNP has not appointed its National List MP.

The main Opposition SJB staged a protest in Parliament on 8 April over the loss of SJB MP Ranjan Ramanayake's parliamentary seat. However, the previous night they had nominated Ajith Mannapperuma's name to be gazetted to fill the vacancy left by Ranjan Ramanayake. However, they came to Parliament and made a big hue and cry against the removal of Ranjan Ramanayake's parliamentary seat. Is this ethical? What they should have done is at least to delay the issue of the gazette notification for one or two days if they were very really concerned about fighting for Ranjan Ramanayake. Finally, what happened was Ranjan Ramanayake ended up with nobody and they brought a replacement within a day to fill the seat vacant by him.

Q: As reported by the media the Sri Lanka Podujana Perumana (SLPP) Parliamentary group has raised concern over recent remarks by SLPP MP S.B. Dissanayake on Education Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris when he called on

the Chief Incumbent of the Getambe Rajapawanna Vihara Ven.Kappitiyagoda Siri Vimala Thera. Would you like to comment?

A: I think all members in the Government need to talk with responsibility especially as senior Ministers and senior politicians in Sri Lanka.

MP Dissanayake has also made an explanation as to how that discussion came up and we need not to be worried about that. The issue is when you make such a statement in front of the media, sometimes it may have a bad impact on the Government. I don't see Prof. G.L. Peiris as a weak Education Minister. He is actually planning Sri Lanka for the future.

We have to help him to make that effort to every success. Despite all the issues faced by the world and Sri Lanka due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Education Ministry has done a tremendous job by holding the Year Five Scholarship examination, Advanced Level examination and G.C.E. Ordinary level examination and steps were also taken to reopen the schools.

That is one of the biggest tasks for any education Minister to go through. They have also looked into the issues faced by the teachers and non-academic staff. Despite the Covid-19 outbreak, the Government doesn't have any breakdown in the higher education system. So, we don't agree with the statement made by former Minister S.B. Dissanayake. I hope MP Dissanayake will not make such statements in the future.

Q: UNP Chairman Vajira Abeywardana has said that businesses in the country have collapsed and all income sources of the people have been lost due to an inefficient economic policy of the Government. Would you like to comment on this?

A: That is an absurd statement. During the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, can you tell me a single businessman who didn't have a business? It means the people have money. We took the agricultural policy forward. We have allowed the rural economy and local production to improve. We have given lots of opportunities to develop the businesses. I think Vajira Abeywardana doesn't understand the economic crisis they dragged the country during their tenure in office and how to emerge from this crisis. He doesn't understand that Covid-19 is still in the world and we are one of the best countries which have been able

to manage it. I think he doesn't understand these things. So, it is useless to talk to somebody who doesn't have any understanding on the economy.

When you are in the Opposition

FACT-FILE



1976

► Born in Anuradhapura to a political family. Asanka Shehan Semasinghe is the son of former MP and North Central Provincial Council Member Henry Berty Semasinghe. His grandfather, K.B. Ratnayake, was former Speaker in the Parliament of Sri Lanka in 1994

► Educated at St.Joseph's College, Anuradhapura and D.S. Senanayake College, Colombo. MBA postgraduate, University of Pradeniya and (B. Com) graduate, University of Delhi, India

2010

► Entered active politics following his father and grandfather. Contested the General Election under United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and elected to Parliament from the Anuradhapura district

2015

► Elected to Parliament from Anuradhapura district under the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA)

2019

► State Minister of Development Banks and Loan Schemes

2020

► Re-elected to Parliament from Anuradhapura district having contested under the Sri Lanka Podujana Perumana (SLPP) and secured 119,878 preferential votes

Aug 2020

► State Minister of Samurdhi, Micro Finance, Home Economy, Self-Employment, Business Development and Under-Performing State Asset Development in the Government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Source: Internet, Graphic: Mahil Wijesinghe

and don't have a reasonable number of seats in Parliament, you can always talk about anything you feel like.

Q: Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (JVP) Leader MP Anura Kumara Disanayake has alleged that the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill presented in Parliament on April 9, would make the Port City an entirely separate state. Is there any truth in this allegation?

A: There wouldn't have been a Port City for them to talk if former President Mahinda Rajapaksa didn't initiate the Port City project. I can remember when the Port City was initiated, he said if we are to proceed with the project, we will have to import sand and mettle. Within 24 hours of gaining power in 2015, they said they will cancel the Port City project.

When it came to 2017, the then entire Ministers of the Yahapalana Government including Patali Champika Ranawaka and also Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe admitted the fact that the Port City is going to be an economic hub in Sri Lanka and South Asia. If it is to be an economic hub, there are certain rules and regulations which we have to amend as an investment friendly Port City.

So, we have presented the Commission Act to Parliament and there is enough space to debate it in Parliament. There is absolutely no intention whatsoever of making a separate state. We know who wanted to have a separate state in Sri Lanka. They themselves were leading a Government which led into a separate Eelam state in Sri Lanka.

We are not doing such things. There are no restrictions saying that only Chinese can come and invest. There are ample opportunities given for everybody to invest.

Unless you may not increase productivity and bring investments, no country can move forward. Now the line is clear. We are bringing investments so that productivity has grown. Now they are trying to hamper this so that we will take the economy backwards.

Q: Some of those including prominent bhikkhus who were at the forefront to bring the President and the Government to power say the Government has failed to meet the people's expectations. Your comments?

A: Of course, there are certain people who talk against the Government.

There is a certain category of the people in the country and whatever good move you made, they always look at it from a different perspective.

We are obliged to listen to the Maha Sangha and the leaders of other religions. The reason is we are working with good intention. Our intentions are very clear and we want to turn the country into a developed nation which will successfully move forward. If there are any areas which we have to improve, we will certainly look into it. So, we will always get advice and listen if necessary and we will even make changes.

Q: Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Senior Vice President Prof. Rohana Lakshman Piyadasa has said that the Party has decided to separately contest the upcoming Provincial Council Elections and form a new alliance led by the SLFP. Will this have any adverse effect on the SLPP?

A: We will not disturb their decision. They were the very first people even to join hands with the UNP. When the UNP ill-treated them, they didn't feel anything bad.

As a SLPP Government, we have given due recognition to them and they don't have an issue. It is not a matter where they have an issue with policies or recognition. I think some of the SLFPers are now comfortable with the UNP. So, they want to have the same old scenario that they had few years back

Q: After the Easter Sunday Mass on April 4, Colombo Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith said they will definitely have to take a decision if the Government fails to bring the masterminds behind 2019 Easter Sunday attacks to book before April 21. Would you like to comment on this?

A: The Cardinal is also under pressure to seek justice for the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday terror attacks. It is not only the Cardinal; the entire country wants to identify those who were the masterminds behind those multiple terror attacks

Actually, we are responsible for bringing justice to those who died and injured due to this particular incident. We are having a judicial process and it is looking into it. We cannot disturb or interfere with the judicial system the way we want. So, inquiries are being held. As a Government, we have supported those initiatives.

Economics of Discrimination

By
**Dr. Thilan U.
Hewage**



“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” – Nelson Mandela

When one sees or hears the word “discrimination” the very first feeling one gets, almost always, is a negative one.

Most of us have heard, seen and/or read about horrific stories of discrimination against a person or a group of people throughout the human history.

Nelson Mandela's fight against apartheid in South Africa and his success in becoming the first non-white president in that country is perhaps one story of such struggles most of us remember from the recent past.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said: “In my country of South Africa, we struggled for years against the evil system of apartheid that divided human beings, children of the same God, by racial classification and then denied many of them fundamental human rights.”

Discriminatory practices

South Africa was not the only country where similar or even worse types of discriminatory practices were found based on people's race, colour of the skin, religion, gender and/or the cast.

During the trial of the white police officer of the Minneapolis, Minnesota police department, for allegedly killing the African-American George Floyd while being in his custody, another officer from the same police department was taken into custody last week for killing a twenty year old African-American during a routine traffic stop.

This officer has said that it was a mistake due to a mix-up she had with the Taser and the Gun.

Racial profiling has been and still is a common practice with the law enforcement authorities in many countries.

Malcom X, who was a fearless human rights activist in the USA during the 50s and 60s, once said: “They don't stand for anything different in South Africa than what America stands for. The only difference is over there they preach as well as practice apartheid. America preaches freedom and practices slavery.”

Yet, it is the same country where the declaration of independence says that “We hold the truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the Governed...”

What do all these have to do with Sri Lanka or any other country for that matter? If the USA was not the economically most successful and/or not considered as the most successful democracy (at least on paper) in the world then, why things happen the way they do may not be that important



to other countries.

But, it is the largest economy in the world and China's GDP, in the second place, is still about US\$ 7 trillion behind that of the US.

Important information

Therefore, how they became the largest economy in the world and what they do to maintain that lead and how they do it are all important information for all other countries.

While one can motivate oneself to do better by following the good practices of the others identifying and understanding the bad practices is equally important in avoiding such disasters in one's own land.

Economies around the world are struggling at present due to the Cov-

id-19 pandemic and Sri Lankan economy is not an exception.

In addition to, numbers and figures it may be helpful to look at the socio-logical factors affecting an economy of a country in general, ours in particular, within the efforts of rebuilding the economy.

Discrimination in the marketplace occurs when people with similar economic characteristics experience different economic outcomes because of their race, sex or other non-economic characteristics.

Nobel Prize winning economist Gary S. Becker's pioneering work on the “economics of discrimination” suggested that such discrimination occurs because of people's preferences or attitudes.

If enough people have prejudices

against a certain group of people then the market will respond to those preferences. On the contrary, “discrimination is simply an act of choice.

Scarcity requires us to choose and therefore, scarcity is the cause of discrimination” says the economist Walter E. Williams, who happened to be an African-American himself.

Marketplace discrimination can be seen in all kinds of different ways such as: salespeople less willing to sell to one group than another or consumers less willing to buy from one group than another or workers of one race, sex, religion or ethnic group less willing to work with those of another race, sex or ethnic group. If a certain group of employees are discriminated against, irrespective of whether the discrimination comes from the employers, employees or the consumers, the impact on the group discriminated against will be the same.

They will find it difficult to be employed and even if they did, they will have to settle for lower wages than their counter parts due to the imbalance in the supply and demand in the labor market.

Support systems

At the same time, the leaders and the entrepreneurs in the discriminated group will start looking for ways to help their community and will find it easier to be segregated and build their own support systems with their own industries which will give preference to their own kind when hiring workers, will offer better salaries, have their own banking systems, housing complexes, schools and hospitals.

This will create a sub economy that

can even be the envy of the discriminators who may not have seen the negative effects of losing a part of the labour force and even the consumer base.

It may be too late when they realise it, if at all they do come to that. “United we stand divided we fall” is a quote that is used quite often to encourage collaboration, team work and patriotism. One of the important characteristics employers look for in their employees is their willingness and ability to be good team-players. Whether it is the family unit, a business organization, a particular industry or even a nation, the unity among the members of an entity certainly strengthens the energy of its existence and the efforts of achieving its goals.

Justice programs

While stricter enforcement of civil right laws and other social justice programs may help reducing labor-market discrimination some of the differences may be attributed to premarket conditions such as family environment and education.

The problem is that such premarket conditions may themselves be due to similar discriminatory practices.

Whatever the remedies a country would bring in, it will be a long-term process since these discriminatory practices have been in existence for generations and changing the thought patterns is an evolutionary process itself. It is interesting to note here that it was also a Harvard educated African-American historian, Carter G. Woodson, who, in early 1900s said: “In the long run, there is not much discrimination against superior talent”



Castro steps down as Communist party leader

Raúl Castro said he is resigning from his position as Cuban Communist Party leader, ending his legendary family's six decades in power.

Castro, 89, told a party Congress that he is handing over the leadership to the younger generation 'full of passion and anti-imperialist spirit'.

His successor will be voted in at the end of their four-day Congress.

The move, which was expected, ends the era of formal leadership by him and his brother Fidel Castro, which began with the 1959 revolution.

"I believe fervently in the strength and exemplary nature and comprehension of my compatriots," he told party delegates in Havana on Friday.

Although Castro has not endorsed a successor, it is widely believed the party leadership will pass to Miguel Díaz-Canel, who took over as the island's President in 2018.

Not unexpected, but no less historic

While the entire island knew this moment was coming, it was no less historic or symbolic when it arrived: Cuba will be officially governed by someone other than a Castro for the first time since 1959. The reality is that, at least in the short term, little will change.

The man who took over from Raúl Castro as President, Miguel Díaz-Canel, may well succeed him now as the party's first secretary too. It seems likely he will be forced to take further steps to liberalise Cuba's centrally controlled economy.

The island is currently in the grip of its worst economic crisis since the period immediately following the end of the Cold War.

As a result, private farmers were recently permitted to sell beef and dairy products, goods previously under the sole control of the State.

Any hope of improving ties with the US, however, may have to wait as the Biden administration has shown little inclination to unpick the Trump administration's harsher sanctions on Cuba at this stage.

Raúl Castro's words of keeping 'one foot in the stirrup' means he will remain a power broker behind the scenes. And by reiterating the island's eternal commitment to socialism it means that political change remains as unlikely under his successor as it was under his late brother, Fidel.

End of an era

His retirement means that for the first time in six decades Cuba will not have a Castro formally guiding its politics.

Raúl has been the party's Secretary-General since succeeding his older brother, Fidel, in 2011. Fidel Castro led the Communist revolution that toppled the Cuban government in 1959, when Raúl served as one of his Commanders.

Fidel Castro was the country's leader until falling ill in 2006 and in 2008 handed over the Presidency to his brother. Fidel Castro died in 2016.

Cuba under Raúl

As the leader, Raúl Castro maintained the Communists' one-party grip on power. He oversaw an improvement in relations with United States between 2014 and 2016, including historic talks with then President Barack Obama in 2016. But tensions worsened under Donald Trump, who reinforced sanctions.

Current US President Joe Biden has vowed to relax some of Trump's sanctions, although the White House said on Friday a shift in Cuban policy was not one of his top priorities.

At the Congress on Friday, Raúl Castro said his country was willing to 'develop respectful dialogue' with the United States but it would not accept having to make 'concessions' regarding its 'foreign policy and ideals'.

Next step

The change at the top of Cuba's governing party comes as the island's leadership is tackling its most serious economic crisis in decades.

The Covid-19 pandemic, financial reforms and restrictions imposed by the Trump administration have hit the economy, which shrank by 11% last year.

A long-awaited currency reform launched on January 1 has sought to make the economy and State companies more efficient. But it has also badly squeezed the budgets of ordinary Cubans. Many have been calling for much more economic freedom in the country.

Another challenge will be maintaining ideological unity and support in the face of citizens' increased access to the internet and social media. Dissidents have been using social media to stage anti-government protests and gather live audiences online.

In response, the party has said one of the functions of its congress would be 'confronting political and ideological subversion, which has made internet and social media its principal field of operations'.

But despite the change in leadership, few expect it will prompt a dramatic

change in policy direction.

A new constitution in 2019 confirmed State dominance of the economy and the 'irrevocably of socialism'.

In a tweet on Friday, 60-year-old President Díaz-Canel said the Congress would be where 'ideas are entrenched, history recognised and the future discussed'.

But he added that there would be 'continuity'.

Castro told the Congress he was retiring as 'a simple revolutionary fighter'.

"And as long as I live I will be ready with my foot in the stirrups to defend the fatherland, the revolution and socialism."

Courtesy: BBC



PROPELLING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS TO STELLAR HEIGHTS.

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Cabraal decries US Ambassador's comment

State Minister of Money and Capital Market and State Enterprise Reforms, Ajith Nivard Cabraal dismissed allegations that the Colombo Port City would be a "Chinese Colony", pointing out that it will be administered under Sri Lankan law.

He said that the Colombo Port City would be a catalyst for economic revival as it would provide over 83,000 high-paying employment opportunities and will completely change the economic fabric of the nation. "It would be the single biggest investment in the history of Sri Lanka attracting not only Chinese but other investors from all over the world."

Addressing a news conference in Colombo on Friday (April 16), State Minister Cabraal came out strongly against comments made by US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Alaina B. Teplitz who said that Sri Lanka may be creating a haven for money launderers and other nefarious actors through the Colombo Port City development.

He said that this was a very unjust and unfair comment. "The Government and several other bodies will and have taken every effort under international laws to scrutinise investors and can assure the public that such activities would not take place." He challenged the Ambassador to provide him with even one instance of such a 'shady' activity. Cabraal said that the Ambassador should also note that small countries with a population of less than 650,000 have invested heavily in the US.

SLPP MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakse at a media briefing held at the Abhayaramaya temple, Narahenpita on Thursday (April 15) said the Colombo Port City would become a Chinese colony and foreigners can acquire that land and sell it. He said he was opposed to the sale of the Hambantota port during the Yahapalana Government, adding that one of the consequences of that deal was the utter rout of the UNP.

Rajapakse said the Government is trying to hand over the Colombo



THE COLOMBO PORT CITY WILL PROVIDE OVER 83,000 HIGH-PAYING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE THE ECONOMIC FABRIC OF THE NATION

—AJITH NIVARD CABRAAL

Port City to China through the Port City Economic Commission Bill adding that certain parts of the bill were unconstitutional and very dangerous. Responding to a question raised by the journalists on the critical remarks made by MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakse, State Minister Cabraal said MP Rajapakse had not even asked a question about the Bill during the Parliamentary Group meetings.

Collective responsibility

The State Minister said he would have explained to the MP had he inquired from him about the legislation. "I am sure he will understand if I explain to him the real situation with regard to the legislation."

Cabraal said, "It was wrong of Rajapakse to hold a press conference and utter things to the media as all Government MPs will have to maintain collective responsibility."

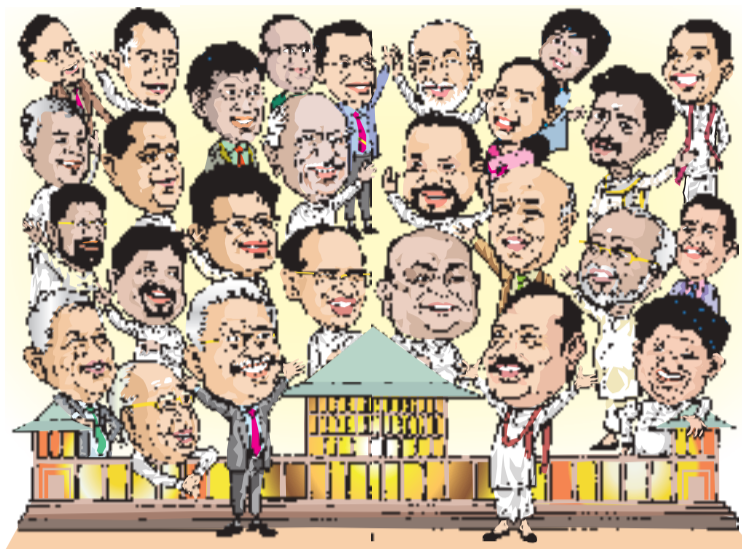
Thirty-eight United National Party (UNP) members of the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) had recently met Opposition and Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Leader Sajith Premadasa and had discussions on issues of mutual interest. According to SJB sources, the discussions had revolved around current political and social issues.

The two sides had discussed action to be taken in future with regard to identified key issues. Thirty-eight UNP members had said that they were willing to work with the SJB on political matters as well as social matters confronting the country.

UNP Chairman Vajira Abeywardana told the media that the UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe will most likely swear-in as MP, filling the party's vacant National List Parliamentary Seat. He told the opening ceremony of the UNP office in Galle last week, that the party has taken a unanimous decision that Ranil Wickremesinghe should take the sole National List seat allocated for the party.

Abeywardana said, "The UNP is a party which is prepared to change its political strategies to suit the contemporary political setup of the country. He said not only the UNP members but every politically motivated person will agree with the party decision."

He said Wickremesinghe is the most suitable political leader



University of Politics

By Prof. Backbencher

at present to fill the National List vacancy in the context of the contemporary complex political situation in the country. Abeywardana said that Wickremesinghe has a history of not doing any harm to the country every time he became the Prime Minister, and that Wickremesinghe is the only leader who could save the country from the current economic abyss.

Not a racist party

Participating in several road development programs in the Trincomalee District, State Minister Nimal Lanza said that the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) is not a racist party even though some are trying to drag it into racism. Minister Lanza said, "We are not a racist party. We work with all races, religions and parties. The SLPP is a party of all Sri Lankans. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or UNP, SLPP or SLPP. We want only to develop the country."

He said that the Provincial Council Elections will be held soon. "Those ordinances will be brought to Parliament to amend the laws in this regard. The Provincial Council System has been established. Therefore, it cannot be abolished." He said that in a democratic country, democracy cannot be disregarded. "It is the right of the people to have Provincial Council Elections."

Namal goes to Angunakolapelessa

Minister Namal Rajapaksa visited imprisoned former SJB Parliamentarian Ranjan Ramanayake at the Angunakolapelessa Prison on Friday (April 16).



The Minister had left the Angunakolapelessa Prison after talking to Ranjan Ramanayake for about half an hour. Ramanayake is currently being held in the E ward of the Angunakolapelessa Prison.

He lost his parliamentary seat due to the conviction and subsequent imprisonment. Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa had also visited Ranjan Ramanayake serving his sentence at the Angunakolapelessa Prison on the eve of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on April 13.

SJB Hambantota District Parliamentarian Dilip Wedaratchchi had accompanied Premadasa to meet Ramanayake. Speaking to journalists outside the prison, Opposition Leader Premadasa said he will continue to seek justice for Ranjan Ramanayake taking all possible democratic and constitutional measures.

Ridiculous

Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said that the statements made by Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa, who was a Cabinet Minister in the Yahapalana Government and the Deputy Leader of the UNP at the time of the Easter Sunday terror attacks, accusing the Government of trying to hide the masterminds of the terror attacks is ridiculous.

The Minister pointed out that the previous Yahapalana Government was trying to hide the masterminds behind the Easter Sunday terror attacks and the current Leader of the Opposition who was a prominent member of it

should also bear responsibility for these attacks.

The Minister was responding to a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition Sajith Premadasa accusing the present Government of trying to hide the masterminds of the Easter Sunday terror attacks. Minister Ranatunga said that providing security to the country and the people is the ultimate responsibility of every Government and pointed out that the Yahapalana Government has failed in their duties and therefore everyone in that Government should be held responsible for Easter Sunday terror attacks.

He said that the TNA and the JVP which helped maintain the Yahapalana Government could not escape their responsibility. Minister Ranatunga said even though Sajith Premadasa held a highly responsible position in the previous Government, he did not raise any voice against the Easter Sunday terror attacks or its investigations. "People of the country should understand why the present Opposition Leader, who was silent then, is shedding crocodile tears over the Easter Sunday terror attacks today."

Backbenchers visit Carlton House

A group of the backbenchers of the ruling party had visited Carlton House, Tangalle on April 13 to greet Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his family for the New Year. The Premier had a cordial chat with the Government lawmakers and wished them and their families and the entire country, a happy New Year.

"Hitler" The Opposition lawmakers and certain sections of the Maha Sangha have raised concerns over the recent statement made by State Minister Dilum Amunugama who said that if this status quo doesn't change, then it will force the President to become "a Hitler".

State Minister Amunugama at a recent media briefing said people who voted for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to power expected him to play the role of a dictator and get things done but today, were blaming him for the lack of progress by his Government. Responding to the State Minister's claim, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa said that what Sri Lanka needs is not a murderous Hitler-style regime but a regime that keeps the people alive.

Premadasa said, "Leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi have taught the world many lessons. Therefore, our country does not need a murderous Hitler-regime. Our country does not need a culture of assassination. What we have to do today is to keep people alive."

The Chief Incumbent of the Abhayaramaya temple, Narahenpita, Ven. Murutthettuwa Ananda Thera told reporters he doesn't believe that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will become a Hitler on any grounds. Ven. Ananda Thera said we condemn such statements and pointed out that Sri Lanka had been visited by Buddha thrice and that Buddhism is based on kindness.

Political decision

SJB National list Parliamentarian Harin Fernando had told the media that he will inform the nation about a major political decision he is to make in Parliament soon. He said, "I will not reveal what I am going to do now but will make a special statement in Parliament soon and will take my decision on behalf of former SJB MP Ranjan Ramanayake."

Speculation is rife that Harin Fernando will resign from his seat as a national list MP and allow Ramanayake to come to Parlia-



ment to fill the vacancy. MP Fernando had told the media that he will not reveal anything till he makes the special statement in Parliament. MP Fernando at a recent meeting had said that he will take a political decision in the first week of May on behalf of Ranjan Ramanayake who was sentenced by the Supreme Court to four years rigorous imprisonment for contempt of court. MP Fernando had said that he also plans to request the Government to grant a pardon to Ranjan Ramanayake.



STATE MINISTER NIMAL LANZA SAID THAT THE SRI LANKA PODUJANA PERAMUNA (SLPP) IS NOT A RACIST PARTY EVEN THOUGH SOME ARE TRYING TO DRAG IT INTO RACISM



THIRTY-EIGHT UNP MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MET OPPOSITION AND SAMAGI JANA BALAWEGAYA (SJB) LEADER SAJITH PREMADASA RECENTLY AND HAD DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST

After Geneva Resolution: What next?

BY DR LAKSIRI FERNANDO

The adoption of the UNHRC Resolution against Sri Lanka is a setback not only to the government but also to the country and the people. It is, however, not the end of the world. The Government as the elected authority by the people should now seriously think about the effectiveness of their foreign policies, foreign relations and perhaps personnel who are handling these crucial matters.

Defeating the Resolution undoubtedly was a difficult task, among other factors, given the last Government was completely following an opposite policy. Who was correct may be a debatable matter for some, but not for the majority. If Sri Lanka had a better profile among the OIC countries and a counter strategy for 'reconciliation and accountability' along with preventing terrorism, defeating the resolution could have been feasible.

Motives behind

The recent statement by Mangala Samaraweera that Resolution 30/1 in 2015 was not only something co-sponsored by his Government but in fact drafted by Ranil Wickremesinghe and a group is quite a revelation. Why did Samaraweera wait for such a long time to reveal the truth is the question?

Whatever the different nuances or tactics between Governments, foreign policy should be a common endeavor that all Governments should adhere to. National interest is the primary concern of any foreign policy, political, economic, or other. The ball is now with the present Government to build that consensus with the main opposition, as Wickremesinghe and his UNP are now categorically defeated.

During the campaign for the Resolution against Sri Lanka the last Government's position was a major trump card in the hands of the UK and the US to win over around 14 countries other than their own Western countries. It was primarily a campaign against the present Government on political and on other grounds.

As a report by the Universal Rights Group stated, [1] "Two country situations in particular dominated the Council's attention during its 46th session: Myanmar following February's coup, and Sri Lanka following the return to power of the Rajapaksa family. At the end of the session Resolutions on both situations (the former led by the EU and the latter by the UK) were adopted, by vote in the case of Sri Lanka (22-11-14) - the first time a vote has been called since 2014, and by consensus

in the case of Myanmar (though many LMG States disassociated from the text)." (My emphasis).

The report was equating the election of Rajapaksa leadership to coup d'etat in Myanmar. It is very clear that motive behind the Resolution was political, against an elected government whatever its main composition. This was also very clear from the High Commissioner's report on Sri Lanka that paved the way for the Resolution. They were angry with the Government as it was not subservient to the international forces.

One may agree or disagree with the Government, but it was overwhelmingly elected by the people. It is still not known how far Ranil Wickremesinghe and his followers campaigned for the Resolution. We may have to wait for Mangala to reveal it later. The politics of these people apparently are so treacherous to the country.

Legality of the Resolution

There are people who wonder whether the recent UNHRC resolution is legally binding on the country or not. On this count, some have been even criticising some Ministers on their statements. I have looked for authoritative statement from the OHCHR itself, but unfortunately clear procedures are not explained in their website for some (dubious) reason. The best I could quote is from 'The Human Rights Council: A Practical Guide' from the Swiss Mission in Geneva as follows under 'HRC Resolutions.' [2]

'HRC Resolutions are the political expression of the views of its members, or a majority of its members, on specific human rights issues and problems that are of particular concern to the international community. They are sometimes also used to recognise the existence of certain 'soft law' principles (cf. e.g. Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, annexed to res. A/HRC/RES/16/1). Regardless of their content, HRC resolutions are not legally binding.'

The emphasis in bold in the above paragraph is not mine. They were there in the Guide. According to this authoritative guide, (1) HRC resolutions are political expressions of member countries, of course on human rights issues, thematically or on country situations. Therefore, it is a political task for countries through diplomatic means to canvass and bring support for their positions. (2) Except in the case when the HRC approves UN General Assembly's 'soft laws,' the HRC Resolutions are not legally binding on member states or the target countries. However, the High Commissioner and the office



are legally binding in implementing them.

In May 2009, Sri Lanka successfully managed to obtain 29 out of 47 votes for its own Resolution at the UNHRC when a UK lead group was planning to bring a resolution against the country. That was the success of diplomacy of the country that time. Of course, when such a Resolution is proposed, the incumbent country has a duty to implement it. It is something that you do positively, and not negatively. Not as a tactic but as a commitment.

After that Resolution, there were no Resolutions on Sri Lanka until 2012. Thereafter it was a period of tumble down for the country particularly in diplomatic terms ending in Ranil and the group proposing something completely disastrous to the country. Under the circumstances, Sri Lanka's defeat at the last occasion is not a surprise. Most of the independent countries were puzzled because of the zigzags of different governments.

It is doubtful whether the Ranil Resolution in 2015 was proposed with a genuine effort for reconciliation or accountability. It must have done as a tactic. This is also clear from Mangala Samaraweera's statement. The purpose appeared to be to satisfy the Western countries (the US and UK) and not necessarily the Tamil community or the victims although the TNA also supported that effort.

Although Sri Lanka is not legally binding on the HRC Resolution, there are political imperatives and customary practices that the country may have to follow. As the first

struggle is over (with a setback of course), the country may have to use different tactics. More than being tactical, Sri Lanka can be straight forward and true to its beliefs. It should restart good relations with all countries irrespective of how they voted or behaved at the HRC, including the UK, USA, and the EU.

Although Sri Lanka is not legally binding on the HRC resolution, the High Commissioner and her office are legally binding. Therefore, they may have to soon start fact finding and even visits to Sri Lanka. A budget of \$ 2.8 million is indicated for this task. Although I said in my last article that Sri Lanka should not allow anyone from the office to visit Sri Lanka that could be handled tactfully and cautiously.

Forgive and forget

The most important is to be true to Sri Lanka's beliefs and interests. This is political realism. Although some foreign countries and Tamil

Diaspora believe that accountability is the priority matter, Sri Lanka believes reconciliation is the most important. Some are even asking for the 'pound of flesh.' This is all after supporting LTTE terrorism unashamedly.

No sustainable accountability or reconciliation is possible without allowing the Government of Sri Lanka to protect national security, prevent terrorism and develop the country. These should have been included in a true Resolution in 'promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights' in the country.

On the question of accountability, there is another difference. Sri Lanka has shown that the country is ready to 'forgive and forget' most of the past atrocities of the LTTE for the sake of the future of all communities if the perpetrators genuinely

repent. This may even apply to Adele Balasingham. At the same time, it is not ready to punish the military leaders who must have made mistakes in their judgements or directives. This has nothing to do with any actual or factual crimes committed by anyone in the field. The Government should be ready or cannot prevent even today anyone filing such cases in the Supreme Court or before in the High Courts. Instead, going behind foreign jurisdictions cannot be acceptable for the great majority of the people.

Even at this stage of great controversy, there is a possibility of the Government, preferably with the agreement of the opposition, making a statement to all member countries of the UN on something like 'Prevention of Terrorism and Promotion of Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights.' It should be made clear to the international community that without measures for the prevention of terrorism through national security, sustainable reconciliation and accountability cannot be achieved.

It should also be made clear that in Sri Lanka's view human rights should go along with promoting human duties and responsibilities.

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Dr. Palitha Kohona presents credentials to Chinese President

Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona presented Letters of Credence to President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping on April 14 2021 at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. He also formally handed over the letter of recall of the former Ambassador. By the presentation of the credentials, Dr. Kohona has been formally recognised as the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to China by the Chinese Head of State.

The credentials ceremony was conducted according to a new format complying with health guidelines, although China has largely overcome the Covid-19 threat. Thirty Ambassadors and the Resident Representative of the United Nation were ceremonially taken from the State Guest House to the Great Hall of the People where a guard of honour was accorded to them before proceeding to the presentation of the credentials.

After accepting the credentials, President Xi Jinping addressing the new Ambassadors and said that China was grateful for all the assistance given



by friendly countries in the early stages of the pandemic. China for its part has provided vaccines and other assistance to over 80 countries and international organisations. China will uphold the UN centred multilateral system and WTO based global trading system.

The 14th Five-year Plan will make China a modern socialist country. China will conduct its relations on the basis of friendship and equality. The address

was followed by a group photo of the Ambassadors with the President.

Previously, Dr. Kohona arrived in Beijing in mid December 2020 and assumed his duties as the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the People's Republic of China.

The staff of the Embassy accorded a warm welcome on his return to the Embassy after the presentation of the credentials.

High Commissioner S. Amarasekara presents credentials to South African President

High Commissioner S. Amarasekara, presented his Letters of Credence to Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of the Republic of South Africa on 14th April 2021 at Sefako M. Makgatho Presidential Guest House, in Pretoria along with eight envoys from other countries.

The ceremony was held in two phases, complying with strict Covid-19 health protocols.

In the 1st phase, each envoy was

accorded a guard of honour and led to the audience chamber to be introduced to President Ramaphosa and the 2nd phase of the ceremony was to present President Ramaphosa the Recall papers of the Predecessor as well as the letters of Credence of the High Commissioner Amarasekara.

Soon after accepting the Credentials of the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to South Africa, President Ramaphosa happily recalled his visits to

Sri Lanka and emphasised the importance of enhancing bilateral relation with special attention to tourism sectors of the two Countries.

In his response, High Commissioner Amarasekara, also highlighted the importance of enhancing people-to-people interactions and strengthening the economic ties between two countries. The High Commissioner was accompanied by his spouse Hema Amarasekara to the ceremony.

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SUNDAY OBSERVER

A commendable gesture

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all segments of society in every country, regardless of whether they are rich and poor. But it is the economically deprived segments in every country that has felt the most severe effects of Covid-19.

Not only are they more susceptible to Covid-19 itself due to cramped living conditions, but also the lockdowns and other restrictions imposed in the wake of the pandemic affected their day-to-day livelihoods.

Hence the disproportionate effect of Covid-19 on the marginalised and the poor in societies around the world. It is no secret that the poor bear the brunt of any disease and Covid-19 is no exception.

But only a few countries have had a formal system to extricate the poor from this Covid-19 induced plight.

Sri Lanka is a prime example of a developing country that took care of its underprivileged segments from the very start of the pandemic back in March last year.

Sri Lanka has several pillars of strength that make this possible. First, Sri Lanka has an enviable Universal Health Care (UHC) system that is free for all citizens (regardless of income levels) and even for foreigners who use its Government healthcare facilities.

In fact, every Government has invested in and developed the free healthcare system which is almost on par with those of the developed countries.

Some of its health indices match or even exceed the similar indices for developed countries. This means that any Sri Lankan, rich or poor, who gets Covid-19 is assured of the best possible treatments and care at a Government-run hospital somewhere in the island.

Those who had come into contact with Covid-19 infected persons were quarantined at Government-run centres free. This way, poverty is no bar to receiving the best medical care for Covid-19 in Sri Lanka.

The country's vaccination drive (which has now been temporarily halted due to factors beyond the Government's control) is also entirely free for all citizens, rich or poor. Once the Covishield and Sputnik V vaccines arrive in their numbers, Sri Lanka would be on track to inoculate all its citizens except schoolchildren and pregnant women by the end of the current year.

Besides the free healthcare system, there are other fallback systems that take care of our poor and vulnerable citizens.

The Samurdhi (Prosperity) poverty alleviation drive is one such program. It is aimed at ultimately achieving self-reliance for poor people who are Samurdhi recipients rather giving them a 'dole' per se monthly.

Sri Lanka's poverty rate has come down drastically over the decades, but there is still a substantial number of people who depend on this program.

Having realised the difficulties faced by the underprivileged communities due to the complexities of the pandemic, the Government paid multiple allowances of Rs.5,000 for millions of Sri Lankans during the lockdown period that began in March 2020.

This was much appreciated by all, as they would have become destitute otherwise, their daily vocations having disappeared owing to the strict lockdown. Moreover, the Government granted concessions for vehicle leasing, bank loans and tourism activities due to the economic difficulties faced by the populace.

This time too, the Government has not forgotten or neglected these communities.

Although there is no lockdown, the economy has not rebounded completely and some segments of economic activity are at a standstill.

Hence, there was an acute need to help them to tide over the Avurudu period and enjoy the festivities unhindered.

It is with this aim in mind that the Government expended Rs. 15 billion to pay a Rs. 5,000 allowance to three million low-income families for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

This initiative was mooted at the request of the Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Poverty Alleviation, Basil Rajapaksa and on the instructions of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Former Minister Basil Rajapaksa had suggested that this allowance should be paid as a solution to the economic difficulties faced by the people during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year season.

Families belonging to seven categories received this benefit. There may be families belonging to several categories but each family receives only one allowance of Rs.5,000.

This facility has also been extended to low income earners in the Muslim community who are fasting during Ramadan, which is now under way. This is a great gesture from the Government especially at a time when it faces economic constraints precipitated by the Coronavirus pandemic. This shows the Government's commitment to the underprivileged communities who would otherwise have been left out of the Avurudu celebrations countrywide.

One could argue that Rs.5,000 is not much given today's economic climate, but that is better than nothing and can be a lifesaver for many families who lead a hand-to-mouth existence in these pandemic times. The Government alone cannot battle the scourge of Covid-19. The entire society must fight it by observing the health guidelines to the letter.

We must remember at all times that we are experiencing a "New Normal" period which might continue at least for two more years.

Even if vaccination is 100 percent successful, it will not necessarily mean that the danger is over as the virus is mutating and variants are arriving at a rapid pace. It is, therefore, advisable to follow health guidelines such as wearing masks, washing hands frequently and social (physical) distancing at all times.

It is only through a combination of vaccination and preventive strategies that we can hope to defeat the contagion and get the economy back on the correct track towards prosperity.

Micro-credit touted by experts who ape, failed badly

by
Rajpal Abeynayake

This Sinhala and Tamil New Year was a triumph of the human spirit. Though the build-up to the New Year festivities may have been slow, when the time came, it seemed the people were determined that their can-do attitude is indomitable. In towns such as Maharagama, the social media photos indicated, the crowds soared — but there was discipline too, and mask wearing.

The people were back with some urgency. With that, hopefully the economy as well. All this was amid the ceaseless rumblings in ranks of the SJB and JVP that there was a coconut oil crisis, and hence a konda kevan (oil cake) crisis, and that the people are in the throes of an economic apocalypse.

The optimism about a recovery is now so high that even the World Bank could not resist joining the refrain. World Bank forecasters have predicted a recovery year for Sri Lanka and with that, it is time to take stock of what happened and how we should chart this comeback in the months to come.

Arguably, some came out of the Covid-19 induced crisis better than others. The self-employed small business folk probably came out better than the private sector wage earners who were hit by downsizing and pay cuts that were put in motion due to the pandemic induced economic crunch. But yet, among the worst hit were the women who had obtained rural credit in various micro-credit schemes that blossomed much before the crisis hit.

This crisis in micro credit — the fact that women in some rural areas were driven to suicide — was a lesson that once again told us to keep off the fad of the day as recommended by the various international trend setters, pundits, advisors and what have you.

ENTREPRENEURIAL

Of course the micro-credit calamity was setting in much before the Covid-19 induced crisis began taking a toll on the economy. But perhaps the situation after the pandemic took hold made matters worse. So where are the NGO experts and the gender equality pundits now that what they touted as a panacea for all ills has proved to be quite the disaster? For the uninitiated, here is the story.

Not so long ago, the NGO resource persons as they are called, went about selling the story of the Grameen bank micro-finance success to rural villagers — rural women in particular.

"Many MFIs, through their social mobilisation process, create opportunities for women to interact with the broader society, build social assets such as social networks and mutual trust, and raise self-reliance. Moreover, it is believed that women through the involvement in MFIs develop social skills, leadership skills and managerial skills/ entrepreneurial skills." That's



This crisis in micro credit - the fact that women in some rural areas were driven to suicide - was a lesson that once again told us to keep off the fad of the day as recommended by the various international trendsetters, pundits, advisors and what have you

a direct quote from a local think tank survey on micro-finance, carried out in the year 2017. MFI stands for Micro Finance Institutions. Notice the almost rapturous language used about alleged female empowerment through micro-credit/micro-finance arrangements. MF was touted as the new shiny thing in the realm of empowering developing economies. But when everything fell in a heap and rural women were caught in dangerous debt traps due to micro-finance schemes — some being driven to suicide in the process — the pundits disappeared.

INDEBTEDNESS

The Grameen Bank micro credit concept, born in Bangladesh, won its conceptualiser Mohammed Yunus the Nobel Prize. Generally, countries such as Sri Lanka have the experience of being told to do something if it had been successful in Bangladesh and Nepal. Both countries have considerably greater poverty levels than Sri Lanka, and according to the Indexes, a quality of life that lags far behind ours.

But even so, if Bangladesh catches cold, we are told to go and catch influenza because their common cold was so potent.

Remember the so-called independent Constitutional Councils (CCs). When they were introduced first as some sort of shiny new thing in modern democratic praxis during the Chandrika Bandaranaike presidency, the Colombo NGO intellectual sphere

was in a tizzy over the glittering new object. When this writer was critical of the Constitutional Council idea at the very outset, super-lightweights such as Nigel Hatch were unleashed on cautious critics such as myself and others who had seen the early warning signs. Chandrika Kumaratunge never fully implemented the Constitutional Council legislation in her tenure.

When finally the CCs were made a functioning reality during the term of the Yahapalana government, contributing in no small measure to the now infamous gridlock in government due to the power struggle between the then President and the then Prime Minister, all the great fans and advocates of the CCs had decamped. They were mostly AWOL.

To get back to the MFI crisis, micro-credit is not supposed to kill. How can cooperative credit where rural women get together for instance, and form a cooperative credit scheme, lead to suicide after some debtors are forced to default? Surely, there is a safety net, and the self-help ethic functions in a way that the less successful debtors are rescued from their indebtedness?

In theory, yes. That's the way micro-credit was touted. It was also sold as a scheme where the "irresponsible" men were bypassed and credit was often given to women who were supposed to diligently use the loan facilities extended to them. But when it all fell in a heap, the pundits initially murmured something about the males controlling the credit given to women

in Sri Lankan households, and when all these arguments proved to be hollow and without any basis, they essentially bailed out and rejected any ownership of the colossal failure they had spawned.

PREDISPOSED

It's a cautionary tale. Half baked economic theorists such as those in the last government who were mostly pretenders anyway, are generally susceptible to be conned — ingloriously duped — by various schemers who produce shiny new schemes before them.

It's not a coincidence that both the failed CCs and the failed Micro Finance Schemes were imports that were smuggled in through the agency of governments in troth to so called 'liberal values'. The Chandrika Kumaratunga administration falls into that category, needless to say.

A thorough investigation is necessary as to why the Sri Lankan micro credit sub-culture blew up like a hand grenade with a faulty fuse on its handlers. When will we ever learn that what's touted as a success in Bangladesh and Nepal by NGO experts from elsewhere — who are funded by others in Europe or North America — cannot work here, because our culture and value systems are different?

BACKLASH

Some may say that micro-credit has worked in rural Sri Lanka despite the fact that some women have been driven to suicide, but that's no argument in the face of the fact that there is a tremendous backlash against these schemes in the villages. There is a complete lack of trust of the entire concept of micro-credit in this country, and that calls for some soul searching as to why we as a nation regularly fall for these fairy tales hook line and sinker.

One reason this happens of course is that we have a class of monkey like imitators who are not trained to think, but are almost genetically predisposed towards copying.

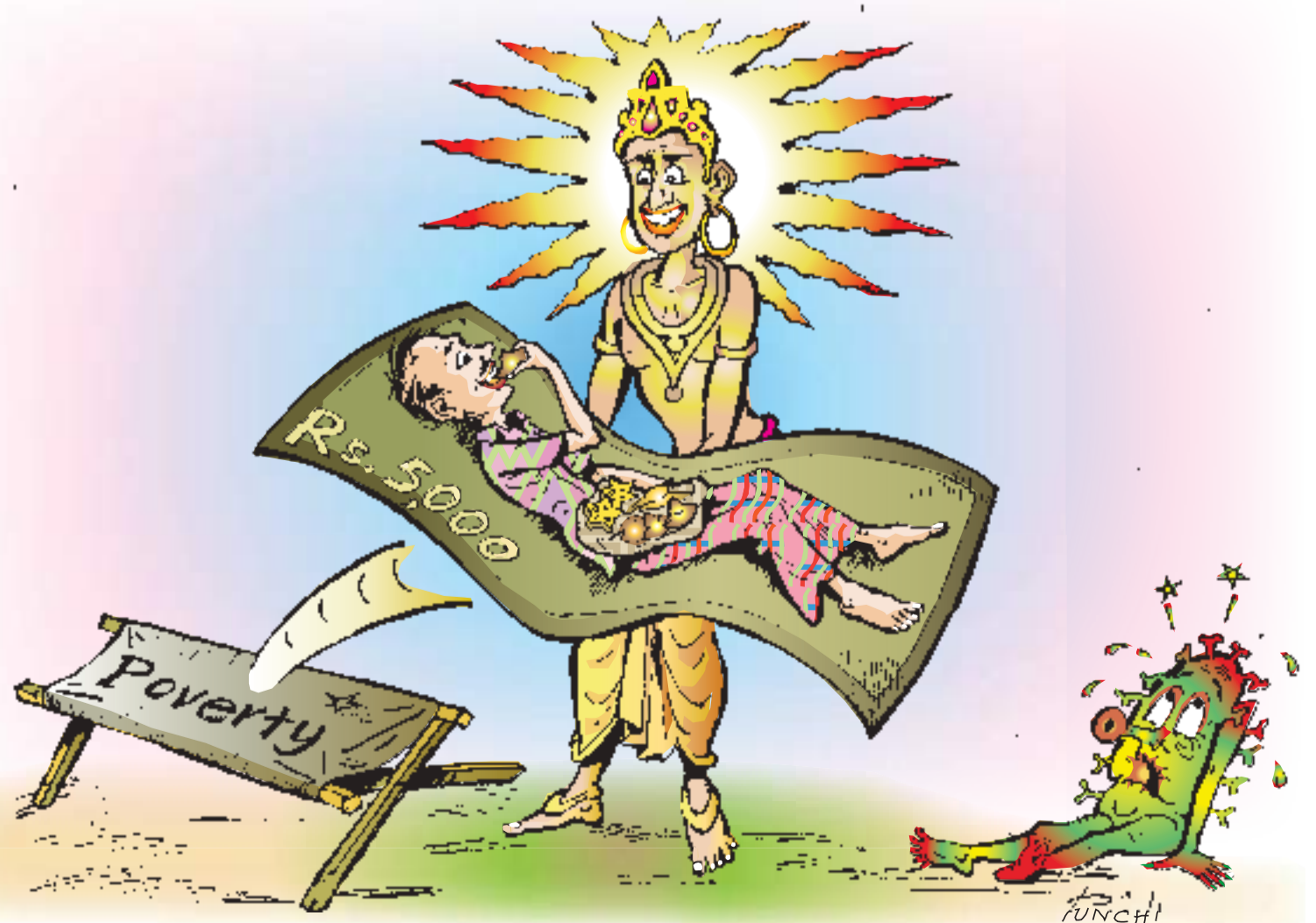
It is good that the current economic orientation is moving away from this culture of aping, but the structural underpinnings that regularly propels us towards the culture of imitation and adaptation is still very much intact.

There is the NGO superstructure and then the second tier technocratic superstructure too, that still harbours men and women who fawn over the imported idea.

To wean ourselves away from that sort of aping, we need to radically overhaul attitudes and comprehensively ignore the input of the failed monkey brigade that went after the foreign idea, and idolised the foreign expert.

They are now making noises from the level of the political gutter — and seeking all types of sleight of hand to reintroduce their alien models that have brought us inevitably closer to disaster than to redemption.

There must be more vehement riddance of their bad rubbish — and it must be on a more permanent basis.



Death of liberal democracy in Jaffna, a disaster

By
H. L. D. Mahindapala



No Tamil political leader in the post-Donoughmore period had single-handedly constructed an ideology and changed the course of national politics, almost overnight, as Ganapathipillai Gangaser Ponnambalam (November 8, 1901 – February 9, 1977).

Not only that, no one else has left such a lasting impact – albeit a divisive and devastating one – with his ideology on the national scene as the politics engineered by him. He was, in his own way, an exceptional figure whose role has been overshadowed by his junior partner, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, a charismatic figure who in reality extended and built on the ideology founded by him.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was Ponnambalam's counterpart but he did not create the Sinhala-Buddhist ideology. Rather he adopted what was already there on the ground and gave leadership to the dormant forces that were struggling to be born. Ponnambalam, on the other hand, gave birth to an ideology which he fathered, defined and activated giving leadership to a political force that entered the bloodstream of Tamil politics. In doing so, he reversed the liberal-democratic movement in Jaffna and took it back to communalism – a force that dominates the North to this day.

Ponnambalam arrived on the political scene just in time to fill the vacuum in the leadership of Jaffna. By the early thirties the old turbaned Tamil aristocracy was fading away. The last of the iconic leaders of Jaffna, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, passed away in 1930.

Jaffna was in the grip of the English-educated Tamil youth who were leading Jaffna up the road of liberal democracy and comprehensive nationalism without sectionalism. They were virtually laying down the political agenda of the day.

It was a radical movement that went against the traditional norms of Jaffna political culture. They were the daring counter force to the dominant Vellala elite which held the reins of power both as loyal subalterns in the British bureaucracy and as the traditional supremacists anointed by the Hindu casteism authored by Arumuka Navalar.

It was the Vellalas that dictated and enforced the laws and customs (Tesawalamai) that guided every aspect of the Jaffna way of life, from the womb to the tomb. Inside Jaffna the Vellalas ruled with an iron fist to maintain their supremacy.

Outside Jaffna, the Vellala supremacists campaigned to acquire seats in the legislature based on allotting seats on a communal basis and not on territorial demarcation of electoral borders. Getting seats on a communal representation would go to maintain their disproportionate share of power in the commanding heights of the political and administrative institutions.

Getting seats on a territorial basis would not only reflect the will of the people which is the ultimate goal in any democratic system but would also uphold the fundamental principles of democracy. The radical Tamil youth rejected both casteism and communalism and organised their movement to abolish what they considered to be the two evils of the peninsular political culture.

In the mid-twenties the Tamil youth of Jaffna were leading Jaffna out of feudalism, casteism, communalism and dowry-system into modernity. When they talked of nationalism they meant total swaraj for all “without narrow domestic walls” of communalism, or “sectionalism”, as the Governor of the day called it.

By the late thirties, however, the Jaffna Tamil Youth Congress had lost its grip. Without the old turbaned aristocracy and without the radical youth, Jaffna fell into a political vacuum. The political space was open for Ponnambalam to step in as the antithesis

of all that was held sacred by the Tamil youth. The political pendulum swung from liberal-democratic end to naked communalism. Single-handedly, Ponnambalam reversed the liberal-democratic trend and took Jaffna back to its communalistic and casteist roots. With that he reigned supreme as the sole representative of Jaffna with no rival in sight until the arrival of Chelvanayakam.

The unique characteristic of his politics is that he left an indelible legacy which wound its way, through several twists and turns, until it wound up in its ill-fated historical end in Nandikadal. Chelvanayakam, though he shone brighter than Ponnambalam as a leader, particularly with his integrity and commitment to the cause, was merely an ideological pupil of Ponnambalam. In extending and taking Ponnambalamism to a further extreme the pupil outshone the teacher.

Different

To get a better view of the evolving events, it is necessary to step back and take a glance at young Ponnambalam as he entered the mainstream. Right from the start he was different from the rest of the pack. To begin with, his contemporaries who went abroad in the twenties and thirties for studies in leading universities of the West returned home as committed nationalists imbued with either democratic liberalism (S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Dudley Senanayake) or Marxism (N. M. Perera, Philip Gunawardena, Colvin R de Silva and Pieter Keuneman).

Even the Tamil students such as P. Kandiah and A. Vaidiyalingam returned home from Cambridge as communists. They were, in fact, the founding members of the Ceylon Communist Party along with Pieter Keuneman. Only Ponnambalam was the exception.

He went to Cambridge on a scholarship granted by what he contemptuously called “the homogenous state” (i.e., the Sinhala state) and returned home without embracing either liberal or socialist ideals as guiding principles for his politics. He opted for a brand of communal politics minted by him which ran counter to the mainstream politics of the time.

Nationalists (Nehru) coming home had to face two enemies: 1. The imperialists and 2. The separatists (Jinnah) attempting to fragment emerging nations. Ponnambalam, however, was not inspired by either nationalism for the nation, or for the Tamils, or by the ideology of separatism or federalism. In fact, he is on record saying that “federalism is bad for Ceylon and worse for the Tamils.”

His formula of “50-50”, or what he called “balanced representation”, was his ideology to revise communalism as the determining force of national politics, refusing to go along with the prevailing liberal-democratic politics. His main argument was that “50-50” would obviate the fears and threats of majoritarianism. Governor Andrew Caldecott rejected it as a “crude arithmetical formula”. Later Lord Soulbury dismissed it as “mockery of democracy”. The Jaffna Youth Congress was most vociferous in condemning his 50-50 ideology.

Mouthpiece

Faced with overwhelming opposition he delivered a marathon speech on March 15, 1939 to the State Council defending his “50-50” ideology. It was the first time that the Tamil communalism found a mouthpiece to articulate its seminal ideology that was afloat in a vague form demanding extra seats for the Tamils to be on par with the Sinhalese in the Legislative Council. It was seen and rejected as communal representation by the British and the Jaffna youth. There was a growing consensus for territorial representation which reflected the democratic will of the nation.

To overcome the tag of communalism Ponnambalam made it an issue between the majority and the minority. Instead of demanding one or two extra seats like his predecessors he wrapped the fragmented demands of the old turbaned aristocracy into a consolidated package of “50-50”. It was



G. G. Ponnambalam

THOUGH PONNAMBALAM DID NOT PUT ALL THREE FACTORS TOGETHER AND SPELL IT OUT AS A COHESIVE IDEOLOGY THE UPSHOT OF HIS TACTICS RESULTED IN PROVIDING THE FRAMEWORK FOR HIS SUCCESSORS TO BUILD ON THIS TRIAD TO PUSH MONO-ETHNIC POLITICS OF THE NORTH TO THE EXTREME

communalism on a national scale.

He wasn't asking for one or two extra seats in the periphery, either in the North or Western provinces for the Tamils. He was asking for a huge share of power at the centre to be on par with the majority. In his speech he explored various theories against majoritarianism and presented his argument as a defence against the abuses of the majority against the minorities. It was this speech that made him a figure to reckon with in national politics. Needless to say, it enhanced his stature in the Tamil community.

In May-June 1939 he shot into the limelight again with his explosive speech at Nawalapitiya denigrating the Sinhala-Buddhist culture, its history and the people. In the political heat generated by his “50-50” demand this anti-Sinhala-Buddhist speech was explosive enough to set the nation on fire. But both events – his marathon speech and his virulent speech at Nawalapitiya – were sufficient to destroy the communal harmony that prevailed in the colonial and feudal ages.

Ponnambalam ignited the first Tamil-Sinhala riots. The nation that began to bleed in Nawalapitiya in 1939 never stopped until it ended in Nandikadal in 2009.

Ponnambalam's main theme was on the evils of the majority oppressing and denying the rights of the minorities. But Ponnambalam never referred to how the Vellala majority in Jaffna exploited, oppressed and denied the fundamental human rights of the non-Vellala castes and slaves, particularly the Nalavars and the Pallas. He was focused on communal politics directed against the Sinhala-Buddhist majority while he was a leader of the Vellalas who never lifted a finger to liberate the oppressed Tamils under his very nose.

Rapidly pauperised

Ponnambalam's success in reversing the liberal-democratic trend fostered by the Jaffna Youth Congress was fatal. He was trying to make a case for the Tamils as the victims of the Sinhala majority. But the ground reality was different. The Sinhala masses were in the same boat as the masses of the other communities though Ponnambalam made it look like a Sinhala

not put all three factors together and spell it out as a cohesive ideology the upshot of his tactics resulted in providing the framework for his successors to build on this triad to push mono-ethnic politics of the North to the extreme.

A close examination of Northern politics will reveal that it never deviated from these three factors identified by Ponnambalam. First, in the post-Ponnambalam period mono-ethnic extremism escalated incrementally heading straight towards the Vadukoddai Resolution which declared war against the democratically elected state demanding a separate state. Tamil extremism encapsulated in the Vadukoddai Resolution has its roots in Ponnambalamism, especially his disproportionate demand for “50-50”.

Elam is an extreme version of “50-50”. Second, the rationale for this demand was the accusation that the Tamils were the victims of Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism and discrimination. In his second length speech to the Soulbury Commission in 1945 he made the same accusation.

After examining his claim, the British Commissioners dismissed it as an accusation unsubstantiated by the weight of evidence. Third, for him to make a demand of these proportions he had to buttress it with just not yesterday's politics but on the entire course of history. To claim “50-50” he had to put Tamil history on par with that of the Sinhalese. Or better still, to denigrate it as being almost inferior to that of the Tamils. Demonising the Sinhala-Buddhists and denigrating their history and culture was a primary tool of Tamil politics.

History was an indispensable element for the Tamils to claim equal status – i.e., 50-50 at first and then later, separatism. Hijacking history to back their claims was an essential source. A whole new industry sprang up, particularly in academia and the NGOs, to denigrate Sinhala-Buddhist history, culture and heritage.

A classic example is Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka – S. J. Tambiah of Harvard University. Though it came with the imprimatur of prestigious Harvard University it lost its credibility because it was seen as a tendentious tract written to denigrate the Sinhala-Buddhists – a la Ponnambalam.

The cover itself betrayed his political bias. In it a leading bhikkhu was portrayed in a militant pose, indicating clearly the anti-Sinhala-Buddhist mission of Tambiah. Besides, he begins his book with a stupid question: “If Buddhism preaches nonviolence, why is there so much political violence in Sri Lanka?” And in the following 203 pages he labours to convince the reader that behind all the violence were the Sinhala-Buddhists and their ideology.

Multifarious factors

In other words, he produces a mono-causal thesis blaming only the Sinhala-Buddhist ignoring the complex history of multifarious factors that converged to create the North-South conflict. He says: “.....I have tried to present in narrative form the unfolding of events over a period of hundred... The main question to which I shall probe is the extent to which, and the manner in which Buddhism as a “religion” espoused by Sri Lankans of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has contributed to the current ethnic conflict and collective violence in Sri Lanka.” (p.2 – Ibid). And then he proceeds to detail how Buddhism has contributed in a significant way to the current conflict.

He takes a blinkered view as if Buddhism had acted as the sole miscreant that caused the violence. The dialectics of two forces of the North and the South interacting and clashing does not enter into his account. It's Sinhala-Buddhism that is blamed all the way.

The fact that Sinhala-Buddhists were reacting to an inimical, uncompromising, intransigent force from the North, determined to impose its minority demands at the expense of the rest of the nation, which can naturally provoke a reaction, has been ignored. What is implied is that as non-violent Bud-

dhist their duty was to give in to all the demands of the minority. The crisis could have been avoided if the Buddhists had been more tolerant and compromising, according to him.

By omitting the roles played by Northern actors, Tambiah has virtually exonerated them from any responsibility for the violence. In any case, it is against common sense to believe that violence came only from the uncompromising attitude of the majority. It is like believing in the sound of a clap with one hand.

Besides, this claim is factually wrong. For instance, when Ponnambalam was demanding “50-50” the Sinhala Board of Minister offered him 43 percent. Ponnambalam rejected it. Which majority in the world had given 43 percent to a minority of 12 percent on an issue of so fundamental as power-sharing? The Tamil leadership blundered and the blame was put on the Sinhala-Buddhists.

In contrast, A. J. Wilson, son-in-law of the father of Separatism, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, has commended Sinhala-Buddhist as the force that has sustained democracy in a pluralistic society. Calvin Woodward, in his review of Wilson's book, Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947 – 1973, states: “The uniqueness of Sri Lanka, Wilson points out, is that it (Sri Lanka) has faced challenges without veering from the democratic path.”

Key to the future

Certainly then, the key to the future lies in an understanding of the past. How and why, in other words, has the democratic experiment been able to work so well in Sri Lanka? The author investigates this and concludes that the political stability so far maintained in Sri Lanka is due mainly to two factors, one of indigenous origin and the other the result of Western implantation. Primary is the Buddhist ethos and the doctrine of tolerance.

This, according to Wilson, has acted to dissuade the majority community from unduly imposing itself on the minorities and encouraged it to respect the fundamental rights and distinctions of others in the plural society.” (p. 72 - The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies – Vol III, July-December, 1973, No.1.)

Of course, it didn't take long for Prof. Wilson to somersault, like most Tamil intellectuals, after the anti-Sinhala-Buddhist resolution was passed in Vadukoddai in May 1976. Tamil and pro-Tamil intellectuals fell in line with Ponnambalam to denigrate Sinhala-Buddhist history and devalue its culture to push their claim for what Bandaranaike called “outrageous demands”. The intellectual fashion was to follow Ponnambalam every inch of the way.

A whole school of Ponnambalayay rose in academia, NGOs and among pseudo-Marxist pundits / political scientists to defend Tamil extremism on the triad outlined above. The irony is that they imagine themselves to be original thinkers when they are merely aping Ponnambalam.

Dayan Jayatileka, the self-styled political scientist, for instance, is wondering why there are no Gramscis in Jaffna. “Where are the Gramscis of Jaffna?” he wants to know. He can look till the cows of Jaffna come home and he will not find any for the simple reason that Ponnambalayay do not breed Gramscis.

Of course, in his latest “Gramscian” utterance he has predicted the end of the Tamils if they don't band together against the “armed Dharmapalas”. The Ponnambalayay in the North – there was no one else in the peninsular landscape – always survived by similar kinds of call to arms. Dayan Jayatileka is a Ponnambalaya of the South raising phobias against the Sinhalese just like the way Ponnambalam did at Nawalapitiya in 1939. Clearly, there is nothing original in regurgitating old “Ponna”, as he is known in demotic parlance.

According to Dayan's latest prognosis, Ponnambalamism has come to a dead-end. So why is it that the Marxists, the Gramscian, the ex-JVPers and the political scientists behaving like Ponnayyas?

News Features

Tamil Diaspora children and LTTE child soldiers

BY SHENALI WADUGE

The LTTE Diaspora are very much in action of late. This is nothing to be surprised of. At every Geneva session their adrenalin gets pumped and LTTE kitty is put to use. Several videos are being relayed of girls and boys speaking with heavy foreign accents off a prepared script about Tamil Eelam. How do they propose to create that Eelam? By packing off another set of Tamil poor and low caste children into the Vanni jungles?

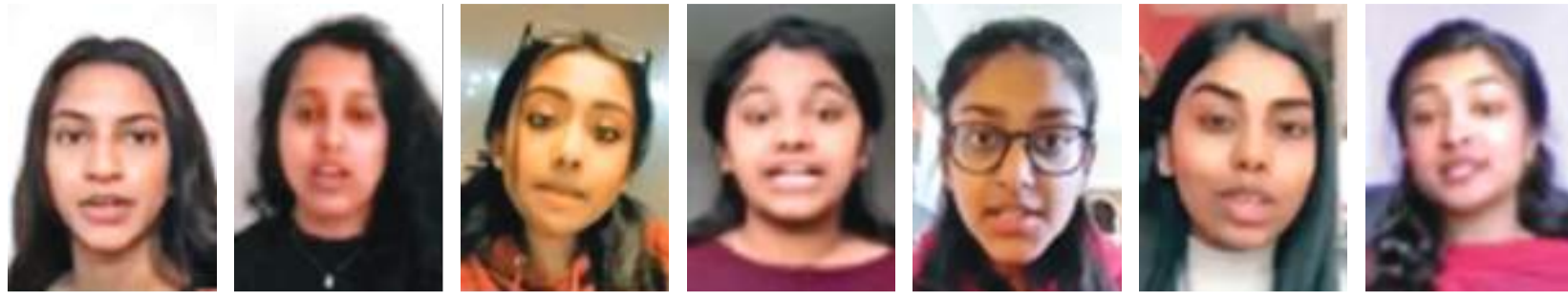
Do these foreign living LTTE diaspora children know how many such Tamil children lost their youth and were denied fundamental right to education? Are these foreign living children so wicked that they want to outsource Eelam and send another set of children to the jungles while they enjoy life living in the West and realising their personal dreams? Why outsource Eelam to innocent Tamils, why don't these children go to the Vanni themselves and fight for Eelam?

Listening to these children overseas you have to wonder what they know of the life that the Tamil child soldier went through.

