



YOUR PAPER TODAY 10 PAGES



President reprimanding BASL Chief in Parliament

Saliya Pieris is not a political lawyer to take Executive's stance: Lawyers' collective

BY KURULU KOJANA KARIYAKARAWANA

Events that sealed the fate of ex-Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake for her disagreement with the then executive cannot be seen as a similar instance for the removal of BASL Chief Saliya Pieris PC for disagreeing with President Ranil Wickremesinghe, as Pieris is an independent person, a lawyers' collective said yesterday.

Senior lawyers and past Presidents of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) addressing a media briefing to register their displeasure and protest over the baseless criticism and hate speech by President Wickremesinghe on the BASL chief at the Parliament last week said that Saliya Pieris is not a political lawyer to be a puppet of the executive.

Senior Lawyer Upul Kumarapperuma said the BASL works according to its own council decisions and not to the whims and fancies of any political authority. It is common how the political administration is trying to slander the BASL when it fails to make the latter a political tool in achieving its personal agendas.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

US should intervene to ensure LG polls held: SJB

BY YOHAN PERERA

The USA should intervene to ensure that the local government elections are held in Sri Lanka, a Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) member said yesterday.

Samagi Tharuna Balawegaya (SJB Youth Wing) National Organizer Chamith Wijesundara told a media briefing that the USA should intervene through its Ambassador Julie Chung to convince President Ranil Wickremesinghe to hold the LG polls. "Ms. Chung is a good friend of President Wickremesinghe," he said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Cannot change Govt. by taking to the streets: President

Says positive results on the country's economy soon

President Ranil Wickremesinghe yesterday emphasized that the only way to bring about a change of government is through a parliamentary election and not through street protests, stating that the latter is not a viable option for the parliament.

The President emphasized that a nation can become anarchic due to an economic collapse and urged everyone to prioritize safeguarding both the constitution and the economy of the country.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe said this while addressing the commissioning ceremony of the Air Force Officer Cadets at the Trincomalee Air Force Base yesterday morning. Meanwhile, 40 Officer Cadets including three females were commissioned as Officers of the Sri Lanka Air Force by the Chief Guest and received their ceremonial swords, which symbolizes their status as Commissioned Officers.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

CPC PROFITING FROM ALL PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Currently, the price of a litre of Octane 92 Petrol in the market is Rs. 400 and according to the formula-based price per litre of 92 Petrol is Rs. 373.62

The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) is gaining profits from selling petrol and diesel in the market with the recent price revision, according to statistics issued by Power and Energy Minister Kanachana Wijesekera.

The minister revealed the fuel cost breakdown of CPC after the fuel price formula price revision for March, showing Rs. 110.35 profited from a litre of Octane 95 Petrol, while a gain of Rs. 26.38 was recorded from selling a

litre of Octane 92 Petrol. Currently, the price of a litre of Octane 92 Petrol in the market is Rs. 400 and according to the formula-based price per litre of 92 Petrol is Rs. 373.62 including all the costs and taxation. The formula-based price per litre of 95 Petrol is Rs. 399.65 and the current market price is Rs. 510. Also, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is gaining profit of Rs. 4.73 by selling a litre of Auto Diesel while Rs. 12.90

from a litre of Super Diesel. The cost per litre of Auto Diesel is Rs. 400.27 and per litre of Supper Diesel is Rs. 497.10. Meanwhile, even after the CPC reduced the price of a litre of kerosene by Rs. 50 with effect from March 1, the CPC gains Rs. 3.63 by selling a litre of kerosene. The current retail price per litre of kerosene is Rs. 305. According to the minister, the cost per litre of kerosene is Rs. 301.37.

CB to do away with forex trading band, mandatory sell-down rule

As the liquidity in the foreign exchange market is improving steadily, the Central Bank said it would fully lift the trading band introduced in last May along with the complete removal of the

foreign currency sell-down rule imposed on exporters, from next week onwards.

The Sri Lankan rupee saw significant appreciation during this week, with the spot rate trading

at 338/339 levels against the US dollar yesterday, from over 360 levels at the start of the week on a flurry of positive developments and news on the foreign exchange market.

