

Four arrested with seven kilos of ICE from Jaffna

SHAVINI MADHARA

Police have arrested four suspects with seven kilos of the ICE narcotic in Jaffna.

Police Media Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said three suspects were arrested along with five kilograms of ICE substance in the Kopay area by the Jaffna Divisional Crime Detective Bureau. **TO PAGE 02**

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VACCINATION ONLY SOLUTION TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC - PRESIDENT

PEOPLE MUST STRICTLY FOLLOW HEALTH GUIDELINES

SECOND DOSE FROM FIRST WEEK OF MAY CABINET NOD FOR IMPORT OF SPUTNIK V VACCINE

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday emphasised that only vaccination can end the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that people must strictly follow all rules and regulations recommended by the health authorities, as they did during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Only a vaccine can end the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government has a systematic and strong programme in place

to vaccinate the public. The Government has made arrangements to import four of the COVID-19 vaccines currently approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) and to be approved in the near future by the WHO," the Presidential Media Division said in a press release.

The first imported AstraZeneca vaccine has been administered to 925,242 persons. The second dose of the vaccine will

be given in the first week of May this year. The second dose will first be given to 356,000 people, including frontline health staff and Tri-Forces and Police officers engaged in COVID-19 control. The Government is holding talks with foreign pharmaceutical firms that produce the AstraZeneca

vaccine to meet the remaining demand. Around 200,000 doses of the Russian made **TO PAGE 02**



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Airport functions, tourist arrivals will continue - Minister

IRANGIKA RANGE

Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said that airport functions and tourist arrivals will continue in accordance with health guidelines despite the current COVID-19 situation in the country.

He said that no decision has been taken yet to limit the repatriation process of Sri Lankans despite the increase of COVID-19 patients in the country. **TO PAGE 02**



All State, private sector functions cancelled

The Government has decided to cancel all State functions and events for two weeks from yesterday.

The President's Media Division in a press release said that similar functions and meetings would also be prohibited for the private sector during that period.

The PMD said that these measures were initiated under the Quarantine Law to control the spread of COVID-19. Previously, the Government also decided not to allow any May Day rallies this year given the prevailing situation in the country.

Two critical from experimental explosion



Police and STF officers at the three wheeler repair workshop where the blast occurred. **Picture by Bandara Ratnayake.**

Two persons had sustained injuries following a minor explosion at a workshop in a house at Pannala, Ibbagamuwa, Police Media Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said.

He said the explosion had occurred when the victims had tried to experiment using explosives in fire crackers.

The Police Spokesman said an investigation was launched into the incident. **TO PAGE 02**

Port City Bill needs thorough review and amends - JVP

Sri Lanka falling victim to regional power struggle

DINULI FRANCISCO

JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva yesterday accused that the Colombo Port City leads Sri Lanka to become a victim of the power struggle in the Indian Ocean Region.

In order to fulfill the political and economic interests of China, Sri Lanka is inevitably falling victim to a regional power struggle, he said, observing that the United States, Japan, and India are leading camps on one side with China on the other. **TO PAGE 02**



Attorney General, Police decide whom to arrest - Minister

ASELA KURULUWANSA

The decision to arrest MP Rishad Bathiudeen was taken solely by the Police and the Attorney General's Department and the President or the Cabinet has had no hand in it, Media Minister and Cabinet Spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said.

Speaking to the media in Kandy on Saturday, the Minister said that decisions such as who to be arrested and when to be arrested are not made at Temple Trees unlike the previous Government did.

He pointed out that if the Speaker has not been informed **TO PAGE 02**



Bail out Bathiudeen - MP Kiriella

ASELA KURULUWANSA

MP Rishad Bathiudeen must be given bail without politically harassing him, Chief Opposition Whip and Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Lakshman Kiriella said.

Speaking at a gathering in Kadugannawa in Kandy, the MP said the Opposition condemns the political harassment meted towards Opposition MPs without any concrete evidence. **TO PAGE 02**



Easter Attacks: CID holds Rishad, brother under PTA

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Rishad Bathiudeen and his brother Riyaj Bathiudeen were arrested after an exhaustive analysis of evidence for allegedly aiding and abetting the Easter Sunday terrorist attackers.

Police Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said the arrests were made pursuant to a careful and detailed analysis of scientific and technical evidence, financial transactions and communication network of the attackers and other suspects linked to them.

The MP and his brother are currently detained at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for questioning under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

"They would initially be held for a period of 72 hours and we expect to obtain another 90-day detention order against the suspects if required," he said.

He said the MP was arrested on Saturday morning in a joint operation by the CID and the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID). He added that the Police have so far arrested 702 suspects in connection with the

Easter Sunday terrorist attacks on April 21, 2019. He added that 202 suspects out of them were in remand custody, while 83 suspects were detained by the CID and the TID under the provisions of the PTA. Among the detainees are the wife of ring-leader and suicide bomber Zaharan Hashim, her father and the father of the two Ibrahim brothers.



He also said that about 80 people had been arrested for attending classes and lectures on extremism.

BIA visitor lobbies closed

The Arrival and Departure lobby areas of the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) were closed for visitors with immediate effect until further notice, yesterday.

The BIA announced that this decision was taken as a preventive measure in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases. However, the functions of the airport will continue as normal giving due regard to health guidelines.



Dambulla Economic Centre closed for three days

Meegahawatta Police Station relocated

The Dambulla Economic Centre was closed yesterday for three days following the detection of 42 COVID-19 patients, the Dambulla Traders' Association said. **TO PAGE 02**



Celebrate Vesak indoors, PHIs urge public

Adhere to new quarantine guidelines

The Public Health Inspector's Association urges public to refrain from organising dansas and pandals during Vesak due to the COVID-19 situation in the country.

PHI's Union President Upul Rohana said that no public gathering is allowed under the new health guidelines issued to control the spread of COVID-19.

"It is clear that sub-clusters of COVID-19 infected persons are growing. In this wake, we request the public to refrain from unnecessary public gatherings. **TO PAGE 02**



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Forests, water and clean air as Fundamental Rights in new Constitution

Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said that he has proposed to include environment, forests, water, and clean air as Fundamental Rights in the New Constitution.

He was speaking at the 'Stakeholder Dialogue on Climate Change, Resilience and Just Recovery in the Sectors of Agriculture, Forestry and Biodiversity' held last Friday at Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo.

"Climate change has become the biggest threat to the global existence of humankind. While Sri Lanka is focusing on address-

ing climate change impacts at local and national level, through existing mechanisms, we also continue our engagement and commitment to global action ever since climate change started gaining international traction, through various initiatives.

"Sri Lanka continues to focus on setting up national mechanism to facilitate the work related to the areas of the Warsaw International Mechanism under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since the ratification of the UNFCCC, in 1993,

and the Paris Agreement in 2016, we, as a country have made commitments focusing on key sectors and taking affirmative actions to address the impacts of climate change. In working towards climate action, it is important for us to also achieve sustainable development and at how resilience could be built through inclusive and participatory processes, integrate stakeholder driven decision making processes and implementation of climate action.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's National Policy Frame-

work "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" gives highest priority to the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". We are focused on eventually becoming a net carbon zero country, without compromising our national development goals.

"I am pleased to mention Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa opened Sri Lanka's largest wind farm, with a capacity of 100 MW, in the Mannar District. The total energy portfolio by 2030 will accommodate over 40 per cent renewable energy and with an anticipated 80 per cent

energy mix obtained from hydro and renewable energy sources.

"Our country is currently engaging with international and regional entities to bring sustainable nitrogen management to the South Asian agenda.

It is in line with the implementation of the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management with an ambition to halve nitrogen waste by 2030, which would bring multiple benefits, including effective measures in mitigating impacts of climate change.

"Sri Lanka believes that cli-

mate financing commitments under UNFCCC and other mechanisms are needed for developing economies such as Sri Lanka to build resilience and address the adverse effects of climate change and to undertake potential greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives.

"I call upon you to embark on getting more, and if possible, all young men and women to harvest and harness more rainwater and solar energy. Both are in abundance and blessed in Sri Lanka," Minister Gunewardena said.



Hambantota Pharma Zone ready for investors in June

CHAMINDA PERERA

Aviation and Export Zone Development State Minister D.V.Chanaka said all arrangements will be made for investors to begin construction of factories in the Pharmaceutical Zone in Arabokka, Hambantota in June.

In a bid to enhance foreign exchange earnings and save foreign exchange by way of import substitution, the government has decided to set up a Pharmaceutical Zone in Arabokka in Hambantota.

State Minister D.V.Chanaka said investors have shown

unprecedented enthusiasm in investing the pharmaceutical industry in the face of COVID-19 Pandemic

Addressing the progress review meeting of the dedicated Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Zone at his Ministry, the State Minister said President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has given specific instructions to him and Ministry officials to ensure that this project runs on time.

The Zone is expected to meet 40 per cent of the domestic pharmaceutical requirement by locally manu-

facturing drugs while creating pathway to US\$ 1 billion export earnings as import substitution by 2025.

"The government has already identified an area in extent of 1000 acres in Arabokka in Hambantota for this project and an extent of 400 acres are to be developed under the first phase", he said.

He said that acquisition of land and preliminary construction activities have



already commenced and the Board of Investment will start providing infrastructure facilities to the zone while factories are being constructed by investors concerned to ensure commencement of commercial operations soon.

"The government is striving to promote the export earnings while facing the COVID-19 challenge effectively," he said.

He said that the government has set apart a colossal amount of money to import pharmaceuticals and the Pharma Zone will help the government save foreign exchange flowing out by producing the country's pharmaceutical requirement locally. He added that eighty five per cent of country's pharmaceutical needs are imported and about 15 per cent of them are manufactured locally mainly by the State Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Corporation with an estimated value of Rs. 18 billion.

US grants US\$ 345,000 for programme to tackle plastic pollution

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Alaina B.Teplitz on Friday announced the first grants awarded through the U.S. government's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean programme totalling US\$ 345,000.

the US Embassy in Colombo said these grants to Sri Lankan organizations would fund projects that help protect Sri Lanka's cities and marine resources from plastic pollution. Environment Ministry Secretary Dr. Anil Jasinghe joined Ambassador Teplitz at the event.

"National and local coordination, enduring partnerships, community engagement and localized solutions are key to reversing the impact of pollution and environmental degradation," said Ambassador Teplitz. "The Clean Cities, Blue Ocean programme incorporates the principles and will help Sri Lankans build sustainable

solutions to protect the precious ocean that surrounds us," she added.

The Embassy said that in line with Sri Lankan government and grassroots efforts, the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Clean Cities, Blue Ocean programme would fund pilot projects to minimize the flow of plastic pollution to the ocean. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the Public Interest Law Foundation received funding to develop, test, and implement new models to enhance solid waste management and promote reducing, reusing, and recycling practices. Grantees will also build awareness of the negative impact of plastic pollution on the ocean.

Working in Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna districts, grantees will collaborate with local and national government entities to manage solid



U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Alaina B.Teplitz and Environment Ministry Secretary Dr.Anil Jasinghe.

waste more effectively. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce will pilot a public-private partnership approach that encourages manufacturers to take responsibility for the environmental impacts of the production and disposal of their plastic products. The Public Interest Law Foundation will help to create guidelines for the disposal of non-hazardous plastic waste from

hospitals, draft proposals to strengthen local solid waste management, and advance reforms that support recycling and disposal of plastic waste. The Clean Cities, Blue Ocean programme will provide technical assistance and conduct site-level research to understand specific challenges in solid waste management and enforcement and barriers to private

sector investment. "The Clean Cities, Blue Ocean programme is the U.S. government's flagship programme to respond to the global crisis of ocean plastics pollution.

This is one component of the longstanding partnership between the American and Sri Lankan people to support self-reliance and promote economic growth".

Vaccination only solution to... From page 01

"Sputnik V" Covid-19 vaccine will be available by the end of April, while 400,000 doses will be available in May, 800,000 doses in June and 1,200,000 doses in July this year. Cabinet approval has already been granted to purchase and import 13 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine.

Plans are already on to distribute around 600,000 doses of the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine donated by China to Sri Lanka in the next few weeks following WHO approval.

In addition, the State Pharmaceutical Corporation (SPC) has already signed preliminary agreements required for the import of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the Government is in the process of importing this mRNA-based vaccine as soon as possible.

The Head of the WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has reiterated in Geneva yesterday that adherence to basic public health guidelines is the backbone of the fight against the increased spread of COVID-19. Properly wearing the face mask, occasional hand washing with soap and water or hand disinfectants, the practice of social distancing, and avoiding non-essential travel and events are among the most important.

"Some sections of society think that the country should be locked down for some time as a solution



to control the spread of COVID-19. Although such an action may have satisfactory results at the beginning, in the long term it will have extremely detrimental effects on the lives of the people and the economy.

"Developing countries such as Sri Lanka cannot take lockdown measures or impose curfews that obstruct the economic activities. The majority of our country's income earners depend on informal livelihoods.

Therefore, while the Government is fulfilling its responsibilities, the people must fulfill their respective responsibilities and duties for the betterment of the country as well as themselves," the Presidential Media Division press release said.

Celebrate Vesak indoors, ... From page 01

People should be mindful about the quarantine laws. No religious ceremonies can be organised. The people can only worship at religious places.

The Atamasthanadhipathi in Anuradhapura also requested the people

not to gather at religious sites in the North Central Province given the country's prevailing situation.

Therefore, we request not to organise any form of religious gatherings for the upcoming Vesak festival," he noted.

Airport functions, tourist ... From page 01

"We are giving our utmost assistance to health authorities to control the spread of the virus. The pandemic seems to be more dangerous now than before and this situation should be brought under control if we want to revive the tourism industry," he added.

Tourists who are arriving in the country are subject to PCR tests and 14-day quarantine period. These regu-



lations are strictly implemented. Since the third wave of COVID-19 is spreading worldwide, there is certain control in the tourism industry globally. On the other hand, it would negatively affect the country's economy.

However, the President always advises us to take the best decision for the betterment of the country and we always do so," he added.

Four arrested with seven... From page 01

the main suspect was arrested along with two kilograms of ICE in the Jaffna Town yesterday.

He further stated that two motorcycles, a lorry and a three wheeler were also taken into police custody in connection with the drug trafficking case.

"The investigations are continuing. It has been revealed that the ICE narcotic has been brought to Sri Lanka from India through sea. 135 kilograms of the ICE narcotic was seized by the Police Narcotics Bureau over the past 10 days," he added.

Attorney General, Police... From page 01

prior to the arrest of the MP, that responsibility should be held by the relevant law enforcement bodies. He noted that even though there were loud calls several months ago that politicians who have had links with extremists organizations must be arrested, the Government did not unduly interfere



into the law enforcement bodies. "We let the law take its own course. We have made the judiciary system independent. It was the previous Government which called officers of the Attorney General's Department to Temple Trees to discuss whom to be arrested," he said.

Former Speaker M.H.Mohamed remembered today

MOHAMMED RASOOLDEEN

A ceremony to commemorate the 101st birth anniversary of former Speaker Mohamed Haniffa Mohamed will be held at the Islamic Centre in Maligawatte, today (26).

Mohamed was stalwart of the Muslim community, who commanded respect from members of all communities. He represented the Borella electorate in Parliament.

Besides being the first Muslim Mayor in Colombo, Mohammed officiated as Speaker and has held several Ministerial portfolios.

Being a founder member of the Constituent Council of the Muslim World League, Mohamed founded the Islamic Centre in Colombo which has been offering multifarious services to community which includes scholarships to hundreds of university students.

Born in Colombo to a conservative Muslim family, his father was a proctor by profession. An old boy of Wesley College Colombo, he took to the family business then dominating the shipping industry in Sri Lanka.



Mohamed first entered politics in 1945, as a Member of the Colombo Municipal Council. He contested the Maligawatte municipal ward as an Independent candidate supported by the Communist Party.

As a young dynamic politician, he rose to be the first Muslim Mayor of Colombo in 1960 from the United National Party.

He entered mainstream politics by contesting the Borella constituency.

He served as Labour, Employment and Housing Minister in 1965 and was responsible in making legislation to grant gratuity for private sector employees. He introduced the concept of building housing schemes in Colombo for the underprivileged and the housing schemes presently standing in Borella and Maligawatte, were initiated by him.

He was the first Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs Minister under Presidents J.R. Jayewardene and R.Premadasa.

Dambulla Economic Centre... From page 01

An Association spokesman said this was taken to control the spread of COVID-19, adding that re-opening would be done after evaluating the situation.

At the same time, the Meegahawatta police station has been relocated temporarily at the Nagarukkaramaya Temple after two police officers were tested positive for COVID-19. Other officers of the same station have been asked to undergo PCR tests.



Two critical from experimental... From page 01

by Gokarella Police together with the Bomb Disposal Unit of the Special Task Force and the Intelligence Unit.

Two youths, aged 27 and 22, are being treated at the Kurunegala Hospital. One of them had sustained severe injuries.



Port City Bill needs thorough... From page 01

"The Government pledged to pursue a non-aligned foreign policy but this leads to a position where we lose our sovereignty. We do not have the capacity to clash with these countries. Anyhow, we are dependent on Chinese and Indian loans. Thus, the Government is trying to bargain parts of the country in exchange for debt," Silva said.

He said that the Supreme Court would only consider whether the Colombo Port City Economic Bill is in line with the Constitution, but it would not go into its economic and political implications on the country.

"A number of economic and political damages are expected from the Port City Bill. According to the Bill, Port city will be governed by a Commission five to seven people appointed by the President. It is unclear who will be appointed," he said.

Furthermore, he said that the Port



City would create two counties and two laws instead of one country and one law. "The Port city Bill excludes a number of Acts such as the Urban Development Act, Strategic Development Act, etc. Therefore, this does not belong to the Colombo Municipal Council or Western Provincial Council. In fact, the Parliament too is not accountable for this. We are going to make a grave mistake by taking this forward" he added.

MP Harini Amarasooriya also speaking to the media stated that the Colombo Port City would not be helpful to address the burning issues of the public.

"A Government that comes to power for five years has no right to make arbitrary decisions that could affect not only their tenure but also the generations to come. We urge the Government to seek the approval of the public before passing this Bill" she added.

Bail out Bathiudeen... From page 01



"MP Bathiudeen was arrested previously also but was later released stating that there is not enough evidence. If he has done any wrong, legal action must be instituted in the Court of Law. MP Bathiudeen will not flee the country. He was arrested in the wee hours on Saturday stating that there is evidence against him. How come the evidence which was not there before came up suddenly?" he questioned.



A Buddhist monument in Swat valley in Pakistan.

Swat valley most venerable place for Buddhists - Lankan Bhikkus

Sri Lankan Buddhist monks said on Saturday that the paradisiacal Swat valley remained the centre of Buddhism and had immense importance for Buddhists all over the world.

They said this during their visit to the Buddhist archaeological sites of Gandhara Buddhist civilisation in Swat valley.

The delegation includes senior monks Ven. Dr. Walpola Piyananda Thera, Ven. Dr. Bodagama Chandima Thera, Ven. Dr. Kirinde Assaji Thera, Ven. Dr. Pallegama Rathanasara Thera, Ven. Prof. Kallanchiye Rathanasiri Thera, Ven. Uduwe Dhammaloka Thera, Ven. Muruththettuwe Ananda Thera, Ven. Embilipitiye Rahula Thera, Ven. Korathota Dammadasi Thera, Ven. Dr. Atapattukande Ananda Thera, Asela Pushpa Kumara Wickramasinghe and Aaishah Abu Bakr Fahad, who is Second Secretary (political) at the Pakistan High Commission, Colombo.

The monks said that Swat valley had high importance for Buddhists and its name meant a blessing.

"Swat is also important for us as both the Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism started from here and spread into Southeast Asia. It is also the place where most venerable monks like Padmasambhava were born and spread Vajrayana Buddhism to Tibet, Bhutan and other countries of Southeast Asia," Ven. Dr. Walpola Piyananda said.

He said, however, that people in Sri Lanka were afraid to go to Pakistan because of certain media reports and he himself was hesitant at first.

"When we came here and saw the love and respect of the local people, we became very happy and now we send the message to all the Buddhists to come and visit Pakistan," he said.

Asela Pushpa Kumara Wickramasinghe, the Coordinator Officer, said that the monks were hesitant to visit Pakistan because of the wrong image developed through the media, but thanks to the Pakistan High Commission such fears were assuaged, which not only assured them but also arranged the visit.

"People are amazingly helpful and hospitable here and when I saw their love with us it erased the wrong image of Pakistan from our minds and hearts," he said, adding he and the Tourism Minister of Pakistan discussed a tourism plan between the two countries.

Aaishah Abu Bakr Fahad said that during recent visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Sri Lanka he invited the Buddhist monks to Pakistan, so the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo organised the visit.

"We tried to take the delegation to the proposed Buddhist Trail and we hope that through this not only people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will strengthen, but the religious tourism will also increase from Sri Lanka to Pakistan," she said, adding it was also aimed at showing the true and peaceful image of Pakistan to the world. - The Dawn

Task force to prevent Diyawanna algae growth

A Cabinet paper will be presented this week to appoint a task force on the unusual algae growth in the Diyawanna Oya, Environment Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said.

"It has been confirmed that the discoloration of the water around the Diyawanna Oya in Parliament is due to Algae Bloom or algae growth. Experts have pointed out that this algae growth could further spread and could even lead to a strong odour in the surrounding environment," the Ministry said in a press release yesterday.

"It is proposed to appoint a task force with expertise to provide a solution to this environmental problem. The relevant Cabinet Memorandum has been finalised and Minister Amaraweera will present it at the next Cabinet meeting," the statement added.

Ministry Secretary Dr. Anil Jasinghe said that several factors have been identified with regard to this problem and steps were being taken to prevent the growth of this unusual algae growth.

The Secretary pointed out that such algae growth could be due to the neglect of sustainable development policies in the implementation of Sri Jayawardenepura development plans.

He said that a discussion would be held at the Ministry tomorrow with several experts who can work in this regard.

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena convened a meeting in this regard last week. The Speaker instructed Secretary Dr. Jasinghe to take immediate action to prevent the growth of these algae.

Two foreigners die of COVID

Two foreigners were among those who died of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka on Friday and Saturday, the Government Information Department said.

The number of COVID-19 deaths stood at 642 yesterday morning.

A foreigner (46) who was residing in Colombo 2 had died on Saturday while under treatment at the Kandy General Hospital. He was diagnosed as COVID-19 infected while at a private hospital in Colombo and later transferred to the Kandy General Hospital. The cause of death has been mentioned as Cardio Respiratory Arrest following COVID Pneumonia.

Another foreigner (63) who was residing in Colombo 4 had died on Friday in a treatment centre in Colombo. The cause of death has been mentioned as COVID Pneumonia, Multiorgan failure associated with Chronic Kidney Disease.

Sri Lanka-Afghan relations strengthened in past two years - Afghan Envoy

MOHAMMED RASOOLDEEN

Afghanistan Ambassador M. Ashraf Haidari, who met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Monday said that signing 10 MoUs and Agreements between his country and Sri Lanka during the past two years bears testimony to the strong and friendly relations between the two countries.

The envoy signed an accord with Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on Political Consultations MoU between the two Foreign Affairs Ministries.

He said both sides agreed that win-win cooperation in defence, connectivity, mutual legal assistance, and people-to-people ties would deepen Afghanistan-Sri Lanka friendship.

Ambassador Haidari thanked the Sri Lankan Government for additional scholarship slots for the Afghan military cadets at the National Defence University (KDU) of Sri Lanka.

The Ambassador briefed



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in discussion with Afghanistan Ambassador M. Ashraf Haidari.

the President on the recent developments in Afghanistan with implications for regional peace and stability. They particularly discussed the announcement by the Biden Administration of its

decision to draw US forces from Afghanistan by early September.

The Ambassador told the President that the "new chapter" in the US-Afghanistan relations entailed con-

tinued security and military, economic development and humanitarian partnerships on the two countries' mutual commitments under the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and

the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA). He underscored the importance of effectively managing all dimensions of the withdrawal process, so it is not misperceived as a victory by the Taliban and other regional and transnational terrorist networks. "This should be a cause for concern for the whole region where emboldened by such a misperception, terrorists could foremost threaten stability in our wider neighborhood, as well as international peace and security," the Ambassador said.

President Rajapaksa reaffirmed the support of Sri Lanka for the principled peace efforts of President Ghani and called for an end to the 42-year suffering of the Afghan people. Ambassador Haidari recalled the recent condemnation by Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena of the terrorist attacks that daily take innocent lives in Afghanistan and greatly

appreciated Sri Lanka's firm stance against all forms of extremism and terrorism with no distinction. He also extended to the President the gratitude of the Afghan people and government for the recent statement of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, which strongly rejected the use of terrorism and violence against civilians in the name of any religion, especially Islam, a faith of peace, tolerance, and co-existence.

Ambassador Haidari sought the continued support of Sri Lanka in multilateral forums, including for Afghanistan's candidate for the Presidency of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly 2021-2022. He highlighted the superior qualifications of Afghan candidate Dr. Zalmay Rassoul, former Foreign Minister and National Security Adviser of Afghanistan, as well as his contributions to the Afghanistan-Sri Lanka bilateral ties during his tenure as Afghan Foreign Minister.

Prison in Horana for Welikada inmates

ASELA KURULUWANA

The Welikada Prison inmates will be moved to a newly constructed prison in Horana before the end of 2024, Prison-Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation State Minister Lohan Ratwatte said.

He said that the constructions of the prison will commence in October. "We will close this prison and the 40-acre land that houses the prison will be given to a company for development. The prison in Horana will have a rehabilitation and training centre, gymnasium, hospital and a swimming pool," he said.

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Draw Number ▶ 070
Draw Date ▶ 24.04.2021
Saturday
Winning Numbers: 22, 42, 43
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 1,977,480/-
Total no of Rs. 100,000 winners | 10
The blue and orange tickets are respectively valid on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The winning tickets will be valid for 6 months.

English Letter & Winning Numbers
Draw No: 716
Date: 23.04.2021
Colour: Green
Winning Numbers: 18, 51, 54, 60
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 2,637,040/-
Next Super Jackpot Rs. 80,296,960/-
Yellow, Pink and Green coloured tickets are valid on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays respectively. Winning tickets are valid for 6 months.

Date: 24-04-2021
Draw Number: 428 | Colour: Red
SUPER JACKPOT Rs. 12,340,496/-
Development Fortune
English Letter: H
Winning Numbers: 27, 52, 68
Fate Number: 7
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 3,225,500/-
Next Super Jackpot Rs. 12,474,588/-
The winning ticket will be valid for 6 months.

Date: 23-04-2021
Draw Number: 3137
Colour: Blue
SUPER JACKPOT Rs. 3,348,091.60
Winning Numbers: 22, 26, 43, 54
Capricorn
TOTAL VALUE OF PRIZES Rs. 11,117,920/-

Date: 24-04-2021
Draw Number: 3138
Colour: Light Blue
SUPER JACKPOT Rs. 3,569,442.60
Winning Numbers: 12, 26, 31, 51
Aries
TOTAL VALUE OF PRIZES Rs. 10,537,340/-

Friday
Date: 23.04.2021
Draw No.: 1256
Colour: Purple
ADA KOTIPATHI
Winning Numbers: 25, 29, 54, 62
English Letter: Y
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 5,175,900/-
Winning tickets are valid only for six months

Saturday
Date: 24.04.2021
Draw No.: 1257
Colour: Yellow
ADA KOTIPATHI
Winning Numbers: 13, 52, 67, 69
English Letter: K
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 4,923,960/-
Winning tickets are valid only for six months

Draw Number ▶ 1430
Colour ▶ Pink
Draw Date ▶ 23.04.2021
Date ▶ Friday
Winning English Letter and Numbers: I, 13, 15, 19, 55
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 3,278,220/-
The winning tickets will be valid for 6 months.

Draw Number ▶ 1431
Colour ▶ Blue
Draw Date ▶ 24.04.2021
Date ▶ Saturday
Winning English Letter and Numbers: Q, 22, 39, 59, 67
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 3,377,320/-
The winning tickets will be valid for 6 months.

Friday
Date: 23.04.2021
Draw No.: 3586
Colour: Orange
ශනිදා
Winning Numbers: 06, 15, 32, 69
English Letter: H
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 5,207,680/-
Winning tickets are valid only for six months

Saturday
Date: 24.04.2021
Draw No.: 3587
Colour: Green
ශනිදා
Winning Numbers: 03, 13, 17, 56
English Letter: P
Total Value of Prizes Rs. 4,195,120/-
Winning tickets are valid only for six months

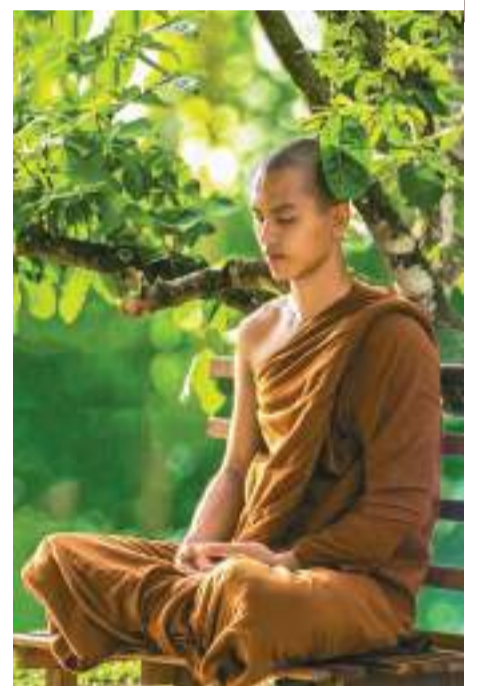
BUDDHISM'S FIVE REMEMBRANCES ARE WAKE-UP CALLS FOR US ALL



All things are impermanent including life and Earth itself



A Bhikku venerating the Buddha



A meditating monk

KOUN FRANZ

Often, someone will ask me, "What's Buddhism about?" I usually go straight to what are known as Buddhism's "three seals" — the concepts of dissatisfaction, impermanence, and non-self. I will tell the person, "These are the structural underpinnings of Buddhism." But that's a lot to take in. If I were being more skillful, I would probably have business cards printed up with the "Five Remembrances" of foundational Buddhism on them. And when someone asked, "What is Buddhism?" I would say, "Here. It's this."

- I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.

- I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape having ill health.

- I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.

- All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them.

- My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground upon which I stand.

These Five Remembrances, first found in the *Upajjhathana Sutta* ("Subjects for Contemplation"), are intended to be recited. They are intended to be memorized. They are things we can say every day. Maybe they are the first thing you say when you wake up, or the first thought you have before you go to bed; maybe they are taped next to your bathroom mirror or on your kitchen counter. And as they become internalized, they become a kind of touchstone, a constant reminder to yourself that you are of the nature to grow old, that there's no way around aging, that there is no way around sickness. There is no way around death.