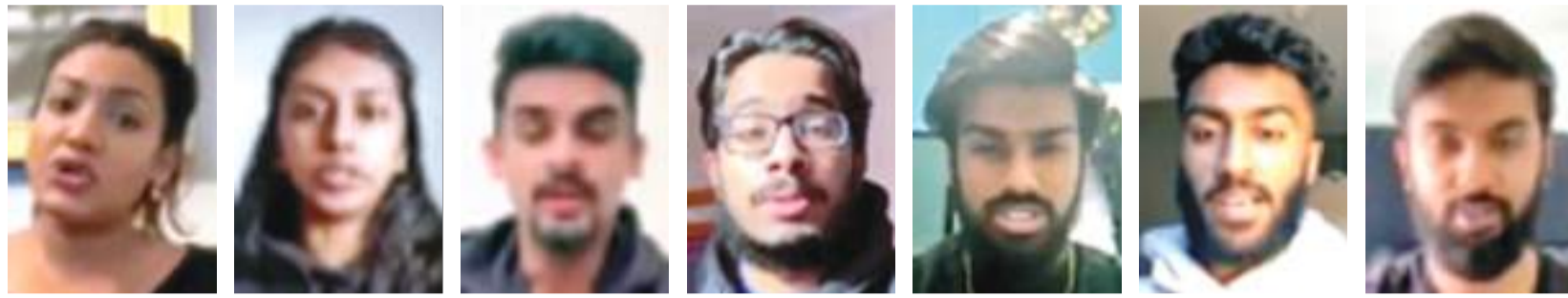
Do these foreign-living Tamils reading scripts with heavy accents know that the Tamil Eelam they are demanding while living in Toronto, Texas, and such meant a sordid life for their counterparts back in Sri Lanka?

While these children were happily living in foreign climes, going to play school, playgrounds and eating toffees, the Tamil child soldiers were kidnapped from their homes, the begging of their parents only meant gunshots scaring them back home, any child that fled the LTTE 'orphanages' were shot and killed, the only playground these children knew were training ground that taught them how to shoot.

The only sweets they bit were the cyanide capsule that spelled their death certificate if caught. So how do these foreign-living Tamils feel about the suffering of these



THE ONLY PRIZE-GIVING THE LTTE CHILD SOLDIERS ATTENDED WAS THE LTTE PASSING OUT PARADE WHERE THEY SHOOK HANDS WITH THE MASS MURDERER VELUPILLAI PRABAKARAN AND WAS GIVEN A CYANIDE CAPSULE TO KILL THEMSELVES WHEN CAPTURED AND A GUN TO KILL



Tamil child soldiers in the jungles of Vanni, with stinking clothes, hardly time to have a bath, wearing the same underwear for months, smelling of body odour never smelt a perfume or used a bar of soap in their little lives and never had the fortune to even enjoy a parent's hug and kiss.

Brainwashed

The only toy they held was the gun, the only playmates they had were the other child soldiers equally frightened and brainwashed into hating people they had never seen or known.

The foreign-living Tamils had the luxury of going to school, of taking part in prize-givings, winning competitions, showing off their talents, singing, dancing and many other things.

What did these Tamil children enjoy? The only prize-giving they attended was the LTTE passing out parade where they shook hands with the mass murderer Prabhakaran and was given a cyanide capsule and gun to kill.

They had no opportunity to sing or dance or show off their talents. The only talent they could show off was their ability to kill and shoot people. Some of these children are today invalid without legs or hands. What a life that would have been for such a child. Have the 9 girls featured in the video probably with foreign passports, probably not knowing a single town in North Sri Lanka or even where any of the LTTE camps were set up, thought of what life would have been like for teenage LTTE child soldiers in the jungles?

Who stole their adolescence? Did they ever get to cut a cake for their birthday, did they ever go out for parties or watch a movie with friends or share girlish secrets? Just imagine the torment these young girls in tiger uniforms would have suffered? How many of them became sexual bait for male combatants living in bunkers for months where naturally the sexual desires would have taken the better of their orders? Why are these facts kept hidden? Even Thamilini's book subtly brings out some of these facts which are nicely swept under the carpet.

Are these foreign-living teens not ashamed to come in public demanding Tamil Eelam which they simply want to outsource to another set of poor and low caste Tamils while they enjoy educating them-

selves and gaining lucrative employment overseas and enjoying the LTTE kitty which is ever expanding.

In May 2009 when LTTE was militarily defeated 11,644 LTTE combatants surrendered. They were all in civilian clothing and 4167 were married, 7375 were single, 122 were widowed and 594 were children above 12 and below 18.

These 594 LTTE child soldiers were given a Presidential pardon and put through schools something the LTTE Diaspora would not even dream of doing. The Government gave them vocational training and guided them on taking a new path to the one they had been forced into by the LTTE and the LTTE Diaspora. Gokulan became a singing sensation the whole country is fond of.

It is pathetic to watch LTTE Diaspora children reading off scripts

demanding Tamil Eelam living overseas and unlikely to ever come to a bogus Tamil Eelam. So what is this actual game the LTTE Diaspora are playing?

Do they need to keep alive Tamil Eelam to enable more Tamil asylum seekers and refugees to foreign country on the bogus 'discrimination' card?

Do they need to keep alive the Tamil Eelam demand to continue the nexus of international racketeers they operate which has been able to even buy off corrupt foreigners.

Do they need to keep alive Tamil Eelam as this is what the Western governments have asked of them as it enables them to use the UN system to pressure and carry out gun-bout diplomacy against Sri Lanka, or is it a combination of all above?

Foreign demands

We would really like to know the real reason as these foreign demands are nothing that connects with what the Tamils in Sri Lanka want. With the ever reducing number of pro-LTTE protestors in Sri Lanka and decline in TNA following, the LTTE Eelam quest is as good as dead now.

All that Tamils living in Sri Lanka wish to do is to have their areas develop, to enable their children to go to school, university, get a good job, own a house and car, marry and start a family. The Tamils in Sri Lanka have far bigger issues than Eelam to think of - these include the drug menace, drinking fathers, abusive fathers, rape by members of their own family, why don't the LTTE diaspora children do some initiatives to curb these headaches that the Tamils are suffering.

If the LTTE diaspora children really want to create a Tamil Eelam - put Rudrakumar into a tiger suit, wear tiger kits themselves and go to the Vanni jungles and experience first-hand what the Tamil child soldiers suffered for three decades losing their entire youth. Then come on Instagram and tell us whether it was really worthwhile.

Sustainable development, environment and political hypocrisy

by
Hemantha
Kulatunga



Sustainable development ensures the well-being of the citizens of a country by integrating social development, economic growth, and environmental conservation.

Social development implies access to food, shelter, health, education, employment, and so forth whilst economic development expands the availability of work and the ability to secure reasonable income to support themselves and their families.

Economic development is compulsory to a country that includes industry, agriculture, food security, and sustainable economic growth. The two factors are interdependent and vital to the quality of life of a country's population.

The concept of sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of the present generation whilst preserving the ability of future generations. The key components of development are society, the economy, and the environment. When these three elements are aligned, human well-being increases in proportion. Therefore, a balance of the three concepts must be in place for the benefit of the country.

Stakeholders

The biggest criticism of sustainable development in Sri Lanka, however, is that the stakeholders are not doing enough to conserve the environment when they plan new projects.

Environmentalists complain that the authorities adequately practice the norms of nature protection. Views of authentic and genuine environmentalists are essentially important to the country and must be considered with respect by the authorities.

The emphasis given by most of the enthusiasts is that the forest cover the country possessed in the 1950s was 44 percent and reduced to just over 29 percent as of today. This reduction took place mainly due to the high rate of population growth.

For example, the country's population in 1950 was 7.9 million as against the estimated 21.4 million in the present year, marking an increase of over 250 percent in 70 years. Therefore, the claim of environmentalists is jus-

tifiable for stating that the country in unison must preserve the remaining forests.

The future of Sri Lanka's future growth will be defined by its ability to close the gaps pertaining to the economy, society, and environmental protection.

Ongoing demanding criteria such as increasing unemployment, inequalities, prevailing job losses due to Covid-19, the rising cost of living, are a few among many persistent issues.

Changes in behaviour in individuals, society, and institutions are required to move towards a sustainable society.

The economic mechanisms are vital to achieving the goal of sustainability. However, for Sri Lanka, similar to many other developing countries, integration of environmental conservation with human progress has become one of the main challenges.

Scoundrels

Any sane citizen of the country, except scoundrels who are involved in illegal tree felling and other environmentally damaging illicit activities, will protect the environment at any cost.

With recently emerged interest in environmental issues, the entire nation has become attentive about protecting their local environment. The issue of environmental protection has become a common and day-to-day topic in society.

Currently, an intense discussion on government-sponsored development projects, particularly infrastructure-related schemes, is in progress. Also, private tourism and agriculture-related large-scale commercial projects are being discussed in society.

Regrettably, most of these projects have earned the wrath of various organisations that are representing environmentalists and enthusiasts for both good and bad reasons.

The pertinent question is to fathom whether all these organisations who oppose these projects are genuine or politically influenced. In reality, whilst many genuine environmentalists are concerned about nature protection, there are also others with various dubious agendas.

Those who are interested in either achieving political mileage or discrediting the government currently are enjoying glory days because of the freely available social media platforms regardless of whether such projects are important nationally.



SRI LANKA STILL REMAINS A LOWER-MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY DESPITE THE AVAILABILITY OF ALL THE RICH NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE LITERATE HUMAN CAPITAL

For example, a certain segment of the public including clergy have made a big hue and cry declaring that the Crudia Zeylanica plant that was in the path of the central highway is the only such tree existing in the world.

This group influenced by a range forest officer demanded that the highway should be diverted and built evading the tree even if the cost to state coffers can be billions of rupees of taxpayer's money.

Manipulation

However, later it was found that many such trees are available in other areas, including the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. The intention of the official may have been genuine. However, knowingly or otherwise, opportunistic political manipulation has sneaked into the scenario.

Therefore, a conscious analysis is required to determine what is best for the country without arbitrarily object-

ing to everything.

A certain amount of damage to the environment is inevitable in the development of large projects. For example, the Mahaweli Development Program, known as the largest multipurpose national development scheme in the history of Sri Lanka, was initiated sacrificing a substantial amount of forest land according to an evaluation done in 1993 on behalf of USAID.

The study revealed that 50 percent of the total area, before the development, was covered with tropical humid sub-humid or dry forests.

As of today, as per the Mahaweli Authority socio-economic Statistic Book-2018, the population in the Mahaweli area is over one million with a total cultivated area of 201,000 Hectares. This is a huge contribution to the national economy.

These figures divulge the importance of development projects to the sustainability of a country and its society.

However, the development must be done with an extremely meticulous evaluation process to determine whether the environment can withstand the damage.

The key issue prevails today mainly because of public opinion that dubious political involvement is in place whenever there is a development project.

Development

Over the years, Sri Lankans have witnessed environmental destruction taking place in the name of development projects spearheaded by corrupt politicians. Therefore, the general population grossly mistrusts the politicians whenever there is a new project. Political opportunists, usually from the opposition parties, create the biggest damage to the development of the country.

They take full advantage and oppose any project undertaken by the government to create mayhem whenever there is even a minor issue.

Most often they are not fully aware of the correct situation or the actual damage if there is such environmental damage.

Usually, these opportunistic politicians pick up unsubstantiated information or hearsay from the hugely unreliable Sri Lankan social media to

create confusion.

In order to meet the future needs of society, the country requires multi-disciplined development projects.

Hence, the authorities, the public, and the environmentalist collective pay serious attention to the integration of environmental and development concerns. A strong ethical framework and political commitment at the highest level with firm decision-making power is a dire need for the country currently.

Transparent national policies and strategies must be introduced to curb unnecessary resistance and disagreements.

The government must implement policies to encourage business and industry whilst protecting the environment.

Regrettably, almost every privately funded project is being obstructed by several groups. These elements grossly disregard the country's economic sustainability.

Hypocritical

Most often, these groups are either politically motivated or those who seek personal glory.

Hypocritical and duplicitous politicians make the maximum out of any and every possible situation to discredit the present administration.

Most often, the sole interest is to improve their vote base by criticising the government. These expedient and unethical elements only pursue their political agendas and not the future of the country or the environment protection.

Sri Lanka still remains a lower-middle-income country despite the availability of all the rich natural resources and the literate human capital.

Most of the general public justifiably blames the political system and politicians for the stagnation since independence.

There are purported political parties that object to every action any government takes on every development strategy.

These bankrupt and deceitful political parties sans any public appeal or Parliamentary representation are continued to be a nuisance to the nation's future.

As pledged in the Presidential manifesto, Sri Lanka must be a prosperous nation. Given this, the government and the private sector must continue to pursue economic growth extending the highest priority to environmental conservation.

Government's response to JVP claim on Port City

By
Milinda Rajapaksha



Recently the government used its two-thirds majority power to introduce a Bill called the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Law.

A government does not need a 2/3 majority to introduce a Bill in Parliament. It can be passed by a simple parliamentary majority except in the case of a Supreme Court ruling or other special ordinance.

Eighty percent of the 1,115 acres of land in the Port City built near the city of Colombo is owned by China Harbour Company. The land area of the Port City of Colombo is only 269 hectares or 664 acres, but the total area around it, including the breakwater and moat, is 446 hectares or 1102 acres.

Government owned lands

All this is freehold land owned by the Government of Sri Lanka with ownership vested by a Parliamentary Resolution. Out of 269 hectares of land, only 178 hectares or 439 acres can be used for constructions and the remaining 91 hectares or 224 acres are allocated for public infrastructures such as roads, beaches, parks, sidewalks and canals. Out of the possible 178 hectares, the project company will receive 116 hectares or 286 acres on a 99-year lease, while the remaining 62 hectares or 153 acres, could be released directly to the government or any other party.

The company plans to re-lease their land to private investors to get payback of \$ 1.4 billion it is investing in the project. Out of the total 1102 acres of land, only 286 acres will be given to the company temporarily, which makes it 25%.

It was reported that this company had pumped a lot of money for the Rajapaksa's elections and funding in the recent past. The government has been pressured by this company to designate the region as non-compliant to local laws. This bill by the government is put forward as a result of that.

US fabricating stories

In 2018, a New York-based newspaper in the United States of America slandered the China Ports Engineering Company with distorted information and a fabricated story with the intent of discrediting China in the eyes of the world. China Port Engineering Company denied that news and the falsehoods contained therein.

The management of the Engineering Company held a press conference chaired by the then Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka and revealed the facts, although both the ruling party and the party in power at the time insisted that a law suit be filed against the Company based on the news. The investigation did not take place because the American media report was completely untrue and the project company could not influence the Government on the bill except to invest in the construction of the Colombo Port City.

The Bill, which was originally drafted, was rejected by the Attorney General's Department on two occasions. Because it is so powerful that it surpasses even the Constitution. Accordingly, a bill which has now been introduced is less in force as compared to the previous two drafts.



Government Acts

There are two Acts in our country, the Board of Investment Act and the Strategic Development Act. Those bills allow huge tax breaks. It was under this that the Rajapaksa's gave tax relief to the Shangri-La Hotel for 25 years and Ranil gave tax relief to the Chinese company in the sale of the Hambantota Port. Despite having these Acts, they have not been applied a large number of privileges but have been granted under a commission similar to power of a state.

The Board of Investment Act or the Greater Colombo Economic Commission Act is now more than 43 years old. The aim at the time was to encourage production-based investment, for example, garments, rubber products, assemblies, etc., to attract foreign investment in those sectors. The Strategic Development Act, 2008 was introduced to attract services and commercial investment not covered by the Board of Investment Act. As the Port City is a project aimed at the financial and service sectors the need for an inherent legal framework has developed over time.

Special zone

The Port City is a special zone that does not belong to any local government area.

This is the time where there is a lot of talk about local government bodies and its inefficiencies, regardless of party affiliation. There is a lot of talk about suitable alternatives. The Port City creates the perfect environment for any of these experiments. If this model succeeds as an efficient and people-oriented service region, it can be substituted for the rest of the country.

Local Government areas are governed by elected representatives of the people living there. But the Port City is governed by a commission appointed by the president. The President of this country is elected by the people

Representatives of the Commission will be granted immunity from prosecution for doing or not doing anything. It is not the same as the President, but close to such immunity.

That exemption applies only to matters relating to this Act. That

exemption does not apply in the event of any criminal offence, intentional omission of this Act or any other violation of law recognized in the country

This Commission has special financial powers. The Commission has a separate fund. Government revenue is added to the Consolidated Fund. Parliamentary approval is required to obtain money from it. But the Port City Economic Commission can maintain a separate fund outside of it that does not require parliamentary approval.

It is common for the Port City Commission to have its funding, just as any other public body and commission has its funds. Although other State Institutions receive public tax money through parliamentary approval, the Ports Commission will operate with a different method of earning its own funds, mainly from foreign investment, and handing them over to the government. The Commission is accountable to the President of the country or a Minister nominated by him, so in the end, it is accountable to the people of the country.

The Port City Economic Commission has the power to grant various tax concessions. Generally, only Parliament can grant tax relief. But this 'Province' has special tax relief.

For any tax relief recommended and formulated by the Commission to take effect, it must be presented to Parliament for approval

The money received by the state is subject to the supervision of the Auditor-General. But the Port City Economic Commission's accounts are audited by a private company. It has been removed from the state audit. Article 154 of the Constitution stipulates the need for an international audit to oversee the audit process. As the final audit report has to be submitted to Parliament, the people's representatives have the opportunity to study it thoroughly.

Government Agencies may be summoned before Parliament for

COPA (CO) and COPE (CO). But this 'Chinese Province' cannot be summoned to Parliament.

There is no mention of not being able to convene. As it is an Institution that is expected to be built as an Institution that does not depend on public funds, it is more directly accountable to the President or a nominated Minister than to the parliament.

Only foreigners can invest in this Port City. It has indirectly prevented Sri Lankan businessmen from investing. That is by informing that only those who raise those funds from abroad can invest here. In a nutshell, this is a separate state.

If it was possible to raise funds locally or overseas in any way, Sri Lankan Businessmen, as well as active foreign Businessmen from Sri Lanka, would transfer their cash reserves in Sri Lanka to foreign currencies or withdraw money from their foreign currencies into Sri Lankan banks very quickly and would have been transmitted to Port City, but this condition made it mandatory for any local or foreign businessman to bring in foreign reserves from a foreign country, which would inevitably attract foreign investment to Sri Lanka regularly. Even at this moment some local companies are depositing such money to banks in Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai.

The first beneficiaries of the Port City Commission will be these local businessmen who have deposited such foreign reserves abroad.

It is stated that the salaries of those working in this Port City area should be paid in a designated foreign currency. It could be the Chinese 'Yuan'.

In the Port City it will be possible to buy and deliver, not only wages but also goods and services in any of the world's recognised currencies. It can be not only Sri Lankan or Indian Rupees but also Euros, Pounds, Dollars, Yen, Dinars or Rubles.

Income of employees working here is exempt from income tax. It is stated that the money can be deposited in a foreign currency account in this country.

Early stages of creating an era of

earning foreign exchange by pursuing higher careers in Sri Lanka instead of earning foreign exchange abroad.

Citizens of Sri Lanka can pay for services in the Port City of Colombo but should pay taxes on goods purchased upon departure. This convinces the region is a separate country.

Tax relief is available for tourists or those with temporary residence visas or for use or consumption in the Port City. Otherwise, sales of services and goods provided in other parts of the country may be disrupted. This will enable provision for superior and competitive goods and services to tourists while safeguarding the overall sale of goods and services in the country. And if anyone has any doubts that this Act will create a separate country, they can go to the Supreme Court against it.

Disputes within the jurisdiction of the Port City Economic Commission should be resolved through international arbitration. For example, the dispute over the hedging agreement with the Petroleum Corporation and the International City Bank was referred to a Singapore arbitration board. That is the way to resolve disputes between states. Accordingly, the power to resolve disputes between the Commission and Institutions and between Institutions and Employees have been vested in an International Arbitration Board established there.

The emergence of such arbitration centres marks the first step in making the Port City of Colombo a developed international city.

Also, several important Acts that have already been passed in Parliament are not being implemented in the state. Urban Development Authority Act No. 78, Municipal Councils Ordinance, Commercial Mediation Centers Act, Urban and Rural Design Ordinance, Strategic Development Act granting tax concessions for various projects, General Contract Agreement Act, No. 78 of the National State Council approving construction, Important Acts such as the Board of Investment Act, the Securities and Exchange Commission Act are not enforced in this State.

The Securities and Exchange Commission Act protects foreign exchange. All powers and regulations

on the foreign currency of that country are exercised through this Act. Also, The Government is taking steps to relieve all Acts or amend certain clauses in the Inland Revenue Act, the Value Added Tax Act No. 11 of 2002, the Finance Act No. 11 of 2005, the Customs Ordinance in force on imports and exports of goods, ports and airports related to ports and airports, including the Income Tax Regulations Development Act, Sri Lanka Export Development Act, Betting and Gambling Act, Workers' Termination of Employment Act, Employment Tax, Foreign Exchange Act, Casino Business Regulation Act.

Therefore, plans are being made to make this Port City a Chinese province. China has a plan similar to the one in Hong Kong for the port city project.

Hong Kong is, according to historical evidence, part of the ancient Chinese Empire.

In 1997, British reluctantly returned the Hong Kong region to China, where they had exploited the region's wealth and natural resources for more than 150 years like wolves in sheep's clothing. But Chinese authorities did not try to change the system which was there for 150 years, overnight. Although they did so in the concept of two ways in one country, Britain is still engaged in the brutal act of destabilising the Hong Kong region, constantly inciting the pro-Western modern Hong Kong generation created by the British. It is surprising that China, the supreme example of modern socialism, has been pushed into the role of ultra-capitalist Britain.

The Commission

Also, nowhere does it say that the members of the Commission appointed by the President should be only Sri Lankan citizens. Therefore, it is doubtful whether the members of the Commission are Chinese. This Government came as a patriotic government that protects national resources. The regime that has built up a great deal of criticism of the Liberal economy. A key element of economic liberalisation is the Board of Investment and the Strategic Development Act. The anti-liberal views expressed by the President in the presidential election are to be liberated by abolishing the laws and regulations of the country, turning it into rhetoric about the national economy.

In many parts of the world, we often hear of talented Sri Lankans working in various government and quasi-Government Institutions. It can also be viewed positively as a great opportunity to bring back the lost great intellectuals from such a country.

This is an attempt to break the backbone of the remaining economy of our country and present the economy to powerful states. Therefore, this process must be defeated and the citizens of this country must speak out against it. We are also looking into whether legal action can be taken against this by our legal team. However, the government has turned the judiciary of this country into a centre that can be manipulated according to it.

It is now very clear why. This is why the 20th Amendment brought the President some superpower. These laws are being drafted to build a state for the Chinese government and the Chinese Harbour Company, in violation of all laws applicable to Sri Lanka.

Anyone who has any doubt that this Act will create a separate country can go to the Supreme Court and seek justice

'Blood clot concerns'

Denmark stops AstraZeneca vaccine

The move is expected to delay the country's vaccination program by several weeks. Drug watchdog the European Medicines Agency last week announced a possible link with clots but said the risk of dying of Covid-19 was much greater.

Several European countries had previously briefly suspended the jab. Most have now resumed vaccinations with AstraZeneca, but often with limits to older age groups. On Tuesday, the US, Canada and the European Union paused the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for similar reasons over clotting.

South Africa has also paused its use, despite the Johnson & Johnson being its preferred vaccine because of its effectiveness against the South African variant. For both AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, the blood clot side effects are extremely rare.

The EU's vaccine roll-out has been criticised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for being too slow, and there are concerns this latest delay could throw it into further turmoil.

Both vaccines work by a similar method, known as adenoviral vectors.

Why is Denmark stopping the AZ vaccine?

Danish officials said that all 2.4 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine would be withdrawn until further notice. The Danish Health Authority said studies had shown a higher than expected frequency of blood clots following doses, affecting about one in 40,000 people. It comes after two cases of thrombosis in Denmark were linked to vaccinations. One of the cases, in a 60-year-old woman, was fatal.

Director General Soren Brostrom said it had been a "difficult decision" but Denmark had other vaccines available and the epidemic there was currently under control.

"The upcoming target groups for vaccination are less likely to become severely ill from Covid-19," he said. "We must weigh this against the fact that we now have a known risk of severe adverse effects from vaccination with AstraZeneca, even if the risk in absolute

terms is slight."

However, the authority said it could not rule out using it again at another time. During the press conference the head of Denmark's Medicines Agency, Tanja Erichsen, fainted and was taken to hospital as a precaution. The agency later tweeted that she had recovered. Almost one million people in Denmark have been vaccinated, with approximately 150,000 of them receiving the AstraZeneca jab. The Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are also in use.

How do adenovirus vaccines work?

Adenoviruses are found in humans and other animals. Scientists use a modified version of one of these adenoviruses, known as a vector, to deliver important instructions to cells, according to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

They work by entering cells and using the cell's machinery to produce a harmless piece of the virus that causes Covid-19, known as a spike protein.

The cell then recognises that the spike protein does not belong there and

this triggers the immune system to fight back against what it thinks is an infection. This process allows our bodies to learn how to protect us against Covid-19, according to the CDC.

Regulators are now investigating whether an unusual immune response to the adenovirus vaccines is causing the rare but severe incidences of blood clotting. An official from the US Food and Drug Administration said it was "plainly obvious" that the cases of blood clots linked to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine were "very similar" to those linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The US paused rollout of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine after six women under 50 developed rare blood clots after getting the shot. In the UK 30 people had developed unusual blood clots and seven of them had died after getting the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, out of a total of 18 million vaccinated.

What are other countries doing?

Some European countries have limited the use of adenovirus vaccines to older people, who have been less affect-

ed by the rare blood clotting condition.

After the Danish announcement, France said it viewed the AstraZeneca vaccine as an "essential tool".

"It is important that this vaccine continue to be deployed. It is a vaccine that is safe and works," a French government spokesman said.

France will also go ahead with plans to give the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to those aged over 55, the spokesman said. The country has already received 200,000 doses. Belgium will also give the doses it has received, while Greece and Italy will not.

Czech Deputy Prime Minister Jan Hamacek said he had instructed the Czech ambassador in Denmark to try to buy the 2.4 million AstraZeneca vaccines doses that the Danes would no longer be using.

Hamacek said he would also travel to Moscow to arrange deliveries of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine - another adenovirus vaccine - once its use is approved by the EMA.

The developer of the Sputnik V vac-

cine, the Gamaleya Center, told the BBC it had found no cases of blood clots in connection with its jab. It said all vaccines based on adenoviruses were "different and not directly comparable".

Denmark was the first country to postpone use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in March. It was followed by numerous other European countries. More Pfizer-BioNTech doses for the EU. In a separate development, the European Commission said Pfizer-BioNTech would deliver an extra 50 million doses to the EU in the next few weeks.

The Pfizer-BioNTech is an RNA vaccine - a new type of vaccine that uses genetic material to teach cells how to make copies of the virus causing Covid-19, triggering an immune response.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also said the EU was discussing a new deal with Pfizer-BioNTech to deliver 1.8 billion doses in 2022 and 2023 which would all be produced within the EU.

So far 27 million people in the EU have been fully vaccinated.

News/Obituaries

US spies doubt reports of Russian 'bounties' for troops

WASHINGTON, April 17 (BBC) - The White House has acknowledged there was little evidence that Russia had offered Taliban militants bounties to kill US soldiers in Afghanistan. A spokeswoman for President Joe Biden said the claim had "low to moderate confidence" from US spy chiefs. Russia has denied paying the bounties. In last year's US election, Biden heavily criticised Donald Trump for not confronting Russia over the claim. It comes amid new sanctions on Russia and US plans to leave Afghanistan.

The intelligence assessment was first reported last June by the *New York Times*, and was cited by Biden on the 2020 presidential campaign trail to accuse then-President Trump of not standing up to Russia. Trump at the time called it "fake news" and a "fake issue".

He later tweeted that he was not briefed on the subject because US intelligence agents had not deemed it credible. At a White House news briefing on Thursday, Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters the intelligence community had determined it had "low to moderate confidence" in the claims. She said this was due to the fact that the information was said to have come from inter-

rogations of Afghan detainees. "It's challenging to gather this intelligence and this data," she said. "While there is low-to-moderate assessment in these reports, we felt it was important for our intelligence community to look into it." When it emerged last year, the news caused a political furor in the US Congress.

Biden repeatedly used the report to criticise Trump's leadership. "His entire presidency has been a gift to Putin, but this is beyond the pale," Biden said of his Republican opponent shortly after the news broke. "It's a betrayal of the most sacred duty we bear as a nation to protect and equip our troops when we send them into harm's way. It's a betrayal of every single American family with a loved one serving in Afghanistan or anywhere overseas."

Biden brought it up again during his speech to accept his party's nomination at the National Democratic Convention and in his first conversation as president with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the heat of last year's presidential campaign, reports of Russian bounties being paid for killing US troops in Afghanistan quickly became a new line of attack against Donald Trump. Democrats cited the reports - based



on anonymous information provided by US intelligence sources - as yet further evidence that the then-president was soft on Rus-

sia, willing to turn a blind eye to Vladimir Putin's transgressions even at the cost of American blood. Joe Biden brought it up during one

of the presidential debates. Barack Obama mentioned it in a campaign speech, accusing Trump of being "missing in action" as commander-

in-chief.

It turns out the "evidence" behind those reports is thin - "low to moderate confidence," in intelligence-speak. And this week the Biden administration indicated it isn't willing to use it as the basis for further sanctions against the Russian government.

All Putin got from Biden on the matter this year was a warning. The original coverage of the bounties story included acknowledgment of nuance and uncertainty. Much of that was lost in the white-hot crucible of US politics, however.

These latest revelations should provide a cautionary tale: take anonymous reports, even when they come from official sources, with a healthy dose of salt. No mention of the bounties came in Biden's most recent phone call with Putin on Tuesday, according to a White House summary of the call. The White House statement comes as the US launches several new sanctions against Russia over what it describes as cyber-attacks and other hostile acts. It also comes days after Biden announced that the US will withdraw all troops remaining in Afghanistan by September 2021.

Tamil actor Vivekh passes away

Actor Vivekh who suffered a massive heart attack on Friday, died early yesterday morning, according to hospital sources. He was 59.

He was taken to SIMS hospital in Vadapalani on Friday morning, after he collapsed at home. He was revived and was hooked up to an ECMO on Friday.

Dr. Raju Sivaswamy, Vice President, Medical Services, SIMS, said, Vivekh had been put on inotropic support, to help the heart beat. But from about 2 a.m. yesterday, his health began to decline, and the blood pressure would not hold.

Resuscitation itself, after he landed in the hospital, took about 45 minutes. There is a condition called reperfusion injury that might occur after this pro-



cedure, and causes damage to tissues, when the blood returns to the organ. He could not survive this injury," he said.

The Hindu

"Service to the nation and courage" Celebrated at Prince Philip's funeral

LONDON (BBC) - The Duke of Edinburgh's "unwavering loyalty" to the Queen, service to the nation and "courage", was celebrated at his funeral held in London yesterday. Prince Philip's association with the Royal Navy and love of the sea was focused at the Windsor Castle ceremony.

But no sermon was delivered, in line with his wishes.

More than 730 members of the armed forces took part in the event, but there was a limit of 30 mourners at St George's Chapel, under Covid-19 rules.

The ceremonial royal funeral was broadcast on BBC One after the service itself observed a national minute's silence at 15:00 BST. Prince Philip died at Windsor Castle on Friday, April 9, aged 99.

His body was resting in the inner hall at Windsor Castle. His coffin was placed on a modified Land Rover that the duke himself helped to design, and carried in a procession the short distance to St. George's Chapel.

The funeral service was con-

ducted by the Dean of Windsor, with the Archbishop of Canterbury pronouncing the blessing.

The Dean of Windsor paid tribute to Prince Philip's «kindness, humour and humanity» and the «many ways in which his long life has been a blessing to us».

The funeral plans were modified to take into account public health guidelines. The funeral took place entirely within the grounds of the castle and the public were asked not to gather there or at other royal residences.

But the ceremonial aspects of the day and the service remained in line with Prince Philip's wishes and reflected his military affiliations and personal elements of his life. The 30 guests at the funeral wore morning coats with medals, or day dress, but not military uniform.

The Queen and duke's four children - the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, the Duke of York and the Earl of Wessex and - as well as their eight grandchildren - were in attendance, but none of their young great-grandchildren.

Duke of Sussex's wife, the Duchess of Sussex, is heavily pregnant and was advised by her doctors not to fly in from the US.

The other mourners included the children of the Queen's sister, Princess Margaret, and three of Prince Philip's German relatives - Bernhard, the Hereditary Prince of Baden; Donatus, Prince and Landgrave of Hesse; and Prince Philipp of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.

The funeral procession from the castle to the chapel was headed by the Band of the Grenadier Guards, the Major Generals party, and military service chiefs.

Nine members of the Royal Family walked behind the coffin, with Princess Anne and Prince Charles in the front row, followed by Prince Edward and Prince Andrew. In the third row, the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry were on either side of their cousin Peter Phillips.

The British Queen traveled with a lady-in-waiting in the state Bentley at the end of the procession.

Covid-19 deaths pass three million worldwide

The number of people who have died worldwide in the Covid-19 pandemic has surpassed three million, according to Johns Hopkins University. The milestone came the day after the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned the world was "approaching the highest rate of infection" so far.

India - experiencing a second wave - recorded more than 230,000 new cases on Saturday alone.

Almost 140 million cases have been recorded since the pandemic began. WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on Friday that "cases and deaths are continuing to increase at worrying rates".

He added that "globally, the number of new cases per week has nearly doubled over the past two months".

The US, India and Brazil - the countries with the most recorded infections - have accounted for more than a million deaths between them, according to Johns Hopkins University. Last week saw an average of 12,000 deaths a day reported around the world, according to news agency AFP. However, official figures worldwide may not fully reflect the true number in many countries.

Up until a few weeks ago, India appeared to have the pandemic relatively under control. Cases had been below 20,000 a day for much of January and February - a low figure in a country of more than a 1.3 billion people.

But then infections began to rise rapidly: Saturday saw a record set for the third day in a row, with more than 234,000 cases reported. - BBC

Nepal fires: "We saw huge flames coming towards our garden"

BBC - Nepal is seeing its worst wildfires in more than a decade, according to experts. This year's wildfire season has been worse than usual with more fires, burning longer. It has led to record levels of air pollution. Scientists think climate change may have made the forests "tinder dry". One eyewitness told BBC Minute she could see the fire approaching her house. - BBC

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DARLING MUMMY



DAISY DE ALWIS (nee COLOMBAGE)

We love you and miss you so much mummy.

Fondly remembered and Sadly missed by everloving children.

Sam, Chandra, late Noreen, Manel

"The Walauwa" Station Lane, Nugegoda.

THIRD MONTH REMEMBRANCE



Mrs Padmini Devendra Retired English Language Teacher

Demised on 19th January 2021.

Beloved wife of late High Court Judge Nandisena Devendra, dearly beloved mother of Harsha, Ransi and Samantha and mother-in-law to Anoja, Sunitha and Sarath, beloved grandmother of Sathi, Thisari, Rajani, Kisanga and Chathurika, great grandmother of 8 children.

A Dhamma discussion will be held on the 23rd of April, followed by a Sanghika Dana on the 24th April.

Tel. 0776300798

OBITUARY



Aswini Kumar Wijewardene

(PROPRIETOR KOHOMBE ESTATE DIV. 3)

Beloved husband of late Sita. Loving father of Dishni, Sandhya, Ramya, Ruwan (Prop/Planter) & Nirosh (Prop/Planter). Loving Father-in-Law of Susantha Senaratne (Senaratne Jewellers), Senadhi Pathirana (Middle East Airlines), Chandran Mendis (Canada), Tina & Arosha. Devoted Grandfather of Hansika & Thushan Premaratne (Japan), Senith, Senanya, Selinka, Senal & Navishka. Precious Great - Grandfather of Arina & Tanasha passed away peacefully.

Cortege leaving residence 9/3, 5th Lane, Ratmalana at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday 18th April 2021, for cremation at 5.00 p.m. at The General Cemetery Kanatte, Borella.

REMEMBRANCE

25 Years 20 Years

24.01.1924

20.04.1996



Mrs.

Margaret Paaris (Retired English Teacher) St. Anthony's College - Wattala

Mr. Manuel

Paaris (Retired Serviceman, Sri Lanka Artillery)

18.12.1914

18.04.2001

Beloved father-in-law and mother-in-law to late Mr. Daiva Moorthy.

Fondly remembered by youngest daughter Christable and Grandson Vidujith.

Obituaries

REV SISTER - PIA MARKUS - Safe in Arms of Jesus - Rev sister Pia Markus of sisters of the Holy Cross Convent Jaffna, dearly beloved daughter of late George Ernest of Ratnapura and late Mrs Ida of Matara, loving sibling of late Patience Perera, Rita Nissangarachchi, Anton Markus, sister-in-law of late Susantha, late Benedict and of Edna. Remains were laid to rest on 10th April 2021 after celebration of the Holy Mass at the Convent Chapel. Friends and relations please accept this intimation. 028575

APPUTHURAI - VELUPPILLAI - Age 109 (Retired Senior Assessor of Inland Revenue Department, Colombo). Beloved husband of late Rajalaxumy, loving father of late Yogeswary, Thirunavukarasu and Shanthini, expired on 13.04.2021 and cremation took place on 14.04.2021 at **General Cemetery, Borella.** 028810

PERERA - CHULANI ANTON - Beloved husband of Ira, much loved father of Viraj, stepfather of Lala. Brother of Godwin, late Mervyn, Sarath, Upul, Sharma. Remains will lie at 175, Elvitigala Mawatha, Rathmaldeniya Road, Moraketiya, Pannipitiya. Funeral service will take place on April 18th, Sunday at 3.30pm. Cortege leaves residence at 3pm for burial at **Borella Cemetery Kanatta.** 028903

WIJESINGHE - WIMAL (Retired Inland Revenue) - Beloved husband of late Lalitha, loving father of Naranjana, Ganga and Thilini, caring father-in-law of Ravindra, late Prianga and Janaka, beloved grandfather of Chathurya, Yasindu, Kalanaka, Chandula, Ithara and Nitesh, passed away. Remains will be at **101/1, Galle Road, Mount Lavinia,** cremation on 18th April (Sunday) at 4.30 p.m., Atthidiya Crematorium. 028907

WORLD

APRIL 18, 2021

India's Kumbh festival attracts big crowds amid devastating second Covid wave

HARIDWAR, April 17 (BBC) - This past week, as India grapples with a devastating second wave of the coronavirus, millions of devotees have descended on the banks of the Ganges river in the northern city of Haridwar to take a dip in the water.

Hindus believe the river is holy and taking a dip in it will cleanse them of their sins and bring salvation.

But the government of Uttarakhand state, where Haridwar is located, is facing heavy criticism for allowing the Kumbh Mela festival to go ahead amid a sharply worsening Covid picture. On Thursday, India reported more than 200,000 Covid cases for the first time since the pandemic began.

One influential Hindu congregation decided to opt out of the massive festival. "The Kumbh Mela is

over for us," Ravindra Puri, secretary of the Niranjani Akhada or congregation was quoted as saying in local media.

The decision came a day after Swami Kapil Dev, the head of another prominent congregation, died after being diagnosed with Covid-19.

It's unclear how many devotees at the Kumbh Mela have tested positive since the first day of bathing on March 11. But Haridwar's chief medical officer, Dr SK Jha, said more than 1,600 cases had been confirmed among devotees between 10 and April 14.

But there are fears that the numbers could be even higher, and that many of those who have returned home could have taken the disease with them across the country.

India has confirmed more than 14 million cases and 174,000 deaths from the virus so far. There had



been a sharp drop in case numbers in January and February, but with cases and deaths now rising again, hospitals across the country are re-

porting a shortage of beds, oxygen cylinders and drugs.

The uptick in cases did not discourage people from attending the

Kumbh Mela. Ujwal Puri, a 34-year-old businessman, arrived in Haridwar on March 9 armed with bottles of sanitiser, masks and vitamin pills.

Puri expected stringent Covid security checks. But he told the BBC he faced no checks at the airport or in Haridwar.

One of his photographs from the festival shows crowds at the banks, waiting to take a dip on one of the nights. Many people can be seen not wearing a mask or pulling it down to their chin.

"There was no social distancing," Puri said. "People were sitting cheek-by-jowl for the holy prayers in the evening."

He stayed at the festival for three days, he said, and took off his mask in public "only once to take a selfie with seers". "I left everything to God," he said.

When he returned to Mumbai, Puri locked himself in a room, he said, and got himself tested. "I live with my parents so I took all the care I could."

Facebook faces mass legal action over data leak



NEW YORK, April 17 (BBC) - Facebook users whose data was compromised by a massive data leak are being urged to take legal action against the tech giant.

About 530 million people had some personal information leaked, including, in some cases, phone numbers.

A digital privacy group is preparing to take a case to the Irish courts on behalf of EU citizens affected.

Facebook denies wrongdoing, saying the data was "scraped" from publicly available information on the site.

Antoin Ó Lachtnain, director of Digital Rights Ireland (DRI), warned other tech giants its move could be the beginning of a domino effect.

"This will be the first mass action of its kind but we're sure it won't be the last," he said. "The scale of this breach, and the depth of personal information compromised, is gob-smacking."

He added: "The laws are there to protect consumers and their personal data and it's time these technology giants wake up to the reality that protection of personal data must be taken seriously."

DRI claims Facebook failed to protect user data and notify those who had been affected.

The data leak was first discovered and fixed in 2019, but was recently made easily available online for free.

DRI said individual users who take part in the legal action could be offered compensation of up to €12,000 (£10,445) if it is successful - based on what it says are similar cases in other countries.

"If successful this could well set a precedent and open the door to further class action down the line," Ray Walsh, a digital privacy expert at ProPrivacy, told the BBC.

"Big Tech might then find that being made to compensate individual users is a strong reminder to work harder on privacy compliance," he added.

On Thursday, the Irish Data Protection Commission announced its decision to launch an investigation into the leak. It will assess whether any parts of the GDPR or Data Protection Act 2018 were infringed by Facebook.

In a statement about that inquiry, Facebook said it "relates to features that make it easier for people to find and connect with friends on our services".

It added: "These features are common to many apps and we look forward to explaining them and the protections we have put in place."

Biden backtracks on keeping Trump cap on refugees

NEW YORK, April 17 (BBC) - President Joe Biden has reversed course hours after signing an order to keep the number of refugees admitted annually to the US at Trump-era levels.

Biden drew ire on Friday as he held the cap at the historically low figure of 15,000, two months after he pledged to increase it to 65,500.

The White House later said Biden would raise the refugee cap next month.

Reports say Biden is concerned about letting in more people amid a record influx at the US-Mexico border.

UN figures indicate there are more than 80 million refugees worldwide, with 85% of them hosted by developing countries. The White House



said Friday's order would speed up refugee admissions to the US - since October around 2,000 people have been admitted under the program.

The order also changes the allocation of who is allowed in, with more slots being provided to arrivals from Africa, the Middle East and Central America, and an end to restrictions on resettlements from Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

But Biden - who vowed to raise the cap on refugees during his campaign - kept the maximum number allowed in annually at 15,000, a ceiling set by his predecessor as president, Donald Trump.

Biden stated the Trump-era cap "remains justified by humanitarian concerns and is otherwise in the national interest".

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the Democratic president's directive had been the "subject of some confusion" after the news

sparked outrage among aid groups, as well as from within Biden's own party. Senate Foreign Relations Chair Bob Menendez described the figure as "appalling low".

Ms Psaki blamed Biden's failure to deliver on the 62,500 figure that he announced to Congress two months ago on "the decimated refugee admissions programme we inherited".

Ms Psaki said Biden's order on Friday was meant to allow refugee flights to the US to begin within days.

The press secretary added: "With that done, we expect the president to set a final, increased refugee cap for the remainder of this fiscal year by May 15."

She did not specify a number, though she said "his initial goal of 65,000 seems unlikely".

Facebook Oversight Board delays decision about Trump's possible return

Facebook's Oversight Board has delayed its decision regarding former US President Donald Trump's possible return to Facebook and Instagram.

Trump was banned from Facebook in January after the Capitol Hill riots. The Board said the delay was due to the time it has taken to review over 9,000 public responses to cases.

A decision was originally due by April 21. In a statement on Twitter, the Board said it would make a decision "in the coming weeks".

The ruling will be the biggest decision the Oversight Board has had to make since it started taking on

cases last year.

The Board was set up to rule on difficult or controversial moderation decisions made by Facebook.

The 20-member committee, established by Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg, is often referred to as "Facebook's Supreme Court". It operates as an independent entity, although its wages and other costs are covered by the tech company.

The committee is made up of journalists, human rights activists, lawyers and academics.

The group has already ruled on nine cases including:

- a comment that seemed derogatory to Muslims - in a post from a user in Myanmar, removed for breaking hate-speech rules - was found not to be Islamophobic, when taken in context
- an alleged quote from Joseph Goebbels - in an old post reshared



by a US user, removed for violating policies on dangerous individuals and organisations - did not support Nazi ideology, again when taken in context

• a video about Covid-19 "cures" - referred to the board by Facebook - was a comment about French government health policy and would not lead people to self-medicate

• an Instagram post of eight photographs of breast-cancer symptoms should not have been removed - by Facebook's automated moderation system, only to be restored before the board's decision - for breaking adult-nudity rules

Hong Kong:

Jimmy Lai sentenced to 14 months for pro-democracy protests

HONG KONG, April 17 (BBC) - Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai has been sentenced to 14 months in prison after being found guilty of unauthorised assembly.

Lai, 73, was one of several activists in court who were earlier found guilty of charges relating to pro-democracy protests in 2019.

The founder of the Apple Daily tabloid is a fierce critic of Beijing.

Friday's verdict comes as the mainland is increasingly cracking down on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms.

Several other activists were sentenced on Friday for participating in two demonstrations, on 18 August and August 31, 2019.

They include veteran campaigner Martin Lee, 82, and lawyer Margaret Ng, 73, whose sentences were suspended.

Earlier this week, Lai's Apple Daily newspaper published a handwritten letter by him, sent from prison, which read: "It is our responsibility as journalists to seek justice. As long as we are not blinded by unjust temptations, as long as we do not let evil get its way through us, we are fulfilling our responsibility."

Lai was sentenced to 12 months for the August 18 demonstration and another eight months for August 31. However, the judge ordered for the



Pro-Beijing supporters have been celebrating the sentences

sentences to be served concurrently except for two months. Former lawmaker Lee Cheuk-yan was also jailed for both demonstrations.

The tycoon faces another six charges - two of which were imposed under the country's new National Security Law, which can carry a maximum

term of life in prison. It is possible that prosecutors could file further charges against him.

The law, implemented in Hong Kong by China last year, criminalises secession and subversion. Earlier this month, Beijing overhauled the territory's electoral rules to ensure more

loyalty to the mainland.

Some of the most long-standing and well-known activists were in the dock today. Except Jimmy Lai, all of them were elected legislators.

At 82, Martin Lee was the oldest defendant. Often called as the "father of democracy" in Hong Kong, he is also

the most senior barrister in the city.

The court was filled with their families, friends and supporters. Before the hearing started, some in the audience stood up, waved to the defendants and gave them a thumbs-up.

Jimmy Lai appeared to be calm during sentencing, even though he had been charged with two additional charges earlier today.

But one of the most striking parts of the hearing came in the speech delivered by Margaret Ng, a barrister who served as a lawmaker representing the legal profession for nearly two decades, after discharging her lawyer during mitigation.

Adapting a quote from Thomas More who was executed by King Henry VIII, she said: "I stand the law's good servant but the people's first. For the law must serve the people, not the people the law."

There was a round of applause from the audience after her speech. During sentencing, the judge said: "Actions have consequences for everyone irrespective of who they are."

Five of the defendants have to be sent to jail as they didn't get suspended sentences. When they left the dock, many in the audience waved and cried out, "Stay strong!"

The sentencing is part of a series of trials all relating to the large-scale pro-

democracy protests two years ago.

In 2019, protests culminated in the most tense wave of demonstrations in years, often ending in widespread violence between police and activists.

The pro-democracy campaigners were already found guilty of unauthorised assembly earlier this month.

Their defence team had argued that freedom of assembly is protected under Hong Kong's constitution, and that authorities had approved a demonstration which only then grew into the unauthorised march.

The prosecution argued that freedom of assembly - while granted in the constitution - was not absolute in Hong Kong. Lai is one of the most prominent supporters of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement - and faces separate charges under Beijing's national security law.

Estimated to be worth more than \$1bn (£766m), he made his initial fortune in the clothing industry and later ventured into media and founded Next Digital. Next Digital publishes Apple Daily, a well-read tabloid which is frequently critical of Hong Kong and mainland Chinese leadership.

In a local media landscape increasingly fearful of Beijing, Lai has been a persistent thorn for China - both through his publications and writing.

Rugby uncovers daughter of the East

Sri Lanka finds new discoveries in Batticaloa as the sport continues to be suppressed in the rest of the island

BY CALLISTUS DAVY

In a dramatic turn of events, what pompous Sri Lanka Cricket officials have failed to do, rugby has succeeded by making an invasion of the country's eastern province that its keepers contend has given the sport a new horizon at a time when it is being written off as a dead game for more than a year.

What has made Sri Lanka Rugby (SLR) go over the moon is that it had discovered a brand new ambassador in a former national women's cricket team member Ida Nobert Johnson, a native of Batticaloa and a true daughter of the east.

A onetime fast bowler, the dusky Johnson was a member of the Sri Lanka women's team at the T20 World Cup qualifier in 2013 and toured South Africa and has now given her word to rugby that she will do everything within her image and scope to promote one of the world's fastest growing sports among girls.

"It was a very interesting experience for me. I enjoyed the classroom sessions and then the opportunity to practice the skills that gave me the confidence. I'm excited to introduce rugby to girls schools in the near future," Johnson declared.

Her conversion from cricket to rugby took place when officials of Sri Lanka Rugby with the blessings of the Ministries of Sports and Education made a tour of Batticaloa last week looking for new followers at a time the game suffered a crippling blow when internal politics moved in to stifle the inter-club Sevens.

"I saw it in the eyes of the chil-



Sri Lanka women's cricketer Ida Nobert Johnson now turned rugby messiah

dren who came to learn rugby. It was fire power," said Sri Lanka Rugby chief Rizly Illyas. "This girl (Johnson) was a big find for us and we want her to be a leader, a coach and educator".

Illyas said he felt being at home at the other end of the country that he described as "neglected and unattached," from the rest.

"Sport unites a country and rugby can play a major part in that process to connect people. This is the platform," said Illyas who last month



School children in Batticaloa come together at a maiden rugby camp

world by-passed by many. The hunt for new rugby converts also raised curiosity among educationists and parents of the budding rugby players in a part of the country that has been adversely left to fend for itself.

But seeing the potential that lies in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka Rugby is hoping that it can entice and sustain new commercial partners in a region that they say has shown a desire for social change through sport.

Not only does Sri Lanka Rugby contend it has found a fertile ground in the east of the country, but also sees the potential for new commercial godfathers to enter the scene given the region's resources for agriculture, fisheries and leisure.

Illyas has a reliable and loyal commercial partner in a shipping and freight forwarding multinational company known as Expolanka Freight Logistics (EFL) that funds women's rugby.

Probably the first head of a major sports association to patronize

Batticaloa on a promotion mission, Illyas claimed they could start a junior rugby event within the next three months having received assurances from one of the region's most influential figures, former chief minister Sivanesathurai Chandranathan now the Co-Chairman of the Batticaloa District Development Committee and Dr Chandranathan Mahendranathan Ammani, the incumbent president of the Sports Association of the University Grants Commission.

Probably the first head of a major sports association to patronize

Dilshan to lead Australian club

Former Sri Lanka captain who led the Sri Lanka Legends team recently, Tillakaratne Dilshan has been named as captain of the Australian club team Mulgrave Cricket Club for the 2020/21 season.

Mulgrave Cricket Club plays in A Turf or Division 3, of Victoria's Eastern Cricket Association.

"Tillakaratne played for the club last season during its T20 campaign, helping us to the Grand Final and has been one of the finest players that Sri Lanka has ever produced, averaging over 40 in Test cricket, as well as being a former national captain." Mulgrave Cricket Club announced on Thursday.

"I'm excited to announce that I will take the reins as the captain for Mulgrave Cricket Club for the season 2020/2021.



Tillakaratne Dilshan

"I look forward to leading the club and play with the boys during the upcoming season," Dilshan said in a Facebook post.

He recently excelled at the Legends World Series leading Sri Lanka Legends, where he topped both the batting and bowling charts and winning the man of the tournament award in India.

Over 1000 badminton players to contest Summer Open in Nuwara Eliya

BY DHAMMIKA RATNAWEERA

More than a thousand badminton players are expected to take part in the All Island 'Summer Season' Open Badminton Championship that is scheduled to be held from April 20 to 27 at the Nuwara Eliya Municipal Indoor Stadium.

This will be a major event in the badminton calendar and already 1159 entries have been received for the event organised by the Central Province Badminton Association and Nuwara Eliya District Badminton Association.

According to the draw 1117 matches from 39 sections will be conducted in this eight day tournament.

The tournament will be more competitive with several leading shuttlers already having confirmed their participation. The national runner-up Rasindu Hendahewa, national doubles champion Buwaneka Gunatilleka and national



Buwaneka Gunatilleka national double champion



Chandrika de Silva former national champion

pool players Viren Nettasinghe, Chamath Dias, Ranthushka Sasindu who was the former National runner-up and Dumindu Abeywickrama are in the men's category.

Women's top ranked player Ashini Fernando, 2019 national

champion Dilmi Dias, former national champion the experienced Chandrika de Silva and promising players Chamudi Abeywickrama, Kavindi de Silva and Jananuwani Amanda are the key players in the women's category.

Sri Lanka Badminton has already and successfully conducted the National Badminton Championship and the recently concluded Mercantile inter-firm tournament that offered the much needed exposure for the players.

School cricket quarter finals on Monday

The quarter-finals of the Under-19 Inter-School Division I Tier A and B cricket tournament will commence on Monday.

Division One - Tier 'A'

Group X: Royal Colombo, Trinity Kandy, Gurukula Kelaniya, Wesley Colombo, D.S. Senanayake Colombo, De Mezenod Kandana.

Group Y: Mahanama Colombo, St. Sebastian's Moratuwa, St. Joseph's Colombo, St. Thomas' Matara, St. Benedict's Kotahena, St. Anne's Kurunegala.

Group Z: Richmond Galle, St. Anthony's Kandy, Nalanda Colombo, Prince of Wales Moratuwa, S. Thomas' Mt. Lavinia, Maliyadeva Kurunegala.

Quarter finals: April 19 at Mt. Lavinia (QF 1) Royal College vs Nalanda College

At Royal ground (QF 3) Trinity College vs St. Sebastian's

April 20 at Welgedara Stadium (QF 2) St. Anthony's College vs Mahanama College.

At D.S.S. ground (QF 4) St. Joseph's College vs Richmond College.

Semi-finals: April 28 at De Soya-

sa stadium Moratuwa and Surrey ground Maggona

Final - On May 1 at NCC

Tier 'B' Group X: St. Peter's, Mahinda Galle, Thurstan College, Moratu Vidyalaya, Dharmaraja Kandy, St. Aloysius Galle.

Group Y: Isipathana, Joseph Vaz Wennappuwa, Ananda Colombo, Maris Stella Negombo, Zahira Colombo, Dharmapala Pannipitiya.

Group Z: St. Anthony's Wattala, Devapathiraja Ratgama, Dharmasoka Ambalangoda, St. Sylvester's Kandy, Lumbini Colombo, St. Servatius Matara.

Quarter finals: April 21 at Galle Stadium (QF 1) St. Peter's vs Dharmasoka

At St. Peter's ground; St. Anthony's Wattala vs Ananda College

April 22; at DSS ground (QF2) Isipathana vs Devapathiraja

At St. Sebastian's ground Moratuwa; Mahinda Galle vs St. Joseph Vaz

Semi-finals: On April 25 at BRC and Thurstan College ground Colombo

Final: On May 2 at NCC (YK)

Women's chess next week

The second Sri Lanka Women's Chess Grand Prix 2021, one of the leading Women's Chess events in Sri Lanka, has been tentatively planned for April 24, 25, 26, 30 (evening only) and May 1 and 2 in Kandy by the Chess Federation of Sri Lanka (CFSL).

Participants will be informed of the exact dates in due course. The event is open to Sri Lankans and foreign players.

According to the President of the Chess Federation Luxman Wijesuriya, only the top women players will be eligible to participate and the event will be conducted on a round robin basis.

If entries exceed the anticipated number, two qualifying



rounds will take place culminating on a knock-out basis from the quarter-final stage. CFSL is offering cash awards of Rs 70,000, Rs 30,000, Rs 20,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 6,000 and Rs 4,000/along with medals and trophies for the winners.

Those who are interested in participating should send an email with the contact details to FIDE ID, Rating to chessfederations@gmail.com. (DR)



Cycle racers come under a dangerous ducking as a spectator throws water on them during a race conducted by the Wishwakalawa Sports Club in Piliyandala on Wednesday (Pic by Sulochana Gamage)

Rahula meet Lyceum in quarter-finals

The quarter-final matches in the Under-19 Inter-School Division II Tier A and B Cricket tournament will commence from today.

Division Two - Tier 'A'

Group X: Sri Sumangala Panadura, St. John's Panadura, Piliyandala Central, Galahitiyawa Central, Kalutara Vidyalaya, St. Peter's Negombo.

Group Y: Holy Cross Kalutara, Siri Piyarathana Padukka, Sri Devananda Ambalangoda, Anuradhapura Central, St. Sebastian's Katuneriya, Tissa Central Kalutara.

Group Z: Lyceum Wattala, Sri Dharmaloka Kelaniya, Rahula Matara, St. John's Jaffna, Vidyarthi Kandy, Karadeniya Central.

Quarter finals: April 18 at Darley Road (QF 4); Rahula College vs Lyceum International Wattala

April 21 at Lake View (QF 1): Sri Sumangala Panadura vs Piliyandala Central

At Nalanda ground (QF 2): Sri Dharmaloka Kelaniya vs Holy Cross College

April 22 at St. Anthony's ground Wattala (QF 3): St. John's Panadura vs Siri Piyarathana MMV Padukka.

Semi-finals: April 26 at Thurstan ground and De Soysa stadium Moratuwa.

Final - on April 30 at Surrey ground Maggona

Tier 'B': Group X Sri Jayewardenepura MV, Bandaranayake Gampaha, President's Kotte, St. Mary's Kegalle, Tholangamuwa Central.

Group Y: P. De S. Kularathne, Royal Panadura, Sri Rahula Kandy, Henegama Central, Kingswood Kandy, Kegalu

Vidyalaya. **Group Z:** Taxila Horana, Revatha Balapitiya, St. Thomas' Matala, St. Mary's Kegalle, Christ King Ja-Ela, Asoka Vidyalaya.

Quarter-finals: April 18 at Campbell Park (QF 1): Sri Jayewardenepura MV Kotte vs President's College Kotte

April 20 at Trinity ground Kandy (QF3): Bandaranayake MMV Gampaha vs Royal Panadura.

April 21 at Sebastian's ground Moratuwa (QF2): Revatha College Balapitiya vs P. De S. Kularathne Ambalangoda.

April 21 at Maliyadeva Kurunegala (QF 4): Taxila Central Horana vs St. Thomas' Matala.

Semi-finals: April 24 at Surrey ground Maggona and De Zoysa Moratuwa

Final on April 29 at BRC (YK)

'Big matches' commence in Kandy

BY HAFIZ MARIKAR

Big match cricket fever has hit Kandy and all the leading schools here are gearing up for the occasion.

The first big match will be the Battle of the Golds" between Wariyapola Sri Sumanigala (St. Paul's) College and Sri Rahula College for the 22nd time on April 24 and 25.

The two schools hope to play the match at St. Anthony's College ground at Katugastota.

The 62nd Battle of the Babes between St. Sylvester's College and Vidyarthi College will take place this time on May 7 and 8 at Pallekelle while the Trinity College versus St. Anthony's College match will be played in the month of May at Katugastota with the dates to be finalized.

The Dharmaraja College versus Kingswood College match for the 114th time has been fixed for May 14 and 15 at Pallekelle.

This is the second oldest big match in the country.

The other big matches are between Madeena Central College and Al Azhar College, Teldeniya National School against D.S. Senanayake College and Nugawela Central College versus Walala A. Ratnayake Central College

Did Mahela want chief selector to include uncapped spinner?

Sri Lanka's new cricket team selection panel headed by Pramodya Wickremasinghe announced a squad for the upcoming home two Test series against Bangladesh but there had been speculation that former captain Mahela Jayawardena had wanted a player, Prabhath Jayasuriya, to be included.

Jayasuriya is an uncapped left arm spinner who crossed over from Colts Cricket Club to the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) that Jayawardena played for.

The selectors had instead picked another uncapped left arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrema to replace Lasith Embuldeniya who has been ruled out following an injury he sustained on the recent tour of the West Indies.

Neither Wickremasinghe nor Jayawardena, who is currently away as coach of the Mumbai Indians at the IPL, could be reached for comment.

But a Sri Lanka Cricket official

said there was nothing fishy that took place over the selections.

"I don't see anything wrong if Mahela had made any inquiry on why a particular player was not selected. After all Mahela was a brilliant player with a clean track record. He must have inquired from Pramodya out of curiosity and does he not have a right to inquire as one of the best followers of the Sri Lanka team," said an SLC official who did not want to be quoted as team selections were not his business.

Sri Lanka Test squad:

Dimuth Karunaratne (Captain), Dasun Shanaka, Pathum Nissanka, Oshada Fernando, Lahiru Thirimanne, Dinesh Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Niroshan Dickwell, Roshan Silva, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga, Ramesh Mendis, Vishwa Fernando, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka and Praveen Jayawickrema.

Centurions star as Peterites and Thomians draw

Centuries by Nipunaka Fonseka from St. Peter's College and Ryan Fernando from S. Thomas' College ensured a draw in their traditional inter-school cricket encounter at Mount Lavinia yesterday.

The Thomians batting for the second time had to come to terms with a triple-trouble start, losing their captain Romesh Mendis as Danal Hemananda struck twice in the same over.

It was Peterite skipper Nipunaka Fonseka's day, as he made full use of the encounter firing an undone captain's classy knock of 101. He also compensated for the missed hundred of his team-mate Lahiru Chethaka and a tit-for-tat for Thomian Fernando's 103.

Fonseka was instrumental in gaining a lead of 41 and declaring with that.

The Peterites resuming on 51-2, soon lost their settled and opening batsman Shenal Boteju, ending a 73-run stand.

However, wicket-keeper bats-

man, Chethaka posted his 50. But before he could have a crack at a hundred, he was sent back for a superb 70 giving Yasiru Rodrigo his third wicket.

During his eight boundaries stay, he was also associated in another partnership, this time with his skipper Nipunaka Fonseka that produced 53.

The latter though, began to steer his side, during the process of notching up a responsible 50 and missed by a whisker of two runs of becoming the encounter's top-scorer.

S. Thomas': 227/7 dec (79.5) (Ryan Fernando 103, Shalin de Mel 35, Anuk Paliawadana 30, Mahith Perera 24, Niman Umesh 2/35, Jesuran Benjamin 2/41, Wanuja Kumara 2/80) and 59/6 (Shalin de Mel 26 n.o., Danal Hemananda 2/12)

St. Peter's: 268/5 dec (Nipunaka Fonseka 101 n.o., Lahiru Chethaka 70, Vinudha Liyanage 29 n.o., Wanuja Sahana 28, Yasiru Rodrigo 3/18).PS

Shakib says Sri Lanka Tests have less value

Shakib Al Hasan has said that he was misrepresented by the BCB about his decision to skip the Test series against Sri Lanka.

Shakib said that the two matches, which are part of the World Test Championship, aren't of much value as Bangladesh are at the bottom of the competition's points table.

He said that playing in the IPL would rather help him prepare better for the T20 World Cup, to be

held in India in October.

"These two Tests are our last matches in the World Test Championship so it is not as if we are going to play the final," Shakib told Cricfrenzy.

"We are at the very bottom of the points table. I don't think it makes much of a difference. The other major reason is that the World Cup T20 is in India later this year. It is a very important tournament."

Bangladesh batsmen strike form ahead of SL Test

BY CHRIS DHAMBARAGE

Bangladesh batsmen struck early form in their preparations for the Test series against Sri Lanka with solid performances on the opening day of their Intra-Squad match, which began at the Chilaw Marians ground in Katunayake yesterday.

After completing their quarantine period in Negombo, the Bangladesh team came out for the first time with a home-and-home game, which will be their only warm-up ahead of the two-Test Test series.

The openers Tamim Iqbal and Najmul Hossain found the conditions ideal for batting as they figured in a century opening stand with both batsmen completing half-centuries.

In fact, left-hander Tamim is a vital cog in the Bangladesh batting line-up as he looks to regain his form following a poor run during the home Test series against the West Indies.

Najmul Hossain (53), Saif Hassan (52) and Mushfiqur Rahim (66) also struck half-centuries as Bangladesh Red ended the day at 314 for six.

The first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka begins on April 21 at the Pallekele Stadium in Kandy.

CHIEF SCORES:

Bangladesh Red: 314/6
Tamim Iqbal 63, Najmul Hossain 53, Saif Hassan 52, Mushfiqur Rahim 66, Nurul Hasan 48) vs Bangladesh Green



Tamim Iqbal plays a shot (SLC pic)

Dominant Royal take major honours over Wesley

Royal College dominated their annual inter-school Under-19 traditional cricket encounter against Wesley College which ended in a draw at Reid Avenue yesterday.

After setting their opponents a target of 227 runs, Royal's bowlers put up a fine display to have

Wesley struggling at 114 for seven in their second innings.