SEE FULL STORY ON A8 >>>

SC PREVENTS WITHHOLDING FUNDS FOR LG POLLS

Interim order issued to Treasury Secretary, Attorney General

BY LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

The Supreme Court yesterday issued an interim order preventing the Treasury Secretary, the Attorney General who is representing the President and any other state official from withholding any funds allocated for the purpose of conducting Local Government Polls-2023.

Supreme Court three-judge-bench comprising Justices Preethi Padman Surasena, Janak De Silva and Priyantha Fernando made this order consequent to a Fundamental Rights petition filed by Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) General Secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

EC to announce LG polls date before March 9

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA

The new date for the Local Government elections would be announced before March 9, the Elections Commission announced yesterday. The Commission said a suitable date for the LG polls would be decided following a discussion with the Finance Ministry and other relevant institutions based on yesterday's Supreme Court ruling. The Elections Commission earlier said the new date for the LG polls would be announced yesterday.

Man arrested for allegedly stripping and torturing wife

- Police help wife to go to her parents
The victim is a 39 year old mother of four children

BY BUDDHIKA KUMARASIRI

An individual who inflicted atrocities on his wife causing her grievous hurt was taken into custody by Padukka Police.

The victim is a 39 year old mother of four children from Angampitiya in Padukka.

The injured woman called over at the Padukka Police and made a complaint against her husband to the

OIC Women and Children's Bureau SI W.S.A. Pathma. She stated her husband under the influence of liquor stripped her of her clothes, trussed up her and smeared her female organ with a paste of spices and green chillies, and squeezed in leeches and worms into it. She said she had been subject to his atrocities quite often in this manner in front of her eleven-year old eldest daughter. She stated that when she attempted to escape him, he

severely assaulted her. She said she had a four month old infant child.

Police said she was admitted to Padukka district hospital and after treatment she was to leave for Anuradhapura where her parents were living. Meanwhile, the police officers raised a hat collection for her to cover up her expenses during the journey with her children to Anuradhapura.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Vega receives vehicle registration number

Vega is South Asia's first fully electric two-seater supercar

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

The Vega Innovation Company yesterday officially received the registration numbers for the fully electric, two-seater supercar "Vega" and for the other electric three-wheelers manufactured by the company.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



Vega infographic showing car specifications: The Vega is an all-electric battery-powered two-seater AWD sports car developed by Sri Lankan automobile manufacturer Vega Innovations. This car is the first sports car to be manufactured in Sri Lanka and the first all electric sports car to be manufactured in South Asia. Height 1,220 mm, Length 4,532 mm, Width 1,970 mm. TORQUE 760Nm, POWER 304hp, ACCELERATION 0-100km/h 3.1 seconds, RANGE 300km.

Alleged illegal arrest of lawyer: SC grants leave to proceed with FR petition

BY LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

The Supreme Court has granted leave to proceed with a Fundamental Rights petition filed by a lawyer who sought a declaration that his arrest by CID was illegal and in violation of his fundamental rights.

Supreme Court two-judge-bench comprising Justices Priyantha Jayawardhana and Justice Vijith Malalgoda granted leave to proceed in terms of Articles 12(1) and 13(1).

The petitioner Roshan Dehiwala, an Attorney-at-Law by profession

filed this petition naming IGP Chandana Wickremaratne, DIG Prasad Ranasinghe, OIC Induka De Silva, Woman SI Seneviratne, Sergeant Thusitha and Attorney General as respondents.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

LOVERS AT PERA UNI TAKEN TO TASK FOR HUGGING

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

A video is circulating on social media where two lovers of Peradeniya University staged a protest hugging each other symbolically in front of the Peradeniya University Senate building to show displeasure for taking disciplinary action against them for hugging each other at the Sanatana Mandira premises.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



Pet dog removed under police protection from house accommodating murder suspect

The couple living at a house in Millaniya in Horana, who had given him accommodation also disappeared

A Chief Inspector (CI) of Bandaragama Police reportedly deployed a police constable to take away a pet dog from the home of a couple from Millaniya who had allegedly provided accommodation to a murder suspect who had escaped from police custody at BIA recently.