These first three, of course, are basically what drove the Buddha to become the Buddha. These were the central wake-up calls of his life before he "woke up": sickness, old age, death. It's so commonsensical.

If you have all five memorized, there's no need for a further teaching. I'm going to ramble about these for a while, but it's all right there already. It's complete. It's Buddhism at its very, very best. It's perfectly clear. It's perfectly compassionate. It's perfectly concise. And you can't argue with it. It must matter.



Prince Siddhartha sees sickness, death, old age and a sage

So we have sickness, old age, death, and then we have these last two. "All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change." This is impermanence. "There is no way to escape being separated from" — and there we have a little bit of the spice of *dukkha*, or unsatisfactoriness. Everything is going to change; nothing is ever going to be as I want it to be, as I need it to be, as I think it should be. I can't keep the perfect thing. I can't keep anything.

We say these in the first person, but we can say them in the second person. Maybe not out loud, but as you are looking at your aging parents, as you are looking at your friend who is suffering from a debilitating disease, as you are looking at your children going through all the joys and the difficulties of growing up, you can pause and think to yourself:

You are of the nature to grow old.

You are of the nature to die.

You are going to suffer separation and loss. We shouldn't pretend otherwise. And of course, we can also say it as "we": *we are all this. We are all going to lose what we have, if we ever had it. We are all of this nature.*

Some of my most grounded and simple moments in relationship to this practice have taken place in settings like subway stations,

moments of being crowded in by hundreds or thousands of people and looking out at so many faces, more than you can process, and then thinking, "Oh, *we're ALL this*. Everything that is true to me about this practice is true to them." It changes the room. It changes the air. Not because something good happened, but because that's my one brief honest look at where I am.

Remembrance #5 is maybe the most interesting. "My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground upon which I stand." This is about *karma*. I've heard it said, and maybe you have as well, this phrase, that we own our actions "but not the fruits of our actions." We experience the consequences, but we don't get to have the rewards. Within my tradition, Zen, we can understand this to a certain degree as practice-verification, Dogen's central teaching that the *meaning of what we do* is expressed, complete, in *what we do*. What we do is the thing.

My life is being expressed 100 percent right now. This is what my life looks like right now. There's no back story. There's no other thing that you don't see. And it's equally true for you wherever you are, whichever part of the world you are in. However you are sitting, however you are breathing, that's you — not just a *version* of you but the *complete* you, the culmination of your life.

What you choose to do in this moment matters. There will be consequences. And while you get to choose which actions you take, you don't get to choose what those consequences will be. It's like aiming a bow and arrow while you're running; you know what you want to hit. Maybe you'll get it. Maybe you won't. You just do your best, but you have to accept the consequences for what happens because what other option is there? So Remembrance #5 is saying that what you do matters — so *live* like it does.

These Five Remembrances are powerful. They are enough. They are more than enough. But I want to add another piece, which is that in another sutra, in the *Devaduta Sutta* ("The Deva Messengers"), there's discussion

about the Remembrances, but from a different angle: "The Five Divine Messengers." When we encounter these five divine messengers, they are reminders of the Five Remembrances.

I love the first one. It makes me trust the whole list: newborn babies. When we encounter a newborn baby, even if we don't have any particular philosophy about the nature of reality, we are struck with something powerful. There's something earth-shattering about a newborn child. In that little face, we see all of it; we see something so perfect. And at the same time, we know that it can't remain. We would never wish for that baby not to grow up, to not get older. And at the same time, when that child gets a little older, we may not be able to see its perfection as clearly. So there's a sense of loss. There's an understanding that this is temporary — and at the same time, so complete.

The second divine messenger is "a bent over, broken-tooth, old person." Every time you see someone who has reached old age — and in this case, a kind of extreme example, someone who has really felt the ravages of age — that's a divine messenger. It's a kind of angel appearing to remind you, in case you forgot in this moment or for today that you, too, are of the nature to grow old, that you cannot escape.

Don't look away. Say thank you. The third messenger is someone who is suffering from an illness. Part of what I love about this teaching is that I've heard people say, many times, that when you see someone else who is suffering, you should count your blessings that you're not suffering in the same way. This teaching is saying the opposite: "That person is suffering. Don't kid yourself — that person is showing you the nature of your life. You may not feel it acutely in this moment, but this is what it is to be human."

Again, don't look away. Realize what you are seeing.

The next is someone who has died. In this culture, that's usually been a rare event; in other cultures and other times, seeing a

corpse was not uncommon at all. But these teachings came about in times when there was, for example, no photography. We have a different opportunity. Every time you see a picture of someone from the past, every time you see a photograph of someone who is no longer with us, you can pause and consider the fact that that person died and that you will too, that there is no escape. It isn't a punishment; it isn't unfair. It's just who we are.

And then there's the last divine messenger. This one, we need to examine a little bit; it comes from a different place. The last messenger is "a punished criminal." This image, of course, is intended to remind us of *karma*, something closer to "justice." Perhaps people had more faith in the criminal justice system 2,500 years ago, but if someone points out a "punished criminal" to me today, I don't simply assume the person got what they deserved. How can I know that?

If a divine messenger isn't sending the intended message, you can disregard it. Find something new. In this case, we're looking for something to remind us of *karma* — luckily, literally everything does. Every time you can't find your keys, it's because you put your keys somewhere else. That too is *karma* — it doesn't have to look like justice. It doesn't have to be a balancing of the scales; that's a simplistic and dangerous view. It's simply that we do things, and something comes of those choices.

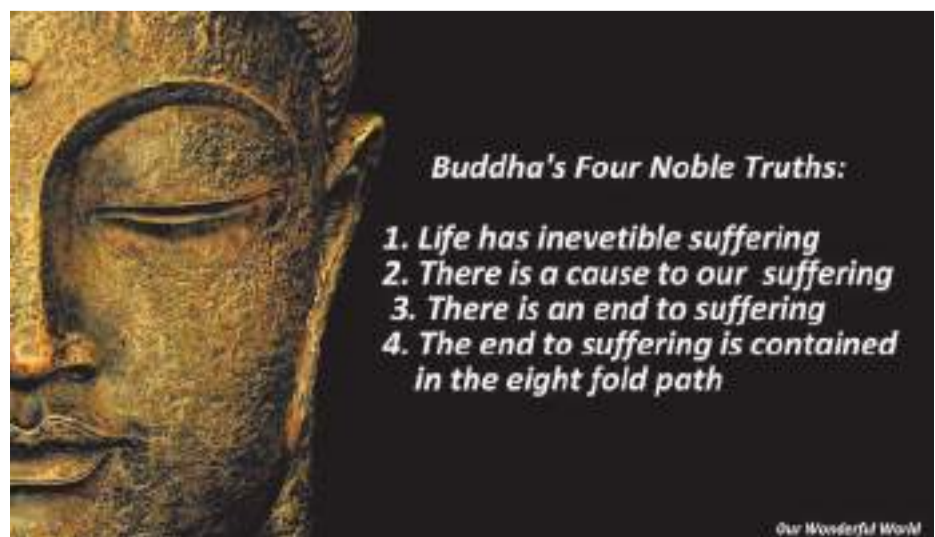
When you breathe out, your body needs to breathe in again. Just like that, multiple times a minute, you have a reminder that what you do matters, that what you do now is leading to something else. We always bear the weight of that, but we can also choose that weight in the way we sit and stand and walk and speak, because again, what other option is there?

We can get so caught up in the idea that this tradition and this practice are about somehow perfecting ourselves or about purifying our view. Even if we are in a tradition that tells us not to see it that way, that particular door feels so wide, so open, so seductive. But if we choose that path, if we try to walk through that door, then we walk past *this*, the thing that is truly on offer.

Maybe, in the future, there is a better you, a wiser you, a more compassionate you. But in this moment, you don't need to focus on that at all. Just don't lie to yourself about the nature of your life. That's what these five are saying. Remember every day. Let them be the air you breathe. Metabolize them. And then, whatever you choose to do with your life, the actions you choose to take will come from that place of total honesty, of total transparency.

That's what these five are about. Not something out there. Not something to come.

If you are looking for a project, go grab a 5x7 card and write the Remembrances down, and stick it next to your mirror. Tape it on your kitchen counter. Put it on your desk. Let these five truths soak into your skin. You've always known them, because they've always been true. But best to remind yourself anyway. (*Lion's Roar*)



Buddha's Four Noble Truths:

1. Life has inevitable suffering
2. There is a cause to our suffering
3. There is an end to suffering
4. The end to suffering is contained in the eight fold path

Our Wonderful World



Devotees engage in religious observances



Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka STAFF VACANCIES

Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka ensures through strategic planning, professional guidance and stringent surveillance under well established regulatory framework, the operational of safe secure efficient regular and environment friendly national civil aviation system that conforms to the national legislative requirement and the International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka is looking for energetic enthusiastic and self-motivated personnel who have sound qualification and extensive experience in the field of civil aviation to fill its vacancies in the following posts.

Deputy Director General (Corporate Management)
Post Code HM-2-1-DDG3 Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 91,645 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 91,645 – 12 x 2,700 -124,045 –as per the MS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Fuel allowance – 140 l + Transport Allowance - Rs 50,000/- (if use own vehicle) + Professional Allowance as per the MS Circular 05/2017
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Option 1</p> <p>1. A Bachelor's Degree of not less than (03) three years duration in the field of Economics, Accountancy, Management, Commerce or Administration which is recognized by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. A Postgraduate Degree qualification (Masters') in the field of Economics, Accountancy, Management, Commerce, Administration or Associate Membership of a recognized professional Chartered Institute relating to Finance Management or Administration;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. Minimum of eighteen (18) years' service experience in the field of Finance, Management, Administration or Auditing at a Managerial Level in a Corporation, Statutory Board/ Institution or a reputed private institution.</p>	<p>Option -1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualification required by the external candidates mentioned.</p> <p>Option -2</p> <p>1. Minimum of five (05) years' service experience as Director (Human Resources and Property Management), Director (Finance and Revenue Management) or Director (Quality and Internal Audit) in the CAASL;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. Unblemished track record for the preceding five years and having earned all the increments in the current post;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. 'Good' or above grading in the Annual Performance;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>4. A proven ability to lead and direct multi-disciplinary teams. Experience in proper development and efficient management of human and other resources.</p>

Director (Aerodromes)
Post Code HM-1-1-D2 Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 80,295 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 80,295 – 15 x 2,270 -114,345 –as per the MS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Fuel allowance – 120 l + Transport Allowance - Rs 50,000/- (if use own vehicle) + Special Technical Allowance(Please refer the CAASL Web site for requirements) - Rs. 225,000/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Option 1</p> <p>1. A Bachelor's Degree of not less than three (03) years duration in the field of Physical Science, Aerospace Engineering, Air Transport, Aeronautical Engineering or Civil Engineering which is recognized by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WITH</p> <p>2. A Postgraduate Degree qualification (Masters') in the field of Aviation or Associate Membership of a recognized Professional Chartered Institute relating to Aviation or successfully completed courses which includes Aerodrome Certification Course [Managerial Level] of not less than six (06) weeks conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organization or similar Organization of International repute or any similar qualification which is recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. Minimum of ten (10) years' experience in the field of Aerodrome Operations at Managerial level in a Corporation, Statutory Board/Institution/Government owned company or a reputed Private Institution.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>1. Post graduate degree qualification (Masters in the field of Aviation) or full Membership of a recognized Professional Chartered Institute relating to Aviation or successfully completed courses(Managerial Level) of not less than (06) six weeks conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organization or similar Organization of International repute or any similar qualification which is recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. Minimum of thirteen (13) years' experience in the field of Aerodromes at Managerial Level in a Corporation, Statutory Board/Institution/Government owned company or a reputed Private Institution.</p>	<p>Option -1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualifications required by the external candidates mentioned.</p> <p>Option -2</p> <p>Having satisfied all of the following:</p> <p>1. Completion of minimum of five (05) years' satisfactory service in a post in the Manager category (MM-1) grade I in the field of Aerodromes ;</p> <p>2. Unblemished track record for the preceding five (05) years and having earned all the increments in the current post;</p> <p>3. Having successfully completed advanced Training courses approved by the Authority in the field of Aerodromes and Aerodrome Certification of not less than six (06) weeks conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organization or its recognized institute ;</p> <p>4. 'Good' or above grading in the Annual Performance Appraisals for the last five (05) years.</p>

Senior Civil Aviation Inspector (Aeronautical Information Service)
Post Code MM-1-1-AN2 Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 53,175 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 53,175 -10 x-1,375 -15 x 1,910 -95,575 - as per the MS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Managers' Allowance - Rs 50,000/- + Special Technical Allowance(Please refer the CAASL Web site for requirements) - Rs. 100,000/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Option 1</p> <p>Bachelor's Degree of not less than three (03) years from a University recognized by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka in Physical Science, Transport, Aerospace, Information and Communication Technology or Engineering Streams, with not less than eight (08) years post qualifying experience in Executive Capacity in the relevant field in a Government Department /Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in Aviation</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Having passed the Intermediate Examination of a recognized professional Chartered Institute, of which the subject area is relevant to the post with minimum eight (08) years post qualifying experience in Executive Capacity in the relevant field in a Government Department/ Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in Aviation.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>Having obtained a certificate of proficiency in the relevant field which is not below than the National Vocational Qualification Level 7 determined by Technical /Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission with minimum eight (08) years post qualifying experience in Executive Capacity in the relevant field in a Government Department/ Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in Aviation.</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualifications required by the External Candidates mentioned above.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>1. Minimum of six (06) years' service experience as a Civil Aviation Inspector (Aeronautical Information Service);</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. Unblemished track record for the preceding six (06) years and having earned all the increments in the current post;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. Having successfully completed ICAO approved courses of training not less than four (04) weeks in the field of Aeronautical Information Service ;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>4. 'Good' or above grading in the Annual Performance</p>

Senior Civil Aviation Inspector (Air Traffic Management-Technical)
Post Code MM-1-1-AN3Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 53,175 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 53,175 -10 x-1,375 -15 x 1,910 -95,575 - as per theMS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Managers' Allowance - Rs 50,000/- + Special Technical Allowance(Please refer the CAASL Web site for requirements) - Rs. 170,000/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Option 1</p> <p>Bachelor's Degree in Engineering of not less than four (04) years from a University recognized by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka in the field of Telecommunication / Avionics, with not less than eight (08) years post qualifying experience as an Electronics/Telecommunication/Avionics Engineer in a Government Department /Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in provision of Air Navigation Services and Ground Aides.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Having passed the Intermediate Examination of a recognized professional Chartered Institute, of which the subject area is relevant to the post with minimum eight (08) years post qualifying experience as an Electronics/Telecommunication/Avionics Engineer in a public or private organization engaged in the provision of Air Navigation Services and Ground Aides.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>Having obtained a certificate of proficiency in the relevant field which is not below than the National Vocational Qualification Level 7 determined by Technical /Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission with minimum eight (08) years post qualifying experience as an Electronic/Telecommunication/Avionics Engineer in a public or private organization engaged in provision of Air Navigation Services and Ground Aides.</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualifications required by the External Candidates mentioned.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>1. Minimum of six (06) years' service experience as a Civil Aviation Inspector (Air Traffic Management Technical) ;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. Unblemished track record for the preceding six (06) years and having earned all the increments in the current post;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. Having successfully completed ICAO approved courses of training not less than four (04) weeks in the field of Air Traffic Management ;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>4. 'Good' or above grading in the Annual Performance</p>

Senior Civil Aviation Inspector (Aeronautical Meteorology)
Post Code MM-1-1-AN5 Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 53,175 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 53,175 -10 x-1,375 -15 x 1,910 -95,575 - as per theMS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Managers' Allowance - Rs 50,000/- + Special Technical Allowance(Please refer the CAASL Web site for requirements) - Rs. 120,000/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate

A Bachelor of Science degree of not less than three (03) years from a recognized university by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka having studied in Atmospheric Physics, Physical Science, Transport, Aerospace, Information and Communication Technology or Engineering Stream with not less than eight (08) years post qualifying experience as a Forecaster or Meteorologist in a Government Department /Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in Meteorology.

Senior Civil Aviation Inspector(Aircraft Registration and Airworthiness Standards) Post Code MM-1-1-AW -1
Senior Civil Aviation Inspector (Air Operator Certification and Surveillance) Post Code MM-1-1-AW-3
Number of Posts – 02

- Recruited specifically for Matana – CAASL Office

Remuneration

- Basic Salary -Rs. 53,175 /- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 53,175 -10 x-1,375 -15 x 1,910 -95,575 - as per the MS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Managers' Allowance - Rs 50,000/- + Special Technical Allowance(Please refer the CAASL Web site for requirements) - Rs. 270,000/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment, Reimbursement of mobile phone bills

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Option 1</p> <p>Bachelor's Degree in Engineering in the field of Mechanical, Electrical or Electronics of not less than four (04) years from an University recognized by the University Grant Commission of Sri Lanka with not less than eight(08) years post qualifying experience as an Airworthiness Inspector/Engineer or Aircraft Maintenance Engineer in a Government Department /Public Enterprise or in a reputed Mercantile Establishment engaged in Aviation.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Having passed the Intermediate Examination of a recognized professional Chartered Institute, of which the subject area is relevant to the post or similar qualifications with minimum eight (08) years post qualifying experience as a Mechanical, Electrical or Electronics Engineer in public or private organization engaged in a Commercial Air Services, Aircraft Maintenance or Repair or Flying Training or Engineering Training.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>Having obtained a certificate of proficiency in the relevant field which is not below than the National Vocational Qualification Level 7 determined by Technical/Vocational Training Institute accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission or holding an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Licence (AML) with minimum eight (8) years post qualifying experience as a Mechanical, Electrical or Electronics Engineer in a public or private organization engaged in a Commercial Air Services, Aircraft Maintenance or Repair or Flying Training or Engineering Training.</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualifications required by the External Candidates mentioned.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>1. Minimum of six (06) years' service experience as a Civil Aviation Inspector (Airworthiness - Airframe), Civil Aviation Inspector (Airworthiness - Power Plant), Civil Aviation Inspector(Airworthiness - Avionics), Civil Aviation Inspector (Airworthiness - Design and Production) as applicable ;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2. Unblemished track record for the preceding six (06) years and having earned all the increments in the current post;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>3. Having successfully completed ICAO approved courses of training not less than four (04) weeks in the field of Airworthiness ;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>4. 'Good' or above grading in the Annual Performance</p>

Technical Assistant (Civil)
Post Code MA2-1-TA-1Number of Posts – 01

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 30,310/- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale -Rs. 30,310 - 10 x 300-7 x 350 - 4x 495 - 20x 660-50,940 - as per the MS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Transport Allowance - Rs.14,575/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate

Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not lower than the National Vocational Qualification Level 5, issued by a Vocational Training Institute accepted by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission relating to Civil Works with at least three (03) years of service experience in Public or Private Organization in the relevant field.

Civil Aviation Assistant
Post Code MA1-2 – CAA Number of Posts – 03

Remuneration

- Basic Salary - Rs. 27,910/- will be paid initially at recruitment (Salary Scale - Rs. 27,910- 10 x 300 - 7 x 350 - 12 x 600 - 12 x 710-49,080 - as per theMS Circular 02/2016)
- Other allowances – Cost of living allowance - Rs.7,800/- + Transport Allowance - Rs 14,575/-
- Other Benefits - Health Insurance Scheme, Accident Insurance Scheme, Death Grant Scheme, Bonus, Leave Encashment

Qualification and Experience

External Candidate	Internal Candidate
<p>Having passed the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) examination in six (06) subjects in one sitting with credit passes for four (04) subjects including</p> <p>(i) Sinhala / Tamil (ii) English language (iii) Mathematics</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Having passed three subjects (other than the General Paper) at the General Certificate of Education (Advance Level) examination.</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>Having obtained the qualifications required by the external candidates .</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>Having passed General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) examination in six (06) subjects with credit passes four (04) subject including</p> <p>(i) Sinhala / Tamil (ii) English language (iii) Mathematics</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Has completed a minimum of five (05) years satisfactory service in a permanent post as an Office Aide or a Driver is eligible to apply.</p>

Age limits

Post	Age limit	Remarks
Deputy Director General / Director	35 years - 55 years	
Senior Civil Aviation Inspector	22 years - 45 years	
Technical Assistant (Civil)	22 years - 45 years	The upper age limit will not apply to the internal candidates.
Civil Aviation Assistant	18 years - 45 years	

- Only the applications sent on the **Standard Application forms** will be entertained. Applicants who serve in any of the Government organizations should apply through the Head of the Organization.
- Duly completed applications should reach this office on or before 10.05.2021 under registered post or can be forwarded by e-mail: employment@caa.lk and they will be acknowledged.
- Applications should be addressed to **Director General of Civil Aviation & Chief Executive Officer, Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka, No.152/1, Minuwangoda Road, Katunayake** and the title of the post being applied shall be marked on the top left hand corner of the envelope.
- Separate applications should be sent for each post, if applying for more than one post.
- Only the candidates satisfying the eligibility criteria will be called for interviews/ tests.

Director General of Civil Aviation & Chief Executive Officer,
Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka,
No. 152/1,
Minuwangoda Road,
Katunayake.
25.04.2021



Sri Lankan Ambassador to China Dr. Palitha Kohona addressing the 20th China International CICA Summit Financial Cooperation.

Less non-tariff barriers for exports in China will benefit developing countries – SL Envoy Kohona

Sri Lankan Ambassador to China Dr. Palitha Kohona said that developing countries will benefit immensely and share in China's prosperity if non-tariff barriers to their exports to China could be minimised and provided assistance in negotiating through the complexities of these barriers.

The Ambassador's views were later endorsed by a number of participants, including the WHO representative in Beijing. Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona attended the 20th China International CICA Summit Financial

Cooperation in Jinan from April 16-18. He was invited as a resource participant and he addressed the plenary on the issue of non-tariff barriers to accessing the lucrative Chinese consumer market. The growing emphasis, in particular in China, on the urgent need to

switch to renewable energy, consistent with the commitments made under the Paris Accords, and the increasing shift to AI to facilitate business also was touched upon by many high level speakers. Many of China's leading banks, other financial institutions and

SOEs were represented at the high-level event. Ambassador Dr. Kohona also addressed a roundtable on investment opportunities in Sri Lanka. It was noted that Bangladesh and Laos had created a very conducive investment environment in their countries.

Opposition dreaming of toppling Government by propagating falsehoods - Minister

The Opposition is entitled to their dream of toppling the Government but they should also remember that the ground realities ensure people's undivided faith and support to the Government, Chief Government Whip and Highways Minister Johnston Fernando said.



talk about dangers that this country would face if the Resolution on Sri Lanka would be passed there. Nothing of that sort happened. Thereafter they lamented about an environmental destruction, but we proved there was no such thing. For example, we proved that not a single tree had been cut in the process of the Lankagama road renovation project.

Speaking to the media after a meeting with the Kurunegala District SLPP Local Government members yesterday, Minister Fernando said that the Opposition was yet to recover from their shocks of back to back defeats in the elections.

"Take a look at the lies that they have been propagating in recent times. First they cried foul of COVID-19 prevention programmes dreaming that they could turn it for their political gain. That was not successful as the Government could counter it successfully. Then they clamoured of a collapse of the economy. When the Geneva UNHRC vote was taken, the Opposition had nothing but to

Sunday investigations forgetting that it was owing to their mistakes that terror attacks took place. They even tried to drag Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith into their bandwagon."

"Now the Opposition talks of their latest dream of toppling the Government. I challenge them to go to their electorates and speak to the people, so that they could understand that people are with us. People know the truth that the Opposition is an impotent force which can do nothing but dream of impossibilities without knowing the ground reality," the Minister said.

SP Governor rallies round stakeholders against COVID pandemic

MAHINDA P. LIYANAGE, Galle Central Special Corr.



The health sector, security forces including every other State institutions of the Southern Province are now battling against the third wave of COVID-19, Southern Province Governor Dr. Willy Gamage said.

COVID cases are being reported from many parts of the Southern Province and the health sector is taking necessary steps to control the pandemic. The public should follow the health regulations. The Southern Provincial COVID Monitoring Committee met recently and made necessary decisions to

implement plans to face the pandemic, the Governor said.

The Governor said that the measures have been taken to rectify the shortcomings at the PC hospitals and additional staff including doctors

will be provided along with necessary infrastructure facilities, he said. Only 50 per cent of office workers will be asked to report to work. The Working from Home system will be reactivated. The Southern Provincial Council is following recommendations by the Health Ministry. Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at hospitals will be made fully functional, Governor Willy Gamage said.

The Governor said that the local government authorities have been informed to take steps to hold fairs in the Province in accordance with the health guidelines, the Governor said.

Two new paddy varieties found

P.P.G. SUGATHADASA, Thihagoda Group Corr.

The Labuduwa Paddy Research Station has found two novel varieties of paddy.

The new varieties have been named 'LD-3-6-12 white samba' and 'LD-3-12-50 red samba'.

According to paddy researchers, these two paddy varieties have already been introduced to farmers.

The varieties are highly resistant to all pests, diseases and insects. About 80 to 100 bushels could be harvested per an acre in the Wet Zone.

UNESCAP SL Representative's first courtesy meeting on Zoom



The courtesy meeting on Zoom.

The newly appointed Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Thailand, C. A. Chaminda I. Colonne had her first courtesy meeting with the Executive Secretary Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana of the UNESCAP virtually on April 20.

While conveying the warm best wishes of the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka to the Executive Secretary Alisjahbana, Ambassador and Permanent Representative Chaminda Colonne assured her fullest

cooperation and support for future endeavours of the UNESCAP and activities for betterment of motherland, in consultation with line Ministries and agencies in Sri Lanka.

After congratulating and warmly welcoming Ambassador Chaminda Colonne to the UNESCAP, Executive Secretary Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana briefed the arrangements for the 77th Session of the Commission under the theme of "Regional Cooperation to Build Back Better from Crises in Asia and the Pacific" scheduled to be held online from April 26-29. She highlighted that the forthcoming session would be an opportunity to

exchange experiences and learn the best practices of the countries in the region on strategies and actions taken to recovery from the social economic impact of the pandemic. She thanked Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa for delivering a pre-recorded video message at the opening and Sri Lanka's active participation at the forthcoming 77th session of the Commission.

While referring to the successful episode of Sri Lanka in COVID-19 responses, recovery strategies, vaccination programme. Ambassador Chaminda Colonne highlighted that the Sri Lanka delegation to the 77th Session of the Commission

would be headed by the Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage, who greatly involved in the COVID-19 pandemic control in Sri Lanka, especially on the repatriation process, since the evolve of the pandemic last year.

Ambassador Chaminda Colonne also took the opportunity to emphasise on the return of migrant workers from the Middle East due to COVID-19 pandemic and importance of creating new employment opportunities for those either domestically or outside Sri Lanka. She elaborated on the possibilities of creating local job market through foreign investments and need to expand

Sri Lanka's export market in the Asia-Pacific region, for the recovery of pandemic hit economy of Sri Lanka.

Both also exchanged their views and reaffirmed their fullest commitment in achieving common Sustainable Development Goals of the UNESCAP.

At the invitation of Executive Secretary Alisjahbana, Ambassador Chaminda Colonne also joined the preparatory virtual meeting of the 77th Session of the Commission, thereafter, on April, 20.

First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative for the UNESCAP Saritha Ranatunga also associated with the virtual meetings.

Asia Progress Forum condemns allegations of Chinese colonialism

The Asia Progress Forum (APF) in a statement noted that the Colombo Port City would provide opportunities for young Sri Lankan entrepreneurs and help reduce brain drain.

Issuing a statement on Colombo Port City Economic Commission (CPCEC) Bill, the APF said that the Bill stipulates that the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) would be under the centralised rule of the democratically elected President of Sri Lanka, and not any foreign country, let alone China.

The statement undersigned by Prof. K. D. N. Weerasinghe, Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara and Percy Samarasinghe said that the Bill also stipulates that land in the SEZ cannot be sold on a freehold basis.

"The APF unequivocally condemns the virulent Sinophobia and claims of "Chinese colonialism" made by various public figures in the guise of critiquing the CPCEC Bill. Such statements are factually incorrect, grossly misleading to the public, and deeply insulting to one of our oldest and most steadfast allies," the statement read.

"The Port City Colombo was initially conceptualised by Sri Lankan policymakers, and the CPCEC Bill is also the product of Sri Lankan policymakers. Land reclamation for the Port City was not debt incurring but instead came through a direct investment of 1.4 billion US dollars – the largest in Sri Lanka's history. The land itself is an inalienable part of Sri Lanka and was officially vested with the Urban Development Authority (UDA) in 2019," the statement said.

"APF views Port City Colombo as an opportunity to gain much-needed foreign investment, which in turn would stabilise the rapidly depreciating Sri Lankan Rupee. We envisage that the services-driven SEZ will provide opportunities for young Sri Lankan entrepreneurs and reduce brain drain," it stated.

Lanka envoy in Netherlands presents credentials

Newly appointed Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Kingdom of the Netherlands Aruni Ranaraja presented credentials to King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands at the Royal Palace, The Hague on April 21. An audience and tete-a-tete followed the Credential Ceremony.

King Willem-Alexander warmly welcomed Ambassador Ranaraja and wished her well in her assignment. The King referred to the need to further elevate the cooperation and friendly ties between the Netherlands and Sri Lanka, which are based on the longstanding historical and cultural ties dating back to several centuries and which serves as a firm foundation for the friendship and cooperation. Ambassador Ranaraja conveyed to him greetings and best wishes of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and the people of Sri Lanka.

Late Obituaries - I

BARTHOLOMEUSZ – EVADNE (EVA/EVE, nee FERNANDO) (Retired Personal Assistant - Coconut Development Authority and prior to that A. Baur & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd.) went to be with the Lord peacefully at home in California, USA. Beloved daughter of late Theodore Fernando & late Letitia Fernando; wife of Fritzroy (Fritz); cherished mother of Jerome (Australia) & Simone (USA); loving mother-in-law of Rukmani (Ruki - Australia) & Udaya (USA); devoted grandmother of Udeshika Ranaraja & Wahdatt (Anthony) Amini, Samantha Ranaraja & Jason Meadows, Holly, Annoushka & Kelly; cherished great-grandmother of Aaliyah, Arianna & Alexander; precious sister of late Merl, late Herbert, late Clive, late Earl, late Hilarian, late Clinton, Loyala and Clement; dearly loved sister-in-law of late Christy, Shayama, late Myrna, Prima, Yvonne, late Manel, late Nimal & Krishanthi, late Christopher, late Melville, Avril (USA), late Lynton, late Anstruther, late Evelyn, Felicia, Ursula (Australia), Winifreda (Australia), Christine (Australia), & Frederica (Australia). Remains will lie at **Gates, Kingsley & Gates Praiswater Mortuary Los Angeles, CA** from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on 26th April 2021, followed by a private service at 12:00 noon. Interment of ashes to be at a later date at Christ Church Galkissa, Sri Lanka. 031336

Residents in Akkaraipattu cautioned against COVID

M.A. PHAKURDEEN, Addalaichenai Group Corr.