CHIEF SCORES

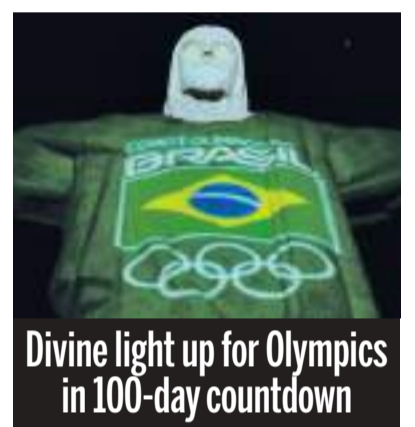
Royal: 188 and 138/7 dec (Sadhisha Rajapakse 33, Ahan Wickremasinghe 26, Dasis Manchanayaka 24, Denuwana Mendis 2/35,

Thenuka Perera 2/38)

Wesley: 99 (Anudith Wickremasinghe 25, Denuwana Mendis 21, Kavindu Pathirathna 3/21, Prashan Kalhara 2/21, Gishan Balasooriya 2/26) and 114/7 (Thenuka Perera 48, Semila Liyanage 22 n.o., Gishan Balasooriya 3/56) (YK)



Ahan Wickremasinghe of Royal College looks behind to see his stumps shattered in their match against Wesley College at Reid Avenue yesterday (Pic. by Chinthaka Kumarasinghe)



Divine light up for Olympics in 100-day countdown

The world's most famous statue of Jesus Christ was lit up with the Olympics logo and images of sporting arenas on Wednesday to mark 100 days to the Tokyo Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Hundreds of LED projectors were used to beam images onto the 98-foot (30-m) Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, according to media reports.

The show began and ended with the statue seeming to wear Brazil jerseys in yellow and green, the country's distinctive sporting colours, derived from its national flag.

Words like "discipline", "determination", "respect", "focus" and "courage" in Portuguese were also projected onto the statue against the backdrop of sporting arenas, from a swimming pool to a running track.

The Tokyo Olympics are scheduled to open on July 23, postponed from last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Murali named ODI cricketer of the 2000 decade



Ex-Sri Lanka spin bowling wizard Muttiah Muralidaran has been named as ODI cricketer of the 2000s in the 2021 edition of the Wisden Almanack, published on Thursday (April 15).

In marking 50 years of ODI cricket Wisden Almanack named its greatest players for each decade, where Murali has been named best in 2000s. Other selected cricketers are Viv Richards (1970s), Kapil Dev (1980s), Sachin Tendulkar (1990s), and Virat Kohli (2010s).

Ben Stokes has been chosen as Wisden's Leading Cricketer in the World for the second consecutive year while 44 year-old Darren Stevens of Kent has been named one

of the Five Cricketers of the Year, the fourth oldest in the publication's history. The Leading Woman Cricketer in the World was awarded to Australian batter Beth Mooney.

Stevens is joined on the list by West Indian all-rounder Jason Holder, Pakistani wicket-keeper batsman Mohammad Rizwan and two of England's new-look top order, Dom Sibley and Zak Crawley. Excellence in, or influence on, the previous English summer are the major criteria for inclusion on the list and no player can be chosen more than once.

The Leading T20 Cricketer in the World is West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard.

Stokes, who was ruled out of the

IPL earlier this week having broken a finger on his left hand, was chosen after a year in which he averaged 58 with the bat in Test cricket - better than any other player - and just 19 with the ball. He becomes the first England player to be named Wisden's Leading Cricketer in the World more than once following his award in 2020 for his World Cup and Ashes heroics.

Mooney, who was named the Belinda Clark Medallist at the Australia Cricket Awards in February, was the player of the tournament at the T20 World Cup last March - she scored an unbeaten half-century in the final against India and averaged 64 across the tournament - as well as

the leading run scorer in the Women's Big Bash.

In just five Bob Willis Trophy matches last season, Stevens took 29 wickets, performances which earned him a contract extension at Kent and confirmed his status as one of the best new ball bowlers in the country. He is the oldest player to be named one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year since 1933, when Leicestershire's all-rounder Ewart Astill won it. Stevens shows no signs of slowing down either, having scored a hundred in Kent's opening Championship game last week.

Pollard, the West Indian T20 skipper, was described as taking

"T20 hitting to new heights in 2020".

He scored 59 sixes across his T20 matches at a rate of one every 5.5 balls. His strike rate for the year was 199 and he averaged 53. He won two titles as well, the Caribbean Premier League with the Trinbago Knight Riders and the Indian Premier League with Mumbai Indians.

This year's Wisden is the 158th edition and it can rarely have reported on a year quite like the one just gone. The coronavirus pandemic meant there was less cricket in 2020 than there would otherwise have been and as Booth writes: "Cricket, like everything else, had its heart ripped out...It lost family and friends." (Cricbuzz)

42nd OBSERVER – SLT-MOBITEL

SCHOOL CRICKETER OF THE YEAR

"Recognizing talent, inspiring greatness"

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APRIL 18, 2021

Boys and girls prepare to waltz on stage

Chief Guest, former Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya

By **Dinesh Weerawansa**



42nd OBSERVER SLT-MOBITEL SCHOOL CRICKETER OF THE YEAR 2021
Recognizing talent, inspiring greatness.



The Mother of all Cricket Shows – the 42nd Observer Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel School Cricketers of the Year 2021, which every award winner, their proud parents and fanatic supporters are eagerly awaiting, will finally be held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in Colombo on Tuesday, starting at 5.30 p.m.

Gracing school cricketers' big day this year will be former Sri Lanka captain and ex-Chairman of selectors Sanath Jayasuriya, fresh after his last month's performance for Sri Lanka at the Legends World Cup final where he top scored for his team.

The organizers – Sri Lanka's leading English newspaper with the largest circulation the Sunday Observer and national mobile network provider Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel have left no stone unturned to see that this show will be a rousing one to beat all other shows and keep everyone talking till the next show like they have been doing since the inception.

As the Covid-19 pandemic hit all over the world early last year, all global activities came to a complete standstill. Hence, there was no exception in Sri Lanka as sports events too came to a complete stop after the Royal-Thomian Battle of the Blues encounter in mid-March last year. Ever since, there were no school cricket activities for a complete one year until last month.

With the Observer Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel School Cricketers of the Year going great guns uninterrupted for over four decades, a few other newspapers and sponsors teamed up to organize a similar school cricket award show. As the first and the pioneer in the business, we were more than happy to welcome those as the ultimate beneficiary of all those have been school cricketers.

But with the Covid-19 showing no mercy, all sponsors of those cricket award shows left their partners. Only SLT Mobitel stood strong with the Sunday Observer to exercise their corporate social responsibility. Hence, the SLT Mobitel and Sunday Observer became the only partners to honour school cricketers even when Covid-19 hit last year.

After Tuesday's awards ceremony for achievements during the 2019-2020 seasons, the 43rd Observer SLT Mobitel School Cricketers of the Year would continue to once again reward the 2020-2021 top performers towards the end of this year.

The show is not merely an awards ceremony. It has its own fun with music, dance and entertainment acts with the experience-sharing only speech by the chief guest.

Jayasuriya, who was adjudged the Player of the Tournament at Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup triumph, once again proved his grit when he played for Sri Lanka Legends after undergoing four operations including two knee surgeries and a heart stent. That's really a classic example only legends such as Jayasuriya could perform.

The evening's colourful entertainment will be performed by the cream of artists who are really the top of the pops now. Derana Dream Star 2020 winner Falan Andrea will lead the team along with ever-popular Randhir Witana.

Randhir began his professional music career as a member of the first hip-hop music group of Sri Lanka, Brown Boogie Nation. Later he collaborated with Sri Lankan hip-hop duo Bhatiya and Santhush featuring on their first hip-hop remix song Siri Sangabodhi.

In the early years of his career, Randhir collaborated with many popular young Sri Lankan artists, notably BnS featuring as a hip-hop artist on many of the duo's folk hop remixes.

Two other popular artists Tehani

Imara and Madhuvy Vaithialingam are among others lined up for the evening with Gayan Dance Troupe in attendance. The lively 150-minute show is coordinated by the leading event organizer Funtime under the direction of evergreen Imran Saibo.

When the huge operation is talked about, one cannot forget one of the main pillars that has been there always – Sri Lanka Telecom Group Chairman Rohan Fernando. His sporty background right from his school days at S Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia as a rower and his elevation to former Sri Lanka Rowing chief and Vice President of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka made us extremely comfortable to handle things at SLT Mobitel's 15th year as the principal sponsor.

Chairman of ANCL, President's Counsel W. Dayaratne has always given his fullest support to make this event a success. The ANCL director board - Director Editorial Dharma Sri Kariyawasam, Director Legal and Administration, Rakhitha Abeygunawardhana, Director Finance, Janaka Ranatunga and Director Operations, Canishka Witharana have been a tower of

strength towards this huge operation. The Sunday Observer's relationship with Mobitel (Private) Limited has always been smooth with its CEO Chandika Vitharana and day to day ground handling done by Mobitel's Senior Manager Jude Silva and ANCL's Channel Communication Manager Chanaka Liyanage.

ICC Chief Match Referee and former Sri Lanka captain Ranjan Madugale, the first ever winner of the Observer Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year in 1979, said he was delighted to see the smooth progress of the event. "Winning an award here is a lasting memory and I will treasure that moment forever," he said.

"Cricket moulds one's character and makes it a way of life to the individual concerned. Although the laws have changed from time to time to suit modern demands, one has to play the game within the laws because no one is greater than the game and its laws of cricket," he said while adding his compliments for the show.

Sri Lanka's World Cup winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga, who won the Observer Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year twice in 1980 and 1982, said it's a tremendous boost for a schoolboy when he is awarded a win here. You may go places and win many other awards at higher levels, but an award won at the Observer Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year event remains the most memorable in any cricketer's life," he said and added his best wishes for the latest event.

Schoolboy Cricketer 1979 Ranjan Madugalle Royal College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1980-82 Arjuna Ranatunga Ananda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1981 Rohan Buultjens St. Peter's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1983-84 Roshan Mahanama Nalanda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1985 Asanka Gurusinha Nalanda College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1986 Roshan Jurangpathy Royal College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1987 Rohan Weerakkody St. Joseph's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1988 Sanjeewa Ranatunga Ananda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1989 Kumara Dharmasena Nalanda College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1990 Marvan Atapattu Ananda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1991 Muttiah Muralidaran St. Anthony's College, Katugastota		Schoolboy Cricketer 1992 Sajith Fernando St. Anthony's College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1993 Naveed Nawaz D.S. Senanayake College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1994-95 Thilan Samaraweera Ananda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1996 Nimesh Perera St. Sebastian's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1997 Chinthaka Jayasinghe Dharmapala College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 1998 Pradeep Hewage St. Benedict's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 1999 Muthumudalige Pushpakumara Ananda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2000 Kaushal Weeraratne Trinity College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2001 Kaushal Lokuarachchi St. Peter's College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2002 Sahan Wijeratne Prince of Wales College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2003 Farveez Maharooof Wesley College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2004-05 Lahiru Peiris St. Peter's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2006 Gihan Rupasinghe Nalanda College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2007 Malith Gunathileka Ananda College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2008 Umesh Karunaratne Thurstan College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2009 Dinesh Chandimal Ananda College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2010-11 Bhanuka Rajapakse Royal College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2012 Niroshan Dickwella Trinity College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2013 Kusal Mendis Prince of Wales College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2014 Sadeera Samarawickrama St. Joseph's College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2015-16 Charith Asalanka Richmond College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2017 Nipun Ransika P de S Kularatne College		Schoolboy Cricketer 2018 Hasitha Boyagoda Trinity College	
Schoolboy Cricketer 2019 Kamil Mishara Royal College		Schoolgirl Cricketer 2019 Umesha Thimeshani Devapathiraja College Rathgama	

Madhuvy Vaithialingam



Imran Saibo of Funtime



Derana Dream Star 2020 winner Falan Andrea



Tehani Imara



Ever-popular Randhir Witana



Evergreen Clifford Richards and Sonali Perera - the proven combination for years



Gayan Dance Troupe - Wiwaha

IMPACT

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APRIL 18, 2021

PORTUGUESE ERA Dark chapter in Sri Lanka's history

BY SENAKA WEERARATNA

I wish to respond to the article published on a social media platform (April 06, 2021) under the caption 'Was Portuguese proselytisation ruthless as portrayed?' by P.K. Balachandran, as I find the contents inaccurate, misleading and contrary to well established historical facts.

The writer Balachandran relies on Sir James Emerson Tennent, Colonial Secretary from 1841 to 1850, and his book Christianity in Ceylon (John Murray, London, 1850), to make the assertion that the Portuguese proselytisation efforts were benign and harmless, and if there had been any lapse or transgression somewhere that was due to a lapse on the part of a local official.

Portuguese Captain - Generals extended favours, partiality and if there was any state assistance to the converts to Christianity, that was because it was their common religion.

Balachandran quoting Tennent says:

There is no proof that compulsion was resorted to by them for the extension of their own faith or violence employed for the extinction of national superstitions. (By national superstitions" he meant the other faiths).

The probability is that the priests and missionaries of the Portuguese were content to pursue in Ceylon the same line of policy and adopt the same expedients for conversion which had already been found successful by their fellow laborers on the opposite continent of India."

Tennent is further quoted as saying both in India and Ceylon, the cultural tools used by the Catholic missionaries had proved to be more effective than coercion and violence.

Another reason for the preference for cultural tools was that the Portuguese missionaries in India and Ceylon could not count on the support of the Portuguese State apparatus which was necessary to use coercive methods.

The amount of assistance from civil power, on which the Roman Catholic clergy could rely, did not ordinarily extend beyond the personal influence of the Captains-General at Colombo," Tennent says and adds that if at all there was State assistance these were favours and partiality exhibited by successive Governors to all who were willing to conform to their religion."

Comment

Balachandran contradicts his observations based on Tennent in this article with Balachandran's own observations on Portugal's reign of Terror in a previous article where he had based himself on Prof. P. V. J. Jayasekera's book: Confrontations with Colonialism Vol:1 1796-1920 (Vijitha Yapa, 2017).

See How Lankan Buddhists won the battle against proselytisation" http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2020/11/23/how-lankan-buddhists-won-the-battle-against-proselytization/ (Lankaweb - November 23rd, 2020)

Since Tennent published his book 'Christianity in Ceylon' in 1850, there has been extensive studies done both in Sri Lanka and overseas, and particularly in India on the criminal methods that Portugal employed to conquer and convert native populations to Christianity.

Balachandran should have double checked the points made by Tennent by comparing them with the research of scholars like Queyroz, Fernao de, (The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon), C.R. Boxer, Tennakoon Vimalananda, Tikiri Abeyasinghe, (Portuguese Rule in Ceylon 1594 - 1612), Paul E. Peiris, G.P. Malalasekera, among others.

Portugal introduced the Catholic Inquisition, which began in Spain and spread all over Europe, to the Portuguese colonies, including Ceylon, in its Empire in Asia. The most notorious of all them is the 'Goa Inquisition'.

In Europe, the Goa Inquisition became notorious for its cruelty and use of torture. Voltaire wrote: Goa is sadly famous for its inquisition, which is contrary to humanity as much as to commerce.

The Portuguese monks deluded us into believing that the Indian populace was worshipping the devil, while it is they who served him."

European entry into Asia

The European entry into Asia, commencing with the Portuguese in the 16th century, was driven by two principal factors, namely the aim of colonising Asian countries for purpose of trade and exploitation of natural re-

sources, and converting the inhabitants of these lands to Christianity.

The Portuguese had as one of its primary aims the propagation of the Christian faith in the newly 'discovered' lands of Asia, including Sri Lanka (called 'Ceilao' by the Portuguese) and the realisation of this aim was accompanied by steps taken to suppress wherever possible all other religions extant in these lands namely Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

Crown Patronage of missionary activity in the East

The Portuguese authority to spread Christianity in the East was derived from the Papal Bulls issued by the Popes namely Calixtus III, Nicholas V, Alexander VI and the Pope's Treaty of Tordesillas (in 1492), which divided the newly 'discovered' lands between Spain and Portugal, and imposed on the rulers of these countries the duty of propagating the Christian faith. The Western part of the world was allocated to Spain and the Eastern part to Portugal.

To the Portuguese the Christianisation of newly 'discovered' lands was a State objective. The Portuguese Crown maintained the entire ecclesiastical establishment in the East.

The Doctrine of Padroado (jus patronatus established by the Papal Bulls of 1514) provided the authority for missionary work to be in the hands of the Portuguese Crown in areas where Portugal claimed political rights.

The noted historian C. R. Boxer says "The conviction that Portugal was the missionary nation above all the others in the Western World - Alferes da Fe, 'standard bearer of the faith' as the poet - playwright Gil Vicente boasted - was widespread and deeply rooted among all classes".

Royal despatches addressed to Vice-roys, Governors and Bishops began with these words (or words to that effect) in the opening sentence "For as much as the first and principal obligation of the Kings of Portugal is to forward the work of conversion by all means in their power"

The Padroado has been loosely defined as a combination of the rights, privileges and duties granted by the Papacy to the Crown of Portugal as patron of the Roman Catholic missions and ecclesiastical establishments in the regions of Africa, Asia and Brazil.

The Padroado Real or Royal patronage of the Church overseas was one of the most cherished prerogatives of the Portuguese Crown. It was to become the cause of bitter disputes between Portuguese missionaries and other Roman Catholic powers.

Diogo do Couto, the Portuguese Soldier cum Chronicler says in his sixth book 'Decada' (1612) that "The Kings of Portugal always aimed in this conquest of the East at so uniting the two powers, spiritual and temporal, that the one should never be exercised without the other".

Father Paulo de Trindade, the Franciscan Chronicler, writing in his 'Spiritual Conquest of the East' at Goa in 1638, says "the two swords of the civil and the ecclesiastical power were always so close together in the conquest of the East that we seldom find one being used without the other: for the weapons only conquered through the right that the preaching of the Gospel gave them, and the preaching was only of some use when it was accompanied and protected by the weapons".

It is in the exercise of the Padroado Real that we see the close collaboration between the Church and the State in the promotion of Christian missionary activity in conquered lands.

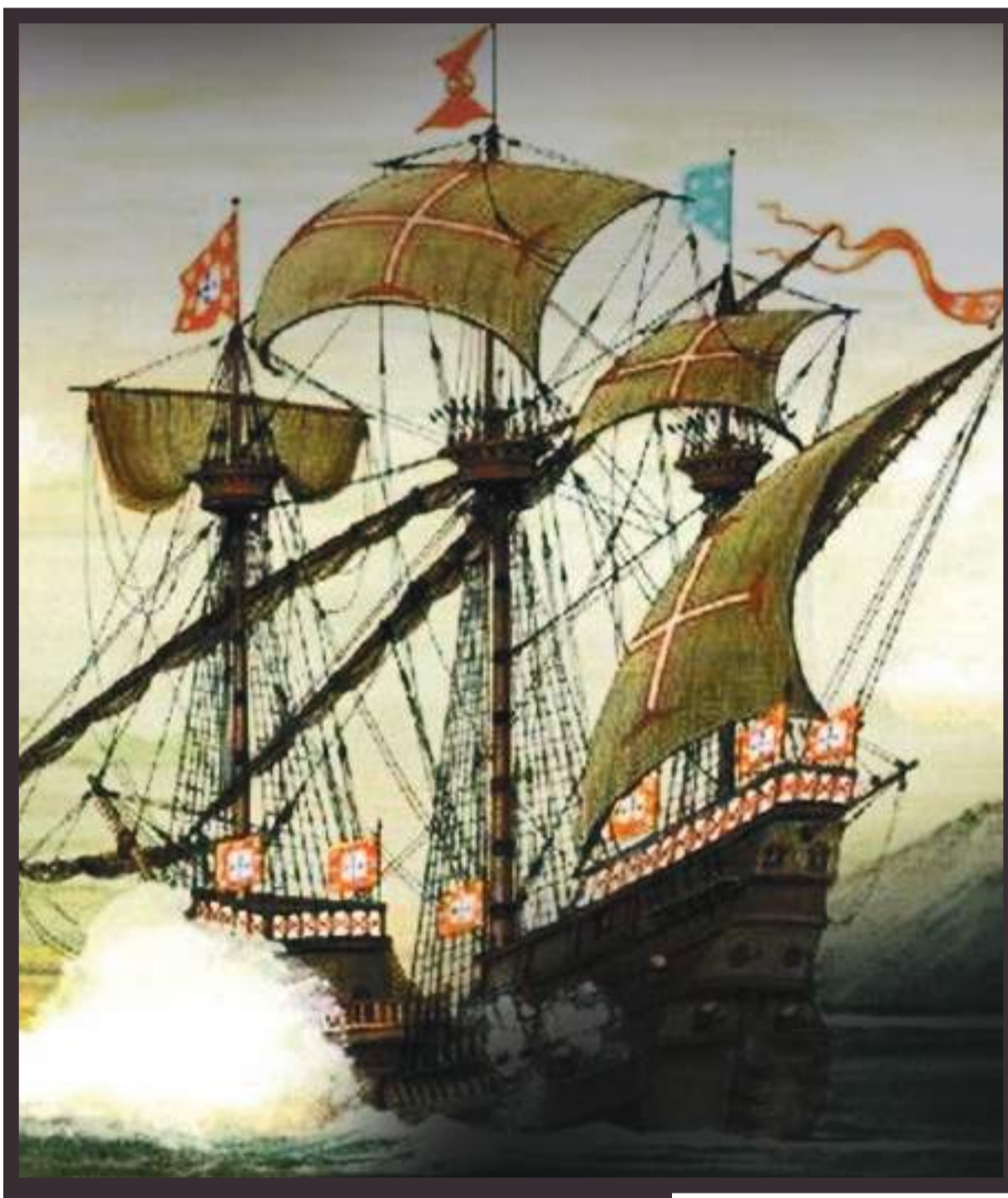
An important component of this relationship was the doctrinal position of the Papacy, which was vigorously upheld by the Church that 'temporal possessions were occupied unlawfully by the infidels' in conquered lands and that these 'should be allotted among the faithful'.

There was an inter-locking policy of temporal and spiritual objectives where benefits flowed to both the Vatican and Portugal.

Verdict of historians on Portuguese rule in Ceylon

Learned Historians and commentators now generally regard the arrival of the Portuguese in the year 1505 as the beginning of the Dark Age in the history of Sri Lanka.

The Portuguese through a policy of cunning statecraft and ruthless terror were able to govern the coastal areas of the island for most of the next 150



THE PROBABILITY IS THAT THE PRIESTS AND MISSIONARIES OF THE PORTUGUESE WERE CONTENT TO PURSUE IN CEYLON THE SAME LINE OF POLICY AND ADOPT THE SAME EXPEDIENTS FOR CONVERSION WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN FOUND SUCCESSFUL BY THEIR FELLOW LABORERS ON THE OPPOSITE CONTINENT OF INDIA."

years, until the Dutch replaced them in 1658.

The Rajavaliya describes the entry of the Portuguese to Sri Lanka thus: - "There is in our harbour of Colombo a race of people, fair of skin and comely withal. They don jackets and hats of iron, rest not a minute in one place but walk here and there. They eat hunks of stone and drink blood."

Several noted historians and commentators have expressed their indignation over the methods employed by the Portuguese during their period of dominance in the following words:

Sir James Emerson Tennent

Sir James Emerson Tennent refers to the Portuguese conduct in Sri Lanka in these terms-

"There is no page in the story of European colonisation more gloomy and repulsive than that which recounts the proceedings of the Portuguese in Ceylon.

Astonished at the magnitude of their enterprises, and the glory of their discoveries and conquests in India, the rapidity and success of which secured for Portugal an unprecedented renown, we are ill-prepared to hear of the rapacity, bigotry and cruelty which characterised every stage of their progress in the East.

They appeared in the Indian seas in the three-fold character of merchants, missionaries and pirates. Their ostensible motto was amity, commerce and religion. Their expeditions consisted of soldiers as well as adventurers, and included friars and chaplain majors. Their instructions were to begin by preaching, but, that failing, to proceed to the decision of the sword."

Paul E. Peiris

The historian Paul E. Peiris observes: They found in Ceylon a contented race, and a fairly prosperous country, and it is melancholy to reflect that they succeeded in producing nothing but chaos.

friendly historians, seems too revolting to be true.

Babes were spitted on the soldier's pikes and held up that their parents might hear the young cocks crow. Sometimes they were mashed to pulp between millstones, while their mothers were compelled to witness the pitiful sight before they themselves were tortured to death. Men were thrown over bridges for the amusement of the troops to feed the crocodiles in the river, which eventually grew so tame that at whistle they would raise their heads above the water in anticipation of the welcome feast."

Methods employed for conversion and suppression of non-Christian religions

The Portuguese used a number of methods in their pursuit to convert people to Christianity and suppress non-Christian religions prevailing in territories under their control. They can be distinguished as follows:

(i) Carrot and Stick Policy

The Portuguese used a carrot and stick policy in converting people living in the immediate vicinity of Portuguese strongholds particularly along the West Coast of India and in the lowlands of Sri Lanka.

ii) Enactment of harsh and oppressive laws

The Portuguese lawmakers enacted a large number of harsh and oppressive laws with the aim of putting a stop to the public practice of non-Christian religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam in territories controlled by the Portuguese.

These laws were followed by a number of other decrees designed to favour converts to Christianity with Portuguese patronage.

The Ecclesiastical Councils at Goa laid down rules for missionary work and these rules had a significant bearing on the conduct of Christian missionary work in Sri Lanka, particularly after 1567. The pioneer Ecclesiastical Council of 1567 in adopting a series of decisions were guided by three main considerations, namely:

a) All religions other than orthodox Roman Catholicism were intrinsically wrong and harmful in themselves. b) The Crown of Portugal had a fundamental duty to spread the Christian faith and the power of the State must be utilised to support the work of the Catholic Church c) Conversion of non-Christians into

Christianity must not be made by force, for nobody comes to Christ by faith unless he is drawn by the love of God.

The third consideration stated above on non-use of force was negated by several other decisions of the Council which had the sanction of law by virtue of promulgation of a Vice-regal decree at Goa in December 1567. This decree enacted among other things the following decisions of the Ecclesiastical Council:

All heathen places of worship in Portuguese controlled areas should be demolished.

All non-Christian clergy, teachers and holy men must be expelled.

All their sacred texts such as the Koran should be seized and destroyed wherever found.

Buddhists and Hindus must be prohibited from visiting their respective temples in the neighbouring provinces under the control of other rulers.

The transit passage of Asian pilgrims to these places of worship must be prohibited.

The celebration of non-Christian weddings and religious processions must be strictly forbidden.

Conversions from either Islam to Buddhism to Hinduism, and vice-versa were not allowed but the conversion to Christianity from other religions should be permitted and encouraged.

Every married man should be required to practise monogamy irrespective of his religion.

Non-Christian orphans should be required to be handed over to Christian guardians or foster parents and then baptised by Catholic priests.

Christians should be forbidden to live together or lodge with non-Christians

2. In addition the Portuguese authorities are held as responsible for the following repressive practices, which if adopted today would, be tantamount to explicit violation of human rights and cultural genocide:

In Goa nominal rolls were made of Hindu families and they were forced in groups of fifty to visit local churches and convents and listen to Christian sermons on alternate Sundays.

Fines were imposed on a sharply escalating scale on those who made attempts to keep away from complying with these obligations.

There was official and legal discrimination against non-Christians who were denied public employment.

On the other hand public offices and remunerative posts were reserved for Christian converts only and where there was no such reservation the latter group was favoured.

Buddhist Temples, Hindu Kovils and Muslim Mosques were systematically destroyed by the Portuguese conquistadors and Roman Catholic churches were built on or near the sites of such destruction.

Incomes drawn from the lands belonging to Buddhist Temples, Hindu Kovils etc. were channelled to support and maintain Roman Catholic Churches and missionary educational institutions.

The penal laws against the public practice of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam which, were enacted after 1540 in some of Portugal's eastern possessions were inspired by laws that had been adopted in European countries against the practice of what the then European rulers considered as 'heretical' or 'subversive' forms of Christianity.

For example, the treatment of the Roman Catholics in England during the period of the Reformation, the exclusion of Jews from public life in many parts of Europe, and the torture and burning at the stake of 'witches' were based on such penal laws enacted during the period of the Christian Inquisition.

C.R. Boxer observes: "It is obvious that these discriminatory and coercive measures, if they did not actually force people to become Christians at the point of the sword, made it very difficult for them to do anything else.

Deprived of their priests, teachers, holy men, sacred books and public places of worship, not to mention the free exercise of their cults, it was confidently expected by the legislators of 1567 that 'the false heathen and Moorish religions' would wither and die on territory controlled by the Portuguese Crown".

(Continued on page 19)

'NAVY IN DAMAGE CONTROL DRIVE'

'Underwater Gallery Nilwella'



It is no secret that the destruction of the marine ecosystem due to natural and human activities deals a deadly blow to the fishing industry, tourism and ornamental fish industry making an adverse impact on the country's economy.

As a result of illegal fishing practices, the use of explosives and discharge of harmful pollutants into the marine environment by certain individuals, the coral reefs and natural marine environment required for fish breeding are now dangerously poised, threatening the survival of fish species as well as other marine life. In this backdrop, the Sri Lanka

Navy is constantly on the lookout for the adverse effects of such human activities on the marine environment and is committed to protecting the marine biodiversity around Sri Lanka and passing on its resources to the future generation, through the implementation of various projects.

Underwater

Accordingly, the Sri Lanka Navy embarked on the creation of underwater museums with the primary objective of attracting tourists, creating artificial reefs for coral growth and creating an artificial breeding environment for fish.

As the opening gambit of the project, the first underwater museum created by the Navy was declared in the seas off Galle Harbour on April 05th 2020.

As of now, the underwater museum, which was created in the Galle Harbour, has become an ideal breeding ground for fish and other marine life and the very fact bears testimony to the success of the first phase of the project.

Taking the initial step forward, the Navy also created the country's second underwater museum off the coast of Sandy Bay, Trincomalee on 10th July 2020.

As an extension of this well-intentioned project, the third (03rd) underwater gallery fashioned by the Sri Lanka Navy was open as 'Underwater Gallery Nilwella' off Nilwella in Matara on April 10th 2021. Apart from the scuba divers, this attractive site, located at the depth from four to 10 meters, can be easily viewed by snorkeling and plying by dinghies with glass bottoms.

As this neck of the woods is known to be a popular tourist destination, a number of local and foreign diving enthusiasts often come here to be mesmerized by the exquisiteness of underwater.

Bringing a whole new experience to the avid divers, this latest 'Underwater Gallery Nilwella' had been created, as an attractive prospect of the country. This underwater gallery includes sculptures, structures and other artifacts moulded by eco-friendly materials, discarded vehicles and aircraft as well as artificial substrates specially designed for coral growing.

Models

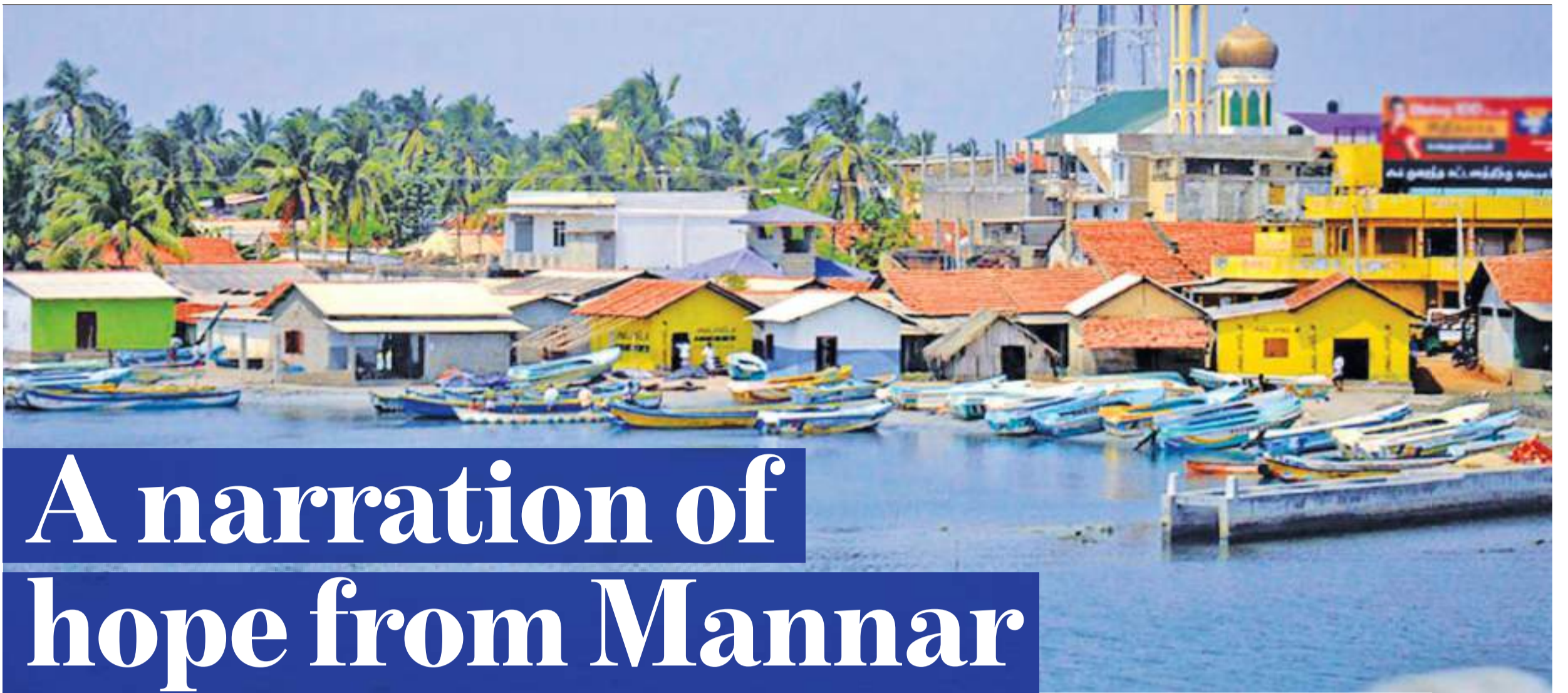
Some of the models here are made by small pieces of rock so that seaweeds and corals can easily grow on those surfaces and create an environment conducive to natural fish breed-

ing in a very short period of time.

The Sri Lanka Navy was well supported by a number of state and private organisations in carrying out this major project.

In addition to this project, Sri Lanka Navy, under the guidance and directives of Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne, scuttled some aging fleet units in the sea last year, to create artificial fish breeding grounds and attractive diving sites for local and foreign divers. Moreover, the Navy has indulged its passion for a coral replanting project to conserve corals which are considered as an important underwater ecosystem.





A narration of hope from Mannar

By
Frances Bulathsinghala
in Mannar



My meeting with 20-year-old Jathusha Khristhuras who lives in Andankulam in Mannar with her teenage brother and widowed mother took place during a detailed visit I undertook to the North in the past fortnight covering Vavuniya, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Jaffna and including some of the Jaffna islets.

Visiting the remotest of areas affected by long years of terror means that one has to hear pleas of people still struggling for basic needs.

With the international community being party to intriguing agendas and obsessed with fault finding of the Government and totally lacking a realistic understanding of the actual needs of the Northern people, there is no visible current international assistance to the government for providing livelihood, entrepreneurship training, and completing the housing related assistance begun in 2010. Tamil politicians might as well be in another planet working out their own agendas and seemingly purposely avoiding the solving of the actual day to day issues of people. The Northern people do not ever see them.

Teenagers

Yet amidst these difficulties the innocent enthusiasm and hope of children and teenagers shine through like the sun.

The parents of these children scout the terrain for labour work, the only option they have (even this is scarce) and are happy if they get at least two day's work a week, earning about Rs. 500 a day which will provide at least one meal, a day.

Nevertheless, with the miraculous quality of youth, children and teenagers seem unscathed by the hopelessness that engulfs the older generation.

The parents - most of the time it is one parent, as there are many war widows and women headed households in the North, starve themselves

giving whatever food and small luxuries such as money for tuition classes, books and clothes for their children.

The singular hope these parents cling to is that their sons and daughters will do well academically and never fall into the trap of deviant terrorists and those who champion such dastardly causes overtly and subtly. Their hope for their children is within this country.

With a few distractions and a simple way of life, the children focus fully on their education, nurture immense hope of a better future. They are very successful in diverse fields such as arts, general knowledge and sports, making use of whatever meager opportunity they get.

The story of Jathusha Khristhuras is one of these success stories in the making. The featuring of her story is part of an ongoing series of writings in this paper, highlighting diverse individual narrations from different parts of the North, especially those of youth and young adults. This is aimed at assisting in the reconciliation and human development process begun by the Lankan government from May 2009.

What is exceptional about Jathusha is the unbridled enthusiasm. This quality stands out against the bleak backdrop she is in like a super bright beacon of light against a cloudy horizon. I speak to her at her house, watched by her 83 year old sick grandmother sleeping on a bed in the small verandah.

Jathusha only falters ever so slightly when speaking of her father, a doctor, who had died in the war when she was five years old. Quickly collecting herself she puts her dreams into words. Her dreams are many! She wants to be a journalist in the print media in the English medium. She also wants to be a Tamil language news reader. But she says she may later also want to read news in English and even Sinhala! She explains with almost palpable dynamism, how she watches and replicates the manner of television news presenters.

She says she knows how to deliver the news over television and carry out TV programs 'just like them.' She then



Twenty year-old Jathusha with her mother and brother

says she has started writing a sketch of a newspaper article in English on how she wants to improve her hometown Mannar.

She did not know who to send it to but was confident 'someone will come' and now that I am here she assuredly says she will post her finalised article to me shortly. I marvel at both her spoken English which is perfect and her use of the subconscious confidence and auto suggestion far better than any psychologist.

Pittance

This youth is a remarkable achievement for her mother, Khristhuras Pathima who carries heavy bricks or walks miles searching for a work and digs the earth for 10 hours a day on other people's land for a pittance. Having no agriculture land of their own (the dilemma of many Northern people) Jathusha's mother does not even have the recourse of cultivating vegetables to help at least their day to meals.

However, the mother does not burden her daughter by telling her woes to her but allows Jathusha to dream and plan and use every minute of the day to further herself in knowl-

edge. Like most single mothers in the North heading households, she thus provides the child the needed mental space for the developing of unfaltering hope in her great dreams.

Jathusha's perfect English knowledge has been achieved by enrolling in a private academy in her district providing Diploma level qualification in the English language. This is achieved by the family by skipping meals.

Jathusha is also keen to learn Sinhala and says all youth of her age too has the same interest but that her school has no Sinhala teacher although they sit for the Sinhala exam.

She asks me if I can write about this and get it corrected. I tell her yes but that she should also write about it and she in all earnestness takes a sheet of paper and starts taking copious notes on 'Sinhala officials' she can talk to about it. I say 'well you can also speak to the President' and her response is a nonplussed 'yes. I have no doubt she will achieve this too and inform President Gotabaya Rajapaksa of all the social issues in her district.

About the article she wants to write about; on how she wants to im-

prove her home town she asks for my address to post the article. I realise she has no computer, a luxury few youth in the North have, and therefore do not highlight this factor but simply ask her to post the article.

She quickly does some kind of mental calculation and says maybe she can buy a computer in a year if she works very hard 'as a news presenter and journalist.' Her belief is so strong that in her mind she has already achieved her goal. She says she has followed an IT course and that 'although she has no computer' that she knows how to use one very well.

With a wide smile she says she will be getting the licence for her scooter the next day.

She does not own a scooter or even have one on loan but she has under gone the training and is getting the license in the hope that she will 'one day soon own one.' Her brother Kishon is still continuing his education and she wishes to take the burden off from her mother in being the main breadwinner of the family.

I am supposed to be interviewing her but it turns out the other way around as she asks me how she can

get a university degree specialising in Mass media and notes down every bit of information I give her. Her GCE Ordinary Levels she has passed very well having studied at the Andankulam Maha Vidyalaya and has sat for her Advanced Level Exam in the Commerce stream at the Mannar Sithiviniyaha Hindu college scoring good results.

Privileged

She loves reading and says she wants to read 'every kind of book' in all languages used in Sri Lanka and covers themes ranging from science to geography!

"There is so much of knowledge in the world. I want to know all of them. I want to use this knowledge to make the world a better place and Sri Lanka a very nice place," she said with a vision rare among the privileged youth of Lanka whose main preoccupation is leaving their motherland for foreign countries.

Before I leave she telephones her best friend, Sebastian Sainica living close by that has got university entrance in the Bio Science stream at the Kelaniya University and readying to come to Colombo. Both of them are apparently the highest academic scorers in school.

I speak to this youth also and listen to her excitedly saying how she will next week go to the university hostel in Kelaniya and how she looks forward to having 'Colombo friends.'

As I conclude my meeting what is clear is that the fulfillment of the hopes of Sri Lankan children and youth, wherever they are, whether in the battle scarred North or poverty scarred South, is not just the duty of the government but that of every single Sri Lankan.

It is supporting these next generations that will ensure Sri Lanka does not fall to diverse traps and machinations aimed at destabilising the country.

NOTE: This article is part of a series that will shed light on the needs and aspirations of the North-Eastern citizens of Sri Lanka, recovering from 30 years of terror.

Portuguese era...

However, it must be noted that the application of these laws in Portuguese controlled territories varied significantly according to the time, place and circumstances and more importantly according to the disposition of the arch bishops, Vice-roys and Captain - Generals (in Sri Lanka) whose decision-making powers were immense.

It must be stated that the great abuses that took place in almost all of the Portuguese overseas mission - fields, including the use of force and farcical baptism of ignorant converts, did not proceed unnoticed and without a protest by some members of the Catholic Clergy living in Portugal.

C.R. Boxer refers to a petition to the Portuguese Crown drawn up at Lisbon in February 1567 by the Bishops of Ceuta, Lisbon, Tangier, Angra, Portalegre, Lamego and the Algarve protesting against the use of unsavoury methods by Portuguese missionaries overseas.

Boxer then adds that it was unlikely that seven leading Portuguese prelates would have made such grave allegations unless they were quite certain of their facts).

iii) Strategic conversions

The Portuguese missionaries were aware that some of the methods employed to convert Buddhists and Hindus into Christianity were dubious and indefensible.

But nevertheless, they still persisted with rough and ready methods of conversion in the knowledge that though the first generation of converts were likely to be superficial Christians, their descendants would become de-

vout Christians in due course of time.

The Bishop of Dume, the pioneer prelate of Goa, was aware of these outcomes and he is reported to have said in 1561 that those who remained inside Portuguese territory and accepted baptism rather than be expelled for refusing to become Christians could hardly be expected to become good Christians 'yet their children will become so'.

C.R. Boxer comments 'This is, in fact, exactly what happened' and he compares this position to a similar situation that occurred in Europe where the descendants of the Saxons, Teutons and Slavs, who in many instances were forcibly converted to Christianity, later became ardent Christians.

iv) The Ruler and the Ruled must be of the same faith

Both, the Catholics and Protestants in Europe readily accepted the principle that the Ruler and the Ruled should belong to the same faith, which is expressed in Latin as follows: 'cujus regio illius religio'.

Conversion was no longer a question of faith. The conversion of kings was sought because their subjects were expected to follow as a matter of course. The Portuguese wrote to their King in Lisbon as follows: "If the King became a Christian that would be sufficient for all to become the same: this your Lordship can take as certain, for such is the nature of this people"

The Portuguese missionaries in Sri Lanka launched a concerted campaign to achieve this result when they forced the grandson (Dharmapala) of King Bhuvanabahu to renounce his Bud-

dhist faith and adopt Roman Catholicism as his religion.

The noted historian P. E. Pieris observes that "the king's change of religion was a grave political blunder: the social organisation of his people was based on Buddhism, and his defection could not fail to estrange them from him, the more so when the revenues of their most venerated shrines were being diverted towards Christian propaganda. It was not long before the Portuguese priests guided his counsels, Portuguese officers controlled his army, and Portuguese names were the fashion at Court."

v) Forcible conversion of orphans
The use of force was permitted in a series of royal and vice-regal decrees in respect to the conversion of Hindu orphans in Goa and Bacalm in India.

Legislation enacted both at Lisbon and Goa specifically authorised the use of force in removing orphans from the custody of their relatives, guardians, or friends.

They were then taken to the College of Sao Paulo of the Company of Jesus in Goa and baptized, educated and catechized by the Fathers of the College.

It is quite possible that similar measures were adopted in respect of Buddhist and Hindu orphans living in Portuguese controlled territories of Sri Lanka.

vi) Gun boat policy
The Portuguese used force or the threat of the use of force as a tool in their conversion policy. The writings of Jesuit priests who served in Catholic missions in various parts of Portuguese

controlled territories in Asia substantiate the adoption of this practice.

Padre Alexandre Valignano, a well-known Jesuit priest who organised the Jesuit mission in Asia, observes that some of the indigenous people in the East were incapable and primitive in respect of matters concerning God, and consequently reasoning would not make an impression as force.

He laments that it would be difficult to establish Christian communities 'among the Niggers' and more difficult to preserve such communities except in areas under Portuguese rule, or in regions where the Portuguese power could be extended such as the sea coast through the use of the Portuguese naval fleet that can 'cruise up and down, dealing out favours and punishments according to what the people there deserve'.

Padre Alexandre Valignano adds that the striking success of the missionary work of Francis Xavier on the Fishery Coast was primarily due to the deliberate mixture of threats and blandishments.

The Portuguese fleet lying off shore had the capacity to deprive people of their fishing and sea borne trade and using this power Xavier influenced a large number of people living in coastal areas to embrace Christianity.

C.R. Boxer observes that 'gunboat' policy methods were widely prevalent among the Portuguese missionaries in the East and adds that the term 'Christian militant' was no figure of speech.

vii) Exploiting Buddhist injunctions against taking away of animal life

The Portuguese were well aware of the Buddhist reverence for all forms of life and the strict injunctions against the taking away of any form of life including animals whatever the need.

Kill and eat is not a Buddhist tenet. On the contrary Christianity takes the view that animals and plants were created by God for the benefit of humans and therefore man is free to kill animals and eat their flesh.

Christian missionaries in predominantly Buddhist and Hindu lands achieved their most notable successes among the fisher castes and classes.

Those who engage in vocations involving the breeding of animals for slaughter as well as destruction of animals, which are considered as Wrong Livelihoods, attract deep-seated prejudice in conventional Buddhist and Hindu societies.

The Portuguese missionaries exploited this position and converted a large mass of fisher folk, 'who found acceptance and enhanced self-respect in Christianity.'

viii) Similarities in outward manifestation of the Roman Catholic Church vis-a-vis Buddhism and Hinduism

The use of images, incense, rosaries, orders of monks and nuns, colourful ceremonies and Churches etc. created a superficial similarity in the outward manifestation of Roman Catholicism vis-a-vis Buddhism and Hinduism, and in turn these similarities also contributed towards making the transition from the indigenous religions to the Roman Catholic faith relatively more convenient.

In contrast the austere practices of the Protestant religions failed to impress the mass of the common folk in territories under Dutch and later British control.

Conclusion

Historian J.H. Elliot says: The history of the Portuguese intrusion into the Indian Ocean is an epic of ruthless savagery. "In the bloody annals of the European conquest of Asia, Portuguese barbarity stands out. Indeed, it apparently was an essential component of the Portuguese's strategy to subdue the local populations. This use of terror will bring great things to your obedience without the need to conquer them." Afonso de Albuquerque, chief strategic mastermind behind the Portuguese expansion into Asia and intermittently known as the 'Terrible' or the 'Great,' wrote to the King of Portugal in 1510 after the sacking of the Indian city of Goa.

I haven't left a single grave stone or Islamic structure standing," he boldly claimed. In another letter to the king, he wrote: I tell you, sire, and the one thing that's most essential in India: if you want to be loved and feared here, you must take full revenge."

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Digitisation and modernising trade business and consumerism for the citizen

By
Sarath
Wijesinghe



The World is fast changing despite the dangerous Covid-19 pandemic, leading Sri Lanka towards success through education on Vistas of prosperity and spender in order to digitalise the system and modernise the natural knowledge based on human capital to suit the 21st century on the theme 'Towards a perfect education that enriches wisdom and experiment' on steps taken by the program and vision of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Introducing new platforms and programs coupled with education, development and other subjects including trade and international issues - a leap frog from this program for the future.

It is salutary news that Sri Lanka is keeping pace with the modern developments even during the festive season easing citizens pressurised with pandemic and economic hardships due to economic downturns around the world. It is indeed salutary that digitalisation and modern international platforms are utilised in combating 'Covid-19' and development strategies including in agriculture which is the topic of the article today.

The festive season and prices of consumer items

The festive season is here and the talk of the town is the prices of consumer items and the legal framework which has not still been settled on trade, business, competition and prices of items in demand.

There was a news item by Minister Bandula Gunawardena that the Consumer Protection Act of 1979 will be amended when in fact it is repealed by the Consumer Affairs Authority Act no 9 of 2003, on March 17 2003 with other existing legislation amalgamating the current act which is a combination of Australian, Canadian modelled system with basic English principles partly embodied in the act and not a properly effective piece of legislation in action today.

It is the duty of officials to brief the Minister on updates on legislature when making such important public statements which are the basis of current and future changes on legislature, when the Minister again claims to change current old and outdated legal structure to be proactive, modern and applicable for the current developments.

The Minister has quite correctly stated that the current legislation is outdated and is a 'toothless lion' needing drastic changes and vigour with modern changes on the digital age with new international platforms and developments in line with the changes happening world over.

Act No 9 of 2003 changed the existing pattern and structure of successful concept of price control still in force in the United Kingdom to the current system of regulations of trade also based on competition law and modern commercial law concepts, which has not yet been understood by successive regimes that attempted to implement the concept introduced by Lalith Athulthudali, then Minister of Trade who introduced the legislation with the best of intentions which was unfortunately unsuccessful on implementation.

Undisputedly, change of the CAA Act is badly needed and the CAA during successive Chairmen have attempted to do so with no success.

Drastic changes necessary

This is not the time for immediate major changes of the law, and the best is to give time for a complete and

comprehensive study in the law and practice with international trade and developments which are now interwoven. What is news today is the controversy over coconut oil, paddy and rice prices, alleged sugar scam, and rising cost of living due to price rise of every consumer item that CAA has miserably failed to answer.

How the price structure operates in Sri Lanka is very interesting. Trader can sell at any reasonable price provided if it is of good quality and of quality health standards in order to provide the price mark is exhibited on the show room cage for the citizen to clearly see, whereas under the previous legislation control of prices Act 173 (which is repealed) price mark was strictly adhered to on conditions on price control legislation with price control system.

Then what is the maximum price? In the current price regime and the fluctuation of the prices of paddy, rice, sugar, coconut etc are issues confronted by the consumer which is bit hard to understand to follow. It is operative under S/18 of the act when the Minister and the Authority can determine the wholesale and retail price if the consumer item by a Gazette notification with the condition of 18(2).

No manufacturer or trader shall increase the retail for wholesale price of any goods of and services specified under subsection (1) except with the prior written approval of the authority. This is not effective or straight as the price control procedure which is working well in UK which is repealed here in 1979.

Attempts have been made to change the consumer law on previous occasions and today we have to be extra cautious due to the modern trends, introduction of new international platforms and changes due to digitalisation process which is ever growing with the mobile penetration of 100 per cent of the population and the developments on the knowledge an practice on learning when village children climbed water tanks for WIFI and the villager got used to WhatsApp for the payment of water and electricity bills through the network of computer centres at every junction.

A good trend ever increasing indeed! We have to take note of all international trends and changes in framing if any legislation or rules on consumerism in future, School teachers conducted online classes with the help of their computer literate children - our future scientists.

No end to Covid-19 soon

Covid-19 has changed the entire marketing developments and life of the ordinary citizen including students and the working class. There is no guarantee that the Covid-19 will end or a timeframe to end thereby we have to live on hopes and be prepared for any eventuality, so that future planning is near impossible.

Sri Lankans proved themselves to be adaptable to any adverse conditions or situations when facing Covid-19 and hardships as consumers. Prices of consumer items are going up with it in addition to many other considerations which effects the consumer in all fronts, with food being the main consideration.

Food that is available should be reasonably priced and of quality as required by Section 7 (a) (b) (c) and (d) which states that it is the duty of the Authority to see that consumer is provided with goods and services not hazardous to the consumers (Section 4) protect against unfair trade practices, adequate access to goods and provide redress against exploitation.

All this has to be implemented by regulatory powers in part two of the Act. Anti-competitive practices are dealt with in the Consumer Affairs Council also engaged in research and procedure on air trade practices.

Covid-19 also has melded the attitudes of the citizen with better relations with the trader consumer, and the regulator, for the trader and in-



dustrialist to be fair and the consumer to be smart, sharp and careful to have the ideal combination of fair trader, alert consumer and able regulator.

The consumer must change his/her attitude to be simple and smart to ascertain a) when to purchase, b) where to purchase and how to purchase items available. Consumer items to be purchased with required quantities and well planned for the day or week giving priority to health and quality.

Fruits should not be purchased from long term stalls and imported fruits and vegetables should be avoided when we have such great varieties, for example Banana in UK has only one variety which is available with not much taste when we have so many varieties at very reasonable of taste and quality.

Fresh vegetables and fruits could be purchased cheap in markets. Cola should not be consumed at any cost, which is poisons and expensive. Why consume bottled water in plastics bottles which can be poisonous and unhealthy, when we can have boiled and cold water in glass bottles which is cheap and healthy.

When you purchase consumer items it is worthy to note the best would be Sathosa. When non-perishables can be stored and it is a good idea for the family to plan out the week or month as an exercise to save and be healthy. During online purchase can be practiced which can extended to clothes and other consumer items for convenience and safety.

Now that the entire lifestyle has changed due to Covid-19, it is time to be prepared to go through it for an unspecified period with changes of future plans. Needless to state that all precautionary measures are to be followed to the last word for a long-term solution and a healthy, stable and happy life with the family.

Bogus sales, congestion and presents to family

The consumer should be aware of rights, duties and the expectations from the trader and the industrialist. It is the duty of the trader to give the consumer dignity, quality goods, and services at a reasonable price indicated on the rack or the showcase.

The consumer has the right to complain to the CAA or a branch office which you will have access form 1919 system, or personal complain to the CAA office or a branch.

Telephone and written complaints are accepted and the CAA is prompt on complaints by the consumer who the CAA and the trader considers as top priority.

Consumer need not be hesitant to question or complain and it can be

done in a friendly manner as it is your right to do so. Bogus sales are plenty and the consumer should use common sense in purchasing very cheap items with hidden charges.

It is advisable to take your own time in selecting the goods as it is your money that you are parting with. Consumer should know the basic needs, rights and duties and expectations from the trader to be a satisfied consumer.

When you purchase electric and electronic items one should be careful of the make, quality and the condition you may not be conversant with when you have to be careful on the warranty documents/cards and specially the paragraphs in small letters in a language not known to you.

It is advisable to demand for a receipt for which you are entitled to and you can request more details on the receipt. Some traders will encourage you to give on credit on hire purchase schemes, and you should be careful in signing documents on conditions with small letters or in a language not known to you, and giving your personal information.

It is advisable to seek the advice of a known family member generally conversant with trade practices. Always ask for the visiting card and other details of the trader and trading names with contact numbers. It is a joint effort of trader, consumer, regulator, and industrialist for a better consumer regime and a fair-trading regime.

Especially during the festive season be extremely careful of the 8000 drug addicts on the road in Colombo waiting for preys which can be dangerous. Always be in touch with security forces and loved ones during exposure to the traders and public.

Quality of consumer items and consumer organisations

The trader is bound to give items of quality to the consumer and finding the quality is always an issue unless it is tested by the standard bureau or tests by a group of consumers.

It is imperative for the consumers to be a member of one or more consumer organisations which is very forceful in other parts of the world. In the United Kingdom, the consumer organisations are very powerful and the trader is obliged to be consumer friendly based on the famous adage that consumer does no wrong and always correct.

Consumer Affairs Authority is expected to assist, monitor and encourage consumer organisations as powerful groups though less powerful compared to UK and other parts of the world.

Then what about the rice prices,

adulterated coconut oil, consumer items of inferior quality, and hiding a storing the consumer items refusing to sale are offence for prosecution.

In UK and the West, the returned items are accepted but sadly not in Sri Lanka, when you can exchange it and when you need to change or return. Consumer organisations should agitate for this right with the help of CAA.

Modern trends on trade practices

The quality of goods, services of food and consumer items are substandard, and of inferior quality due to lack of supervision and regulation by the CAA and other regulators such as TRCEL insurance, and Trade Ombudsman, public health inspectors, local councils, health department, and many statutory bodies.

With advancement of technology Sri Lankans are at the doorsteps of digitalisation with mobile phones in everybody's hand (100 percent of the population) and computer literacy of 40 percent that is ever increasing? Younger generation is now armed with excellent computer skills and able to use credit cards, advanced banking methods, and engaged in modern technology via face book and other social media platforms for day-to-day office with computer centres at every corner on the road used by the adults.

However, in Sri Lanka online shopping is not practiced often as in the United Kingdom where 40 per cent of the consumer items are purchased online when the practice is being fast used in Sri Lanka too.

Sri Lanka appears to be ready for a leap frog with the advanced applicability of modern technology and day to day transactions and day will not be too far when the majority of the population makes its purchases online.

'Uber' a worldwide digital application is catering to millions of people worldwide including Sri Lanka. These technologies are expanding to blow drying to food chains when majority of consumer population purchases online.

'Uber' - a main digital application catering to millions of customers worldwide including Sri Lanka these techs are expanding to bring blow drying and food items to door steps which will revolutionise online purchasing further.

Digitalisation of education has commenced by setting digital classrooms which equips students and teachers with laptops and tabs. How do you make digital regimes fairer in Sri Lanka with outdated regulator CAA with fast developments on technology? We watched on the television an impressive digital classroom at

'Thurstan College' and we understand the trend is fast spreading. Are we in the digital age or in the door steps are the issues to be resolved today.

Digitalisation in the world is fast spreading with adverse effects shedding billions of jobs with no strategy from the state and the leaders of the private sector to find alternate arrangements to use them as innovators as in Israel.

The digital marketplaces are thriving in the West which has a foothold in Sri Lanka and the potential is very interestingly limited changes of lifestyles due to innovative changes making life easier. However, these changes include the risk of health other unexpected and undesirable changes in the economy.

Will Sri Lanka be affected by the ripple effect or to what extent it will invade Sri Lanka is a matter of time Digitalisation developments depend on the vision considering the mobile and internet user are young.

Experts predict saturated digital market in Sri Lanka in 10 years with innovative smart cities in line with Israel Hong Kong and UAE when 40 percent of the global population is online with 750 million global internet users, Sri Lanka will be finding it difficult to join the world out of necessity ad compulsion. Chinese multinational company 'Alibaba' started by an English Teacher in Hangzhou is the biggest retailer with 100 British brands and with 440 million active clients which is also protected by the UK government could be considered as a guide line for our digital introduction.

It is time to encourage and promote our young entrepreneurs with the vision in the Israel youth on innovation taking them up to the world standards on innovation.

Dhammika Perera, who is supposed to be the richest man in Sri Lanka who bought 'Singer' recently said in Colombo that he has increased the business of Singer by 38 percent after taking over and introducing online business and has observed that online trend was settling to a mixture of online and storage stores worldwide, again indicating the uncertainty of world business trends at successive speed.

Challenges and way forward

Digitalisation, modernisation, trade and consumerism are interconnected and interwoven with one another in the present context, connected and depending on each other. Trade and consumerism is a part and parcel of the life and digitalisation and modernisation are complementary.

The world is ever changing with challenges, especially with Covid-19 pandemic when village bravely faced by using WhatsApp to make payments, children climbed water tanks for WIFI and teachers were guided and trained by children for distance teaching on line are proof that Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans are adoptable to any challenges.

Invasion of international digital platforms to Sri Lanka is inevitable and we have to be ready to accept and meet challenges without changing ourselves culturally and age-old traditions and habits we lived with.

Consumerism is not an alien concept to us when we had the Badulla 'TAM' in 1857 AD, with instructions to the consumer and trader along with other 4000 'TAMS' found on excavations, to show our past glory and education on the subject.

Therefore, it is time for us to give and interpret the correct meaning on consumerism to have the balancing livelihood of consumer, trader, regulator and the industrialist, in return the citizen to be happy and contented.

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The writer is the former Chairman Consumer Affairs Authority, President's Counsel, former Ambassador to UAE and Israel, President Ambassadors' Forum

Covid-19 variant can still infect vaccinated people - Israeli study

BY JAIMY LEE

A coronavirus variants may put people who have been vaccinated at higher risk of breakthrough infections, though U.S. health officials questioned some of the wording used in the preliminary research.

These types of cases are called "breakthrough infections," which occur when someone who has completed their Covid-19 vaccination later gets sick from the virus.

The preprint, which was published on Friday and has not been peer reviewed, gained attention over the weekend after it said that the B.1.351 variant was more likely to infect people in Israel who had been

vaccinated with Pfizer Inc.'s PFE, +1.16% Covid-19 vaccine, compared with other strains of the virus.

There are several documented variants of concern thought to be easily transmissible, including the B.1.351, first identified in South Africa; the B.1.1.7, first detected in the U.K.; and the P.1 out of Brazil.

The researchers identified eight cases of breakthrough infections caused by the B.1.351 variant and 134 cases of the B.1.1.7 variant out of the roughly 400 people included in the study who had tested positive for the virus during or after the vaccination period. The control group of unvaccinated people oddly had only one case caused by B.1.351.

"Our results show reduced effectiveness against the [South African] variant only in a short window of time (7-13 days post-second dose) since all the breakthrough cases we saw were in this time frame," Adi Stern, a professor at Tel Aviv University and one of the co-authors, said in an email. "However, once again the caveat is that our sample size is small and this requires further research."

When asked about the study, federal health officials on Monday downplayed the accuracy of the findings.

"That preprint, as it were, was about as confusing as you possibly could be," Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Joe Biden's chief medical advisor, told reporters during a White

House briefing. "It made it seem like you were more likely to get the [B.1.]351 if, in fact, you were vaccinated against the mRNA. That wasn't the case. If you were going to get infected with anything, you would get infected with the more difficult variant, which was 351. That doesn't mean you have a greater chance of getting it."

Pfizer directed questions about the study to the authors.

What we know so far about vaccines and variants

Fauci said that clinical data so far indicates the mRNA vaccines developed by Pfizer and BioNTech SE BNTX, +6.12%, as well as Moderna Inc. MRNA, -0.10%, still provide protection against B.1.1.7, but vaccine ef-

ficacy is thought to drop against the B.1.351 variant, which is a less common strain of the virus at this time, at least in the U.S.

Both mRNA vaccines had very high efficacy rates in Phase 3 clinical trials, with each reporting rates around 95%, though the trials were conducted last fall, before two of these new variants had been detected. The real-world effectiveness rate for both of these vaccines is thought to be closer to 89%, according to at least one preprint study published by the Mayo Clinic in February, but that is still considered a very strong rate of protection against the virus.

Here's what we know — and don't know — about 'breakthrough

infections'

While getting Covid-19 shots may dramatically lessen the possibility that someone will become infected with the virus, breakthrough infections for the vaccinated are still possible, especially with these new, more infectious variants of the coronavirus circulating throughout the world.

Moderna last month said it will begin clinical trials, in partnership with the National Institutes of Health, on a vaccine that specifically aims to protect against the B.1.351 variant. Pfizer is likewise running trials for a booster shot and a new vaccine specifically targeting the South African variant.

Semi-finalists found in MCA 'G' division

Unbeaten Hayleys Group 'B' along with Pyramid Wilmer, Abans Group and Zillion Systems advanced to the semi-finals, in the 10th Stafford Motor Co. sponsored, 'Honda' Trophy MCA 'G' division 25-Over League Tournament 2021.

In the quarter finals Hayleys 'B' scored a hard fought two wickets win with two deliveries to spare over A. Baur & Co. Pyramid Wilmer scored a comfortable 50 runs win over Orient Finance. Abans Group edged out Aitken Spence by 13-runs and Zillion Systems scored an impressive five wickets win with three overs to spare over Hilton Colombo Residences.

The semi-finals will be played April 24 and 25 at the MCA ground where Hayleys 'B' will meet Pyramid Wilmer and Abans Group will take on Zillion Systems.

Results (all quarter-finals):

Hayleys Group 'B' beat A. Baur

A. Baur: 135/9 (25) (Pradeep Sampath 37, Rajendran Dinesh 25, Sahan Nanayakkara 3/15, Tashik Perera 2/22, Mahesh Deepal 2/31)

Hayleys 'B': 139/8 (24.4) (Gihan Gunathillaka 27, Mahesh Deepal 20, Damitha Jayaratne

4/26, Chandima Janaka 2/17, Dinesh Chandimal 2/28)

Pyramid Wilmer beat Orient Finance

Pyramid Wilmer 176/6 (25) (Malintha Peiris 61 n.o. Lasith Fernando 58, Sampath Dharmasiri 2/23)

Orient Finance 126 (21.1) (Methusha Wijethilaka 31, Ruvin Leelarathne 48, Umedha Madushan 3/24, Suboda Lakmal 3/37, Chandimal Chanaka 2/28)

Abans Group beat Aitken Spence

Abans PLC 180/5 (25) (Oshen Nimroda 64, WV Danushka 32, Dinesh Rangana 23, Lakshitha de Silva 21 n.o.)