Earlier, four policemen including the OIC of the Katunayake Police were arrested for letting go a suspect wanted over several murders who was arrested at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) while attempting to fly overseas in spite of a travel ban imposed on him.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Rajitha says he can play a great role as minister

"I am able to play a great role to revive the nation if I am given a portfolio such as the Health Ministry"

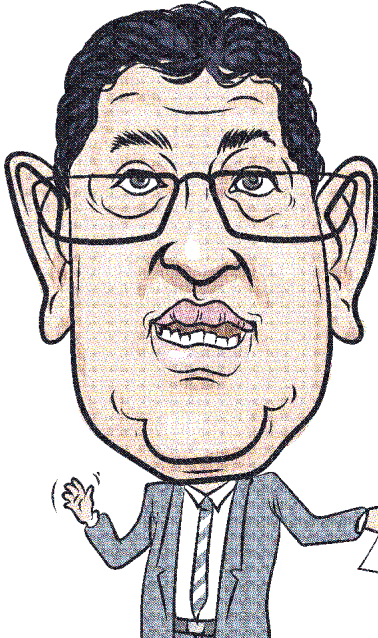
BY YOHAN PERERA

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Rajitha Senaratne said he will be able to play a great role in resolving the current crisis in the nation if he is given a ministry such as the Health Ministry.

"I am able to play a great role to revive the nation if I am given a portfolio such as the Health Ministry," he told the media, responding to a question as to whether he would accept a ministerial portfolio if one is offered to him.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Harsha welcomes CB action to stabilise rupee



BY YOHAN PERERA

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Harsha de Silva yesterday welcomed the action of the Central Bank to ensure the stability of the Sri Lankan rupee.

"Kudos to the @CBSL for sticking to the plan. It's working. As detailed in our Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) economic blueprint in which we have said continued relaxation of restrictions will help move the rate to a stable equilibrium, with further action as per our document," Dr. de Silva said in his Twitter message.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Addict who spent Rs.80,000 daily on drugs arrested

He had resorted to robbery to earn money

BY REKA THARANGANI

A drug addict who spends Rs.80,000 a day on drugs and had resorted to robbery to earn money was taken into custody for his involvement in a theft of commodities including cigarettes from a grocery store in Bishop Terrace in Laxapathiya in Moratuwa. He had in his possession 6.120 grams of heroin at the time of arrest.

Under interrogation, he stated that he spent about Rs.80,000 a day on drugs and earned money by selling stolen goods for cheaper prices. Police said the 32-year-old suspect had been involved in a series of robberies earlier. He was to be produced before the Moratuwa Magistrate yesterday. OIC Moratuwa Police CI Nihal Francis and CI Mamdama are conducting further investigations.

Daily Mirror

www.dailymirror.lk

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

CANNOT CHANGE GOVT. BY TAKING TO THE STREETS: PRESIDENT

Addressing the gathering, President Wickremesinghe said,

During the period between 1980 and 2009, the country faced significant threats to its unity and territorial integrity. It was during this time that the armed forces and the police made immense sacrifices to safeguard the nation. Their unwavering commitment and dedication helped to protect the country's sovereignty and independence and ensured that its people could live in peace and security.

"I am deeply grateful to the armed forces for their role in protecting the Parliament last June. As we have seen in other countries, when a parliament is not safeguarded, chaos and anarchy can quickly ensue. Similarly, a country without a strong economy is also at risk of devolving into chaos," the President said.

It is therefore the responsibility of all of us to work together to protect both the constitution and the economy of our country. In recent days, I have met with various organizations to discuss strategies for boosting the economy, and I am confident that our efforts will yield positive results in the near future.

SC PREVENTS WITHHOLDING FUNDS FOR LG POLLS

The Supreme Court further issued an interim Order preventing the Treasury Secretary, Attorney General who is representing the President from withholding any funds allocated by the budget for the year 2023 for the purpose of conducting Local Government Polls, from the Government Printer.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court further granted leave to proceed with this Fundamental Rights petition in terms of Articles 12(1) and 14(1) (a) of the Constitution. The matter was fixed for argument on May 21. President's Counsel Upul Jayasuriya appeared for the petitioner. Additional Solicitor General Priyantha Nawana appeared for the Attorney General. Saliya Pieris PC appeared for the Election Commission. SJB General Secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara filed

this petition naming Secretary to the Treasury Mahinda Siriwardana, Government Printer Gangani Liyanage, Attorney General representing the President, the Election Commission Chairman and its members and several others as respondents.