Akkaraipattu Medical Officer of Health (MOH) Dr. Faroosa Nakfer asked the public of the region to be very cautious during Ramadan and strictly adhere to the instructions given by the Health Department.

Dr. Faroosa said that

the third COVID wave is more fatal than the previous. "The infected with it will not cough and have no fever like those who infected in the first round," he said.

Pulmonologist Dr. Ritesh Kumar said that every one should take extra precautionary measures in combating this virus.

"The new variant is causing great hardships to the public," he said.

The MOH has instructed Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) to be very vigilant on those who breach the health guidelines.

Companies have been instructed to follow health guidelines strictly, the MOH said.



Dr. Faroosa Nakfer

'Over 20 persons drowned in past 10 months'

S.M.WIJAYARATNE, Kurunegala Corr.

About 21 persons had died of drowning while bathing in unsafe waterways under the influence of liquor during the past 10 months, Kurunegala District SSP W. Amarasena said.

He said that liquor and drug addiction among the youth

need to be arrested and early steps should be taken to rehabilitate them.

He said that members of 5,678 families in the Kurunegala District are now addicted to drugs.

About 12,567 liquor and drug addicts have been detected countrywide during the past six months, he said.

Afghanistan becomes Chair of Colombo Process

The Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), António Vitorino, has congratulated Nepal on its successful leadership of the Colombo Process over the last two years and committed continued IOM support as Afghanistan takes over as Chair.

DG Vitorino made the remarks at the virtual Chairmanship handover ceremony during which Nepal was commended for its achievements, notably the work of the five Colombo Process Thematic Areas Working Groups towards greater understanding of labour migration governance across and beyond the region, and the contribution of the Colombo Process Member States to the Global Compact for the Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

Afghanistan succeeds Nepal as Chair of the Colombo Process for a period of two years. At the virtual handover

ceremony, the Governments of Nepal and Afghanistan were represented by the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal, Mr Gaurishankar Chaudhari, and the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr Bashir Ahmad Tahyanj, respectively.

The Colombo Process – also known as the Regional Consultative Process on the Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia – was established in 2003. It brings together 12 South and Southeast Asian labour-sending countries in a member state-driven, non-binding regional consultative process on migration to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest and concerns relating to labour mobility.

Nepal assumed the Colombo Process Chair in 2017 under the theme: "Safe, regular and managed migration: a

win-win for all". Minister Gaurishankar Chaudhari of Nepal stressed how, through their collective efforts, the Colombo Process had made significant contributions to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which reflected the shared objectives of the Colombo Process itself. As the Chair, Nepal had promoted the Colombo Process position and ensured its high visibility also in the preparatory processes leading up to the GCM.

As the Chair for the next two years, Afghanistan will pursue an ambitious program of priorities to guide its mandate and advance its achievements. Mr Bashir Ahmad Tahyanj, Afghanistan's Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, extended his gratitude to Nepal and stressed that it is a great honor for Afghanistan to continue Nepal's legacy.

(Mirage News)

'Threat Lens' discusses New Security Dimensions

The Institute of National Security Studies; think tank on national security established under the Defence Ministry, organised a 'Threat Lens' a closed door discussion under the theme of "New Security Dimensions Relating to Islamist Extremism in Sri Lanka" on April 21 at the main auditorium of the Ministry.

The Guest Speaker for the event was Major Sinduja Jayaratne, lecturer from Department of Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University.

The event was graced by Major General (Retd) J. R. Kulathunga RSP the Chief of National Intelligence. It was attended by several other experts from the intelligence and operational fields that were invited to attend from other security

agencies. The Threat Lens was moderated by Admiral (Prof) Jayanath Colombage, Director General of the INSS and Secretary to the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The discussion disclosed the threats identified soon after the Easter Sunday attacks and also the new security dimensions of two years from the Easter attacks. Some of the threats identified are the continuation of online radicalisation, threat of lone wolf attack, radicalisation of the feeble and weak (women in marginalised societies), spread of communal violence through exclusion, the returning foreign terrorist fighters in the region, and activation of sleeper cells. At the same time, Sri Lanka being used as a transit point or a sanctuary of extremism was also identified as a

threat eminent soon after the attacks.

The use of crypto currencies by terrorists, proxy jihad in South Asia, radicalisation of women and reciprocal radicalisation were further identified as new security dimensions at the discussion. The Speaker expounded that a "cycle of resistance" has been created following rise of extremism in the country and emphasised the importance of removing the "fear factor"; to break the key element off cycle of resistance curtailing the radicalisation in Sri Lanka. Major Sinduja stressed the need to strengthen the social contract between the Government and citizens. The discussion ended after obtaining views and comments of other stakeholders present and a Q and A session.

Sri Lankan's death in Japan casts spotlight on its refugee system

A Sri Lankan woman fled to the authorities in Japan in August last year to escape from domestic violence, end up dying in detention in Nagoya last month.

Ratnayake Liyanage Wishma Sandamali, 33, who was taken into custody for overstaying her visa, died on March 6, having lost 20kg while she was in detention over a stress-induced stomach condition.

"I need to recover, but I don't know how to do it. Please help me to recover," she wrote in a February letter to non-profit group Start, which helps immigrants, adding that she was being deprived of medical attention.

She is the 18th foreigner to die in the custody of the Japanese

Immigration Services Agency since 2007.

The case has become a lightning rod for activists who decry inhumane Third World treatment in a First World country.

Wishma was vomiting blood in her final days, and was so weak that she had no control of her arms and legs.

The immigration authorities allegedly turned a blind eye to medical expert advice to put her on an intravenous drip or to grant her provisional release to ease her stress.

A report by public broadcaster NHK suggested that officials tend to suspect malingering for minor illnesses in their reluctance to grant provisional release.

Yet, at the same time, Japan is

pushing through reforms to its Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition law that will forcibly deport refugees if their applications for the right to stay are rejected twice.

The law allows immigrants to apply for refugee status as many times as they want. Deportations cannot be carried out during the application or appeal process.

The revisions, Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa argued, will solve the problem of repeated asylum bids leading to indefinite detention and the accompanying stress.

"Many individuals have been trying to avoid deportation, contributing to their prolonged detention," she said, insinuating that they have been trying to game the system.



Ratnayake Liyanage Wishma Sandamali, 33, was taken into custody in Japan for overstaying her visa last year.

She added that the official discretion will "unlikely" be wrong since each application would

have been independently reviewed twice.

But the United Nations Human Rights Council, which has criticised Japan's practice of prolonged detention, has slammed the proposed revisions by saying that they do not meet international criteria for human rights protection.

Japan's meagre refugee acceptance rate means that the two-strikes-you-are-out rule will only serve to endanger a vast majority of asylum seekers, activists say.

Only 44 out of 10,375 applications were accepted in 2019, or a rate of 0.4 per cent.

Comparatively, the United States accepted 29.6 per cent of refugee applicants, while Germany accepted 25.9 per cent.

The proposed revisions

include a "supervisory measure" for provisional release under strict conditions, including a ban on paid work.

Activists say the reforms are for the worse. Protests and silent marches have been held in Tokyo.

Ippei Torii of the Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan said at one such rally: "We need to change our society in which those who should be protected are treated like criminals."

Wishma came to Japan on a student visa in 2017, but her permit was cancelled in 2019 when she was unable to afford her tuition fees.

Media reports said her dream was to teach English in Japan.

She initially said she wanted to return to Sri Lanka when she

was first taken in by the authorities.

But she changed her mind with flights reduced due to COVID-19 and with her boyfriend writing a letter to her threatening revenge.

Yasunori Matsui, 66, an adviser to Start, said: "Rather than listening to immigrants' needs and providing relief, Japan is treating them like a problem and looking at how to send them back. If there was any true understanding of the value of human life, it would have been possible to save her."

Wishma's mother said at an online news conference: "My daughter is not an animal. And even animals get proper treatment when they are sick."

- The Straits Times

Only 7.1 per cent of plastic, polythene we use recycled - Minister Amaraweera

Only 7.1 per cent of plastic and polythene used in the country is recycled and the remaining 92.9 per cent is discharged into the environment, Environment Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said.

He said that one of the major environmental problems in the country today is the haphazard disposal of polythene and plastics.

"Every year 177, 197 tonnes of polythene and plastic are dumped in our country, but only 12,636 tonnes, are recycled. These polythene and plastics then join the ocean via rivers, streams and lakes. Generally, polythene and plastics take 50-400 years to decompose. As a result, discarded polythene and plastics cause enormous environmental damage," he said.

The Minister was participating at a discussion at the Environment Ministry last Friday regarding plastics and polythene, which are proposed to be banned in the future. It was attended by representatives of the Central Environmental Authority and several companies producing polythene and plastics.

"According to the informa-



tion, more than 15 million shopping bags have been released in two weeks alone during the last New Year period. On an average, the amount of shopping bags issued by the supermarket chain in our country alone is one billion a year. The use of lunch sheets in our country is 10 million in one day. All of this adds up to the environment.

"During a discussion, a group of supermarket owners requested permission to charge one rupee per shopping bag they issue. The money is ready to be credited to an environmental development fund. It also does not tempt consumers to buy shopping bags unnecessarily.

Unfortunately, a lawyer in Galle has filed a case against charging for shopping bags. He has requested a ruling that shopping bags issued by supermarkets should be issued free. Therefore, I instructed the officials to file an appeal in this regard.

"Some steps should be taken to reduce the use of shopping bags issued by stores. We need to look at whether the plastics and polythene have also contributed to the recent rise in cancer patients. There was a newspaper report that 80 cancer patients are reported in our country every day. The population of our country is about 21 million.

"An official told me that about 600 million paracetamol tablets are imported annually to the government hospital system in our country alone. How can a country move forward when everyone in the country is sick? If all the food we eat and use contains things that make us sick, we should get rid of them immediately. That is why we need to make an immediate decision on polythene and plastics," the Minister said.



A large crowd visited Nuwara Eliya last weekend despite the renewed calls from the health authorities and the security forces to the public to limit their movements to help control the spread of COVID-19. Despite the increase of COVID-19 cases and fresh health guidelines, a large number of locals were seen near Gregory Lake and other tourist attractions in Nuwara Eliya. Several competitions organised parallel to Wasantha Udanaya programme organised by the Nuwara Eliya Municipal Council had been held even on Saturday. Health authorities request the people to pay more attention towards the health guidelines. Picture by Asela Kuruluwansa

Sri Lanka Envoy presents 'Letters of Credence' to Seychelles President

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Seychelles Srimal Wickremasinghe presented Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Seychelles on April 20. The ceremony held at the State House in Seychelles was attended by the Foreign Affairs and Tourism Minister, the Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Director General for Bilateral Affairs in the Foreign Affairs and the Attaché of to the High Commission.

Thereafter, High Commissioner

Wickremasinghe had a one to one meeting with President of the Seychelles Ahmed Afif, Vice Mayor of Victoria David Andre and Fisheries Minister Jean Francois Ferrari and Health Minister Peggy Vidot. The High Commissioner expressed his keen interest to further enhance the friendly relations and close cooperation between the two countries to new heights.

While congratulating the High Commissioner, the President wished him success in his new

assignment and warmly recalled the longstanding bilateral relations between the two countries.

The ceremony included taking of an official photograph and a Guard of Honour according to a 'National Salute'.

High Commissioner Srimal Wickremasinghe, a Sri Lankan diplomat with past experience, was the former Deputy Chief of Mission of Sri Lanka in Austria and Deputy Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United

Nations (UN) in Vienna from 2009 to 2015.

He was previously the General Secretary of the International Olympic Academy Alumni Association of Ancient Olympia, Greece and had worked in the private sector in the United Kingdom. He has participated in numerous trade, and economic relations and negotiations with the largest banks Europe to secure funding for infrastructure development projects in Sri Lanka.

DATE 23.04.2021 FRIDAY OFFICIAL RESULTS www.nlb.lk

MAHAJANA SAMPATHA DRAW NUMBER : 4460 Prizes won in this draw

Rs. 13,439,430.00

WINNING LETTER **L** WINNING NUMBERS **6 2 7 2 8 4** THE SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 24,669,110.00**

Govisetha DRAW NUMBER : 2755 TOTAL PRIZE WON IN THIS DRAW

Rs. 6,712,380.00

WINNING LETTER **W** WINNING NUMBERS **20 23 37 76** THE SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 67,163,711.20**

Mega POWER 10 DRAW NUMBER **819** TOTAL PRIZES WON IN THIS DRAW

Rs. 3,339,720.00

NEXT MEGA SUPER PRIZE **Rs. 130,303,482.00**

NEXT POWER SUPER PRIZE **Rs. 10,000,000.00**

NEXT GRAND SUPER **Rs. 10,000,000.00**

ENGLISH LETTER **S** SUPER NUMBER **01** WINNING NUMBERS **56 71 78 80**

Dhana Nidhanaya DRAW NUMBER : 497 TOTAL PRIZE WON IN THIS DRAW

Rs. 3,515,880.00

ENGLISH LETTER **O** WINNING NUMBERS **02 11 14 63** THE SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 94,114,910.00**

SUPIRI VASANA DRAW NUMBER : 1592 TOTAL PRIZE WON IN THIS DRAW

Rs. 2,791,740.00

ENGLISH LETTER **02** WINNING NUMBERS **01 06 10 31** THE SUPER PRIZE OF THE NEXT DRAW **Rs. 3,269,824.00**

23.04.2021 - TOTAL PRIZE WINNERS PRODUCED BY NATIONAL LOTTERIES BOARD 716,435

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY DISTRIBUTED AMONG WINNERS Rs.29,799,150.00

Rs. 2,000,000 PRIZES 02 | Rs. 1,000,000 PRIZES 30

- All Winning Prizes above Rs. 500,000 are subject to government taxes
- Winner has to submit National ID when receiving Prizes
- All Winning lotteries are valid only for 06 months from Draw Date

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දිනේෂ්වර බණ්ඩාර සමාප
National Lotteries Board
Tel: 011-4607000, 011-2324324
Fax: 011-4669416

32, Deshamanya N. W. J. Mudalige Mawatha, Colombo - 01.

Applying for Indian Scholarships Closing date extended

The last date for applying for the Scholarship Schemes, the Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme: under this scheme covers all Undergraduate courses (except Medical/Paramedical and Fashion Design course, provided by the Government of India; has been extended to May 15, 2021. The Students who could not apply before the earlier deadline of April 20, 2021 may do so before the fresh deadline.

given to the fields of Engineering, Science and Agriculture; Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme: PhD Degrees in all subjects except Medical/ Paramedical and Fashion Design course, provided by the Government of India; has been extended to May 15, 2021. The Students who could not apply before the earlier deadline of April 20, 2021 may do so before the fresh deadline.

The details are available in the website of the Education Ministry at www.mohe.gov.lk. Prospective students are advised to approach the Education Ministry or High Commission of India, Colombo to learn more about the eligibility criteria and selection procedure.

COPE probes FFSL irregularities

The Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) on Thursday drew the attention to irregularities of former Football Federation Chairman Manilal Fernando in using money provided by various institutions.

Accordingly, misappropriation of Euro 40,400 (nearly Rs. 6 million), which had been donated by the Italian Football Players Association to construct football playground in Kalutara, USD 60,000 (nearly Rs. 6 million), which had been given by the Asian Football Federation for competitions, Rs.10 million, which had been given by private company to construct 20 houses for Tsunami victims and USD 200,000, which had been donated by the Asian Football Federation were discussed at the meeting.

It was revealed that the President of the Federation has submitted an affidavit to Court stating that no such financial irregularities have taken place in the background of the Financial Crimes Investigation Division (FCID) concluding its investigations and filing cases in Courts. The committee pointed out that it was a serious matter to inform through an affidavit that it had not happened.

COPE Chairman Prof. Charitha Herath said that football in the country has fallen to a very low level

and it is a tragedy that despite such a large allocation of funds, it has fallen to such a low level. Therefore, the Chairman and former Chairman Manilal Fernando should be summoned immediately before the COPE to investigate the matter, the COPE said.

The COPE Chairman on Thursday suspended the COPE meeting of the Football Federation of Sri Lanka, due to the absence of the President of the Federation.

Accordingly, the President and other officials of the Sri Lanka Football Federation and its former President Manilal Fernando will be summoned on May 6, the COPE Chairman said.

The committee pointed out that although 10 members were elected to the Football Federation Executive Committee, it was revealed that the Chairman would appoint another 18 members to the Committee.

The COPE instructed the Youth and Sports Ministry Secretary to intervene immediately as this is a major problem, even though it is done in accordance with the Constitution of the Federation. Youth and Sports Ministry Secretary Anuradha Wijekoon said that an order will be issued soon to prevent the appointment of 18 members by the Chairman.

The Committee pointed out that the election committees to conduct elections of these sports associations are being set up by these associations and therefore, these activities are being carried out without any transparency.

It was revealed that Rs. 750,000 will be given to the Chairman of the Election Committee for the forthcoming election of the Football Federation and Rs. 600,000 each would be given to the other two members and this was severely criticised by the Committee. It was also revealed that this situation has arisen due to the inability to oppose the decisions of the Chairman as there are 18 members appointed by the Chairman.

The COPE Chairman said that the Ministry should always be vigilant about the role of these associations and that direct supervision should be carried out by the Ministry.

Ministers Mahindananda Aluthgamage, Sarath Weerasekera, MPs Rauff Hakeem, Nalin Bandara, S.M Marikkar and S. Rasamanikkam, Youth and Sports Ministry Secretary, the Department of Sports Development Director General along with other officials and Football Federation officials were present.

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MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021

Covid facts in perspective

The new Covid-19 protocols in place here are in the nature of health guidelines backed up with State sanction. They are definitely no cause for alarm. The worst is undoubtedly behind us as far as the pandemic is concerned, but intermittent waves are to be expected. That is the nature of this contagion.

In many ways, waves they are not — even though they are called “waves” by those who sensationalize these issues in the media, and social media in particular. A “wave” sees a distinct and substantial uptick in the number of cases that there is a need to use new terminology to describe what is happening. Sri Lanka has not seen that sort of increase in numbers of the infected though there is certainly a mild increase of those who are testing positive. That is not something to be alarmed about except that there is a cautionary tale reviewing the experience of some other countries. All this is happening at a time the economy is picking up in significant ways. Economic activity in the country saw a manifold increase in the Sinhala and Tamil New Year period, which saw an increased number of people on the streets that is now partially being blamed in certain quarters for the new Covid numbers that are said to threaten the recovering economy. This “vicious circle” explanation of how things are happening is a mere fraction of the narrative. There would anyway be a natural increase in the numbers of Covid-stricken patients in the course of time. This is inevitable as there have not been enough people vaccinated yet for herd immunity to take hold.

All this information could bewilder and confuse some people if it is not filtered in a way that there is a logical reading of events. But the media and social media behaviour that overlap leaves too much room for idle speculation. The information control aspect of Covid is sometimes as important as actual disease control. But even countries such as New Zealand have had problems in this area.

The narrative about the pandemic and the pandemic itself are both unleashed in tandem, and could be chaotic. But very often the perceptions cause even more chaos than the pandemic itself. There is also a measure of what is called “vaccine complacency” affecting some of the most successful of countries when it comes to Covid curtailment.

Did vaccine complacency contribute in any measure to the current slight increase in numbers this country is seeing after the holiday season? Did enough vaccinated people break the protocols in place to contain the disease, to cause some sort of jump in numbers among those who were not vaccinated? It is possible this happened for the simple reason that those who are vaccinated can be carriers of the virus even though they would not succumb to it, or would experience mild to no symptoms.

In some countries social media was used to good effect with the State being able to muster the power of various alternate media platforms to good effect. In this regard the New Zealand example is exemplary. Could we replicate that situation here? Probably not as well as New Zealand has done, because there are still remote parts of this island in which certain popular social media platforms are not widely used, amazing though that may sound in this day and age.

Curbing the spread of needless panic is almost as important as channeling accurate information to the people. Those who consider social media as a trusted information source are more often part of the problem than they are a solution to the problem. Some who share seemingly innocuous posts are genuinely misinformed for the simple reason that they trust any source. Impressive looking posts that are immaculately crafted could be minefields of misinformation. That is what is scary about the social media age that has sophisticated methods of communication at the disposal of amateurs.

Over time, however, people too become wiser to the negative impact of certain fringe misinformation campaigns, some of which are unleashed as pure mischief while others are planned efforts at disturbing the vital social cohesion that is an important factor in combating the consequences from the smallest Covid outbreaks that happen from time to time. But by the time people learn the truth about misinformation it may be too late, which is why there should be a greater effort to educate people about the real picture. The Government is doing what is possible by getting the message across through available media, but this too paradoxically can motivate some people to take extreme measures such as panic buying of foodstuffs because they think the Government is not giving them the full picture with the precise motivation of avoiding panic.

Such paradoxes aside, it is important that people act responsibly. There are always the deviants that would share the wrong information or indulge in damaging gossip — but their impact would be minimal if people are as vigilant about the possibility of being duped by misinformation, as they are about the dangers of the virus.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Covid is not going to impede the progress of humanity.
- Rakesh Jhunjhunwala



Wear a mask in office, which should be well ventilated

Now & Then

BY NADIRA GUNATILLEKE

Last Friday was a judgement day for Sri Lanka. During the most important press conference held this year so far, Sri Jayewardenepura University Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine Professor Neelika Malavige said that the latest COVID-19 variant in Sri Lanka is airborne. This single and simple scientific fact has already decided the fate of Indian people and it will shortly decide the fate of Sri Lankans.

But Sri Lankans are much luckier than Indians because we still have the time and the chance to prevent a huge COVID-19 disaster similar to India. Prof. Malavige explained how you can get killed by a stranger not wearing his or her mask properly inside a building. She explained very well how it happens and said that when a person does not wear a mask properly inside a building, he or she contaminates the air inside the building and then leaves the building after waiting for some time. Then another person comes and does not wear the mask in the same building and he or she inhales the contaminated air. The result is that one can become COVID-19 positive even without associating *per se* with an infected person.

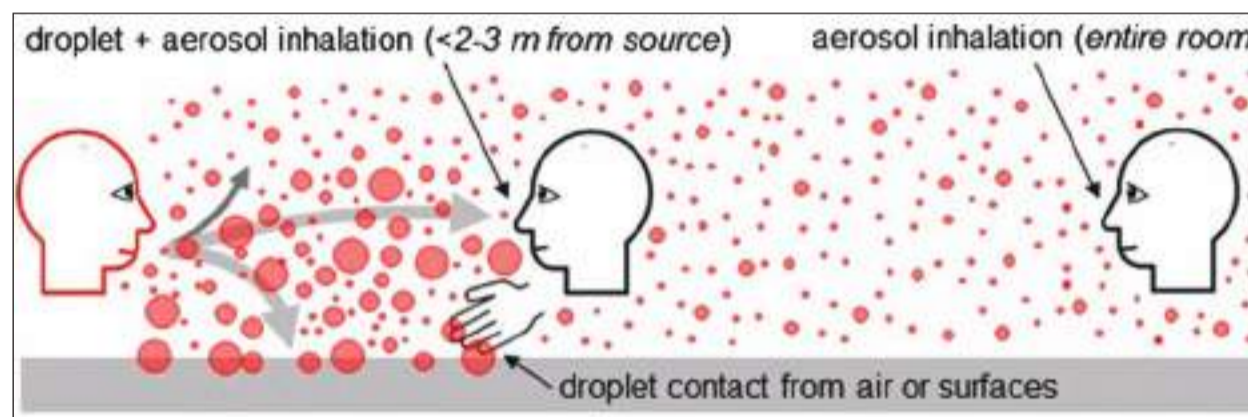
This tragedy is now at our hand's length. It is common to see how rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and young or old meet and speak with others without a mask or without wearing the mask properly, covering both the nose and the mouth. The majority remove the mask as soon as they enter their office or a familiar place where their relations or friends are. No one wears masks because there is no one to demand to do so. Friends are not concerned at all and relations are so sure that they are not COVID-19 positive. The Department Heads turn a blind eye and deaf ear when they come across a staffer without a mask. This situation existed in Sri Lanka from late last year.

Most of the time employees give a sarcastic look at people who wear masks properly and wear additional protective equipment such as face shields or visors. The individuals who had power to monitor and regulate the COVID-19 prevention measures turned a blind eye towards such employees who broke the rules and regulations and made fun of the other employees who obeyed all rules and regulations.

It is a sin if someone has to pay the price of his or her life for an offence that he or she did not commit. Now it can happen due to the behaviour of the latest COVID-19 virus which is airborne. Maybe the innocent victim does not know who contaminated the air of the building a few minutes ago because by then the culprit is not in the building. It is the same with air conditioned private and state-owned buses which run along expressways.

People who travel in air-conditioned buses do not wear masks properly and they sneeze and cough freely inside those buses spreading the COVID-19 virus which is now airborne. Usually no human being dies without using air-conditioned buses and buildings but they can very easily get killed due to air-conditioned buses and buildings

Wear masks, save lives



now because the COVID-19 virus is airborne. The pathetic situation is that the majority of the people do not know what droplets are and what is airborne and the difference between these two types of spread. They have no idea at all about this ‘airborne’ virus. They think that the virus exists only when there are people in the building.

Now it is the high time for all relevant authorities and officials to come



Face shields and masks are effective deterrents against Coronavirus

forward through the media and explain clearly to the people of Sri Lanka that even an empty building can give them COVID-19 if it was contaminated by COVID-19 positive person or persons a few seconds, minutes or even hours ago. There is no reason to hide this scientific fact from the people. No official or authority speaks about ‘mobile COVID-19 distributors’ which run along expressways and sometimes along ordinary roads 24x7. They are air-conditioned buses.

If the authorities can order bus owners and bus operators to switch off air-conditions and run the buses

for at least two or three weeks, the COVID-19 situation will be automatically controlled while saving a lot of money for bus owners. But we all noticed during the past that no one was interested in this. The media reported only when all the passengers travelled in a specific bus got infected with COVID-19. But now this situation will not end there because such buses will infect almost everyone whenever they travel along expressways and other roads all over the country. This is because the latest COVID-19 virus found in Sri Lanka is airborne.

It is almost the same with all the other small air-conditioned offices with several employees. It is funny to see how some employees require air-conditioning turned to 15 or 18 degrees Celsius to stay and work inside a small office. If an employee increases the temperature of the air conditioner for a few minutes those employees shout at them. It seems all houses of those employees are fully air-conditioned 24x7. But now COVID-19 can kill the entire staff if one employee is an asymptomatic COVID-19 patient. This is the bitter truth all of us ignore.

It is strange that some Departmental and Agency Heads with all the scientific knowledge on airborne COVID-19 virus do not make sure that the entire Department gets proper ventilation by opening all windows and doors. Those who think that air-conditioning is better than opening doors and windows to control the airborne COVID-19 virus can be forgiven if they had passed the eighth grade and become Department Heads by acting as henchmen of a politician or a top official, but what about educated Department Heads?

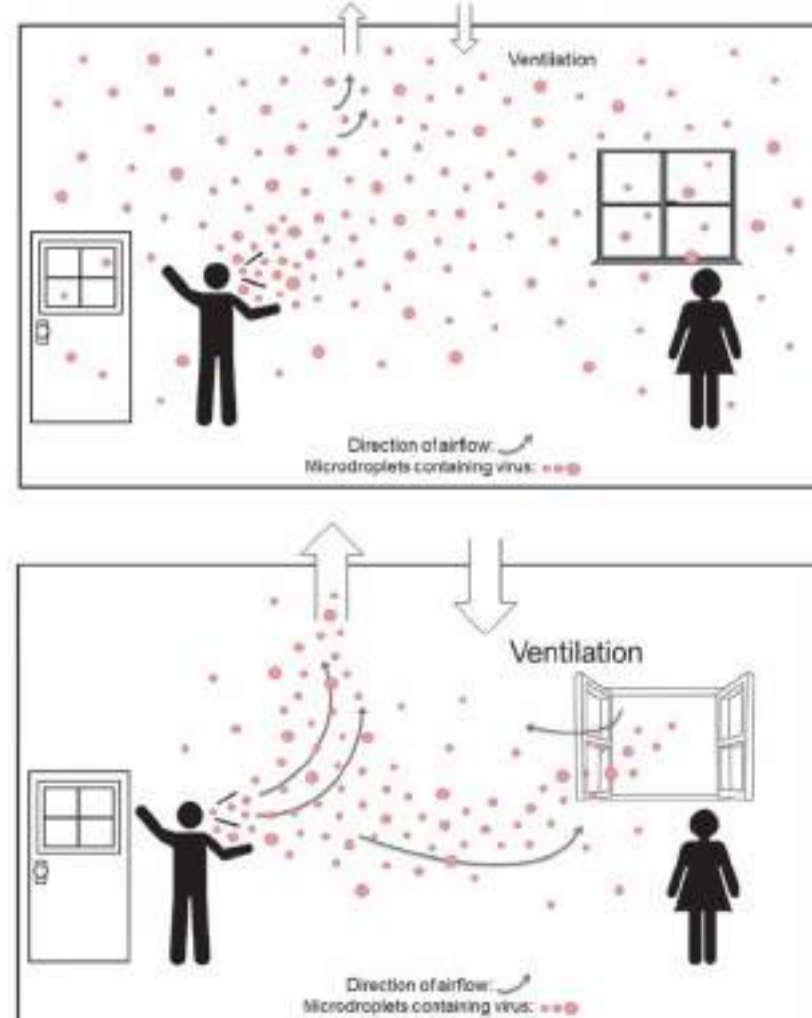
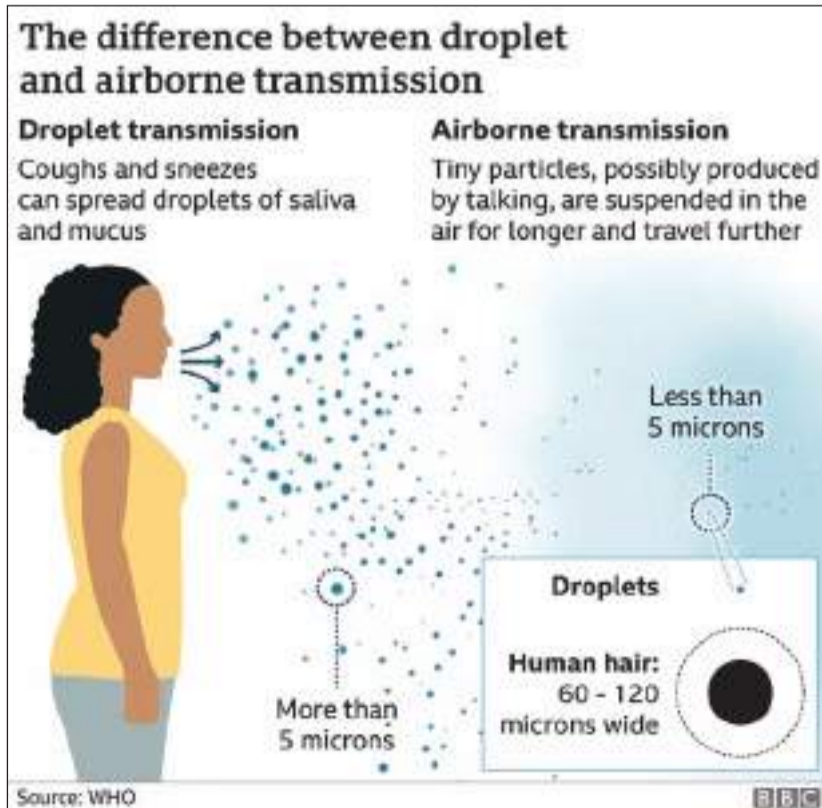
If someone is working inside a small air-conditioned office with a bunch of selfish employees, there is only one

way of saving himself or herself. That is wearing the best mask which costs nearly Rs. 2,000 in the market with goggles or shields during office hours. There is no other way. But if all employees care for all the others and strictly follow all health guidelines all the time, such an office is safe for anyone to work in.