Aitken Spence 167/8 (25) (Thilan Nugawela 48, Sisindu Weharatne 38, Ravindu Wijeratne 22, Dilan Muthuthanthri 2/13, Dinesh Rangana 2/26)

Zillion Systems beat Hilton Residences

Hilton Colombo Residences 142/5 (25) (Kevin Joseph 51 n.o. Kevin Jayamanne 20 n.o. Diniru Wijesekera 20, Chathuranga Silva 2/17)

Zillions Systems 145/5 (22) (Nilupa Peiris 47, Chathuranga Silva 28, Jaan Fernando 28, Jaan Fernando 28, Ashan Saputhanthri 2/21, Joseph Jason 2/37)



Jockey Vivek rides Western Wind to win the Governor's Cup

Western Wind blows up the rest, carry away Governor's Cup

In spite of heavy underfoot conditions, a thrilling and fitting finale was scripted to the RTC Governor's Cup 2021 when Western Wind, ridden by jockey Vivek-knot stole the limelight and beat two of the best fillies - Alcazaba and Spirited Touch - to clinch an enthralling win at the Racecourse in Nuwara Eliya this week.

The event was delayed when a sudden downpour occurred during the Governor's Cup which happened for the first time in its history of nearly 150 years. Yet, the horse race loving public, who gathered in large numbers, remained at the venue to witness the race.

Western Wind took the lead from the setoff in the Class 1 1800metre race for the prestigious silverware, which is now 145 years old. The field of nine runners went past the legendary Grandstand, once at the start and then the culmination, which forced all spectators on their feet.

Jockey Vivek made the owner Gamini Jayaratne proud to claim a stunning victory from Alcazaba, who looked threatening in the final two furlongs.

Reigning title holder Spirited Touch fell back to third position after jockey J. Chinoy navigated Alcazaba to the fore from the rear, looking threatening as usual and almost regaining her lost form as a two-time Governor's Cup winner.

Eventually Western Wind sealed the win by three lengths from Alcazaba, who was four lengths ahead of Spirited Touch. The win by Western Wind helped the Jayaratne Stables regain the Governor's Cup after five years after the coveted title went to the hands of Edwards Stables thrice and Fearless Stables and Stud Farm once each.



Gamini Jayaratne and his wife Chamari, the owners of the horse Western Wind that won the Governor's Cup



Glittering, the winning horse of the Mayor's Cup with its owner from Edwards Stables along with jockey J. Chinoy and trainer SD Mahesh

Prior to the grand finale jockey Vivek gave his stable masters their first win with the RTC Queen's Cup steering Another Ace to an inspiring win in the race for Class 2 horses.

This was the third successive

year that Jayaratne Stables secured the RTC Queen's Cup. When the 2000 metre race was at its end with two furlongs remaining, Star Scholar and Silver Streak were battling out to finish ahead of one another, but Vivek made a sudden breakthrough from the outside to clinch a thrilling and uncertain win to give Hasanga Jayaratne his only win in the RTC Governor's Cup 2021.

Glittering, ridden by jockey J. Chinoy and owned by Edwards Stables, made another stunning finish to win the RTC Mayor's Cup powered for Class 3 horses in a 1600 metre race. Glittering pipped out Vigorous, ridden by S.D. Janaka, by a whisker as Olive, ridden by jockey Aneel, finished third by ten lengths.

Fearless Stables and Stud Farms completed a double in the Vegibest International Cup with Honorious and Torpedo making it a home-and-home battle in the Class 4 race of 1400 metres.

Jockey Aneel eventually steered Honorious to a win by half-a-length from Torpedo, ridden by local boy K. Sanjeewan. Jockey J.

RESULTS

Sports Ministry Challenge Cup for Class 5 Horses 1400m

1. Miss Ivory (K. Sanjeewa/Ko-salaSenaratne)
2. Waiting for Glory (K. Vaibhav/Hasanga Jayaratne)
3. Goldie Girl (J. Chinoy/Edwards Stable)

Vegibest International Cup for Class 4 1400m

1. Honorious (Aneel/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)
2. Torpedo (K. Sanjeewan/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)
3. Zulu Fantasy (J. Chinoy/Edwards Stables)

RTC Mayor's Cup for Class 3 1600m

1. Glittering (J. Chinoy/Edwards Stables)
2. Vigorous (S.D. Janaka/Ajantha de Soya)
3. Olive (Aneel/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)

RTC Queen's Cup for Class 2 2000m

1. Another Ace (Vivek/Hasanga Jayaratne)
2. Silver Streak (L. Dayalan/Ramsis Peter Fernando)
3. Star Scholar (R. Vaibhav/Gamini Jayaratne)

RTC Governor's Cup for Class 1 1800m

1. Western Wind (Vivek/Gamini Jayaratne)
2. Alcazaba (J. Chinoy/Edwards Stable)
3. Spirited Touch (Aneel/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)

Chinoy rode Zulu Fantasy to a third place finish.

The Governor's Cup 2021 was organized and conducted by Royal Turf Club (RTC) with EFL partnering as main sponsors.

Pakistan's Babar Azam ousts Virat Kohli from ICC rankings

Pakistan captain Babar Azam grabbed the top slot in ODI batting rankings dislodging Virat Kohli who for three years was the world's number one batsman in one-day international rankings, the International Cricket Council announced Wednesday.

The 26-year-old becomes the fourth Pakistani batsman to get the top spot in ODIs and the first since Mohammad Yousuf in 2003.

"Pakistan captain Azam has ended Kohli's long reign at the top of the ICC Men's ODI player rankings," the ICC said in a statement from its Dubai headquarters.

Azam knocked 103, 32 and 94 in a three-match series in South Africa which Pakistan won 2-1 last week. By ending Kohli's supremacy that lasted more than three years, Azam has followed compatriots Zaheer Abbas (1983-84), Javed Miandad (1988-89), and Mohammad Yousuf (2003) as the number one ODI batsman.

In Tests, Azam's best position was fifth and he is currently ranked sixth, while in T20s he has previously been number one and now ranks third, the ICC added.

"This is another milestone in my career," Azam was quoted as saying by the Pakistan Cricket Board. He committed to working harder and achieving consistency



Babar Azam

with the bat so he could "hold on to the ranking for an extended period of time".

"I will savour the moment, as it has come after I was first appointed the white-ball captain, and that too on the back of my performances that helped Pakistan become the first Asian side to win two ODI series in South Africa."

Since making his ODI debut in 2015, Azam has progressed rapidly, scoring three hundreds in successive ODIs against the West Indies in 2016.

He was fastest to 13 ODI centuries, which he made against South Africa earlier this month.

Azam has so far scored 3,808 runs in 80 ODIs, with 13 hundreds. (Agencies)

Jason Holder and West Indies earn accolades for braving coronavirus

Former West Indies captain Jason Holder, who came in for universal acclaim when he led the first international cricket tour amid the coronavirus pandemic, has been named as one of Wisden's five Cricketers of the Year.

Holder joins England batsmen Dom Sibley and Zak Crawley, Pakistan wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan and Kent all-rounder Darren Stevens in being given a stamp of approval in the esteemed almanack's slightly condensed 158th edition.

Stevens, who turns 45 later this month, is the oldest recipient since Ewart Astill in 1933 for an honour bestowed just once in a career, usually reserved for those who have shone during the preceding English domestic season.

While Holder's six-for at the Ageas Bowl last July put the Windies on course for a win in the first Test after the outbreak of Covid-19 led to a global shutdown of sport, the mere fact they made the trip was an outright success.

At the time the UK was among the worst-affected nations, but the flexibility of Holder's side facilitated the return of international cricket as they agreed to travel and spend two months in restrictive 'bio-secure' bubbles.

They may have departed these shores with a 2-1 defeat but there was endless gratitude from administrators and players alike at the end of a series where the teams showed their support for Black Lives Matter by taking a knee. The symbolic act - spear-



The West Indies players take a knee bow on the tour of England

headed by the Windies and Holder, in particular - before each of the three Tests was a powerful image in cricket, with each member of the touring party raising gloved right fists for added significance. Holder has since been superseded as Test captain by Kraigg Brathwaite but the integrity he showed while leading his side in an environment made all the more challenging by coronavirus did not go unnoticed by Wisden.

Sibley shed 12kg during lockdown before recording two fifties

and an obdurate hundred last summer, amassing 615 Test runs across the whole of 2020 at an impeccable average of 47.3 to cement his place at the top of the order.

It has been feast or famine for the Warwickshire opener recently and the same can be said for England team-mate Crawley, who topped the Test run-charts last summer largely thanks to a breathtaking 267 against Pakistan.

Crawley's remarkable innings - his first three-figure score in an Eng-

land shirt - saw him join Len Hutton, Garry Sobers, Donald Bradman and Graeme Smith as the only batsmen to register 250 or more in a Holder has since been superseded as Test captain by Kraigg Brathwaite but the integrity he showed while leading his side in an environment made all the more challenging by coronavirus did not go unnoticed by Wisden.

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Test before turning 23. Rizwan's swift stumping ended the Kent batsman's knock before even more records tumbled and the glove-man's deft handiwork and a couple of timely half-centuries in Pakistan's 1-0 defeat led to him being recognised by Wisden.

According to the publication, Stevens, who last week became the oldest County Championship centurion since 1986, sealed his status as one of domestic cricket's "most unsung heroes" with 29 wickets at 15 in the Bob Willis Trophy.

At 44 years and 350 days, the ever-green Stevens is the fourth-oldest recipient on record of a Wisden gong, behind only Astill, the great WG Grace and Lord Hawke.

For the second year in a row, England's talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes, whose broken finger means he will miss the rest of the latest edition of the Indian Premier League, has been named Wisden's leading male cricketer.

Stokes underlined his status as one of the modern greats in 2019 and followed it up with some impressive numbers last year, racking up 767 runs at 51.13 in 13 matches across all formats, adding 25 wickets at 18.84.

Beth Mooney, who scooped player of the tournament as Australia retained their Women's T20 World Cup title 13 months ago, has unsurprisingly been named the female cricketer of the year. (PA media)

Olympics of Antwerp 1920 Arose on Ice after First World War

By
Rear Admiral
Dr. Shemal
Fernando, PhD



were archived at the Belgium Olympic Committee headquarters in Brussels.

Nations, Sports and Highlights

The city of Antwerp hosted the Games of the VII Olympiad, commonly known as the 1920 Summer Olympics, not long after the end of the First World War. It was a magnificent edition studded with achievements that have gone down in history. The Games were opened on August 14, 1920 by King Albert I and closed on September 12, 1920.

These Olympics were the first in which the Olympic Oath was voiced, the first in which the Olympic Flag was flown and the first in which doves were released to symbolize peace. The Games also featured a week of winter sports, commencing on April 20, 1920 with ice hockey making its Olympic debut and figure skating appearing for the first time since the 1908 Olympic Games.

In the early 20th century, at a time when winter sports on ice and snow were becoming increasingly popular in Europe and North America, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin was an early advocate for their inclusion on the Olympic program, declaring that the Olympic Games were Games for all sports.

On the back of the success of these ice events, and also thanks to Pierre de Coubertin's deeply held convictions about the "frank and pure sporting dignity" of winter sports, the IOC decided, at its 19th Session in June 1921 in Lausanne, to organize an "International Winter Sports Week" in Chamonix, as part of the Games of Paris 1924. The event which was retroactively designated as the first Olympic Winter Games, launched the Olympic cycle for ice and snow sports to be held separate from the Summer Games.

The 1916 Summer Olympic Games, scheduled to be held in Berlin, the capital of the German Empire, were cancelled due to the First World War. The aftermath of the war and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 affected the conduct of the Olympic Games not only due to new states being created, but also by sanctions against the nations that were blamed for starting it.

Host City Selection and Organization

In March 1912, during the 13th session of the IOC, the bid on the behalf of Belgium to host the 1920 Summer Olympics was made by Baron Edouard de Laveleye, President of the Belgian Olympic Committee. The organizing committee with 4 Presidents and 22 Vice Presidents was created on August 9, 1913 and the first action was to send an official letter to the IOC in Paris.

On September 13, 1913, Pierre de Coubertin, President of the IOC, visited the future Olympic Stadium. In 1914, a brochure was created to promote the idea of Antwerp as a host city for the Olympics. It was sent to all IOC members and used during the 6th Olympic Congress in Paris in 1914, where the candidacies of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Budapest and Rome were discussed and the outbreak of the First World War soon afterwards prevented any further progress.

It was at the same Olympic Congress in 1914, Pierre de Coubertin presented the Olympic flag, with its five interlocking rings, for the first time.

The IOC members wanted to pay tribute to the suffering endured by the Belgian people during the conflict.

Thus, Antwerp was selected as the host city of the Games on April 5, 1919 at the 17th IOC Session in Lausanne, where Coubertin had established the IOCs headquarters during the war.

An executive committee was established on April 17, 1919, with Henri de Baillet-Latour as chairman and Alfred Verdyck, as general secretary. Seven commissions were created, to deal with finances, accommodation, press relations, propaganda, schedules, transport, and festivities. The program of events was published in February 1920.

The first stone of the new Olympic Stadium at Beershot was laid on July 4, 1919 by Jan De Vos, Mayor of Antwerp, and inaugurated in less than a year on May 23, 1920.

The documents of the Games

A total of 29 nations, participated in the Antwerp Games. Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Ottoman Empire were not invited, having lost the First World War. Brazil, Estonia, Czechoslovakia and New Zealand were among the nations sending their athletes to the Games for the first time at Antwerp in 1920 and all of them produced their first medalists.

A total of 2,626 athletes - 2,561 men and 65 women, took part in 156 events in 29 sports disciplines under 22 sports. Nedo Nadi won 5 gold medals in the fencing events. At the age of 72, Sweden's 100m running deer double-shot event champion Oscar Swahn, who had participated in the 1908 and 1912 Games, came in second in the team event to become the oldest person to win an Olympic medal.

The Olympic legend, Paavo Nurmi secured 3 gold medals in 10,000m cross country, 8000m cross country and the team cross country, and a silver in the 5000m. He followed it up with 5 gold medals at Paris 1924 and one gold medal at Amsterdam 1928 to achieve 9 gold and 3 silver medals. Duke Kahanamoku retained the 100m swimming title he won before the war in 1912.

Alfred Neuland, who had fought in the First World War and the Estonian War of Independence, resumed his weightlifting career, and travelled to Antwerp to compete for his newly-independent country, Estonia. He won Estonia's first gold in the lightweight category (- 67kg), lifting an Olympic total of 257.5kg.

The United States sent a women's swimming team for the first time, and the Americans won seven out of seven available swimming medals. In a rather strange moment in Olympic history, the 12-foot dinghy event in sailing took place in two different countries. The final two races in the event were independently held in the Netherlands, on its own accord, supposedly because the only two competitors in the event were Dutch.

The 30m military pistol event was won by Guilherme Paraense, with a score of 274 out of a possible 300, making him Brazil's first-ever Olympic champion. The Games in Antwerp saw five weight categories introduced for the first time in weightlifting, ranging from featherweight (- 60kg) to heavyweight (+ 82.5kg).

These were the first Olympics where the host nation did not win the most medals overall. The top six nations that won medals at the 1920 Games: United States - 41G, 27S, 27B, total 95; Sweden - 19G, 20S, 25B, total 64; Great Britain - 15G, 15S, 13B, total 43; Finland - 15G, 10S, 9B, total 34; Belgium - 14G, 11S, 11B, total 36; Norway - 13G, 9S, 9B, total 31.

Canada's Success in Ice Hockey

Canada, as would be the case at several subsequent Winter Games editions, was represented by the club that had won the national championships - "Winnipeg Falcons". All other teams competing at the Games were national teams.

Canada won the first of what is now a record haul of nine Olympic titles. In their first match, they in-



The Oldest Olympian and Oldest Olympic Medalist, Oscar Swahn (centre)



Duke Kahanamoku, "Father of Modern Surfing"



Ethelda Bleibtrey, the trailblazer for women's swimming

flicted a 15-0 defeat on Czechoslovakia; second match, against major rivals the USA, was a tightly contested affair and the Canadians sealed a 2-0 victory; third match was the gold-medal decider and Canada beat Sweden 12-1. Ice hockey had shown its merits on the Olympic stage, and it would become a permanent fixture on the program at the Winter Games from the first edition in 1924.

Most Decorated Figure Skater

Gillis Grafstrom, a Swedish skater, etched his name into the annals of the Olympic Games in Antwerp. Legend has it that he broke the blade of one of his skates just before the competition and went looking for a replacement pair in town. He managed to get his hands on an old pair of skates, with which he nevertheless put in a dazzling performance.

He is now recognized as one of the greatest compulsory figure specialists in the history of his sport. The inventor of the "Grafstrom Pirouette" and the "flying sit spin", and the first skater to make the axel a controlled jump. He was awarded first place by the judges in the free skate.

Grafstrom, renowned for his athletic abilities and his flair for skating to music, won Olympic gold again at the Chamonix 1924 and St Moritz 1928

the starting whistle was about to blow, he had to be woken up to get to the edge of the pool and his team won in a world record time of 10:04.4.

"The Duke" will always be remembered as the champion who introduced surfing to the world at the beginning of the 20th century. While continuing to popularize and promote surfing, he also competed in his third Games in Paris in 1924. There, he won the silver in 100m and shared the podium with his brother.

Trailblazer for Women Swimming

Women first competed in swimming at the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912, taking part in two events: 100m freestyle, and 4x100m relay. At Antwerp 1920, a third event was introduced: 300m freestyle. Ethelda Bleibtrey, aged just 18 raced in and won, all three!

Bleibtrey's story is that of an emancipated woman who made a real difference for all female swimmers in her country. She first took up swimming in 1917 to help her recover from polio. At the time, social convention in the USA dictated that women had to cover up their legs with stockings when swimming. In 1919, at Manhattan Beach, Bleibtrey removed her stockings; this was considered a reprehensible act of "nudity" and Bleibtrey was arrested.

Her arrest caused public outrage, however, to such an extent that not only was Bleibtrey not sanctioned, but it was also subsequently decided that women could go swimming without stockings. Bleibtrey was also one of the first women to wear a swimming cap.

She took to the water on August 23, 1920 in the third heat of 100m freestyle. She won and set a new world record of 1:14.4 in the process and 48 hours later, she claimed her first Olympic title, setting another world record of 1:13.6.

In 300m freestyle, she was once again head and shoulders above her rivals. The day after her victory in the 100m, she swam her 300m semi-final in a world record time of 4:41.4. In the final, on August 28, Bleibtrey was simply on another level, breaking the world record again with a time of 4:34.0. Finally, on August 29, she swam as the anchor in 4x100m relay for the USA, secured victory and set a new world record of 5:11.6.

Belgium at the Top of the World

The Antwerp Games took the sport of football to a new dimension. "It is

certainly the case that the football association tournament is unique from a competition perspective. It combines the involvement of the 15 best teams in the world, representing all the countries that practise this sport. Never before have such a group of soccer players come together in the same tournament," the French sports daily L'Auto reported in August 1920.

In the semi-finals the Czech beat France 4-1. The Belgians reached the final by dominating the Netherlands 3-0. The report written by the journalist for L'Auto who was on the spot states: "In front of a huge and enthusiastic crowd, Belgium won the tournament final by clearly beating the Czechs 2-0. The Belgian eleven proved splendid from start to finish, triumphant thanks to their speed and the fast and lucid design of their game, and through the efficiency of their unstoppable shots. The best team in the tournament won." The Antwerp 1920 was the forerunner of the FIFA World Cup, which was created 10 years later.

Greatest Female Tennis Player of All Time

In tennis, Suzanne Lenglen of France, then aged 21, sailed through the Olympic women's singles tournament. She dispatched her first three opponents in straight sets with no games lost. In the final, she beat Great Britain's Dorothy Holman 6-3 and 6-0. She also won the mixed doubles with Max Decugis, defeating Great Britain's Kitty McKane and Max Woosnam 6-4 and 6-2.

Lenglen, the world champion at the age of 15, a six-time winner at both Roland Garros and Wimbledon and the first real global tennis star, she also won a bronze in the women's doubles alongside Elisabeth d'Ayen.

Last Appearance for Tug of War

The origins of tug of war, a sport with two opposing teams in which each tries to drag the other towards them, are lost in the mists of time. It was an Olympic sport on five occasions, on the program of the Games in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912 and lastly 1920. The rules are simple: two teams of eight athletes all hold tight to the two ends of a long rope.

Two lines are drawn on the ground, around four or five meters apart. The aim is to drag the opposing team over the line on their side, or make them fall over. Each round consists of two pulls. The British team was composed mainly of members of the London police force, and they easily won their six bouts, winning 2-0 against the USA, Belgium and finally the Netherlands in the gold medal match.

Oscar Swahn on the Olympic Podium Aged 72

Oscar Swahn born on October 20, 1847 in the region of Gotaland, when Charles XV was King of both Sweden and Norway, as the two countries became separated only in 1905. Victoria reigned over the British Empire; Paris still looked like a medieval city; and the Mexican-American War would result in California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas and part of Colorado becoming United States territory.

Oscar Swahn's shooting career spanned several decades, but he was already in his sixties when he competed at his first Games, London 1908, where he won gold in the individual and team running deer single shot events, and a bronze in the running deer double shot individual event. In Stockholm 1912, at the age of 64 years and 258 days, he became the oldest Olympic champion and winner of a gold medal in history (a record that still stands today) as a member of the Swedish team who won the 100m team running deer single shot event.

And there was more to come, in Antwerp 1920, he became the oldest medalist ever, at 72 years and 281 days, winning a silver in men's 100m team running deer double shot event. Significantly, all the team medals that Oscar Swahn won in 1908, 1912 and 1920 Summer Olympic Games were with his son, Alfred, who was born on August 10, 1879 and 31 years younger.

(The author highlights spectrum of sports extravaganza. He is the winner of Presidential Academic Award for Sports in 2017 and 2018 and recipient of National Accolades for Academic pursuits. He possesses a PhD, MPhil and double MSc)



Great Britain winning the Tug-of-War

No match for Ashan and Aaron

BY BERNARD PERERA

Ashan Silva emerged as the champion driver once again at the inaugural SLT Mobitel Kukuleganga Hill Climb held in Mahagostota last Sunday (11).

Driving his Mitsubishi Evo, Ashan returned the best time of the day for cars in SL-Gt 3500 cc class.

This victory gave Ashan his third successive Speed Hill Climb win in the race organized by the Sri Lanka Army Motor Sports Committee with the corporation of the Motor Racing Association. It was also a new record lowering his own set last year.

Silva completed the 900 metres long climb of 90 metres high taking only 32.135 seconds to be the overall winner. The main contender to challenge Ashan was none other than Dinesh Jayawardena who faced one of the biggest mishaps when his Formula vehicle went off the road crashing onto hoardings.

With this incident he failed to complete the first run and also the second run as his vehicle could not be repaired soon enough.

Aaron Gunawardena was the star on this day on the two-wheelers winning two events ahead of his elder brother.

He recorded the best time in the Group M Super Sport Motorcycles 900 cc up to 1000cc category when he completed the course in only 33.508 seconds. Competing in the next race the Group M Super Sport Motorcycles 400cc up to 600cc category he set up the best time for the day of 33.701 ahead of his brother Jaden.

Jaden, who was looking to make it three wins in a row this season had to be satisfied with the runner-up title in two major events, behind his brother Aaron.

The other noteworthy performances for motorcycles saw the Pathirage family dominating with two sons and father reaching the podium.

In the Motor Cycles 700cc Open class it was father Mangala and son

Nikila on the podium as winners while brothers Vinula and Nikila received awards as the runners-up in the Group M Super Sport Motorcycles over 175 cc up to 250cc 4/T.

The cars category too saw father Neil Weerasinghe and son Sandaru receiving awards in the Group 'H' Cars up to 1275cc.

Young Mihin Peiris who is following in his father Dammika's footsteps and brother Kushan, was at his best driving in the Group N Cars up to and including 1300cc (one make Ford Laser/Mazda) 1300cc to return the best time of 45.583. He went on to win the next class Group N Cars up to and including 1500cc (one make Ford Laser/Mazda) 1500cc in a time of 45.008.

Two women drivers Lakshika Pathirana and Shehara de Silva too were in action on this day in the Group S Cars up to 1500cc (Modified Special). It was only Lakshika who was placed behind Zakir Wahab (38.520) and Sachith Pathirana 45.219. Lakshika returned a time of 37.619.

The Hill Climb was well conducted following all health guide lines and the Organisers had the fullest co-operation from the Motor Racing Association and Southern Motor Sports Club who did a fine job.

RESULTS:

Group M Super Sport Motorcycles over 175 up to 250cc 4/T: Vinula Pathirage (39.35), Nikila Pathirage (39.614), Janaka Dinshe (39.663)

Group SM One-make Kawasaki Tracker 250cc: Sasindu Prasanna (39.529), Kushan Chamod (39.550), Malsha Minuwantha (41.113)

Group M Sports Touring Motorcycles, up to 600cc: Supun Suraj (38.794), Sasindu Prasanna (39.890), Mangala Pathirage (40.44)

Group SM Super Motard Over 175cc up to 250cc: Isuru Maduranga (35.985), Harsha Sivagnam (38.037), Malsha Minuwantha (39.463)

Group SM Super Motard Motorcycles over 250cc Open: Jaden



Ashan Silva receives his trophy from army commander Lt Gen Shavendra Silva

Gunawardena (35.108), Stephan Fernando (37.161), Reza Odayar (38.742).

Group SM over 100cc up to 125cc 2/T: Kushan Chamod (39.553), Stephan Fernando (41.722), AG Rusith Shamika (43.157)

Group SM Sports Touring Motorcycles over 700cc Open: Shashika Sandaruwan (39.608), Nikila Pathirage (39.850), Mangala Pathirage (39.937)

Group O Standard Motorcycles over 100cc up to 125cc 4/T: RMRK Ratnayake (50.887), Dilan Ratnayaka (51.414), Suranjan Lakmal (51.789)

Group M Street Trail Motorcycles 100cc up to 250cc: Sarath Kumarasinghe (42.152), S. Vasudevan (44.607), Sivalingam Chandrapragash (45.461)

Group M Super Sport Motor-

cycles 400cc up to 600cc: Aaron Gunawardena (33.701), Jaden Gunawardena (33.73), Stephan Fernando (36.508)

Group M Super Sport Motorcycles 900cc up to 1000cc: Aaron Gunawardena (33.508), Stephan Fernando (36.617), Reza Odayar (37.964)

Cars:
Group Cars up to and including 1000cc (One make Nissan March): Daham Janith (46.304), Adeesha Kithwith (47.030), Thenuka Liyanaarachchi (47.590)

Group H Cars up to 1275cc (One Make Mini): Sandaru Weerasinghe (44.833), Chanaka Ratnayake (45.748), Neil Weerasinghe (45.970)

Group E Cars up to and including 1300 (One Make Ford Laser/Mazda 1300cc): Thenuka Liyanaarachchi (44.874), Rashitha Pas-



Aaron Gunawardena with his trophy

an (45.676), Madushanka Jayasuriya (46.109)

Group T&J up to 5000cc (Trucks & Jeeps) Chamod Samarakoon (42.809), Buddhi Gunasekera (51.814), Duminda Jayasinghe (51.914)

Group N Cars up to and including 1300cc (One Make Ford Laser/Mazda 1300cc): Mihan Peiris (45.583), Akila de Costa (45.868), Imesh Silva (46.142)

Group T&J open (Trucks & Jeeps): Darin Weerasinghe (36.260), Imran Yakoob (41.116), Israaq Wahab (41.625)

Group N Cars up to & including 1500cc (One Make Ford Laser/Mazda 1500cc): Mihan Peiris (45.008), Tharindu Dharmaratne (45.279), Shanaka Dias (45.828)

Group H Cars up to 2000cc (One Make Subaru Legacy): Randika Niroshan (40.159), Hashen Peiris

(40.407), Shiran Dool (42.229)
Group A cars up to 1050cc (modified): Namal Silva (42.623), Duminda Amarasiri (42.807), Dilanka Wijesuriya (42.932)

Group H Cars up to 1618cc (SLH Honda 1600cc): Irfan Fuard (37.432), Randika Niroshan (37.624), Irshad Faham (37.754)

Group F Formula McLaren 1300cc EFI: Chandima Gunaratne (38.911), Mevan Perera (39.719), Kevin Perera (39.774)

Group F Modified Formula Cars up to 1665cc: Dilan Seneviratne (34.294), Nadeera Jinasena (35.103), Chandima Gunaratne (37.385)

Group S Cars up to 1500cc (Modified Specials): Zakir Wahab (38.520), Sachith Pathirana (45.219), Lakshika Pathirana (37.619)

Group SL GT Cars up to 3500cc: Ashan Silva (32.135), Abeeth Danggalla (34.613), Ushan Perera (35.742)

Mother of All Shows

BY DR. ELMO RODRIGOPULLE

There is no doubt that the Observer-Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel School Cricketer of the Year' show conducted annually by the flagship English newspaper of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd is the most eagerly looked forward to award show awaited by the thousands of school cricketers annually.

Once the inter-school cricket season starts, it is the thing for the cricketers to give of their best in every department of the game, garner votes and catch the attention of the panel elected to choose winners of the many awards by performing in all aspects.

To be crowned the proud 'School Cricketer of the Year' is the yearning of every cricketer who will strive to the maximum and strain his every nerve and sinew to score runs, take wickets and grab catches.

This show conducted over the years with great success has the unstinted support of all present and old boys of the schools who flock in their numbers to cheer and motivate cricketers from their respective schools to give off their best and reach great heights so that they could win an award, be proud of it and treasure it for posterity.

This show has gone on to make champion cricketers from mediocre ones and given them the impetus to aim to represent the country which is the ultimate dream of every cricketer and many have been the award winners who sported the national cap and even went on to captain the country.

Every past winner has nothing but high praise for this excellent awards show and has been proud to talk about it and shower praise on the popular and much read 'Sunday Observer' for continuing the show, hurdling many obstacles placed on its way. Three of these prestigious winners who went on to achieve stardom and bring pride to the leading newspaper, the game and country were Ranjan Madugalle, Arjuna Ranatunga and Sanath Jayasuriya who shone from the outstation.

The cheerful and ever smiling and ever obliging Madugalle who had his early education at Trinity College, Kandy, and then it was lottery that Royal College won when he was drawn to the prestigious Reid Avenue school.

He continued from junior level where his coaches were amazed with the rare talent this youngster was showing as a stylish and straight playing right hander and predicted a star in the making that was going to shine and glitter brightly in the local and international cricket firmament not only as a batsman but also a national captain. And those predictions did not take long to materialize when he scored a lot of runs and



his first crowning moment was when he led the school in the 100th 'Battle of the Blues' against S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. He made Non-descripts Cricket Club his favourite and kept moving rapidly and his next crowning moment was when he led the country. But what he would cherish most was being appointed Chief of Match Referees in Test cricket. The International Cricket Conference which followed Madugalle's career and the gentleman in him and his immense knowledge of the game preferred him as Chief Match Referee pushing aside many other international cricketers who battled for this post. Madugalle still continues to bat in that position because the ICC has the highest regard and respect for him.

The other award winner to shine in the international cricket scene was Ananda's stylish left hander Arjuna Ranatunga who sported the national cap when he was still a schoolboy and the first to make a half century in the inaugural Test against England in 1982.

He later went to steer the country to win the ultimate prize in limited over cricket when Sri Lanka beat Australia in the World Cup final in Lahore, Pakistan in the 1996 tournament. In the same World Cup an outstation star from St. Servatius College, Matara to attain celebrity status was left handed batting sensation Sanath Teran Jayasuriya who clubbed all opposing bowlers to win the 'Most Valuable Player of the Tournament'. He was later tagged Sri Lanka's 'master blaster' and like the world's greatest boxer Muhammed Ali to be also tagged the 'Black Superman of Cricket'.

Although the dreaded covid-19 played the part of spoil sport and stalled the holding of the 'Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year' award ceremony last year, Editor-in-Chief of the leading weekly Dinesh Weerawansa along with the Chairman and the efficient Director Board of the ANCL and Chairman of Sri Lanka Telecom and SLT Mobitel Rohan Fernando have worked tirelessly and left no stone unturned to make this long awaited show what it is today.

Football Super League kicks off tomorrow

The Football Federation of Sri Lanka (FFSL) makes history with yet another milestone with the launch of Sri Lanka's first-ever professional football league competition, dubbed as 'Super League', from April 19, 2021, at the Sugathadasa Stadium.

The inaugural Super League competition has been the highly anticipated event in Sri Lanka among football fans both home and abroad.

Ten top-tier club teams have been selected through a strict club licensing criteria on par with international standards. These clubs are now shaping up their operations to transform into vibrant professional football entities, similar to European Football Clubs.

These ten clubs were unable to play or practice as much as they

wanted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus the FFSL has organized this league to pave the way for them to come out in action. The FFSL had successfully organized a pre-season League to help the clubs prepare for the Super League proper.

The Super League can be witnessed on TV I to allow the fans to be content with. The fans will be able to watch the matches with a little foreign flavour in the teams as they have got down players from countries like Morocco, Ivory Coast, Japan and others to add more punch to their attacking moves.

This Super League will also benefit the development of football in Sri Lanka enticing the players to raise their standards while representing the national team

too. Clubs too will gain by way of finances and their commercial values.

The Super League will be conducted on a single leg-based format and will be limited to 45 games, with nine games per club. The team at the top of the table at the end of the 45 games will be crowned champions of Sri Lanka's first ever Professional Football Tournament.

All participating clubs are guaranteed of financial support, even if they are ranked at the bottom of the table. Eventual Super League Champions will win a prize of Rs. 5 million, first runners-up win Rs. 3.5 million, second runners-up Rs. 2.75 million, fourth place gets Rs. 2.5 million, fifth place gets Rs. 2.25 million, sixth place gets Rs. 2 million, sev-

enth place Rs. 1.75 million, eighth place Rs. 1.5 million, ninth place Rs. 1.25 million and despite finishing at the bottom of the table, the last team will still get Rs. 1 million according to the organisers.

"We believe the first ever Professional Football League in Sri Lanka would create the platform necessary to develop the game at elite level in the country. The FFSL is grateful to FIFA for giving the approval to launch this League as a special project and funding to a great extent for the first two seasons of the League.

"The FFSL also would invest a huge sum looking for a brighter future for the game, players, coaches, referees and other stakeholders in the long run," said Anura de Silva the president of the FFSL. (BP)

All-island cycle races commence

BY TB RAHAMAN

The all island cycling races for standard cycles and half marathon races for men and women organized by the Ministry of Sports and the State Ministry of Rural and Schools Sports Infrastructure Improvement and Department of Sports Development in conjunction of the Sinhala and Hindu New Year commenced yesterday.

The first event was held yesterday with the cycling races in the Hambantota district. The races started opposite Carlton House in Tangalle covering a distance of 120 kms for men and 80 kms for women. The marathon event will

also be conducted concurrently. The men will have to run a distance of 20 kms and the women 10 kms.

Such races will be organized covering all districts at a time that may extend beyond the month of May and June. Other events such as swimming, beach volleyball and beach football will also be conducted during the festive season in every district. Besides, all talented athletes will be selected for further training at a higher level.

The events will be under the patronage of Lanka Sportreizen who are experienced in organizing events of such magnitude and will be sponsored by Nestomalt.

Fans accuse clubs of power grab

European football fans have charged that Manchester United and Bayern Munich fans are involved in a "power grab" in connection with changes in the Champions League.

The clubs belong to the European Club Association (ECA). The ECA's chairman, Andrea Agnelli, has described the proposed new format, in which each team would play at least four extra group-stage matches, as "close to ideal".

However, it is understood that some ECA members are still pushing for greater commercial control.

An open letter to Agnelli, signed by 17 fan groups from 14 clubs who are represented on the ECA board, said the voices of millions of supporters were being ignored.

"Your plans to restructure the Champions League by increasing the number of games, introducing qualification based on past achievements, and monopolising commercial rights present a serious threat to the entire game," it said.

"Instead of realising your supposed goal of 'building a successful, sustainable, and socially responsible football industry', you will only make the gap between the rich and the rest bigger, wreck domestic calendars, and expect fans to sacrifice yet more time and money." It added: "Such a blatant power grab would be indefensible at the best of times, but at the height of a global pandemic, it is nothing more than crisis profiteering -- not to mention a stark contrast to the solidarity displayed by fans." (agencies)



Senura Silva (left) and Bimandee Bandara

Senura and Bimandee win double titles

Senura Silva of Ananda College and Bimandee Bandara of Hillwood College Kandy clinched two titles each at the All Island Open Ranking Under-15 and 18 table tennis tournament held at the S. Thomas' Indoor Stadium in April 10.

The Western Province Table Tennis Association conducted only these age categories due to the prevailing health situation in the country. This tournament is approved by the Table Tennis Association of Sri Lanka and is an annual held event listed in the TTASL tournament calendar.

The under-15 boys segment attracted 71 players while 53 players competed in the girls category. In the under-18 boys age group a line-up of 58 players and

44 players in the girls Under-18 category contested.

Yohan Deshappriya, a former national player was the chief guest and presented the certificates to the champions.

RESULTS: (ALL FINALS)

Boys under-15: Senura Silva beat Akesh Dimantha 13/10, 11/9, 11/6.

Girls under-15: Bimandee Bandara beat Oneli Lehansa 11/3, 11/3, 11/5.

Boys under-18: Senura Silva beat Chandupa Alahakoon 5/11, 15/13, 11/6, 3/11, 11/7.

Girls under-18: Bimandee Bandara beat Jithara Warnakulasuriya 11/8, 11/6, 13/11.

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APRIL 18, 2021



SPORTSCOPE
BY ELMO RODRIGOPULLE

Cricket selectors at last

Ah! At last! After a long wait and much speculation, cricketers and cricket fans will finally have heaved a sigh of relief now that the Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Namal Rajapaksa has finally played the stroke that everyone was waiting to watch and appointed a six-member selection committee.

It will be headed by Pramodya Wickremasinghe, and padding up with him will be Romesh Kaluwitharane, S.H.U. Karnain, Waruna Waragoda, Hemantha Wickremaratne and Nilmini Gunarathne.

Firstly we must give credit to Ashantha de Mel who bowled the first ball when Sri Lanka began their safari in Test cricket against England after the country attained Test status. He resigned as chairman, the game went off pitch and the selection committee he captained fell apart with no genuine selection committee appointed.

In favour of de Mel it must be said that he got the committee he captained to do a job to the best of their ability and he disciplined, directed and saw to it that picking the teams to represent the country were done purely on merit and no other consideration.

De Mel's shoes were big to fill! After De Mel and his team's departure, lot of uncertainty prevailed with teams being picked with nobody knowing by whom and the game moved on. It moved on not for the betterment or benefit of the game, the players or success, but to utter disaster.

The game is now grasping for breath after the disastrous showing against England in the two Tests on home soil which was inexplicable and unacceptable followed by the thrashing by the West Indians in the limited overs games. The Lankans saved face somewhat by drawing the two Test series.

Now to the new selection committee and it must be stated that some of them have been in the hot seats, un-seated and re-seated again like the recent 'Mrs World Contest' held at the Nelum Pokkuna where the winner was crowned, un-crowned and re-crowned finally. All's well that ends well.

We have nothing against those who recommended the selectors or the selectors, but as for us it would have been better and refreshing to see new faces who would have different ideas of how selections should be done. Anyway now the selectors have been appointed and let's watch how they go. We wish them the best. What is acceptable is that all of them have played the game at the highest levels.

We would like to say a few words about former dashing opening batsman and wicket keeper Kaluwitharane who sports the gloves of a selector for the first time. After the famous Kingsley and Susil Fernando produced by St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa 'Little Kalu' as former cricketer and commentator Tony Greig loved to call him, begins a new innings as a selector.

What is still in the memory of the writer was the good fortune of watching his dashing debut hundred against Allan Border's Australians at the SSC and the century he made on a tour of New Zealand. 'Kalu' was given the big time game by Bro Gurusinghe who saw the rare talent in him when he was the cricket master at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa. Bro. Gurusinghe showed him how and his rise was phenomenal.

It is every cricketer and cricket fan's hope that the new selectors when they sit to perform their arduous tasks will do so with an open mind, with no favourites marked and pick purely on merit not worried from which school, club, politician or political party he supports.

If they follow these principles and pick teams, they will leave no room for the scribes to take their selections and them apart. It is accepted that not only in Sri Lanka but the world over that the selectors act in mysterious ways. Let these selectors offer straight bats and leave no gaps to be bowled out.

Bens-Wesley at cricket

Two of the oldest schools in the country St. Benedict's College and Wesley College will play, not what they call is a 'big match' but one that they call 'special' on April 23 and 24 at Kotahena and a 50-over game at the P.Sara Stadium on May 8.

The heads of the two schools Bro. Director Pubudu Rajapaksa of St. Benedict's and Principal of Wesley Avanka Fernando and the Organizing Committee headed by the hard working and efficient Benedictine Lalith Madapullu must be congratulated not only on their success of making this match a reality, but for not tagging it a 'big match' and making a farce of the game that the so called 'big matches' have ended up as.

The 'special match' will be contested for the Rev. James Cartman Cup and the limited over game for the Rev. Bro. Luke Gregory shield.

Both schools have a rich tradition of producing top class cricketers and while we appreciate the naming of trophies in memory of the above, ours is only a suggestion that it should have been the Mahadevan Sathasivam and Ranjit Fernando trophy in honour of the two finest and best cricketers produced by the two institutions.

St. Benedict's and D.S. Senanayake College organized and played what they called a 'big match' some time back and it progressed smoothly and with great success until after a one-day game, supporters of DSS were alleged to have stoned the Benedictine team bus and Bro. Gurusinghe who was the Director of SBC during that time did right by putting a stop to that 'big match'.

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Watch out for the spice girls

Former schoolboy greats who rue the standard of youth cricket today may take heart that there could be an on-field voice to echo their sentiments

BY CALLISTUS DAVY

For years they were unheard of or played second fiddle to the boys feeding on the crumbs that fall off the table. Not many in Sri Lanka knew they even existed outside the scope of their brothers and parents from whom they were able to pick up a hint or two.

Legend or history has it that it was a girl who even created the art of bowling in cricket when she realized her frock or gown was too cumbersome to send the ball down underarm that she turned her arm overhead thus inventing today's bowling technique or style or whatever the pundits choose to call it.

When the girls came out to play, England, inspired by that historic gesture found many a role model that became legends in their own right that paved the way for what is today being called women's cricket.

In Sri Lanka women's cricket at the start was confined to a few grown ups in the city and townships under the watchful eyes of a pioneer known as Gwen Herath and Heaven bless her wherever she is if not in whatever she does now.

That paved the way for Sri Lanka to at least possess a women's team leave aside competing against teams like England and one of its players who braved a man's world and even had the audacity to nudge the media to take note of them was the dusky Rohini Fernando among others.

Today all of them can at least try to relax a bit that what they pioneered more than three decades ago is beginning to bear fruit at least in bud form and thanks to the media, particularly the Sunday Observer that has 'officially recognised' their existence, the girls in good old Sri Lanka have come out to both challenge the boys for their due places while adding that little spice that can go along way.

Thanks to the Sunday Observer and its commercial partner SLT Mobitel, girls' cricket has replaced women's cricket, with no mean reference to those prototypes of the past. The girls of today have found a plot on which to grow from the seeds which were sown and the year 2019 marked a historic chapter when the Sunday Observer-Mobitel Schoolgirl Cricketer Awards were

added. It means that no longer does the keeper of the sport in the country, Sri Lanka Cricket, have to depend on finding the grown ups or

even moms to showcase an international team.

They can be caught, netted in and put on the catwalk as spritely teenage schoolgirls. A role model has already been found in Nimesha Wijesundera who in

2019 was the best runner-up all-rounder and in the following year 2020 was voted the Most Popular Schoolgirl cricketer.

She waltzed her way to a century in a school match a few weeks ago and the purists can only hope that unlike schoolboy cricket where players are traded under the guise of scholarships from the provinces into the privileged big city and original players from kindergarten are pushed out in the win-at-all-cost syndrome, the girls will be taken care of for the right reasons.

It is hoped that gone will be the days when people like Gwen Herath and Rohini Fernando and the Rest who ventured out boldly into a man's world in search of a new tribe of sportswomen.

Today by extending its goodwill towards girls as young as 10 years who will some day blossom into fully fledged players, the Sunday Observer and Mobitel have sounded the trumpet this time in a more privileged way than Herath and Fernando who were granted just a morsel of space for a precious few lines in a newspaper.

What Sri Lanka Cricket had not done with all their wealth and pompous conduct, the little obscure girls most from village schools in the country have sent out a message in no uncertain terms that they are here to stay and all what was needed for a turn-over was just one stroke of the pen.

No longer will coaches of women's cricket, and they were mostly men, have to complain to their employer Sri Lanka Cricket that all they hit in their search were mothers with babies, save the occasional young lass.

Today while the seeds that were sown many decades ago but neglected when they sprouted, have found fertile ground with a godfather to back them up.

Winners of the Observer Schoolboy Cricketer contest of the past, many of whom were members of the 1996 World Cup winning team, may believe that their voices for quality cricket have found an echo in the girls.



Nimesha Wijesundera

Umesha Thimeshani
Schoolgirl Cricketer 2019

Angelo Perera: Youngsters played leading role in NCC's title win

BY DHAMMIKA RATNAWEERA

Nondescripts Cricket Club (NCC) who emerged champions in the Major Club Limited Overs tournament attributed their success to the commitment of their team and the part played well by their youngsters.

This was revealed by their captain Angelo Perera whose personal contribution during the tournament was 394 runs inclusive of a ton and two fifties. "I had a big challenge to take up with more youngsters in the side.

Despite playing without five of our main players who were ill or injured and four players who were doing national duty, the youngsters played superbly to remain unbeaten," said Perera.

"Kamil Mishara, Kaveen Bandara, Chamika Karunaratne, Nimesh de Silva, Shan Arachchighe, Ashen Daniel and Yugeesha Dilshan all of them played to their best while experienced Upul Tharanga, Chaturanga de Silva and myself were there for guidance," added Perera.

Their batting throughout the tournament was very consistent scoring over 300 runs three times. Kamil Mishara, Upul Tharanga, Hasitha Boyagoda and Angelo Perera scored centuries in this tournament. Mishara was superb with three centuries and this wicket keeper batsman was a bonus to their batting line-up. This was the second major title NCC has won and they twice finished as runners-up during the last four years under the leadership of Angelo Perera.

"Our game plan really worked well in this tournament and we have to give full credit to our head coach Duminda Perera and Manjula Fernando and the cricket committee members Hashan Tillegaratne and Marlon Ranasinghe for the excellent job they had done," said Perera.

He was also full of praise for Chamika Karunaratne who played one Test match against Australia and took four wickets against Ragama CC in the final.



The champion NCC squad comprising Angelo Perera (Captain), Upul Tharanga, Kamil Mishara, Chaturanga de Silva, Lahiru Kumara, Chamika Karunaratne, Hasitha Boyagoda, Dineth Jayakody, Kavin Bandara, Lahiru Udara, Chamika Gunasekara, Sahana Arachchige, Praveen Nimesh, Yugeesha Dishan and Ashain Daniel with the trophy

BUSINESS

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BIZ SNIPPETS

Oil prices surge

(Bloomberg) --Oil jumped the most since late March with declining U.S. crude stockpiles and rising fuel demand providing the spark needed to break out of a nearly monthlong price range.

Futures climbed as much as 5.3% in New York mid this week, pushing prices out of a recent \$5 trading range to the highest intraday level since March 18.

A U.S. government report showed domestic crude inventories fell by 5.89 million barrels last week, the biggest decline in two months, bringing nationwide supplies to the lowest since late February.

A gauge for gasoline demand ticked higher for a seventh straight week.

The stronger outlook for U.S. demand, along with improvements in China, drove the International Energy Agency to lift its forecast for oil consumption this year. - World Oil



International travel getting easier

Travelling abroad is getting less complicated for vaccinated travellers.

A growing list of countries is reducing or eliminating quarantine and Covid-19 testing requirements for those who have been fully vaccinated, while keeping restrictions in place for those who haven't.

Barbados announced this week that quarantine requirements for vaccinated travelers will be reduced to zero to two days, during which they can move around their hotels. Unvaccinated visitors, however, must stay in their hotel rooms until they pass a Covid test on the fifth day, and wait several more days for results.

Children aren't eligible to be vaccinated yet, a fact which is complicating family travel plans this year, but Barbados doesn't leave them out.



Weaker economic recovery in Southeast Asia - IMF

SINGAPORE — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) downgraded its forecasts for several Southeast Asian economies even as it turned more optimistic about the global economy and Asia-Pacific more broadly. The IMF expects the five largest developing economies in Southeast Asia to collectively grow by 4.9% in 2021, down from its previous projection of 5.2%. Those five economies are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. IMF's deputy director of the Asia and Pacific department, Jonathan Ostry, said on Wednesday that an increase in Covid cases and renewed lockdowns are dampening the economic prospects of some Southeast Asian countries.



No authorisation for Port City to go beyond existing laws

ONLY TAX EXEMPTIONS WILL BE OFFERED - TREASURY SECRETARY

By **Lalin Fernandopulle**

There will be only tax exemptions and investment facilitation granted to the Port City through the legislation which in no way would permit the city to function beyond the existing laws of the country, said Treasury Secretary S.R. Attygalle rebuffing claims by the Opposition that the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill would pave the way for the port city to function as a separate territory.

"The gazette clearly states that there would be only certain tax reliefs offered to woo investments and promote the city globally," Attygalle said.

He said that all anti money laundering and smuggling preventive measures have been covered by the law. "The Opposition claims have no base. They are only speculation. Those who read the gazette will know what it contains," the Treasury

Secretary said. Government officials refuting claims that the city would function independently from the laws of the mainland, said that the legal structure of the city had been approved by three former administrations and that the Colombo Port City Economic Commission is structured similar to the Greater Colombo Economic Commission concept. However, Opposition parties alleged that the proposed Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill will turn Colombo Port City into a Chinese colony.

Leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Anura Kumara Disanayake, said recently that the Bill would pave the way for the city to function independent of the existing laws of the country. **TO PAGE 28**



S. R. Attygalle

Concessional financing is not without controversy - Report

Explicitly evaluating whether loans are concessional or adverse considering the combined consequence of the grant element and cost escalation on the tied element/unsolicited proposal would be advantageous for Sri Lanka. By contrast, at present only the grant element is evaluated, noted... **TO PAGE 28**



Urgent intervention vital to stabilise falling rupee - Economists

BY LALIN FERNANDOPULLE

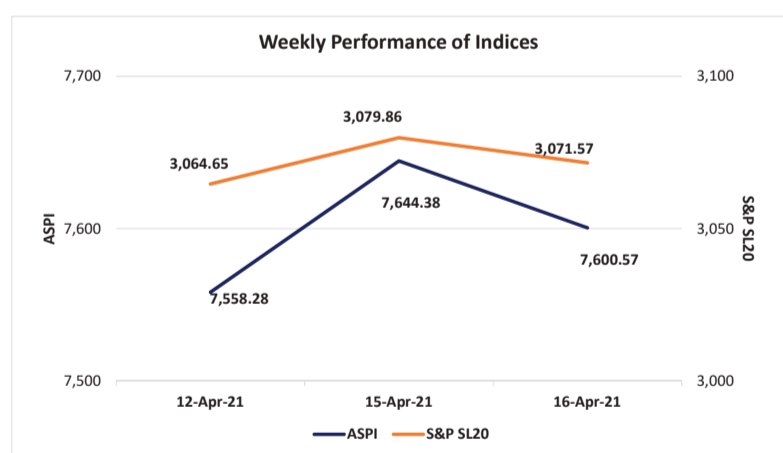
Urging swift action by the monetary authorities to arrest the weakening trend of the Sri Lankan Rupee economists and financial analysts said unless speedy steps are taken the rupee will plunge further making debt repayment and servicing imports impossible.

Financial experts said the US Dollar strengthening is not an excuse to get away from the issue. Measures to spur trade, attracting export oriented foreign direct investments and promoting the destination for tourism focusing on new markets are key to stabilise the falling currency.

The Sri Lankan rupee has depreciated by around 7.8 percent so far this year from Rs. 189 at the start of the year to Rs. 204 last week. The selling price of a US Dollar on Thursday was Rs. 204.62 while the buying rate of a US Dollar currently stood at Rs 199.80. However, when asked a senior official of the Central Bank said market conditions had led to the current stand of the Rupee. **TO PAGE 28**



With the setting up of a State Ministry to develop the cane and other rural industries, the people engaged in the industry look forward to a better future. More importantly its environment-friendly nature promotes the use of cane products. Here a cane product seller in Minuwangoda takes a break. **Pic: Samantha Weerasiri**



Courtesy: The Colombo Stock Exchange

	US Dollar \$	Euro €	Japanese yen ¥	Pound sterling £	Chinese Yuan ¥
Apr 12 - Apr 16					
Monday	203.73	242.95	1.8697	279.97	31.260
Tuesday	-	-	-	-	-
Wednesday	-	-	-	-	-
Thursday	204.62	245.84	1.8915	283.39	31.510
Friday	201.28	241.65	1.8625	278.09	31.025

Asia, world's most expensive region for the wealthy

Asia continues to be the most expensive place in the world to be rich, according to a new report, which saw the region's resilience to the Covid-19 pandemic hold high prices steady.

The world's most populous continent remained the most costly for high-and ultra-high net worth individuals (HNWIs) in Bank Julius Baer's Global Wealth and Lifestyle Report 2021 as its swift response to the global health crisis and overall currency stability maintained the cost of luxury goods in the region. Four of the five most expensive cities for HNWIs —



individuals with \$1 million or more in investable assets — are now in Asia, according to the annual report. Shanghai, China jumped to the top of the ranking of 25 global cities to be named the most expensive place to live as a wealthy individual. Hong Kong, last year's number one, slipped to third

place, while Tokyo, Japan held steady in second position.

Monaco, a small wealthy state in Western Europe, and Taipei, Taiwan rounded out the top five. "Covid didn't become an epidemic (in Asia) in quite the same way as the other countries in the index," said Rajesh Manwani, head of markets and wealth management solutions for Asia-Pacific at Bank Julius Baer. Europe and the Middle East ranked in second place, with the majority of global cities represented in the region buoyed by the strength of the euro and Swiss franc. The Americas, ... **TO PAGE 28**

Manufacturing goods up last month

There was a strong revival in manufacturing goods in the country. The manufacturing PMI reached a nine-month high at 67.0 last month. This was largely attributable to the increases in production, new orders, and stock of purchases sub-indices.

The significant increases in New Orders and Production sub indices,

particularly in the manufacture of food and beverages and textile and wearing apparel sectors, have mainly contributed to the improvement in the overall index. Many respondents in the manufacture of food and beverages sector highlighted that they experienced higher levels of sales and production during March 2021 ahead of

the New Year festival season. Respondents from the textile and wearing apparel sector said that they increased production during the month to cover-up seasonal holidays.

Meanwhile, the Stock of Purchases sub-index increased in line with the expansion in New Orders and Production. Employment... **TO PAGE 28**

China's economy grows 18.3% in post-Covid

China's economy grew a record 18.3% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the same quarter last year.

It's the biggest jump in gross domestic product (GDP) since China started keeping quarterly records in 1992.

However, Friday's figures are below expectations, with a Reuters poll of economists predicting 19% growth.

They are also heavily skewed, and less indicative of strong growth, as they are compared to last year's huge economic contraction.

As a baseline, they use the first quarter of 2020, when China's economy



shrank 6.8% due to nationwide lockdowns at the peak of its Covid-19 outbreak. Other key figures released by China's statistics department also point to a continuing rebound, but are also unusually strong because they are

compared against extremely weak numbers from last year.

Industrial output for March rose 14.1% over a year ago, while retail sales grew 34.2%.

"Promisingly, the monthly indica-

tors suggest that industrial production, consumption and investment all gained pace in March on a sequential basis, following the weakness in the first two months," said Loui Kuijs from Oxford economics.

It's not all good news for China's economy, with analysts predicting some sectors will slow as the government's fiscal and monetary stimulus measures are reduced. Yue Su, from the Economist Intelligence Unit, said that while the latest figures show that China's economic recovery is broad-based, some production and export activity could have been "front-load-

ed" into the first quarter, suggesting slower growth ahead. "Trade performance and domestic industrial activities for the rest of year might not be able to maintain such strong momentum, due to lack of measures to stimulate domestic economy," she said. The figures nevertheless suggest China has continued to gain economic momentum, after posting 6.5% economic growth in the last quarter of 2020. Helped by strict virus containment measures and emergency relief for businesses, the economy has recovered steadily since the pandemic hit Despite a calamitous... **TO PAGE 28**

Business

Connect your employees with your brand mission



BIZ TALK with Kishu Gomes

Companies make large investments in building brands through an integrated communication strategy - quite rightly so, as profitability revolves around the power of brands you sell.

No matter how impressive your TV commercial and scheduling on most popular channels is and which external brand personality you use at a huge cost, how much money you spend on promotions, sponsorships and other types of 'below the line' activities. Unless you support all these efforts with 'internal people brand' you may not reap the best returns, especially in service industries such as banking and finance, hospitality, airline, and creative agencies. If a company doesn't consider employees as brand ambassadors, advertising efforts can come completely undone. Your employees are the biggest brand strength any business organisation has got.

Surprisingly, many companies end up building a hollow brand. They

hire high profile, very expensive creative agencies to 'create' their brand. To build something from scratch to tell the world who they are and what they stand for.

This can work in the short term - it can look like the company has a strong brand. But if it's not backed up by the company's actions in everything it does, the brand will never really survive in the long run.

Brand culture - the DNA

When most people think of a brand, they think of the logo and design, and maybe the marketing and advertising. They think of all the external communications and touch points someone might have with a brand. The brand is the way a company or product presents itself to the world. But a truly strong brand is far more than that. For a brand to ring true, and have real authenticity to it, it must start from the inside of the company.

It must be inextricably linked to the soul - the very DNA - of the company. The company must live and breathe its brand from the inside out. Otherwise, the brand is only an empty promise. It becomes a hollow shell - a veneer that it presents to the world, but can't back up. It becomes a facade, with nothing to support it.

It's not simply only what your employees do, but also what they say - outside office walls and how they conduct themselves, how they package and present themselves, how knowledgeable and able they are. Whether their personality supports the product brand that either props or affects your brand value. Employees



rank higher in public trust than a firm's PR department and employees are the most credible source of information regarding their business. As the daily communicators of your brand, employees need to be engaged and committed to creating the brand from the inside out.

This means they need to be inspired, prepared and given the right tools to deliver on your external brand promise.

'Brand is Culture, Culture is Brand' - the relationship between marketing and HR as the new "power couple" behind a valuable brand. Almost a

decade later, activating this power couple by aligning HR and marketing strategies, is more important than ever. Pure talent and capability alone, isn't enough to make the cut. Hiring in line with your brand culture builds a workforce that is already on board with your mission and brand values, minimising compliance issues or culture clashes.

By making sure future employees really understand - and importantly love, your brand before they start, you're essentially creating a team of employees as brand ambassadors from the very beginning.

Having employees as brand ambassadors holds more weight than buy-in from the latest industry influencer, it's crucial to educate all employees on brand purpose, ensuring they feel genuinely connected to that mission.

The brand has to be co-created with the employees, not shoved down people's throats. If they are not involved in some capacity or if they don't see their fingerprints all over it, they will say, 'This is not my company.'

Writing employees into your brand story is a smart way of cultivating a deep understanding of your

The brand is the way a company or product presents itself to the world. But a truly strong brand is far more than that. For a brand to ring true, and have real authenticity to it, it must start from the inside of the company

brand and an internal sense of brand loyalty.

Authentic

We get a feel based on how the brand, company, and its people, speak and behave that together gives us a general positive or negative feeling towards it.

So how can a brand feel authentic? What must it do to earn this positive gut feeling in consumers' minds? Everything the company does must align behind the brand idea. This goes beyond the traditional marketing roles, and includes corporate communications, distribution, customer service, and more. Everything must tell the same cohesive story around the brand. Consumers relate to brands on these deep, gut-feeling levels, whether they realise it or not. The human brain is programmed to sense whether or not a brand is something they can trust, and every tiny interaction with a brand will add to the feeling they have towards it. For brands to truly have this level of authenticity, it has to start from within - from the people in charge of building the company and brand. Remember, a brand is a reflection of the company, and the company is nothing more than the people behind it.

DSI Tyres wins NCE Export Award

DSI tyres, the flagship brand of Samson Rubber Industries (Pvt) Ltd. proved its excellence again being the recipient of the Gold Award in the Rubber Tyres and Accessories Sector, Extra-Large category at the 28th Annual NCE Export Awards 2020.

MD, DSI Samson Group, Ranatunga Rajapaksa said he appreciates the tireless dedication of his staff with a profound sense of gratitude while thanking the loyal customers whose trust was a great strength in this feat. DSI Tyres, which is a 100% Sri Lankan company committed to quality, has obtained a number of local and international quality certifications such as ISO 9001:2015, Immetro, SLS and Tanzania Bureau of Standard.

Having started in 1983, the company posted steady growth over the years, manufacturing tyres and tubes for various vehicles ranging from bicycles to Truck with its main focus on export market.

Today, DSI Tyres products are exported to over 85 destinations in six continents.



The NCE Award won by DSI

Everyone knows HR

Most employers prefer to add machinery than people though they are expensive, not only because of higher productivity but due to the complications in managing people. They include bad work ethics, complex labour laws, and politicised unions.



People as a resource

By Janaka Kumarasinghe

LexDuco marks 10th anniversary

LexDuco marked its 10th anniversary in providing total construction solutions with an event for staff members and guests in Colombo recently.

The company which has designed and constructed over 1,000 houses over the past 10 years remains committed to the ethos of inclusive growth, providing clients with elegant luxury house designs and construction management solutions while simultaneously offering economic opportunities to suppliers and contractors. In the span of 10 years, over 50 supportive companies have teamed up with Lex Duco. It has a presence throughout the country with a focus on Colombo and sub-



MD Nishad Weeratunga

urbs with the commitment of delivering the dream home of the Citizens. Chairman, Lex Duco, Dr. Buddhika Adhikari said, "It has been an



Chairman Dr. Buddhika Adhikari

exciting ten years for Lex Duco understanding the very well-defined needs that we Sri Lankans construction industry have.

As we steal a short moment to reflect on our eventful journey here, I'd like to thank all the employees, partners, and our loyal customers for their unwavering support. We're only getting started with our range of services, and there are many exciting additions in the works soon." Managing Director, Lex Duco Nishad Weeratunga said, "Currently we are developing systems and procedures to lead the home design and build market and become the customer's first choice in Sri Lanka." Some of the former employees were also present. By offering its homeowners a diverse array of experiences, Lex Duco is committed to change the lifestyle of Sri Lankans.

Premier Ceylon unveils honey tea

Premier Ceylon Teas and Spices (Pvt) Ltd has introduced one of the world's first hand made 'honey teas' to the market opening up a new chapter in tea exports.

Founder of Premier Ceylon and inventor of the Golden Line Honey Teas, Jagath Wijesekara said that they have registered the product after extensive research for almost a decade. "We have already spoken to leading high-end supermarket chains in Europe, UK, Japan, Australia and the Gulf countries to export the honey tea from July. "The product is handmade from high-grown Ceylon tea buds, hand-picked from private tea gardens in the Nuwara Eliya district and hand rolled and baked in a cinnamon wood fired hearth and fermented and preserved in pure and natural bee's honey at the factory in Bandaragama. The process takes two weeks. "We also follow this same process and offer an exotic selection of fruits and spice varieties. Our next range would be adding an array of European fruits such as blueberry, raspberry and Cranberry, blackberry, cherry and a selection of wild



Jagath Wijesekara

berries to the Honey Tea range," he said. Premier Ceylon Teas and Spices, a specialised handmade products company, also offers a range of spices. "With our patented 'Honey Tea' we hope to take our entire range to the global market," Wijesekara said. Premier Ceylon Teas and Spices is chaired by Dr. Tissa Jayaweera with Selvarajah Krishnakumar, a businessman living in the United Kingdom as the Deputy Chairman and Jagath Wijesekara as the founder Managing Director of the Premier Ceylon Group.

JF&I Packaging wins Bronze

JF&I Packaging (Pvt) Ltd, was the only award-winning entity in the packaging sector, extra-large category, winning a bronze at the 28th Annual NCE Awards ceremony at the Shangri La Hotel recently. NCE Export Awards is conducted by the National Chamber of Exporters to recognise and reward outstanding performance of exporters of Sri Lanka. Found-

ed by the iconic entrepreneur, late Dr. Neville Fernando in 1978, JF & I packaging has come a long way since its humble beginning as a comprehensive solution provider in the packaging industry becoming the largest foreign exchange generator in the industry for the country. Chairman Naomal Fernando expressed his gratitude to all the staff for their

untiring efforts in making the company keep pace ahead of its competitors.

Managing Director Sajith Nanayakkara said that they managed a 15% topline growth even during the pandemic which he attributed to the company's adaptability, supply chain speed, sustainability, innovation and long-standing business relationships.



MD Sajith Nanayakkara with the award

Avurudu awakening amid an awful pandemic



STRATEGIC STRIDES
by

Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri

Powered by

PIMA

PIM Alumni

We just witnessed a better Avurudu this year, amid the Covid-19 pandemic. We were home-locked last year and celebrating the Sinhala and Tamil new year as a confined family became a discovering experience of family richness.

The television and broadcasting channels kept us vibrantly alive with connecting with artists in family settings, while social media was galore with multiple greetings. The whole experience radiated unity in a unique manner facing an unprecedented challenge. Moving beyond, I see the time of Avurudu as an invitation for awakening, individually as well as interactively. Let's discuss further.