The petitioner is challenging the alleged illegal and unlawful decisions of the Treasury Secretary to not provide adequate funds to the Election Commission for the purpose of conducting Local Authorities Elections, in violation of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed to the Petitioner and to all citizens of Sri Lanka by Articles 12(1) and 14(1)(a) of the Constitution and in violation of their right to exercise their franchise guaranteed to them by Articles 03 and 04 of the Constitution.

LOVERS AT PERA UNI TAKEN TO TASK FOR HUGGING

They staged the protest by way of a drama by hugging each other to show the Marshal officers what the meaning of real love is.

The male student claimed that the Marshal's officer had insulted them in a defamatory and derogatory tone and taken his student card.

The protest was organized to symbolize the freedom a university student should have to love in any space and as an art performance.

However, the protest was held against the abominable incident of violation of the rights of the couple by the disciplinary officers who stormed the scene. Several attempts to contact the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Peradeniya University, Prof. W. M.T. Madhujith, were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, commenting on the video on Facebook, former Elections Commissioner Mahinda Deshapriya said, "It seems that Peradeniya is getting rid of all kinds of cultural policies and becoming Peradeniya again. Let's send our love and respect to this brave young couple".

According to the official notice issued by the university's official website, the Marshals Office was established to assist the university administration in the maintenance of discipline among the students of the university and to report to the proctor regarding such acts of indiscipline as if an offence against the by-laws or the laws of the country had been committed by any student.

OBITUARIES


DE SILVA - NIHAL (C.N.J.), Safe in the arms of Jesus. Beloved husband of the late Nelum, loving father of Niloosha, Roshan and Romesh, father-in-law of Malike, Inakshi and Rushika, brother of the late Mohan and of Lal, brother-in-law of Tamara and Felicity, was called to eternal rest on 2nd March, 2023. Remains lie at A.F. Raymond Funeral Parlour. **Cortege will leave the parlour after service at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday 4th March 2023 for burial at 4.00 p.m. at the Jawatte Cemetery (R.C. Section). 071890**

ONLINE OBITUARIES
www.dailymirror.lk/obituaries

Man arrested for alleged stripping and torturing wife

Investigations revealed that her husband was a drunkard without permanent employment and that he had fled from the area when the police initiated investigations of the complaint. OIC Women and Children's Bureau SI Pathma is conducting further investigations on the instructions of OIC Padukka Police CI Kapila Senanayake.

OBITUARY



Sreena De Silva
Dearest mother of Shamalee and mother-in-law of Jayalath Fernando, beloved aacha to Dulasha, Chadini and Chemuka & Duminda everloving sister to Hema & Paula, Lal & Ramani and Chula & Bemal, peacefully passed away at her residence on the 2nd of March surrounded by her family.
Final respects can be paid at 29/1, D.P. Wijesinghe Mawatha Pelawatta. Funeral cortege leaving home on the 4th of March at 3.30 pm for cremation at the Borella cemetery at 4.30 pm.

VEGA RECEIVES VEHICLE REGISTRATION NUMBER

The registration numbers were handed over by Transport Minister Bandula Gunawardana yesterday at Vega Innovation Company.

Vega is South Asia's first fully electric two-seater supercar, handmade with a carbon fibre body and powered by a dual-motor all-wheel drivetrain. All automotive electronics, including the liquid-cooled motor controllers and Li-ion battery packs, are designed and manufactured in-house, showcasing some of the most advanced technologies in the EV supercar space. The decision was announced with the concept of promoting the inclusion of environmentally friendly electric vehicles in Sri Lanka as a solution to the existing fuel crisis and financial issues, the Minister said. "The aim of this project is to popularize

the three-wheeler, which is fully charged by electricity, as a more environmentally friendly product among the people. Any manufacturer will get the ability to produce and register their electric three-wheelers in Sri Lanka in the future," he said.