To be a selfless employee one needs to do certain simple and inexpensive things. They are wearing a proper mask all the time inside his or her department, keeping at least two metres distance from another employee and washing hands properly for 30 seconds with soap and water whenever possible. He or she needs to keep a good hand sanitizer inside his or her pocket to use when soap and water is not available. The Department heads can get all important surfaces such as tables, door handles, telephones, railings, etc. cleaned once every two or three hours.

One female employee attached to a State Ministry located in Colombo 7 saved herself and her aged parents from COVID-19 recently by acting with a backbone and maintaining mindfulness. All her colleagues except herself became COVID-19 positive last October. She wore the best mask all the time while working in her Department and had meals and tea outside in the garden alone while all the others laughed at her and made fun of her. She did not associate with anyone during office hours. She washed her hands and used a good hand sanitizer all the time. All her friends abandoned her because she simply rejected their invitation to share food. But she still has the most valuable thing in her life, that is her aged parents.

At this moment we all need two main things. They are being mindful all the time and having a backbone to follow all health guidelines all the time and demand others to do the same. We have the right to protect ourselves. No one can violate our right to life.



COVID-19 VACCINES:

RICH COUNTRIES MUST MAKE A CHOICE



TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

Almost one billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered around the world, and yet the weekly number of cases hit a record high last week, and deaths are climbing, on pace to eclipse 2020's grim tally. How can this be? Weren't vaccines supposed to douse the flames of the pandemic?

Yes, and they are. But here's the thing about an inferno: If you hose only one part of it, the rest will keep burning.

Many countries all over the world are facing a severe crisis, with high transmission and intensive care units overflowing with patients and running short on essential supplies, like oxygen.

Why is this happening? For several reasons: The rise of more transmissible variants, the inconsistent application and premature easing of public health measures like mask mandates and physical distancing, populations that are understandably weary of adhering to those measures and the inequitable distribution of vaccines.

Scientists developed several vaccines for Covid-19 in record time. Yet of the more than 890 million vaccine doses that have been administered globally, more than 81 percent have been given in high- and upper-middle-income countries. Low-income countries have received just 0.3 percent.

This problem is sadly predictable. When the HIV epidemic erupted in the 1980s, life-saving anti-retrovirals were developed rapidly, and yet a decade passed before they became available in sub-Saharan Africa.

A year ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) and many global health partners came together in an effort to avoid history repeating. The Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, including the vaccine sharing initiative Covax, was begun to ensure the most equitable possible distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for Covid-19.

The concept was crystal clear: At a time when no one knew which vaccines would prove effective in clinical trials, Covax was designed to share the huge inherent risks of vaccine development, and to offer a mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable rollout.

While scientists toiled in laboratories, the

WHO and partners set standards, facilitated trials, raised funds, tracked manufacturing progress and worked with countries to prepare for rollout.

Countries at all income levels, manufacturers and others in the private sector committed to participate.

But many of the same wealthy countries that were publicly expressing support for Covax were in parallel pre-ordering the same vaccines on which Covax was relying.

In January, I issued a global challenge to see vaccination underway in all countries within the first 100 days of the year. This was an eminently achievable goal.

By April 10 — the 100th day — we had come close to achieving it: All but 26 countries had started vaccination, and of those, 12 were about to start, leaving 14 countries that had either not requested vaccines through Covax or were not ready to start vaccinating.

But the amount of vaccines delivered has been totally insufficient. As of Thursday (April 22), Covax has distributed 43 million doses of vaccine to 119 countries — covering just 0.5 percent of their combined population of more than four billion.

Since the ACT Accelerator's birth a year ago, many of the world's biggest economies have given strong support to Covax politically and financially, but they have also undermined it in other ways. First, vaccine nationalism has weakened Covax, with a handful of rich countries gobbling up the anticipated supply as manufacturers sell to the highest bidder, while the rest of the world scrambles for the scraps. Some countries have placed orders for enough doses to vaccinate their entire population several times over, promising to share only after they have used everything they need, perpetuating the pattern of patronage that keeps the world's have-nots exactly where they are.

Second, vaccine diplomacy has undermined Covax as countries with vaccines make bilateral donations for reasons that have more to do with geopolitical goals than public health. This inevitably leaves countries with the least political clout as wallflowers at the vaccine ball.

Third, vaccine hesitancy has hampered the rollout of vaccines, through the same combination of myth and misinformation that has enabled measles to resurge around the world.



Vaccine diplomacy has undermined Covax as countries with vaccines make bilateral donations for reasons that have more to do with geopolitical goals than public health

Reports of very rare side effects linked to some vaccines have spurred countries with other options to cast some aside. This includes vaccines that many of the world's low-income nations were relying on but now question. Let's be clear: While safety is paramount and we pay careful attention to any signs of adverse events, the shots' benefits vastly outweigh the risks for all four vaccines with WHO emergency use listing.

And fourth, a new trend — let's call it vaccine euphoria — is undermining hard-won gains as some countries relax public health measures too quickly and some people assume that vaccines have ended the pandemic, at least where they live.

It doesn't have to be this way. Scarcity drives inequity and puts the global recovery at risk. The longer this coronavirus circulates anywhere, the longer global trade and travel will be disrupted, and the higher the chances that a variant could emerge that renders vaccines less effective. That's just what viruses do.

We face the very real possibility of affluent countries administering variant-blocking boosters to already vaccinated people when many countries will still be scroung-

ing for enough vaccines to cover their most-at-risk groups.

This is unacceptable. Analysts predict vaccines will generate huge revenues for manufacturers. Meanwhile, the ACT Accelerator is still \$19 billion short of the funds it needs to expand access not just to vaccines but also to diagnostics and treatments like oxygen. But even if we had all the funds we need, money doesn't help if there are no vaccines to buy.

The solution is threefold: We need the countries and companies that control the global supply to share financially, to share their doses with Covax immediately and to share their knowhow to urgently and massively scale up the production and equitable distribution of vaccines.

One way to do this is through voluntary licensing with technology transfer, in which a company that owns the patents on a vaccine licenses another manufacturer to produce its shots, usually for a fee. Some companies have done this on a bilateral basis. But such agreements tend to be exclusive and nontransparent, compromising equitable access.

A more transparent method is for companies to share licenses through the Covid-19 Technology Access Pool, a globally coordinated mechanism proposed by Costa Rica and started by the WHO last year.

Another option, proposed by South Africa and India, is to waive intellectual property rights on Covid-19 products through a World Trade Organization agreement that would level the playing field and give countries more leverage in their discussions with companies. Governments could drive greater sharing of intellectual property by offering incentives to companies to do it.

It is not a time to take those actions, it's hard to fathom when that would be.

In combination with proven public health measures, we have all the tools to tame this pandemic everywhere in a matter of months. It comes down to a simple choice: to share or not to share.

Whether or not we do is not a test of science, financial muscle or industrial prowess; it's a test of character.

(Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has been the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), the world's leading public health agency, since 2017. He is the first person from Africa to head the agency. This opinion piece was first published in the New York Times.)



New world disorder and South Asia

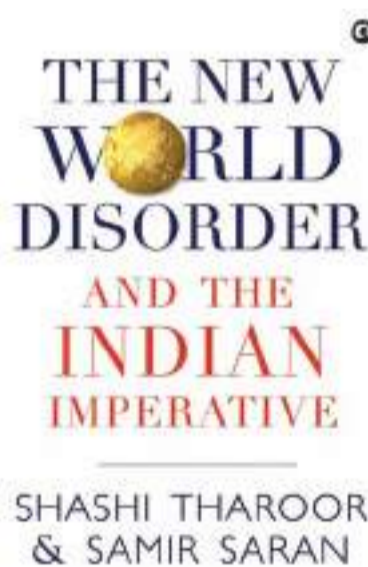
ATUL K. THAKUR

O brave new world that has such people in it! Miranda said in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, on first sighting the shipwrecked courtiers. Today, at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, most of us have a sense of it as the world is in a state of disorder. All about us is prominently chaotic. The world is ravaged to an extent by Covid-19 and the failure of governments and multilateral institutions, and an attempt to see the light at the end of the tunnel may be too simplistic. With the future of humanity threatened and uncertain, the 'new world' has failed to believe in a consensus-based approach to finding a mechanism to decode the global pandemic, and creating a common task force to save humanity from suffering an unprecedented crisis consecutively in the second year.

While reading *The New World Disorder and the Indian Imperative* by Shashi Tharoor and Samir Saran, one gets a very clear sense of the new world order in transition. The book prominently deals with the roots of the universal predicaments — from the inequity of the post-war international power politics to the fundamental causes of the new world's illiberal leadership. In the South Asian region too, the wind of change is well felt. Yet the authors overlook India's growing leadership issues and rightly believe in its potential in the long run where it has a major role to play in shaping future global trends.

Rise of the East

The rise of the East is wrongly viewed with skepticism and fear by the West, precisely so, as somewhere it is erroneously made synonymous



countries view China's aggression in the South Asian region and its adverse implications for regional unity and bilateral relations. Not often discussed, though also not beyond the obvious, a very promising regional association like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could not do as well as expected with China's territorial and market overreach. In comparison, India's posture in the neighbourhood has been conciliatory, and its dominance in the region merits being seen through the same perspectives.

"The international liberal order is facing a moment of crisis. With Darwinism (or the survival of the strongest and fittest) having guided the construction and management of international systems of governance for seven decades, it is no surprise that as sweeping change overtakes the

world, there are no longer many takers for these arrangements. Globalisation is confronted by economic nationalism. Strong leaders are exploiting the grievances of citizens (whether imagined or real) to discard global ideals and champion local interests. And the prospects of a 'global village', of the world coming ever closer together, seem to be in reversal. A zero-sum approach to development and the securitization of growth are creating new potential for conflict at a time when the institutions of global governance are weaker than ever before," write Shashi Tharoor and Samir Saran.

They make it amply clear how the newly disrupted world is not short on opportunities for the countries that have been hitherto given no due by a niche group of countries. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and

as an aspirational country, India's stake is certainly high as the world is reassured of seeing a complete reset.

Braving the New World Order

There is no single multilateral institution including the United Nations that can exactly ascertain the level of losses the world has witnessed with the Covid-19 global pandemic. In fact, the UN's failure in communicating the imminent dangers of unknown biological warfare disguised as a malady, and making a concerted effort to constitute an international task force for a global approach to save the world, is too big to be ignored. Today, we are already living in a ravaged world that can't live in harmony if the old institutions find no new way to justify their existence.

At the cusp of a defining change, it

is wishful that the South Asian countries come forward for reimagining South Asia and staking a claim in the new world order. To brave the challenges, some of the inherent weaknesses have to be addressed, especially on the bilateral front. Essentially, for finding a strong basis for regional and sub-regional economic and strategic integration, the bilateral hiccups and unhelpful baggage of the past have to be effectively dealt with. In South Asia, a new chapter of cooperation should be driven by regional unity rather than symbolisms of bilateralism and trilateralism. A shared vision for regional peace and prosperity will help bilateralism and trilateralism too. If the region gets a new lease of life through a renewed approach of cooperation, the new world disorder will be rather eventful after the crisis. (*Kathmandu Post*)



The two authors at the launch of the book

SIGNIFICANCE OF BAK FULL MOON POYA

Origins of spiritual diplomacy

SACHITRA MAHENDRA

The significance of Bak poya is historical since it marks Buddha's second visit to Sri Lanka. This is noteworthy, as Bak is a month of national importance as well.

According to Mahavamsa, Buddha could foresee an imminent war between two Naga Kings Culodara and Mahodara, uncle and nephew, over a jewel-studded throne that made Him think of visiting Lanka for the second time. Professor Wilhelm Geiger explains the conflict in the translation of Mahavamsa:

That same Naga Mahodara was then a King, gifted with miraculous power in a Naga Kingdom in the ocean, that covered half a thousand Yojanas. His younger sister had been given (in marriage) to the Naga-King on the Kannavaddhamana mountain; her son was Culodara. His mother's father had given to his mother a splendid throne of jewels, then the Naga had died and therefore this war of nephew

with uncle was threatening and also the Nagas of the mountains were armed with miraculous power.

Mahavamsa also records that the Buddha was accompanied by a deity to Sri Lanka.

The deva named Samiddhisumana took a rajayatana-tree standing in Jetavana, his own fair habitation and holding it like a parasol over the conqueror, he with the Teacher's leave, attended him to that spot where he had formerly dwelt. That very deva had been, in his latest birth, a man in Nagadipa.

On the spot where thereafter the rajayatana-tree stood, he saw paccekabuddhas taking their meal. And at the sight his heart was glad and he offered branches to cleanse the alms-bowl.

Therefore he was reborn in that tree in the pleasant Jetavans garden, and it (the tree) stood afterwards outside at the side of the gate-rampart. The God of all gods saw (in this) an advantage for that deva and for the sake of the good which should spring (therefrom) for

our land, he brought him hither (to Lanka) together with his tree.

Mahavamsa then relates how Buddha settled the dispute and the next development of events.

Hovering there in mid-air above battlefield the Master, who drives away (spiritual) darkness, called forth dread darkness over the Nagas. Then comforting those who were distressed by terror he once again spread light abroad.

When they saw the Blessed One they joyfully did reverence to the Master's feet. Then preached the Vanquisher to them the doctrine that begets concord and both (Nagas) gladly gave up the throne to the Sage.

When the Master, having alighted on the earth, had taken his place on a seat there and had been refreshed with celestial food and drink by the Naga-Kings, he the Lord, established in the (three) refuges and in the moral precepts eighty kotis of snake-spirits, dwellers in the ocean and on the mainland.

The Naga-King Maniakkhika of Kalyani mother's



brother to the Naga Mahodara, who had come thither to take

part in the battle and who, aforetime, at the Buddha's first coming, having heard the true

doctrine preached, had become established in the refuges and the moral duties, prayed now to the Tathagata: "Great is the compassion that thou hast shown us here, O Master!

Hadst thou not appeared we had all been consumed to ashes. May thy compassion yet light also especially on me, O thou who art rich in loving-kindness, in that thou shalt come again hitherto my dwelling country, O thou peerless one'.

When the Buddha had consented by his silence to come thither, he planted the rajayatana-tree on that very spot as a sacred memorial and the Lord of the Worlds gave over the rajayatana-tree and the precious throne-seat to the Naga-Kings to do homage thereto. "In remembrance that I have used these do homage to them, ye Naga-Kings!

Buddha's calling forth dread darkness over the Nagas should not be misunderstood. The Buddha holds fame for being the Greatest Compassionate on earth. The concept bears a symbolic meaning;

Buddha preached the dark side of the world, and the Naga tribes were scared just to hear and visualise them. That paved the way for them to comfort later on.

Buddha's visits to Sri Lanka are believed to be false and legendary in certain sects. One reason is that it is not contained in Tripitaka, the official document of Buddha's life. Tripitaka contains more philosophically important factors, rather than history. Buddha had been to Sri Lanka thrice: the first visit to Mahiyangana, second to Jaffna, then called as Nagadipa, and third to Kelaniya.

The common question is that if Buddha had already been to Sri Lanka, not only once, but thrice, why did Arahant Mahinda visit Sri Lanka once again. Arahant Mahinda, of course, had a mission to fulfill: to establish the Upasampada Bhikkhu order. The suitable time was not ripe for Buddha to consider establishing the serious Bhikkhu order. However, Buddhism was not alien when Arahant Mahinda set foot.

Fruits of an intellectual struggle

RUPA BANDUWARDENA

Northern Sri Lanka is said to have been blessed by Thathagatha the perfect one with the outcome of his intellectual struggle - the absolute truth of life during the month of Bak.

Dhamma chronicles reveal that he diverts his divine eye, a countless number of times on the lives of countless beings and their journey in the sea of Sansara, to come to their aid and relieve them of their suffering.

This is said to be his daily routine. In the fifth year of his supreme enlightenment, while he was at Jetavanarama, Sri Lanka had caught his divine eye. He could see a great disaster in Northern Sri Lanka. The Buddha with his wealth of Metta arrived in Nagadeepa to settle a dispute, an event of great historical importance.

Divine Vision

His divine vision attracted his attention to avert the human destruction resulting from a war between Mahodara and Chulodara, uncle and nephew who were at loggerheads over the ownership of a gem studded throne. Mahodara a powerful King in Nagadeepa whose younger sister named Thirachchika married a Naga King had been offered the above throne which was later inherited by her son Chulodara.

The raging King was about to wage war when Thathagatha appeared immediately which happened to be the month of Bak. Here the inhabitants who belonged to various tribes such as Yakka and Naga, Naga being more advanced in trade and industry supporting the Naga Kings with their rough behaviour and poor intellect though opposed the Buddha at the beginning, they did have the good fortune to be blessed with the message of the Dhamma.

Rajayathana Kiripalu Rukha A deity named Samiddhi Sumana who had made the above banyan tree his abode, in Jetavana accompanied Thathagatha holding the uprooted tree as an umbrella to him, who knew that it was a merit bestowing act to the deity.

On arrival seeing the Naga Kings involved in fighting, Sakyamuni with his psychic powers appeared above, in the sky performing miracles which made the Nagas astonished and happy. Finally having listened to the sermons displaying the masterly knowledge of unity and harmony, meththa and compassion they worshipped Thathagatha with overwhelming shraddah and within minutes the throne was offered to him in unison and



became pious devotees thereafter.

The Naga King Maniakkhika, the ruler of Kelaniya who had become a follower of the Buddha during his first visit to Mahiyangana, while on his way to help Chulodara Mahodara in the battle ground, moved by the compassion of the Buddha thanked him profusely for settling the dispute. He further pleaded for a souvenir to worship and consequently the Buddha offered him the Kiripalu tree and the throne. History says that where Kiripaluru was planted a Chetiya was built enshrining the Minipalanga by Chulodara and Mahodara.

Nagadeepa Seya The temple premises with its glittering dagaba bear testimony to Thathagatha blessings. This above mentioned Chaitya, Nagadeepa Seya is supposed to be one of the 16 most sacred places to be worshipped in Sri Lanka. This is a milestone in Sasanian history and is of considerable historic value and immense cultural significance.

History records that it was developed and reconstructed by pious Kings like Devanampiyatissa, Dutugemunu and converted into a fully accomplished sacred place. According to the golden Sannasa Walipuram committed to writing during the reign of King Vasabha, it is the present Jaffna peninsula that was identified as Nagadeepa.

Invitation to Thathagatha When King Maniakkhika met Thathagatha on his second visit to Lanka at Nagadeepa he was very anxious that the great

master, visit his kingdom too. With universal love towards all beings he arrived at Kelaniya later in the eighth year of his enlightenment. This honoured invitation had been made on a Bak full moon day, paving way for the third visit of the Buddha to this Dharmadweepa. There is other evidence which highlight the importance of Buddha's visit to Nagadeepa during the month of Bak. Surrounding areas bear testimony to this. To show profound religious devotion and respect to Thathagatha, devotional activities include, the offering of flowers, incense and oil lamps coming down from Buddha times to this day. These offerings are made as a mark of gratitude in return for Buddha's blessings.

It is believed that villages in and around Nagadeepa known as 'Mallakam' and 'Chunnakam' indicate places where flowers and incense were supplied for the worship of the Buddha. Further, the Buddhist chronicles make mention of 'Puwangu Divayina, Ka-ara Divayina, Manda Divayina' as popular Buddhist villages in the area, entirely devoted to Buddhist activities.

One can well and truly say that Nagadeepa the most favoured spot visited and blessed by Buddha occupies a unique place in the history of the island as a blissful place showered with peace and harmony among the inhabitants. May the relics enshrined in the Chetiya usher the area with unity for the peaceful co-existence of all beings.

May all beings be happy

KEVIN GRIFFIN

Metta (lovingkindness) is that sense of openness when we feel connected to everyone and everything in the world. In some ways, it's a natural outgrowth of mindfulness practice and just the general cultivation of happiness in our lives. When the Buddha talks about lovingkindness, he's clearly pointing to something different from what we usually call 'love'. In fact, his teachings point to the problems with selective love, and how that leads to clinging and ultimately suffering as things change. The Metta Sutta tells us to spread love over the entire world to everyone, no matter what we think or feel about them. This is unconditional love, love that doesn't expect or need a return, love that sees past the petty differences and disputes in life to the universal longings for happiness that we all share. In practicing lovingkindness, we are faced with our clinging, our judgments, and our selective caring. We see that what we usually call love may have a lot of conditions tied up with it: "I'll love you as long as you love me" or "as long as you give me what I want." And, further, we see that the love we have for our dear ones makes us vulnerable to grief and loss.

Traditionally, metta practice focuses on three categories: those we love, those we are neutral or have no strong feelings about, and those we have difficulties with. Before we work with these categories, the practice suggests we first focus on a benefactor or beloved person (or even a pet). When we spend time sending lovingkindness to this beloved, we accomplish a couple of things: first, we soften ourselves up a bit, so that we are ready to send love to others; and second, we get a clear sense of what love feels like so that we establish that kind of baseline.

After connecting with the beloved, we then try to send love to ourselves. Many people find this to be one of the most difficult aspects of the metta practice. At least in our culture, many of us have complicated, and often negative, feelings about ourselves. To see ourselves as just another person deserving love is a valuable exercise. Here we start to disidentify with ourselves, see ourselves in more objective terms. When we can see ourselves as just another imperfect human, equally deserving of love as anyone else, it becomes easier to offer love to ourselves.

Moving from focus on ourselves to focus on all the rest of the people we care about—family, friends, intimates, and partner—the heart tends to open more easily. Now we might feel ourselves getting into the flow of lovingkindness. Without obstruction, and using the phrases, feelings, and visualizations of the practice, the mind can become quite focused and concentrated, so that, not only do we enjoy the pleasant feeling of love, but also the powerful feeling of concentration, called samadhi, that comes with deeper meditation practices.

We then try to carry these two qualities, the openheartedness and the focus, into giving metta to a neutral person or persons. For many people, this seems to be an awkward practice at first, but I think it has great potential in terms of growing a broad sense of lovingkindness for all beings.

A neutral person is someone we don't have strong feelings about, either positive or negative. I've used people like the clerk in the video store and the security guard at the bank. These are people I can visualize pretty easily because I've seen them many times, but I certainly don't like or dislike them in any meaningful way.

At first, and naturally enough, it might be hard to feel much about these people,



but the practice gives us a form we can simply follow without worrying about the results. You see the person in your mind, you say the lovingkindness phrases to yourself, and you try to connect in your heart. What helps me in doing this practice is contemplating the universal desire for happiness and freedom from suffering. Even though I don't really know this neutral person, I know that, just like me, they want happiness. So, in a sense, I'm connecting with my own wish for happiness and just projecting it onto them.

As we work with the neutral person, we have the opportunity to see what the Buddha was getting at. It might be easy to wish happiness for your loved ones, but as you wish that, it's still very personal for you. You have some investment in their happiness, so it's difficult to disidentify with their happiness. However, with the neutral person, you have no investment, so you have to connect with something else, this universal longing that is impersonal. That moves you away from your self-identification into a more authentic metta. As long as there is identification or longing or investment in someone else's happiness, we aren't experiencing unconditional love.

I think that many people can get caught up in the idea that metta is about feeling good and praying for people you care about. This is something of a distortion of the teachings. Yes, being immersed in metta is a pleasant experience, but that experience isn't the goal of the practice.

Working with the difficult person makes this fact clear. If we were just trying to feel good, we certainly wouldn't spend time thinking about someone we don't like. The difficult person can be someone you've had conflict with or toward whom you have a resentment. Sometimes when no one in my life comes up, I just use a political figure that I disagree with. In any case, this is a place where we have to apply a strong mindfulness to our practice so that we don't lapse into aversion, anger, judgment, or resentment. As we follow through on the practice, visualizing the person and saying the phrases, it's very likely that we will not feel much that's positive, at least in our initial efforts. We need to be careful that the mind doesn't wander into negative thoughts and that we just keep with the simple task of the practice, staying with the words and the breath in the heart. Here, you may be able to get some insight into the limits of your own capacity for love. That's a valuable thing to see. It can give us some goals as well as show us where some of our own suffering comes from.

Clearly, the great spiritual masters believe that the capacity to love our enemies is one of the vital tasks of human evolution. Jesus spoke of this and exemplified it when he forgave those who crucified him; the Buddha explains this in the 'Simile of the Saw,' in which he says that even if someone were sawing off our limbs one by one, no thought of hatred should arise. If we want to be truly loving people, unconditionally and for all beings,

we have to work with some form of this practice. It's certainly not something that I've come anywhere close to mastering, but I have found that with compassion practice, I can get some sense of this.

After working with the difficult person, we can move to the expansive part of metta practice. This is actually a complete shift because no longer are we thinking about any individuals, but working instead with a sense of space. This space is what the Buddha is talking about in the Metta Sutta when he says that we are 'radiating kindness over the entire world, spreading [it] upwards to the skies and downwards to the depths, outwards and unbounded, free from hatred and ill will.'

This is a somewhat more difficult area of practice to describe because it doesn't have the same cognitive elements of the earlier pieces. Instead, we are working more with a feeling, a feeling of expansiveness and connection. Hopefully when we arrive at this part of the practice, we've developed something of an internal sense of lovingkindness. While focusing on that feeling, that authentic wish for all beings to be free from dukkha, or suffering, we being a process of imaginative expansion. We can use a visualization if that works, while we stay connected to the feeling in the heart and imagine that the love is growing.

First we see/feel that love filling and enveloping the room we are in. Then we let that feeling expand out through the whole building, the neighborhood, outward in all directions until it touches everything on earth. This can be done slowly or quickly, depending upon how much time you have and how into it you are. You can have specific groups of people you want to send love to: the sick and dying, the oppressed, or whatever comes up for you. You can also send love to animals, plants, and the earth itself.

At this point, you may lose the sense of boundaries with your body, and experience a sort of floating or fluid sensation. I'm not trying to tell you how you should feel—just know that anything in this realm is normal and helps to support this part of the practice. When we've spread lovingkindness over the entire planet, we then expand into space, vast and limitless. We try to permeate the universe with loving-kindness.

Once we've sat in this place of boundless love for a little while, we can bring ourselves gradually back into the body and heart, and close the period of meditation.

Practice-Metta Phrases

I've more or less outlined the practice above. Always start by connecting with the breath, so you have some attention in your body, preferably at the heart. As I've said, we first send metta to a beloved person or benefactor, then ourselves, our dear ones, a neutral person, a difficult person, then radiating to all beings. A big part of this, then, is the felt sense of lovingkindness; however, this feeling may be stronger, weaker, or even absent at times. Nonetheless, we continue the practice by visualizing the people we are sending metta to, maybe naming them, and repeating phrases. You should use phrases that resonate for you and are simple and direct. Not more than four phrases. Here are some typical ones:

May you be happy
May you be peaceful
May you live with ease.
Some people like to add something like, "May you be safe."
Stay in touch with your breath; notice feelings of happiness or resistance that come up at various stages; let the phrases flow with the breath and stay connected to the heart.

Buddhism and New Year celebrations

KKS PERERA

Nagadipa, is an island in the Jaffna peninsula. According to the Chronicle Mahavamsa, the name Nagadipa is related with the visit of Gautama Buddha. It marks Buddha's second visit to the island.

People of past generations believed in gazing the new moon which appears 14 days before this day as a good omen.

“Nava bag lasand dut - minisek āc hunova .janneyi”: - [A man who has seen the tender moon of Bak should not be rejected]

Homage paid by the Buddhists to moon [nava sanda belima] in the present times though uninspiring and weak, centuries ago, a sightseer to Sigiriya marked his visit on its Mirror Wall with the above graffiti.

Buddha's second visit

The enlightened one arrived in Sri Lanka, accompanied by Diety Samiddhisumana on a Bak Full Moon Poya day to settle a war between two factions of Naga community. The Buddha's mission was to bring peace to this island. Bak Poya Day, therefore is a significant day for Sri Lanka.

In the fiftieth year of his enlightenment, the Buddha perceived with his divine eye, a dispute brewing between the two factions of Nagas led by two Kings Chulodara and Mahodara.

The Mahavamsa says, Mahodara ruled the Kingdom of the sea, who gave his younger sister in marriage to the Naga King, Chulodara was their son. His mother's father has gifted to his mother a Gem studded throne. This magnificent chair resulted in a war between the uncle and nephew. The Buddha, visited Sri Lanka, preached his doctrine to the warring factions Chulodara and Mahodara at Nagadeepa, in Northern Sri Lanka.

The Buddha first created darkness while hovering in mid-air, above the battle field. He illuminated the whole area. When the Naga Community seeing this miracle, joyfully paid their obeisance. The Blessed one illustrated the value and the benefits that they accrue from unity and peaceful co-existence and the evils of discord.

Economics

Dighajā nu once visited the Buddha and said: “Venerable Sir, we are lay men, leading the family life with wife and children. Would you teach us some doctrines which will be conducive to our happiness?” The Buddha spoke on four things which are conducive to a man's contentment in this saṃsāra: one- he should be skilled, efficient, energetic and earnest in whatever profession he is occupied, and he should know it thoroughly; second: he should look after his possession, which he has thus earned, with the sweat of his brow; third: he should have kalyāṇa-mitta or good friends who are virtuous,

learned, faithful, liberal and intelligent, who will direct him along the correct path away from immorality; fourth: he should use up reasonably his expenses, in proportion to his returns” meaning he should live within his resources and save a portion.