Awakening ourselves

Avurudu invites us to awaken ourselves. It is the time to rejoice, relax, reflect and reinforce. Celebrating as Sinhalese and Tamils alike is the central key. Collaboration, consensus and connectivity are all coveted concepts associated with Avurudu. Cheerful, optimistic and an open mindset can be a good starting point. I know, it has become hugely challenging with Covid-19 experience. A challenge is in front of us. Are we seeing the good in us as well as in others enough in a truly win-win sense?

We live in a time when meetings are started asking the question, "What went wrong last month?". We are very good at catching people doing things wrong. An institutionalised negativity is a common phenomenon in Sri Lankan workplaces. This is the time, I

think for us to change. We should catch people doing things "right". We should more often ask the question "What went right?" Positive focus is one vital ingredient for consistent performance.

We need to recharge ourselves to change for the better. There is no better time than this festive season to do so. I am talking of the need to take care of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of our lives. This is an opportune time for renewal, an awakening to the reality with focus on being better. We need an awakening in each of the above facets, in making the coming months a meaningful period of prosperity.

Awakening physically

Avurudu games traditionally had been an invitation for us to stay physically fit. This time it is different. Human body is the vehicle that takes us through the journey of life.

Being healthy and fit are of utmost importance, despite our constant negligence of them. Finding quality time for physical exercises on a regular basis will be one sure cure for physical inactivity. Perhaps, confining to home front would have given you ample time and space to reignite your exercising routines. Having a healthy dietary pattern, in opting to be fit than fat, is another vital need. Avoiding tasty yet unhealthy food is not so easy. Wasting food while millions are starving worldwide should be stopped at least in our family front. Now, make the decision to allocate time for it, and to respect the commitment. That is what an awakening is all about.

Awakening mentally

Avurudu invites us to sharpen ourselves. As Stephen Covey highlighted as one of the seven habits of highly effective people, "sharpening the saw" is essential for growth and success. Ensuring that knowledge and skills are regularly updated and upgraded is what we need to focus on. The wide range of webinars during the past few weeks is a sign of a thirst for knowledge in using available time wisely.

Tom Peters gave a challenge to US managers a decade ago. Look back for the past six months, and see whether you have acquired any new knowledge or skills. If the answer is "no", you are stagnating with a blunt saw. As the Digital Journal tells us, the rate at which knowledge is becoming available is doubling every year and, on a curve, predicted to rise even faster. What we discover with regards to Covid-19 day by day is indeed illuminating.

With the internet as a vast ocean of knowledge offering a variety of informal learning approaches, learning has become a part and parcel of our lives. Despite occasional fake and hate news, we can learn something sensibly from social media as well. As Socrates said a long time ago, we learn from "the womb to the tomb".

Awakening emotionally

Avurudu is a time to strengthen positive, constructive emotions. This has become acute amidst Covid19 pandemic where psychologists advocate us to embrace more enthusiasm despite the existing doom and gloom. There are



people who have successfully passed their exams, but have miserably failed in their lives. Being aware of constructive emotions as well as destructive emotions, surrounding our lives, is the first step. Laziness and anger are two common examples for destructive emotions. Enthusiasm and determination are common constructive emotions.

As experts on Emotional Intelligence (EI) say, self-awareness should lead to self-regulation. That is when you are in control of your emotions and channeling them towards achievements. This is especially true if you are at an organisational leadership position. As Daniel Goldman, who popularised the concept of EI advocate, leaders should be 70% more emotionally intelligent than the others. This is a fitting time to show that in words and deeds.

Awakening socially

Avurudu unites the nation and socially bonds the country. As we know, no man is an island. Human beings are social animals. Human connectivity is an essential requirement for any community to foster. In a high-tech world, where speed is a key factor, a high-touch dimension of relationships should not be neglected. I have seen many achievement-oriented executives who have "married" to their jobs while their neighbours take care of their families.

This could be challenging in a time where social distancing is strictly regulated. I see what is required in tackling Covid-19 is more "physical distancing" and not social distancing in a true sense. Physical distancing should not

We are very good at catching people doing things wrong. An institutionalised negativity is a common phenomenon in Sri Lankan workplaces. This is the time, I think for us to change. We should catch people doing things "right". We should more often ask the question "What went right?" Positive focus is one vital ingredient for consistent performance

pave the way for personal disconnecting. As Sir Arthur C. Clarke predicted, the world will embrace more communicating than commuting, with the advancements of technology.

The term social media is the case in point. A renewal should ensure the fostering of relationships with the team at work, and more importantly with the team at home.

This is a golden and opportune time for us to do so. Building better relationships, taking quality time off from your work to be with your loved ones, and being involved in voluntary work are some of the popular activities in this respect.

Awakening spiritually

Avurudu is very much associated with religious traditions. Moving beyond rituals, it is a time where we revisit and reinforce our values. As we are constrained in visiting religious places this year, it gives us the opportunity to be more "inward bound". That highlights the central connect or the underpinning

base in truly living them in the spirit of humanity.

Awakening to awesome results

Awakening of one's physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions should lead to better understanding of oneself. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz in their seminal HBR article titled "Making of a Corporate Athlete", describe vividly the importance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual "capacities". According to them, organisations can not afford to utilise their employees' capacities, while ignoring their physical, emotional and social wellbeing. They offer us further insights in these aspects:

"In a corporate environment that is changing at warp speed, performing consistently at high levels is more difficult and more necessary than ever. Narrow interventions simply aren't sufficient anymore. "Companies can't afford to address their employees' cognitive capacities while ignoring their physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. On the playing field or in the boardroom, high performance depends as much on how people renew and recover energy as on how they expend it, on how they manage their lives as much as on how they manage their work. "When people feel strong and resilient - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually - they perform better, with more passion, for longer.

They win, their families win, and the corporations that employ them win." (Loehr and Schwartz, 2001) The key point here is the need to have a balanced approach towards performance. Awakened employees will assure their commitment towards assigned tasks in achieving the expected results. Moreover, they will become better human beings, and not "human doings or un-doings".

The way forward

The planet will take a considerable time to heal itself. It could be a painful prolonging period. Yet, being positive and productive is the need of the hour. "It is difficult to say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow," said Robert H. Schuller. We need to go beyond festivities to ensure focused action leading to future revival. It is healthy people who should strive hard to recover the ailing economy. May the awakening Avurudu this year herald an era of economic revival with engaged and enthusiastic people who have confidently battled Covid-19 pandemic.

TFC depositors:
Additional compensation
payment begins



The payment of additional compensation under the Sri Lanka Deposit Insurance and Liquidity Support Scheme for depositors or legal beneficiaries of the Finance Company PLC (TFC) commenced on April 12, a Central Bank media release stated.

For further inquiries contact Resolution and Enforcement Department through 0112 477 000, 0112 477 261 or 0112 398 788.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Title : Expression of interest for shares of a private company in Sri Lanka

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY

An export oriented garment accessory manufacturing company incorporated as a private company in Sri Lanka, currently in operation with a customer base spread in India, Bangladesh, etc. The Company is approved by the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka (BOI) and is located in an Export Processing Zone in the Western Province equipped with the finest infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply and good water supply.

The assets of the Company include a factory space of approx. 1,400 m²; well fitted office space of approx. 150 m²; stand alone store of approx. 120 m²; total land extent of approx. 7,900 m²; 50 year lease agreement with the BOI, signed in 2003 and an educated and computer literate workforce of 24 persons with years of hands-on exposure to quality product processing. Half the land area is available for development and is also connected to a 250kV transformer.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Expressions of interest are hereby invited within 2 weeks of this advertisement for the purchase of all the shares (100%) of the Company. Ideal opportunity for investors seeking an early operational feasibility.

Expressions of interest should be submitted, in English, to :

Attn: Ms. Diluka Rodrigo/Ms. Shanila Gunawardena
Julius & Creasy
Julius & Creasy Building
No.371, R. A. De Mel Mawatha
Colombo 3

OR submitted via e-mail to the attention of Ms. Shanila Gunawardena at shanila@juliusandcreasy.com and copied to Ms. Diluka Rodrigo at diluka@juliusandcreasy.com. Please ensure that both e-mail addresses are included. Please note that the total size of all attachments should be less than 5MB.

Only shortlisted purchasers will receive a subsequent communication.

LIDEL
Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 544 kWp (cumulative) Rooftop Solar Power Systems for the Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd, Makola

Procurement Number: 01/2021

- The CEO/ Director of the Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd., invites bids for the above procurement from suitable suppliers to 'Supply/Install/Test & Commission 544 kWp Grid Tied Solar Net-Plus Systems for a selected rooftop area of the Industrial Estate'. This initiative is planned as an extension to already commissioned Net-Plus systems of 900 kWp.
- Interested bidders may purchase Bidding Documents during normal working days from 0900 - 1530 hrs from the DFCC Bank Building, 73/5 Galle Road, Colombo 3 for a non-refundable cash payment of LKR 10,000/-. Bidders may also visit the site prior to purchasing the bid document on 21 April 2020 from 0900 - 1200 hrs. The deadline for the issuance of the bid document is 1500 hrs on 23 April 2021.
- The pre-bid meeting and the inspection of the site is scheduled at the office of Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd., Pattiwila Road, Sapugaskanda, Makola at 1500 hrs on 29 April 2021.
- Solar PV service providers active in Sri Lanka since 2015, having experience in installing and commissioning a minimum of five projects with a cumulative capacity of more than 1000 kWp are eligible to bid.
- The sealed bids marked 'Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Rooftop Solar Power Systems for the Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd, Makola' on the top left-hand corner shall be sent to reach DFCC Bank Building, 73/5 Galle Road, Colombo 3 through hand delivery on or before 1500 hrs 12 May 2021. Late bids will be rejected. All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security of LKR 300,000.00, valid for six months.

CEO

Lanka Industrial Estates Ltd
Pattiwila Road, Sapugaskanda, Makola
Tel : 94 (0) 773 060068
Fax : 94 (0) 112490 321
Email : lidel@itmin.net

Business

NDB Group hosts “Financing for Transformation”

NDB Investment Bank Limited and the National Development Bank PLC conducted a knowledge sharing session recently, providing a holistic view on alternative sources of funding.

The Forum focused on assisting local businesses including Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs to navigate and financially transform their businesses towards the next phase of growth through such funding. The forum, which was hosted in a hybrid form with participants attending physically and virtually, with over 400 participants in total.

The forum was launched as a convenient platform to provide insights and solutions to the major challenges faced by entrepreneurs and other corporate businesses while addressing and highlighting the importance of the key areas in investment banking such

as forms of Debt Financing, Private Equity, Mergers & Acquisitions and Initial Public Offerings (IPOs).

The forum featured an engaging panel discussion followed by an interactive Q & A session.

The panel comprised Chief Regulatory Officer of the Colombo Stock Exchange, Renuka Wijayawardhana, Chairman, Uni Power, Jayantha Rajapakse, Director and Group CEO of NDB Bank, Dimantha Seneviratne, CEO of NDB Capital Holdings, Senaka Kakiriaragodage, CEO of NDB Investment Bank, Darshan Perera and Vice President, SME Middle Market and Business Banking of NDB Bank, Indika Ranaweera.

The Q&A was moderated by Head of Corporate Advisory of NDB Investment Bank, Nilendra Weerasinghe, while the presentation on Financial

Options was made by Vice President of NDB Wealth Management, Ms. Vindhya Jayasekara. Director and Group CEO Dimantha Seneviratne said that the timing of empowering SMEs could not be more relevant.

As the global economy is on a recovery from the effects of the pandemic, SMEs play a critical role in that process. Banks and other financing institutions have a tremendous responsibility in supporting and empowering SMEs with not just financing but also with knowledge on the various options that are available to them which would propel them towards sustained growth.

He said that SMEs and others who seek alternate financing options now have a conducive environment, particularly with tax concessions introduced for IPOs.



The forum in progress

Bio Extracts wins Bronze Award

CNCI Achiever Awards 2020

Bio Extracts (Pvt) Ltd. won the Bronze Award at Ceylon National Chamber of Industry Achiever Awards 2020 at Hotel Galadari recently.

Bio Extracts is based in a 50,000 s.q.ft. facility in Ratmalana, equipped with a state-of-the-art laboratory, the company's R&D team continually develops new and innovative products, keeping with the highest international standards.

Equipped with technologically advanced soft-gel and hard-gel manufacturing units, tableting, blister packing, automated counting, liquid and cream filling, and finishing lines, Bio Extracts has made its way to the forefront of the industry.

Leveraging on the rich herbal heritage of Sri Lanka, the Baraka basket covers a range of products and supplements for diabetes, good heart health, arthritis, GI care, asthma, memory enhancers, weight control, skincare, daily health supplements, cold and flu products, analgesic applicants, and natural health foods. The range selectively undergoes re-launches to improve upon the effectiveness of its ingredients, thus ensuring continuous improvement for consumer satisfaction. New prod-



Bio Extracts COO Dilantha de Silva and CFO Haniffa Mohamed Fahim receive the award.

ucts are due to be released within 2021 and 2022. The range is differentiated by its key ingredient – the black seed, further enriched with Sri Lankan herbs such as lunuwila, garlic, mace, gotukola, karawila, ash plan-

tain, velmi, virgin coconut oil, and more. Ingredients are sourced through a highly experienced, specialised team to ensure high quality. A subsidiary of Aberdeen Holdings Group, Bio Extract's investment in

well-trained and professional human capital, aptly guided by Founder Managing Director and Group Director Sattar Kassim, has seen the company grow exponentially stronger over the years.

Double win for ComBank

The Commercial Bank of Ceylon has won the awards of 'Best Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises' and 'Best Bank for Corporate Social Responsibility' for the second year in a row from Asiamoney Magazine. The award for 'Best Bank for SMEs' recognises Commercial Bank's efforts in identifying the importance of small and medium enterprises to the economy of the country and the products

and services put in place to empower this segment, while the 'Best Bank for Corporate Social Responsibility' award is a tribute to the Bank's nationally-significant contributions via its CSR Trust, to the spheres of education, healthcare, environment and community development. The CSR award is a tribute to the Bank's continued support to community projects, despite the pandemic.

Coffeehouse opened at Excel World

The Brick Lane Coffeehouse which was launched at the Excel World Entertainment Park recently, serves an array of cakes, bakes and coffees. Operated by Excel Restaurants (Pvt) Ltd, which manages a portfolio of restaurants and pubs in Colombo. The interior of the coffee shop creates a cosy and warm feel, with dark blue hued comfy wooden sofas to sink into while the chic counter top with high stools offers more seating space. Although the space is compact, Covid-19 health regulations are adhered to where the one-metre distance has been maintained in all seating arrangements. Headed by pastry chef, Janaka Dias, the patisserie delights its diners with speciality cakes from across the world, including black forest, red-velvet cake and light and simple Victoria sponge.



Chef Dimuthu Kumarasinghe and Executive Pastry Chef Janaka Dias, open The Brick Lane Coffeehouse.

Concessional financing... Continued from page 25

...a research report by Verite Research titled Financing Infrastructure: the (Non) concessionality of concessional loans.

Multilateral and bilateral borrowing is often favoured by governments such as Sri Lanka because such financing tends to have 'concessional' elements, relative to the international financial markets.

Such concessional financing of infrastructure development, however, is not without controversy; and there is a significant body of literature engaging with the consequential concerns of such financing.

The report aims to contribute to that literature by analysing the concessionality of 50 high-value loans to Sri Lanka from multilateral and bilateral sources to finance infrastructure, taken between 2005-2018.

These 50 loans are worth USD 13,068 million and accounted for 53% of the total value of foreign loans taken to finance infrastructure during that period.

Of the 50 loans, 33 loans had a grant

element of above 35%, a benchmark level used by international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to classify a loan as concessional.

These 33 loans account for 72% of the value of the 50 loans analysed in this paper. These 33 loans consist of four loans from multilateral institutions (of a total of 15 loans) and 29 loans from bilateral institutions (of a total of 35 loans).

Sri Lanka is highly dependent on international loans from multilateral and bilateral sources to finance infrastructure development.

During 2005-2018, the Government took loans worth USD 24,582 million from bilateral and multilateral lenders to finance its infrastructure. Five sources accounted for 82% of the value of those loans: China (33%), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (17%), Japan (18%), the World Bank (7%) and India (7%).

The paper investigates the financial and procurement terms and conditions attached to the 50 high value loans. The investigation is limited to two primary

elements that undergird each loan: (1) the grant element and (2) the tied element.

The study highlights the importance of strengthening regulations to reduce unsolicited procurement proposals.

It notes that as much of the adverse borrowing can be linked to the acceptance of unsolicited proposals, Sri Lanka will benefit from strengthening the regulatory framework governing the management of unsolicited proposals, making the process more transparent, and less open to abuse.

It states improving Sri Lanka's procurement framework can also reduce the adverse consequences resulting from tied procurement terms embedded in infrastructure loans. Limiting existing political and bureaucratic discretion to grant exceptions to competitive bidding, through signing loan agreements, can help to contain adverse borrowing practices.

An example of such a limiting mode would be mandating parliamentary approval for a loan that suspended com-

petitive bidding in high value public procurements.

Loans from multilateral and bilateral sources are considerably more concessional than international financial markets International agencies such as the IMF and the OECD (for Export Credits) classify a loan as concessional only when the grant element of the loan exceeds the benchmark rate of 35%.

Of the 50 loans analysed in the paper, 33 had a grant element above 35%, and these accounted for 72% of the total value of the analysed loans. These 33 loans consist of four loans from multilateral institutions and 29 loans from bilateral financial institutions.

This finding indicates that loans to Sri Lanka from multilateral and bilateral sources is considerably more concessional compared to the alternative of borrowing from international financial markets.

Overall, loans from Japan have the highest average grant element. All loans from Japan exceed the 35% benchmark for the grant element.

Only tax... Continued from page 25

He said that the Bill empowers the Head of the State to appoint a Colombo Port City Economic Commission which would comprise around seven members named by him.

Dissanayake said that the law would provide financial powers and judicial immunity to the Commission. Opposition parties also said that

local businesses would not be permitted to formulate procedures in the city and alleged that the Commission would be empowered to pay salaries of employees of the city in foreign currency.

The Commission which is said to be independent in the conduct of its operations is said to advertise calling for staff from abroad.

China's economy... Continued from page 25

...start to the year, China was the only major economy to register growth in 2020.

Nevertheless, the world's second largest economy only managed 2.3% growth, its weakest result in decades.

China has set an economic growth target of 6% for 2021, after scrapping its target last year.

Despite its rebound, the Covid is still casting a shadow over China's economy. - BBC

Asia, world's... Continued from page 25

... meanwhile – hard hit by the pandemic – emerged as the cheapest region to live a luxury lifestyle, as the US and Canadian dollars fell against other major global currencies. The ranking is based on the price of a basket of luxury goods representing discretionary purchases by HNWIs across the 25 global cities. This year,

the list saw major changes as four of the 18 items were replaced as the pandemic shifted consumer spending habits. Personal trainers, wedding banquets, Botox, and pianos were booted out and replaced by bicycles, treadmills, health insurance and a technology package, including laptop and phone. - CNBC

Urgent intervention... Continued from page 25

"We have allowed market conditions to prevail and hopefully the currency would stabilise with revival in exports and tourism by the end of the year," he said.

According to Central Bank data merchandise trade deficit continued to narrow during January 2021, while preliminary data for February 2021 showed a further reduction in the trade deficit, driven by a larger contraction in expenditure on imports over earnings from exports.

Workers' remittances continued to record a healthy growth thus far in 2021

and this momentum is expected to continue in the remainder of the year. The tourism sector is expected to recover gradually with the opening of the borders along with Economic Research Department 08.04.2021 2 the successful rollout of vaccinations locally and globally.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank and the Government continue to engage with investment and lending partners to secure foreign financing and remain committed to honouring foreign currency debt service obligations on time.

Recently, the Central Bank entered

into a bilateral currency swap arrangement with the People's Bank of China (PBOC) amounting to CNY 10 billion (equivalent to approximately US dollars 1.5 billion). The bank noted that although the Sri Lankan rupee experienced some volatility recently, the continuation of the existing restrictions on non-essential imports and certain foreign exchange outflows, among others, is expected to help cushion pressures in the domestic foreign exchange market.

Gross official reserves were estimated at US dollars 4.1 billion (excluding the swap facility with the PBOC), with an

import cover of 3 months, at end March 2021.

As per the GDP estimates published by the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), the contraction of the Sri Lankan economy at 3.6 per cent in 2020 was lower than initial projections. Despite the second wave of COVID-19 in the country, the Sri Lankan economy grew by 1.3 per cent in the last quarter of 2020 from a year earlier.

However, the economy is expected to rebound this year with a growth rate of around 5-6 percent according to the Central Bank.

Manufacturing goods... Continued from page 25

... sub-index also expanded at a higher rate. The Suppliers' Delivery Time sub-index lengthened at a slower pace during the month. Many respondents highlighted that some easing in suppliers' delivery time was experienced with the gradual resolution in shipping related issues.

However, freight rates remain at elevated levels, increasing the cost of raw materials, which in turn adversely affected their profit margins. Expectations for manufacturing activities in the next three months remained at improved levels anticipating a further

improvement in economic activities within the country as well as in major export markets. Services PMI rose to 62.1 in March 2021, indicating an expansion of the services sector for the fourth straight month.

This increase was underpinned by the expansions observed in new businesses, business activities, employment and expectations for activity.

New businesses in the services sector increased in March 2021, particularly with the improvements observed in financial services, other personal services, and wholesale and retail

trade sub-sectors. For the fourth straight month, the business activities in the services sector increased in March 2021 with increases observed almost across all sub-sectors.

The financial services sub-sector recorded a further improvement during the month in line with the progresses in economic activities. With the festive season, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation sub-sectors also expanded further.

Other personal services sub-sector also experienced an increase in March 2021. Meanwhile, education sub-sector

continued to expand amid the increased demand for higher education following GCE Ordinary and Advanced Level examinations. Employment increased in March 2021 for the first time after declining for 13 consecutive months due to new recruitments amidst growing business activities.

Backlogs of work decreased in March 2021 for the second month in row in line with the increase in staffing levels, which were previously at a low level due to Covid-19 related health concerns.

Maintaining retail sales momentum in the post-festive phase

by
Hemantha Kulatunga



Every year, early April is the biggest season for Sri Lankan retailers when the majority of the revenue is generated. The excitement of the buyers diminishes when the New Year's festive days are over. As an unwritten law, retail businesses experience a substantial decline in consumer spending during the post-holiday period.

The slump after the New Year is unavoidable. Most of the retailers tend to relax and accept the downward trend as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The chain reaction starting from all stakeholders including owners, staff, and suppliers willingly acknowledge the common phenomenon. Instead of unconditionally giving in to the situation, if the retailer focuses on the immediate post-festive period, they can maintain the momentum of the pre-festive sales.

The end of the festive season does not mean that your business has to go back to the way it was before the New Year season. You have to find other reasons to make people want to visit your retail store once again. Similar to the pre-festive period, the business can go into social media campaigns, regardless of the size of the business. A Facebook advertising campaign for customers in the retailers' geographical area can be effective. The retailers can find any number of unorthodox reasons to make them want to shop again. The business can offer something special and irresistible to customers during this period.

Customers are aware that retailers offer special holiday offers during the festive period. Hence, usually, they do not anticipate businesses to continue the discounts offered or any other promotion soon after

the festival is over. Post-holiday clearance sale is an effective method to keep the momentum of foot traffic. As the retailers tend to keep additional stocks during the festival, typically they are left with excess goods in the store.

'Clearance Sale'

A clearance sale permits the retailer to earn extra revenue from the available stocks. The phrase 'Clearance Sale' itself is attractive to customers anywhere in the world where they visit a retail store even out of curiosity. Slashing prices will attract more customers during the lull and the retailer can generate revenue, perhaps as effectively as the pre-festive period.

Offering discounts or coupons soon after the season is a good method if practiced with caution. However, this tactic must be used sparingly. The danger is that the moment the retailer decreases the monetary value of an item, the signal to the customer can be tricky. The customers tend to think that the retailer has made an excessive profit during the season for a product that otherwise could have been sold at a lesser price. Therefore, offering discounts should be decided carefully to avoid misunderstandings or doubts.

Alternatively, the retailer can deploy other tactics such as running a contest or offering other perks to lure customers to visit the store. Offering perks such as extended warranties or extra loyalty points (if such a system is available), soon after the holiday season can give the customer a good reason to revisit the store.

Another very effective method to increase foot traffic after a season is to include a discount or gift coupon during the seasonal shopping, to be effective in a future date. For example, a discount card can be offered to the customer in April (New Year season) where he or she can use that in the month of May. This strategy is successfully practiced around the world to improve



post-season sales improvements. This is beneficial to the retailer in two ways. Firstly, with a proper awareness campaign, they can attract more customers during the season and subsequently get people back at the store during the lower traffic period.

Loyalty

Communicating with customers individually through SMS, personal e-mail, or collectively through Facebook, email campaigns, or through conventional media, thanking them for patronising or wishing them well for the New Year is another good concept to follow. A wish from the trader followed by a special offer can be appealing to customers and a sure way to increase loyalty.

The buying behaviour is trig-

gered by a psychological process that eventually persuades the customer to make a purchase. This phenomenon starts with the need of an individual to purchase. In a festive season, particularly the Sinhala and Tamil New year directly celebrated by over 70% of the population of the country, retailers dream about the anticipated high volume of sales, irrespective of the size of the business.

From the roadside textile vendor to a high-end shopping mall provided the best attention to their stores before a festive season to trigger the said psychological persuasion. They invariably launch awareness campaigns targeting their audiences. However, most of them drop the enthusiasm soon after the seasonal sales are over.

Therefore, to keep the momentum going, retailers need to recreate the holiday buying mood and environment when the season is over. Unlocking the same emotional buying behaviour as the season is not easy, but certain types of promotions to build anticipation can help to connect with customers emotionally. Redecorating the store in a different theme or rearranging displays can be of assistance. If planned properly with the right tools, the effort can create a sense of urgency in customers.

It is now known that a personalised marketing experience makes the vast majority of customers more likely to buy from the store that provides the best-personalised service. If customer data can be secured during a season, such a database to

When the season passes, retailers take a break from the hectic schedule they experienced during the season. It should not be so. Every retailer must consciously engage in maintaining the momentum even after the lucrative period is over

which the retailer can address can be huge. The result can be tremendous if the retailer can address the customers through the information collected during the season.

Social media

In this digital era, it is imperative to stay attentive and responsive on social media reach. Given the influx of offline shoppers during the season, it is exceedingly important to ensure the service response for your Facebook and other modes of communication. As discussed previously, the most cost-effective mode of communicating with customers is social media applications. Effective social media engagement with prompt response builds up customer trust and loyalty.

For almost all retailers in Sri Lanka, the Sinhala and Tamil New Year festival is the single most anticipated period of the year, for the simple reason that the celebrations are common to the entire nation. As a rule, every retail seller, brick-and-mortar or online, prepares himself well in advance for killer sales revenue. However, having a well-thought-out plan is a must for the weeks to follow.

When the season passes, retailers take a break from the hectic schedule they experienced during the season. It should not be so. Every retailer must consciously engage in maintaining the momentum even after the lucrative period is over. The post-festive period even can be even better for thoughtful retailers who can use this period when their competitors relax. Therefore, treat the bygone holiday season as a rearview mirror and look out for the front windscreen for a better period.

EY conducts seminar on stress testing and risk measurement

Ernst and Young in Sri Lanka (EY), conducted an informative half-day training session for officials of all Licensed Commercial Banks (LCBs) and Licensed Specialised Banks (LSBs) on Integrated Stress Testing during the pandemic and Pillar II risk measurement recently.

Officials of banks including Chief Risk Officers, Finance Managers, Risk Managers, Compliance Managers and those involved in Internal Capital Assessment Adequacy Process (ICAAP) from Finance and Risk teams were present.

The discussion included the importance of integrated approach to stress testing incorporating pandemic impact and Pillar II Risk assessment and measurement.

Partner - Financial Accounting Advisory Services of Ernst and Young, Sri Lanka, Rajith Perera was the resource person.

Perera said, "Even though the larger exposure to stress on capital is due to Pillar I risks (minimum regulatory capital for credit and market and



Rajith Perera

operational risk) financial institutions cannot underestimate the effects of the Pillar II risks (such as Liquidity Risk, Reputational Risk, Cyber Risk & etc.) which could intensify due to the adverse impacts of the Pandemic. As a result, banks may not be able to rely on traditional stress testing and risk measurement techniques (locally and globally) resulting from economic slowdowns and pressures."

This led to the discussion of the

importance of having a scientific approach to stress testing and sound risk management framework for Pillar II Risks.

The discussion highlighted the common weaknesses seen in current practices of financial services such as stressing risks in isolation, limiting stress testing to sensitivity analysis, not considering the impact of macroeconomic variables, lack of rationale for application of stress testing methodologies.

To make Stress Testing relevant in the current context, it was recommended to use unprecedented conditions resulting from the Covid19 pandemic scenario into Stress Testing. It was emphasised that modelling methodologies adopted by banks should capture behaviour of macroeconomic variables along with hypothetical scenario definition and selection of macroeconomic factors based on balance sheet structure and risk profile of a bank.

"Stress testing should be dynamic and forward looking - i.e. factor-in

business growth plans, structural shifts in funding profile, and capital strategies," he said.

Conceptual Model for Market Risk and Scientific Methodology for Operational Risk Stress Testing was demonstrated to participants.

He outlined how banks could integrate Value at Risk (VaR) models to measure market risk exposures. Institutions owning VaR Systems have failed to integrate the output to ICAAP. Rajith was specific on the validation requirements of the VaR models before deployment as it can result in generating inconsistent loss exposures.

Perera demonstrated how an institution could develop Parametric and Non-Parametric VaR models and demonstrated the VaR, a Tool developed by the Financial Services Risk Management team of EY in Sri Lanka which has the capability to measure VaR exposures to Equity Instruments, Fixed Income Instruments and Derivative Instruments to aid measurement of market risk.

State Finance Minister meets Oman's Deputy PM



State Minister Ajith Nivard Cabraal with the Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, His Highness Sayyid Assad bin Tarik al Said.

State Minister of Money and Capital Market and Public Enterprise Reforms, Ajith Nivard Cabraal met and the Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, His Highness Sayyid Assad bin Tarik al Said in Oman recently.

The Minister conveyed greetings from the President and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and delivered a message from Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik of Oman. Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Oman, Ameer Ajwad was also present.

Swarnamahala Financial Services: CB suspends business

The Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CB) has suspended the business of Swarnamahala Financial Services PLC (SFSP), in terms of Section 31(1) of the Finance Business Act, No. 42 of 2011 (FBA).

The suspension came into effect from 5 p.m. on April 12.

Excerpts of the media release of the Central Bank:

Having considered the continuously deteriorating financial condition and non-availability of a viable revival plan, the Monetary Board suspended the business of SFSP and its parent Company ETI Finance Limited (ETIF) in terms of Section 31(1) of the FBA with effect from July 13, 2020 and the period of suspension of business activities was in effect until January 12, 2021.

During the suspended period the Company failed to bring in an accept-

able revival plan through a capital infusion even after expiry of almost six months from the date of suspension of the business activities and the financial position of SFSP continued to deteriorate further.

During this period, a significant amount of dues to SFSP were collected mainly through gold loan recoveries and a number of depositors requested their remaining deposits to be repaid with such recoveries.

The Monetary Board, in the public interest and in the interest of depositors, ordered SFSP to resume business notionally for a limited period of three months from January 13, 2021 under the supervision of the Panel of Management appointed by the Monetary Board, subject to specified strict conditions, only for the purpose of repayment up to 50 percent of remaining deposits. Over Rs. 665 million has



been paid to 94% of the remaining depositors under the repayment plan by the end of March 2021 and the balance payments are also being processed by SFSP. In the meantime, the Monetary Board decided to increase the maximum compensation payment under the Sri Lanka Deposit Insurance and Liquidity Support Scheme (SLDILSS) from Rs. 600,000 to Rs. 1,100,000 by Rs. 500,000.

This decision was taken to provide

further relief to the depositors of financial institutions regulated by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in the event of a cancellation or suspension of the licences of such institutions.

Having considered the continuously deteriorating financial condition, intensifying the insolvent position of the Company and non-availability of a viable revival plan and the need to facilitate payments of increased compensation of Rs.

500,000 from SLDILSS to remaining depositors of SFSP without delay, the Monetary Board issued a Suspension Order on SFSP on April 12.

During the suspension period, the Panel of Management will continue to manage the affairs of SFSP and the enhanced amount of compensation from SLDILSS to the remaining depositors of SFSP will be paid through the island wide branch network of Peoples' Bank.

The date of commencement of such compensation payment will be notified in the near future. Further regulatory action that will be taken on SFSP will be notified in due course. All debtors of SFSP are advised to pay their dues to SFSP on time, only through the bank accounts under the name of SFSP and maintain records of all payments to avoid any possible litigation against them for non-repay-

ment of dues. Depositors, who have not yet received 30% of deposit repayments made in 2018 and 2019 and 50% repayment of remaining deposits made in 2021, have the ability to collect/receive their repayments during the suspended period of business of SFSP.

For further clarifications contact: Department of Supervision of Non-Bank Financial Institutions on 011 2477504 011 2398806 011 2398637. email - snbfi_query@cbsl.lk

Resolution and Enforcement Department - 011 2477261 011 2398788. email - dred@cbsl.lk.

Call centre, CBSL General inquiries 011 2477966.

Swarnamahala Financial Services PLC / Panel of Management Inquiries regarding deposits, settlement of advances and other clarifications - 011 7534800. email - info@sfs.lk

Business

Smoking, poverty and the economy

The case for stronger tobacco control policies

The negative health effects of tobacco consumption are well established and confirmed by numerous sources. Tobacco has been found to increase the risk of many non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer, heart diseases and respiratory illnesses.

These tobacco-related illnesses are chronic illnesses with long term suffering and impose financial strains on governments and households due to increased health care costs. For instance, the direct and indirect costs of tobacco amounted to Rs. 89.4 billion for the Government, which is equivalent to 6.1 per cent of government revenue in 2015'. Tobacco-user households in Sri Lanka spend a greater share of their budget allocation on tobacco, rather than on critical items such as education, health and housing.

Since signing the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) treaty in 2003, Sri Lanka has introduced several tobacco control policies, which have over the years been successful in gradually reducing the smoking prevalence rate in the country. Nevertheless, pockets of smokers remain; for instance, 28 per cent of men still smoke in Sri Lanka. However, tobacco control policies face significant resistance by the tobacco industry.

Their arguments often revolve on the contribution of tobacco to the economy and assertions that stronger tobacco control will have negative economic impacts. To contribute to this debate, it is important to have empirically-backed evidence on the national income aspect of reduced tobacco consumption when considering efforts towards tobacco control.

Based on the output approach, the study on which this policy insight is

based, reveals that reduced tobacco consumption will yield net positive gains on national income through increased consumption of non-tobacco goods and services.

Methodology

Following the Economics of Tobacco Toolkit developed by the World Bank, the impact of a reduction in tobacco consumption on the national economy is assessed by using National Input-Output (I-O) tables.

The analysis involves the following three main steps:

- ▲ Estimate the reduction in outputs resulting from the fall in demand for tobacco products.
- ▲ Estimate the increase in outputs from the increases in demand for non-tobacco goods and services.
- ▲ Calculate the net change in output due to the change in final demand as the difference between the two.

Household level tobacco use: 'Crowding out effect'

Tobacco consumption impacts the socio-economic well-being of households. A well-researched phenomenon that is observable in households where tobacco spending is present is the 'crowding out effect' where beneficial products such as education, food and clothing are neglected at the expense of tobacco.

Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) data reveal that on average, a tobacco-user household in Sri Lanka spends nearly Rs. 2,000 per month on tobacco, constituting 4 per cent of the household budget, thus driving out other critical expenditures (Figure 1). Tobacco-user households spend an even greater share of their budget allocation on tobacco, rather than on education (3.2 percent), health (2.7 percent) and housing (3.5 percent).

This 'crowding out effect' would be the greatest for poor families, affecting not only the smoker but the rest of the family as well. For instance, the poorest 40 percent of tobacco-user households, spend less on education (Rs. 788), health (Rs. 426) and housing (Rs. 1,124) than the same economic group of tobacco non-user households, whose respective spending are Rs. 834, Rs. 521, and Rs. 1,218. This suggests that if tobacco users were to stop smoking, they would spend more money on themselves and their family's basic needs such as food, health, education and housing.

Impact of tobacco control policies on national output

The study assessed the impact of reduced tobacco consumption on the national economy. Tobacco control measures are designed to reduce consumer demand for tobacco products. This shift in demand can lead to reduced spending on tobacco products and increased spending on other goods and services.

With the application of the World Bank developed economics of tobacco methodology, the study investigated the net impact of reduced tobacco consumption on the national economy. Taking into consideration the tobacco prevalence trends during the last decade, this study assumed a 20 per cent tobacco consumption reduction to estimate the impact of reduced tobacco consumption on national income. The study assumed that money released from tobacco purchases is spent on non-tobacco goods and services.

This simulation exercise offers empirical evidence that reduced tobacco consumption will yield net positive gains for Sri Lanka's economy.

The total net impact on the economy due to a simulated decrease in

Table 1: Net Changes in Output (2019 prices)

	Scenario-1 (Rs. Mn)	Scenario-2 (Rs. Mn)
The decrease in tobacco-related output	1,974	1,974
Increase in non-tobacco related output	2,524	2,554
Net impact	551	580
Percentage difference (%)	28	29

Source: Authors' calculations.

smoking tobacco consumption is positive in terms of output produced by non-tobacco sectors. Decreasing smoking tobacco consumption by 20 per cent will increase output by Rs. 550 million, which will result in a 30 per cent net benefit to national income through spending of freed up money in other non-tobacco goods and services (see Table 1).

Note Scenario 1 - assumes that the money released from tobacco expendi-

ture will follow the food and non-food expenditure pattern of the HIES when spending on non-tobacco goods and services.

Scenario 2 - assumes that money released from tobacco spending is equally allocated to all the non-tobacco goods and services.

The study offers empirical evidence to support effective tobacco control policies in Sri Lanka. Based on the output approach, the study reveals that

reduced tobacco consumption will yield net positive gains to national income through increased consumption of non-tobacco goods and services.

The study findings indicate that reduced smoking tobacco consumption will lessen the household budget constraints for basic needs, particularly for the poor, as it would free up more resources for basic needs such as food and education.

Thus, the empirical findings show that implementing tobacco control policies to reduce smoking consumption will enhance household welfare as well as the national economy through the spending of released tobacco expenditures on non-tobacco goods and services. These findings offer important evidence for Sri Lankan policymakers, in support of stronger tobacco control measures including higher tobacco taxation.

This Policy Insight is based on findings from an IPS study on 'Talking Tobacco: How Reduced Consumption Benefits the Economy' carried out by IPS researchers Priyanka Jayawardena and Harini Weerasekera.

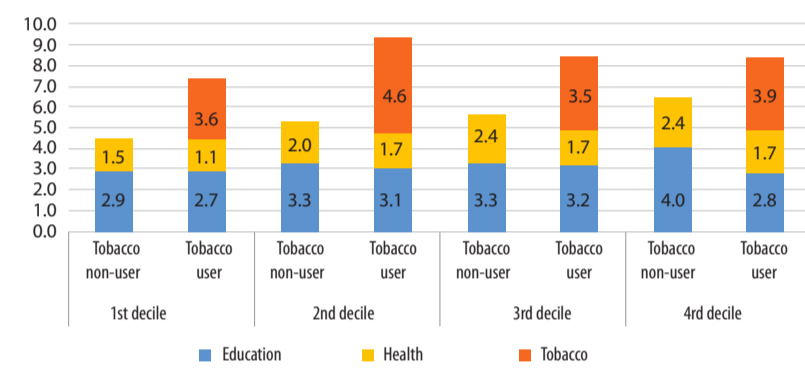
1. World Health Organization. (2017). Economic and Social Cost of Tobacco and Alcohol in Sri Lanka - 2015. World Health Organization Country Office for Sri Lanka.

2. Calculations based on Household Income and Expenditure Survey micro data.

3. World Health Organization. (2019). WHO Global Report on Trends in Prevalence of Tobacco Use 2000-2025. Geneva: World Health Organization.

4. World Bank. (2020). Economics of Tobacco Toolkit. Retrieved September 10.

Figure 1: Share of Expenditure on Tobacco, Health and Education (%) by Tobacco Using Status of the Household Members



Source: Authors' calculations based on HIES 2016 micro-data. Note: Based on HIES-2016 data, a household reported any expenditure on any smoking tobacco product - cigarettes, cigars or beedi, that household is categorised as a tobacco-user household.

Aitken Spence bags highest number of awards

Aitken Spence PLC won 12 awards, the highest number of awards received by a single company at the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability (BCCS) Award 2020.

Aitken Spence emerged first runner-up and was unmatched as the only company to have been ranked among the Top Ten Best Corporate Citizens of Sri Lanka for 15 consecutive years and placed in the Top 3 for eight consecutive years.

The company was also the recipient of the highest number of certificate awards for 'Consistent Commitment and Continuous Improvement' which goes to show the robust sustainability strategy and unparalleled commitment to sustainability from its teams across the diversified Group even during extremely challenging times.

The company was also awarded the top 10 best corporate citizens, triple bottom line awards for plant and people, category awards for environmental integration and environmental commitment, sector award in diversified holdings and consistent commitment and continuous improvements



From left: Country Representative for IUCN in Sri Lanka, Dr. Ananda Mallawaratne, Director and Head of Business Development and Plantations, Aitken Spence, Dr. Rohan Fernando, Director Aitken Spence, and Chairperson, Aitken Spence Hotel Managements, Ms. Stashani Jayawardena, Chairperson, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya, Deputy General Manager, Group Business Development and Sustainability, Aitken Spence, Ms. Yasangi Randeni and Chief Human Resources Officer, Aitken Spence, Rohan Pandithakorralage with the awards.

certificate awards for environmental commitment, environmental integration and environment beyond the business, employee relations and customer relations.

Deputy Chairman and Managing Director of Aitken Spence, Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake said, "My grati-

tude goes out to our Sponsonians for their unwavering commitment especially during these challenging times. These many awards won by a single company validates the approach we have adopted across the leadership of Aitken Spence and is a reflection on our sustainability ethos."

Virtusa sponsors virtual IEEE Sri Lanka robotics workshop

SOUTHBOROUGH, Massachusetts - Virtusa Corporation sponsored the first in a series of 'Workshop' branded events organized by IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Sri Lanka Section Chapter in partnership with IEEE Sri Lanka Section.

Anchored to an alliance that goes back a number of years, Virtusa and the IEEE RAS Sri Lanka Section Chapter moved away from the traditional 'Meet-up' to host a full day virtual workshop, offering an opportunity for participants to engage with robotics and automation experts on a virtual platform.

An Introduction to Robot Operating System (ROS) - the workshop explored the fundamentals of ROS including robot theory, perception, navigation

and manipulation, followed by hands-on sessions on ROS basics, as well as moving and manipulating robots online.

Senior Lecturer, Department of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering, University of Moratuwa, and lead presenter at the workshop, Dr. Peshala Jayasekara said, "Over 120 students, undergraduates, postgraduates, academia and industry stakeholders enthusiastically engaged and invested their day to successfully complete the workshop with an IEEE Technical Sponsorship, one of the highest recognitions in the world."

Chairman of IEEE RAS Sri Lanka Chapter, Prof. Chandima Pathirana said, "Our aim is to host an IEEE Sri Lanka Robotics Workshop each year



The Arduino compatible ZUM0 32U4 robot interfaced using ROS during the workshop

among other events, so that we can work together with expert resource personnel who are on par with global robotics trends and insights."

Ceylon Leather Products opens refurbished store

The refurbished flagship store of Ceylon Leather Products PLC, the manufacturers of Di brand leather goods, was opened at Bambalapitiya recently.

The company has invested Rs. 25 million on new machines to produce quality, genuine leather footwear and handbags.

Due to the company's special production techniques, Di's genuine leather products have acquired the ability to compete with imported leather products. The company's main target of this investment is not only to save foreign exchange but also enable customers purchase quality leather products made in Sri Lanka. A branch is to be opened soon at Nawala, a spokesman for the company said.



Ceylon Leather Products Chairman Dr. Sarath Paranawithana, Deputy Chairman Waruna Maliduwapathirana, Managing Director Sithendra Senarathne, Director of Finance Jayantha Munasinghe, Director Shehani Maliduwapathirana, General Manager Thimira Liyanage and Marketing Manager Vipul Madanayake were present.

DFCC Bank supports Royal International School

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to leave its mark on our lives, businesses, and the Sri Lankan economy.

Slowly but steadily we embarked on the collective journey of returning to normalcy. We owe it to the unfaltering dedication and hard work of our frontline workers and officials who have enabled this process. Organisations today have been able to adapt to the new normal and resume activities, with the continued support of essential services such as their banking partners.

One such story about an uplifting partnership comes from Chairperson of Royal International School Kurunegala, Ms. Sandra Wanduragala, and the support rendered from her banking partner, DFCC Bank.

"When we went into lockdown in March last year, it brought all our academic and administrative duties to a halt. It was a truly testing time, as we



were actively making strides with our development projects during the time. For years, our primary and secondary schools were in separate locations, with the latter being opened in our own five-acre premises, with state-of-the-art facilities constructed with the support of funds provided by DFCC bank," said Wanduragala.

"However, during the pandemic we faced an unexpected roadblock

when the owners of the building where our primary school was housed requested us to vacate with urgent effect, and we were still in the process of building the primary building at our new premises. Understanding the need of the hour, DFCC Bank stepped in and expedited the process to free funds that helped us develop the building, which we opened in January," she said.

EFC hosts forum on "IT-integrated remote work culture"

The first edition of the HR/IR Forum for 2021 of the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) was held recently on the theme "IT-integrated remote work culture: Pandemic and Beyond".

The webinar-forum which brought together experts in HR/IR, Industrial and Labour Law and disability sector from the EFC and its member-companies, deliberated on opportunities and challenges a remote work culture driven by IT entails in the pandemic-clouded environment. It also brought to the table the shifts to be forged in an IT-

driven work culture beyond the pandemic.

Opening the forum, Head of Business Transformation, Hirdaramani Group, Kelum Herat-Gunaratne provided a snapshot of the labour-intensive, diversified conglomerate's key areas of business impact due to the pandemic which included both primary and supporting activities. With an unprecedented toll on sales due to market and operation closure, non-supply of raw materials all of which had a 'domino effect on operations' as Herat-Gunaratne explained, the company

was driven to adapt mitigation strategies which were largely IT-fuelled.

"All were counting on technology as the answer. Infrastructure and finance too had a huge role to play and we strategised collectively to see how we could adapt to this new environment." The IT-HR fusion gave new interventions a further thrust. Resources for remote work, adapting a change in the work culture, and health and safety of the employees were among the core strategies adopted, said the senior professional who went on to remark that the flip-side of the pandemic was that it

'fast-tracked the implementation of Hirdaramani's digital transformation strategy', he said.

Amplifying the existing processes and leveraging the right technology, pushed WSO2 to brave Covid-induced business challenges, said Vice President, Human Resources and Administration at WSO2, Udeshika Ratnavira. Citing monthly town halls, buddy chats, employee surveys, interactive onboarding sessions, support to set up home offices and creating awareness on coping with crisis as chief strategies embraced by her company.

"Employees were missing out on social experience, their mental health was affected, brainstorming sessions were difficult on the phone and there were domestic interventions impacting work which we had to take stock of," she said.

With the challenges, learnings were also many said the HR professional who cited prioritising costs and essentials, investing in technology, fostering a larger and a deeper pool of talent, connectedness, communication, agility, thinking global and well-being among them.

Head of Solutions, Legal and HR and Assistant Director General of the EFC, Sewwandi Jayatunga Wijesekera shared some of the common legal concerns raised by the EFC members in navigating through the new business fabric brought about by the pandemic. Deviations from the terms in the contract of employment, new work arrangements, leave and holidays, remuneration and benefits, monitoring the performance of probationers and poor performers and managing discipline were among these.

Lanka's health financing challenge: why smarter spending is key

BY ASHANI ABAYASEKARA

Across the globe, the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked a new urgency around healthcare systems and universal health coverage – the access to high-quality and affordable healthcare services for all, as and when needed. Such concerns are paramount for Sri Lanka, given its growing debt overhang and weak public finances, apart from the obvious constraints on public resources brought about by the pandemic.

Added to this, a rapidly ageing population, increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancers, and mental illnesses, and tighter access to donor funds as an aspiring upper-middle-income country, pose challenges to sustaining the country's internationally recognised and successful healthcare system (Figure 1) built on the foundations of providing universal, free access to public healthcare services since the 1930s.

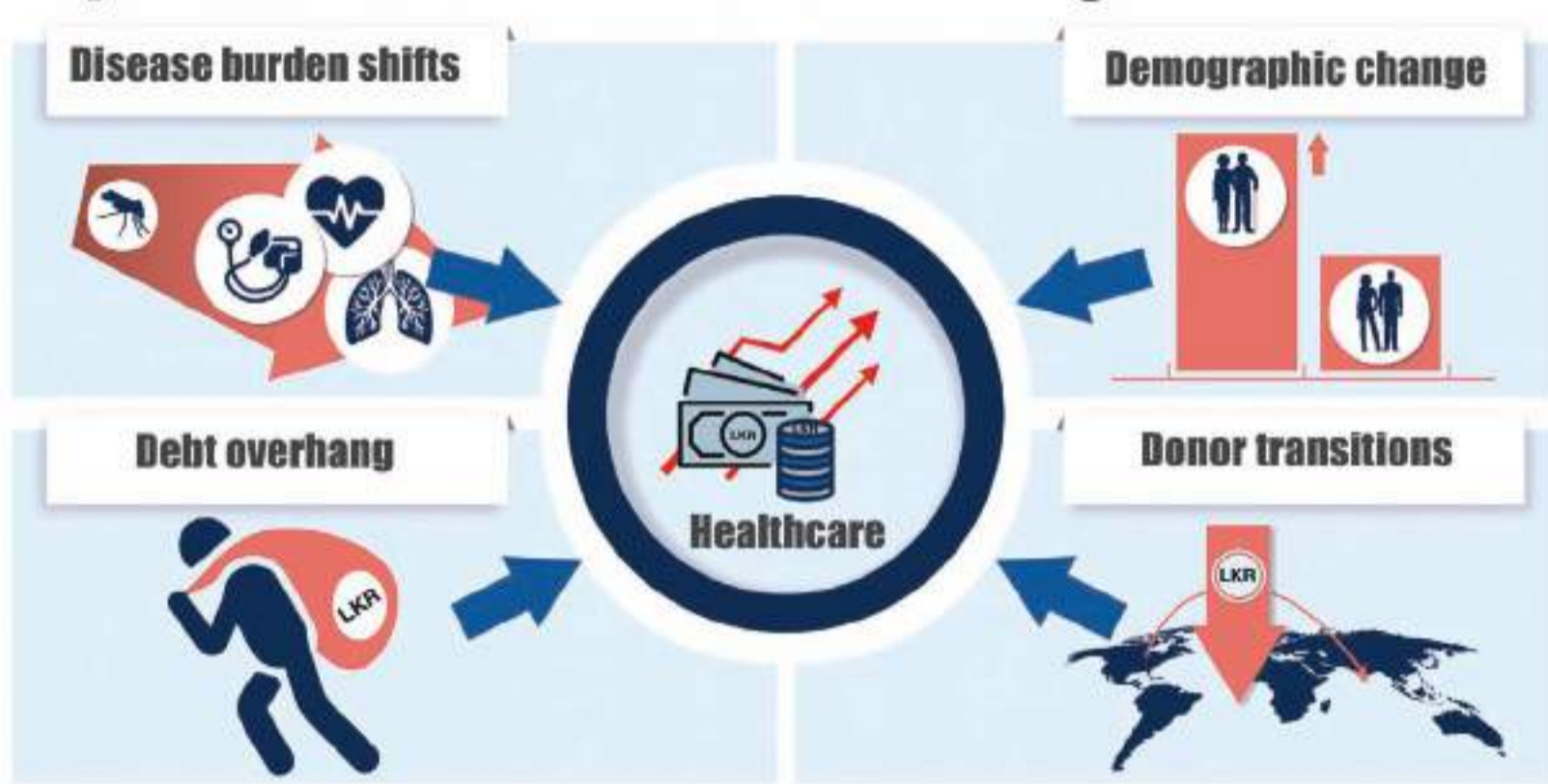
The limited resources available to address multiple challenges facing the health system point to the critical need for policymakers to explore better and smarter ways of investing existing funds. This blog examines some areas in which health spending can potentially be made more efficient, drawing from information collected for an ongoing IPS study.

Current Issues in Health Financing

Inefficiencies in Fund Administration and Allocation

Sri Lanka's public health spending as a share of GDP, at around 1.5%, is low by international standards. This is compounded by inefficiencies in fund administration and allocation. The current system is more a command-control type administration that offers very limited flexibility and authority to individuals to deliver services locally. Although power has been devolved to the provinces in administering funds at the provincial level, they can raise only about one-fourth of their budgets through taxes, making them dependent on the central government for transfers.

Top Pressures on Healthcare Financing



The Provincial Council system is also heavily disorganised. Lack of a proper needs assessment mechanism has created problems in efficiently allocating funds to different sectors, leading to mismatches between required and allocated amounts, as well as actual funding received.

Poor projections of spending priorities

As Figure 2 shows, province-wise capital health expenditure – consisting of expenses for durable and essential items like medical equipment – falls significantly below allocated amounts across all provinces. In contrast, actual recurrent expenditure incurred in provinces – mainly consisting of staff salaries – is higher than budgeted amounts.

A related problem is the lack of a proper system to forecast financial

requirements well into the future. Currently, accounting is done based on an outdated cash basis, where expenditures are recorded only after incurring an expense. For example, in many government hospitals, the process of allocating funds to buy new equipment only starts when the current ones are no longer usable, resulting in significant delays and uncertainties in procuring material when needed. This contrasts with accrual accounting where expenses are recorded before they are actually incurred, thereby securing funds well in time for future needs.

Similarly, future planning to adapt and cater to the changing health burdens in the country is limited. Managing and treating NCDs require a different type of health service delivery model compared to communicable diseases, focusing more on the conti-

nunity of care, at a more personalised level. Meeting the needs of an increasingly ageing population also requires longer-term and costly services; it is generally believed that around 85% of a person's health budget is spent during the final stages of life.

Poor collaboration

These trends suggest the need for urgent investments in infrastructure and capacity, including laboratory equipment and high-quality drugs, specialised physicians and other healthcare workers, elderly homes, and insurance schemes. On the contrary, the 2021 Budget proposes more spending for paediatric care and maternal and child hospitals – which are already well-developed – but does not allocate any funds towards building infrastructure or capacity for elderly care.

Current collaborative mechanisms, both within the government and between the public and private sectors, are minimal. Government ministries, and at times, divisions within a given ministry, often work in silos, resulting in duplication of activities and wastage of resources. Greater collaboration with the private sector, particularly during the pandemic, could have helped in financing Covid-19 related expenses, such as PCR tests and in-patient treatment, among others.

Towards smarter health spending

Prioritisation and efficient allocation and utilisation of available funds are key to addressing the changing health and financing needs of Sri Lanka and sustaining the very positive narrative that has accompanied health system performance over

many decades. Robust reforms are urgently required in the following areas:

Well-developed and transparent accountability mechanisms are important in preventing wastage and inefficient allocation of resources. Clear and monitorable needs assessment procedures should be developed in preparing central and provincial government budgets, while also providing more flexibility and authority to individuals at the local level in decision-making, who have a better understanding of the most pressing needs in their respective localities.

Better planning is also key towards increasing the efficiency of spending. Challenges surrounding NCDs and an ageing demographic have so far not been addressed due to the absence of forward-thinking about emerging problems. Accrual accounting systems need to be adopted in ensuring budget allocations are made for necessary medical equipment, treatment and caring facilities, as well as for training of healthcare personnel in relevant areas, which are typically long-term and costly investments.

Better coordination and collaboration within government ministries and departments, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, is essential to avoid duplication and overspending. Partnerships with the private sector are also important in the context of weak government finances.

In the current context, allowing more private sector involvement in the COVID-19 response, including in procuring vaccines, is a potential win-win strategy, where those who can afford private services can opt for them, freeing up government services for others. The government could still play a supervisory role to ensure procedures are being followed correctly, and conduct audits or impose price limits to ensure reasonably priced services.

The was written for World Health Day - April 7, 2021.

The writer is a Research Economist at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka

Sampath Bank hosts Central Bank's 'MatarataQR' event

Sampath Bank PLC recently hosted the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's (CBSL) MatarataQR event, to drive awareness and increase acceptance and usage of LANKAQR, the common Quick Response (QR) code standard for the country that was introduced in 2020.

Encouraging consumers to adopt the use of QR codes in their day-to-day transactions, the event was held at the Sanath Jayasuriya grounds in Matara under the patronage of the chief guest, Minister of Power Dullas Alahapperuma and Guest of Honour, Director, Payments and Settlements, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, D. Kumaratunga and senior officials of the CBSL, other commercial banks and financial institutions.

Sampath Bank was represented by Managing Director Nanda Fernando, Senior DGM, Operations, Tharaka Ranwala and Group Chief Information Officer Ajith Salgado.

The Bank actively promoted its 'WePay' mobile wallet which helped attract more customers while also onboarding new merchants. A 25% cash back was on offer for payments at over 200 merchants in Matara on the day, made via the LANKAQR enabled WePay digital mobile payment app.



Sampath Bank Managing Director Nanda Fernando

"We are very proud to partner with the Central Bank to host this event that will highlight the safety, convenience and speed of getting onboard the LANKAQR payment standard to the people of Matara. These benefits, coupled with the advanced digital banking solutions offered by Sampath Bank, make it a simple choice to migrate to digital payment technology and we warmly invite the merchants in Matara to come experience the benefits of adopting this new method of payments," said Managing Director, Sampath Bank, Nanda Fernando.

HNB teams up with Hayleys Agri

Sri Lanka's leading private sector bank HNB PLC, renewed its partnership with leading agricultural machinery and equipment supplier Hayleys Agriculture, to offer customers convenient leasing solutions and attractive benefits for Kubota, Agrotech and Farmtrac range of machinery.

The partnership which offers HNB customers special rates on tractors, transplanters and harvesters was inked at a ceremony held at Hayleys Head Office. HNB Deputy General Manager- Retail and SME Banking Sanjay Wijemanne and Hayleys Agriculture Managing Director Jayanthi Dharmasena graced the ceremony as guests of honor.

"Last year was especially challenging for us all. However, we have continued to work tirelessly to provide our customers with the best possible deals available in the market. As such, we hope that entrepreneurs in the agricultural industry will make use of this offer to strengthen and expand their businesses," HNB Head of Personal Financial Services Kanchana Karunagama said.



From left: Hayleys Agriculture Sales Manager Sunil Gamini, Hayleys Agriculture General Manager Sumith Herath, Hayleys Agriculture Director Lushan Abesekara, Hayleys Agriculture Director Amjad Rajap and Hayleys Agriculture Managing Director Jayanthi Dharmasena with HNB Deputy General Manager- Retail and SME Banking Sanjay Wijemanne, HNB Head of Micro Finance Vinodh Fernando, HNB Head of Personal Financial Services Kanchana Karunagama, HNB Head of Leasing Niluka Amarasinghe, HNB Assistant Manager- Leasing Roshan De Silva and HNB Business Development Executive- HNB Leasing Mahesh Ratnayake.

The partnership entails an attractive leasing package with low-interest rates, and customised repayment facilities, tailor-made to suit each customer's budget and income. HNB customers will also be offered the Prestige Prime credit with the bank waiving off the first year annual fee payment. The card

will provide customers with access to unique discounts on automobile products, servicing, spare parts, tyres and batteries.

"At Hayleys we make it our priority to develop and sustain our customers. We strongly believe that a partnership of this nature will provide our clientele afford-

able leasing solutions as well as attractive benefits needed to grow their businesses," Hayleys Agriculture Managing Director Jayanthi Dharmasena.

Hayleys Agriculture will offer customers making use of the facility with a free Agrospray Electric Sprayer.

Lanka Hydraulic Institute bags Gold award



Dr. D.P.C. Lakkath with the Gold Award.

Lanka Hydraulic Institute (LHI), a provider of engineering solutions to the global marketplace bagged a Gold award at the 28th annual NCE Export Awards ceremony at Shangri-La Hotel recently.

"Being a major player in the consultancy business in services export sector, we have consistently been honoured since 2007, and this is the second time Lanka Hydraulic Institute (LHI) achieved the coveted Gold," said its CEO Janaka Kurukulasuriya.

The company's exceptional export performance came despite the tumultuous times in the global and domestic markets with the onset of Covid-19 pandemic worldwide and the aftermath of Easter bombings. When the economic downturn hurt many exporters, Lanka Hydraulic Institute (LHI), remained resilient owing to its far-sighted management strategies coupled with unmatched dedication of its employee base, he said.

Union Assurance extends partnership with Nations Trust Bank

Union Assurance (UA) extended its long-term partnership with Nations Trust Bank (NTB) for five more years, in a strategic move to enhance portfolio value and pave the way for sustainable business growth.

"We are honoured to extend this partnership with Nations Trust Bank. In our journey to provide services of exceptional quality and value, strategic partnerships have proved to be an absolute necessity, and it takes a collaborative effort to deliver exceptional services to customers and increase market penetration. We believe that Union Assurance's partnership with Nations Trust Bank has been an example of how two towering organizations can come together and collaborate to satisfy the multiple needs of clients. To this end, we will also continue to intensify our use of



Chief Executive Officer, Union Assurance, Jude Gomes and Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nations Trust Bank, Priyantha Talwatte, symbolising the partnership with the respective top management teams.

artificial intelligence, and analytics to transform our customer experience and optimise engagement," said Union Assurance Chief Executive Officer Jude Gomes.

Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Union Assurance and Nations Trust Bank partnership was able to deliver robust performance to maintain undisputed

market leadership, and was recognized as Bancassurance Partnership of the Year at the Business Leadership Awards.

Chief Executive Officer, Nations Trust Bank, Priyantha Talwatte said, "The signing of this partnership signifies the largest bancassurance strategic alliance in the financial industry and is indeed a true milestone for both Nations

Trust Bank and Union Assurance. As the leader in the bancassurance offering, this is a natural next step for us at Nations Trust Bank in offering our valued customers holistic financial solutions with industry-leading customer service standards, and we look forward to working with Union Assurance in continuing to provide the same quality services."

Advertorial

“Using LG Inverter A/C costs less than a cup of tea per night”

Using a LG Dual Cool Inverter Air Conditioner in your home will cost you lower than the price of a cup of tea per night's sleep. Due to the high efficiency of the Dual Cool technology, energy loss is minimized to offer up to 70% savings on electricity.

The Dual Cool technology features dual rotary compressors that adjust cooling by automatically controlling the compressor speed. This provides faster cooling up to 40% until the required temperature is reached, and maintained with minimal fluctuation. The 4-in-1 Active Energy Control technology uses a simple four-click operation on your remote, where you can adjust the cooling according to the number of people and activity level in the room.

LG Inverter Air Conditioners use R32 refrigerant gas that has a lower global warming value and amazingly low impact on the environment. Built with an organic compound to allow better heat dissipation, R32 refrigerant



provides powerful cooling and high efficiency for the air conditioner. These ACs offer the world's only Ocean Black Protection – a special coating

applied to the outdoor unit of the air conditioner. It provides exceptional durability against typical Sri Lankan conditions of sand, salt, smoke and pollutants, in order to reduce corroding of the AC's critical parts.

The unique LG ThinQ app allows you to easily monitor and control your LG AC from your home or car at any time. Download the app onto your smartphone and the in-built Wi-Fi technology in the AC lets you change temperatures, switch on or switch off the AC and do more, all with a simple tap.

A LG Inverter Air Conditioner is the perfect solution for your home, especially in this hot weather. Featuring trusted and pioneering Korean technology, this is the AC that you should invest in, as the market leader in the Sri Lankan air conditioner industry. LG Dual Cool Inverter Air Conditioners are available exclusively at Abans showrooms island wide and BuyAbans.com.

CBL Group named Sri Lanka's Best Corporate Citizen in Sustainability for 2020

The CBL Group was awarded first place at the recently held 17th Annual Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards 2020. Organized by the Chamber of Commerce, the award is the highest recognition of the private sector for sustainability and good corporate citizenship.

The award recognizes CBL's contribution to creating meaningful growth across its value chain and beyond and assesses its commitment to sustainable business practices. The win reflects CBL's sustainability journey, having been in the top 10 Best Corporate Citizens in Sustainability in Sri Lanka consistently for 14 years.

“Through our food we are helping to change lives for the better in every part of Sri Lanka. This is a constantly evolving journey and not one that we can do alone and we rely on our value chain partners to support us to achieve our purpose so, ensuring that our partners and our consumers grow with us is a very important part of our business. We are very proud to have won first place the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards and grateful to our consumers for the opportunity to



contribute to the growth of Sri Lanka.” Says CBL's Group Managing Director Sheamalee Wickramasingha.

CBL's value chain reaches backwards to its network of over 13,000 conventional and organic farmers who supply the greens, grains, fruits, vegetables and spices used in its diverse product portfolio. Ensuring the stability and security of its farmer network is crucial to maintaining secure high quality agricultural raw material

inputs and the company is determined to achieve this through improving livelihoods and creating better access to growth for its farmers. In Financial Year (FY) 2019/20 alone, CBL contributed over Rs. 6 Billion to the sector through agriculture purchasing. The Group has invested in excess of Rs. 2.5 Billion to mechanize, automate and develop competencies in the agriculture sector and is actively involved in promoting good health and wellness

for its farmers through the 'Govipawula' programme.