In addition to manufacturing electric three-wheelers, Vega Innovation Company also converts fuel-powered three-wheelers to run on electricity. In addition to three-wheelers, many other vehicle models, including high-tech electric cars and motorcycles, have already been produced by Vega. The minister also joined the observation of several institutions involved in the introduction of new products, including the Vega Innovation Company located in the Maradana Trace Complex.

HARSHA WELCOMES CB ACTION TO STABILISE RUPEE

"Balance of payment difficulties and black market premium in the official forex market will be eliminated by adjusting the exchange rate to the equilibrium (market) level. This can be done through a transitional phase of floating the currency to permit the market to reveal the equilibrium rate, and then stabilizing that rate through Central Bank intervention

in the forex market," he added, quoting the SJB blueprint.

Two specific actions by the Central Bank also contributed positively to the rupee's appreciation on Thursday. They were, the relaxing of surrender rules on export proceeds to 15 per cent from 25 per cent and the increase of the daily forex trading band.

US should intervene to ensure LG polls held: SJB

"US President Joe Biden assured that his country would not allow democracy to die in any part of the world and therefore,

he should intervene in resolving the issue pertaining to the local government polls," Wijesundara added.

Saliya Pieris is not a political lawyer to take Executive's stance: Lawyers' collective

"Saliya Pieris is an independent lawyer who practised privately for his clients and he is not affiliated or answerable to the executive like the ex-Chief Justice, who was impeached by the then legislature and executive. Thus, no action could be taken against him," said Kumarapperuma answering a question.

Senior Lawyer Asthika Dewendra said the stand that Saliya took with the Election Commission regarding the Local Government polls is not the stand President Ranil Wickremesinghe stood, and thus he was reprimanded in the House, which is baseless and hate speech. "We have known Saliya for over 25 years to be a clean and independent practising lawyer and when President who recently celebrated 50 years as an attorney without practising a single day at the courts, insulting the former is a joke," Attorney Dewendra said.

Lawyer Manoj Nanayakkara said what Saliya Pieris did was to assist the Election Commission in finding a solution to the LG polls issue when the independent commission failed in receiving better advice from the Attorney General's Department.

BASL Past President Geoffrey Alagaratnam PC, Attorneys Nuwan Bopage and Amila Egodamahawatte were also present at the briefing.

Rajitha says he can play a great role as minister


"All governments in the past appointed new ministers from time to time in order to ensure the nation has a powerful government," he said.

Asked about the holding of local government elections, he said people should be fed first before holding elections. "Are we going to starve the people?" he questioned. There were reports that a group of SJB MPs have had discussions with President Ranil Wickremesinghe and would join the government if IMF assistance is finalized but sources close to the President told Daily Mirror that crossovers would take some more time.

PET DOG REMOVED UNDER POLICE PROTECTION

As soon as the suspect was arrested, the couple living at a house in Millaniya in Horana, who had given him accommodation, also disappeared from that house and only the pet dog of the house was left alone. It was reported that a woman who had come to Bandaragama Police to meet the Chief Inspector of Police last week had sought his help to remove the pet dog from the house. Accordingly, the CI who is in charge of the administration had deployed a police constable to provide security until the dog is taken away.

"Reminiscing the fond memories of our Beloved Nuwara Loku Aththa!"



Dudley Gunatilake-Kandy

It's been one year since dearest Nuwara Loku Aththa has passed away, but the sparkle in his eyes, the brightness in his smile and the goodness in his soul are still etched in our memory. That is simply effaceable.

Our darling Nuwara Loku Aththa, for his sisters and brothers - "Loku Ayya" and for Rajans and many in Kandy - Dudley Ayya, was a person with a big heart and a refreshing smile. At the same time, he was an exemplary character to the dearest and nearest and society at large, as everyone looked up to him in awe and sense of respect for who he was - "embodiment of humbleness and chivalrous". He was also full of childlike-innocence who showed a keen interest on arts, culture, theatre, social dancing, singing, socializing etc.

He was indeed a lovable son to his parents, a dutiful brother to his sisters and brother, a caring uncle to his nieces and nephews, a darling husband to wife, a good father to his son and daughter-in-law and an ideal companion for many. He stuck to the core values and principles and he never compromised those, even though he worked with a diverse group of people belonging to all walks of life. He always stood by his ethics no matter who it was and how close the bond was. He was a true source of strength to many and certainly he was a person who was greatly looked up to by family and society for advice and ideas.