Freedom

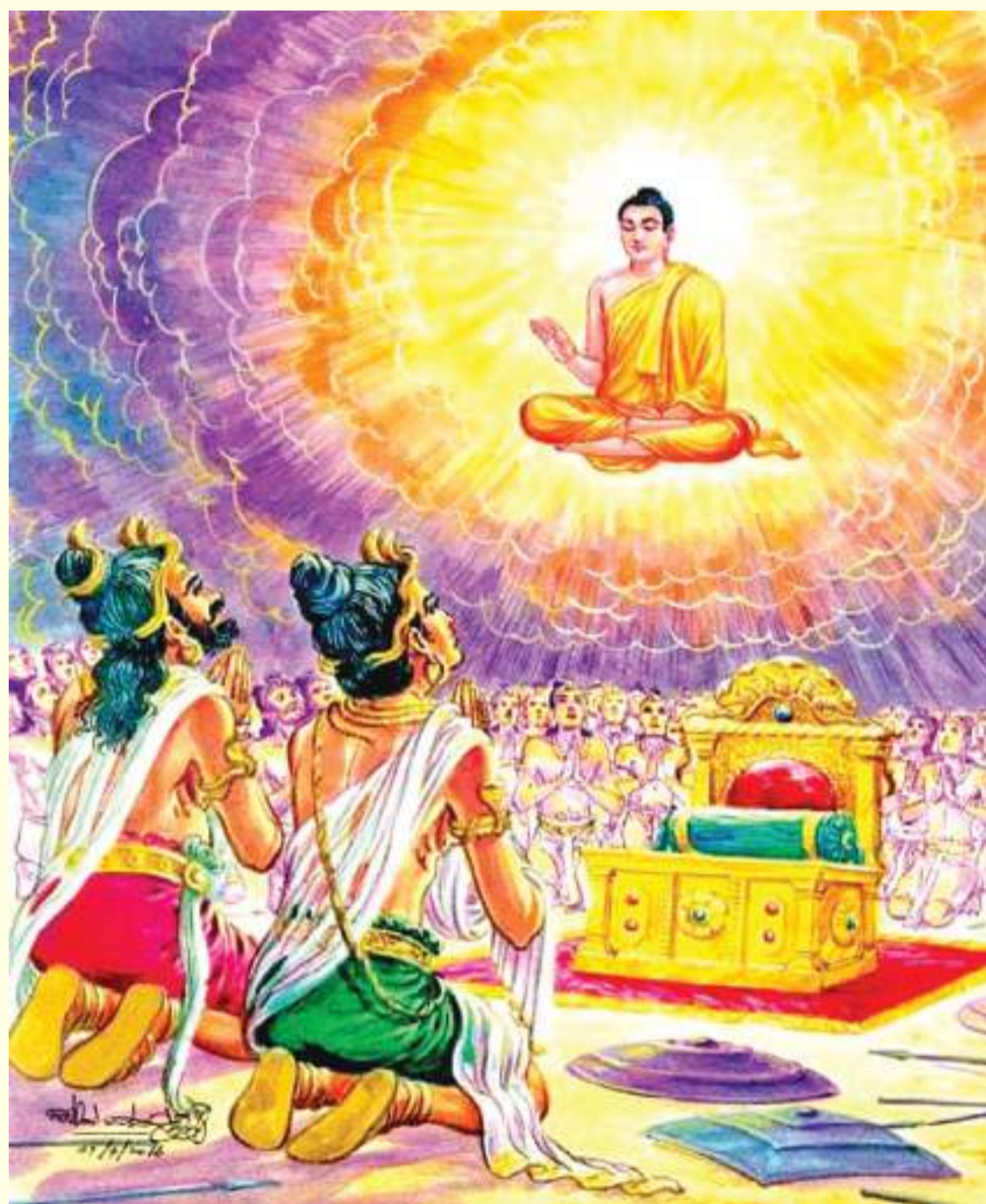
Give up all you have ever thought about yourself; start as if you knew nothing, and begin to understand ourselves for the first time. How to free ourselves from bonds of life? We have to investigate ourselves “not someone explaining while we listen, agreeing or disagreeing, but taking a journey of discovery into the most deep corners of our minds. And to take such a journey we cannot be burdened with prejudices, opinions, and conclusions - all that we have collected for thousands of years and more.

How can we be free to look and learn when from the moment we are born to the moment we die, our minds are shaped by a particular culture in the narrow pattern of the “I” me’ and “mine”? We have been conditioned for centuries by nationality, religion, caste, language, class, custom, tradition, education, literature, art, convention and propaganda of all kinds, the pressures, the climate we live in, the food we eat, our friends, our family, our experiences and therefore our reactions and responses to every problem are conditioned. You will never be free of it, and if you think, “I must be free of it”, you will fall into another form of conditioning. Even when you look at a tree and say, “That is a jak tree”, or “that is a mango tree”, the naming of the tree, which is general knowledge, it has so conditioned you that the word comes between you and actually observing the tree.

So it is for us to decide whether or not we wish for complete freedom. You can be free from doctrine very easily, by scrutinizing it, but the purpose for that freedom from dogma has its individual reaction since the desire to be free from a doctrine may be that it is no longer fashionable or opportune. If we say we do, then we have to understand the character and structure of freedom. Is it freedom when you are free from pain, free from anxiety? Or is freedom itself something completely different? You can be free from envy, resentment say, but isn't that freedom a response and therefore not freedom at all?

Silly Nationalistic Belief

All youth, are in revolt against the world, and that is a good thing in itself, but revolt is not freedom because when you revolt it is a reaction and that response sets up its own pattern and you get trapped in that pattern. You can be free from patriotism because you believe in internationalism or because you sense it is no longer reasonably necessary to adhere to this silly nationalistic belief. You can effortlessly put that away. Or you may counter against some religious or political leader who has guaranteed you freedom as a result of restraint or



revolt. But has such rationalism, such commonsense conclusion anything to do with liberty? You think it is something novel, but it is the old in a different mould. Any societal or political rebellion will inevitably slip back to the good old bourgeois frame of mind. If you say you are free from something, it is a rejoinder which will then become another reaction which will bring about another conventionality, another form of authority. In this way you can have a chain of responses and accept each reaction as independence. But it is not freedom; it is merely a link of a modified history which the mind adheres to.

There is only your relationship with the world - nothing else; there are no guides, no teachers. When you understand this, what you feel, what you think, how you work, all self-pity goes. We will not

thrive on blaming others, which is a type of self-pity.

If you examine very closely what is taking place and observe it, you will see that it stands on a rational conception. What is imperative is not a philosophy but to observe what is in fact taking place in our daily existence, inwardly and outwardly. And when we look at what is happening in the world we commence to understand that there is no external and internal process; there is only one unitary process, it is a whole movement. To be able to stare at this seems to me all that is required, because if we make out how to look, then the whole thing turns out to be very clear, and to look desires no viewpoint, no teacher. Nobody need tell you how you should look. You just look.

May all beings be happy

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN

As you progress in sustained, daily practice, it might be helpful to have an overview of meditative insight. Of course, there are many maps of the spiritual journey, and what follows is simply one way of highlighting some different aspects of the path.

Often people think of mindfulness as present moment awareness-living in the present moment, rather than being lost in thoughts of past and future. And while this is certainly a necessary prerequisite for mindfulness, it is not enough. It is possible to be fully in the moment and still be completely lost in whatever the experience might be.

For example, there is something I call “black Lab consciousness.” You may be familiar with black Labrador Retrievers. They are immensely playful, friendly dogs, who seem to be very much in the moment, lost in their worlds of sight and sound and smell. It doesn't seem that they are ruminating about the past or future, but at the same time, they don't appear to be at all mindful.

Dogs don't seem that they are ruminating about the past or future, but at the same time, they don't appear to be mindful.

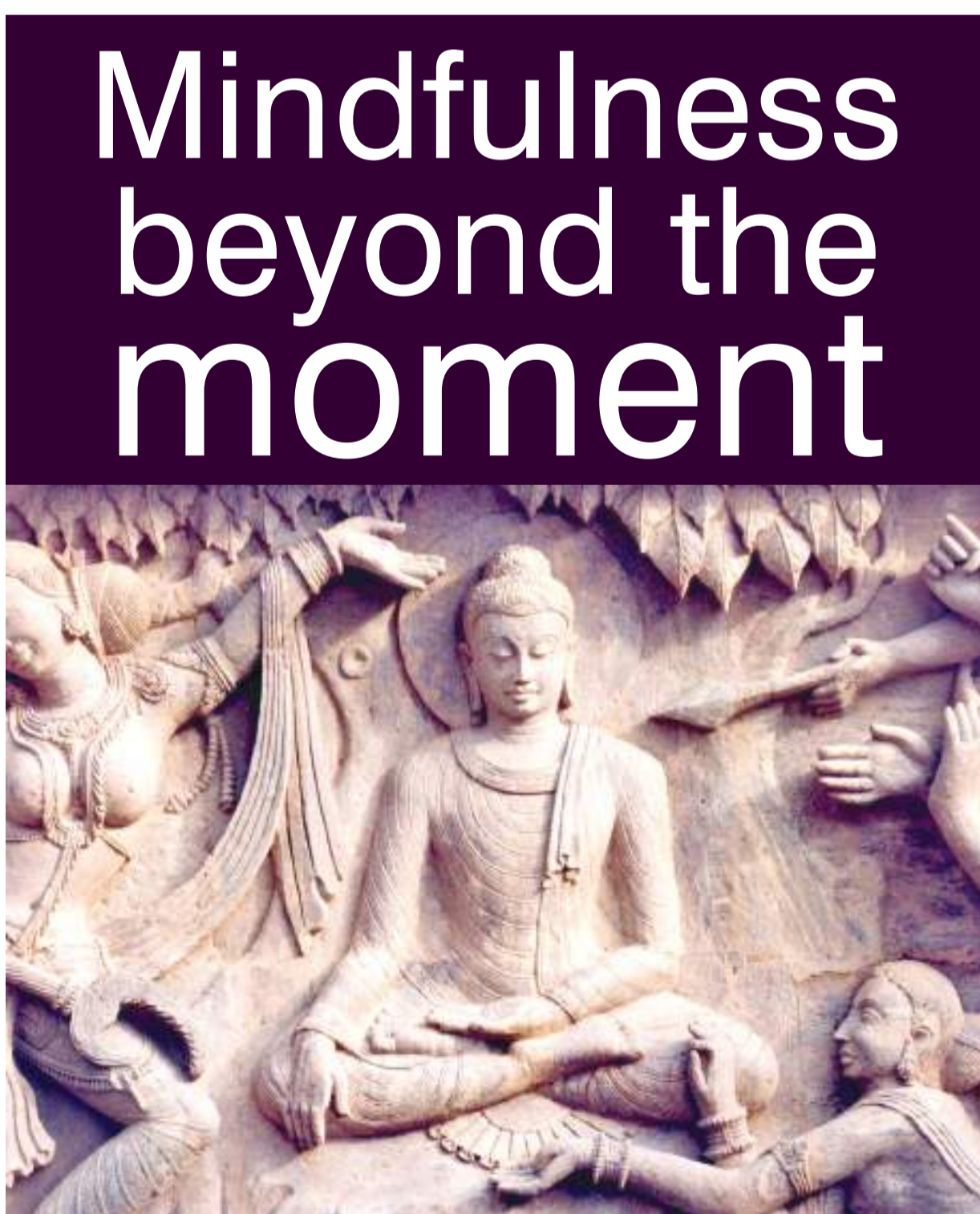
For much of the time, our own minds are in a similar situation. Even if we're not lost in thought, we may not be mindfully observing what is arising. Here, there is an important distinction between attention and mindfulness. How many times during the day do we hear sounds or see sights without the meta-cognition of knowing that we're hearing or seeing? We're simply lost in the experience, much like a black Lab. Attention allows us to know the object, but without necessarily opening to its nature (or to the knowing itself) on a deeper level. The Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, described this well:

Live you say in the present. Live only in the present. But I don't want the present, I want reality.

In order to accomplish the understanding of reality, mindfulness also has an ethical component, which is knowing our experience without the often unnoticed filters of greed and aversion.

The beginning of practice-and throughout our entire journey-we remind ourselves to actively notice what it is we're experiencing and, at the same time, to be aware of any attitude in the mind regarding it. The difference between being lost in a present moment experience and being mindful of it is very obvious every time we wake up from being lost in a thought. Just there, in that moment of transition, we can feel the difference between the deluded mind of non-awareness and the wakeful quality of mindfulness.

At first, it may feel quite effortful to remember to be mindful. But as the momentum of our practice grows, there may be more space between thoughts and more awareness of whatever is arising in our bodies, our minds, or in the external environment. And at a certain point, a level shift takes place. While we're still aware of what is arising, there is an even greater awareness of the process of change itself. It's as if we have shifted the emphasis of awareness from content to process. Here, experience flows on more smoothly, and mindfulness seems to be happening by itself. We still get lost, but our



minds return more effortlessly to being mindful of the flow of phenomena.

This shift can be illustrated by the images of an arch and a trough. At first, it's as if we're balancing at the top of an arch, often falling off to one side or another and

requiring an effort to climb back up to the top. But through that effort, at some point the arch inverts to become a trough, where we're simply resting at the bottom. We still may be pulled off center, that is, getting lost in various momentary experiences, but then quite

effortlessly, the mind settles back into balance, into the flow of changing phenomena.

An important insight begins to emerge at this stage of practice. We begin to be clearly aware of two different but unified aspects of all experience: that is, in each moment we see the wise progression of knowing and object, arising and passing away together. Usually, the object is more predominant, but at times we can also emphasize the knowing aspect. We might understand this in terms of foreground and background. At times, there will be a natural interweaving of the two, and at other times we can choose to give emphasis to one or another, still remembering that they always arise together. For example, we might be feeling the sensations of the breath quite intimately and then it's as if we put these sensations to one side (or let them recede into the background) and rest more in the awareness itself.

For those exploring this aspect of practice, the question may arise, “How can I be more mindful of the knowing?” While it will come naturally as we continue our meditation, there is one linguistic re-framing that I found to be extremely helpful in this regard. Usually, we describe experience, either consciously or unconsciously, in the active voice, with a subject, a verb and some object. “I'm knowing a sound” or “I'm knowing a movement.” If we reframe these experiences in the passive voice-“a sound being known” or “a movement being known”-we have taken the “I” out of the equation. The actor is no longer the subject and we can see how effortlessly the knowing arises in every moment, without an “I” making the effort.

It's very simple. As an experiment, just now, you might move your arm back and forth, noticing how effortlessly the movement is being known. Of course, the mind will still wander from time to time, but we can always come back to the simplicity of things being known moment after moment. Because of this effortless quality, it's easier to rest in the knowing aspect, even for short periods of time, again remembering that we'll also be aware of what's being known at the same time.

Another important understanding happens when we notice the tendency to lean into the next moment-what I call the “lean” mind. We may be with a strong sensation in order for it to diminish, or with an emotion in order for it to go away, or even being with an in-breath but already leaning into the arising of the out-breath. This is one aspect of what the Buddha called “craving for becoming.”

We can taste one dimension of freedom in those moments when we're not leaning, not wanting to become. On this fundamental, moment to moment level, the mind is free of craving-for anything. In the morning of the Buddha's enlightenment, it's said that a verse came to his mind, expressing the depth of his awakening. The last two lines of that verse say, “Realized is the unconditioned, achieved is the end of craving.”

This is a reminder that the essence of our practice is non-craving-the Third Noble Truth of the Buddha's teaching: the end of suffering. And although for us, the end of craving might at first be momentary, it does give a real taste of peace.



Following are excerpts from an interview with Theravada Buddhist monk Venerable Ajahn Suchart Abhijato of Thailand.

SAMANGIE WETTIMUNY

Q: How can we develop mindfulness and Metta (Loving-kindness) Mind?

A: To develop mindfulness you need to have a 'mindfulness' object such as your body - movement. Keep watching every movement of your body and action. Whatever you do, concentrate on what you do. That's what it means. Don't send your mind elsewhere. [For example] when you are brushing your teeth you should keep watching brushing your teeth, and not thinking about other things.

With Metta, you need to be friendly to everybody. So when you meet people smile and say 'Hello' and if there is something to share with them, [do share] - when people are happy share it with them. This is what practising Metta (kind) means. Also do not hold a grudge when somebody does something wrong to you. You should forgive them. This is also Metta. Whatever you do, you must not hurt them either physically or mentally. This is what having Metta means. Having a Metta mind means [having] goodwill towards all living beings.

Q: What role does one's 'Chutti Citta' play, when an individual's next birth is concerned?

A: The Chutti Citta will connect itself to a new body. Eventually it will come across an available body, then it will connect to this physical body by sending the streams of Vinyana or consciousness to attach to the five mental objects/organs of the body.

Q: If a person dies with a pure "Kusala citta", will he definitely get a good birth?

A: It depends on the total summation of the good and the bad Kamma. They will be competing to take control of your mind. If your good kamma is more than your bad kamma then your next birth will be a good birth. If your bad kamma is more than your good kamma then your next birth will not be a good birth.

Q: What key factors will determine one's rebirth?

A: Your kamma. Your good and bad kamma. It is like your financial account. You have both debit and credit. If you have more debit than credit then you are in the green. If you have more credit than debit then you are in the red. Same way with good and bad kamma.

Q: As the Buddha said, what we experience in this lifetime results from what we ourselves created in the past. Can we overcome all our bad kamma by engaging in good deeds in this birth. What's the Buddhist explanation?

A: Some of our experiences are the results of our past good or bad Kamma. But they don't determine what your present Kamma will be. You are the one who can choose the kamma you want to make - good or bad kamma.

Your bad kamma will eventually [once it has shown its consequences] disappear from your mind.

Q: What is the best way to practise Buddhism?

A: The Buddha taught us to do three actions - 1) avoid bad kamma, 2) do only good kamma, 3) purify the mind. - get rid of the defilements such as greed, hatred and delusion in the mind - purifying the mind by the practice of meditation.

Q: Thousands of people fall prey to Covid 19. At the moment over three million people have died. Are these people destined to die at this particular moment? Is it their kamma?

A: Well, it is the kamma to die. For every birth there is death. But when and where [to die] depends on circumstances that they happen to be in. So those people who die just happen to have the right conditions for them to die. So they die. For those still alive, it means they don't have the right condition for them to die yet. But eventually they will find the right condition for them to die sooner or later. Everybody will have to die.

TAME THE 'MONKEY' IN THE MIND!

KEEP WATCHING WHAT THE BODY IS DOING



■ Wat Yansangwararam, Chonburi, Thailand

“For every birth there is death. But when and where [to die] depends on circumstances that they happen to be in. So those people who die just happen to have the right conditions for them to die. So they die. For those still alive, it means they don't have the right condition for them to die yet. But eventually they will find the right condition for them to die sooner or later. Everybody will have to die.**”**

Q: It is said that the highest form of birth is to be born as a human being. However there is also a view that the "Devas" are above humans and human beings are in the habit of praying for gods to achieve material benefits/to cure illnesses etc. Are the Devas truly more powerful than us?

A: No, Devas cannot do anything for us. We cannot pray to devas and expect them to do something for us. When they say human birth is the highest form it means it is the best form for Enlightenment. It is the best form to receive the teachings of the Buddha. If

“You have to train your mind with mindfulness from the time you get up and to the time you go to sleep. You should take control of the mind right away as soon as you wake up by forcing [making] the mind to concentrate on the body movement. Keep watching what the body is doing, keep reciting a mantra 'Bhuddo Bhuddo, Bhuddo'. Then you will stay focused and when you meditate you can calm your mind easily.**”**

Q: When practising meditation, laymen often find it little hard to stay focused. How to stay focused on meditation/what we are doing?

A: You have to train your mind with mindfulness from the time you get up and to the time you go to sleep. You should take control of the mind right away as soon as you wake up by forcing [making] the mind to concentrate on the body movement. Keep watching what the body is doing, keep reciting a mantra 'Bhuddo Bhuddo, Bhuddo'. Then you will stay focused and when you meditate you can calm your mind easily.

Q: How can one tame one's Monkey Mind?

A: Again mindfulness is the key here. Be mindful of your body movement and be mindful of a mantra such as Bhuddo, Bhuddo. Just keep training yourself in mindfulness all the time, from the time you get up to the time you go to sleep. Then you will have continuous mindfulness and when you sit and meditate you can calm the mind and tame the 'monkey' in the mind.

Q: Is it true that feeding hungry animals and being kind to them is a very insignificant activity in terms of acquiring merit when compared with treating and feeding a hungry human being?

A: No, the merits are the same. Animals and humans are the same 'thing'. They need kindness, they need help. So when you give 'kindness and help' to them you get merit. That does not matter who you give to. The act of giving itself is what makes you have [acquire] merit. and if you want more merit then you have to give more. That is all. It is not the person or the animal who received the help from you. It is the amount that you give [that matters]. The more you give the more merit you will get.

(Special thanks to Ajahn Suchart Abhijato's administrative team for facilitating the interview)
(Ajahn Suchart Abhijato became a Buddhist monk at the age of 27 years and ordained at Wat Bovornives in Bangkok on February 19, 1975 with Somdet Phra Nanasarivara—the late Supreme Patriarch (Somdet Phra Sangharaja)—as his preceptor. He is well known across the globe for his Dhamma teaching methods and meditation practice. Presently Venerable Ajahn Suchart Abhijato resides in Wat Yansangwararam, Thailand.)

there is a Buddha around or his Noble Disciples, [humans] have the chance to become Enlightened, to be liberated from the realms of existence, to be liberated from aging sickness and death forever.

For Devas it is harder to achieve Enlightenment because they need someone who can communicate [with them] either the Buddha or his Noble Disciples. Not all Noble Disciples can connect with the Devas. So it is better to become a human being than a Deva as far as becoming Enlightened is concerned.

Q: In Sri Lanka " Bodhi Poojas" (paying homage to the Bo tree) is a common ritual practised by the Buddhists in order to invoke a blessing on oneself or others. There are certain cults who view such acts with scorn. What is your view of Buddhist Bodhi Pooja concept?

A: The concept of paying respect to the Bodhi Tree is really to remind us of the Enlightenment of the Buddha. That is what it means. [Thoughts] are focused on the Buddha, so that we don't forget that once upon a time, a few thousand years ago, there was a person sitting under the Bodhi tree and became Enlightened, became free from suffering forever. That is the purpose of paying respect to the Bodhi Tree, to recollect the Buddha's Enlightenment and once you have recollect the Enlightenment of the Buddha it will inspire you to become Enlightened. So you will study the teachings of the Buddha to see the way to become Enlightened. Then you would start to practise the teachings of the Buddha in order for you to become Enlightened.



Greece opens doors to vaccinated tourists

Teenage models Lydia-Angel Beach and Charlotte Claussen are seated on Monastiraki Square drinking in the warm Athens sunshine, having just sated their post-casting hunger with a juicy takeout souvlaki from classic kebab joint Thanasis.

London-born Beach, 18, who grew up in Ibiza, and her colleague Claussen, 19, from Hamburg, flew in a few days ago, after Greece's decision to lift a quarantine requirement for vaccinated travelers and those testing negative for Covid-19 from key tourism markets.

"It's model season, so we're here for work but also combining it with a vacation," says Beach. "The weather is amazing, the people are really welcoming and the food is really good. Everyone speaks English, so it's easy to get around."

There aren't many other tourists currently enjoying what would be the start of peak season in Athens, but there soon could be.

As of April 19, residents of the European Union, the United States, the UK, Israel, Serbia and the UAE who have been inoculated or present a negative PCR test up to 72 hours prior to arrival are free to enter Greece and must abide by domestic restrictions on movement.

The country has promised to open to all other countries on the same terms, as of May 15.

The move has so far been unmatched by any other major tourist destination in Europe — where new waves of Covid-19 are currently



prompting heavy lockdowns. And even for Greece they represent a bold step at a time when restrictions for locals are still in place.

A tiny minority in Greece, including some opposition politicians, see it as an unnecessary gamble, risking a further rise in Covid cases, which reached a new peak earlier in April. It comes at a time when healthcare services are already stretched.

But in a country where 20% of national income depends on cash from visitors and the effects of a decade-long financial crisis are still being felt, most people see it as a vital step out of a financial hole, insisting that vaccines and testing will help weather any virus resurgence.

For the first visitors, the easing of restrictions in Greece is already proving a welcome contrast to tighter controls at home.

"In Germany, Covid-19 restrictions are much stricter," says Claussen. "Things are much more relaxed here.

It's a good place to travel to right now and Greece really needs tourists," she says.

She and Beach are thrilled to learn that restaurants and bars, which have remained closed for much of the past year but can provide delivery and takeout, are due to open for outdoor dining on May 3.

"It will be nice to be able to go out for a cold beer after working a 12-hour day," says Claussen.

For Greek citizens, the official messaging around the country's opening up is mixed. While the government has taken to the international stage to throw doors open wide and tantalize visitors with the prospect of warm Mediterranean sunshine, locals are still subject to restrictions.

Greeks remain in lockdown and are required to send an SMS or carry a handwritten note in order to leave their homes to visit a doctor, assist someone in need, shop at the supermarket or get some exercise, among other restricted

activities. For now, they can only move between municipalities within their prefecture on weekends. Masks remain mandatory indoors and out.

On Wednesday, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced measures, including a strict ban on domestic travel around the May 2 Orthodox Easter, the country's most important holiday, for a second consecutive year to minimize virus transmission.

There is some light at the tunnel's end. Greece's vaccination program is speeding up, with appointments for those in their 30s opening up next week. Rates of transmission, intubation and death appear to be decreasing slightly, and Greece's Covid toll of 329,134 cases and 9,864 deaths is relatively low.

Earlier this month, store owners breathed a sigh of relief after being permitted to welcome customers with an in-store appointment or picking up items ordered in

advance. Schools are in the process of reopening with the aid of self-testing kits for teachers and students. Dr. Theoklis Zaoutis, professor of pediatrics and epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and a member of the Greek government's Covid-19 advisory committee, tells CNN that the decision to open is essential to restoring national morale.

He says officials are willing to slam on the brakes if Covid cases start to get out of hand.

"We want to give [the Greek] people a ray of hope, given that everyone is tired," he tells CNN. "If the numbers get better or worse, we have an opportunity to change the road map," he says.

"We have two tools now that we didn't have last year, namely vaccines and self-testing kits. Twenty-five percent of the population has received at least one vaccine dose. The goal is to increase vaccination across all age spectrums."

Despite the government's move to warm up the tourism engines — following a disastrous 2020 that saw arrivals Greece-wide plummet from a record 31.3 million in 2019 to 7.4 million last year — by gradually phasing in arrivals, it appears that travelers are hesitant, for now.

Most of the smaller hotels dotted around Athens remain shuttered, with many expected to open on or after June 1 in line with their counterparts on the rest of the mainland and the islands. (CNN)



Relatives wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) mourn a man, who died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at a crematorium in New Delhi, India April 21, 2021.

India's daily cases climb to new world record

India's coronavirus infections rose by 346,786 overnight, the health ministry said on Saturday, setting a new world record for the third consecutive day, as overwhelmed hospitals in the densely-populated country begged for oxygen supplies.

India is in the grip of a rampaging second wave of the pandemic, hitting a rate of one COVID-19 death in just under every four minutes in Delhi as the capital's underfunded health system buckles.

The government has deployed military planes and trains to get oxygen from the far corners of the country to Delhi. Television showed an oxygen truck arriving at Delhi's Batra hospital after it issued an SOS saying it had 90 minutes of oxygen left for its 260 patients.

"Please help us get oxygen, there will be a tragedy here," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a conference on Friday.

The crisis is also being felt in other parts of the country, with several hospitals issuing public notices that they don't have medical oxygen. Local media reported fresh cases of people dying in the cities of Jaipur and Amritsar for lack of the gas.

India surpassed the U.S. record of 297,430 single-day infections anywhere in the world on Thursday, making it the global epicenter of a pandemic that is waning in many other countries. The

Indian government had itself declared it had beaten back the coronavirus in February when new cases fell to all time lows.

However, COVID-19 deaths across India rose by 2,624 over the past 24 hours, the highest daily rate for the country so far. Crematoriums across Delhi said they were full up and asked grieving families to wait.

The country of around 1.3 billion has now recorded a total of 16.6 million cases, including 189,544 deaths.

Health experts said India became complacent in the winter, when new cases were running at about 10,000 a day and seemed to be under control, lifting restrictions that allowed for the resumption of big gatherings.

Others said that it could also be a more dangerous variant of the virus coursing through the world's second most populous country where people live in close proximity, often six to a room.

"While complacency in adhering to masks and physical distancing might have played a role, it seems increasingly likely that this second wave has been fueled by a much more virulent strain," wrote Vikram Patel, professor of Global Health at Harvard Medical School, in the Indian Express. WHO emergency director Mike Ryan said reducing transmission in India would be a "very difficult task" but the government was working on limiting mixing between people, which he said was essential. (CNBC)



World envies US vaccination success

As India announced grim records — the highest daily coronavirus infection tallies in a single country — Americans were enjoying a spring of vaccine abundance.

In India, just 1.4 percent of the population has been fully vaccinated, and overwhelmed hospitals have been running short of oxygen. Meanwhile, in the United States — where 1 in 4 Americans are fully vaccinated and more than 40 percent have gotten at least the first dose — a major Miami hospital, Jackson Memorial, said it would begin winding down vaccinations because of excess supply and weakening demand.

In Michigan, health workers are rolling out shots to high school students. In North Carolina, doses sat on shelves earlier this month

during a pause for spring break. A long-simmering debate over the glaring gap in vaccine access — largely between rich and poor countries, but among some developed nations, too — is now boiling over, with global figures and national leaders decrying the vaccine plenty in a few nations and the relative drought almost everywhere else.

African nations such as Namibia and Kenya are denouncing a "vaccine apartheid," while others are calling for policy changes in Washington and a broader rethink of the intellectual property and trademark laws that govern vaccine manufacturing in global pandemics.

"It's outrageous ethically, morally, scientifically," said Maria Van Kerkhove, an epidemiologist with the

World Health Organization, on global vaccine inequities.

"We have all the kindling to start fires everywhere," she said in an interview. "We're sitting on a powder keg."

It is happening at a demarcation point in the pandemic. In some countries with high vaccination rates — including the United States, Britain and Israel — coronavirus numbers are decreasing or plateauing. But globally, the number of new cases per week has nearly doubled since February, according to the WHO, particularly as some nations in the developing world witness their highest infection rates yet.