Despite the tremendous challenges of a sudden lockdown at the end of a tumultuous year and a complete halt of its operations, CBL's companies were able to rally very quickly to adapt to the COVID safety requirements and resume operations. As an essential player in the food supply chain, the company focused on getting its products to its consumers and ensuring that there was no shortage in the products that consumers rely on. To achieve this the Group streamlined its vast portfolio to manufacture consumer essential food needs and focused on managing staff constraints. Tackling resource consumption and waste were also key priorities with heavy investments made in shifting to renewable energy, reducing its impact in farming and tackling waste.

CBL's partnership with the International Finance Cooperation to empower retailers and distributors for a future ready retail sector, CBL's Senhasin Jayamaga, aims to build competencies for over 5,000 distributors and sales staff in the CBL network.

BOC among Top Ten Corporate Citizens



The Bank of Ceylon General Manager D.P.K. Gunasekera (middle) with the Award received for Bank of Ceylon as “one of the Top Ten Best Corporate Citizens” in Sri Lanka. (L to R) AGM Human Resource K.A.D. Wijayawardena, DGM Human Resource K.E.D. Sumanasiri and DGM Finance and Planning M.P. Ruwan Kumara are also in the picture with three category awards received for the Bank.

The “Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability” Awards 2020 recognized the Bank of Ceylon (BOC) as one of the “Top Ten Corporate Citizens in Sri Lanka”.

Largest financial institution in the country with over 80 years of sustainable growth together with the Sri Lankan community, the Bank of Ceylon has always borne the interest of enhancing socio-economic well-being of all its stakeholders.

The Bank recognizes this award with honour, as an accreditation to this commitment. Organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce to empower corporate citizens who sustain industry best practices with emphasis on aspects of People, Planet and Profit for corporate sustaina-

bility, this event is one of the leading corporate award ceremonies in the country.

Bank of Ceylon General Manager D.P.K. Gunasekera accepted the award for “Top Ten Corporate Citizen in Sri Lanka” on behalf of the Bank.

The Main award came along with one triple bottom line award and two other category awards which are; Triple Bottom Line Award for Economic Sustainability (Profit) and Category Winner for Employee Relations, and Category Winner of Financial Performance.

During 2019, the Bank has reported 8% YoY growth in its income and 10% YoY growth in its net profit.

SLMFIA welcomes ban on scrap metal export

The SLMFIA in a media release has thanked the Minister of Industries, Wimal Weerawansa for banning the export of scrap metal.

It is a fact that when steel is shaped, it emits sparks of fire. As a practice where scrap metal, an essential raw material for the manufacture of metal, was sold to other countries, the Ministry of Industries had to make a strong decision to turn things around.

By halting the export of this much needed raw material, it was made available to our own metal

manufacturers, thereby boosting the industry in our own country.

This momentous step was taken by the Ministry of Industries. As a result of this bold initiative, the capacity of our metal industry has increased tremendously. New avenues of metal-related manufacture are being explored. Job opportunities have opened up for our youth.

“For this we cannot thank you enough. Sri Lanka's metal manufacturers appreciate you, applaud you and salute you,” the release further stated.

Seylan Bank hosts Webinar for SMEs on taxation and benefits

Continues to support the growth of the ‘backbone of the economy’

Seylan Bank recently hosted its latest webinar for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) titled, “Taxation for SMEs and Reliefs Offered during COVID-19 Period”.

The seminar, conducted by Deepani Herath, Senior Consultant on Tax Services to Price Water House Coopers and former Deputy Commissioner General of the Inland Revenue Department, focused on educating SME customers on the importance of meeting tax obligations and assisting them in ascertaining their tax dues. It explained the provisions for relief within the system, enabling them to make use of tax reductions made possible by the authorities. Participating SMEs were also educated on the concessions pro-



Ranil Dissanayake, Assistant General Manager, Branch Credit, Seylan Bank

vided to businesses in light of Covid-19, enhancing their understanding of tax liabilities and tax assess-

ment, options to extend the period of payment for tax arrears and the extension of bank guarantees and non-refundable deposits. The session also covered maintaining the accuracy of financial statements, VAT compliance and other related areas.

Deepani Herath is a lecturer at the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the University of Colombo and has lectured at Sri Jayawardanapura University, Sri Lanka Institute of Taxation and the Association of Accounting Technicians Sri Lanka. She holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Colombo and a BA in Economics with a First Class from the University of Sri Jayawardanapura.

Oppo launches Avurudu song to spread seasonal cheer

Mobile devices and accessories Brand, Oppo, recently launched an Avurudu jingle ahead of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Sung by Oppo brand ambassador Umarina Sinhawansa, the song also features popular personalities including actor and singer Gayan Gunawardena and choreographer Ramod Malaka and his dance troupe, Cool Steps.

The visual for the song was shot in a scenic village atmosphere & features a host of New Year traditions of great cultural significance. The video also features the newly launched fan-favorite Oppo F19 Pro which is on offer during the season. On the first day of sales alone, the F19 Pro recorded a 200% increase in sales compared to its predecessor F17 Pro.

CEO of Oppo Sri Lanka Bob Li said: “This project helped us to immerse into Sri Lankan culture better. In keeping with the spirit of the season, evolving & upgrading, Oppo has launched two concurrent promotions: Erabadu



Wasi from 2-13 April and Oppo Service Wasi from 5-18 April.”

Sinhawansa commenting on the experience remarked: “It was a great experience working with our young and dynamic artists.”

Actor and singer Gayan Gunawardena noted that the shoot, which happens to be his first major campaign

with Oppo, was an unforgettable experience: “I'm glad to be part of this project – working with Oppo was a very inspiring experience because we were allowed complete freedom to be creative.”

Ramod Malaka, the choreographer for the video echoed Gunawardena's comments.

S-Lon facilitates nation-wide tree planting initiative

S-Lon Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, in partnership with its sister-company News 1st and the Sri Lanka Scouts' Association recently launched a community service initiative ThuruKepakaru to plant 25,000 trees across 25 districts. The project is set to be carried out over 16 days from March 26 to April 10.

Each plant will have a designated scout as the ‘owner’. He or she will be responsible for monitoring and recording growth and wellbeing of the plant. Each plant has a unique QR code which connects to the ThuruKepakaru app streamlining the monitoring process. The inauguration was held on March 26, from 8.00 a.m. onwards, at the Agramathya Vidyalaya in Pannipitiya.

ThuruKepakaru is the brainchild of Group Director of S-Lon Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, S.C. Weerasekera. Speaking at the inauguration, Weerasekera said, “What makes ThuruKapakaru unique is its focus on sustainability. The



design of the project ensures every plant is cared for in the long term. This guarantees that all 25,000 saplings planted today will grow up, over-time, alongside their respective owners. This exercise also trains children

to be accountable, responsible and passionate for preserving nature.”

He emphasised on the importance of reintegrating students with nature and commended the Scouts' Association for taking initiative in that regard.

Ceylinco Life's Family Savari reaches mid-point with Draw 3

Tidings of a gold rush of sorts have reached families in Matara, Piliyandala, Baddegama, Moratuwa, Bandarawela and Batticaloa among others, as Ceylinco Life's Family Savari promotion reached mid-point this month with the value of gold gifted reaching Rs 15 million.

The third bi-monthly draw saw another 103 lucky Ceylinco Life policyholders being chosen to receive Rs 5 million in gold under the 14th edition of this mega promotion, with the jackpot winner from Matara winning gold to the value of Rs 1 million.

Three more draws are to be conducted this year, culminating in a total of 618 Ceylinco Life policyholders winning Rs 30 million in gold via the Family Savari 2021 promotion. The



Ceylinco Life Managing Director Thushara Ranasinghe drawing some of the winners and Directors of the Company ratifying the results of the third draw.

decision to present policyholders with gold instead of the customary overseas holidays and local excursions was on account of the travel restrictions and safety precautions necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In each batch of winners, one receives the equivalent of Rs 1 million in gold, two win Rs 250,000 each, five receive Rs 100,000 each, 25 get Rs 50,000 each and another 70 receive Rs 25,000 each.

SPECTRUM

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APRIL 18, 2021



Dilhara, an ardent promoter of eco-friendly environments

By
Nirosha
Rajapakse



Preservation of the environment is neither a liberal nor a conservative challenge. It is categorically the common sense of any individual. James Hansen declares "Global warming isn't a prediction. It is happening." Under such circumstances, young and stunning award winning actress Michelle Dilhara, comes into the lime light as a source of inspiration for those who are in love with nature.



While the people at large across the world are being intrinsically required to be concerned with the ever growing critical consequences of global warming, Dilhara within her capacity as an ardent promoter of an eco-friendly environment has initiated several projects through which it is expected to mitigate the dreadful consequences of global warming, which are escalating at a proportional level. Apart from being the best up-coming actress at the Raigam Tele's 2019 and the 25th Sumathi Awards 2020, she is also Sri Lanka's the Earth Day Network Ambassador. The Earth Day network is one of the largest environmental organisations of which its partners are scattered in 193 countries.

In an interview with the Sunday Observer, Dilhara opined that the younger generation, the university students in particular are the prospective inventors of the future. She also firmly believes that the role played by them, and of their contribution while being part and parcel in extending their helping hand for the purpose of the reduction of global warming would be of much significance where her involvements with nature projects with the Sri Lankan Universities is praiseworthy.

Dilhara's most recent project was launched on the 06th of April 2021 with the Uva Wellassa University where the emphasis has been on the fight against the ever increasing global warming. The Vocational Guidance



Unit of the Uva Wellassa University was commended for having initiated this program. The Vice Chancellor of the Uva Wellassa University, Prof. Jayantha Lal Rathnasekara, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. This program was launched with a tree planting project in the University premises of which attention was focused on the aspect of global warming and climate change. The program was the brainchild of Dr. Janaka Siyambalapatiya, the Director, Vocational Guidance Unit and Akila Aushadha Bandara, Vocational Guidance Counselor. Dilhara further noted that it was her great privilege and pleasure to see Prof. H M S K Herath, Dean Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture, H M J C Pitawala, Dean Faculty of Applied Science, Prof. Kolitha B. Wijesekara, Dean, Faculty of technological studies, M.F. Hibathul Careem, Registrar, Ms. Tharanga Perera, Bursar, all carrier advisors of faculties, all the administrative and academic staff, the non-academic staff, the undergraduates

and the support staff of the Uva Wellassa University participating in this worthy cause. Dilhara extended her gratitude to Akila Aushadha, Manusha Navarathna the Uva Wellassa University for their untiring effort in making the project a success. Dilhara also had a word of appreciation for all the undergraduates of the Uva Wellassa University. She said that she was amazed to have experienced the true spirit of collective and cohabited style of working of the undergraduates.

Dilhara noted that, currently the world is gravely embattled and threatened by serious repercussions which have come into being, both due to the unawareness and negligence of the industrial community over the methods of mitigation which could be applied with the global warming. It has scientifically been proven that the escalation in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the central reason which aggravates this frequently discussed burning issue. It is crystal clear that the industrial revolution

gradually paved the way for the emission of an enormous quantity of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Meanwhile, as declared by the 2020 World Health Organisation (WHO) report, Dilhara expressed her concern on the deaths of seven million people happening in a year wholly due to air pollution. She further noted that it was of great prominence to have participated in many conferences held internationally where the reduction was on the aspect of the reduction of global warming while promoting the precautions which can arrest the serious consequences of climate change.

Meanwhile, Dilhara was delighted to have been able to distribute over 4000 plants among the school children in the island and the Divulapitiya village folk in particular.

Dilhara is of the firm belief, that the initiation of such a program would eventually facilitate the innovations invented by the university students with an actual concern and empha-

sis given to the well-being of Mother Nature. Dilhara's good cause is also facilitated by the Universities of Peradeniya, Sabaragamuwa, Raja Rata, Sri-Jayewardanepura and Moratuwa. Dilhara commented on a lecture which she delivered on the climate change and global warming with the Hanthana Conservation Society at the University of Peradeniya.

Meanwhile, Dilhara said that together with Ishadi Ilankoon, Secretary of the Hanthana Conservation Society, and the students of all nine faculties of the University of Peradeniya, she was happy to join in distributing dry rations among the elder's homes in Peradeniya during the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

The distribution was done with the able guidance and the blessings of Prof. Upul B. Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya, Prof. Parakrama Karunaratne, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. Saluka Kodithuwakku and Prof. Gehan Jayasuriya.

Celebrating The Earth Day: the voice of the next generation

Our world needs transformational change, and it is time for us, those of the present generation to hold ourselves accountable for our role in the environmental crisis while also calling for bold, creative, and innovative solutions. This year marks the 51st anniversary of Earth Day and this Webinar is designed to commemorate the occasion and to support the worldwide efforts to conserve and revitalise the environment of the blue planet that is our home. If we are to succeed, we must listen to the children who will link hands from around the world during this webinar and voice their concerns and ideas to preserve a pristine environment for their generation.

This is the 17th of a series of virtual zoom panel discussions hosted by the America Sri Lanka Photographic Art Society in Los Angeles California, USA (ASPAS); Member of Photographic Society of America (PSA) and The International Federation of Photography of Art in France (FIAP). The objective of the series is to showcase the beauty of world fauna and flora and promote environmental conservation in the context of nature photography and tourism, with a special focus on the grandeur of Sri Lanka's natural habitat. The upcoming program will commemorate World Earth Day 2021.

At a previous ASPAS Webinar, Dr. Peter H. Sand, former Secretary-General of ICUN, stated, "Pandemics such as coronavirus are the result of humanity's destruction of nature, the illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade, as well as the devastation of forests and other wild places, are the driving force behind the increasing number of diseases leaping from wildlife to humans." The ASPAS Webinars are intended to offer a platform to discuss a more balanced relationship with these ecosystems and the tools that can help us reach this objective, so that future

generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from them sustainably and responsibly.

Earth Day

Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970 which gave voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet. Our planet is an amazing place, but it needs

our help to thrive! That is why each year on April 22, more than a billion people celebrate Earth Day to protect the planet from pollution and deforestation and environment related issues. By taking part in activities like picking up litter and planting trees, we are making our world a happier, healthier place to live.

In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, the world was consuming vast amounts of leaded gas

through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or the press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, the world remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health. Since, the great challenge for the environmental community is to combat the cynicism of climate change deniers, well-funded oil lobbyists, reticent policy makers, and a disinterested public. In the face of these challenges, Earth Day prevailed and established itself as a major movement for global action for the environment.

Environmental movement

Over the decades, it has brought hundreds of millions of people into the environmental movement, creating opportunities for civic engagement and volunteers in 193 countries. Earth Day engages more than one billion people every year and has become a major steppingstone along the pathway of engagement around the protection of the planet.

Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day. As the awareness of our climate crisis grows, so does civil society mobilisation, which is reaching a fever pitch across the globe today. Digital and social media are bringing these conversations, protests, strikes and mobilisations to a global audience, uniting a concerned citizenry as never before and mobilising generations to join together to take on the greatest challenge that humankind has faced. It is quite apparent that the youth of our world should also be engaged in

this vital conversation as an absolutely indispensable partner.

Governments have recognised this for decades and many have introduced some level of climate and environmental education into their education systems. But the truth is that impact of climate and environmental education is in some cases weak, cursory, and still in many countries non-existent. In the decades since the launch of the global environmental movement, it is estimated that more than three billion young people have graduated from high school having learned little or nothing about one of the greatest issues that will shape their lives and their livelihoods for decades to come.

The time is now, indeed it is long overdue, for a massive environmental literacy campaign that can create a generation of citizens, workers and leaders who really understand why and how to stop climate change and environmental degradation, ensuring that every student around the world completes their formal education as an environmental and climate literate citizen. A citizen who is ready to take action and speak up for change and build knowledge and skills for the growing green sector of clean energy, efficient transportation, sustainable business and making themselves competitive for new jobs.

Youth

The youth must also equip themselves with the knowledge and skills needed to build a better future and be stewards of this planet. They must learn that to sustain a functional society and economy, natural resources must be used wisely and efficiently while protecting the ecological systems to ensure clean air, clean water, and food security for all.

But just as vitally, we need to equip future generations with the knowl-

edge, skills, and enthusiasm to survive and indeed thrive in the decades to come. And that begins in school. Even world leaders recognised that pivotal role as far back as 30 years, when the countries that forged the original United Nations climate change treaty in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit enshrined climate education as an essential part of a national response to a global emergency.

Educationalists believe every school in the world must have compulsory, assessed climate and environmental education with a strong civic engagement component. They have also pointed out that the onus for developing environmental consciousness in youth could not be the sole responsibility of schools as the young people need the help of adult allies. There is a role for everyone, parents, relatives, and society to support youth voices and stand alongside them.

It is in that spirit that the America Sri Lanka Photographic Art Society Los Angeles, led by its president, Suriya Jayalath Perera, has organised this Webinar to bring together ten young people from the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and Sri Lanka to voice their concerns and present their ideas on the occasion of the Earth Day 2021. Youth from ages 6 to 18, will address the entire gamut of environmental issues from climate change to plastic pollution. It would be a truly ground-breaking event, and you can be a part of it by virtually joining them on Sunday April 18th, 2021. The webinar will be moderated by Medini Ratnayake.

More Information: www.usacaaspas.com

Join us live on Sunday April 18th, at 8.30 p.m. 2021 <https://www.facebook.com/aspaslausa/live>

-Nandasiri (Nandi) Jasentuliyana, Former Deputy Director-General, United Nations



TOPICS AND YOUNG PANELISTS

1. Themi Perera, Age:16 (Air Pollution), North Hollywood Highly Gifted Magnet, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
2. Mihiri Kamiss, Age:17 (Plastic Pollution), St. Joseph's High School, Edmonton, Canada.
3. Hasala Kalendra Ranwella, Age:12 (Loss of Biodiversity), Ananda College, Colombo, Sri Lanka
4. Dhilena Wickramasinghe, Age:16, (Global Warming and Climate Change), Ponderosa High School, Eldorado Hills, California, USA.
5. Theruni Abesinghe, Age:12 (Forest Ecosystem), Bishop's College, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
6. Alosha Samaraarachchi, Age:9 (Oceans and Marine Life), Hillwood College, Kandy, Sri Lanka
7. Akash Perera, Age: 17 (Water Pollution), St. Joseph's Catholic High School, Barrie Ontario, Canada.
8. Nihara Dumbukola, Age:11 (Plastic Pollution), Woodbridge high school South Woodford, London, The U.K.
9. Akira Alagiyawanna, Age:12 (Oceans and Marine Life), Wycherley International School, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
10. Farah Shamim, Age:12 (Global Warming and Climate Change), Woodford county grammar school

The Art of Camouflage



By
Methlini Hewage



In the struggle for survival in the wild, predators and prey have devised many ways of outwitting one another. It is a biological arms race and at any time either protagonist can be ahead. One successful strategy is to become 'invisible' simply by blending in with the background, a method that is practiced by both hunter and hunted. The tiger's stripes, for instance, look gaudy when seen in a zoo, but in its natural home in an Asian forest the colour of its fur enables it to merge with the leaves, branches and dappled sunlight in the undergrowth. From its hidden position the tiger is able to creep up on or ambush unsuspecting prey. Similarly, a young deer with mottled brown or spotted fur can lie motionless in the vegetation and avoid being spotted by a hungry tiger.

Camouflage is not confined to the higher animals, since 'cryptic colouring' of one sort or another is used by all kinds of creatures to gain a meal or to stay off the menu of another creature. The simplest form of camouflage is 'colour matching'. Many caterpillars are green because they live and feed among green leaves, while creatures such as wolf-spiders, scuttling about on the bare ground, are brown. The shadow on the underside of an animal's body may give its position away, and so many animals employ 'countershading'. The body is dark above but paler below and when seen from the side its solid, three-dimensional appearance is transformed, so that it looks like a flat object, difficult to spot initially or locate accurately. Deer and antelope have pale bellies for this reason.

Many fish and sea birds go one better. Seen from below, the silvery underside of a fish becomes invisible against the brightness of the sea's surface.

Animals

Viewed from above, the darker colours of the fish's back merge with the gloom of the ocean's depths. Similarly, the

pale belly plumage of a sea bird blends in with the glare from the sky and the darker plumage on its back merges with the darker colour of the sea or the rocks below. Some animals go to amazing lengths to be inconspicuous; they very precisely imitate inanimate or inedible objects. Frogmouths are nocturnal birds, living in the forests of Australia and South-east Asia that pass the day posing as branches, to the extent that their markings mimic the texture of peeling bark. Looper caterpillars, stick insects and some praying mantises look like twigs, while other mantises, katydids (a kind of tropical grasshopper), bush crickets and leaf insects resemble leaves, they even sport lifelike patterns of veins.

When the real leaves have dropped from the tree and come to rest on the forest floor, there are horned frogs and a multitude of ground-dwelling insects that have adopted a mottled brown coloration to merge with the decomposing of leaf litter in which they hide.

On the bottom of the sea, fish play the same cryptic game. For example, the aptly named stone fish, also notable for its venomous spines, looks remarkably like a stone, and the leafy sea dragon, a relative of the sea horse, resembles a piece of floating seaweed. Flatfishes, such as turbot and brill, are able to change the colour of their skin in order to match the colour and texture of the seabed on which they rest. But what if the background colour changes? An Arctic fox, willow grouse or snowshoe hare with pure white fur or feathers would be very conspicuous when the snow melts, so they solve the problem by changing colour, not instantly like the flatfish, but gradually modifying their coat or plumage in order to adapt to the changing seasons.

Spring

In the spring, when the browns and greens of vegetation begin to appear but patches of snow still lie on the ground, these creatures molt most, but not all, of their white fur or feathers.

By early summer, when the snow has disappeared completely, the animals have followed suit and are dressed in brown. When the snows of winter return, they molt their summer coats to revert to pure white once more.

FROGMOUTHS ARE NOCTURNAL BIRDS, LIVING IN THE FORESTS OF AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA THAT PASS THE DAY POSING AS BRANCHES, TO THE EXTENT THAT THEIR MARKINGS MIMIC THE TEXTURE OF PEELING BARK



Writers don't arrive, they travel

By
R.S. Karunaratne



If you ask any young man or woman whether they like to be writers, you will get a definite "No" as the answer. If you ask them "Why?" they would say, "There's no money in writing". Therefore, if you want to earn big money, do not try to become a writer. However, there are all sorts of people - teachers, professors and eminent writers - who are willing to offer advice on how to become a writer. I personally feel that such advice may not be helpful if you are not serious about being a writer.

Writing gurus suggest numerous ways to work and improve what you write. The professionals have long years of experience in the craft of writing, but you cannot follow their instructions blindly. You have to experiment and find the right way of writing. There is no royal road to success in writing. However, I respect one advice the professionals give: "Get the habit". If you want to be a writer, sit down and write something on any topic every morning. Those who do not do this remain amateurs throughout their lives. Even if you do not become a writer, the habit of writing regularly helps

in becoming a competent amateur.

If you happen to read B.J. Chute's "When the writer comes of age" you will agree with her views. Chute is a fiction writer who started by writing boys' sport stories. Her target readership was young writers. She says there is no royal road to maturity for any human being. Coming of age is not a chronological matter but a lifetime process. When you start writing regularly, signposts will appear on your way giving you guidance. Nobody can become a writer overnight because the process of writing like that of growing up is one of accepting, testing and rejecting what you write by others. When I started writing as a teenager, there was no one to guide me. But I had an intimate curiosity, a seesaw process of vast enthusiasm hampered by discouraging failures.

Game of writing

As a beginner to the game of writing, there were days when anything seemed possible, and there were days when everything seemed hopeless. Trying to be a writer through a trial and error process is not a waste of time. It is a lifetime experience. As a beginner I might have written nonsense. The number of rejection slips confirmed it. But it was a fine growing ground which you can label as experience. Experience and discipline may be dull words, but you

need both to become a writer.

No writer worth his salt will find his life at all permissible, either in the day-to-day process of living it or in the strict professional process of being a writer.

A budding writer should be able to daydream, waste his time writing and re-writing the same story, starting into space or leaning against a wall watching birds in flight. There will be times your mind will be empty and placid as a millpond. Self-discipline will require you to do your work to the best of your ability. There is no way to avoid drudgery because there is drudgery in household work, office work, in acting, singing, dancing or painting. Although you cannot have a permanent state of high-minded activity, you must not give up writing at any cost. Mental and physical discipline becomes easier through constant practice.

A beginner should read what professionals write because their knowledge can enlarge yours. As Pamela Frankau observed, "There must come a time when ... all your

mirrors turn into windows. When we were young, we were surrounded by mirrors and wherever we turned we saw ourselves. As we grew up, the mirrors dissolved and windows replaced them. Through the windows we see how other people behave and understand the complexity of life. Now we see that everything in life is not so simple. They are complex but wonderful. In the final analysis, we will never know the whole truth of anyone or anything, but we are, like Tennyson's "Ulysses", a part of all that we have met.

Read omnivorously

Although I had to do various dull jobs for a living, I consciously planned to be a writer. I pictured stories in newspapers and magazines with my byline on them. I wanted to write at least one book. Then I was forced to read omnivorously. I had a good teacher who laid a solid foundation in me for grammar with a basic knowledge of Latin. I think grammar is to a writer what anatomy is to a sculptor or the scales to a musi-

cian. Most children loathe grammar not knowing its intrinsic value. Once mastered grammar will support you like a solid rock.

If you wish to be a professional writer, you have to be a confirmed re-writer. Without re-writing you cannot achieve success as a writer. When I started writing I did not have even a manual typewriter. Everything had to be handwritten. It was a real drudgery, but I loved it.

If you can write grammatically, you will develop your own style of writing. There is no need to copy somebody else's style. When you have an ear trained by reading, you will at once know when you go wrong. There are many books written on style. You can read them meaningfully to develop your own style.

Producing lions

Even if you continue to write for six or seven decades, you will not arrive as a writer. All writers only travel. How do you gauge the success of a writer? The only success worth having for a writer is to put on paper what he has wished to put on paper.

It is like the small child who was watching a sculptor working on a slab of marble. After many days of watching him, the child did not know what the sculptor was doing. One day the child saw a beautiful sculpture of a lion where the slab of

marble stood. The child innocently asked the sculptor: "How did you know there was a lion in there?" Like the sculptor, all writers are producing lions. They are not going after money or fame.

Many readers complain that they cannot understand classics. They reflect ways of life alien to us. They make heavy demands on the reader to respond to their strangeness. However, they were modern at the time of writing. Therefore you have to make an attempt to read and understand them.

You have to train your mind to follow the involutions of an unfamiliar way of writing. As Baudelaire said, "The heavenly mechanics of the mind is the source of infinity of excitement". You may enjoy reading 20th or 21st century prose and poetry. They are easy to digest. However, if you have read and understood William Shakespeare, Homer or Dante, your reading will illuminate, broaden and deepen every modern book you read.

When Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "Draw your chair up close to the edge of the precipice and I'll tell you a story", can you give up reading him? Even Charles Dickens pulls us into the world of his Curiosity Shop when he wrote, "Although I am an old man, night is generally my time for working". No modern writer should keep away from such classics.

ALTHOUGH YOU CANNOT HAVE A PERMANENT STATE OF HIGH-MINDED ACTIVITY, YOU MUST NOT GIVE UP WRITING AT ANY COST. MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE BECOMES EASIER THROUGH CONSTANT PRACTICE

Highly valued Sinhala-English Dictionary for all

The new edition of the Sinhala - English Dictionary by Buddhadasa Hewage, a massive book that has more than 2,500 pages consisting 1,50,000 English words similar to 95,000 Sinhala words was launched recently as an author publication. It is of high value for the Sinhalese native language students as there are Sinhala words first to seek the similar English words according to the alphabetical order. And the book has been accepted as a school library book by the Ministry of Education too. The following excerpts are from an interview that the *Sunday Observer* did with Buddhadasa Hewage who is a retired school teacher and a Service Advisor of English teachers. In addition to the dictionary he has published two short story books in English, two English translations of his two fictions, six novels and three short story books in Sinhala.

Excerpts:

Q: How is this book appeared? When did you start the research for it?

A: I started working on my Sinhala - English Dictionary in 1998 during which time I was working as a school teacher. First I started to collect words. I note them down in my note book - It was my habit to use a note book those days. That habit came about thanks to my father who advised me to use such a thing for writing down new words. But there were no any intention of compiling a dictionary back then in my mind. I just wrote down words only for the satisfaction of my father as he was inspecting whether I found new words or not. However, this habit gave me a basic foundation for compiling a dictionary in my later life.

Q: So the dictionary started with collecting words?

A: Yes. But there are other things too that helped me to compile this book. You know I am a creative writer, I wrote few novels and short story collections in Sinhala and English, and I learnt English all by myself. Because of this bilingual writing, I had to deal with Sinhala words and English words mostly and therein I noticed many similarities between two languages. So invariably I found myself writing those words in my note book. Besides that, there wasn't any comprehensive Sinhala - English dictionary where I could find words whenever I want to.

So this is how the book was started.

Q: One can say that an English - Sinhala dictionary is more useful than a Sinhala - English dictionary for students because most of the time they need the Sinhala meanings for their difficult English words?

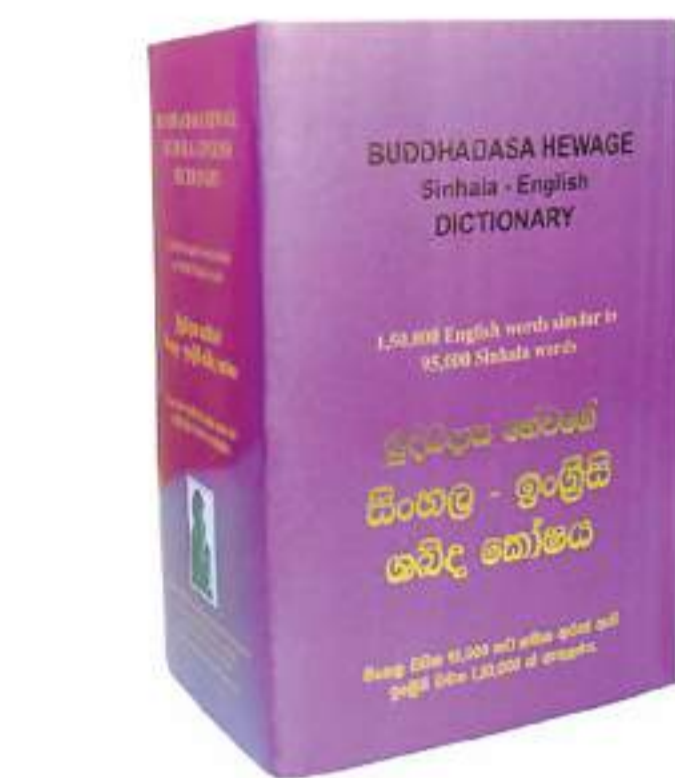
A: Yes, but if you are a student with the native language of Sinhala, you need to know relevant English words for your Sinhala words. In that case, I think this is a more useful book. For instance, we have Malalasekara Dictionary which is an English - Sinhala dictionary, but you cannot find similar English words for Sinhala words from it. You have to know the English language to a certain extent if you use that dictionary. In my Sinhala - English Dictionary I present 95,000 Sinhala words and 1,50,000 similar English words.

There I categorized them into nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, idioms, short forms, prepositions and pronouns, so that one could easily find a synonym in English for a Sinhala word. Actually, the aim of compiling this dictionary is to help Sinhalese native people to find English synonyms for Sinhala words, not to help the rich people who attend to International Colleges or so.

Q: You said earlier that there weren't any comprehensive Sinhala - English dictionary in Sri Lanka. Is that correct?

A: Yes, of course. Here I would like to describe the history of Sinhala - English dictionaries in Sri Lanka. The concept of compiling a Sinhala - English dictionary in Ceylon was presented by British rulers. As soon as they took control of our country they wanted to know the Sinhala language well. Especially, their civil servants needed to know the Sinhala language to understand people's thoughts. So they needed a Sinhala - English dictionary very urgently. Hence, Sir Frederick North, the first Governor of Ceylon (1798 - 1805) decided to compile a Sinhala - English dictionary through a European civil servant. In this way, he carried out his idea by a young British civil servant called John Wine. But he couldn't finish the job.

Then the task of compiling the dictionary came up to another civil servant named Samuel Trolfey. It was in 1801. He compiled at least 40,000 Sinhala words with their English meanings. However, as he deceased untimely, the task was given over to a Father called Benjamin Clough. He



could eventually print the dictionary in 1821. So that is the first Sinhala - English dictionary with 628 pages - the same year he could publish an English - Sinhala dictionary too. Later he edited that first dictionary up to 852 pages and it was published in 1830.

Another landmark of compiling Sinhala - English dictionaries in Ceylon was established when Father Charles Carter came to Ceylon in 1853. He spent twenty years in our country and compiled his own dictionary in 1902. It was actually the most completed one. He edited and reprinted it in 1924. In my view, that is the best Sinhala - English dictionary ever published in Sri Lanka.

After father Carter's dictionary, there published a few more Sinhala - English dictionaries, the first among them was Mudliyar Mendis Gunasekara's Sinhala - English dictionary, printed in 1915. Then another important one appeared in 1948 as (Sinhala - English Dharma Samaya). The most recent Sinhala - English dictionaries are Somapala Jayawardhane dictionary published in 1994 and Somapala Dematapitiya dictionary published in 1995. Before I compiled my dictionary there were seven Sinhala - English dictionaries and I associated them all.

Q: Why did you launch your dictionary as an author publication?

A: If I give my manuscript to a



Buddhadasa Hewage

publisher, he would give me back only a 10 percent royalty which means if a book is priced as Rs. 100, I only receive Rs. 10. If they print 1000 copies of it, they would offer me Rs. 10,000 whereas they would take Rs. 90,000. I think this is very unjust compared to the author's effort for the book. So I thought to publish the book as an author publication.

Q: What about the reader's response to the book?

A: This is actually the third edition of my dictionary, so readers re-

acted to it well. And at the second edition I gave away 100 dictionaries free to University students who came from rural areas and showed their colours at their examinations. I constantly receive letters from the dictionary users.

Q: The first edition of this dictionary appeared in 2013, but it was relevantly a small book?

A: Yes. There was a big problem when it was launched. When I was preparing to publish it I hired a computer operator for the page making and type-setting works of it. That person was one of my close friends, and I gave him 40,000 rupees for the job too. But what happened was he took my final page set-up book by his pen-drive and went to his home in Kurunegala. He never came back. I searched for him to find where he was working. There, I got to know that he had stolen one of the woman servant's money - her three months' salary - in his work place and now he was ready to pay back that money to her by selling my dictionary. I had no option, but to consult lawyers. I met my lawyers and made a complaint too against him in a police station. In the meantime, my lawyers advised me to publish the manuscript that I, though it was a raw one, because if I wait for a more completed one, that person would sell my final corrected manuscript in his pen-drive to someone else and he would publish it. Then I wouldn't be able to prove it as my own dictionary. So that is why the first edition of this book was small.

Q: When we consider the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, we see their Tamil version and other language versions appear in other countries. Unfortunately we don't see a Sinhalese version of it yet?

A: Yes, you are correct. We cannot see such a version. I think the government or relevant authorities must look into this matter. In my case, I only focused on Sinhala - English dictionary which is also a difficult task as there are many meanings for a Sinhala word too. For instance, if we take the word (*Wahanawa*) in Sinhala, it can be shut down, close down, cover, etc. This is why, I think, we need a dictionary with example sentences like Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

Q: In an international stage, we see some standards with regard to dictionary compiling. You cannot just collect

words and publish a dictionary there. First, you have to present the manuscript to an authorized board and take the permission. Then you have to submit it to an editorial board. You have to follow certain standards with regard to its print paper, colour, page lay-out, and so on, if you are going to publish it. But in Sri Lanka we don't see such methodology?

A: You are quite right. We should have such methodology not only for the dictionary publishing, but also for the whole book publishing. Especially, we should have an editorial board. If we have such things, we cannot publish dictionaries with our own consent. This is why many published dictionaries in Sri Lanka are failed efforts.

Q: But your dictionary is also not following the world standards as its print paper is thick and heavy and the words that you have given could be understood by many ways?

A: With regard to the print paper we have no accepted thin paper in Sri Lanka to print a dictionary. So I used this paper though it is thick and heavy. But with other things, I try my best to publish it with accepted standards.

Dictionary compiling in Sri Lanka is not an easy job. Most of the time dictionary compilers die before they see the final output as it's a very long process. And when we consider the aspect of money earning only the publishers take benefits from them. While they earn more and more money, the compilers take only one or two royalty by them.

Actually, there isn't any compiler who takes royalty for his dictionary with each print order, because they are unable to know about the new printing of his book. In most fields we have no ethics in Sri Lanka. Book publishing is one such field that hasn't ethics whatsoever. In that case, dictionary publishing is a way of exploiting writers while dictionary compiling is a painstaking effort for writers.

Q: Finally, what is your plan with regard to your Sinhala - English dictionary?

A: Now I am ready to add Tamil words to my dictionary. Then this would be the only dictionary in Sri Lanka one can find similar English words and Tamil words for Sinhala words. Therein, this could be useful for Tamil people too in addition to Sinhala and English people.

- Ravindra Wijewardhane

Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020, Salman Rushdie's new book

Genre: Non-fiction
Publisher - Random House
Hardcover - 320 pages



The best of best Booker Prize-winning, internationally acclaimed bestselling author Salman Rushdie's new book *Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020* will be released on May. The book is a Random House publication, and is a newly collected, revised, and expanded non-fiction including one original essay from the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

There are four sections in the book. "Before there were books, there were stories", writes Rushdie (Quichotte) in this mesmerizing collection and in the first of four sections, he explores how the "stories we fall in love with make us who we are". And the essay named "Wonder Tales" sees him praising fiction for containing "profound truths".

The second section mainly focuses on writers: from Shakespeare and Cervantes to Samuel Beckett, Eudora Welty and Toni Morrison. Both Cervantes and Shakespeare, he writes, showed that fiction could be "many things at the same time". There is another piece in this section about playwright Harold Pinter, a staunch friend of Rushdie's who stood up for him during the furor over his 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*. There he highlights Pinter's notorious disdain for explaining his work. The third recounts Rushdie's work as president of PEN America. In the essay called "Courage" he challenges the notion that "writers, scholars and artists who stand against orthodoxy or bigotry are to blame for upsetting people". The final section assembles Rushdie's writing on the visual arts.

Here, Rushdie's writing is erudite and full of sympathy, brimming with insight and wit: "Literature has never lost sight of what our quarrelsome world is trying to force us to forget. Literature rejoices in contradiction." *Languages of Truth* chronicles Rushdie's own intellectual engagement with a period of momentous cultural shifts. He immerses the reader in a wide variety of subjects and delves into the nature of storytelling as a deeply human need, and what emerges is, in myriad ways, a love letter to literature itself.

Kazuo Ishiguro's new novel Klara and the Sun published

Genre: Science Fiction
Publisher: Faber and Faber
Page count: 307



Kazuo Ishiguro's new novel *Klara and the Sun* was published last month. It is his first novel after winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. As critics mention, through this book he again proves to be one thing above all: an elegant narrator, a great moralist who shows us the fragility and also the beauty of human existence.

Klara and the Sun is the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behaviour of those who come in to browse and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her.

Klara and the other character Josie live in the United States in the distant future. It's a world that is perhaps not so far off after all and in which people are categorised in a caste system - those who still seem to be useful to society, and those who are sorted out because they don't want to participate, or because they are no longer needed, as artificial beings have taken over many tasks and made many jobs superfluous.

Klara and the Sun is not simply a dystopian fantasy. Like all his books, Kazuo Ishiguro's eighth novel revolves around existential questions: How do we remember - and what? What makes us human? What does it mean to love - and what price are we willing to pay for love? Klara has no memories. She discovers the world through observation and only gradually understands what task she has been assigned. And she learns what friendship is, what love is.

In its award citation in 2017, the Nobel Committee described Ishiguro's books as "novels of great emotional force" and said he has "uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world". This book is a testament for that.

First Person Singular by Haruki Murakami released

Genre - Fiction
Translator - Philip Gabriel
Publisher - Harvill Secker



First Person Singular, a short story collection by internationally best selling post modern writer Haruki Murakami was released recently. There are eight stories in the book and they are told in the first person, with each narrator a man in late middle age who shares interests, such as jazz and baseball, with his author. Only one narrator is given a name: "Haruki Murakami".

The women in the book are remarkably less complex, less individual, than the men, existing primarily as a pretext for the male characters to find out or fail to find out, about themselves. According to the critic David Hayden, "The playfulness with the identity of the narrator might be more rewarding, were it not for the stretches of tepid, underpowered writing. The conversational style can be slack and cliched, speckled with reflections on philosophical questions about ageing, identity, memory and what it is to know oneself".

He also says, after the short story "Spinning Wheels", "in a strange act of literary haunting, Murakami's narrative seems to gather a previously absent depth and power. The language becomes much more acute and vivid, before turning back to the memory of 'a lovely girl ... the hem of her skirt fluttering', whom the narrator met once in high school carrying a Beatles album".

"The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection", "With the Beatles", "Spinning Wheels", "Carnaval" are some of the best stories in this collection. Murakami's books became best sellers and have been translated into more than 50 languages and he has received many honours, including the Franz Kafka Prize.

Jhumpa Lahiri's new novel Whereabouts to release in April

Genre - Fiction
Translator - Jhumpa Lahiri
Publisher - Penguin
Random House India



Pulitzer prize-winning writer Jhumpa Lahiri's new novel after a decade *Whereabouts* is to be launched in April (this month). It follows Lahiri's 2013 novel 'The Lowland and 2006's *The Namesake*'. The book is originally written in Italian and was translated into English by herself. It is the story of a woman protagonist and her journey through life.

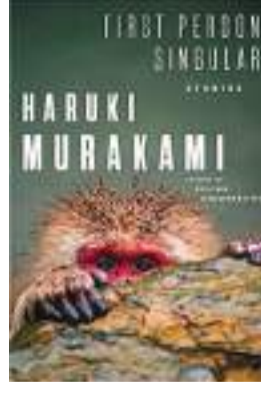
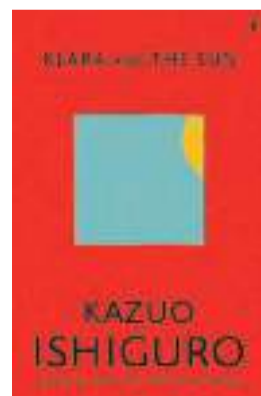
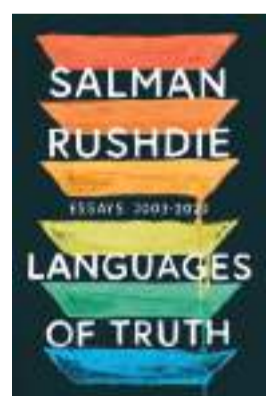
"This is a story of a woman protagonist who longs to belong but dares not conform, who is moving through her life in a city that almost becomes her companion.

"From the sidewalks, parks, and bridges to the pool and the train station that leads her to her grieving mother after her father's untimely death, she moves through the city, one season after another. Until one day, her perspective changes and the life, as she knows it, is transformed," the publisher said in a statement.

As Lahiri said to India media this book was "born from my love of a new language". Exuberance and dread, attachment and estrangement, in this novel, Jhumpa Lahiri stretches her themes to the limit. The woman at the center wavers between stasis and movement, between the need to belong and the refusal to form lasting ties. The city she calls home, an engaging backdrop to her days, acts as a confidant: the sidewalks around her house, parks, bridges, piazzas, streets, stores and coffee bars. We follow her to the pool she frequents and to the train station that sometimes leads her to her mother, mired in a desperate solitude after her father's untimely death.

This is the first novel she has written in Italian and translated into English. It brims with the impulse to cross barriers. By grafting herself onto a new literary language, Lahiri has pushed herself to a new level of artistic achievement.

- Ravindra Wijewardhane



Sarah ended at the convent

SARAH'S BIGAMY



-The
Devastation
Revealed-



BY SANTHOSHYA JAYAMALI SENEVIRATNE

Sarah and Nicolas, the soon-to-wed couple bring Samara across the border, hidden in their vehicle as she's wrongfully accused of carrying illegal drugs. At the border, they pretend to be married, although they aren't and Sarah is arrested for carrying an ornamental gold pagoda in her handbag. She's bailed out the following day and a court case is filed. She wonders why Nicolas and Samara don't turn up to inquire after her and learns later that they're in a secret affair and they've betrayed her. She attends the court case alone, pays a fine and faces a suspended sentence of six months imprisonment. The following week, she flies to a city far away, finds employment there and settles down. She follows a University course to become a teacher. She coincidentally meets a young man (Sherman) and falls in love with him. He suggests Sarah be his niece's home-visiting tutor and introduces her to his family. She gets negative vibes from his sister, Kumberlin, whose husband has faced a tragic death in the past caused by a sudden heart failure after learning that his wife has deceived him. The relationship continues between Sarah and Sherman. She moves in with him. Sarah is conceived, and on the same day, she finds it out and she gets to know some corrupt doings of Sherman's brother, Jerad. She lies low about what she experiences with regard to Jerad. Her visits to the library in the convent becomes more regular, where she falls into a close association with Sister Priscilla. Sarah and Sherman get married and on the same day, Sarah gets to know that the lawyer who represents her at her arrest is a friend of Kumberlin. Kumberlin learns from her friend about Sarah's arrest in the past and makes it a weapon against her. In an antique shop, Sarah coincidentally comes across the ornamental gold pagoda confiscated at the border.

Episode 14

Sarah ended up at the convent, trying to fathom if she was really in a dream. She had her mind floating over the unexpected spotting of the pagoda. The detection had happened amazingly, and she couldn't draw her mind away from the incident.

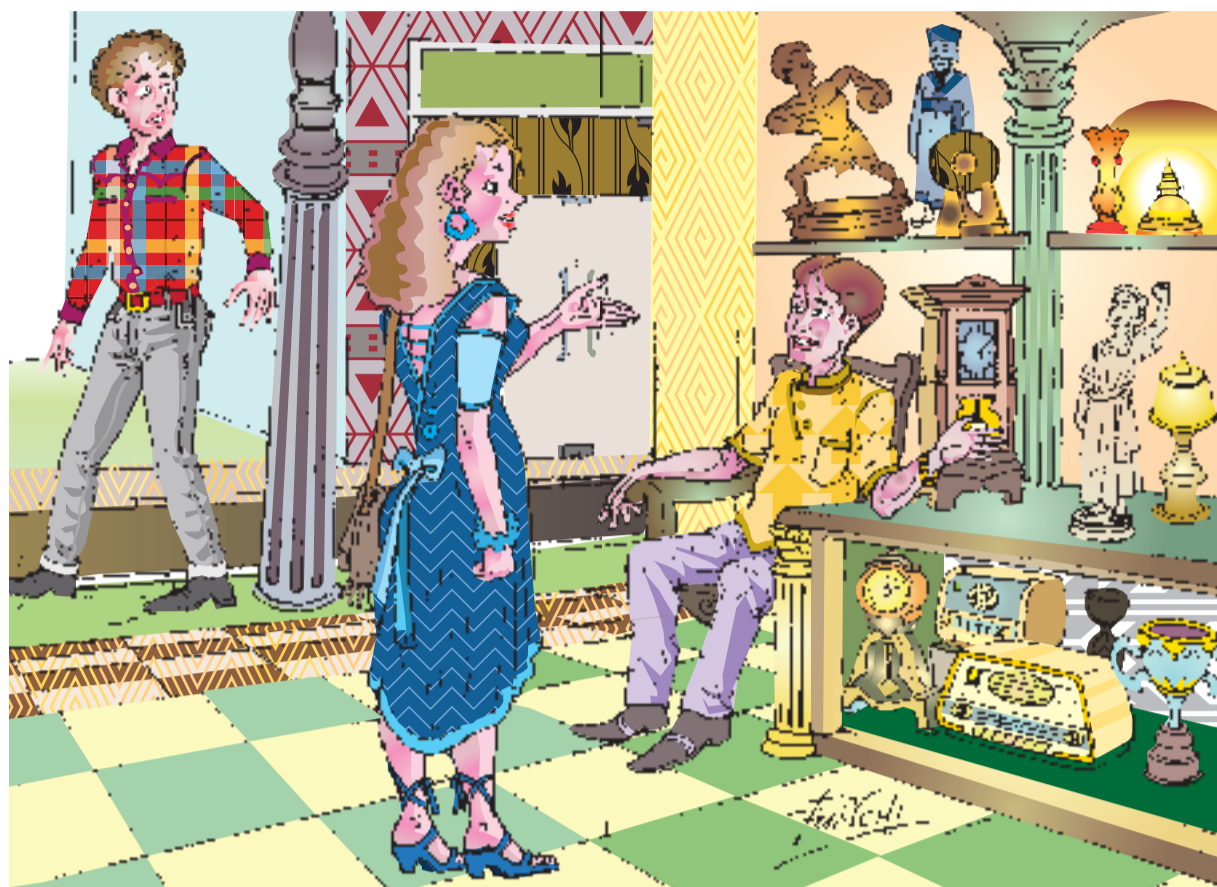
She entered the antique shop. Really speaking, she was grasped. The shopkeeper was preoccupied. It looked as if he wasn't really interested in selling anything. He didn't see her. She moved herself towards the pagoda, and placed her eyes on it. It shined, dazzling her, and everything around, moving the whole environment to a trance. She began to feel the bliss around it for the first time, no matter she had it with her for years before. The shopkeeper was still in a world of his own, not paying attention to the antique lover who had just entered. Sarah felt as if she was slowly moving much closer to the pagoda. It was placed at a higher shelf, and she couldn't reach it.

She looked at the shopkeeper to realize that he was well aware of the shopper now.

"Can I help you?" He asked.
"I was just looking at that pagoda", Sarah mentioned, "can I have a look at it?"

"Sure".
He walked towards it, took it down, and placed it on the glass counter. Sarah slowly moved her hand towards it. At the first touch, she felt as if it took her soul in a grip. She was shaken, and the shopkeeper was observing her.
"Do you like it?" he asked.
"Yes", she replied, with a faint smile on her face.

Now it looked as if the shopkeeper was in a trance, admiring the beautiful antique lover, who didn't have interest in anything else except the gold ornament he had received a few months ago. He looked deep into her face, falling in love with its radiance. Her tiny, expressive eyes were vivid and spoke to him in a language he didn't understand or perhaps he understood bril-



liantly well. And she spoke.

"How much does this cost?" Sarah asked, knowing very well that she couldn't afford it.

The shopkeeper mentioned the price and Sarah wasn't stunned to hear it, as she had expected a high figure anyway. She left the shop, promising herself to return soon, leaving the shopkeeper to wonder.

She ended up straight in the library, pondering over the day's events - she was conceived with triplets, and the very same day of that being notified by the doctor, she had accidentally detected her long-lost gold pagoda. She knew Sister Priscilla would enter the library any time now and she waited. The nun, on her daily visit to the library, was happy to see her frequent visitor, who was diving in eagerness today.

"This is unbelievable", Sarah said, as soon as Sister Priscilla sat in front of her.

The nun who had been expecting Sarah's visit became more than concerned. She knew that something had immensely disturbed her.
"Do you want to go out and talk?" she asked.

"Yes.", Sarah replied.

They sat on the wooden bench placed under the sycamore tree in the convent yard. It was the ideal place to reveal and confide. Sarah divulged her story of crossing the border and the ornamental gold pagoda. The nun listened with patience. However, her story ended with a startle. Sarah was going to give birth to triplets!

"That's wonderful!", Sister Priscilla exclaimed, "does Sherman know this?"
"No, he doesn't, and I'm not saying

it to him either".

"Why?"

"Like I've already told you, he never accompanies me and hardly talks to me anyway".

"Well, I understand. I'm happy you decided to tell me this, Sarah. Now you have to take good care of yourself".

They both held hands and the nun spoke again.

"There's something I've been wanting to give you".

Sarah looked at her in anticipation, and the nun took it out of her pocket, what she was eager to gift her with.
"What's that?" Sarah asked, looking at her fist.

Sister Priscilla stretched out her fingers, exposing a key, a black metal one.

Sarah looked at her, unable to understand her implication.

"This is a key that works for any lock. A little gift from me, Sarah. You might need it".

She placed it in Sarah's hand. It was larger than an average, and also heavier.

"If it's a key for any lock. I'm sure it's very rare", she said.

"Of course! It was gifted to me when I was very young, and I thought of giving it to you".

Sarah took leave from the nun, and she ended up home in no time, returning to the silent life she lived, making sure that Sherman wasn't divulged of any of her findings - neither the triplets, nor the pagoda. However, she became a frequent visitor to the antique shop. Journeying towards her appeal, she hardly knew that Sherman had once accidentally spotted her there, and followed her ever since. Well, Sar-

ah was often visiting an antique shop in town! There had to be some reason! He had to find it out!

The shopkeeper entertained her visits, although he knew that nothing was going to be purchased by her. In brief, a young woman was frequently visiting his shop, whose eyes were well focused on a little pagoda, and in a while, she was gone.

It happened this week, next week and the week after. He decided to have her in a conversation. The idea sounded wonderful. It so happened when she visited immediately after the thought convinced him.

She entered and the shopkeeper couldn't move his eyes away from her. She walked towards her ardor, and began her meditation.

"Only gazing at it every week, but never buying?" he asked.

Sarah was startled by the disturbance and she quickly turned to him. Really, he had become a friend in silence. She smiled.

"Have you fallen in love with the pagoda? If you keep looking at it, one day when you come, it won't be there. Someone else will buy it".

"I know," she said.

"You look tired. Can I get you something to drink?" he asked.

"Sure," she replied.

He walked inside and by the time he returned with a beverage, Sarah had made a decision on bringing the pagoda to light.

"Where did you really get this from?" she asked.

"I get items from many sellers all over. I can't really tell you who sold this. Why are you asking me?" Sarah paused, taking a sip, having

her crystal clear eyes straight on him.

"Because it's mine", she said.

"What?" he asked in surprise.

There was a brief time of silence and Sarah began her exposure.
At the end of it, he gave out a loud sigh of empathy. She left him, thinking of, perhaps never visiting again. After listening to the story, he was overcome by sudden feelings of sympathy towards her, and all his questions about her visits were answered.

Sarah reached home, surprised to see that Sherman was already home and it looked as if he had been waiting for her. He sat in bed, staring at her.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"Just to town", she said, keeping her handbag on the dressing table and almost ignoring his eyes.

"To the antique shop?" he asked.

Sarah quickly drew her eyes towards him and noticed the deep-down rage in his eyes. She feared them and he spoke again.

"I've noticed you going there often and chatting with that man. Good company, right? What a nice couple! Wow!"

She listened to him in disbelief, unable to understand that her own silence had created difficulties now. He threw his words at her, not knowing that his reactions had brought about her silence. And now they met at equilibrium and clashed.

"I want to know right now!", he said, "were you really married earlier?"

Sarah walked to him, wondering if she really heard him. And she heard more questions being posed.

"You were in a marriage earlier? And married me without a proper divorce from your previous marriage? Now you keep visiting that antique shop! Is he your boyfriend? I want to do a paternity test on the baby! I want to know if the baby is really mine!"

Sarah looked at him with burning eyes. He stood up. She felt the three little lives within. Now she was happy that he didn't know it wasn't one baby, really, there were three. All her thoughts were mingled with disappointment and disbelief.

He was wanting a paternity test! He didn't have any trust in her! She walked towards him and held him with both hands by the collar of his shirt. It looked as if she was in an equal level of fury, mingled with sorrow. She shook him back and forth, but he was rigid.

"A test? a paternity test? Are you not ashamed to even think like that?" Sarah screamed.

In her sudden perplexity, she was dazed, and she fell on the ground.

Kumberlin stood right out of their door, listening to the hassle inside. She was overjoyed. More than anything else, Sherman was having doubts of fatherhood! How exciting! Now it was her time to take advantage! Opportunism had to work at its highest! Sidney and Jerad had to be informed of the thrilling excitement!

To be continued next week
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How to make Avurudu healthier this year?

The Sinhala and Tamil New Year is a celebration of harvest, sweetmeats, happiness and plentiful blessings for the upcoming year. A time to spend with family and cherish old memories, of course whilst maintaining health guidelines, and share comfort from the knowledge 'that we got past the challenges from the year that passed.'

It is also a time to indulge in scrumptious traditional sweets; that are either shop-bought or made at home; the fun of sharing plates of food with your neighbours and family member that may include Kokis, Kevum, Aluwa, Asmi, bananas and creamy delicious Kiribath!

However, it is important to monitor one's 'Avurudu indulgence' as unhealthy eating and over indulgence during festive seasons have harmful consequences such as reducing the body's ability fight off infections, most of all worsening the impact of chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure and increase blood sugar levels especially in the elderly.

Medical Nutritionist, Dr. Senani Ranaweera says, "Nutrition is an important aspect of our lives. What we ingest, digest, absorb and utilise supports us with a good quality of life.

With our fast-paced lifestyle we may assume that eating healthy is tough, however good nutrition even during a celebratory time can be achieved". Thus, Dr. Ranaweera shares a few tips on how we can make our Avurudu healthier this year for you and your elderly loved ones:

1. Moderation

Having guilt-free moments to indulge is important, but how much and how often you treat yourself de-



pends on your overall health especially the elderly.

It is important to cut down calories through fat and sugar to prepare for the Avurudu week, limiting the intake of fried food, fat portion control in your main meals, whilst increasing intake of fruits and non-starch vegetables.

2. Be mindful the week before and after

Being mindful the week before and after Avurudu can be a useful

strategy to manage the impact of the sugar rich, oily food. For example, avoiding your Sunday slice of butter cake this week as you know that you will be diving into another two next week is a useful tactic.

3. Skip the sugar in your tea

According to Dr Ranaweera, tea is a good antioxidant for our body, however when consumed with sugar we are introducing more unnecessary calories into our diet.



Thus, avoiding your teaspoon full of sugar, at least for the Avurudu season, will help limit the amount of refined sugar intake.

4. Add some Sri Lankan leafy greens

Inculcating Sri Lankan fresh greens such as Gotu Kola, Thebu Kola and Karavila, mixed with some onions and lemon - sambol style, can be an interesting taste tantaliser as well as a good form of controlling blood sugar levels with their

rich bioactive compounds.

5. Exercise and hydration!

Maintaining an active lifestyle with some movement is important and beneficial, even for the elderly, to manage health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure along with improving one's overall health.

Ensure that the momentum is kept up even during the holiday season to burn off the excess calories.

Similarly, hydration is vital for the good function of our organs, including digestion, maintaining blood pressure and delivering oxygen throughout the body.

Making a few healthier and mindful tweaks in our daily routine in preparing for Avurudu will have a positive impact on our bodies in the long-term, where being healthy is paramount.

Nevertheless, enjoy this joyful time with your family and friends, make wonderful memories during this short time as life is all about happiness and celebration!

MONTAGE

features by Peter Burns | Tel: 011 2 429 429, 011 2 429 228 / Fax: 011 2 429 227

APRIL 18, 2021

The three pieces of advice the world's smartest man shared with his children before he died

Stephen Hawking became a top physicist while suffering from a debilitating disease

BY PETER BURNS

"Life would be tragic if it weren't funny." — Stephen Hawking

At the age of 21, Stephen Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a debilitating disease in which you lose control over your muscles. Given only a few years to live, the future physics genius became severely depressed. His doctors advised him to go on with his studies, but Stephen felt otherwise.

In his mind there was little point in even getting out of bed. However, over time his spirits began to be lifted. Knowing that this was something he couldn't control, he launched himself into doing the things that his physical condition still allowed him.

"My expectations were reduced to zero when I was 21. Everything since then has been a bonus." — Stephen Hawking

Despite the dire prognosis, life turned out much better than expected. Stephen went on to live to the ripe old age of 76, passing away on March 14, 2018. While he couldn't do much with his body, his brilliant mind was able to tackle problems that most ordinary mortals couldn't.

Stephen Hawking the scientist contributed much to understanding how the universe works, but arguably his greatest message to the rest of humanity was his positivity. Even a debilitating illness didn't stop him. Always remember this lesson from the great thinker: No matter your circum-

stances, you can rise above them and become a success.

Advice Hawking gave to his children

Stephen Hawking was a man full of wisdom. In a 2010 interview with ABC News anchor Diane Sawyer, he was asked about the advice he would give to his children. His reply was breathtaking:

"Here are the most important pieces of advice that I've passed on to my children. One, remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Two, never give up work. Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it. Three, if you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is rare and don't throw it away."

Stephen had been married twice, fathering three children. The oldest, Robert, became a software engineer. His only daughter, Lucy, is a writer who co-authored a book with her father. His youngest son, Tim, went in another direction, joining the corporate world. No matter their walk of life, the kids took their father's advice to heart. When he passed away, they repeated one of his lessons in their eulogy:

"It would not be much of a universe if it wasn't home to the people you love. We will miss him forever."

"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet"

Most people go through life just looking at their feet. They forget to stop and look up. However, greats like Stephen Hawking spend a lot less time staring at their shoes, and a lot more gazing at the stars. For

it is curiosity and wonder that are the keys to creativity. Research has shown that they are at the origin of discoveries, big and small. Awareness, excitement, and exploration are all essential building blocks of wonder, which in itself is important for the process of creation.

Much of Stephen Hawking's work focused on theoretical physics. Black holes were his passion. These are regions of space-time where gravity is so strong that it sucks in all the matter around. However, through his study of these phenomena, Stephen realised that black holes weren't just something sitting in the deep corners of the universe.

They could also be used as metaphors for life. In one of his public lectures, the famous scientist quipped that despite the view of black holes as being enormous pits sucking in everything, there is always a way out. Just don't give up trying.

"Black holes ain't as black as they are painted. They are not the eternal prisons they were once thought. Things can get out of a black hole both on the outside and possibly to another universe. So if you feel you are in a black hole, don't give up — there's a way out."

Peering at the countless little yellow dots sparkling above his head in the dead of night allowed Stephen Hawking to look deep down inside himself. It gave him answers not only to grand metaphysical questions, but also the strength necessary to go on in his own personal life. Despite the enormous challenges ahead of him, Hawking pressed on.

"Work gives you meaning and

purpose - life is empty without it"

Purpose has been described as the key to overcoming even the direst of circumstances. Viktor Frankl, the famous Viennese psychiatrist, saw the will to purpose as the driving force of existence. Finding meaning in his struggle allowed him to overcome the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp.

"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'."

— Viktor E. Frankl (quoting Friedrich Nietzsche)

What drives people can be divided into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation are things like money or fame. However in themselves, these are empty. In various studies researchers found that pay and job satisfaction don't always correlate. Instead, something deeper is needed to drive a person to achieve more. It is usually intrinsic motivation, one that comes from wonder and curiosity which is the more powerful factor.

That is why finding work that gives you meaning and purpose is incredibly important if you want to succeed in life. According to an article in the Harvard Business Review, nine out of 10 people are willing to earn less money if they get to do meaningful work.

In a quote otherwise attributed to various famous people, humorist Leo Rosten stated that the purpose of life is to be productive, useful, and above all to make a difference.

"The purpose of life is not to be happy — but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you lived at all." — Leo Rosten

Rosten's ideas point to what some researchers have argued are the two key aspects of significant work. One is to have a broader purpose which is tied to serving a greater good. It's about feeling that you are contributing to something bigger than yourself.

The other key aspect is self-realisation. This is having a sense of autonomy, and being able to express yourself. It's about fulfilling your own desires and achieving what you believe you are capable of. For Abraham Maslow, this was at the highest level of his hierarchy of needs.

Hawking's advice to his kids is echoed by something that Albert Einstein, another physics genius, gave to his own son. Finding meaning in your work can give you enormous states of flow.

"That is the way to learn the most, that when you are doing something with such enjoyment that you don't notice that the time passes. I am sometimes so wrapped up in my work that I forget about the noon meal."

"If you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is rare and don't throw it away"

Love is powerful. Humans are social animals, and the most incredible parts of this experience are the feelings of deep affection that you have towards certain individuals. Science has only confirmed the words of Hawking.

In one study, scientists determined that it generates good stress, which gives you energy throughout the day. In another study, researchers discovered that it improves performance in a variety of activities. Oxytocin is the

hormone responsible for the sensations associated with love. Its release into the body has been found to not only promote social behavior and stress regulation, but also help to alleviate different types of psychiatric disorders.

While love has benefits that can be measured, its beauty lies beyond this. Love acts as a binding force that is above anything else. As medieval Persian poet Rumi so elegantly stated, true love rests on no foundation, but it is an endless ocean that doesn't begin or end.

"Love rests on no foundation. It is an endless ocean, with no beginning or end." — Rumi

The things to keep in mind

Stephen Hawking was a genius, one whose contributions to our understanding of how the universe works have been enormous. He was also a man, one that overcame a debilitating illness. Perhaps this bad fortune allowed him to see things from a different perspective.

This unique way of looking at the experience of going through life gave him immeasurable wisdom. He passed these thoughts onto his kids, and the rest of us. Here are the most important lessons to always keep in mind:

- Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet.
- Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it.
- If you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is rare and don't throw it away.

BY CHAMARI SENANAYAKE

Respecting your dead Kings is an important thing, but giving respect to your ancient Kings in a way that chilled the spines of an audience of several million across the world is a monumental task. And Egypt just did that recently, like the way they built the jaw-dropping Pyramids using unimaginable advanced technologies in the past, the modern-day Egypt created a multi-million-dollar spectacular show of respect to some of their best-known Pharaohs from ancient Egypt.