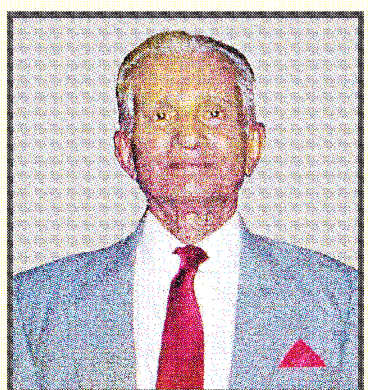
Remarkably, he was an avid reader and a visionary person who clearly understood the true value of education. He helped many children and youth of needy and underprivileged families to gain easy access to education, infrastructure and to climb the social ladder.

Apart from that, he was a veritable torch-bearer of social reform and societal betterment. For example, he was in the Executive Committees of leading coalitions, clubs and groups such as the Young Men's Buddhist Association (President), Kandy Lions Club (President), Kandy Sports Club and the Old Boys' Association of the Dharmaraja College (President) espousing his strong drive to assist the needy and fellow underrepresented community. He treated his alma mater as his second family so that he was selected as the Head Prefect in Dharmaraja College Kandy, which was bestowed upon for a true gentleman-like character back then. Since tender age, he highlighted his true leadership attributes and dedication. He engaged in the social welfare activities silently, where his left hand didn't know what his right hand was doing.

You were a rare gem who served many as a mentor and was a blessing to many others. You will be remembered fondly for the rest of our lives. You had touched countless lives in your lifetime and even after death. I know for the fact that we never lose the people we love, even after they die, you still live with us in our every action.

Missing You Nuwara Loku Aththa! May You Attain the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana!
From - Savindrie Jayawardane - Dearest Savi

5th Year Remembrance



DR. A.M. KARUNARATNE
Sadly Missed and Fondly Remembered
Beloved Husband of the late **CARMEN**
Devoted Father of Milinda

Raj Rodriguez (Snr)

(Beloved Son of Late J.R. & Clara Rodriguez)
05-01-1942 to 09-02-2023

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our Dear Friends and Relatives for the support and kindness extended to us during our great loss.

Our sincere thanks also goes out to St. Theresa's Church and all the Clergy for officiating at the funeral services and for their prayers.

From loving wife Juanita, children Shira (Janaka), Delano (Vini), Grandchild Anisha and the Brothers and Sister of the Rodriguez Family.

We regret our inability to thank you individually.

"Those we Love Don't go away, They walk beside us Everyday"

Alleged illegal arrest of lawyer: SC grants leave to proceed with FR petition

The petitioner stated that he has an extensive practice in Magistrate's Courts and High Courts and had appeared on behalf of former IGP Pujith Jayasundera in the trial relating to his alleged involvement in the Easter Sunday Attacks.

The petitioner stated that on October 25, 2022, he along with

his wife went to the Horana town to purchase some books for their children. The petitioner said he dropped his wife at the bookshop and parked the car in front of a bank. He said whilst he was waiting for his wife, three police officers in civvies surrounded his car and requested him to accompany them to the CID.

COLOMBO FRIEND-IN-NEED SOCIETY NEW MODULAR LIMB WORKSHOP INAUGURATED

The new modular limb workshop of the Colombo Friend-in-Need Society (CFINS) was inaugurated yesterday (3), by High Commissioner of Canada to Sri Lanka Eric Walsh. The Canadian High Commissioner was joined by Ms. Valerie Ouellette, Second Secretary (Political) and Head of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) for Sri Lanka.

The day's proceedings involved a tour of the new modular limb workshop and the rest of the CFINS space, presenting new prosthetic limbs to CFINS' beneficiaries and meeting beneficiaries enrolled in the CFINS Self-Employment Programme. The event was concluded with speeches by CFINS President Krishan Jayawardena,

Canadian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Eric Walsh and President of the Colombo Friend-in-Need Society (CFINS), Krishan Jayawardena presenting a prosthetic limb to a young beneficiary at the inauguration of the new CFINS modular limb workshop. **PIC NIMALSIRI EDIRISINGHE**

Prof. A. H. Sheriffdeen and High Commissioner Walsh. A token of appreciation was presented to the representatives of the Canadian High Commission and the CFINS Board Members.