"Many countries still have no vaccines whatsoever," said Rob Yates, executive director of the Center for Universal Health at Chatham House,

a London-based think tank. "You're seeing much anger, and I think it's justified."

The surging numbers come as a chain reaction of vaccine nationalism is hindering the flow of doses to poorer nations through Covax, a WHO-backed effort to distribute vaccines around the world.

India, a massive vaccine maker — mostly producing the AstraZeneca formula — has largely stopped exporting as its own surge worsens, dealing a major setback to the slow Covax rollout.

The global initiative had expected 71 percent of its initial doses to come from India's Serum Institute, the country's largest vaccine maker. But so far, Covax has delivered 43 million doses of its 2 billion-dose goal this year. (Washington Post)

Merkel calls for tough new restrictions

German Chancellor Angela Merkel says that "tough" new COVID-19 rules are necessary to curb the spread of the virus.

Merkel made the remarks in a weekly video address Saturday, according to The Associated Press. It comes after the country imposed new "emergency brake" restrictions that went into effect at midnight, including a new curfew.

During the address, Merkel said the measures were "urgently needed," and noted that other countries like Britain and Ireland saw infection rates drop due to strict measures.

"No country that managed to break the third wave of the pandemic and then loosen restrictions again did so without tough meas-



ures such as nighttime curfews," she said, according to the AP.

The speech came after Germany announced on Friday that its "emergency brake" restrictions would go into effect Saturday after the upper house of Parliament passed a law allowing the government to do so, according to CNN.

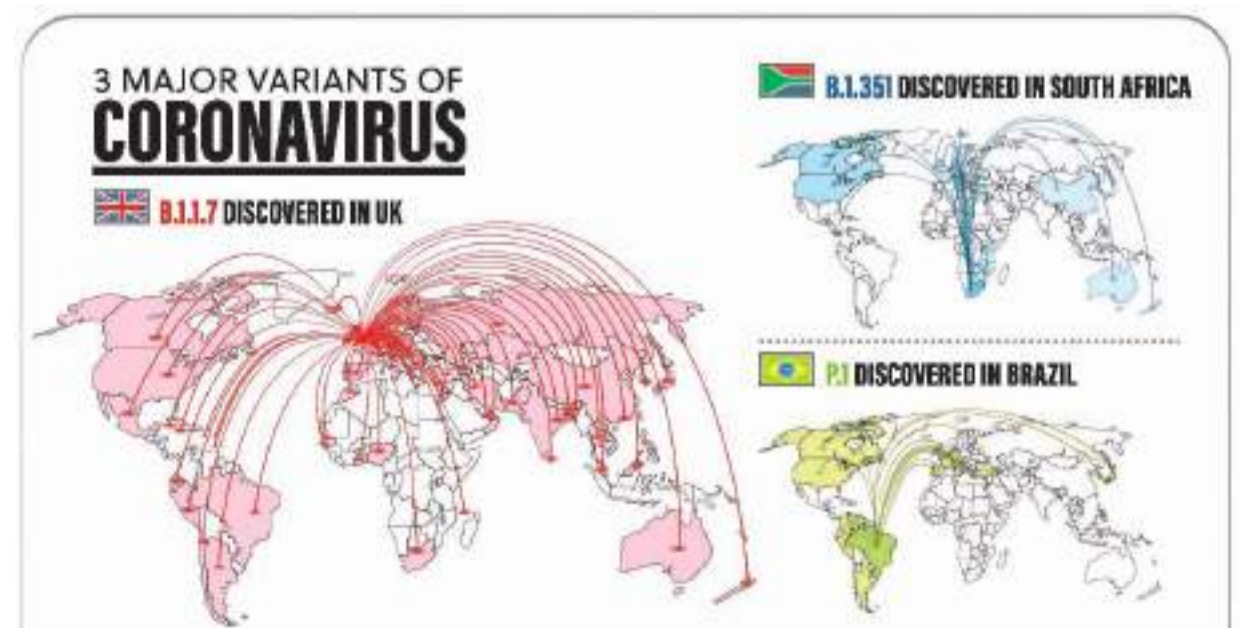
The law allows the government to

impose lockdowns on states, as opposed to states making such efforts on their own. Germany imposed curfews between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. and is limiting private gatherings, sports and shop openings in areas that report over 100 new infections per 100,000 people in one week, CNN reported.

Germany reported 22,262 new coronavirus cases Saturday and 289 new deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Overall, it's logged 3.2 million coronavirus infections and 81,492 deaths. It has also administered 24 million coronavirus vaccine doses and fully vaccinated 7 percent of its population. (The Hill)

Battle continues against the variants



As confirmed daily coronavirus cases rise and certain localities face new surges, a doctor stressed that new virus mutations could prolong the pandemic.

"The thing that worries me is that there are still so many infections that we give the virus an opportunity to mutate," Dr. Jeremy Faust, an emergency medicine physician at Brigham & Women's Hospital, said on Yahoo Finance Live.

"Once in a while, one of those mutations does crop up in a way that can hurt us. So what I keep hoping that I won't wake up and read in the next paper is that now I've got one that's 10 times worse or one that hits kids harder."

The current 7-day average for hospitalizations in the U.S. is at 5,631, a 1.6% increase from the prior week. The CDC noted that while hospitalizations have declined since their peak in

January 2021, they have been steadily increasing since March 22.

"As we move through the population and vaccinate more people, there's a point there that at some point, if I get a mild case of COVID but I don't really notice it, then my case doesn't really matter," Faust said. "As long as I'm not spreading it to others, who could be harmed? So for me, a really good metric to watch is hospitalizations. Hospitalizations give you a pretty good sense of how people are doing in the community."

Nearly 90 million American adults are fully vaccinated, while roughly 135 million have received at least one dose. For the U.S. to reach herd immunity, an estimated 75-80% needs to be fully vaccinated.

"Herd immunity is going to be a moving target because natural immunity could wane," Faust said. "We don't know how long the vaccine immunity

will last, although I'm pretty optimistic it will last a while. To me, the way you know you're at a place where you can return to normal is if our rates of flu-like illnesses and COVID-like illnesses are close to our historical norms — not the norms of the last 15 months. I want to see a sustained low level of hospitalizations."

All three of the major vaccines available in the U.S. — from Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson — have proven to be effective against severe COVID-19 infections. However, those efficacy rates can decrease when up against certain variants. There are currently three main variants (also known as mutant strains) that have spread around the world: the B.1.17 (the British variant), the B.1.351 (the South African variant), and the P.1 (the Brazilian variant). The British variant now accounts for the majority of newer cases in the U.S. (Yahoo)

Baghdad hospital fire kills 82 people

At least 82 people died in a hospital fire Saturday night in Iraq's capital city of Baghdad, the Iraqi Interior Ministry said Sunday.

Another 110 people were injured in the blaze at Ibn al-Khatib Hospital, according to ministry spokesman Major General Khaled Al-Muhanna.

The fire started after oxygen tanks exploded, two health officials at the hospital told CNN.

Social media videos showed a chaotic scene as firefighters scrambled to put out the blaze and health workers tried to evacuate patients. People from all over Iraq are referred to the



hospital in southeastern Baghdad, including many with Covid-19.

Civil defense teams are still at the scene of the accident, investigating the causes that led to this fire, which caused the loss of the lives of many of patients and

their companions," according to a statement released by Iraq's Health Ministry earlier Sunday.

The ministry said health workers and civil defense teams were able to save at least 200 people including patients, and would have an

exact number of those killed and wounded at a later time.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi said the hospital fire was "a crime" and insisted those responsible should be held accountable, according to a statement released by his office Sunday.

"I have directed an immediate investigation and questioning of the head of the hospital, the head of security and maintenance, and all those concerned until the negligence is found and held accountable," Al-Kadhimi said in the statement. He added that he had ordered results within 24 hours. (CNN)

Impact IT helps AIA on Azure Cloud transformation journey

As part of its ongoing digital transformation journey, AIA Insurance Sri Lanka has elevated some of its IT applications efficiency with advanced cloud technology from Impact IT. AIA Insurance selected Impact IT to conduct cloud application assessment and commenced application modernization with SharePoint and PowerApps.

"We were able to pick the correct tools and technologies for our transformation journey while eliminating software maintenance costs by utilizing o365 capabilities with Impact IT solutions," said Sampath Senadeera, Assistant General Manager - IT at AIA.

"We managed to transform five legacy applications into appealing, informative and user-friendly apps that boost our team's efficiency, using the PowerApps and Share-Point platforms. It's been a pleas-



Sampath Senadeera, Assistant General Manager, IT at AIA and Shameera Prajapriya, CEO Impact IT

ure working with the Impact IT team that surpassed our expectations."

The project focused on call center ticketing operations, internal agents' system access and multiple other internal processes enhancements,



providing AIA with an integrated, efficient solution.

"We have implemented several applications at AIA which have helped the insurance giant boost their productivity and process efficiency. We moved some of their leg-

acy systems into cloud technology cutting their IT system maintenance cost significantly," said Shameera Prajapriya, CEO Impact IT.

"We are glad to offer our expertise in Microsoft PowerApps and Share-Point to upgrade and modernize existing applications. The approach by the AIA IT team that analyzed the benefits of migrating to Microsoft Azure must be commended," Prajapriya said.

Impact IT was founded in 2009 by Shameera Prajapriya, who is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional since 2017 for Azure. The company is a Microsoft Gold Partner and provides software development, web designing and security solutions for some of Sri Lanka's leading organizations whilst being experts on Azure cloud-based streamlining and efficiency improvement of systems and processes.

Wickramarachchi Laboratories crowned as 'Woman Entrepreneur of the Year'

Wickramarachchi Laboratories, a forerunner in Ayurveda healthcare products sector, reaffirmed its excellence, receiving two awards at the 24th Sri Lankan Entrepreneur of the Year awards ceremony organized by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries in Sri Lanka.

Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, National Winner and Winner of Western Province In Medium Category were the two awards received by Ruwini Irosha Wickramarachchi, Partner, and Wickramarachchi Laboratories.

The event of FCCISL, which has helped many of Sri Lankan entrepreneurs reach global standards in terms of productivity and value creation, was recently held at the BMICH with President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa as the Chief Guest.

The award winning woman entrepreneur Ruwini Irosha Wickramarachchi said, "This is not the result of an individual effort but a team work of a very dedicated staff and I am grateful to all the customers for having trust in our products."

Founded way back in 1972, aimed at building a healthy nation, Wickramarachchi Laboratories has come a long way with success to become a fully-fledged institution with a range of more than 200 Ayurvedic products including Ms. Ruwasampatha Face Cream, Anjanaleepa Face Cream, Suwega Cream for Skin Ailments, Wickramarachchi Diyawediya Suwaya, Kapruka Holy Powder, Pawatta Thalsookiri Peniya, Oral Care Mouthwash, Dasapanguwa Powder, Shakti, Cinnamon Tea and Moringa



Ruwini Irosha Wickramarachchi, Partner, Wickramarachchi Laboratories with the awards.

Capsules. Located in Embaraluwa, Weliveriya, Wickramarachchi Laboratories is equipped with sophisticated machinery and a highly skilled set of professionals.

In its successful journey the company has gained many awards such as Productivity, Shilpa, Entrepreneur and SMIDEX Award etc. In keeping with international standards the company has been able to obtain GMP, Cosmetic GMP, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 22000:2018 and ISO 9001:2015 certificates.

DSI unveils Lanka's first PVC Wellington Boots

Designed to ISO 20346 standard

Sri Lanka's first ever PVC Wellington Boots designed under ISO 20346:2014 Personal Protective Equipment — Protective Footwear Specifications has been unveiled by D Samson Industries Pvt Ltd. Building on the R&D success borne out of their pioneering spirit, the innovative boots that provide value for money, will be available under the brand "Kebellawa"

"The new PVC Wellington boots will greatly enhance the company's powerful portfolio of footwear brands and a new experience to its customers. This product complies with the current health standards. DSI also plans to introduce safety boot features such as steel toe cap and steel plates for



Gamini Senaratne, Head of R&D at DSI.

heavy duty industrial use. In addition, we also hope to offer this product to



Dilshan Rajapaksa, Executive Director of DSI.

our international buyers in the near future and are proud and pleased that we can reduce the much needed foreign exchange spent on importing Safety Boots," Dilshan Rajapaksa, Executive Director of DSI said.

"The growth of the industrial safety footwear market is fueled by mounting demand for the product in the construction sector, growing compliance regulations in the manufacturing sector, and increasing adoption of health

and safety measures in medical sectors. Reducing foot injuries in the workplace is a key factor and our boots are designed to safeguard the feet from falling objects, fatigue, burns, cuts, electrical hazards and adheres to current pandemic hygiene regulations," opined Gamini Senaratne, Head of R&D at DSI.

The ISO quality certification of the PVC boot manufacturing process makes it superior to all other products in the market and is a much better option to the other cheaper alternatives, as it is backed with superior DSI quality and comfort.

DSI endorses the government's initiative to control imports and encouragement given for the manufacturing sector.

D. Samson Industries (Pvt) Ltd is the largest footwear manufacturer in Sri Lanka with over 3,000 employees in its footwear plants; while DSI Samson Group provides over 10,000 direct jobs. The group also provides over 5,000 indirect jobs by way of sub-contracting and support services across its 25 companies.



Kebellawa Boot range

Meu Labs revolutionises conventional education in Sri Lanka

Meu Labs has made a significant contribution to the development of next-generation problem solvers and creative thinkers by introducing Project-based Learning concepts as an adjunct to Sri Lanka's existing education system. Meu Labs is an open ecosystem where Grades and Traditional Classes Don't Exist, and the focus is on embracing learning through enjoyment.

For decades, the education ecosystem of Sri Lanka has been in desperate need of reform. Even today, the Sri Lankan education system encourages and emphasizes memorization and rep-

lication of existing knowledge rather than encouraging students to think. Students are subjected to intense competition from a very young age, because of the nature of examination-based evaluations, resulting in a stressful learning environment. The inspiration for Meu Labs comes from a curriculum built for tomorrow, from global education revolutionaries such as Elon Musk. Musk's school called Ad Astra, has no language, music, or sports lessons, and instead encourages students to work on complex projects, such as building battling robots, discussing nuclear politics, and planning

how to defeat evil AIs! This is music to any intellectually curious young mind and definitely better than digital screens! Meu Labs sessions are designed to guide students in achieving collectively as a team, with projects lasting anywhere from a few hours to several months. These lessons are based on the results of a one-year experimental pilot program and the guidance of global education experts partnered with Meu Labs.

Each Meu Labs session is designed & developed with a specific educational goal in mind. It is assured that while your child is having fun in an engaging

and stimulating environment, he or she will take home tangible skills geared for your child's development and future while bridging the education real world disconnect. Meu Labs' vision is to shape tomorrow's Problem Solvers and Creative Thinkers. They believe the best way to achieve this is by building a learning environment that is designed around the specific needs of the future, while trial and error is fundamental to learning and non-judgment. Whether it's to become the next Elon Musk, Pablo Picasso, or Nelson Mandela, the students need to carve out their own unique path in this world.

RIC introduces Blended Learning with the Deakin University

For the first time in Sri Lanka, the Royal Institute of Colombo (RIC) Kohuwala, Nugegoda brings the Blended Learning initiative in collaboration with the Deakin University.

This initiative has been specifically introduced for the students who have faced a major setback in starting their international degree programme in Australia due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"Families, on the other hand, who rely on the support and guidance of the university have faced a significantly complicated situation regarding the future of their children. The emergence of blended learning has thus become the new dynamics and need of the hour in the education sector today. Hence, students will now be able to complete the entire degree in Sri Lanka at their comfort of being closer to home," an official from RIC said.



"The cost savings that come along with the university's new Blended Learning initiative is financial relief for the students and families. The RIC-Deakin partnership exclusively offers a flat 50% scholarship on the tuition fees for students who choose to complete their entire degree programme from Sri Lanka itself."

"Moreover, in terms of cost-saving, a RIC student can save up to 60% of the expenses for the Engineering pathway programme and up to 40% of the expenses for the Science pathway programme as compared to starting at Deakin directly."

Amidst the mounting financial pressure during this difficult time, RIC is continuously seeking ways to address this concern with compassion towards students and families.

"The courses and units delivered

through the Deakin Cloud Campus are taught by the same academic staff as at other campuses in Australia. Classes are recorded and posted on Cloud Deakin (Deakin's dedicated online platform) and students will be engaged in active learning activities in real-time with other students and staff using innovative digital tools."

Moreover, RIC will be further supporting students with the learning infrastructure along with practical, tutorials and local lecturer's expertise.

Since the formation of an abiding partnership in 2012, RIC and Deakin University have incredibly uplifted the aspirations of Sri Lankan students intending to pursue an international degree. The collaboration has offered students the choice to pursue their bachelor's degree in the fields of Science, Engineering, and Environmental Science.

"The significant growth of this partnership has continuously opened invaluable avenues to students in global employability and further studies."

As of 2020, Deakin University ranks 16th on the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Australia University Rankings list and is one of the major hubs for international students. With numerous active global partnerships and alumni networks, students with Deakin degrees will be able to connect with industries, governments, research institutes and NGOs. More details could be obtained from, info@ric.lk or at www.ric.lk

Lanka Hospitals wins 14 Golds for Quality and Productivity

Lanka Hospitals PLC, an internationally accredited multiple award-winning healthcare provider has once again proved delivery of the highest quality in healthcare services having received 14 Gold awards at the National Convention on Quality and Productivity Awards 2020 held recently.

The Convention, an annual event, was organised by the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Quality and Productivity (SLAAQP). The National Convention and awards presented are recognized as a premier event which acknowledges companies who showcase commitment to quality in its products and processes. Lanka Hospitals received 14 Gold awards in recognition of demonstrating continuous dedication in maintaining the highest quality, productivity and standards in all spheres of the organization and culture.

The Hospital received the Gold

awards for the following categories; Cath Lab, Cardio Thoracic Operation Theater, General Operation Theatre, Ward 6C, Infection Control Unit, Coronary Care Unit, Lanka Hospitals Diagnostics, Gastroenterology Center, Clinical Pharmacy, Medical Intensive Care Unit, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Medical Record Audit Unit, Matron Office and Nurses Training School.

According to SLAAQP, companies and team members who receive Gold

Awards at the Convention are selected to represent Sri Lanka at the next International Convention on Quality Control Circles (ICQCC) 2021 scheduled to be held in September in India. This year's conference will promote the theme 'Quality Concept Facilitating Societal and Economic Turnaround'. Lanka Hospitals is the first hospital in Sri Lanka to be awarded some of the most prestigious accreditations in the world for its healthcare service standards including the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation 6th edition, and the world-respected Medical Tourism Certification from the Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQA). Furthermore, Lanka Hospitals Diagnostics (LHD) is the only Sri Lankan laboratory to be accredited by the prestigious laboratory accreditation body, the College of American Pathologists (CAP).



Four students smile and talk to each other while walking down stairs - Waterfront Campus



Winning team of Lanka Hospitals

Fly half Chanaka Chandimal proud product of Vidyarth

ALTHAF NAWAZ

A person to reach great heights in any endeavor including sports will need the influence of someone to boost his morale. Similarly, in the game of rugby some players were motivated by their friends and families to take up handling the oval shaped ball, to transform them to a prominent player, enabling them to don the National jersey with the highest recognition.

Fly half Chanaka Chandimal was one of them who was motivated by one of his friends to take up rugby to become the cynosure of all eyes by representing the Sri Lanka team. Chanaka Chandimal had a nickname called 'Meeya' and was born in 1988 in Kandy. His father is K. G. Piyasena working at Schokmans and Samarawickrama Auctioneers and mother is

Ranjani Premalatha, a housewife. He has two siblings Niroshan and Madhubashini Kumari.

He schooled at Vidyarth College, Kandy from 1993 to 2007 completing his academic career from primary to higher education. He was a sports fanatic from his younger days and from 1998 to 2000, was a member of the college football team. In addition, he participated in athletics competing in long jump and was also involved in scouting during his school career. In 2000, one of his good friends, Hasantha Lakshan suggested him to join the college rugby team which made him concentrate more on rugby than football. He insisted him to attend practices which subsequently enabled him to secure a position in the college rugby team. Since then he has



continued playing rugby up to date. He started playing Rugby from under-13 age group team at school when he was just 11 years old. He played for the first XV team in 2003 and surged ahead to lock horns with the under-19 Sri Lanka team touring Brunei in 2007.

After his school career, from 2007 to 2011, he joined the Air Force and started his club rugby

career. In 2008, they became the club sevens runners up coached by Dhammika Medagedra and captained by Suranga Arunashantha.

He was awarded "The Best Player" in that tournament which was an unforgettable memory in his life. While he was excelling there in 2009, he received the National team call and established a regular position and played in the Asian Rugby Championship held in Dubai the same year. From 2010, he participated in several Asian Five Nations Tournaments in Singapore and won the Championship with the National team. He also played in the Commonwealth Games in India in 2010, played in Asian Games Sevens in China coached by late George Simpkin and Imthi Marikar. He was in the Sri Lan-

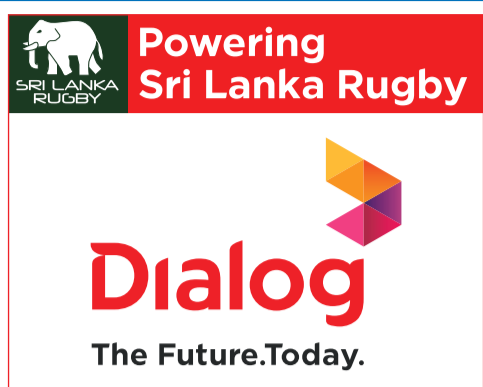
kan team which won the Carlton Sevens 'Bowl Championship' held in Sri Lanka. In 2011, he participated at the Asian Five Nations Tournament involving Hong Kong, Japan, Kazakhstan and UAE. In 2011 and 2012, he participated at the Carlton Super Sevens with the North Western Blacks captained by him winning the Championship in 2012.

He then moved to Navy Sport Club in 2012 and scrummed down for them from 2012 to 2018. They became the Clifford Cup champions in 2013 coached by Leonard de Zilva assisted by Mithilal Jayathilaka where the team was captained by Rohitha Rajapaksa. In 2014, once again participated at Asian Five Nations Tournament involving Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Philippines. In 2016, he played in

Rugby Super Sevens Tournament representing the team 'Ezy Wolves'. Navy went to win the Western Province Sevens championship coached by Mithilal Jayathilaka and captained by him.

He was honoured by Vidyarth College being awarded the 'Blue Eagle' for his rugby achievements.

He once again participated in the Asian Five Nations Championship in Malaysia. He further played in the Brunei sevens representing the National team involving Malaysia, Korea, Hong Kong and Philippines. He was also a member of the Navy team which won the Dialog Club Sevens in 2017. In 2018 he crossed



ships while becoming runners up on six occasions. In the 2020/21 season, he moved to join Dialog to play in the Mercantile Rugby Tournament.

While as a player in 2016/17, he was recruited to coach the under-18 team as assistant coach with Thurstan College, Colombo and won the Plate Championships. In 2020, he coached the under-13 Isipathana team. He has successfully completed IRB strength and conditioning level-one and he also has completed the IRB coaching course level one and two.

He is married to Lakshika Maduranga, a teacher by profession and has a child Ayush Chanketh.

121st Battle of the Blues of Ruhuna

Centuries by Hirantha and Diniru highlights of drawn encounter

Text and pictures by PRIYAN DE SILVA

Centuries by Hirantha Lakshan (St Thomas) and Diniru Abeywickremasinghe (St Servatius) were the highlight of the 121st edition of Ruhuna's Battle of the Blues between St Servatius College and St Thomas College Matara which ended in a draw at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium in Sooriyawewa on Saturday.

Hirantha Lakshan scored 127 runs off 163 balls with a dozen boundaries and a six for the Thomians while Diniru Abeywickremasinghe scored an unbeaten 103 off 168 balls with ten hits to the ropes in the Servatians second innings.

The Thomians electing to bowl first had the Serva-



Hirantha Lakshan

tians on 117/7 but a 103 run 8th wicket stand between Kushan Wijerama (70) and skipper Madishan de Silva (38) took them to a respectable 253.

In reply the Thomians were 202/3 at stumps on day two after rain put an

end to the post tea session and declared their first essay at 312/8 three overs after lunch on day three. Hirantha Lakshan scored 127 runs off 163 balls with a dozen boundaries and a six while Nipun Samarasinghe supported him with a patient 59 off 132 balls with five hits to the ropes. The duo figured in a 151 run fourth wicket stand.

The Servatians put on a better performance in their second essay and were 170/2 at the close of play.

In addition to Diniru's unbeaten 103 Pasindu Madawa scored 20 runs while Chirath Neththaru was unbeaten on 25. A total of 735 runs were scored while only 20 wickets fell in the eight sessions of play possible in this



Diniru Abeywickremasinghe

encounter. Pradeep Udawaththa and Deepal Gunawardena officiated while Leelananda Kumarasiri was SLSCA's match commissioner. The official scorers were Hemantha Kapuduwa and Kamantha Wickramasekera

Brief Scores

St Servatius 253/10 in 94.5 overs Kushan Wijerama 70, Diniru Abeywickremasinghe 31, Thaus Damindu 38, Vishwa Supun 20, Madushan de Silva 38 Hirusha Jeewadith 3/25, Sineth Disanayake 3/82, Senura Perera 2/37 and 170/2 in 62.4 overs Pasindu Madawa 20, Diniru Abeywickremasinghe 103 not out, Charith Neththaru 25 not out Sachira Rashmika 1/65

St Thomas 312/8 dec in 88 overs Woshitha Amarasinghe 35, Hirantha Lakshan 127, Nipun Samarasinghe 59, Sanjaya Maduranga 21, Sachira Rashmika 39 Tharush Damindu 2/49, Chathum Kulasekera 2/49



Sri Lanka National Chess Championships held in 2020
Seated L/R - Ranidu Dilshan, Romesh Weerawardene, Anuruddha Chinthaka, Niroshana Chathuranga (Arbiter), Lakshman Wijesuriya (President of CFSL), Tharindu Weerasekera (Arbiter), Minul Doluweera, L. M. S. T. De Silva, Randil Lakshitha
Standing L/R - Theekshana Denuwan, Rasika Samaranyake, D. M. S. P. Dasanayake, Bandara Danushka, A. A. C. B. Amarasinghe, S. Sivathanujan, C. C. Werasinghe, Dilshan Maheesha Dabarera (Dilwin Mendis, Moratuwa Sports Special Correspondent)

Dilshan Maheesha Dabarera outstanding chess player

DILWIN MENDIS
Moratuwa Sports Special Correspondent



Chess Player, member of the World Youth Chess team in Greece and Asian Youth Team tour of Thailand Dilshan Maheesha Dabarera has brought honour and immense glory to his Alma Mater Maliyadeva College, Kurunegala and his motherland.

Dilshan was born on 10th January 2004 and he was admitted to Maliyadeva College in 2010 when R. M. M. Ratnayake was at the helm of the school and his first class teacher was Mrs. Ramya Gunathilake.

When he was in Grade Two in 2011 his parents Neir Dabarera and Sandya Kuruppuarachchi handed over their son to the school Chess Coach Nuwan Liyanage and the teacher in Charge of Chess was Mrs. Padeniya and at the Inter House Chess Tournaments Dilshan participated and impressed and at the under eight age group he won at the Divi-

sional, District, Provincial level and also at the All Island Schools Tournament and he repeated the same result at the under 10 and 12 tournaments.

In 2018 at the All Island Youth Meet held in Colombo he was the under 14 Champion and this enabled him to earn a place for the Asian Youth Team in Thailand and he was named as the Official Player of the Contingent and 70 players participated for his age group and he was not successful but it was a fine exposure for Dilshan

and with these performances and experience under his belt he was a unanimous choice for the World Youth Chess Championship held in Greece and there were 60 participants and his rating was increased by 150 points.

After returning to the island at the All Island Schools Meet he was the under 15 Champion where 400 competitors participated and in the following year at the All Island Youth under 16 age group he was the Runner Up and in 2020 at the National All Island Open Championship held in Colombo out of 14 finalists he came seventh. His school coach is Niranga Kandearachchi and he is attending private coaching under Nuwan Liyanage and his teacher in Charge of Chess is Mrs. Chamali and the Prefect of Games is Mr. Chalinida. He captained the school under 15 and 17 teams and his Principal Saman Indrathne is supportive of him at all times.

Alcazaba proves she is still Queen of Nuwara Eliya

Alcazaba proved she is still the Queen of Nuwara Eliya Race course, with her gallant win, which gave her the spotlight back and the RTC Magic Million Cup in the Horse Racing Festival 2021 finale event held under strict health guidelines on Saturday.

The overall outcome was far from what was witnessed on 15th of April, at the Governor's Cup race day. Winners of the prestigious race day, failed to impress in the five-race event held this weekend and were beaten by some of the traditional winners, who dominated the Nuwara Eliya race course.

Alcazaba was an easy pick out of the five winners, so were Another Ace and Vigorous. Stormont and Krabi were surprises.

Strangely running in an almost empty racecourse, Alcazaba lived up to her potential to outclass Spirited Touch and Western Wind to win the RTC Magic Million Cup, for horses of Class 1 in a race of 1600metres. Owned by the Edwards Stable, trained by S.D. Mahesh and ridden by jockey J. Chinoy.

Alcazaba proved that she is the Queen of Nuwara

Eliya, beating two of the top contenders in Class 1, who had outsmarted her earlier. They were Spirited Touch, the 2019 Governor's Cup winner and Western Wind, who claimed the Governor's Cup nine days ago in a race that had a similar thrill.

The Jayaratne Stable, who had a brilliant outing at the RTC Governor's Cup Race day on April 15, however, won the Sporting Star Cup, the Class 2 race of 1600metres and placed second in two races.

Their main win came through Another Ace, who made a brilliant gallop in the final furlong to claim a thrilling win by half-a-length. Ridden by jockey Vivek and owned by Hasanga Jayaratne, Another Ace took away a possible win from Silver Streak, who looked well set for deserving victory, as Santos finished close behind at third by another quarter length.

Vigorous, ridden by S. Dineshraj, claimed the Sri Lanka Insurance Motorplus Cup, the Class 3 1600metre race in the opening race of the day. It was a three-way battle Olive and Honorious had to settle in at second and third, as Vigorous



RTC Magic Million Cup (Class 1 - Group 1 - 1600m)-Winner- Alcazaba with jockey-J. Chinoy/S.D. Mahesh/Edwards Stables with the owner.

proved a point with the inspiring win. After the thrilling finish on the Governor's Cup Race day in the same race class, a heated competition was expected between Glittering and Vigorous, who was edged out in the final furlong to finish first and second respectively. However Glittering could not start the race despite reaching the starting gate.