These mummies are undoubtedly national treasures and they were given such a lavish parade with all honours when they were so carefully transported to a new resting place, a state-of-the-art 'National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation' in Old Cairo, an ancient city as during the 2013 unrest many museums were damaged and looted by the extremist Muslim brotherhood until the Egyptian military came to save the nation.

Millions watch

The Golden Parade was watched by millions of people across the world in absolute awe when these Monarchs were transported inside Nitrogen filled boxes in specially built shock-absorbing chariot-like vehicles to avoid even the minimum damage during the short journey.

The modern vehicles have been built duplicating ancient golden winged ships that once transported them along the Nile for burials with lavish golden encrusted symbols and decorations and braided with each of their names in English, Arabic and Hieroglyphs. World's most famous medias from BBC, Reuters, CBS, ET, Russian TV, French TV, Canadian channels, Australian channels Bloomberg to far away China, Japan and Indonesia, almost all the nations dedicated many minutes in each of their news segments, some broadcasting the entire event live parallel from Egyptian national television channels.

Respect of the President

They were received by Egyptian President Gen. Al Sisi, standing to at-

Amazing display of respect - the Pharaohs' golden parade



tention as respect for the dead Kings while 21-gun salute fired for the ancient Kings giving goosebumps to any spectator watching live or by video. Some of the roads were re-paved to keep these rulers' journey so smooth although it lasted less than one hour along the Nile river, making almost everyone from Egypt gather along the Nile to see this amazing event while overseas correspondents continuously narrated every second of it in amazement.

An orchestra comprising hundreds of musicians and famous Egyptian singers played powerful and heroic themed music while hundreds of beautifully dressed dancers danced to themes of pride and history. When the 22 Pharaohs left their usual resting place, the world-famous Cairo museum at Tahrir Square in these Chariot vehicles, thousands of actors dressed as ancient servants and soldiers lined up their entire way of three miles holding lights and flowers and offering them along the way as the Pharaohs arrived slowly in their beautiful vehicles.

The streets were lit up with thou-

sands of lights while the bone-chilling music from the final place was broadcast along the way loudly. The entire city was brought to a standstill during the event, roads being closed for any other vehicles for over two hours, with only the shining new Police and Military motorbikes and Jeeps, groomed beautiful high-stepping Police horses with officers dressed in their ceremonial clothes and thousands of extras



dressed in ancient clothing and dancers decorating every meter of the streets till the event finished which was attended by many important dignitaries including the Director General of UNESCO.

Twenty two kings and queens

The Golden Parade of Pharaohs included 18 Kings and four Queens from

the 17th to the 20th dynasties of ancient Egypt, approximately 3,600 to 3,100 years ago.

Most of the 22 kings and queens were discovered in two archaeological 'caches' in Luxor in the late 1800s. The most famous Pharaoh was King Ramses II, the world-renowned warrior King of the New Kingdom, who ruled for 67 years and is remembered for signing the first-known peace treaty.



Another was Queen Hatshepsut, who ruled Egypt for a long-time bringing peace, prosperity and famous art and architectural structures to ancient Egypt, became the ruler even though the customs of her time were that women did not become pharaohs, therefore, it is said that she wore a false beard like the other Pharaohs, to show that her power was equal to that of a man.

It was a prideful moment to all Egypt enthusiasts around the world, not just for the crowds gathered, even those who watched online cheered with tears of joy when the Parade was headed by King Sequenre Tao II's Chariot vehicle, who died so painfully in the battlefield fighting for unity of Egypt against invaders.

His face was brutally broken by his enemies and body left to rot unceremoniously in battlefield but he would have never dreamt that a day would come, 3,600 years after his tragic death that his mummy would be leading a Royal parade when the world would watch in amazement.

These mummies will be carefully unwrapped from their vehicles and will go on display to the public from today, April 18.

These great rulers who shed their blood and fought in the deserts for the sake of Egypt wished to be immortal and modern-day Egypt has given them the chance to be seen and loved by the whole world.

Pictures: Courtesy of The Pharaohs' Golden Parade



Features

Comedy gold; the other guys

BY CHAMARI SENANAYAKE

Hollywood has gifted the world with countless comic movies but real comedies that make you laugh out loud despite where you are hard to come by. Over the years I have seen hundreds yet found most being lukewarm comedies. Among some of the best is a movie that I must mention, often referred by some fans as underrated, as it was not much known outside the US. It must be highlighted that 'The Other Guys' is a critically praised movie, which managed even to defeat the famous DiCaprio movie 'Inception' in its first weekend earnings when released in August 2010, reaching Box Office top and ultimately earning good reviews from critics and 170 million dollars earnings.

The film has a great ensemble of famous Hollywood actors with Mark Wahlberg and Will Ferrell in the lead roles as buddy cops along with 1989 Batman Michael Keaton as their Captain, and beautiful Eva Mendes, noted British actors Steve Coogan, Ray Stevenson, famed black actor Samuel L. Jackson and many other famous supporting actors in other roles. While most Sri Lankans might not be familiar with Mark Wahlberg or Will Ferrell, they will be delighted to hear that an actor they know well, 'The Rock', Dwayne Johnson also stars in the movie as an adrenaline charged cocky detective with Samuel L. Jackson.

From the beginning till the end, this movie has such witty humour, and hilarious action sequences that keep the audience truly entertained.

The opening scene of the movie is a car chase along the busy



streets of New York by the two most famous detectives of New York City Police, Johnson (The Rock) and Jackson who often create mayhem and millions of dollars damage along the way chasing criminals. Later, the

two were killed during duty when they idiotically jumped from a building, excited and adrenaline charged with the fame and excitement they get from their daily tasks as the most famous detectives in the city.

The two main characters, Wahlberg and Ferrell are sidelined characters at the Police station,

limited to desk jobs and forced to watch the above two idiots on media and flashing egos each day at work.

My favorite comedic moment of the movie is the silent fight that takes place between the cops at the funeral, which is also one of the comedy Golds according to millions of fans around the world. 'Next time, you me at the library' became a

catchy phrase after the movie's success. One needs to watch the movie to realise that it is an absolute comedy gold with such talented actors and a finely directed and edited story. Although the movie contains some adult themed jokes, it is decent and highly recommended for Sri Lanka's Hollywood comedy lovers.



Russian House marks 60th anniversary of first space flight

A ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's space flight and visit to Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) was held at Russian House in Colombo on a grand scale recently.

The chief guest was State Minister of Skills Development Vocational Education, Research and Innovation, Dr. Seetha Arambepola.

Deputy Head of Mission and Counselor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation, Alexey Budanov, State Minister of Education Reforms, Open Universities and Distance Learning Promotion and President of the Sri Lanka-Russia Friendship Society, Susil Premjayantha, Advisor to the Prime Minister and General Secretary of the Sri Lanka-Russia



Friendship Society, Dr. Saman Weerasinghe, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Russian Federation and Director of Russian House, Anastasia Khokhlova and CEO, Russian House, Buddhapriya Ramanayaka were also present.

The event was organised by Russian House in partnership with the

Sri Lanka-Russia Friendship Society in a collaboration with Anura Samaraweera, Member of the International Association of Philatelic Journalists and Assistant Treasurer of the Philatelic Society of Sri Lanka.

Photographs, newspaper articles and stamps issued to mark Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight in 1961 were on display.

One of the highlights of the ceremony was the presence of Magilin Nona, 'the girl who garlanded Gagarin in 1961.'

She was chosen for this honourable task due to her heroism in saving the lives of several people from drowning when she was a teenager. As she shared her experience of that memorable day 60 years ago.



Sri Lanka poised to become a “Centre of Excellence of Malaria” and an international malaria training centre - AMC Acting Director

Malaria can be cured completely with early detection and treatment

By Carol Aloysius



Today, World Malaria Day highlights the theme of “Zero Malaria - Draw the line against Malaria”. While Sri Lanka has been recognised as a country which has eliminated Malaria, its last locally transmitted case being in 2012, concerns have been raised that the disease which wiped out thousands in the distant past, could re-establish itself from local travellers who visit malaria high risk countries. The *Sunday Observer* spoke to Acting Director of the Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC) Dr. Prasad Ranaweera on the precautionary measures that have been taken so far, symptoms of the disease and where one could obtain free advice and treatment.

Excerpts ...

Q. Malaria is once again in the news. Sri Lanka's achievement of eliminating the disease has won recognition from world authorities. However, health officials are now expressing concerns of a possible re-establishment of the disease with the discovery of imported malaria cases. Why is this?

A. Malaria is the first non-vaccinable disease to be eliminated from Sri Lanka. Eliminating malaria from Sri Lanka was a great achievement. However, in spite of this achievement, we cannot afford to be complacent as there is always a danger of the disease re-establishing.

Q. So what is your biggest worry at present?

A. It is not a resurgence we are worried about, but of the disease getting re-established here. What is needed is continuous vigilance and surveillance to ensure that re-establishment of malaria doesn't happen. Each year we get 50 - 60 imported cases of malaria among people who travel to malaria endemic countries and come back with the disease. So, continued, sustained surveillance and rapid action to treat them is essential.

Q. Name some of the main malaria high risk countries where these Lankan travellers had worked prior to returning to Sri Lanka.

A. Statistics show that most of the malaria cases detected in Sri Lanka were travellers either from Africa or neighbouring Asian countries.

Q. How is Malaria transmitted?

A. The malaria transmitting agent (malaria vector) is highly specific. It is a female mosquito belonging to the genus Anopheles. In Sri Lanka Anopheles culicifacies is the main malaria vector. Some other anophelines are also considered as secondary and potential malaria vectors.

Q. Many people still don't know much about Malaria, what causes it and its health impacts. What is Malaria?

A. Malaria is a mosquito borne disease, found in the tropical world. The parasite responsible is of the Plasmodium species (There are four main types named, Plasmodium vivax, Plasmodium falciparum, plasmodium ovale and Plasmodium malariae. This parasite has a lifecycle both in humans and mosquitoes.

Q. When was the last recorded case of locally transmitted malaria in Sri Lanka?

A. In 2012.

Q. Health impacts? How does the disease affect person? What are the symptoms to look out for?

A. The commonest symptoms of acute malaria are fever with shivering, and sweating, malaise, body aches and headaches. Even headache alone can be a symptom of the disease. Diagnosis of asymptomatic patients is also not uncommon.

Q. If not treated early what happens?

A. If the disease is not treated the patient's condition could deteriorate very fast to becoming unconscious, having fits and internal organs like the brain, lungs, kidneys begin to fail. In this condition the patient may not be treatable and it may be fatal. Therefore, it is very important to diagnose malaria early and treat effectively.

Q. Can the same malaria carrying vector also cause Haemorrhagic Dengue?

A. No. The malaria vector in Sri Lanka does not transmit dengue. Aedes aegypti and albopictus are the vectors of dengue fever and dengue haemorrhagic fever.

Q. Is Malaria a chronic or long lasting disease? Can it be fatal?

A. Rarely does a malaria infection become chronic and long-lasting, unless treated partially or with ineffective drugs. Chronic malaria leads to severe anaemia and a great deal of debilitation and even death if not diagnosed and treated.

Q. Diagnosis - How do you diagnose malaria? What is the most reliable



method used here?

A. The most reliable way of diagnosing malaria is by taking a blood film and examining it under the microscope after straining. However, blood samples must be checked for three consecutive days before excluding a diagnosis of malaria. There are other methods of diagnosing malaria such as by a rapid antigen test, which is usually coupled with microscopy or even using PCR which is only used under certain circumstances.

Q. Treatment - How is malaria treated and where?

A. Acute uncomplicated malaria is treated with oral drugs. Any person detected with malaria should be admitted to a hospital and treatment should be started as soon as the diagnosis is confirmed. Our strategy is to detect and treat the malaria patient before he or she is bitten by a mosquito. In Sri Lanka, everyone, even a foreigner diagnosed with malaria, will be tested and the full course of treatment provided free of charge regardless whether the patient is admitted to a government or private sector hospital.

Q. Where could one obtain the anti malaria drugs you referred to just now? Are they available with the private sector? Pharmacies? State hospitals?

A. Anti-malarial drugs are available with Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC) only. They are not available with the private health sector or in pharmacies in Sri Lanka. Therefore, whenever a Malaria patient is detected, the Anti Malaria Campaign should be informed via a 24/7 hotline (0117626626).

Q. Tell us about your own interventions to prevent the re-introduction of malaria to this country? What are the main strategies used by the AMC?

A. Early detection, complete cure and follow up according to standard treatment guidelines is one of the key strategies of AMC. We screen high risk

groups for malaria. We continuously perform parasitological and entomological surveillance and if only indicated, the vector mosquito control to prevent transmission, and make doctors aware of the need to ask patients for a history of travel overseas and test them for malaria.

Q. What advice do you have for travellers going to such malaria endemic countries?

A. All people travelling to malaria endemic countries should obtain drugs to prevent malaria during their stay abroad. These prophylactic drugs can be obtained from Anti Malaria Campaign Headquarters, Narahenpita or from the Regional Malaria Offices in all Districts in Sri Lanka. These drugs should be started one week prior to their departure and need to be taken continuously throughout their stay abroad and for four weeks after returning. The other most important advice is that if you develop fever within one year after returning from a malaria endemic country, to tell your doctor that you have travelled to a malaria endemic country. Your doctor will refer you to check for malaria.

Q. The Covid-19 epidemic would have posed many obstacles in carrying out activities such as screening and treating patients. How did your Campaign face them?

A. In lighter vein I wish to say that there were no flight restrictions to mosquitos even though travel restrictions were imposed on humans to prevent Covid-19!

Since March 2021, all returnees coming from malaria endemic countries that are quarantined due to the Covid-19 pandemic were screened for malaria before sending them home. The Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC) detected 11 malaria cases by screening in Quarantine camps last year. The lowest number of malaria cases (30) was diagnosed in 2020 because there were fewer returnees from overseas. In addition, mobile malaria clinics are con-



Dr Prasad Ranaweera

ducted by the regional malaria offices throughout the year. These returnees are followed by regional malaria offices according to protocol developed by the AMC with the support of experts. In addition, AMC advised all Regional Medical Officers (RMOs) to carry out entomological surveillance around the quarantine centres. Mobile malaria clinics were conducted with PPE without disrupting other activities.

Q. Your Campaign has a facility where one can obtain useful information in all three languages on malaria screening detection, as well as advice to travellers to and from high risk countries regarding where they should obtain their medicines via your hotline (0117626626). Your comments?

A. All information on preventive measures, treatment, screening and detection are given free by the Anti-malaria Campaign. All preventive drugs are provided free of charge, even for foreigners.

Q. Any other awareness raising methods targeting the public at large? What are the challenges you face?

A. Malaria is becoming a forgotten disease in Sri Lanka as numbers detected are few. This is a major challenge. Therefore, AMC conducts training and awareness programs for clini-

cal doctors and General Practitioners on malaria in all Districts in Sri Lanka. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the World Health Organization is continuously supporting the AMC. Every year, the AMC takes the World Malaria Day as an opportunity to create awareness on malaria among the public as well as among doctors.

Q. What are the gaps you like to see filled in the future so as to more effectively deliver the objectives of the Anti-Malaria Campaign?

A. The Global Fund has supported Sri Lanka with funds since 2003 during the pre-elimination, elimination and post-elimination period. But the Global Fund terminates its financial support for AMC from the end of this year. Thereafter the Government has to bear all costs for malaria in Sri Lanka. In this context I wish to emphasise that the return of malaria must be prevented at any cost. The Anti-Malaria Campaign has moved from paper-based system to digital system. Maintaining this digital platform is another challenge identified by the AMC.

Q. Today being World Malaria Day, what is your theme?

A. This year's World Malaria Day Theme is “Zero Malaria - Draw the line against Malaria”.

Q. Your message to all those at risk in relation to this theme?

A. My appeal to travellers to endemic countries is to please take preventive treatment from your Regional Malaria Office or headquarters of AMC and after returning always check for malaria up to one year. Inform your doctor that you have travelled to a malaria endemic country whenever you develop fever within one year after returning from a malaria endemic country. Then your doctor will refer you for testing for malaria. By doing this you will support the activities of the Anti Malaria Campaign to keep Sri Lanka malaria free.

Q. Future plans with regard to Malaria in Sri Lanka?

A. We hope to establish a “Centre of Excellence of Malaria”. This will be an international malaria training centre. As I mentioned earlier, Sri Lanka is the first country to achieve malaria elimination targets in this region. We have successfully maintained our malaria free status for the ninth consecutive year in the presence of vector mosquito.

The effectiveness of our strategies to achieve this goal has been proved beyond doubt. So we are now ready to share our experience with other countries who are about to reach elimination in the coming years.

Family Time Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
18				19			20			
			21			22				
23	24	25		26			27	28	29	
30				31			32			
33			34			35				
		36	37			38				
		39				40		41	42	43
44				45			46			
47				48			49			
50				51			52			

DOWN

- (K) Word said before church lets out
- Flood-control embankment
- Turn over ___ leaf (2 words)
- (K) Type of exam
- (K) Right next to you
- (K) Wheeled shopping convenience
- (K) Something to wear in the fall
- (K) “America the Beautiful” color
- (K) Mr. da Vinci
- (K) Simple horn honk
- (K) Have, as a possession
- Make others gung-ho
- Domination, as over a craft
- The O in IOU
- (K) Serving of butter
- Stockades of weapons and ammo
- Run off at the mouth
- (K) Like one running a fever
- Words before “nose” or “hair”
- (K) Green gemstone
- (K) Hated rivals
- (K) Allow in
- ___ in comparison
- Goad on
- Thing entered in court
- (K) Rim
- (K) Freshly straightened and vacuumed
- Young boys
- (K) Weapon filled with water

ACROSS

- (K) Man of Eden
- Hypodermic needle amts.
- (K) Choir voice type
- Prefix with “mart” or “van”
- (K) No one should break it
- (K) Sound from a certain type of pet
- Barely obtained (with “out”)
- Something miners pick out
- Timely, generous benefit
- The Gospel's there (2 words)
- To the right of true north
- “Gone With the Wind” plantation manor
- Abstract drawing form in the '60s (2 words)
- (K) Affirmative answer
- (K) “Spare” thing at a barbecue
- In a kind way (2 words)
- Martians and such
- (K) Person shouting “out”
- ___ Gay (historic bomber plane)
- Life of luxury
- (K) Opposite of “post-”
- \$20 handed over for a \$25 bill?
- (K) Food fat unit
- (K) With zero left over
- (K) Thing created in the mind
- Large fruit similar to a grapefruit
- Jeans company
- “Heavens!”
- (K) Home with worms
- (K) A man to look up to
- (K) Groups of collectibles

Sudoku 13

Have fun with this highly addictive logic-based number placement puzzle, the objective of which is to fill the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 sub-grids that compose the grid contains all of the digits from 1 to 9. The solution to the puzzle will appear next week.

			6					
			3		4	7		
5	7		4			9	6	
7	1		8			3	5	
	8		7				6	
	2	5			3		8	4
4	5			2			3	8
	6	8		5				
				8				

Can you find the answer to this riddle within the solved puzzle?

Riddle:
What can be pulled over one's eyes?

Last week answer:
1-A) Scan

Last week solution

7	8	4	6	9	2	5	1	3
9	5	1	4	8	3	7	2	6
3	2	6	5	1	7	4	8	9
2	6	5	1	7	4	3	9	8
4	1	7	8	3	9	6	5	2
8	3	9	2	6	5	1	4	7
1	7	3	9	5	8	2	6	4
6	9	2	7	4	1	8	3	5
5	4	8	3	2	6	9	7	1

Feature

Hunters without a forest!



—Text & Pix by—
Mahil Wijesinghe

After visiting Mawaragala forest hermitage (featured last week), we moved to nearby Kotabakiniya where traditional Veddhas' ancestral home is located in a scanty forest area and dwelling place of Veddha Chief Uruwarige Wanniya. The place is out of bounds for visitors except a few locals due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among the many groups of people who had to leave their traditional homes, the Veddhas have attracted a great deal of attention. The Veddhas are regarded as descendants of some of the early aboriginal inhabitants of Sri Lanka. In the history of the Sinhalese there is evidence to suggest that Veddhas provided shelter to the Sinhalese and made common cause with them in times of turmoil.

Although the term "Veddha" generally denotes a person who lives by killing 'animals' as scholars have indicated, this term also refers to persons who live by fishing and bird hunting. There are a

few places in and around the Mahaweli System C Area where scattered Veddha settlements are still found. With the diminishing forest habitats and the spread of Sinhala culture the Veddha in most other areas have been gradually absorbed to the mainstream of civilisation.

Quiet dignity

The development of the Mahaweli areas downstream of Mahiyangana for agriculture and to set up forest and wildlife sanctuaries necessitated the evacuation of Veddhas from some areas, such as Dambana, which was their traditional home. These families were provided land in Hennanigala in System C.

The quiet dignity and intelligence of Chief Uruwarige Wannila-etto befits a leader of an ancient race, indigenous Wanniyalaetto community (Veddha).

Newer generations

He does not rage against the filtering influences of the 'modern' world. This he considers to be inevitable. What he desires is that the newer generations maintain the knowledge and identity handed over by one generation to the other over the centuries. He abhors the forced changes they have been compelled to accept in the name of development of the area.

This development is perceived and designed by dominant communities and the lack of sensitivity to the needs of the indigenous people in these development plans is inescapably obvious.

"I want others to recognise us as a distinct people and allow us to live in the land we have been living for over 30,000 years", said Uruwarige Wannila-etto.

"All successive governments would have introduced the development schemes probably with good intentions. But the effects of all those were disastrous to us. They came to discuss with us only after the important decisions were taken and the project implemented. By that time the damage was already done," said Chief Uruwarige Wannila-etto.

It was in 1983 that the last of the indigenous forest territory was legally transformed into the Maduru Oya National Park and the community who had lived there

for thousands of years was driven out to flat rice-fields, namely System C under Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project.

The hunter-gatherer community then began to be considered as poachers and their traditional livelihood was made a criminal offence with the creation of the National Park.

Hennanigala, a village in the Mahaweli scheme, is a few kilometres away from Dambane and now hosts some of these dispossessed people when Maduru Oya National Park was set up.

The first generation members of resettlements speak with a deep sense of wrongful deprivation of a way of life. The second generations born and bred in the new land shy away from discussing their origins and do not appear to have even the thinnest thread of connection to their distinct past.

A well-researched and thoughtful policy with a supportive legal framework is required for a meaningful restoration of what the Wanniyala-etto (Veddha) community has lost and what it needs in today's context.

Their claim to this land is historically uncontested and their contribution to the richness of the Sri Lankan socio-cultural fabric immeasurable.

THE FIRST GENERATION MEMBERS OF RESETTLEMENTS SPEAK WITH A DEEP SENSE OF WRONGFUL DEPRIVATION OF A WAY OF LIFE. THE SECOND GENERATIONS BORN AND BRED IN THE NEW LAND SHY AWAY FROM DISCUSSING THEIR ORIGINS AND DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE EVEN THE THINNEST THREAD OF CONNECTION TO THEIR DISTINCT PAST

Veddha Chief Uruwarige Wannila-etto in his home at Kotabakiniya



Veddhas' paintings at Kotabakiniya



Veddha bakes 'Roti' at Kotabakiniya



Veddhas sell souvenirs to visitors



Veddhas' souvenirs for sale at Dambana



Traditional Veddhas' home at Kotabakiniya



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Advanced Level Examination from October 04th to 30th

– Minister of Education Prof. G.L. Peiris

Minister of Education, Prof. G.L. Peiris said that arrangements have been made to conduct the Advanced Level Examination of year 2021 from 04th to 30th October this year. This examination was earlier scheduled

to be held in August this year.

Minister announced this speaking to the media at the Ministry of Education in Battaramulla.

Minister also said that it has been planned to hold the Year Five Scholarship Exam on Sunday, 03rd

October 2021 and the G.C.E. Ordinary level Examination starting in the last week of January 2022.

It was a difficult task to cover the school syllabuses completely owing to the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Generally, schools func-

tion for 200 days in a year. But this year, schools functioned only for 150 days. In the Western Province schools functioned only for 130 days. We could not rectify this situation via online education as the internet facilities are not available

in all areas throughout the island. Accordingly, we arrived at this decision after cautious discussions, he said.

Media Secretary of the Ministry of Education Buddhika Wickramadara was also present.

Advanced Level Results before the end of April

– Minister of education Prof. G.L. Peiris

Minister of Education Professor G.L. Peiris said it would be possible to release the results of the Advanced Level Examination before the end of April this year so that there will not be any delay for children to get admission to the Universities. Minister made these observations while participating at a press conference held in Galagedera area recently.

"We expect to release the results of the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination that concluded recently by June this year so that those who sat the examination may start their Advanced Level classes in July. By that the students will be able to continue their studies without any interruption. We are unable to take a definite decision regarding the Universities owing to the hostel problem. We will find a solution for this problem very

soon. We also need to take steps to reopen the Universities. We expect to obtain the instructions from the Director General of Health regarding the possibility of vaccinating the University Community.

Likewise there is a problem regarding the coconut oil. It is this government that first called for an inquiry regarding this. Others are trying to take credit for that. There is no need for anyone to find out about this. It is the government that found out about this issue. If there is a problem we should find out the exact position regarding it after conducting an inquiry. Sri Lanka Customs do not have stores and that is why the consignment was sent to the stores of the

importer and the stores were sealed. There is no possibility to release that stock to the market. We will take stern action against those who have a hand in it.

Further, our government should make a statement of the stance it take regarding the decisions taken by the Human Rights Commission. We will use a local mechanism to safeguard human rights within Sri Lanka and fulfill our duties and responsibilities to the highest level. What we say is that foreign institutions should not be given that responsibility. We will continue with the Commission established to inquire into disappeared persons.

Join the Digital Platform of National Educational Reforms...

The process of preparing National Educational reforms framework to build a qualitative educational system to suit the new world was inaugurated by His Excellency the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa recently and a digital platform has been created to obtain public opinion.

Ministry of Education requests to submit your proposals and ideas regarding how country's education system should be designed by directly accessing the <https://egenuma.moe.gov.lk> website after accessing



www.moe.gov.lk official website of the Ministry of Education.

Clerics, Educationists, Principals, Teachers, Representatives of the General Public, Parents, Stu-

dents, Past Pupils, various Professionals and any other person representing any other party is free to participate in this either individually or collectively and may also submit the proposals and ideas in either Sinhala, Tamil or English languages.

Ministry of Education further requests every person to participate in this, considering it to be a national duty and an important responsibility entrusted to you to develop country's education into a qualitative and productive education system for the future generation.

Ten best A/L revision tips from past students

If you're determined to get as many "A" grades as possible when you open your A/L results in August, you may be searching for better ways to revise for your exams to make sure you get there. Nothing beats hard work, especially when it comes to studying, but there are ways you can guide your brain to remember information easier which supports your ability to learn.

We have gathered the best revision techniques from past A/L students who have achieved top class results to help you understand how you can learn better to improve your A/L results.

1. Create a Revision Timetable

Building a revision timetable can add structure to your revision and help you identify which A/L subjects you need to prioritize to get better marks. Creating a revision timetable is a great way to organize your study time, plus it also helps boost your motivation to revise for your exams.

2. Take Regular Study Breaks

Do you feel stressed, tired and that no new information is entering your head? There is no point forcing you to study for hours upon hours as this will not result in a positive outcome. Taking regular study breaks and exercising is proven to engage your brain in studying and improve your exam performance in the long-run. See the proof below:

3. Use Mind Maps to Connect Ideas

If you find it difficult to remember tons of new study notes, Mind Maps may be the key to improving your memory. The theory behind mind mapping explains that making associations by connecting ideas helps you to memorize information easier and quicker.

4. Understand Your Learning Style

Everyone thinks that there is a best way to study but the reality is that each person is different. Once you understand whether you are a visual, auditory, reading/writing or kinesthetic learner, then remembering and recalling new information



will become much easier. Practice will also tell you if you work better studying during the night or in the morning/daytime.

5. Practice, Practice, Practice

One of the biggest recommendations that past A/L students recommend is to do as many A/L past papers as you can. Practicing past papers will help you get familiar with the exam format, question style, time pressure and overall improve your ability to retrieve information quicker.

6. Collaborate with Classmates

If you find your coursework to be too much, why not divide the course study notes between trustworthy classmates and share your notes with each other. This will reduce the amount of workload you need to do to prepare for your A/Ls plus you will gain an insight into how other students learn.

7. Variety is the Spice of Life!

Mix up your study habits and methods by listening to podcasts, watching videos or documentaries, moving to new study area or even something as simple as using different colors for your study notes.

This is different to the other A/L revision tips mentioned here as it encourages you to try a few different things to see what fits for you. Your brain will recall where you were or how you revised for a topic which will help you remember more informa-

tion. Give it a go!

8. Day of Your A/L Exam

The day of your exam can be the most stressful of the entire examination experience but there are ways which you can minimize your anxiety such as avoiding panicking friends, giving yourself plenty of time to get to the test centre plus don't underestimate the power of eating a healthy breakfast the day of your exams!

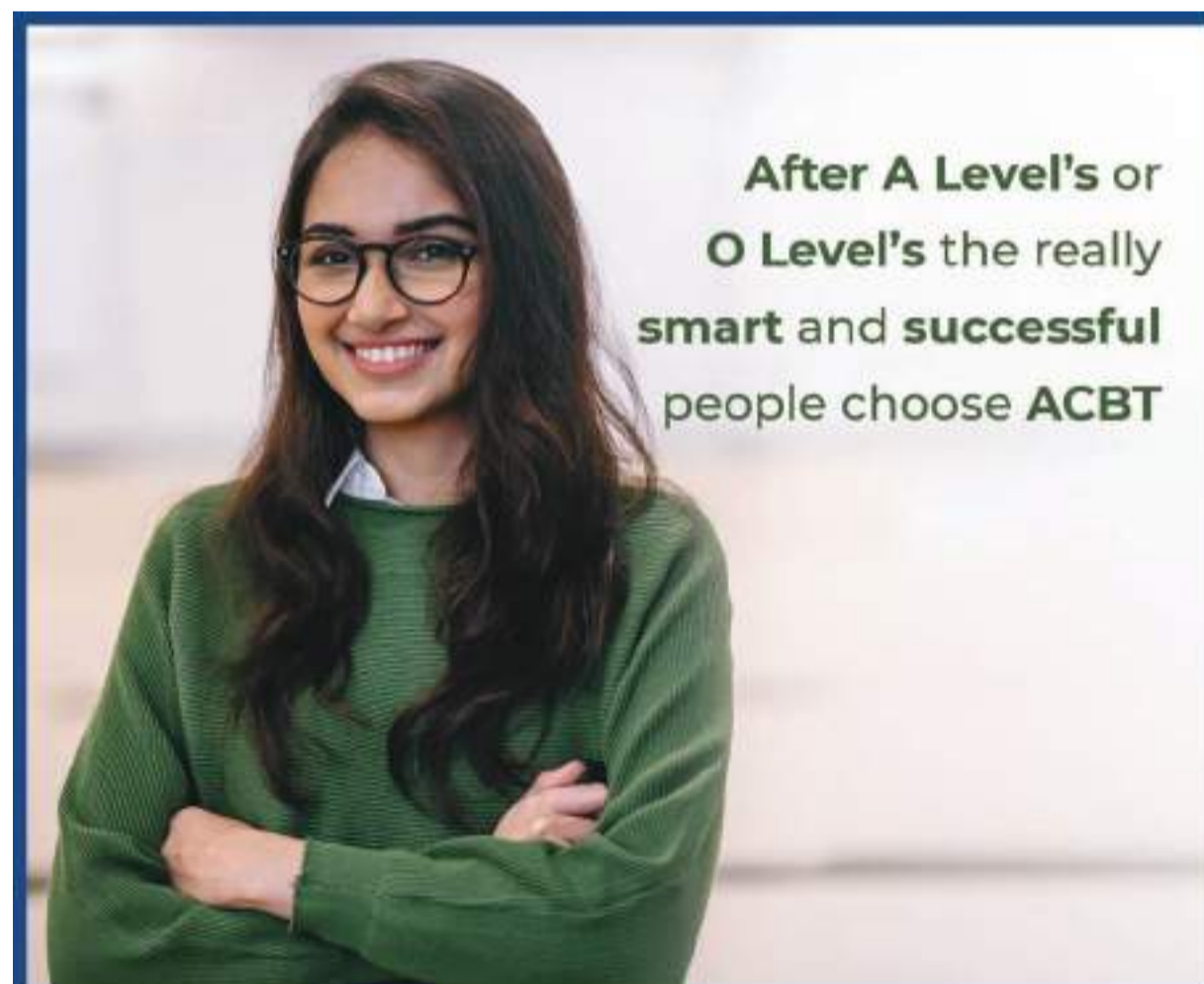
9. Adapt for Different A/L Subjects

It may seem obvious but many students try to study for different subjects using the same study methods. Your A/L revision should take account of the difference between your subjects and the challenges they represent. For example, Flashcards are an ideal study aid to help you prepare for a Spanish, French, German and exam such as A/L Science where you need to remember key definitions. An Online Quiz is a great way to test your A/L Maths skills while you would highly benefit from using a Note to study English.

10. Apps for Students

If you want to stay ahead of your friends with the latest technology, get the best student apps before anyone else. Not only will they help you show off to your friends,

If you're stressed and feeling worried about your upcoming exams, try these A/L revision tips to ease your mind!



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Advertorial

THE IMPACTFUL RESEARCHER South Asia's first-ever partnership to conduct virtual research program



Prof. A. Bakr Ibrahim



Prof. Athula Gnanapala



Prof. M.S.M. Aslam

The Research and Publication Unit of the Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, has collaborated with the Emerald Publishing and College of Healthcare Management and Economics, Gulf Medical University, Ajman, UAE, in launching a four-month research program on 'Writing Impactful Research'. The program's whole objective is to develop impactful researchers by enhancing the scholars' research and publication competencies in the region.

The course combines didactic topics to understand how to write a quality manuscript on any business and management domain and the ways and means of publishing in top-tier research journals in the world. There is no course fee associated with the program, and it is delivered free of charge as a CSR program.

Academics and researchers interested in scholarly publications were identified as the target group of the program.

The program will be conducted from 22nd April 2021 to 5th August 2021 through the Online Platform: GoToWebinar. The participants will receive a certificate - jointly signed by the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Emerald Publishing, and Gulf Medical University, UAE, at the end of each webinar.

A 'Certificate of Completion' will also be issued to all the participants who can maintain a minimum of 75% attendance throughout the series.

Dr. Jayantha N. Dewasiri (Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka), Ms. Sangeeta Menon (Publishing Relationship Manager, Emerald Publishing), Prof. Sudhir Rana (College of Healthcare Management and Economics, Gulf Medical University, UAE), and Prof. Muhammad Kashif Saeed (GIFT University, Pakistan) are working as the regional co-ordinators of the program.

Recently, Emerald Publishing has appointed Dr. Jayantha as the Brand Ambassador for the South Asian region and Prof. Kashif is representing UAE for Emerald's brand ambassador program.

The program is focused on the rationale and complexities in research publishing, how relevant is the innovative approach in research for targeting high impact journals, philosophy of research, generating research questions through problematisation, identifying research gaps, selecting and studying literature, the rationale for methodology selection, how to select the suitable journal for publication, structuring the manuscript, and understanding the publishing process.

Moreover, there are special sessions from Emerald Publishing, Clarivate Analytics (Web of Science), and Elsevier (Science Direct) on how to improve article acceptance rate and publish quicker, ethics in publications and how to eliminate typical mistakes in the publication process, how to take your research to the next level, and tools facilitating research writing.

The resource panel of the programme consists of eminent scholars such as Prof. Kashif Saeed (GIFT University, Pakistan), Prof. Vikas Arya (Rajalakshmi School of Business), Prof. Satyanarayana Parayitam (University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, USA), Prof. Abhishek Behl (Jindal Global University), Prof. Murugan Patusamy (University of Hyderabad), Prof. Umesh Bamel (International Management Institute), Prof. Sudhir Rana (Gulf Medical University), Dr.



Dr. Jayantha N. Dewasiri

Subhasree Nag (Web of Science), Dr. Shubhra Dutta (Science Direct), Miss Sangeeta Menon (Emerald Publishing), Prof. Nakul Parmeshwar, Dr. Amila Jayarathne (USJ), Dr. Jayantha N. Dewasiri (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka), Prof. Tharusha Goonerathne (UoC), Prof. Arosha Adhikaram (UoC), etc.

Commenting on the program, Professor Athula Gnanapala, Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka), stated that "The role of an academic institution is to find the new knowledge and disseminate the same.

Research plays a vital role in finding new knowledge and journal publications support communicating the same. As a region, there is a lack of impactful research published in top-tier academic journals.

We intend to address this gap by enhancing the scholars' research and publication competencies through this program.

Further, we are establishing some reputed journals in collaboration with global publishers such as Emerald to develop the region's research infrastructure.

I believe that it is the primary responsibility of any Academic Institution".

Professor MSM Aslam, Chairman of the Research and Publication Unit (FMS, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka), stated that "We can see that most of the Academic Institutions in the region have deviated from its mandate, it is required to develop research and innovation skills of the scholars to boost up any economy.

Most of the time, we intend to emphasize that it is a responsibility of the Government, but I see that as a responsibility of Academic/Professional Institutions.

Accordingly, we developed this program with the support of Emerald Publishing, Gulf Medical University, GIFT University and few other Institutions to address the same".

Commenting on the Programme, Miss Sangeeta Menon (Emerald Publishing) stated that "ever since the inception of Emerald Publishing in 1967, the core of our ethos has been to change lives through learning and championing fresh thinking.



Miss Sangeeta Menon

This also means working closely with partners that share our vision of providing innovative tools and services to build confidence and capability in impactful research.

We have always known that researchers, especially in developing countries, often need additional support in understanding how to make significant contributions to their field through writing impactful research and to keep up with the ever-evolving world of research publishing.

To be able to support a free program that brings in experts from around the world to guide researchers is no easy feat.

We at Emerald Publishing are glad to be the Academic partners of Sabaragamuwa University's 3-month long webinar series, 'Writing Impactful Research,' a much-needed program in today's time that goes beyond borders".

Prof. Abu-Bakr Ibrahim (Dean, College of Healthcare Management & Economics, Gulf Medical University) commented that over a period of time, the Academic Institutions have realised the importance of research publications, achieving publications in high-quality journals seems difficult without having proper training on it.

The avenues of such training are very limited in the Academic world. I am pleased to see that the College of Healthcare Management & Economics, Gulf Medical University, Ajman, UAE, Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka and Emerald Publishing together came forward to provide this training by hosting the webinar series on "Writing Impactful Research".

The webinar series is aiming to cover many important topics such as understanding the publishing process, expectations of editors and reviewers, conducting literature review and understanding conceptual/empirical methods, choosing the right journal etc.

Hence, the webinar series attempts to provide integrative training to generate impactful research.

Dr. Jayantha N. Dewasiri stated that 'there are no specific courses that solely focus on enhancing research and publication competencies of the researchers.

We tend to learn only the methodology; in a research methodology course, but not how to publish in a top-tier journal. Most of the time, we tend to learn things from our own experience, and we develop this program in addressing such a gap.

Accordingly, the eminent panel of speakers will share their own experience on publishing art and science in impactful journals. Currently, we have more than 2000 registrations for the program, and I hope it will be an amazing experience for the researchers in and out of South Asia".

The registration link for the programme: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/registration/757500153752116237>



TRAVERSE FAR TO GATHER YOURSELF

"THE WORLD IS A BOOK AND THOSE WHO DO NOT TRAVEL
READ ONLY A PAGE" – SAINTAUSTINE

By
Vasana
Abeynayake



Travelling through different places gives a chance to meet new people. And talking to them about themselves or ourselves gives us a different way to see things. If we get to meet a person who has a completely different way of seeing things, spending some time with them, helps us to think things in a much broader way.

Travelling helps to explore different places, getting to know the place's culture, its tradition, how people celebrate culture and what type of food they eat. Meeting different people helps to increase our knowledge about the particular place we visit.

Getting to see the place ourselves gives us some lifetime experiences and helps us to learn more than reading it from books. Travelling is very helpful in getting out of our comfort zones.

While travelling we get a chance to do the things that we are not able to do. It is a great stress booster that helps to refresh and to keep away from all the tension and worries.

Travelling helps us to divert our mind and is a great change of pace. Change of scenery around us helps us to think better and gives a clear idea of what can be done in a particular situation if one is stressed. There are many different ways through which traveling affects our personality and life.

Travelling through different places gives a chance to meet new people. And talking to them about themselves or ourselves gives us a different way to see things. If we get to meet a person who has a completely different way of seeing things, spending some time with them, helps us to think things in a much broader way.

Travelling to a place where we haven't been before help to increase our knowledge about its history, festivals and food.

Talking to them face-to-face gives us a clearer picture of the place than reading it from books. We might also be able to know about the things that are not written in the books by visiting the place itself and talking to the locals. Visiting these places give us such a wonderful feeling that cannot be expressed in words.

Going to different places gives us a chance to meet new people. It helps to build friendship. Spending time with people helps us to learn about their culture more closely. And we get to see

how someone of our age is living its life. Sometimes it can be completely different from ours. Hence, travelling has got immense benefits. It helps us to move out of our comfort zones, make new friends, enhances your creativity, knowledge and gives more positive thinking. As soon as you step off the plane you're instantly excited, happy, carefree and lighthearted.

You have left all your worries behind and become present in the moment as you navigate the novelty of your new environment. Removing the stress from your life completely changes your mood and in order to do that, you usually have to do something that removes you from the stress. Travelling has the power to change your life in many ways. First, when you use those vacation days for travel, you are opening yourself up to new experiences and extending your comfort zone. Stepping outside of your comfort zone is something we talk about a lot because it is a vital tool that makes you grow as an individual. It breaks down those barriers that are holding you back. Once you let those barriers down or conquer them by doing something that scares you or makes you feel uncomfortable, you are letting yourself develop into a more experienced version of yourself. Travelling changes who you are as a person and it's something that you don't realise until you do it. It brings out a

different side of who you are as an individual.

We are living in a multicultural society but most of us don't obey others culture. Go for the worldwide trip then you will learn all society's culture then automatically you come up with an awareness of culture and you will obey those cultures. Complete tasks and generally stay as cautious as possible, People prefer to follow rules. Every country has multicultural habits. You will understand the culture by travelling all over the world.

Travelling all over the world makes so many new friends. You will find the meaning of true friendship. One can make lot more friends all over the world. Making new friends gain perspectives on your life.

A quality of spirit that enables you to face problems or pain without showing fear is called as brave of a person. Travelling practices a man to become braver than previous. Travellers meet weird people. Every traveller becomes brave by travelling more and more. Moreover, the new environment gives chances to learn about tolerance to all the travellers.



CHANGE OF SCENERY
AROUND US HELPS US TO
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BE DONE IN A PARTICULAR
SITUATION IF ONE IS
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WHICH TRAVELING AFFECTS
OUR PERSONALITY AND LIFE



WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT RESEARCHERS,
ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, OFTEN NEED ADDITIONAL
SUPPORT IN UNDERSTANDING HOW TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR FIELD THROUGH WRITING IMPACTFUL
RESEARCH AND TO KEEP UP WITH THE EVER-EVOLVING WORLD OF
RESEARCH PUBLISHING



Institute of Chemistry Ceylon Seminar on “Important Aspects of Cosmetics”

Cosmetics have been widely defined as ‘a substance or preparation intended for placement in contact with any external part of the human body’. Humans have been using various cosmetic substances for at lesser 10,000 years for purposes of beauty and maintenance. Cosmetics have turned into a huge need in society today and is now one of the biggest markets. Cosmetic advertising was previously directed mainly at women, but now they have been targeting a wider audience to include people of all walks in life.

With the intention of spreading awareness on the widely growing cosmetic industry and to tackle the stigma around the chemical usage in such cosmetics, a seminar on “The Important Aspects on Cosmetics” will be conducted by the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon via Zoom, on the 15th of May 2021 from 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.



As consumers of so many day-to-day cosmetics that are ranging from shampoo, cologne, toothpaste, deodorants, face wash and make-up etc. it is important to know exactly what comes in contact with our skin. Personal grooming and hygiene is paramount for a person’s wellbeing. This seminar would also be of immense use to anyone who is looking into stepping into the Cos-

metic market with products of their own or even to be a specialist in the Cosmetic Industry.

The program hopes to cover topics such as the Biochemistry of Skin Care and Ageing, Fragrance Chemistry in Cosmetics, Cosmetic Formulation and Microbiology, Quality Control in Cosmetic Industry and the Marketing Aspects of Cosmetics.



IESL Celebrates the beginning of a new era at 114th Annual Sessions



Induction of New President Eng K P I U Dharmapala for the session 2020

The 114th Annual sessions of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka was held on 8th April 2021 at Main Hall, Bandaranayake Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) Colombo. This marks the ceremonial inauguration of the 114th session which was initially scheduled to be held in October 2020, postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country.

The main highlight of the annual sessions is the official handing over of the mantle of Presidency to the incoming president for the session 2020/2021, Eng. K. P. I. U. Dhar-

mapala by the outgoing President, Eng. (Prof) S.B.S. Abayakoon.

Emeritus Prof. K. N. O. Dharmadasa, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Peradeniya graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

Certificates were bestowed upon members of the Institution who were transferred to the class of Honorary Life Fellow, Honorary Life Member and Fellow. Further certificates were handed over to members who became International Professional Engineers and awards were given to the winners of IESL competitions.



Presentation of Mementoes to Chief Guest



Awards of Certificates for Members



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Advertorial

How to use your LinkedIn profile to power a career transition

BY JANE HEIFETZ

Are you raring to change careers? Break into a whole new line of work that makes you leap out of bed, happy to go to work every day? Parlay personal passions into professional endeavors? Or focus on a different clientele, type of product, or service?

We all know the power of LinkedIn for job hunting and networking. But how do we use it to help change careers—to make sure we're found by the right recruiters, hiring managers, colleagues—not ones from our past, but from our future careers?

It's tempting to create an "everything under the sink" profile that makes you look qualified for both the job you have and the one you want or for a variety of new functions, industries, or roles. But that'll just confuse your readers and send them running—to others' LinkedIn pages.

Instead, focus your profile on your new career direction, just as you've tailored your resume to specific jobs. In both cases, you highlight your most relevant experiences and minimize or omit the rest. Here's how to do that on LinkedIn:

Headline. Focus first on your headline. LinkedIn auto-populates this field with your current position, but don't let it. Instead, use the 120 characters to write your own eye-catching headline.

Why is this so important? If I'm searching for someone like you on

LinkedIn, my search results will reveal only your name and headline — and I could easily overlook you. But if you write an irresistible headline, I'll take the time to click to your entire profile.

Let's look at how one mid-careerist uses her distinctive headline to attract the right people and opportunities.

Kristi Sullivan's been a successful marketing executive for over 15 years. While still very committed to her current Marketing VP role, she also wants to add a new direction to her career path: marketing small businesses in the health and wellness industry. And she's a devoted yoga practitioner and instructor. So this is her two-part headline:

She immediately distinguishes herself from other marketers by putting health and yoga first. And she attracts people needing help with their holistic health and yoga businesses.

Check to see how distinctive your headline is by searching LinkedIn for people like you. Kristi found lots of "marketing executives" but no one else with holistic health and yoga in their headlines—a very good sign.

Summary. Now that your headline has attracted the right people, keep them reading. Tell a compelling story and write it in the first person. Unlike resumes, your LinkedIn summary gives you much more space (up to 2000 characters) to highlight past accomplishments and connect them to what you want to do next.

This is especially important if you've changed careers before. Craft a cohesive narrative that pulls together what might otherwise appear to be fragmented pieces of your professional past. This will avoid leaving your profile reader wondering what the heck you're trying to do now—or why you appear scattered and unfocused.



Here's how Kristi accomplishes this. She stitches together three areas of her professional and personal endeavors: marketing small businesses/nonprofits; women's business success; and holistic health/yoga instruction and business consultation.

She immediately hooks her profile readers with this opening statement: I am devoted to and excel in three areas—each area strengthening the others: marketing small businesses and nonprofits; women's business suc-

cess; and holistic health and yoga. Let me expand a bit on each:

She makes it easy for readers to quickly skim her summary by including headers that call out each of the three areas. And she introduces each area with a sentence that ties it to the others. For example, in the Women's Business Success section, she connects to her 15 years of marketing at the economic development resource center where she's been working:

Because I'm passionate about enabling women to make positive differences in the workplace and the economy at large, I launched the Farmington Valley chapter of B.I.G. (Believe, Inspire, Grow).

And then in the Holistic Health/Yoga Instructor and Consultant section, she makes connections to her

work in economic development and women's business by noting:

I see holistic health as a critical component of individuals', organizations', and communities' wellbeing.

Finally, she ends her summary with an invitation to specific types of people:

I'm always interested in hearing from holistic health business owners and women entrepreneurs, as well as economic development professionals. Please contact me via InMail.

Experience. Once you've nailed your headline and summary, tailor each of the positions in your experience section. Here's how:

- Continue to write in the first person—to provide continuity with your first-person summary.
- Focus on accomplishments, not responsibilities, as you would in any resume or profile. But highlight only the accomplishments most relevant to the new type of work you're seeking. Make those accomplishments concrete by noting the problem you solved, how, and the specific results you generated.

Here's an example of how Kristi focuses on some of her most relevant accomplishments—fund raising, client acquisition, and social media:

I've brought in \$.75M in new funding and over 20 new clients... I established this Connecticut nonprofit's

presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, growing its followers by 150% in the first year. I also conceived an e-newsletter, blog and vlog to enhance our social media presence and website...

Recommendations. As with any LinkedIn profile, sparingly add recommendations to selected positions — the ones most relevant to the new type of work you're seeking. Invite one or two people to recommend you. And don't hesitate to direct their testimonials; you'll make it easier and faster for them, and more effective for you. Tell them exactly the type of positions you're now targeting and the skills you'd like them to highlight.

Images and Media Samples. Again, as with any LinkedIn profile, use images and media samples to draw attention to your most impressive accomplishments. Add them only to the positions you want your new profile readers to focus on. For example, Kristi added her colorful business card to her summary section, a video screen shot and link to her presentation about internal social media strategies, and a photo of her teaching yoga on a stand-up paddleboard.

When you're trying to get into a new line of work you have to prove that you have skills in a new area when you've always focused your career elsewhere. With a targeted profile that catches readers' attention you'll position yourself well to make that change.

Slow Down and Write Better Emails

BY ERICA DHAWAN

Misunderstandings are rampant in today's workplaces. While poor communication habits may feel inevitable with colleagues, we should always strive to engage with clarity and empathy, especially as we come to rely more on remote work and digital communication. What is a good first step to improving our habits? Relearning what it means to read carefully and write clearly.

Not so long ago, we shared information with our colleagues across a table, listening to people's ideas and responding accordingly. Today, so many of those exchanges happen in written (or typed) form — think email, text, IM — meaning that listening in its traditional sense has been replaced by reading text on a screen. The problem with this, according to the linguist Naomi Baron, is that we comprehend less when we read on a screen than we do when we read print; we devote less time to reading something in full, and tend to skim and search for key takeaways. And when it's our turn to reply to a message, we feel so burdened by the volume of emails we have to write that we end up sending sloppy, terse, or confusing responses.

Given how central reading and writing comprehension is to our virtual lives, it's time to remind ourselves what good communication looks like. As I describe in my book, *Digital Body Language*, reading carefully is the new listening, and writing clearly is the new empathy. So before you send off that next email, pause and ask yourself these three questions:

1. Is my email too brief?

One of the more obvious reasons our reading skills decline at work is that we're often moving at lightning speed, which makes details easy to brush over. The thing is, a lot of us aren't really as busy as we'd like to think we are. And it costs us: our speed, and the anxiety that surrounds it, erodes our commitment to accuracy, clarity, and respect.

So, slow down and always reference details in your communications. If someone sends you a longer email debriefing about a virtual meeting, respond to specific components of the email rather than sending back a blanket response. It shows that you put in the time to really read through the other person's time and thinking.

Brevity from the upper echelons of power isn't uncommon. Sloppy texts and sloppier emails, poor sentences, bad grammar, atrocious spelling — the message is, "We don't have time to care!" At one investment bank, there was a running joke that the more senior you were, the fewer characters you needed to express your gratitude in a text or email. You started your career with "Thank you so much!" and after a promotion or two, this was cut down to "Thanks."

Brevity can make a person appear important, but it can also hurt your team and your business. Getting a slapdash email means that the recipient has to spend time deciphering what it means, causing delays and potentially



leading to costly mistakes. And, according to Danielle Gunraj, a professor of psychology at Binghamton University, when we use the punctuation we associate most with brevity — the dreaded sentence-final period — we come across as insincere.

One executive who I'll call Tom was renowned in our office for both his carelessness and his brevity. Once, when a direct report sent him an email, asking, "Tom, do you want us to move forward with this plan or should we gather more information?" Tom replied, "yes." Thanks, Tom, we'll move ahead on one, or both, or neither. Imagine how much time his team wasted debating how long they had to wait before someone pointed out to him he hadn't answered the question!

Leadership expert Dr. Jaclyn Kostner has this to say to execs about sloppiness: "You have to find the time; otherwise, you're not fit for the job and somebody else should be doing it. Or maybe you need to offload some responsibilities, because there's no excuse for sending people cryptic emails." Leaders don't have to respond to every message, but when important work guidance is required, their communications should at least be clear.

Also consider proofreading your emails before sending them. A lot of the time, misinterpretation comes down to a dropped word or misleading punctuation. So, take advantage of spell check and other proofreading programs. Proofreading is both a habit and a skill: making it a point of pride to send clean, unambiguous copy will help people take what you write more seriously.

2. What tone am I projecting?

Tone — the overall attitude, or character, of a message — is another key component of strong reading and writing skills. Perhaps more than anything else, it's the greatest tool for communicating empathy. So ask yourself: Who is the recipient? Who is the audience?

One thing I tell my clients who struggle with digital communication is to make sure they keep in mind the visual impact of their message. I'll explain.

Ethan, a young manager I coach, once told me about an interaction he had with a senior leader that left him feeling unappreciated and belittled. As requested, he had sent this senior leader a detailed plan about increasing productivity among his teams. The plan set forth a different way of working that Ethan was certain could help teams avoid duplicating their efforts and create new levels of transparency. Ethan was excited about the plan,

and even included specific questions for the next team meeting. Expecting a positive response, maybe even a few follow-up questions, what he got back from the executive was this: "k."

Sorry, what? K-what? K-pop? Ethan felt confused and insulted. The visual impact of "k" was that Ethan's clear and comprehensive proposal hardly deserved a response at all. Was the executive even thinking about Ethan's plan — or were they dismissing it outright? Did "k" mean they were giving him the green light to proceed, or was it a subtle command to put his dumb idea on a back burner? It was impossible to tell. Also, did the senior leader think so little of Ethan that they couldn't be bothered to write more than a single letter? Even something pedestrian, like "okay I'll get back to you," would have conveyed more respect and attentiveness than that "k."

Tone deficiencies like the one Ethan's boss demonstrated can hurt morale and sew confusion. It's no surprise that responding to someone's hard work with a one word (or one letter) response communicates a lack of empathy for the person at the receiving end. Don't respond for the sake of responding if you don't have something substantive to offer. If you are having one of those days where you can't give thoughtful attention to an email, send a quick reply acknowledging you received it, and let them know that you plan to respond to it at greater length as soon as possible.

3. Would it help to talk instead?

With so many written platforms at our disposal, we can also get caught up in asking too many small questions in emails or group chats. Phone, video, or live meetings can force us to ask the right questions instead of asking one tiny question after the next. It can also save lots of time while simultaneously generating goodwill.

A German client once told me, "I was having a never-ending email back and forth with a French and an Indian colleague who were having a circular written dialogue, covering the same ground over and over without understanding each other. I got them both to hop on the phone with me, asked a few questions a few different ways, and we got to the bottom of the issue."

If you just received a vague or confusing text or email, don't be afraid to ask to request a phone conversation or, if possible, a video or in-person meeting. If it's a sensitive dialogue, requesting a quick call shows you're being thoughtful. Instead of making you look indecisive, waiting a few beats before responding to questions shows the other person that you are listening and taking your work seriously.

Lacking cues like eye contact, tone of voice, or body language to clarify what another person means makes digital communication challenging. In lieu of traditional body language, having the skills to read and write carefully is essential to organizations who want to make sure their teams are on the same page and excel in our virtual world.

Get ready for your next assignment

When Bruce Wilkinson, an executive in World Vision International's Zambia operation, learned that he was going to be promoted to regional director for southern Africa, he immediately started reading performance reviews of key staff members and talking to his peers, other national officers in the \$2.6 billion organization. In doing so he uncovered a serious weakness: A host of critical positions in the region had gone unfilled for as long as 16 months, leading to lost contracts and deterioration in the programs WWI undertakes to empower poor communities. Human resources needed to step up its game.

But Wilkinson also saw that his appointment offered an opportunity—to both fix broken functions, such as HR, and create new ones, such as quality assurance, that could improve his region's performance. He developed a plan of action that would involve laying off the top two tiers of managers—about 20 people—and asking them to reapply for their jobs. "You want the elements of your vision to take shape before you start," Wilkinson explains. "In my case, I was redefining the role of the regional office as a true service center, and managers got the message."

Most executives know what their next project or promotion will be well before the day it starts, but too few take advantage of their insider status and the time beforehand to prepare well. That is an opportunity lost.

Your next assignment is your next chance to create results—for your organization and for your career. A smart investment of time and effort up front can make the difference between simply getting by and truly excelling, between a dead-end move and a stepping-stone to bigger and better things.

A key factor in your transition will be knowledge—not only substantive information about the project or field, but an understanding of how others inside and outside the organization have tackled similar assignments, what challenges and opportunities lie ahead, and what resources are available and how you can mobilize them to overcome obstacles. Combining insights from our ongoing study of how knowledge is best captured and shared, our experience with consulting and executive search clients, and interviews with successful leaders across different types of enterprises, this article identifies three practical steps for building your knowledge capital to excel in new roles throughout your career. We call them phase zero, learning tour, and affinity groups.

Wilkinson used all three to implement his plan, reinterviewing staff members and translating his network of former peers—the national directors—into a source of feedback. This enabled him to upgrade the HR leadership, add a director of quality, and rapidly fill open positions. Let's look at each step in detail.

Phase Zero

This is a chance to use your insider advantage to become familiar with a new unit's people and performance and to discern the opportunities and challenges of your assignment—before it begins or is even announced.

In the weeks leading up to the assignment, carve out and hold sacred at least 30 minutes a day to prepare. You may find ways to increase effectiveness, reduce costs, or even reassess a business model. In phase zero you can identify problems and develop a hypothesis for how to solve them—as Wilkinson did in southern Africa. And your solutions can be tested and adjusted as you move into your new role.

Among the likeliest places to look for objective data in this step are company documents—such as performance reviews and reports on services and operations—and feedback from customers and suppliers. For qualitative input, turn to colleagues who have supervised the role, interacted with it, or previously filled a similar role. Push to understand the story behind the story—for example, ask "What challenges might I encounter that aren't apparent from the description of the assignment?" Finding these people and getting the information you need, without fanfare, will help you understand expectations and possibilities, think through a plan of action, and prepare personally for the transition.

Consider the experience of Todd Hoddick, who in early 2011 became vice president of the North America entertainment division of Barco, a global visual solutions company based in Belgium, in January 2011. Having joined the firm in 2008 as vice president of digital cinema in North America, Hoddick had developed a strong reputation for building a profitable single-business unit. In 2010 he was approached for the new position, which would add rental and staging, digital signage, home cinema, image processing, and corporate audiovisuals to his plate.

It would be a big leap. "I wanted to understand the challenges of the role I was about to assume compared with what I was already handling," Hoddick told us. He began gathering information from a colleague then in the role who would be moving to another position, as yet unannounced. "He and I were in similar strategic meetings for the company, so I was able to ask questions about the business without seeming odd," Hoddick said. He learned, for example, that the division had significantly streamlined the sales force while maintaining ambitious revenue targets.

His next stop was Barco's worldwide head of sales, to whom he would be reporting. Hoddick had one pressing query: "What constitutes success, and what do you expect me to accomplish that others haven't been able to?" The answer: "Help Barco to be the number one projection company in the world." That clearly meant more travel and some long hours up front. So Hoddick spent time preparing his family for the change and getting their support for his additional responsibilities.

Learning Tour

Phase zero involves solitary study and under-the-radar conversations. The learning tour involves systematic dialogue with the people who can help you do your new job, including direct reports, suppliers, and customers. You'll be testing your definitions

of problems and your hypotheses for solving them, identifying leverage points, building relationships, and tapping into diverse perspectives to help you understand how to energize support and convert opposition.

Hoddick's learning tour started with a big meeting in Austin, Texas, where he asked key salespeople what they needed to be successful. The answer was less paperwork and a specific back-office resource: a jack-of-all-trades named Carlos who had been laid off during the recent re-trenchment. Hoddick told them that he would fix both problems if the reduced sales force would commit to hitting its numbers. Six months later the group was ahead of plan.

You should use your change of role as an excuse to meet with all the important stakeholders—even those you already know. But remember that your "first 90 days" will differ from those of an external hire, because both your reputation and your biases are established. We recommend two tactics for making the most of this step: Be mindful of your reputation in the organization, reinforcing your positive attributes and acknowledging where you will need help. And approach your team members and their ideas with an open mind. Ask inclusive, open-ended questions, such as "If you could make one change in this area tomorrow, what would it be?"

Gary Chapman took a learning tour in early 2011, when he was promoted from vice president of field operations to executive vice president of the national network at Communities in Schools—a \$225 million nonprofit singled out by the White House as one of the most effective youth mentoring organizations in the nation. "I had two sides to my new team," Chapman recalls.

"Field operations, where I had worked before, and research and evaluation [R&E, which audits field operations]. I had a lot of work to do to understand the latter." Right away he met with staff members to learn about their responsibilities and what motivated them. "A number of people told me there was a disconnect," he says. Audit teams worried that field teams weren't learning from their research, and field teams thought they weren't getting enough feedback and felt too busy to elicit it themselves. Although Chapman came from the field, he listened to both sides as an honest broker. He decided to introduce weekly meetings between field and R&E directors in an effort to promote collaboration.

He also reached out to the four other members of CIS's executive team and realized that he could work more closely with communications, government relations, and the development team on advocacy and fundraising.

"These teams needed more information on certain groups of students so that they could make our case on the Hill, with the right data at the right time, and plug us into education dollars we hadn't accessed in the past," Chapman says. He encouraged his field and audit staffs to engage with those colleagues as well—in effect taking his unit on a learning tour of the organization and giving everyone a chance to participate in change with an open mind.



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INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS/ NOMINATIONS

POST OF VICE CHANCELLOR

The Council of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka invites applications or Nominations to the post of Vice-Chancellor of the University, in terms of Section 34(I) of the Universities Act. No. 16 of 1978 and its subsequent amendments.

Under the provisions of the Universities Act. No. 16 of 1978, the Vice Chancellor is a full-time officer of the University. He/ she shall be the Principal Executive Officer, the Principal Academic Officer and the Accounting Officer of the University. He/ she shall be an Ex-officio member and Chairman of both the Council and the Senate.

The Vice Chancellor shall, unless he/ she vacates office earlier or is removed from office in terms of the Universities Act. No. 16 of 1978 as amended, holds office for a term of three years or until he completes his sixty-fifth birthday whichever event occurs earlier.

The Vice-Chancellor will be responsible for providing academic leadership, formulating, conducting and introducing management policies and implementing the decisions of the Council and directing the general administration of the University and should, therefore, uphold the principles of academic excellence, transparency, accountability, democratic management and effective leadership.

The successful candidate should possess a record of high academic achievement including a strong research profile, proven leadership qualities and interpersonal skills to interact objectively with diverse interest groups, a clear understanding of policy issues and a commitment to the effective implementation of decisions. He/ she should also possess a deep understanding of the ethos and mission of a university, including its commitment to the community. (Prospective Applicants/ nominees are invited to visit the University website <http://www.rjt.ac.lk/news/?cat=2> for details).

The Vice-Chancellor is eligible to receive the highest academic salary within the university system, and Entertainment Allowance of 15% of the basic salary, Communication Allowance, Fuel Allowance, etc. In addition to the above, an official vehicle and the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge will also be provided.

The following documents should accompany the application/ Nominations:

- Complete Curriculum Vitae (with supporting documents) of Applicant/ Nominee including the date of Birth (the applicant/ nominee should be a citizen of Sri Lanka and shall be less than 63 years of age as at the closing date).
- A personal statement of vision for the development of the University and a brief account of what the applicant/ Nominee proposes to achieve if appointed to the post of Vice-Chancellor.
- Where the incumbent Vice-Chancellor is an Applicant or had held the post of Vice-Chancellor of the University before a report highlighting accomplishments during his/her first tenure of the office of the Vice-Chancellor.
- A letter of Consent from the nominee in case of a nomination.
- A letter from the employer indicating whether the Applicant/ nominee could be released in the event of his/ her appointment to the post, in case of an Applicant/ nominee serving in Public Service, Corporations, Statutory Bodies and Higher Educational Institutions other than the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Each Candidate will be interviewed by the Evaluation Committee as per the Criteria and Elements prescribed in the Marking Scheme given in Annex I of the UGC Circular No. 02/2020 dated May 04, 2020.

Candidates shortlisted by the evaluation Committee and approved by the University Council shall be summoned before a Special Council Meeting for a brief presentation of a minimum of ten (10) minutes duration but not exceeding fifteen (15) minutes.

The Report of the Special Council Meeting recommending three names of the candidates will be forwarded to the University Grants Commission, for the consideration for appointment, as per the accepted procedure prescribed in the UGC Circular No. 02/2020 dated May 04, 2020.