In the age of information, ignorance is a choice
- DONALD MILLER

OPINION

FAKE NEWS FRAUD USING PRABHA AND FAMILY



By
D.B.S. Jeyaraj

Members of a dozen Sri Lankan Tamil families gathered in the evening at the residence of a fellow Tamil in Switzerland in early November 2022.

They had all been ardent sympathisers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) when the tigers were militarily active in Sri Lanka. They had been invited by the host to listen to a **Mukkiya Arivippu** (An Important Announcement) concerning the Tamil people that evening.

The people were told by their host that someone would arrive in a while to make the announcement.

After a while, two men who at one time were LTTE activists in Switzerland came in. They had a startling piece of news. The assembled gathering was told that LTTE Supremo Veluppillai Prabhakaran described as the "Thamizh Eezha Thesiyath Thalaliver" (National Leader of Tamil Eelam) was not dead as reported by the Sri Lankan Govt. and was living incognito in a safe country.

Sadly, the leader was now seriously ill and required urgent and expensive medical treatment and care.

It was further revealed that Prabhakaran's wife Madhivadhany Erambu and only daughter Duvaraka were also alive and had been living with Prabhakaran.

But due to Prabhakaran's ill health and the urgent need to procure funds for him, the mother and daughter had embarked on a mercy mission. They were now in Switzerland to seek help for the leader of patriotic Tamils with a Tamil nationalist consciousness. Both will now talk to you, the gathering was told.

Thereafter, one of the men took out his mobile and called. The phone was put on speakerphone. A female introducing herself as Madhivadhani said her husband was alive and required urgent medical help.

In a voice choking with emotion, she appealed for financial assistance and then started sobbing. Then another female voice was heard saying "Ammaa, Alatheyungo (Mother don't cry). This was followed by the second female also requesting financial help for her father after claiming to be Prabhakaran's daughter Duvaraka.

The people were then told that both Madhivadhany and Duvaraka were in a vehicle outside the house.

"You can have a look if you want, but you can't speak to them" it was said. Some people went outside. Two women got down from a parked vehicle and clasped their palms together in a traditional greeting style.

Both were wearing Balaclavas covering their faces partially. They got into the vehicle which drove off.

The mood inside the home was emotional. A few ladies were in tears. It was quickly decided that they should donate immediately for the leader's recovery. A sum of 23,635 Francs was raised through cash, cheques and pledges. It was then suggested the amount be made a round figure of 25,000 Francs. This was done and the total sum of donations went up to 25,000 Francs.

A Swiss Franc currently equals 381 Sri Lankan rupees. The two men then left.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2022

The above-mentioned incident was one of many happening in Switzerland among Sri Lankan Tamils in November and December last year. Many Tamil families in Swiss cities such as Zurich, Bern and Basel were approached individually and in groups by persons known to be Pro-LTTE activists in the pre-2009 years.

The modus operandi was basically the same with slight differences in the routine adopted. People supportive of the LTTE were contacted by two unidentifiable women claiming to be Prabhakaran's wife and daughter.

They appealed for financial aid to pay for Prabhakaran's urgent medical expenses who was supposedly afflicted with a serious illness. Many people donated willingly.

Many readers in Sri Lanka may be baffled as to how and why Tamil families fell for what was obviously a blatant confidence trick.

It is indeed well-known that the LTTE leader Prabhakaran died in 2009. His spouse Madhivadhany, daughter Duvaraga and sons Charles Anthony and Balachandran, were also dead.

But now it was being claimed that Prabhakaran, wife and daughter were alive and that the sick leader urgently required cash for medical expenses.

HOW COULD PEOPLE BE SO GULLIBLE?

The main reason for some Tamils believing the fake news about Prabhakaran being alive is due to the stance is taken - after the war ended in 2009 - by the overseas branches of the LTTE in the global Tamil Diaspora as well as prominent pro-LTTE elements in Tamil Nadu.