Stormont with J. Chinoy, claimed a thrilling finish ahead of Night King and Torpedo to win the Sri Lanka Insurance Cup for

Class 4 horses in the 1400metre race.

Results-RTC Magic Million Cup (Class 1 - Group 1 - 1600m)-*Winner-Alcazaba (J. Chinoy/S.D. Mahesh/Edwards Stables), Runner-Up-Spirited Touch (Aneel/S.V. Mathialagan/Fearless Stables and Stud Farms), Third place-Western Wind (Vivek/Sridher Selvaratnam/Mr. and Mrs. Gamini Jayaratne)

Sporting Star Cup (Class 2 - Group 2 - 1600m)-winner- *Another Ace (Vivek/Sridher Selvaratnam/Hasan-

ga Jayaratne), runner-up-Silver Streak (L. Dayalan/S.D. Mahesh/Ramsis Peter Fernando)*, third place-Santos (J. Chinoy/S.D. Mahesh/Edwards Stables)

SLIC Motorplus Cup (Class 3 - 1600m)-winner-Vigorous (S. Dineshraj/Jayantha Wijesinghe/Ajantha de Soya), runner Up- Olive (K. Sanjeevan/S.V. Mathialagan/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm), third place-Honourious (Aneel/S.V. Mathialagan/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)

Sri Lanka Insurance Cup (Class 4 - 1400m)-winner- *Stormont (J. Chinoy/S.D. Mahesh/Edwards Stables) runner Up-Night King (V. Yogaraj/Sridher Selvaratnam/Ms. Nishara Jayaratne)*, third Place-Torpedo

(K. Sanjeevan/S.V. Mathialagan/Fearless Stables and Stud Farm)

DailyMirror Cup (Class 5 - 1400m)-winner- Krabi (K. Naidu/S.D. Mahesh/Dr. Dhanawardene Guruge), runner Up-*Waiting for Glory (R. Vaibhav/Sridher Selvaratnam/Mr. Hasanga Jayaratne), third place- *Goldie Girl (J. Chinoy/S.D. Mahesh/Edwards Stables) (A.N.)



Tharushi Dilesha Table Tennis Champion

Nineteen year old Tharushi Dilesha of Mahamaya Balika Vidyalaya Kadawatha won the under 20 Girls

Singles Title of the Womens Table Tennis Championship held at Gampaha Stadium recently to mark International Womens Day. She is being coached by former national table tennis player Lalith Perera Here she is seen with her Principal Mrs Renuka Priyadarshani.

Former world billiards champion M.J.M. Lafir remembered

HAFIZ MARIKAR

Sri Lanka's first world title winner M.J.M. Lafir will be remembered on his 39th death anniversary, today. A religious ceremony will be held over here in Kandy at the Katuplai Jumma Mosque at Mahaiyawa. He is the man who won the first world title for the country by winning the World Amateur Billiards Championship in Bombay in the year 1973, in the month of November.

He was victorious against all his opponents and also scored the highest break of 859. It is an achievement without parallel in the

annals of sports in Sri Lanka. Prior to this pinnacle of success, Lafir had participated in international championships in Billiards and Snooker in Edinburgh, Scotland, Malta, and Auckland since 1970, but failed to win any of them.

At the World Snooker tournament in Edinburgh, Scotland, in Oct-Nov 1970, Lafir defeated I. L. Glozier (NZ), Paul Mifsud (Malta), John Clint (Ireland), D. Sneddon (Scotland), but lost to John Phillips (Scotland) and Sidney Hood (England).

At the World Amateur Billiards Championships in

Valetta, Malta, in Nov 1971, Lafir finished fourth defeating D. Sneddon (Scotland), Paul Mifsud (Malta), Lance Napper (New Zealand) and lost to Manuel Fransisco (South Africa) in the preliminary rounds.

In Nov-Dec 1972, at the World Open Billiards Championship, held in Auckland, New Zealand, in which professionals as well as amateurs participated, Lafir lost to Clark McConachy (New Zealand), Eddie Charlton (Australia), Paddy Morgan (Australia). Satish Mohan (India), Leslie Driffield (England) and Michael Ferreira (India) but won

against C. Everton (Wales), Jim Fryer (England), Kinsley Kennerly (England) and Jack Karneham (England) but failed to qualify for the final round.

So, it was in 1973 that he finally reached the pinnacle of his career by winning the World Amateur Billiards Championship in Bombay. He defeated Clive Everton (Wales), Michael Ferreira (India), LU Demarco (Scotland), Alfred Nolan (England), Satish Mohan (India), Eric Simons (New Zealand), Brian Kirkness (New Zealand), Phil Tarrant (Australia), and Paul Mifsud (Malta) and wrote

his name in world sport, especially billiards.

On his return to Sri Lanka, after winning the World Amateur Billiards Championship, he was given a red carpet welcome on Dec 22 1973. He was received and garlanded at the airport by the Sports and Parliamentary Affairs Minister K.B. Ratnayake, Minister of Finance Dr. N.M. Perera, Minister of Education Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Transport Leslie Gunawardena, Deputy Speaker I.A. Cader, Sir Razik Fareed and officials of the Cue Association and members of MICH. Lafir

and his wife, Misriya, were conducted in a motorcade from the airport through the streets of Colombo where large crowds gathered to welcome him home. He was given a rousing welcome at the MICH Fort. He also paid a courtesy call on President William Gopallawa, and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, both of whom gave him a warm welcome. The Colombo Municipal Council accorded him a civic reception on December 31, 1973 presided over by Mayor Vincent Perera.

In January 1974 he was given a grand welcome in

Kandy, and an exhibition billiard game was played between him and MSU Mohideen at the Trinity College hall. The people who organized this event were Chandra Wijenayake, A.M.I.N. Marikar, Dr. C.D.L. Fernando, M.E. Marikar, A.C.M. Faleel, E.W. Balasuriya and Simon Marawanagoda.

MJM Lafir was born on May 27, 1930 at St. Joseph's Street, Grandpass and joined MICH (Moors Islamic Cultural Home) in 1947 and was grateful to the MICH for discovering, nurturing and grooming him for big time billiards.

Lafir reigned supreme for 24 years between 1949 and 1973, he annexed the National Billiards title of Sri Lanka 16 times and the National Snooker title on 15 separate occasions. He went across to India and won their National Snooker title on seven occasions from 1956 to 1976, defeating some of the Indian stalwarts. The Colombo Municipal Council renamed Messenger Street, as M.J.M. Lafir Mawatha, as a tribute to his contribution to the cue game. He passed away on April 26 1981, a month before his 51st birthday.

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WORLD OF SPORTS

(April 26)
LOCAL EVENTS

CRICKET
(Under-19 traditional):
St. Benedict's vs Wesley
at Kotahena (2nd day)
(Under-19 Division Two
Tier 'A' semi-finals):
Sri Sumangala MV, Pana-
dura vs Holy Cross, Kalu-
tura at Thurstan Grounds
(Defence Services Tourna-
ment):
Air Force SC vs Army SC
at Katunayake
FOOTBALL
Super League Tournament
at Sugathadasa Stadium
FOREIGN EVENTS
CRICKET (Indian Premier
League):
Punjab Kings vs Kolkata
Knight Riders at
Ahmedabad
FOOTBALL (Premier
League):
Leicester City vs Crystal
Palace
(Spanish League):
Eibar vs Real Sociedad
TENNIS (ATP, Outdoor,
Clay):
Estoril Open at Estoril
Club

BATSMEN DOMINATE as Pallekele Test ends in HIGH-SCORING DRAW



Dimuth Karunaratne walks off the field.

The first Test between Sri Lanka and the touring Bangladesh team ended in a high-scoring draw at the Pallekele Stadium in Kandy yesterday.

The match was also part of the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Test Championship.

Sri Lanka declared their first innings at a massive 648 for eight and while Bangladesh did lose two early wickets, Tamim Iqbal's half-century took the visitors to 100 for two before ran put an early end to the proceedings.

Opener Saif Hassan had bagged a duck in the first innings and fell for one in the second innings to paceman Suranga Lakmal.

First innings centurion Najmul Hossain Shanto - bagged a duck as Bangladesh soon found themselves reeling at 27 for two in their second innings at one stage.

Tamim, however, eased the nerves and scored a brisk half-century. He collaborated with Mominul Haque to prevent any further damage in the session.

Earlier, Dimuth Karunaratne resumed on 234 but failed to get to the 250-run mark while Dhananjaya de Silva fell seven short of his highest Test score and was dismissed for 166.

Skipper Karunaratne was named Player-of-the-Match and expressed his satisfaction of returning to form following a disappointing series in the Caribbean.

"I had a very hard time in the West Indies. First few overs I was struggling but I thought if I get a start and hang around, I can get a big one," he stressed.

"We thought the wicket would have good pace and bounce but in these conditions, with the heat, it was a bit flat."

"The bowlers tried their heart out but

Bangladesh batted very well, showed good patience, and when we batted as well, nothing much for the bowlers, pretty much a batting paradise."

"Even if we had another chance [on this pitch], I don't think we could have done anything differently [with the ball]. We need a 50-50 wicket [for the second Test], we need something for the bowlers as well," he added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Captain Mominul Haque said that it was a good team performance that helped them to come out with a draw.

"I think it was a team performance, everyone contributed, especially Shanto. We set up really well by Tamim Iqbal and later on Liton and Mushy did really well," he explained.

"The bowlers tried really hard, especially Taskin, Miraz and Tajjul. It depends on your mentality [dealing with bubbles]. When you represent your country, you have to adjust it's totally a mental thing. I'm happy as a captain to contribute for the team."



Tamim Iqbal plays a shot

Battle of the Golds ends in a draw

HAFIZ MARIKAR

The Battle of the Golds Inter-Schools Under-19 Big Match between traditional rivals Wariyapola Sri Sumangala College and Sri Rahula College ended in a draw at Kattugastota yesterday.

Chief scores

Sri Sumangala College: 208 in 68.5 overs (Thenuka Ekanayaka 38, Bandara Disanayaka 36, Neranjan Maddage 31, Thineera Akalanka 26, Madawa Sangeeeth 20, Akash Gardiyawasam 3/48, Dilshan Arambegoda 3/45, Thilanka Kumarathunga 2/38, Dananjaya Bandara 2/26) and 111/9 in 48 overs (Thineera Akalanka 28, Neranjan Meddage 23, Dilshan Arambegoda 5/44, Thilanka Kumarathunga 4/19)

Sri Rahula College: 114 in 36.4 overs (Malaka Samaranyaka 4/22, Thineera Akalanka 3/20).



Suranga Lakmal celebrates a dismissal. (Pix courtesy SLC)



Dhananjaya de Silva is bowled by Taskin Ahmed.

SCORECARD	
BANGLADESH 1st innings 541/7 decl	overs) 648 Fall: 1-114, 2-157, 3-190, 4-535, 5-544, 6-553, 7-585, 8-647
SRI LANKA 1ST INNINGS	BOWLING: A. Jayed 19-2-76-0, T. Ahmed 30-6-112-3, E. Hossain 21-1-99-1, M. Hasan 58-6-161-1, T. Islam 45-9-163-2, M. Haque 4-0-18-0, S. Hassan 2-0-5-0
D. Karunaratne c Shanto b T. Ahmed 244	BANGLADESH 2ND INNINGS
L. Thirimanne lbw b M. Hasan 58	T. Iqbal not out 74
O. Fernando c Das b T. Ahmed 20	S. Hassan c Dickwella b Lakmal 01
A. Mathews b T. Islam 25	N. Shanto b Lakmal 00
D. de Silva b T. Ahmed 166	M. Haque not out 23
P. Nissanka c Das b E. Hossain 12	Extras: (nb2) 02
N. Dickwella run out 31	TOTAL: (2 wickets, 33 overs) 100
W. Hasaranga b T. Islam 43	Fall: 1-21, 2-27
S. Lakmal not out 22	BOWLING: S. Lakmal 8-2-21-2, V. Fernando 5-2-18-0, D. de Silva 11-1-46-0, W. Hasaranga 9-0-15-0
V. Fernando not out 00	
Extras: (b4, lb10, nb3, w10) 27	
TOTAL: (8 wickets decl, 179	

Ratnam hold Red Star to a nil-all draw

ALTHAF NAWAZ

A scintillating display of goal-keeping by custodian Mohamed Murshid enabled Ratnam SC to hold Red Star SC to a nil-all draw in their Super League Football Tournament encounter played at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Playing his second match of the tournament, the 19-year-old manned his goal area to perfection, making valiant efforts to prevent his team from defeat.

After holding one of the strong contenders - Up-country Lions SC - to a one-all draw in their curtain raiser a few days ago, the Ratnam lads got into the game with a positive frame of mind and played to a well-executed plan.

Their rivals Red Star SC, which started their campaign with a win over Blue Star SC in their curtain raiser, never lived up to expectations and played in patches.

From the opening whistle both teams were in search of an initial scoring opportu-



Player-of-the-Match Mohamed Murshid of Ratnam SC is about to kick the ball to the midfield.

nity to break the deadlock.

It was Ratnam SC who had the major share of the possession in the first half making some teasing moves.

They tested rival goal-keeper Mubarak on several occasions but their kicks were never targeted at the goal and went astray.

Nevertheless, they maintained possession and executed pressure on their rivals until half time, which was an unproductive one for both teams.

After the turn-around Red Star SC changed tactics and went on the offensive. They dominated almost the entire second half and made some teasing moves but they failed to put the finishing touches.

Ratnam SC, on the other hand, put a mediocre performance in the second passage of the game, and the difference between both sides was the Ratnam goal-keeper, who played a pivotal role between the posts to save his team from defeat.

Referee: Chamalka Ridmal

Sri Chandrananda win on parabola system

HAFIZ MARIKAR

Sri Chandrananda Buddhist College, Kandy defeated Gankanda Central College by 26 runs on the parabola system in their Inter-Schools Under-19 Division Three, Level Three pre quarter-final cricket encounter played at Gankanda yesterday.

Sri Chandrananda Buddhist College won the toss and batted first and scored 136 for nine in 48 overs and Gankanda Central in their turn were 57 for five in 22 overs when rain halted play.

Chief scores

Sri Chandrananda Buddhist College: 136/9 in 48 overs (Chamath Bandara 33, Akila Ude-sha 31, Rusiru Tharaka 3/22, Ravindra Shan 2/21)

Gankanda Central: 57/5 in 22 overs.



Jeewaka Shasheen (Devapathiraja)

DHAMMIKA RATNAWEERA
Jeewaka Shasheen scored a fine 103 with six fours and four sixes as Devapathiraja College, Rathgama recorded an upset 40-run win over Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda in their Under-19 Division One Tier 'B' Cricket Tournament semi-final match played at the BRC Grounds yesterday.



Chathurika Weerasinghe in action

Chathurika sets three SL records at Asian Meet

Sri Lankan weightlifter Chathurika Weerasinghe set up three Sri Lanka records in the 81kg weight class at the Asian Weightlifting Championships now in progress in Uzbekistan.

Chathurika is the only female competitor representing Sri Lanka at this meet, which is also considered as a qualification event for the Tokyo Olympics.

She couldn't win a medal in her weight class but was able to set up Sri Lanka records with the highest weight in snatch method, clean and jerk method and overall weight in this weight class.

(D.R)

Devapathiraja to face Mahinda in U-19 final



Navod Paranavithana (Mahinda)

Meanwhile, Mahinda College defeated Ananda College by 72 runs in their semi-final played at Thurstan Grounds yesterday.

Mahinda will meet Devapathiraja in the Division One Tier 'B' final on May 2 at the NCC Grounds.

Chief scores

At BRC Grounds (Devapathiraja won by 40 runs)

Devapathiraja: 200 in 48.3 overs (Jeewaka Shasheen 103, Pawan Sandesh 23, Imantaka Rajapaksa 2/38, Lohan de Zoysa 2/25)

Dharmasoka: 160 in 39 overs (Lohan de Zoysa 67, Jeewaka Shasheen 3/21, Pawan Sandesh 2/39, Irushka Timira 3/19).

At Thurstan Grounds (Mahinda won by 72 runs)

Mahinda: 196/7 in 23 overs (Navod Paranavithana 52, Kavindu Lakshan 60, Danuja Induwara 31, Teahan Perera 3/32)

Ananda: 124 in 20.4 overs (Mineth Premaratne 28, Saviru Bandara 26, Kavindu Lakshan 5/18).

FEATURE

EU hosts GSP ENGAGEMENT WEEK, Virtual Conference

Dr. DAYARATNA SILVA,
Former Ambassador to WTO



During the Week of 22 - 25 March, the GSP Hub which is a European Union (EU) funded project launched in 2020 hosted an important virtual engagement relating to the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) to increase awareness, transparency, and to engage with stakeholders of GSP.

The objective of this brief article is to present the key issues discussed at this virtual Engagement Week, as most of which are of contemporary importance for Sri Lanka being a beneficiary country of EU GSP scheme. The virtual GSP Engagement was attended by representatives of the European Commission, civil society, academia, industry and trade associations, as well as EU and beneficiary countries. The conference provided a platform for interaction between the economic rationale and the perspective of the value of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and focussed on how the GSP can help economic diversification, what kind of opportunities it presents for EU producers, and how civil and environmental targets can be achieved in beneficiary countries.

The GSP hub plays a vital role in engaging stakeholders to increase the use of GSP, through bringing new EU investment, encouraging European companies to import from the beneficiary countries and promoting the related international sustainability standards. The GSP Hub maintains a website to facilitate the understanding of the GSP, its activities, and associated important topics, including specifics related to the EU's GSP and a tailor-made monitoring database for facilitating the dissemination of information and building of an active feedback mechanism for stakeholders.

The virtual Engagement Week had five Webinar sessions focusing on the topics of the GSP and Export Diversification, the GSP and Green Economy, the GSP and Labour Rights, the GSP and Inclusive Growth, and the way forward on the trade policy review and the review of the GSP Regulation. The webinar sessions were organized with expert inputs followed by panel discussions.

The Vice President of the European Parliament, who is a Member of European Parliament (MEP) from Finland Heidi Hautala, inaugurated the GSP Engagement Week with a keynote address. She explained the object and purpose of the GSP and the need to further improve the scheme to be more effective in terms of helping the beneficiary countries. At this inaugural session Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the European Union Grace Asirwatham participated as one of the panellists who contributed very pertinent and useful inputs to the discussion presenting the perspectives of Sri Lanka on a number of issues.

First, Ambassador Asirwatham explained the policy initiatives and measures taken by Sri Lanka to achieve greater diversification and measures that the EU should take to facilitate diversification of the export portfolio of beneficiary countries, including Sri Lanka. Second, in her intervention, the Ambassador covered a full spectrum of activities and issues related to Sri Lanka as a GSP beneficiary country. A summary of salient points shared at the Conference is given below;

- Sri Lanka was thankful to the EU for the support and cooperation extended to Sri Lanka under the Partnership Cooperation Agreement. Sri Lanka enjoyed Standard GSP since 1971 and it became a GSP plus recipient in 2005. However, due to certain shortcomings in the implementation of Conventions, the GSP plus benefits were withdrawn in 2010, yet Sri Lanka was able to regain the GSP plus in 2017.

- GSP which is a non-reciprocal trade preferential arrangement helps developing and least developed countries to achieve sustainable development making use of tariff preferences for their exports to the largest consumer market in the world.

- GSP plus concessions provide greater benefits to Sri Lanka to enter the EU market with zero or reduced tariff basis. Overall the EU GSP plus status has had a positive economic and social impact, in Sri Lanka.

- Sri Lanka was the first country to liberalize its economy in South Asia, to foreign trade and investment in 1977. As early as 1978 Sri Lanka strengthened the investment laws to make it more export-oriented FDI and established an Economic Commission which is the current Board of Investment (BOI) to facilitate FDI, oversee export processing zones and function as the One-Stop-Shop for Investments in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka also established the Export Development Board (EDB) in 1978. With these arrangements, Sri Lanka was emulating the industrial success of East Asian nations. Sri Lanka's transformation from an agriculture-based society to a more industrial and services-based economy started with product diversification in the industrial sector with garments being the pioneer in that direction.

- However, Sri Lanka's economic transformation was impeded by three decades of a civil war on terrorism, regional and global financial crisis, epidemics, tsunami, Easter Sunday bombings in 2019, and the ongoing corona health crisis. Despite these challenges, over the years Sri Lanka experienced a shift away from domestic agriculture to industrial and service sector activities.

- Yet, the Sri Lankan economy was less diversified, dependent on a handful of industries for its export earnings. Sri Lanka's traditional export items are apparel, tea, rubber, spices, and coconut. Sri Lanka's non-traditional exports of services such as ICT, tourism, and logistics have grown significantly in the last decade. These sectors have proven their ability to diversify and access new market destinations.

- Until BREXIT came into force, the EU was the largest export destination for Sri Lanka

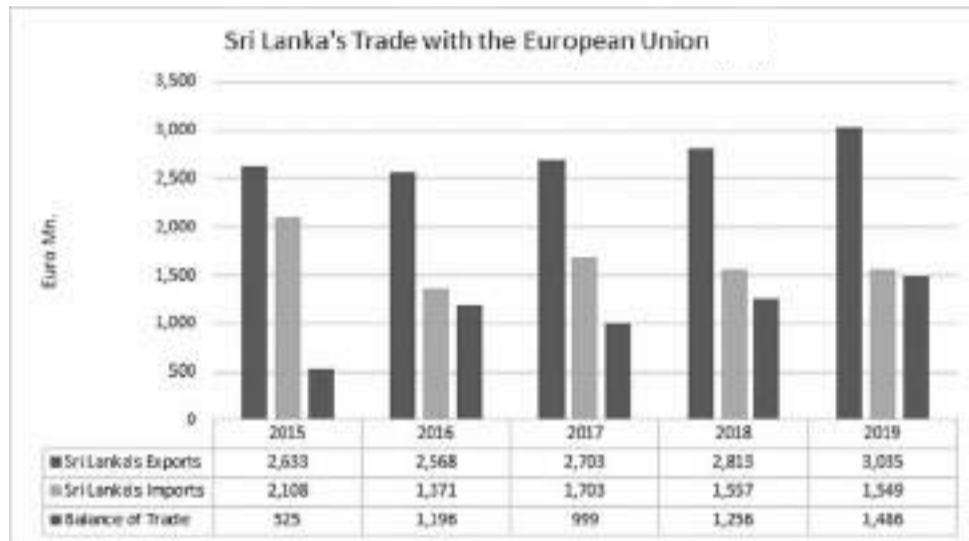
with Euro 3 billion worth of exports in 2019, of which Euro 2.5 billion were entitled to GSP plus tariff concessions. Sri Lanka's GSP+ status has resulted in making the EU, Sri Lanka's largest trading partner ahead of India and China. In the months following the regaining of GSP+ in 2017, Sri Lanka's exports to the EU (calculated in Figure 1 below) increased by more than 12% (2019 compared to 2017). This included a doubling of the fisheries export under the EU GSP concessions, in response to a removal of the import ban on fish, and significant export increases in apparel, tea, tires, gems, motor vehicle parts and footwear (Figure 1 and 2).

- However, Sri Lanka's overall GSP utilisation level recorded at 62.75% in 2019, with the worth of Euro 1.6 billion actual exports under GSP concessions. There is variety of reasons for the low-level utilization including lack of product and market diversification.

Figure 1: Trade flows between the EU and Sri Lanka, 2009–2019

Figure 2: GSP+ utilization rate of Sri Lanka by product sectors in 2019

Third, focusing on the recent policy initiatives and program measures taken to promote



exports and export diversification in Sri Lanka, the Ambassador encapsulated the following:

- The Sri Lanka government Budget for 2021 covered all economic sectors as per the Government National Policy Framework-Vistas and Prosperity.

- The government has identified 5 main sectors and 17 subsectors, for development over the next five years. The five main sectors include manufacturing, information and communications technology, tourism, agriculture, and infrastructure.

- A national trade policy is being formulated and a regional industrial zones development program to promote industries at the regional level was approved for action. Further, in order to diversify the export basket and empower the SME sector, the government proposed to establish 1000 Export Production Villages (EPVs) around Sri Lanka.

- The government budget for 2021 offered tax breaks for investments of \$10m or more in the five strategic industries to encourage investors in the manufacturing sector for export diversification.

- Within the EU, Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, and Poland have been Sri Lanka's main traditional markets and Sri Lanka is making efforts towards market diversification. Such efforts included a business focus on EU countries with which Sri Lanka had fewer trade connections, market surveys, business intelligence, and fact-finding activities, increased participation in trade and investment expos and business activities in those countries as well as decisions to establish resident diplomatic missions in Romania and Spain and appoint effective Honorary Consuls to facilitate trade expansion and market diversification.

Fourth, responding to the question on any measures that the EU should take to facilitate diversification of the export portfolio of beneficiary countries, including Sri Lanka, the Ambassador highlighted the following points:

- The EU had funded a Trade-Related Assistance Project to develop a National Export Strategy, with a view to facilitating a strategic orientation to Sri Lanka to achieve an export-led economic growth path, make Sri Lanka a regional hub of value-added exports and promote linkages between various sectors and diversify its export basket and target new markets. The EU also helped to develop the SME sector which was identified as an important strategic sector for promoting growth and social development in Sri Lanka.

- The exports to the EU are required to meet certain product standards and certifications compliance of which are expensive due to lack of capacities. The EU had helped Sri Lanka to establish a food control certification system and trained officials as part of capacity building assistance, in this regard.

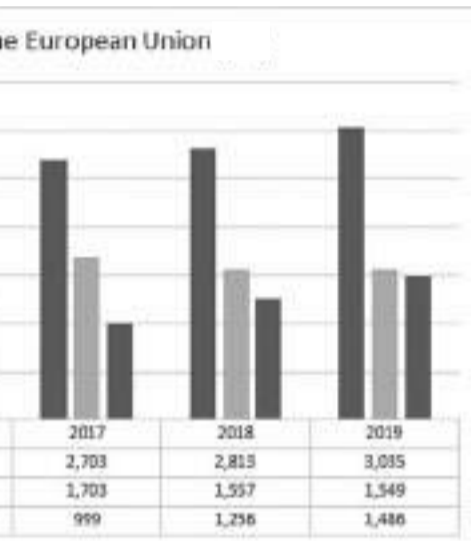
- Concerning the low-level of utilization of the GSP plus (See Table 1), the overall preference utilization rate in 2019 was only 62%. In other words, only 62% of Sri Lanka's exports actually benefitted GSP+ preferences under the GSP scheme. As illustrated in Figure 2, utilization rates were especially low for the textile, electrical and machinery sectors. While inherited domestic productive capacity constraints, common to many developing countries, have been the key reasons for lack of product diversification, a number of other external reasons have also prevented maximizing the benefits of the GSP scheme.

The most important one was the strict Rules of Origin criteria. For product diversification especially for manufacturing most GSP recipient countries including Sri Lanka had to depend on other countries for raw material and accessories. For textile and garments, the double transformation rule applies, that is, products

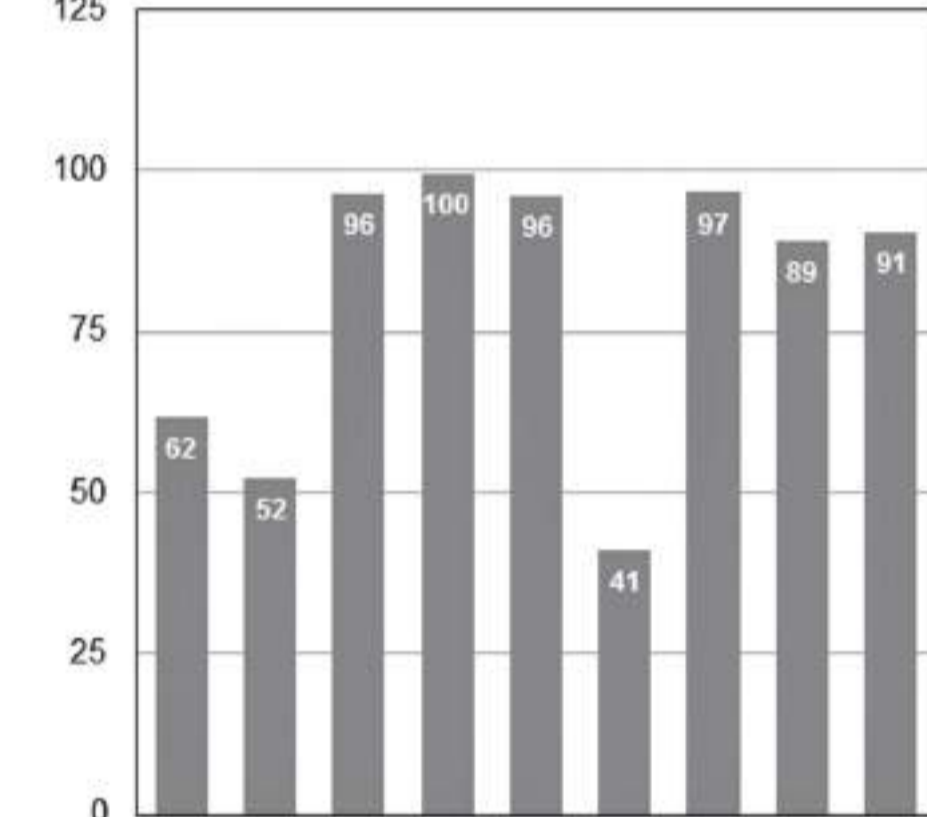
must undergo two transformations in Sri Lanka to be able to meet the rules of origin criteria – from cotton to fabric, and from fabric to textile. Since Sri Lanka imports most of its textile from other countries for manufacturing apparel items for export to the EU, it has been an impediment to meet the rules of origin requirements.

The EU Regulation on the Rules of Origin (ROO) provided for cumulation arrangements such as Bilateral Cumulation, Regional Cumulation, Cross-Regional Cumulation, and Extended Cumulation. Cumulation rules of origin criteria allow Sri Lanka to claim originating status for components that do not originate in Sri Lanka but are used in the production process in Sri Lanka. Cumulation is possible with materials originating in countries that are part of Sri Lanka's regional group: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan. Cumulation rules also apply between two regions such as SAARC AND ASEAN etc. It can also take place, under certain conditions, with materials originating in countries that have a free trade agreement with the EU. Finally, cumulation is possible with materials originating in the EU.

However, the approval procedure related to Cross Regional Cumulation was rather time-consuming or not given. Due to this reason, the exports with raw materials or accessories



Source: Eurostat/ Comext



originating in other countries do not qualify for GSP plus tariff concessions. Further in the South Asian region, as countries are competing with each other, getting an Origin certificate for raw materials or accessories from those countries is also difficult to qualify under regional cumulation.