Applications or Nominations should be addressed to the Registrar/ Secretary to the Council, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale and sent under Registered Post or hand-delivered to reach the above office on or before 2.30 p.m. on 19th May 2021.

The envelope containing the applications/ nomination material must be marked Post of Vice-Chancellor on its top left-hand corner. Late applications will be rejected.

A.M.G.B. Abeysinghe
Registrar / Secretary to the Council
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Mihintale.
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MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION

VACANCIES

Mahaweli Water Security Investment Program (MWSIP)

Funding Source: Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The Mahaweli Water Security Investment Program (MWSIP) is a part of the Master Plan of the Mahaweli Multi-Purpose Development Program implemented by the Ministry of Irrigation with concessional loan facility obtained by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) along with counterpart funds from the General Treasury of Sri Lanka, which is expected to be completed by the year 2024.

Applications:

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified citizens of Sri Lanka for the following positions on Contract Basis, and the qualified applicants are hereby requested to forward their applications along with their Curriculum Vitae giving educational, professional qualifications and relevant experience along with two contact details of Non-relative Referees in Registered post on or before 03.05.2021 to reach the address given below, and indicate the post applied for, on the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

Program Director,
Mahaweli Water Security Investment Program,
No. 493-1/1, T. B. Jayah Mawatha,
Colombo 10.

Shortlisted applicants based on highest qualifications and experience, will be called for an interview and selection will be done based on merit. Therefore, any influence or making representation for the recruitment process could be resulted for rejection of the application. Certified Copies of Certificates to prove basic qualifications, professional and educational should be attached with the Application and all the incomplete applications will be rejected. The applications of candidates from Government Services/ Statutory Boards/ Co-operations and other Government Institutions should be forwarded through their respective Heads of Institutions, who should state whether the applicants could be released on Full Time Basis, if selected.

Posts and Job Profiles	Qualifications & Experience
<p>1. Finance Manager (PS 03)</p> <p>Job Profile</p> <p>Prepare and maintain financial and accounting systems of the Program, planning, budgeting, acquisition of funds, bank accounts, maintenance of ledgers, payments and internal controls, preparation of financial reports and reimbursement documents, stores management procedures, verification and audit reports, and any other finance related assignments that are required by the management.</p>	<p>*Below mentioned qualifications are in accordance with Management Services Department (MSD) Circular No. 01/2019,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Successfully completed Bachelor's Degree in the relevant field which is recognized by the University Grants Commission Or A Qualification recognized by the University Grants Commission as an equivalent Qualification to the Degree in the relevant field Or An Associate Membership/ A similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Institution in the relevant field With At least 14 years post qualifying experience at Managerial Level 2. A Successfully completed Bachelor's Degree in the relevant field which is recognized by the University Grants Commission Or A Qualification recognized by the University Grants Commission as an equivalent Qualification to the Degree in the relevant field Or An Associate Membership/ A similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Institution in the relevant field And A Postgraduate degree in the relevant field and Cooperate/ Chartered Membership or a similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Professional Institution in the relevant field With At least 10 years post qualifying experience at Managerial Level 3. Grade 1 Officer of a Government All Island Services or a similar status in the relevant field With At least 05 years of experience in the Class 1 post.
<p>2. Engineer (PS 04 - Category A, Category B)</p> <p>Job Profile</p> <p>The Civil Engineer will assist Project Director/ Deputy Project Director on planning, designing, and implementation of construction works of MWSIP.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Successfully completed Bachelor's Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field which is recognized by the University Grants Commission. Or A Qualification recognized by the University Grants Commission as an equivalent Qualification to the Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field Or An Associate Membership/ A similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Professional Institution in the relevant field With At least 09/07 years post qualifying experience in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field. 2. An officer of the Government All Island Services Class III/II or above or similar status in the Civil / Earth Resources Engineering With At least 09/07 years of experience in Class III/II post.
<p>3. Earth Resource Engineer (PS 04 Category A, Category B)</p> <p>Job Profile</p> <p>To assist the Project Director in Earth Resource activities, supervision of tunnel constructions implemented under the project and providing guidance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Successfully completed Bachelor's Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field which is recognized by the University Grants Commission. Or A Qualification recognized by the University Grants Commission as an equivalent Qualification to the Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field Or An Associate Membership/ A similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Professional Institution in the relevant field.
<p>4. Engineer (PS 04 - Category D)</p> <p>Job Profile</p> <p>The Civil Engineer will assist Project Director/ Deputy Project Director on planning, designing, and implementation of construction works of MWSIP.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Successfully completed Bachelor's Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field which is recognized by the University Grants Commission. Or A Qualification recognized by the University Grants Commission as an equivalent Qualification to the Degree in Civil / Earth Resources Engineering field Or An Associate Membership/ A similar Professional Qualification obtained from a recognized Professional Institution in the relevant field.
<p>5. Technical Officer (PS 06 - Category B or C)</p> <p>Job Profile</p> <p>Assist the Program Director/ Project Director/ Senior Engineer/ Engineers on implementation of construction works of MWSIP.</p>	<p>Category B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 7 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field And At least 03 years of experience in the required area of specialization. 2. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 6 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field And At least 07 years of experience in the required area of specialization. 3. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 5 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field And At least 12 years of experience in the required area of specialization. <p>Category C</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 7 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field. 2. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 6 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field And At least 04 years of experience in the required area of specialization. 3. Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification level 5 issued by a Technical Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Technical field And At least 09 years of experience in the required area of specialization.

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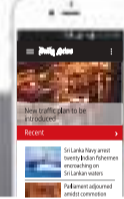
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Grade **1** English

Grade **2** English

Grade **3** English

Grade **4** English

Grade **5** English

6 ශ්‍රේණිය

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10 ශ්‍රේණිය

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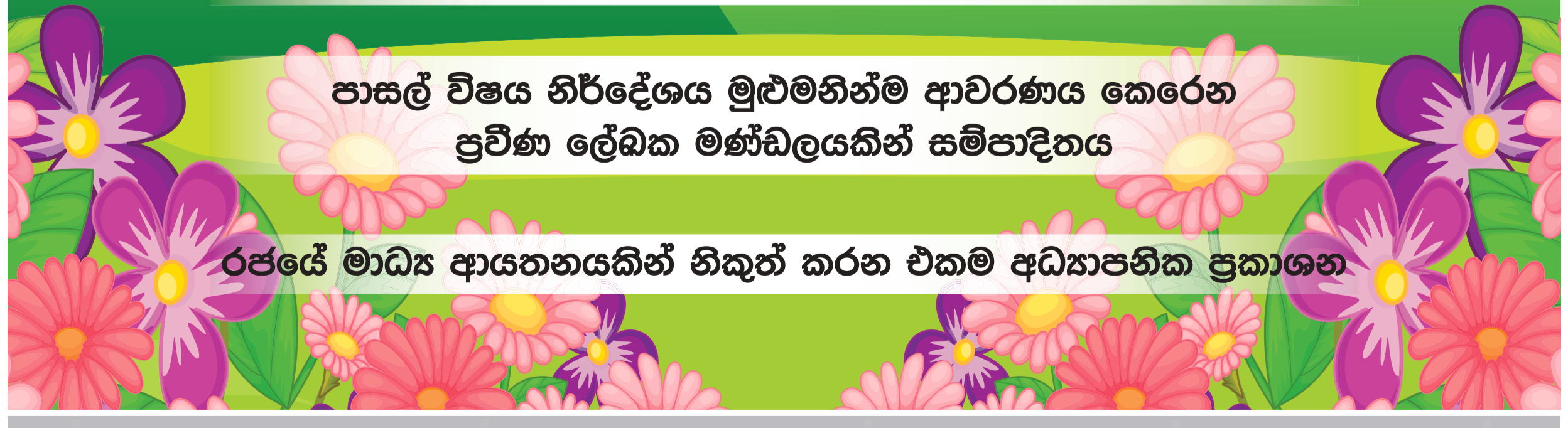
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About our daughter: Academically and professionally qualified, 1993, 5'2". BSc Mgt. holder, slim, fair, and pretty. Inherits substantial assets. Kurunegala Govi B/C parents seek NS/TT academically and professionally qualified well-mannered, kind-hearted son. Email: p ropdebella@gmail.com OB161875

About 1985 Bodu Govi LLB Solicitor in Australia Manager in Bank 1990 MBA Holder in Australia malefic horoscope. Email: anurap1977@gmail.com OB161846

Academically and professionally qualified well-mannered kindhearted son from a respectable family is sought by B/G professional parents for their daughter UK qualified GP Doctor, she is fair, pretty, slim, 34 years, 5'9" with an excellent character. She has substantial assets including a house. Please reply with family details and horoscope. E-mail: ven27@live.com OB161368

Academically & professionally qualified caring, well mannered brother is sought by G/B sisters in Kotte for their unmarried younger sister who born in 1968. She is a Lecturer in a famous University in Sri Lanka. Please reply with horoscope & contact details. Tel: 0112776221. Email: menike.alwis@gmail.com OB161853

Academically & professionally qualified handsome partner age below 42 sought by B/G parents of a business family from Colombo 3 for their 37 Y, 5'2" very much younger looking, fair, pretty daughter. She is highly qualified in Law field/Accountancy (LLM, LLB, Attorney-at-Law, ACIMA) working in MNC as a Legal Officer earning 6 figure salary, and she is a pianist. Possesses assets. E mail - shanama2005@gmail.com OB161892

A S/G/B Bachelor of 40-50 years decent, scrupulous, of respected heredity, above 5'10" sturdy, with a similar status sought for a spinster from a well respected distinguished family. Quality is essential. OB161895

Bodu Govi estate owner family from North Western province looking for a partner for their younger daughter born in 1991 September, 5'4" height studied in an International School has a Diploma in Psychology. We are looking for an educated partner from a business family. She owns valuable assets. proposal_1991@yahoo.com OB161881

B/G parents seek an academically qualified well-mannered son in Sri Lanka or overseas for their only daughter fair and pretty, 1985, 5'3", studied at leading Buddhist Girls' School in Colombo, graduated from University of Colombo with BSc. Willing to migrate. Reply with family details, horoscope, T/N. proposaln21@gmail.com OB161879

B/K parents from a well respectable family from Panadura seek an academically or professionally qualified well mannered son from a similar background for daughter born 1987 April graduate slim and fair earning a six figure salary employed in private sector not willing to migrate. Reply with family details and horoscope email: a khfdo@gmail.com OB161637

Catholic business parents from Marawila seek professionally qualified well mannered son age 34-37 years, height not below 5'6" from Catholic respectable family for their Colombo Convent educated professionally qualified daughter age 33, height 5'5". Telephone, address details to: rjbm60@gmail.com OB161858

Educated working or business son sought by W.P. Sinhala Karawe Catholic parents for pretty graduate daughter in Govt. Service 1976 Sept. studying Masters HR 5'1" getting big two storied house 25p land eldest of 4 all graduates Buddhists considered differences immaterial horoscope not considered. wp.fernando@yahoo.com OB161837

I'm looking for the right man-race religion caste and creed matter but to make the perfect fit you should be a bachelor at least 5'10", smart, handsome, decent, kind, intelligent and born with high quality. So if you are S/G, B in your 40's, and wondering why you are still single it could be because of me. OB161832

Karawa Sinhala Buddhist / Catholic parents seek partner pretty age 24/5'4" Bridgetten following UK fashion designing degree. Father retired Banker mother Nurse. Brother doctor, another residing USA. Caste immaterial. 0112774460. rat hnakeerthiasoka@gmail.com OB161831

Moor respectable parents Colombo seek suitable partner for daughter, BSc in Software Engineering, 31-5'2", religious, fair, pretty, willing to migrate. moorprop678@gmail.com OB161897

Muslim kind parents from Kandy District seek groom for daughter age 20 religious pretty height 5'4" and have completed advanced level. She converses in Sinhala, Tamil and moderate English. We are looking for a son-in-law (a Man) who is following Quran & Sunnah with no material expectations from the woman's side, who have a steady income and, who is independent. Please contact us in full details in your first letter or email: observer@newmuslimnikah.com OB161851

Parents seek suitable decent life partner for their 1991 born pretty, kind, academically qualified daughter living in Australia. abeysekaresumithra@gmail.com OB161889

Professional parents seek suitable educated well mannered son for their Govi Catholic only daughter 1996 born professionally qualified with reasonable wealth. Respond with family details. OB161221

Recently qualified Medical Doctor or a final year Medical Student with a good personality, of excellent character 5'9" or taller aged 25 to 28 years, a non-smoker sought by G/B parents from Australia to their daughter 24 years, 5'8" tall, grew up in Australia, bright & personable daughter studying post graduate Medicine in a well reputed University in Australia. Those living in Australia, New Zealand, UK, Canada or Colombo are welcome. Please respond to: m arriage.cbr@gmail.com with all details, copy of the horoscope and an image or social media links in the first reply if available. OB161887

Roman Catholic parents living in the United States seek a professionally qualified, well-mannered son aged 28 yrs or lower, to build a relationship leading to marriage for their well-brought up 23 yrs old, fair and pretty daughter, recently completed her Bachelor's Degree in Biology. She is currently employed as a Research Scientist in the United States and is planning to complete her higher studies in the near future. Religion immaterial. Please respond to: p marriage29@gmail.com with family details and an image or social media links and contact number in the first reply. OB161834

Sinhalese B/G born in July, 1995, 5'6" height pretty daughter with BSc degree from a university in Ontario, Canada. She is working in a leading company in Toronto, Ontario. University educated parents are seeking academically and professionally qualified son below 32 years, living in Canada. Preferred in Ontario. Reply with all family details with H/C and contact number to: a pmp4nm@yahoo.com OB161893

Sinhalese Christian mother seeking a suitable groom for her daughter, born in 1978 residing Sri Lanka. She is working in a leading organization, academically qualified. She is slim, pretty with good family values. Please send details to proposalm725@gmail.com OB161898

1982 R/C fair 5'6" convent & foreign educated leading to BSc substantial assets, monthly income owns an apartment, car. Colombo based respectable family. johnterrence2015@gmail.com OB161868

1984 Buddhist Govi close Colombo, born 1984, height 5'6", fair, slim, BSc, BCS - Colombo, MSc - USA passed, having PR in USA and employed there, only daughter, parents seek suitable son, specially those living in USA. 0112859062 withanage1949@gmail.com OB161808

Groom Academically and professionally qualified fair, slim, kindhearted, well-mannered daughter is sought by Sinhala B/G respectable parents for their son who is born in January 1989, 5'6" height, N/S, T/T, holding a senior position in a reputed software company. Please reply with family details, Facebook link, and horoscope compatible with Shani at the 7th house. mproposals646@gmail.com OG161900

Academically qualified well mannered pretty slim daughter is sought by respectable B/G parents from Colombo for their son 36 years, 5'9", handsome, educated at a leading school in Colombo, and then pursued higher studies in Australia (Bachelors' in Business and Marketing, La Trobe. Adv. Dip in Accounting, MIT), Australian citizen, planning to settle down in Sri Lanka. He owns a new house in Colombo and other substantial assets. His engagement was only limited to a signature. Please reply with family details and horoscope. Email: proposaladver853@yahoo.com OB161861



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Academically and professionally qualified pretty, fair, slim, well-mannered daughter is sought by Buddhist, Durawa educated and respectable parents in Colombo for their handsome MBBS Government Doctor son born in 1992 August and 5'10" tall. He inherits assets in Colombo. Only brother is an Engineer. Final year undergraduate also considered. Differences immaterial. Reply with family details and horoscope. Email: augpro1992doc@gmail.com OG161844

Academically qualified well mannered pretty slim daughter is sought by respectable B/G parents from Colombo for their son 36 years, 5'9", handsome, educated at a leading school in Colombo, and then pursued higher studies in Australia (Bachelors' in Business and Marketing, La Trobe. Adv. Dip in Accounting, MIT), Australian citizen, planning to settle down in Sri Lanka. He owns a new house in Colombo and other substantial assets. His engagement was only limited to a signature. Please reply with family details and horoscope. Email: mprp998@gmail.com OG161884

A Medical Doctor with Permanent residency in Australia currently working in the UK looking for a suitable bride. Planning to come and work in Australia soon as parents are living in Australia. Buddhist, Govi, 32 years, 5'6". If interested write to: sril2000@yahoo.com OG161877

A pretty and educated daughter from a respectable family is sought by Roman Catholic parents from Colombo suburbs for their son, thirty four, qualified and gainfully employed in a leading corporate. He is financially stable to lead a comfortable marriage life. Please respond with details. Email: mprp998@gmail.com OG161884

Buddhist Medium Level parents residing in Ganemulla seeks a beautiful daughter with honest attitudes. The proposed son is 32 years. 5'7", fair, well-mannered and has an excellent personality. He is qualified master holder in Australia and working. Horoscope is immaterial. Please reply with details to: proposalson1988@gmail.com OG161871

Govi Buddhist respectable professional parents seek educated, pretty slim fair daughter preferably live in Canada from a similar background for only son 27 years 5'8" very handsome, dual citizen, graduated in reputed university in Canada, owns his construction company and substantial assets in both countries. Non malefic horoscope. He is non smoker and not taking habitual drink. Please reply with copy of horoscope. Please reply by only email. Email: pr opsea20@yahoo.com OG161856

G/B of a well respectable family parents look for a suitable daughter for an only child well qualified divorced 45 years handsome fair 5'10" height Businessman son with no encumbrances, suitable daughter should be unmarried, beautiful and below 37 years old 2587501, 2503525, 0777739257. OG161849

G/B parents seeking bride for handsome son only child 1981/5'11" well employed professionally qualified owns & inherits house & properties pending divorce. Reply with horoscope. g hrprop3803@gmail.com OG161863

Kandyan 44, 5'10" height, post graduate, professionally qualified, Govt. Officer, divorced, two children, seeks life partner, Hindu, Christian considered. OG161830

Medical Consultant Govi parents seek Christian daughter of any denomination for MBBS son in Government Hospital 1991 born 68" NS/TT details and telephone confidential. Email: cosmicprop@mail.com OG161835

Only MBBS / MD lady Doctor is sought for MBBS Doctor son, G/B, 33 years old, 5'6", TT/NS, Director of a private hospital. Kuja in 8th position. Respond with horoscope. Email: namripeiris@gmail.com OG161841

Qualified daughter is sought by B/G professional parents for their son, Software Engineer in USA. 32+, 5'5", PR holder. Reply with horoscope to: mprsl88@gmail.com OG161859

Respectable G/B parents seek academically, professionally qualified well-mannered, family oriented, charming daughter for only son, old Anandian, 31 years, 5'6", qualified Engineer, well established with a permanent employment in a reputed Engineering Firm, drawing a respectable salary. He owns house & property, lands and other substantial assets. Two elder sisters are married to professionals. Rahu 7 compatible horoscope holders may respond with family details, including contact number. p ropm4673@gmail.com OG161883

Sinhala Buddhist respectable family living in USA, looking for a bride for our handsome 5'6" well mannered son, born in 1987. Graduated as an Aircraft Engineer, currently working. Inherits properties both from Sri Lanka & USA. The prospective daughter to be good natured & educated, living in the US only. Please reply with details & the horoscope. 7604246667 mproposals1987@yahoo.com OG161873

W.P. Sinhala Karawe Catholic parents seek attractive truly fair educated professionally simple partner for son 1983 June 5'4 1/2" handsome NS/TT Asst. Director in permanent Govt. Service with good salary. He has several degrees BSc (Eng) BSc (IT) including MBA studying for doctorate he has vehicle 25p of land. Buddhists considered. Simple family horoscope not considered, differences not considered. wp.fernando@yahoo.com OG161839



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Business Premises
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Bambalapitiya Kollupitiya Wellawatte Thimbrigasyaya office space, houses buildings available on rent. 500, 5000, 10000, 30000 sq.ft. with parking. 077-6306726. 071498

Employment

301
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Accounts Clerks, Book-Keepers, Computer Operators, Secretaries, Managers, Receptionists, Telephonists, Marketing Executives, Sales Boys / Girls / Drivers, Peons, Labourers, Helpers for supply. Colombo. 0773595969. 028851

Able Benz, Prado, BMW, Vezel Car Lorry Drivers available. Supershine Service, Boralesgamuwa. 0777473694, 0775822976, 0776112998. 028850

Aishan Enterprises for Housemaids, Attendants, Nannies for Male Workers - Salary Rs. 30,000/-, 35000/-, 0776967440, 0772096555. Wattegodara Road, Maharagama. An establishment existing near Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegodara for a period of 17 years. 028708



306
Positions Vacant
Medical

Nursing Assistant / Care Giver - Wanted a live in Nursing Assistant with experience to look after a 85 year old lady suffering from Arthritis. Individual has to have some training and past experience. Salary 50,000. Apply immediately via post with reference to: 162/1, Madinnagoda Road, Rajagiriya or on email: headhnt@gmail.com 028742

310
Positions Vacant
Clerical/Secretarial

Lady Personal Office Assistant Relations Coordinator below 50 able to study work and assist private office. Unitec Placements, 152 Kynesey Road, Colombo 7. SMS/Call : 0777399799 Email: businessassist9kg@gmail.com 028846

Wanted a male retired Clerk from Negombo area for part-time basis. Email - 2012investment@gmail.com 0771220613. 027545

312
Positions Vacant
Technical

Vacancies for motor vehicle technicians. The following vacancies are to be filled for a vehicle service station to be opened shortly in the Negombo area. Female Receptionist / Female Cashier, Foreman, Motor vehicle technicians (Hybrid / Europe / Japanese) Auto Electrician / AC Technician. Attractive salaries and incentives depending on experience. Forward applications to jmsersinghe@yahoo.com, thari ndujayasuriya@gmail.com 194, Giriulla Road, Thimbrigaskatuwa, Negombo. 028628

Welisara, wanted auto AC experienced Technicians for fixing, repairing and servicing of vehicle air-conditioners. Contact: 011-2958215, 011-2956174. 028712

Welisara, wanted experienced Technicians for fixing, repairing and servicing of air-conditioners and experienced technicians for repairing of fridges. 011-2958215, 011-2956174. 028710

316
Positions Vacant
Garments/Textile

Immediate vacancy for a Male (age 25-40) Quality Controller with a motor bike, in a ladies garments manufacturing plant. Salary + Petrol Allowance 45,000/= Mr. Nasseer 0777316075, Gothatuwa. 028618

318
Positions Vacant
Drivers/Chauffeurs

A retired Chairman requires a live-in domestic driver, age between 35-45 years with more than 10 years experience of driving luxury vehicles. Should be a non-smoker and teetotaler. Call over with Gramasevaka and Police Report and other documents. 0773501839. 028800

Vacancies available for drivers possessing heavy vehicle driving licence for our tourist hotel in Seeduwa. No. 842, Ambalanmulla, Seeduwa. 076-0263002 / 0777571004. 028755

Van Dimo Batta Driver Assistant, with good knowledge of Colombo Roads, more than five (5) years experience, over 50 years, able to drive cautiously, responsibly and cleanly care for the vehicle, may walk in between 10.00 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. No. 545, Sri Sangaraja Mawatha, Colombo 10. 028788

Wanted Driver to transport coconuts from Chilaw to Colombo in a small 1 Ton (mini) Lorry. Contact: 0112421668. 545, Sri Sangaraja Mawatha, Colombo 10. 028783

319
Positions Vacant
Domestic

Colombo - house of a Director needs age under 50 years housemaid skilled in cooking and housekeeping, experienced, recently working abroad only interested party call: 0773 770868. 028849

House Keeper with experience in diet control cooking lady, attractive salary. Contact: 0778535767. 67/2, Gregory's Road, Colombo 07. 028845

Muslim person seeking for a job to look after elderly Muslim Gent in Colombo. 0114280490. 028471

Wanted a Female between 35-40 to look after a 1 1/2 year child. 0717-268835, 0777268835. 028837

320
Positions Vacant
Hotel & Bakery

Immediate vacancy available for front and kitchen restaurant for front and kitchen restaurant staff, Colombo 04. hrmrburger@gmail.com 0117111055. 028540

Tamil Room Boy wanted immediately to a small hotel in Wellawatte. Salary Rs. 20000/- need a young/ hardworking/ honest boy. 0764175145. 028808



323
Positions Vacant
Labourers

Wanted a trustworthy Labourer couple (husband and wife) between 45-60 years from the Puttalam District to work in a coconut estate in Karukkuwawa, Madampe, Chilaw. Should be experienced in operating a hand-tractor and husking coconuts. Accommodation facilities available with water and electricity. Contact: 0112421668 / 0765308201. 545, Sri Sangaraja Mawatha, Colombo 10. 028785

General Office Assistant female age 25-40 good knowledge in English and Computer. Apply : accoutns@horizonrelocations.lk 022458

Hardware Shop at Dehiwala need Sales Girls, A/C Assistant, Cashier, Driver. Experienced & un-experienced can apply : 0771375434, 0777281123. 028622

Looking for a male Barber (Beginners / Experienced) Arona Hair and Beauty Salon. Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo 08. 077-5563809 / 0763203809. 027062

325
Positions Vacant
General

Need Assistant to a Medical Center at Mattegoda. Working hours from 4 p.m. - 9.30 p.m. Female preferred. 0717222375. 028732

On call, multi duty worker, recent Colombo School leaver preferred. Rs. 220 per hour. 0725961539. 028508

Supervisors wanted for mask factory in Pelawatta, Battaramulla, Trainees considered but experience in garments or related industries preferred. Knowledge of MS Excel and English required. Send CVs to inquiries@prae sidiumtech.com or call 0712308834. Accommodation provided for women only. 027820

Wanted Security Officer. Responsibility to safeguard properties, assets and to overlook the security of a group of companies and sites. Should be able to conduct investigations. Exp-policemen preferred. Apply to: Unitec Placements (Pvt) Ltd., Colombo 10. Email: realcommstate@gmail.com Please Call: 0727981202. 028844

Wanted Supervisor - Moving Company requires Supervisor for office and field work fluent in English and "A" category Riding License required "B" is a plus. Age 30-50 Basic Storekeeping knowledge is an additional advantage. Apply : Horizon Relocations (Pvt) Ltd. (E-Mail : accounts@horizonrelocations.lk) 022460

327
Positions Wanted

Accountant age 63, Tamil, Royalist AAT (UK) fully qualified, 35 plus years experience Accounting in Cashflow, Banking, P/L, Balance Sheet, Creditors / Debtors, Journals, Updation with managerial capacity seeks job. 0766887412. 028852

I am a Driver with twenty years of experience driving all vehicles. I am looking for a job free of smoking and alcohol. 0717454590. 026750

Retired person age 58 seeks employment driving light vehicles personal assistants. 0785190659. 028686

64 year old Super Market Manager with Stores experience seeks suitable employment 0725774927. 028757

Vacancies available for our Tourist Hotel in Seeduwa for Security Guards. No. 842, Ambalanmulla, Seeduwa. Contact: 076-0263002 / 0777-571004. 028761

Wanted Security Officer. Responsibility to safeguard properties, assets and to overlook the security of a group of companies and sites. Should be able to conduct investigations. Exp-policemen preferred. Apply to: Unitec Placements (Pvt) Ltd., Colombo 10. Email: realcommstate@gmail.com Please Call: 0727981202. 028844

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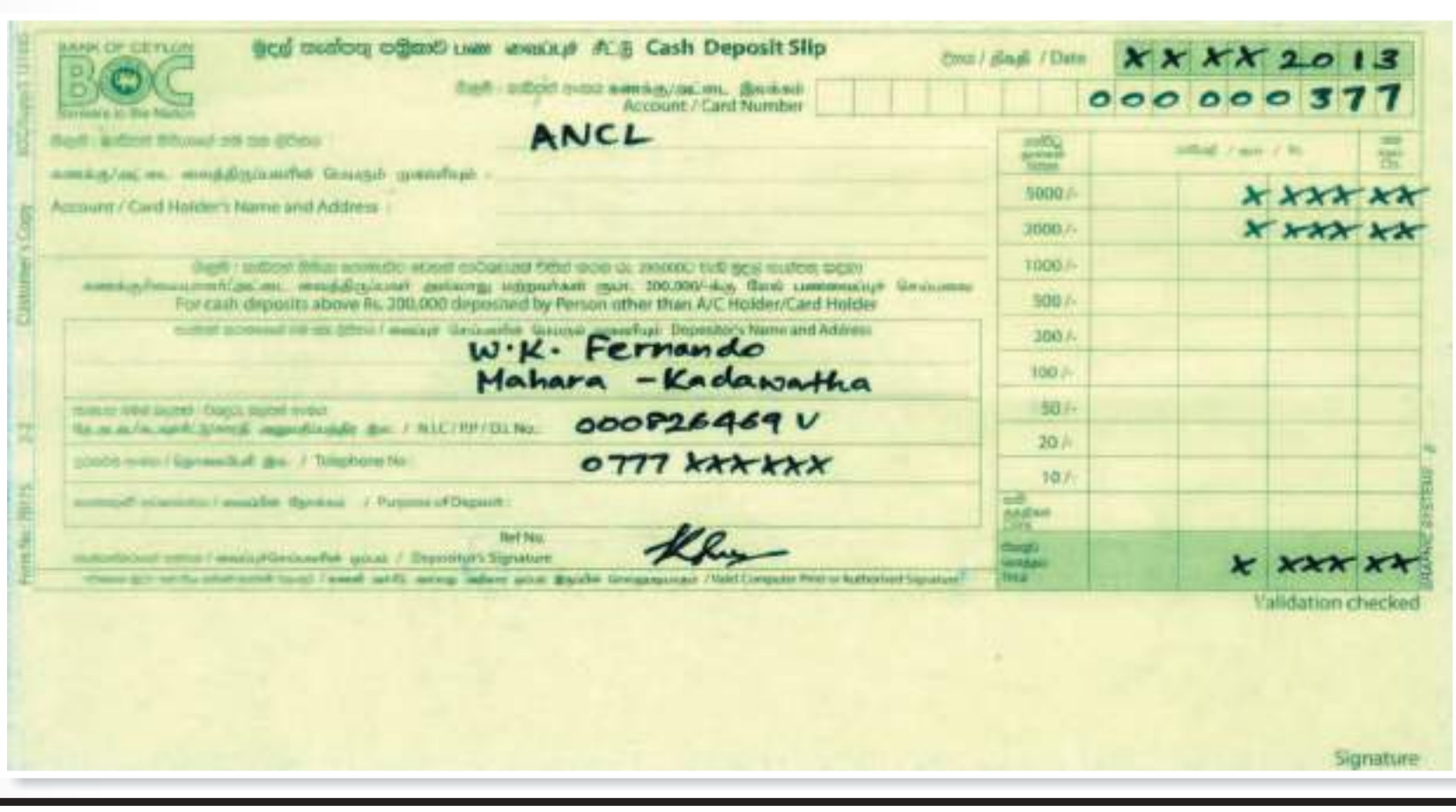
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SUNDAY OBSERVER TENDER AND OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS



AMERICAN EMBASSY, COLOMBO

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES (DB)

The US Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka hereby invites interested and legally eligible Architecture Design & Construction Companies who can provide design build construction services (DB) in Sri Lanka to propose for DB services on the forth coming and future construction projects. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) anticipates awarding design build contracts for construction of humanitarian assistance and institutional projects such as District Hospitals, Rural Clinics, Primary and Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka.

Phase 1 of the solicitation will be posted during the first two weeks of April, 2021 on the US Embassy website. Interested and eligible companies are strongly encouraged to visit the US Embassy website;

<https://lk.usembassy.gov/embassy/colombo/contracting-opportunities-2/> and contact ctha.asia@usace.army.mil prior to the solicitation posting. Instructions for submitting Phase I proposals can be obtained by visiting the specified avenue.

Companies are responsible for all costs and fees associated with preparation of proposals in Phase 1. This project is contingent on availability of funds. If the project is cancelled, all proposal preparation costs will be borne by the proposing companies.

QUALITY ASSURANCE ENGINEER & INSPECTION SERVICES (QA)

The US Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka hereby invites interested and legally eligible Quality Assurance Companies who can provide QA services for design build construction projects. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) anticipates one contract for the required Quality Assurance Engineer & Inspection Services (QA) in support of Various Humanitarian Assistance project sites in Sri Lanka.

The solicitation will be posted late April on the US Embassy website. Interested and eligible companies are strongly encouraged to visit the US Embassy website;

<https://lk.usembassy.gov/embassy/colombo/contracting-opportunities-2/> and contact ctha.asia@usace.army.mil prior to the solicitation posting in late April. Instructions for submitting proposals can be obtained by visiting the specified avenue.

Companies are responsible for all costs and fees associated with preparation of proposals. If the project is cancelled, all proposal preparation costs will be borne by the Offeror.

PROCUREMENT OF COMMERCIAL EXPLOSIVES FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION PROCUREMENT UNIT (CEFAP UNIT) WELISARA, RAGAMA

Invitation for Bids

1. Sealed Bids will be invited from local and foreign suppliers who comply with qualifications mentioned at section III for the bidding document for the procurement of undermentioned contract number for the Commercial Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition Procurement Unit (CEFAP Unit).

Contract No.: CEFAP/PRT/04/2021 Red Phosphorus 20.0 Mts

- Bids will be conducted through International Competitive Bidding Procedure.
- Interested local and foreign suppliers may obtain further information from the Procurement Officer of the Commercial Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition Procurement Unit, Government Explosives Magazine, Welisara, Ragama (Tel: 0112958227) or Director, Commercial Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition Procurement Unit (Tel: 0112955514).
- Bidding document may be obtained on submission of a written request to the Director, Commercial Explosives, Firearms and Ammunition Procurement Unit, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs 4,500.00 from 0900 hrs to 1600 hrs on working days of week from **19th April 2021 to 31st May 2021** (Foreign suppliers may appoint suitable local agent) .
- All bids must be valid for period of **120** days from the date of opening and must be accompanied with an unconditional bid bond. The relevant bid bond must be valid for a period of **148** days from the date of bid opening and the bid bond should be obtained from a commercial bank which is operating in Sri Lanka.
- Bidders must provide an unconditional Performance Bond for 10% of the bid value excluding taxes once the purchase order is awarded.
- Sealed bids in duplicate may be delivered to the Chairman of the Tender Board, Sri Lanka Navy Headquarters, Flagstaff Street, Colombo 01, sent by registered post to the same address or deposited in the tender box kept at the Navy Headquarters, up to 1400 hrs on **01st June 2021** and the bids will be opened immediately after closing in the presence of the bidders who choose to attend.
- Further details of this procurement are available on the SL Navy website www.navy.lk

**Director,
Commercial Explosives,
Firearms and Ammunition Procurement Unit,
Government Explosives Magazine,
Welisara, Ragama.**



PROCUREMENT NOTICE - GLOBAL

STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA

The Chairman, Procurement Committee of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka will receive sealed bids for supply of following items to the Department of Health Services for year 2021.

Bid Number	Closing Date & Time	Item Description	Date of issue of Bidding Documents from	Non-refundable Bid Fee
DHS/P/WWW/CPU/B/01/20	01.06.2021 at 9.00 a.m.	653 Vials of Antithymocyte Injection 250mg, 5ml vial	20.04.2021	Rs. 12,500/= + Taxes

Bids should be prepared as per particulars given in the Bidding Documents available to prospective bidders on working days between 0930 hours to 1500 hours at the Head Office of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka, No.75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1. These could be purchased on cash payment of a non-refundable Bid Fee per set as mentioned above. Offers received without enclosing original payment receipt are liable to be rejected.

Wherever applicable potential bidder/bidders should get registered in terms of the Public Contract Act No.3 of 1987 before collecting the Bidding Documents and also should get the contract registered after the tender is awarded.

All Bids should be accompanied by a Bid Bond as specified in the Bidding Documents.

Sealed Bids may be sent by post under registered cover or may be personally deposited in the box available for this purpose at Internal Audit Department in the mezzanine floor of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation at No. 75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

Bids will be closed at the Head office of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation on the dates and time mentioned above and will be opened immediately thereafter.

Bidders or their authorised representatives will be permitted to be present at the time of opening of Bids.

Bidding Documents are being sent to Sri Lanka missions abroad and foreign missions in Sri Lanka.

**CHAIRMAN DEPARTMENTAL PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE
STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA
75, SIR BARON JAYATILLAKE MAWATHA
COLOMBO 1
SRI LANKA.**

**FAX : 00 94-11- 2344082
TELEPHONE : 00 94-11- 2326227/94-11-2335374
E-MAIL : pharma.manager@spc.lk**



PROCUREMENT NOTICE - GLOBAL

STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA

The Chairman, Procurement Committee of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka will receive sealed bids for supply of following item to the State Ministry of Production, Supply and Regulation of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Health.

Bid Number	Closing Date & Time	Item Description	Date of issuing of Bid Documents	Non-refundable Bid Fee LKR
DHS/L/WW/171/21	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Egg Albumin Packing: 50g	20.04.2021	3,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/1/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	12,500/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/2/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	12,500/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/3/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	3,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/4/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	3,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/5/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	12,500/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/6/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	12,500/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/7/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	3,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/8/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	3,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/9/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	20,000/- + taxes
DHS/L/WW/10/22	31.05.2021 At 9.00 a.m.	Laboratory Consumables	20.04.2021	12,500/- + taxes

Bids should be prepared as per the particulars given in the Bidding Documents available to prospective bidders on working days between 0930 hours to 1500 hours at the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka, Head Office, No.75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1. These could be purchased on cash payment of a non-refundable Bidding document Fee per set as mentioned above. Offers received without enclosing original payment receipt are liable to be rejected.

Wherever necessary potential bidder/bidders should get registered in terms of the Public Contract Act No.3 of 1987 before collecting the Bidding Documents and also should get the contract registered after the tender is awarded.

All Bids should be accompanied by a Bid Bond as specified in the Bidding Documents.

Sealed Bids may be sent by post under registered cover or may be personally deposited in the box available for this purpose at Internal Audit Department in the mezzanine floor of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation at No. 75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

Bids will be closed at the Head office of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation on the dates and time mentioned above and will be opened immediately thereafter. Bidders or their authorised representatives will be permitted to be present at the time of opening of Bids.

Bidding Documents are being sent to Sri Lanka missions abroad and foreign missions in Sri Lanka.

**CHAIRMAN- DEPARTMENTAL PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE
STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA
75, SIR BARON JAYATILLAKE MAWATHA
COLOMBO 1
SRI LANKA.**

**TEL/FAX : 00 94-11- 2582492
E-MAIL : dgmsurgical@spc.lk**



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
STATE PHARMACEUTICALS
MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
(SPMC)



PROCUREMENT NOTICE

PURCHASE OF LAND TO BUILD A WAREHOUSE

Tender Reference: SPMC/PP/LAN/01/2021
Closing on 10th May 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Sealed quotations are invited to purchase a land of 50-70 (Fifty — Seventy) perches situated at Ratmalana area and within 2km distance from State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation (SPMC) No: 11, Sir John Kotelawala Mawatha, Kandawala Estate, Rathmalana to meet the following requirements.

- ❖ The land should be accessible for water, electricity and telephone facilities.
- ❖ Wide access and should be located in non-congested area for the entry and moving of Containers (20ft and 40ft) in the premises.
- ❖ The land should be free of any disputes, flood hazards and should not be a marshy land.
- ❖ Free from high voltage electricity lines around or above the land which may restrict build 2 - 4 stories buildings.
- ❖ Free from legal restriction to build a warehouse under the security reasons or any other limitation imposed by legal authorities.
- ❖ In case of no single owner land is available, adjoining small lands may be quoted to form the above extent.

Following information should be provided

- ❖ Name, address and telephone No. of the owner.
- ❖ Details of access to the land.
- ❖ Extent of the Land and selling price.
- ❖ Copies of the deed and the plan.

Accordingly, prospective Bidders should submit self-prepared quotation by Registered post or drop into the Tender Box kept at the ground floor in the **State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation, No.11, Sir John Kotelawala Mawatha, Kandawala Estate, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka** to reach at or before 10.00 a.m. on 10th May 2021. At the top left hand corner of the envelope should be titled **"PURCHASE OF LAND TO BUILD A WAREHOUSE"** Reference: SPMC/PP/LAN/01/2021 Closing on 10th May 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Any clarifications may be obtained from the Deputy General Manager — Planning and Procurement of State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation over telephone Nos.2637574, 2635353, and 2636966.

Chairman of the Procurement Committee
State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation
No.11, Sir John Kotelawala Mawatha, Kandawala Estate,
Ratmalana, Sri Lanka.

FAX: (00)94-11-2634771

TEL: (00)94-11-2635353/ (00) 94-11-2637574/
(00) 94- 11- 2623298

WEBSITE: www.spmc.lk
E-MAIL : spmc.lk@sltnet.lk



State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka

Appeals for Pre-qualification of Suppliers / Manufacturers

State Pharmaceuticals Corporation do hereby inform all unsuccessful applicants who applied for prequalification in 2020 to submit their appeals if any to reach the Chairman - SPC at or before 2.00 p.m. on 18th May 2021.

Any clarifications in this regard could be obtained from
DGM (Technical, Laboratory & Production)
Tel - 077-7543345 / 076-7645292

Chairman

STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION

26th Floor,
MehewaraPiyasa
Colombo 05.

**REGISTRATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS
(for facilitating writs and auctions)
FOR THE YEAR 2021**

Applications are called from experienced individuals/firms who wish to register as service providers for facilitating writs (including ejections) and auctions on behalf of Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka & Finance PLC.

Conditions:

1. Applicant should have a minimum 10 years of experience in handling similar matters on behalf of reputed financial institutions.
2. Applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka & Finance PLC that the applicant has proven expertise and experience in handling the entire process independently, with integrity and with minimal supervision including the preparation of requisite documents, handling publications, co-ordinating with court staff etc.
3. It is required to provide at least two references with regard to the service and experience from a reputed financial institution.

Applications may be handed over to or sent by registered post within seven days from the date of this advertisement to the address provided below:

Senior Manager – Support Services,
Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka & Finance PLC
Level 10, BOC Merchant Tower, 28, St. Michael's Road, Colombo – 03.



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ELPITIYA PLANTATIONS PLC

Invitation for Partnerships for LOI Holders in Developing On-Ground Solar Projects

Elpitiya Plantations PLC is seeking for investments on On-ground Solar PV Projects and invites to parties who hold Letter of Intent (LOI) issued by the Ceylon Electricity Board.

The interested parties shall submit their business proposal along with the project details.

Proposals should be submitted to Director/Chief Executive Officer, Elpitiya Plantations PLC, 9th Floor, Aitken Spence Tower - 01, No. 305, Vauxhall Street, Colombo 02, to reach on or before 13th May 2021 by 5.00 p.m.

For more details call on: 0777-712683 (Mr Priyantha S Dissanayake) or 0771-385050 (Mr Amila Vitharana).

Director / Chief Executive Officer,
Elpitiya Plantations PLC,

**PEOPLE'S BANK
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**

DEMOLITION & CLEARING DEBRIS OF EXISTING OLD BUILDING AT NO. 429, GALLE ROAD, COLOMBO 03

TENDER NO. 26/2021

1. The Chief Manager (Engineering Services), People's Bank No.75, Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 02, invites sealed bids from interested and qualified bidders For the "Demolition & Clearing Debris of Existing Old Building at No. 429, Galle Road, Colombo 03" as described below;

The existing old building consisting of basement, ground and five upper floors with an approximate floor area of approx. 3810m² and it is located in Colombo District. The work include but not limited to demolishing of existing RCC structure, masonry walls, partitioning, floor, wall, ceiling finishes, door & window, roof structure and etc. and cart away of all debris from the premises.

2. Time for Completion is 60 Days from the Date of Award.
3. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding Procedure.
4. Bidders are requested to submit details of past experience related to similar or higher magnitude of demolition works in buildings within last Five years along with the Bid.
5. The qualified bidder shall carry out work without causing disturbance to adjacent buildings or the general public and provided all the safety procedures up to satisfactory level to avoid damages to adjacent buildings/ structures and the general public.
6. The qualified bidder shall be provided all the relevant vehicles, types of machinery and equipment for the proposed demolition as well as a suitable location to cart away the debris from the site and necessary authority approvals to be obtained by himself.
7. Qualified bidder shall provide and maintain Insurance covers including Contractor's All Risk Policy, Workmen's Compensation, Personnel Accident Insurance Policy and Third Party Insurance Policy at his cost as specified in the bidding document.
8. The payments shall be made at the completion of work based on the Engineer's recommendations and any advance payment shall not be paid.
9. The liquidated damages for the whole of Works shall be Rs 10,000.00 per day.
10. All interested bidders are advised to inspect the site before pricing and site inspection is scheduled on **April 23, 2021 at 10.30 a.m.**
11. Interested bidders may obtain further information from, **Chief Manager (Engineering Services), Engineering Services Department, 6th floor, People's Bank Head Office Building at No.75, Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 02 (Tel. 011-2481513, Fax; 011-2341591)** and inspect the bidding documents during normal working hours from **09.00 am to 3.00 pm from April 20, 2021 to May 10, 2021.**
12. The complete set of bidding document in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to **Chief Manager (Engineering Services)** at the above address from **April 20, 2021 to May 10, 2021 from 09.00 am to 3.00 pm**, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rupees Two Thousand Five Hundred (Rs. 2,500.00) only. The method of payment will be in cash.
13. Sealed bids in duplicate shall be marked "Demolition & Clearing Debris of Existing Old Building at No. 429, Galle Road, Colombo 03" on top left-hand corner and deposited in the Tender Box available at the office of **Chief Manager (Engineering Services), Engineering Services Department, 6th floor, People's Bank Head Office Building at No.75, Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 02** or sent by registered post addressed to the **Chief Manager (Engineering Services)** of the above address to reach him on or before **3.00 p.m. on May 11, 2021.** Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened soon after closing in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
14. Bids shall be valid up to **August 10, 2021.**
15. All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security, for an amount of **Rupees Fifty Thousand (Rs. 50,000.00)** obtained only from a reputed commercial bank operating in Sri Lanka approved by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka other than People's Bank issued in favour of People's Bank, No. 75, Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 02. Bid Security shall be valid up to **September 07, 2021.**

Chief Manager (Engineering Services),
Engineering Services Department,
6th Floor, People's Bank Head Office Building,
No.75, Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha,
Colombo 02.



MINISTRY OF BUDDHASASANA RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL MUSEUMS

Invitation for Bids

Contract No. PD/NMD/LINM/2021/001

The Chairman, Department Procurement Committee (DPC) on behalf of the Department of National Museums now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the under mentioned works as described below.

Table - 01

Item No.	Project Name & Contract No.	Estimated cost for contracts excluding VAT (Rs.)	Non-refundable fee (Rs.)	Amount of Bid Security (Rs.)	Contract Period (Days)	Eligible CIDA Registration Grade	Bid Security valid up to
01	Landscape Improvements of National Museum, Colombo - Phase I & Phase IV PD/NMD/LINM/2021/001	36,607,500/-	10,000.00	400,000.00	150 Calendar days	C5/SP1 and above	02nd September 2021

1. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) method.
2. To be eligible for contract award, the successful bidder shall not have been blacklisted and shall meet the requirements given in the above table and the Bidding documents.
3. Interested bidders may obtain further information from **Chief Accountant, Department of National Museums, No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07 (Tel. 011-2688146)** and inspect the bidding documents free of charge on working days from **19th April 2021 to 07th May 2021, 09.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs** during normal working days.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English language may be purchased by any prospective Bidder or their accredited agent on submission of a written request to the **Chief Accountant, Department of National Museums, No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07 (Tel. 011-2688146)** from **19th April 2021 to 07th May 2021 from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.** on working days upon payment of non-refundable fee as in the above table 01 to **Shroff of Department of National Museums.**
5. A Bid must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of bank guarantee as per the specimen in the bidding documents and issued by a commercial bank/Construction Guarantee Fund (CGF) operating in Sri Lanka and registered under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The value of the bid securities and validity period of bid securities are stated in Table 01 and shall be addressed to the **Director General, Department of National Museums, No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07.**
6. Bids shall be hand delivered or sent by registered post with original and duplicate addressed to the **Chairman, Department Procurement Committee (DPC), Department of National Museums, No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07** to be received on or before **10th May 2021, 10.00 a.m.** Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened soon after the closing of bids in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.
7. A pre-bid meeting will be held at **10.00 a.m. on 27th April 2021** at the **Director General Office, Department of National Museums, No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07.** All the bidders are strongly advised to attend this meeting.
8. Bidder's previous performance and the liquidity position strictly evaluated in selection of bidders. Poorly performed bidders will not be considered for awarding of any bids.
9. Department of National Museums has no any responsibility on cost related to preparation of any bids. The Department Procurement Committee (DPC) reserves the right to accept a suitable bid out of the bids received or reject all bids. The decision of the Department Procurement Committee is final.
10. Further instruction and site visit/clarifications can be collected from Dy. Director (Entomology) of National Museums Department, Tel: 011-2695686.

Chairman,
Department Procurement Committee (DPC),
Director General, Department of National Museums,
No. 53, Marcus Fernando Mawatha,
Colombo 07.

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.

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INVITATION FOR BIDS

Supply of Janitorial & Labour Services to the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited

Bid No. LPA/03/2021

Sealed bids are invited from potential service providers for supply of daily **Janitorial Services and Labour Services** to the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.

Bid documents can be obtained **between 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. during weekdays up to 28th April 2021** from the Procurement Dept. of The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd, on a written request and payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs. 500/= per set.

The services provider shall be able to employ 75-100 labourers per day.

Bid shall include a reference list of similar contracts performed by the bidder in the recent past and all supporting documents to be attached to prove the contracts performed by the bidder.

All bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked as "**JANITORIAL & LABOUR SERVICES**" on the top left-hand corner addressed to Head of Procurement, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., No. 35, D.R. Wijewardene Mawatha, Colombo 10 to reach **on or before 29th April 2021 at 2.30 p.m.**

Bids may be sent by post under registered cover or may be deposited in the bid box kept in the Procurement Dept. of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Lake House, No. 35, D.R. Wijewardene Mawatha, Colombo 10.

Bids will be opened immediately after closing time of the bids. Bidders or their authorized representatives will be permitted to be present at the time of opening.

However, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**Head of Procurement
THE ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS OF
CEYLON LTD.
No. 35, Lake House,
D.R. Wijewardene Mawatha,
Colombo 10.
For details: 2429422, 2429451**



STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA

PROCUREMENT NOTICE

The Chairman, Procurement Committee of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka, Colombo 01 invites sealed quotations from registered and previous sources for following items and bids will be closed at the respective times on the dates given below and will be opened immediately thereafter.

(E. mail /Fax offers as well as FOB offers are not acceptable)

Sealed Bids may be sent by post under registered cover or may be personally deposited in the box available for this purpose at Internal Audit Department in the mezzanine floor of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation at No. 75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

Bidders or their authorised representatives will be permitted to be present at the time of opening of Bids.

LAB ITEMS

TENDER NO/BID REFERENCE	CLOSING DATE	CLOSING TIME	ITEM	QTY
DHS/RL/16SR/20	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	01/41650101-RapiD ONE system (20 panels/kit with reagents and inoculation fluid) Contents : RapiD ONE system (20 panels/kit) RapiD inoculation fluid (2ml/pack) RapiD Spot infole reagent (15ml/pk)	180 kits
			02/41650201-RapiD NF. PLUS system (20 panels/kit with reagents and inoculation fluid) Contents : RapiD NF PLUS kit (20 panels/kit) RapiD inoculation fluid (1ml/pack) RapiD Spot indole reagent (15ml/pk) RapiD Nitrate A reagent (15ml/pack)	120 kits
			03/41650301-RapiD Yeast PLUS system (20 panels/kit with inoculation fluid) Contents : RapiD Yeast PLUS kit (20 panels/kit) RapiD inoculation fluid (2ml/pack)	17 kits
			4/41650401-RapiD STR system (20 panels/kit with inoculation fluid) Contents : RapiD STR kit (20 panels/kit) RapiD inoculation fluid (1ml/pack)	40 kits
DHS/RL/92SR/20	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	02/45500301-2,6 Dimethyl Aminobenzaldehyde HPLC grade Packing : 250ml	250ml
			09/45501701-Acetic acid Glacial HPLC grade Packing : 2500ml	60,000ml
			15/45505601-Nitromethane HPLC grade Packing : 2500ml	5000ml
			16/45505701-Octanoic acid HPLC grade Packing : 2500ml	2500ml
			17/45505801-Pentane 2-ol HPLC grade Packing : 500ml	500ml
			19/45506201-Trichloroacetic acid HPLC grade Packing : 500ml	1000ml
			20/45506401-Trifluoroacetic Acid HPLC grade Packing : 500ml	500ml
			21/45508101-Methanesulphonic Acid HPLC grade Packing : 250ml	250ml
DHS/RL/90WKL/20	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	1/40500301-Sodium desoxycholate	700g
DHS/RL/91RS/20	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	3/43006502-Potassium cyanide AR	1000g
DHS/RL/89SM/20	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	1/45300101-Aflatoxin standards (B1, B2, G1, G2, M1, M2)	100g
			2/45300102-Aflatoxin mixed (B1, B2, G1, G2) standard (TLC grade) in methanol (B1, B2, G1, G2, 1ug/ml, 3ug/ml, 1ug/ml, 3ug/ml respectively or higher concentrated vials than this)	10 vials
DHS/RL/117SM/19	28.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	Lab Consumables (SR Nos : 1 – 21)	Pls. refer RQ item list
DHS/RL/94RS/20	29.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	1/43575201-VCNT Selective supplement for GC	75 Boxes
			2/43562501-Syphills IgM antibody ELISA for detection of antibodies to Treponema pallidum in human serum 96 tests/kit	04 kits
			3/43562601-Vitox supplement (5+5 vials/box) for GC	150 Boxes
DHS/RL/17RS/21	29.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	Lab Consumables (SR Nos 1 – 9)	Pls. refer RQ item list
DHS/RL/93SR/20	29.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	1/50230101-Microcentrifuge tubes, Virgin polypropylene, (PCR grade), sterile, colourless, Vol 1ml	300 Nos
			7/56608801-Multi channel Reagent boats Autoclavable polypropylene reagent boats	500 Nos
			8/56609001-Pipette cleaning set (comprises of pipette jar, pipette basket, pipette washer-rinsers Maximum pipette length 813mm)	02 Nos
DHS/RL/118SM/19	29.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	Herpes Simplex Virus Types	Pls. refer RQ item list
DHS/RL/119SSN/19	29.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	42807001-Hepatitis E – Anti HEV IgG antibody – ELISA (96T/kit)	03 Kits
			42807002-Hepatitis E anti HEV IgM Antibody ELISA (96 tests/kit)	08 Kits
SPC/LAB/03SM/21	27.04.2021	02.30 P.M.	O R S Items	Pls. refer RQ item list

Bids should be prepared as per particulars given in the Bidding Documents available at the Head Office of State Pharmaceuticals Corporation of Sri Lanka, No.75, Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha, Colombo 1.

Wherever necessary potential bidder/bidders should get registered in terms of the Public Contract Act No.3 of 1987 before collecting the Bid Documents and also should get the contract registered after the award.

**CHAIRMAN -PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE
STATE PHARMACEUTICALS CORPORATION OF SRI LANKA
75, SIR BARON JAYATILLAKE MAWATHA
COLOMBO 1
SRI LANKA.**

FAX : 00 94-11- 2335008/2344082
TELEPHONE : 00 94-11- 2335008/2326227/2335374
E-MAIL : dgmsurgical@spc.lk / pharma.manager@spc.lk

කෘෂි නවීකරණ ව්‍යාපෘතිය
Agriculture Modernization Project



කෘෂිකර්ම අමාත්‍යාංශය
கமத்தொழில் அமைச்சு
Ministry of Agriculture

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

Agriculture Sector Modernization Project - Ministry of Agriculture
IDA Credit No: 5873 LK

PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Supply, Delivery, Installation & Commissioning of 400 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in North Central Province for Chili Cultivation Project

- The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has received a Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) in various currencies equivalent to US\$ 58.63 Million towards the cost of the Agriculture Sector Modernization Project (ASMP) of the Ministry of Agriculture and it intends to apply portion of the proceeds of this credit to eligible payments under the Contract of **Supply, Delivery, Installation & Commissioning of 400 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in North Central Province for Chili Cultivation Project.**
- The Chairman of Project Procurement Committee, Agriculture Sector Modernization Project, Ministry of Agriculture, now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for Supply, Delivery, Installation & Commissioning of 400 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in North Central Province for Chili Cultivation Project.

Description	Contact No	Quantity	Value of the Bid Security (Rs.)	Non-refundable Fee (Rs.)
200 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in Anuradhapura District	LKA-MOA-PMU-229403-GO-RFB	200 Nos	840,000.00	20,000.00
200 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in Polonnaruwa District	LKA-MOA-PMU-229404-GO-RFB	200 Nos	840,000.00	20,000.00

- Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedure approved by the World Bank.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from **Procurement Specialist, Agriculture Sector Modernization Project, Ministry of Agriculture** and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below; from **9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. on working days during the period from 19/04/2021 to 10/05/2021.**
- A complete set of bidding documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address given below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The method of payment will be cash to the Finance Manager of the Project.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2.00 p.m. on **10/05/2021.** Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend in person at the address below at **2.00 p.m. on 10/05/2021.**
- Complete bids shall be forwarded in two copies as the original and the duplicate. The original and the duplicate shall be enclosed separately and marked as the 'original' and 'duplicate' respectively in sealed envelope. Both envelopes enclosed in a sealed single envelope and marked the contract number "**Supply, Delivery, Installation & Commissioning of 400 Nos of Drip Irrigation Systems in North Central Province for Chili Cultivation Project (include the contract number)**" on top left-hand corner of the envelope.
- The address referred to above is;

**Chairman
Project Procurement Committee
Agriculture Sector Modernization Project
No. 123/2, Pannipitiya Road,
Battaramulla.
Tele: 0112696086 or 0777419521
Date: 19.04.2021**

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TENDER NOTICE



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இலங்கை மத்திய வங்கி
CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

Tender for Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Real Time Gross Settlement System for the Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Tender Number	LK-CBSL-65728-GO-RFP
Tender description	Tender for Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of Real Time Gross Settlement System for the Central Bank of Sri Lanka
Issuance of Addendum	Addendum 1 issued to Bidding Document dated 24.02.2021, including extending the Bid Closing/Opening
Bid closing and opening (Extended)	<p>Date : 12 May 2021 Time : 1400 Hrs</p> <p>Location : Head Office Building, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, No 30, Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo-01, Sri Lanka</p>

For further information please refer <https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/tenders> or contact: 94 11 2477337 or 94 11 2398754

Project Team, Financial Sector Modernization Project
Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

TENDER NOTICE



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இலங்கை மத்திய வங்கி
CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

Implementation of an Investment Management System for the Centralized Investment Unit of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Tender Number	LK-CBSL-223669-GO-RFB
Tender description	Implementation of an Investment Management System for the Centralized Investment Unit of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka
Issuance of Addendum	Addendum is issued to Bidding Document dated 17.03.2021, including extending the Bid Closing/Opening
Bid closing and opening (Extended)	<p>Date : 18 May 2021 Time : 1400 Hrs</p> <p>Location : Head Office Building, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, No 30, Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo-01, Sri Lanka</p>

For further information please refer <https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/tenders> or contact: 94 11 2477337 or 94 11 2398754

Project Team, Financial Sector Modernization Project
Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

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Kotikawate Junction, Kudabuthgamuwa,

ATHURUGIRIYA 011 2760479, 011 4876968
267, Godagama Road,

BATHTHARAMULLA 011 2866785, 077 0736770
West Town, Bake House, Sweet House,

BORALES GAMUWA 071 6505533, 011 2519954
No. 17, Wewa Rd,

HANWELLA 011 4967962, 011 4967960
Sithumina Newspaper Agency, 144, High Level Rd, Panthigama,

HOKANDARA 071 8685437
No. 501, North Hokandara,

HOMAGAMA 011 2892262, 077 7304046
"Aradanas", Senanayake Shopping Complex, Station Road,

KADUWELA 011 2579609
Nayana Bake House

KADUWELA 011 2412291, 011 4443566
375/1, Pahala Bomiriya, Yakkala,

KALUDOWILA 077 3551145, 011 2767259
No 185, Hospital Road,

KESBEWA 011 2703415
Seedevi Newspaper Office, 19, Horana Rd,

KIRULAPORE 071 5439396, 011 2514166
Ramani Book Shop, 27-A High Level Rd,

KOTTAWA 011 2842569, 071 2510950
Sisara Groceries, No. 101/2,

MANARAGAMA 077 7686683, 011 2896373
Supermarket Complex, 88, High Level Rd,

MALABE 011 2791782
Kumudu Stores,

MEEGODA 011 2858290, 011 2831120
Nandana Stores, No. 635/3, Padukka Rd,

MORATUWA 011 2647410, 077 5486719
Wijesekara Stores,

MORATUWA 0112 657326, 0114 212989
S.J.M. Fareed, 222, Egoda Uyana, Modera

MT. LAVINIA 011 2724820
Dayal Stores, Galle Rd,

NUGEGODA 077 3458785, 011 2811833
Elkwiththa Rd, Mirihana,

NUGEGODA 011 2846100, 077 1652800
No. 4, High Level Plaza, Delkanda,

PADUKKA 011 2859186, 011 5638477
No. 03, Harwela Road,

PILLYANDALA 011 2619967, 072 8069487
No. 05, Seeko Gardens, Gedabwara,

PITAKOTTE 011 2822960, 077 0858585
No. 435, Pothgula,

RAJAGIRIYA 011 2861338
No. 51/2A, Rajahewavitharana Road,

RATHMALANA 011 2626106, 011 2632906
Thushitha Newspaper Agency, Galle Rd,

RAWATHAWATTE 011 2655153, 071 4274689
No. 3, Soya Road, Gale Road

UDANAMULLA 077 6859780, 011 2810042
No 138, Station Rd,

classified@lakehouse.lk
011 2 429 342 | 011 2 429 343
Fax - 011 2 429 375 / 011 2 429 380



SRI LANKA ARMY

PROCUREMENT NOTICE

INVITATION FOR BIDS FROM MANUFACTURERS / SUPPLIERS / IMPORTERS / CONTRACTORS FOR THE SUPPLY OF PRE-PRINTED BLANK DRIVING LICENCE CARDS TO ARMY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CENTRE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR TRANSPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021

- The Chairman, Department Procurement Committee of the Sri Lanka Army, invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the supply of **pre printed blank driving licence cards** for Army Information Technology Solutions Centre (AITSC), Department of Motor Transport, Werahera for the year 2021.
 - Selected Contractor should transport all the pre printed blank driving licence cards ordered by SL Army to AITSC Werahera.
 - The Suppliers who are interested should submit their bidding forms obtainable from the Directorate of Ordnance Services, Sri Lanka Army Headquarters, Sri Jayawardanapura during working days between 1000 hrs to 1500 hrs on below given dates on payment of a non-refundable application fee as indicated against the item in cash to the Director Finance, Sri Lanka Army Headquarters, Sri Jayawardanapura. The bids duly signed by the applicant should be submitted after placing the official seal thereunder as a compulsory requirement. The envelope containing the tender should be marked "BID FOR THE SUPPLY OF (Pre printed blank driving licence cards) FOR THE YEAR 2021, Tender No (DOS/2021/3083) and date/ time of opening of bids" on the top left- hand corner.

S/No.	TENDER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NCB/ICB	QTY	BID DOCUMENTS ISSUING PERIOD	DATE & TIME BID CLOSING /OPENING	NON REFUNDABLE FEE (Rs)
1	DOS/2021/3083	Pre printed blank driving licence cards	NCB	500000 Nos	19.04.2021 to 21.05.2021	24.05.2021 at 1100 hours	35,000.00

- Bidding Process will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) Procedure.
- Pre-Bid meeting will be held at 1100 hrs on 10 May 2021 at conference hall Department of Motor Transport Werahera.
- The sealed bids in duplicate may either be dispatched by registered post to the address mentioned below or deposited in the tender box kept at the same address well before the closing time. Bids will be opened soon after closing the bids and late bids will not be accepted. Bidders or their authorized representatives will be permitted to be present at the opening of the bids, upon presentation of their National Identity Card and letters of authorization from their employers.

Chairman, Army Procurement Committee
C/o Master General Ordnance Branch,
Army Camp,
Ceylinc Building
No. 167/30, Avissawella Road,
ORUGODAWATTA.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Master General Ordnance Branch, Army Headquarters, Sri Jayawardanapura Colombo, Sri Lanka T.P011-2432135, Email: mgobranchemail@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents (free of charge) at the address given below.

Directorate of Ordnance Services,
Sri Lanka Army Headquarters,
Sri Jayawardanapura,
Colombo.
- Bidders should submit a copy of the business registration certificate for the submission of bids.
- Bidding documents which are in complete and not accompanied with required documentary evidence shall be rejected. The Chairman, Department Procurement Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any bid application and to alter the quantity of purchasing.
- Delivery period shall be maximum 90 days from the date signing of the contract agreement.
- Selected bidder will be notified by registered post for signing of agreement.
- Foreign bidders will be paid by letter of credit and local bidders will be paid by cheque .
- Bidders should submit a bid security of 1% from the quoted bid value which exceeds the estimated value of Rs 500,000.00 along with the bids through a recognized local bank or insurance company registered in Sri Lanka which is authorized by insurance board of Sri Lanka. Such bids without the bid security will be rejected. Bid Guarantees shall be valid up to 20.10.2021.
- Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Group Procurement Officer 011-2987528, 011 -2987537.

Commander of the Army
Sri Lanka Army Headquarters, Sri Jayawardanapura,
COLOMBO.

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