In this regard a case in point is the joint request submitted by Sri Lanka and Indonesia seeking approval under cross regional cumulation for raw material originating in Indonesia, which has been pending with the EU for nearly 3 years. Sri Lanka is also expected to sub-



Ambassador Grace Asirwatham and MEP Heidi Hautala, from Finland

mit a request for extended cumulation with Vietnam, against the backdrop of Vietnam's recently signed free trade agreement with the European Union. To assist exporters from Sri Lanka, the EU GSP Plus guide prepared by the ITC (and available in Sinhala, Tamil and English) provides detailed insight into the requirements and regulations to be complied with in order to access the EU market under the GSP+ scheme.

- The double transformation criteria applied to apparel products originating from the beneficiary countries of General GSP and GSP Plus has adversely affected the GSP utilization and making the product diversification even more difficult. However, this criterion was not applicable to the beneficiaries of the GSP scheme "Everything-But-Arms" (EBA) extended to the Least Developed Countries (LDC). This is widely seen as a discriminatory application of ROO across the different GSP arrangements. For example, under the apparel sector, the General GSP and GSP Plus beneficiaries were bound to follow the yarn-fabric-apparel process which is double transformation while EBA beneficiaries follow only a single transformation such as fabric to apparel. The GSP plus was designed to be a special incentive scheme yet these discriminatory rules cannot be considered as incentives.

- The international distribution of value chain activities such as design, production, marketing, distribution, etc., have become increasingly essential and inevitable in the

Responding to a question on Sri Lanka adapting to green practices, the Ambassador very eloquently stated that Sri Lanka was one of the world's most ethical sourcing destinations, particularly for apparel. Sri Lanka's motto on apparel was 'Garment without Guilt'. Sri Lanka has strong potential to enhance its external trade performance since her brands were increasingly associated with high quality and ethical manufacturing practices, focusing on Green concept, environmental safeguards and practices, and targeting zero child labour through pioneering 'Child Labour Free Zones'.

Further, Sri Lanka was building an environmentally friendly fabrics zone, pushing for more green energy and better waste management. Sri Lanka wanted to ensure all companies operating in free zones to take advantage of green credentials when selling overseas. Sri Lanka also engaged in promoting exports of organic and fair trade exports. The Ambassador further said that Sri Lanka would like to join the campaign of the EU to make the GSP green for which necessary support by way of capacity building and resources from the EU is required.

Further, Ambassador Asirwatham also took the opportunity to comment on the GDP per capita-based graduation criteria pertaining withdrawal of GSP benefits. As per the current GSP rules, one of the GSP Plus eligibility criteria was to remain at a lower-middle-income level and upon graduating to upper-middle-income status and after maintaining the new income level for three consecutive years the GSP benefits withdrawal process will be initiated with an additional adaptation time. On this issue, the Ambassador presented a valid opinion that the withdrawal should not be done solely based on GNI figures and the EU should also consider other aspects of economic vulnerabilities and the actual developments on the ground.

As the final point, Ambassador Asirwatham highlighted the fact that the GSP tariff advantages would erode in time to come as the EU was entering into FTAs and other bilateral trade agreements with larger and emerging economies, especially in the Asian region. This would result in affecting the GSP beneficiary countries by way of additional competition to find market opportunities and investments.

The issues raised and suggestions presented at this engagement were well received and discussed during the virtual conference. Ambassador Grace Asirwatham was the only Ambassador who was engaged as a panellist in the week-long Engagement on GSP by the GSP HUB in Brussels.

Besides the points discussed at virtual conference hosted by the GSB HUB, the following two important developments need attention;

01. Brexit

Roughly 30 percent of all Sri Lanka's GSP+ exports are destined to the United Kingdom (UK). Specifically, based on 2019 statistics, they consist of apparel, textile and footwear; rubber and plastic articles; machinery; and coffee, tea and spices. As of January 1, 2021, exports destined for the UK are no longer covered by the EU GSP scheme; rather, they are covered by the UK's GSP scheme. Considering that the UK is a major trading partner for Sri Lanka, it would be important to closely monitor developments relevant to the UK's GSP scheme.

The UK's current GSP largely mirrors the EU's GSP scheme: it contains three frameworks, which correspond to the three arrangements in the EU GSP system. Specifically, it includes a Framework for the Least Developed Countries (LDC), which corresponds to the EU's EBA arrangement; the Enhanced Framework, which corresponds to the EU's GSP Plus arrangement; and the General Framework, which corresponds to the EU's Stand-ard GSP scheme. Countries that are GSP Plus beneficiaries under the EU GSP Plus Framework automatically qualify to receive preferences under the Enhanced Framework. It must be noted, however, that differences apply with respect to the tariff lines subject to tariff reductions.

02. 2023 expiry of EU GSP regulation
The regulation that governs the current GSP scheme expires on 31 December 2023. Currently, on the basis of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the GSP scheme, discussions are ongoing regarding the future of the EU GSP regulation, with a number of different options and scenarios on the table: a continuation of the scheme as is; a discontinuation of any GSP arrangement; and fine-tuning the existing regulation (https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2020/february/tradoc_158624.pdf).

The Commission is currently preparing a proposal for the review of the current GSP scheme.

This proposal is expected to be adopted by the second quarter of 2021, once approved by the Parliament and Council.

It is most likely that a new GSP regulation will be adopted in 2023 that will incorporate various amendments, including updating the list of 27 conventions that must be complied with as a condition to receive GSP Plus preferences, the product graduation threshold, the safeguards mechanism and an examination of the relationship between GSP and EU Free Trade Agreements.

My No : RG/NB/11/2/51/2020/Re./Con

NOTICE UNDER THE LAND REGISTERS RECONSTRUCTED FOLIO ORDINANCE (CAP. 120)

- I hereby give notice under Section 04 of the Land Registers Reconstructed Folio Ordinance (Cap. 120) that Land Register Folios, particulars of which appear in Column 1 of the schedule hereto, affecting the lands described in Column 2, thereof which have been found to be missing or torn, have been reconstructed in full in provisional folios and relate to the connected deeds, particulars of which are shown in Column 3 of the said schedule.
- The Provisional folio will be opened for inspection by any person or persons interested therein at the office of the Registrar of Lands, Delkanda 21.05.2021 to 04.06.2021 between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. on all working days.
- Any person desirous of lodging any objection against any entry included in a provisional folio or against any of the particulars contained in any such entry and any person desiring to make a claim for the insertion of any entry or of any particulars alleged to have been improperly omitted from any entry must do so, by an objection or claim in writing addressed to the undersigned which must be sent under Registered Cover and must reach the office of the Registrar General not later than 11.06.2021. The matter in respect of which the objection or claim is made must be clearly and fully set out in the objection or claim, and the objection or claim must be accompanied by all documentary evidence relies upon the support of it.

SCHEDULE

Particulars of damaged Folios of the Land Registers	Particulars of Land	Particulars of Deeds Registered
Folio No. 106 of volume 780 of Division M of the Land Registry Delkanda in Colombo District.	All that allotment of land lot No. B2E in Plan No. 10998 dated 28.10.1962 made by M.B.De. Silva licensed Surveyor of the land called 'Pelangahawatta' situated at Pitakotte in the Palle Pattu Salpiti Korale in the District of Colombo, Western Province and bounded on the, North and West by : Road Reservation 10 feet wide. East by : Lot B2F. South by : Land of Benjewan Perera Extent : A:00 R:01 P: 00	01. Deed of Transfer No. 6427 written and attested by P.D.S. Rathnasekara Notary Public on 31.01.1965. 02. Deed of Transfer No. 2518 written and attested by L.L. Fonseka Notary Public on 08.03.1966. 03. Deed of Mortgage No. 2519 written and attested by L.L. Fonseka Notary Public on 08.03.1966.

Registrar General's Department
No. 234/A3,
Denzil Kobbekaduwa Mawatha,
Battaramulla.

W.M.M.B. Weerasekara
Registrar General

My No: RG/NB/11/2/09/2021/Re./Con

NOTICE UNDER THE LAND REGISTERS RECONSTRUCTED FOLIO ORDINANCE (CAP. 120)

- I hereby give notice under Section 04 of the Land Registers Reconstructed Folio Ordinance (Cap. 120) that Land Register Folios, particulars of which appear in Column 1 of the schedule hereto, affecting the land described in Column 2, thereof which have been found to be missing or torn, have been reconstructed in full in provisional folios and relate to the connected deeds, particulars of which are shown in Column 3 of the said schedule.
- The provisional folio will be opened for inspection by any person or persons interested therein at the Office of the Registrar of Lands, Homagama, 21.05.2021 to 04.06.2021 between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. on all working days.
- Any person desirous of lodging any objection against any entry included in a provisional Folio or against any of the particulars contained in any such entry and any person desiring to make a claim for the insertion of any entry or of any particulars alleged to have been improperly omitted from any entry must do so, by an objection or claim in writing addressed to the undersigned which must be sent under registered cover and must reach the Office of the Registrar General not later than 11.06.2021. The matter in respect of which the objection or claim is made must be clearly and fully set out in the objection or claim, and the objection or claim must be accompanied by all documentary evidence relies upon the support of it.

SCHEDULE

Particulars of Damaged Folios of the Land Registers	Particulars of Land	Particulars of Deeds Registered
Folio No. 126 of volume 252 of G Division of the Land Registry Homagama Colombo District	All that divided and defined Lot No. 03 in plan No. 595 Dated 29.09.1995 made by D.P.A. Jayasingha Licensed Surveyor of the land called 'Dawatagahawatta' situated at Pore and Hokandara Palle Pattu of Hewagam Korale in the District of Colombo, Western Province bounded on the, North by : Lot 02 and 2a of this land East by : Gam Sabha Road South by : Dewatagahawatta belongs to B. Juwanis Prera West by : Dewatagahawatta belongs to B. Juwanis Prera Extent : A:01 R:00 P:10.05	01. Deed of Transfer No. 14475 written and attested by D.W. Ranasingha Notary Public on 15.12.1955. 02. Deed of Gift No. 5205 written and attested by H.J. Gunasekara Notary Public on 12.10.1996. 03. Deed of Gift No. 5206 written and attested by H.J. Gunasekara Notary Public on 12.10.1996.

Registrar General's Department,
No. 234/A3, Denzil Kobbekaduwa Mw.,
Battaramulla.

W.M.M.B. Weerasekara
Registrar General

SOUTHERN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Southern Provincial Department of Education

Amendment to the Invitation for Bids Notice

- It is hereby informed that the advertisement published on 07/04/2021 calling for Bids is amended as follows.

Closing date for Bids: 10.00 a.m. on 12/05/2021.

Ser. No.	Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	ICTAD Grade Published Earlier	Amended ICTAD Grade
01	Ma/Thihagoda National School - Construction of three storey Technological Faculty	46,323,441.25	C 5	C5 and C4
02	Ma / Devinuwara National School - Repairing the Science Laboratory Building	2,905,651.50	C 8	C8 and C7
03	Ha / Sri Lanka Singapore Friendship National School - Making a concrete road for the Teachers Quarters (Guru Nivasa)	417,086.50	C 9	C9 and C8
04	Ha / Mahanaga National School - Construction of three storey Technological Faculty	45,637,091.00	C 5	C5 and C4

- Issue of bid documents has been extended up to 2.00 p.m. on 11.05.2021.
- Bids in duplicate as "Original" and "Duplicate" in separate covers, should be reinserted in a single cover mentioning the name of the relevant work on the left hand top corner, sealed and may either be sent by registered post to the following address or deposited in the Tender Box kept in this department to receive before 10.00 a.m. on 12.05.2021.

Address : **Chairman**
Departmental Procurement Committee
Southern Provincial Department of Education
Upper Dickson Road
Galle

- Bids will be opened at 10.30 a.m. on 12.05.2021 at the Southern Provincial Department of Education and the contractor who has submitted the bid or his authorized representative may be present at the time of opening of bids.
- All other conditions published on 07.04.2021 remain same.
- Further details regarding this may be obtained by calling on Tel. No. 091-2234234.

Nimal Dissanayake
Southern Provincial Director of Education
Southern Provincial Department of Education
Upper Dickson Road
Galle

Date: 25.04.2021

Auction Sale of Unredeemed Pawns Articles of

the under mentioned branches of
National Development Bank PLC (NDB) will be sold by
PUBLIC AUCTION

Articles pawned at these branches, which remain unredeemed will be auctioned as per the schedule below (Auction will commence at 10 a.m. on the dates given below).

Branches of National Development Bank PLC	Articles Pawned & unredeemed up to	Place & Date of Auction
Akuressa, Aluthgama Ampara, Anuradhapura Awissavella, Bandarawela Batticalo, Chilaw Digana, Embilipitiya Galle, Handala Jaffna, Kadawatha Kaduvela, Kahawatte Kandy, Katugastota Kegalle, Kekirawa Kochchikade, Kotahena Kuliyapitiya, Maharagama Malabe, Matale Matara, Matugama Minuwangoda, Narammala Natthandiya, Nawalapitiya Negombo, Nittambuwa Nuwara Eliya, Piliyandala Puttlam, Ratnapura Thambuththegama, Thirunelvely Trincomalee, Wattala Wellawatta, Wennappuwa Yakkala, Kandana Elpitiya, Kalutara Uragasmanhandiya, Ambalantota Mahawewa, Ja-ela	01.10.2020	Kotahena Branch 295, George R. De Silva Mawatha, Colombo 13. 08 & 09-05-2021

National Development Bank PLC has the right to cancel, postpone or amalgamate the above auctions
Manager - National Development Bank PLC,
40, Nawam Mawatha, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka. Tele No. : 0112 448 448

011 244 8888 | www.ndbbank.com

A+ (Ika) Fitch Rating - National Development Bank PLC (20.27)
is a licensed commercial bank supervised by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

NDB bank
Our Commitment. Your Success.

OBSERVER
JOBS

BREAKING
BOUNDARIES

THE COUNTRY'S
LARGEST
RECRUITMENT
DATABASE

FOR
JOBSEEKERS

www.
observerjobs.
lk

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

UVA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- The **Chairman, Procurement Committee** invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the Construction as described in the table below,

Name of Construction	Required CIDA Grade	Contract Period	Required Bid Security		Non refundable Bid Document Fee (Rs.)
			Security Amount (Rs.)	Validity Period	
Construction of Crematorium at Bibila (CLG/UVA/2021/W01)	C6 or above Building	15 Months	225,000/=	30 th August 2021	3,500/=
Construction of Crematorium at Hali-ela (CLG/UVA/2021/W02)	C6 or above Building	15 Months	225,000/=	30 th August 2021	3,500/=

- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding, however, limited to the bidders who registered within the administrative boundary of Uva Province.
- To be eligible for Contract award, the successful bidder shall not have been blacklisted and shall have been registered in the field of Building Construction for grade mentioned above with the Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA).
- This bid is administered by the provisions of the "Public Contract Act No. 03 of 1987". Therefore, Bidder shall submit valid certificate of registration issued by **Registrar of Public Contract** with the bids and failure to comply will result in the bids being rejected.
- Qualification requirements are indicated in the section 4 of the Bidding documents. Additional details are provided in the Section 5.
- Interested bidders may obtain further information from **Commissioner of Local Government - Uva, Department of Local Government - Uva, Martin Silva Mawatha, Badulla (T.No 0552222363, Fax 0552222055, Email- clguva@gmail.com)** and inspect the bidding documents on working days from 9.00hrs to 15.00hrs.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the **Commissioner of Local Government - Uva, Department of Local Government - Uva, Martin Silva Mawatha, Badulla from 26th April 2021 until 16th May 2021 from 9.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs** upon payment of a non refundable bid document fee mentioned in table above. The method of payment will be in Cash.
- Bids shall be delivered to **Commissioner of Local Government - Uva, Department of Local Government - Uva, Martin Silva Mawatha, Badulla** at or before 14.00 hrs on 17th May 2021. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened soon after closing in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
- Bids shall be valid up to 77 Days after the deadline for Bid Submission.
- All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security issued by a commercial bank approved by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

The Chairman, Procurement Committee,
Department of Local Government -Uva,
Martin Silva Mawatha,
Badulla.

055-2222363/055-2222407

26th April 2021

Daily News
Classifieds

Employment **General**

319
Positions Vacant
Domestic

427
Tuition Available

A lady Cook needed for a house in Colombo 07. Should specialize in making Indian food. Salary negotiable, lodging available. Please contact 0770872542. 030842

320
Positions Vacant
Hotel & Bakery

Looking for a Cashier, Accountant, Driver for a restaurant in Colombo area, minimum experience 3 years. Accommodation available. Pls contact: 0773667998, 0777645172. 031136

Looking for Indian Chef / Cook for an Indian Restaurant located in Colombo. Pls. Call: 0773667998, 0777645172. 031143

325
Positions Vacant
General

Wharf Clerk - With 05 years experience - with CHA / RPU / A pass, Documentation Executive (Female) - Age below 35 - Prior experience in imports and export documentation - Customs related knowledge preferred. Please forward your CV to m.urali@monamilline.com Contact No : 0777715441. 030479

A/L Economics tuition by Econ Master, BSc Finance, CIMA, first ranker in school 2021 revision Sunday 8.30 a.m. - 10.30 a.m. 2022 theory Sunday 11.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. 2023 theory Sunday 2.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. WhatsApp now. 0776533337. 028799

Real Estate
616
House & Property
COLOMBO
District
For sale

Land for sale in Wellawatte No. 145/3, Galle Road, Wellawatte, near Bank of Ceylon 5.57 perches plain land for sale. 20 feet accessible road and with clear deeds. Suitable land for houses and all other buildings. Contact for more information. A.Amir Ali 0777636349. 030337

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.

SOORIYAWEWA PRADESHIYA SABHA
Invitation for Quotations for the Purchase of a Gully Bowser
Sealed open quotations are invited from recognized institutions and importers for the purchase of a Gully Bowser for the Sooriyawewa Pradeshiya Sabha.
Your quotations should be prepared in two copies and sent to the "Chairman, Sooriyawewa Pradeshiya Sabha, Sooriyawewa" by registered post to be received before 10.00 a.m. on 20.05.2021 or should be inserted in the tender box kept in the Secretary's Official room at this office.
Quotations will be opened at 10.30 a.m. on 20.05.2021 by the Tender Board at this office.
Tender forms and conditions for the gully bowser mentioned above could be obtained by calling over at the Sooriyawewa Pradeshiya Sabha and a non refundable bid form fee as mentioned below should be paid for this purpose.

Serial No.	Vehicle expected to be purchased	Non refundable form fees for bid forms (Rs.)	Refundable tender deposit for bid forms (Rs.)
01	Gully Bowser	1500.00	25,000.00

Bid forms will be issued from 27.04.2021 up to 2.00 p.m. on 19.05.2021. A photocopy of the National Identity Card should be submitted by the recipient of bid forms in proof of identity.
Further details could be obtained by calling on Tel No. 047-2288212.
The full right of accepting or rejecting bids lies with the Sooriyawewa Pradeshiya Sabha.
J. Eranda Janaka
Chairman,
Sooriyawewa Pradeshiya Sabha.
Date: 22.04.2021

LAND REFORM COMMISSION
MINISTRY OF LANDS

Digitalization of Land Reform Commission
Request for Expressions of Interest

The Land Reform Commission (LRC) as part of its initiative to fully "digitalize" its tasks and functions with the view to provide an up-to-date information on services offered by the Commission to the public hereby invites interested software organizations to provide their proposals for the said digitalization initiative.
Content of the proposals should be available in English and it should be compatible with innovative ideas and use of modern technology, in compliance with the Sri Lanka local government standards laid down by ICTA as international standards
Also, the developers should have the ability to develop the systems using Open Source tools and techniques.
The Land Reform Commission invites expression of interest (EOIs) from eligible organizations to take up this project for and on behalf of LRC. Interested software developing organizations may obtain further information from Information Technology Division, Land Reform Commission Head Office from May 3rd 2021 to May 10th, 2021 on any working day from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.
The Developers must provide information indicating their qualifications to perform the services (core business; and years in business, qualifications in the field of software development, technical and managerial organisation of the firm number of key staff experience, in the similar enterprises etc.)
All Interested Parties are Informed that their Expressions of Interest should be forwarded in a sealed cover addressed to, Chairman, Land Reform Commission at the following address to be received not later than 2.00 pm on May 21st 2021 either by registered post or handover to the tender box located in same address Administration division. Please mention clearly on the top left-hand corner of the envelope "Expression of Interest for Digitalization of LRC".
Chairman,
Land Reform Commission
475, Kaduwela Road, Battaramulla
Sri Lanka.
T P 011-2096649 Fax 011-2878052
Email: chairman@lrc.gov.lk / lct.lrc@gmail.com

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS MEDICINE
EASTERN PROVINCE

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
(EOI No-01)

Management, Operation and Maintenance of Ayurveda Medical Centre at Pasikudah Batticaloa Under Public Private Partnership

The Department of Indigenous Medicine Eastern Province is a Government Department under the purview of Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine, Eastern Provincial Council having its office at Inner Harbour Road, Trincomalee, Sri Lanka is in process of managing the Ayurvedic Medical Centre at Pasikudah Batticaloa under Public - Private Partnership. The development objective of this initiative is to provide ayurvedic medical services at Pasikudah Tourism Zone by equipping, financing and managing of Ayurveda Medical Centre owned by the Department of Indigenous Medicine on Public Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism.
The Department now invites eligible private sector strategic partners to express their interest for the request of "Expression of Interest" to manage aforesaid facility for a period of three years. Responses must include requested information as specified in the EOI Information Form along with documentary evidence in support of core business and years in business and experience involvement of similar activities in the past, technical and managerial capabilities including appropriate skills of key staff. The Expression of Interest (EOI) documents will be issued from 2021.04.27 to 2021.05.28 between 09.00 am and 03.00 pm on working days on payment of Rs. 1000.00 to the People's Bank Main Branch Trincomalee (Branch No. 066) A/C No 100160000181 Name: Provincial Commissioner, Department of Indigenous Medicine, Eastern Province as non-refundable document fee per EOI document.
The private strategic partner will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the government procurement guidelines and all interested parties are informed that all documentations shall be in the English Language. Interested parties may obtain further information from Dr.(Mr).S.Sivachelvan, Medical Officer Provincial Commissioner's Office, Department of Indigenous Medicine via Phone 0779905167 and Email epindmedicine@gmail.com.
Expression of Interest including all requested information must be either hand delivered or sent by Registered Post to Provincial Commissioner, Department of Indigenous Medicine, Inner Harbour Road, Trincomalee at or before 3.00 p.m. on 02nd of June 2021. Envelope containing EOI documents should be marked "Procurement for Selecting Strategic Private Sector Partner to Manage Ayurvedic Medical Centre at Pasikudah, Batticaloa" on the top left hand corner of the envelope.
Provincial Commissioner,
Dept. of Indigenous Medicine,
Eastern Province.

Invitation for Bids

STATE MINISTRY OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION, PROTECTIVE MEASURES INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF ELEPHANT FENCES AND TRENCHES AND REFORESTATION AND FOREST RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Department of National Zoological Gardens
LEASING OUT OF MAIN RESTAURANT AT PINNAWALA ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE 2021/2023

IFB No: DNZG/A/07/21/105

- The Chairman, Departmental Procurement Committee on behalf of Department of National Zoological Gardens now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for leasing out of main restaurant at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage - 2021/2023 for a period of two years.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedure.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the **Chief Accountant, Department of National Zoological Gardens, Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Dehiwala, Tel- 2896779, 2712752** e mail address - zoosl@st.lk and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below on working days from 8.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. during 26th of April, 2021 to 17th of May, 2021.
- Qualification requirements are as follows;
 - Certificate of business registration in the field of Hotels and Restaurants
 - Documents to prove at least three years of experience in running Restaurants/ Hotels
 - Audited final accounts of last year
 - Bank statements of last 6 months
 - GMP Certificate/ISO 9001 certificate obtained for the field of Restaurants issued by the Institute of Sri Lanka Standards Bureau
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be issued on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rupees Three Thousand (Rs.3,000/-) in cash.
- Bids must be sealed and either be sent by registered post to the address below or deposited in the tender box placed in the same office at or before 2.00 p.m. on 18th of May, 2021. Late bids will not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend in person at the address given below at 2.00 p.m. on 18th of May, 2021 immediately after the bid closing. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid-Security.
 - Bid security Value: Rs. 125,000/-
- The decision of the Department Procurement Committee shall be the final decision.

The Chairman,
Department Procurement Committee,
Department of National Zoological Gardens,
Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha,
Dehiwala.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES - KALUTARA

INVITATION FOR BIDS

- Sealed bids will be received by the Chairman, Procurement Committee of the Office of the Regional Director of Health Services from qualified bidders for the supply of the undermentioned goods.

Bid Ref. No.	Name of Bid	Qty	Non-refundable Bid Fee (Rs)	Value of Bid Security (Rs)
Supply and fixing of Office Equipment				
FI/2021/17	01 Curved Reception Table	01	2,000.00	110,000.00
	02 OPD Chairs (4-gang Set)	135		
	03 Executive Chairs	18		
	04 Office Tables	18		
	05 Office Chairs	40		
	06 Examination Beds	03		
	07 Dispensary Chairs	05		
	08 Sofa Sets	03		
	09 Cushion Chairs	12		
	10 Conference Chairs	100		
	11 Wooden Beds	05		
	12 Patient's Beds	02		
	13 Book Racks	04		
	14 Trowel Racks	05		
	15 Dressing Tables	05		
	16 Patient's Trolley	01		
	17 Table for Auditorium	01		
	18 Podium	01		
	19 Steel Cupboards	03		
Supply, fixing and installation of Information Technology Equipment				
FI/2021/18	01 Desktop Computers	10	2,000.00	150,000.00
	02 Laptops	42		
	03 Sticker Printers	11		
	04 Wireless Printers	13		
	05 Barcode Readers	29		
	06 Wire Access Points	08		
	07 Network Switches	02		
	08 Rack Mountable Server UPS	02		
	09 Rack Mountable UPS	12		

- Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding Procedure.
- Prospective bidders can purchase relevant bid documents from **23.04.2021** up to **17.05.2021**, on working days, between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m., on payment of a non-refundable bid document fee of Rs. 2,000.00, made to the Office of the Regional Director of Health Services.
- All bids should be accompanied with a Bid Security equivalent to the value stated in the Table No. 01 above drawn in favour of the Regional Director of Health Services, Kalutara and obtained from a commercial bank opening in Sri Lanka approved by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Duly completed bids in two copies as the original and duplicate placed in separate sealed covers marked accordingly and the two covers then should be placed in a single sealed cover marked the Bid Ref. No. and the Bid No. at the left-side top corner, could either be sent by registered post or placed in the Bid Box kept at the above address, to be received at or before **10.30 a.m. on 18.05.2021**.
- Bids received late will be rejected and bids received will be opened immediately after closing of acceptance of bids in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.
- Further details can be obtained on Telephone Nos. 034-2222616, 034-2222367 of the Office of the Regional Director of Health Services.

Chairman,
Regional Procurement Committee,
Office of the Regional Director of Health Services,
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UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO VACANCIES

The University of Colombo will entertain applications from suitably qualified persons for the following Posts up to 17th May 2021.

PERMANENT POSTS:

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Department of Medical Education

- Lecturer (Probationary)/Lecturer (Unconfirmed)/ Senior Lecturer Grade II/I

Department of Community Medicine

- Instructor in Social Work

Application forms and relevant details can be obtained from the Senior Asst. Registrar/Academic Establishments, 'College House', University of Colombo, Colombo 3 by personally calling over or by visiting the University web site. (www.cmb.ac.lk).

Duly completed applications should be forwarded with copies of relevant educational (with transcripts), professional, extracurricular activities and service certificates under registered post/ e-mail (recruit@ace.cmb.ac.lk) to the Senior Asst. Registrar/ Academic Establishments, University of Colombo, 94, Cumaratunga Munidasa Mawatha, Colombo 03 on or before the deadline.

The Post applied for should be indicated on the top left-hand corner of the envelope. Please check the University website (www.cmb.ac.lk) for handouts.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

**Registrar,
94, Cumaratunga Munidasa Mawatha,
Colombo 03.**

23 April 2021

State Timber Corporation Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Conservation

VACANCIES

Applications are invited from citizens of Sri Lanka for the following post of the State Timber Corporation.

“Senior Manager” Category - (HM 1-2)

1. Deputy General Manager (Internal Audit)

Salary Scale : HM 1-2 Rs. 81,670 – 2,270 × 15 – 115,720

Age limit : Age should be not less than 35 years and not more than 55 years.

Qualifications:

I. A Bachelor's Degree in Finance/ Accountancy/ Commerce/ Business Administration or Management, which is recognized by the U.G.C.

WITH

A Postgraduate Degree qualification (Masters') in the relevant field or Associate Membership of a recognized professional Chartered Institute, which is relevant to the subject area of the post.

AND

Minimum of 15 years experience at a "Managerial Level" in a Corporation, Statutory Board/ Institution or a reputed private institution.

II. Full Membership of a recognized professional Chartered Institution in a related field to the post

AND

Minimum of 15 years experience at a "Managerial Level" in a Corporation, Statutory Board/ Institution or a reputed private institution.

Other Benefits:

- Medical Insurance for the employee and dependents
- Annual Bonus
- Attendance Incentive
- Housing loan & other loan facilities
- Contributing of E.P.F. & E.T.F.

Applicants should forward their applications with two (02) non related referees and their contact details together with copies of certificates to reach the **Chairman, State Timber Corporation, No.82, Rajamalwatta Road, Battaramulla** on or before **10.05.2021** by registered post. The post applied for should be written on the top left hand corner of the envelope. Incomplete or late applications will be rejected without any prior notice. The applicants who are already employed in National/Provincial Government Service or Corporations or Statutory Bodies should submit their applications through the Heads of the Relevant Institutions. Only the eligible applicants will be called for interviews.

Chairman - State Timber Corporation



EXTENSION OF BID SUBMISSION DEADLINE
INVITATION FOR BIDS

GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
STATE MINISTRY OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Greater Colombo Water and Wastewater Management Improvement Investment Program - Project 3
FUNDED UNDER EIB AND ADB LOANS

1. Kirula - Narahenpita Sewerage Network Development for CMC
ICB Contract No. GCWMMIIP-P2/EIB/KN
2. Rehabilitation of Existing Sewers in Southern Catchment Areas of CMC
ICB Contract No. GCWMMIIP - P2/EIB/SR

Attention is drawn to the above two 'Invitations to Bid' published in the "Ceylon Daily News" on 12th March 2021.
Notice is hereby given that the bid submission deadline mentioned in paragraph 9 in both of the above Invitations had been extended to 3.00 p.m. on 18th May 2021.
The site visit and the pre-bid meeting mentioned in paragraph 6 of the above notices had been already held, and hence will not be repeated.
All other requirements remain same.

Secretary
State Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government Affairs

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