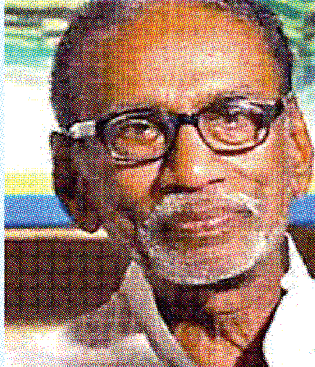
The LTTE structures overseas were financially well-endowed in 2009. The Tigers through front organizations, institutions and trusted individuals controlled a lot of money-making ventures.

They also collected huge sums of money through "contributions" to the LTTE cause. More than a hundred operatives in different countries were

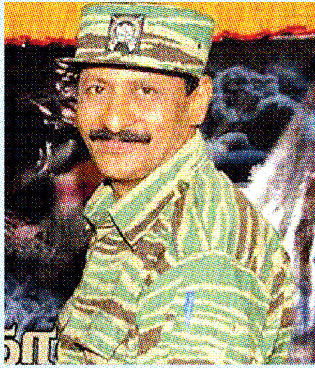
It is alleged that the mastermind behind this fraudulent racket is one Jeevaratnam Jeevakumar alias Chiranjeevi Master, a former deputy of ex-LTTE Intelligence Chief Pottu Ammaan



Perinbananayagam Sivaparan alias Nediyan



Nedomaran



Pottu Ammaan



Jeevaratnam Jeevakumar alias Chiranjeevi Master

full-time tiger activists living comfortably off LTTE funds. So, when the LTTE was defeated militarily and the war came to an end, the situation transformed suddenly. As Yeats wrote in his Easter 1916 "All changed, changed utterly".

The rationale for the overseas LTTE to garner and control funds was to finance the LTTE war machine. Furthermore, the LTTE itself was centred around its supremo Prabhakaran.

So, if Prabhakaran was dead and the LTTE was no more, there was no reason for the overseas LTTE activists to generate funds or run commercial enterprises.

Perinbananayagam Sivaparan alias Nediyan

The overseas LTTE was in a quandary. The man in charge of the overseas tigers then was Perinbananayagam Sivaparan alias Nediyan (Tall man) based in Norway. He and his cohorts decided to deny the fact that Prabhakaran was dead and the war had ended. Instead, it was claimed that the LTTE had "silenced its weapons" (aayuthangal mounikkappattana) and the Leader was still alive.

Nediyan also refused to honour Prabhakaran and other tigers who perished at Mullivaikkal as Maaveerar (Great Heroes).

He argued that if the LTTE openly acknowledged Prabhakaran's death, it would demoralise the Diaspora and LTTE activists abroad.

The overseas Tigers would not be able to raise funds thereafter. The struggle for Tamil Eelam would simply wither away.

Most of the overseas Tiger activists supported Nediyan in this. Prominent LTTE supporters like Pazaniyappan Nedomaran and Vaiyapuri Gopalaswamy (Vaiko) also supported Nediyan.

NO OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION

Thus Prabhakaran's death was never acknowledged 'officially' by the overseas Tigers.

Hence there has been no official commemoration of Prabhakaran or the other LTTE stalwarts killed in May 2009 like Soosai, Pottu, Bhanu, Jeyam or Sornam.

The annual Great Heroes Day observances in November refer to fallen tigers in general and those killed before April 2009 in particular. There was no specific acknowledgement of Prabhakaran and those killed in Mullivaikkal as Maaveerar.

Tamil Nadu was on the boil when news of Prabhakaran's death was first announced. Passions were aroused. But the volatile situation was soon calmed by the public pronouncements of Nedomaran, Vaiko and several other known Tamil Nadu LTTE sympathisers who stated the Sri Lankan authorities were lying and that Prabhakaran was alive and safe.

"Rivers of blood" did not flow in Tamil Nadu as threatened or feared.

Gradually, many prominent Tamil Nadu politicians who said Prabhakaran was alive got "enlightened" later. They changed their position or became silent with the exception of Nedomaran.

The leader of the Tamil Nationalist Movement (TNM) consistently stated in media interviews and public meetings that Prabhakaran was alive and safe and that the tiger leader would emerge soon to take the Tamil Eelam to struggle forward.

No one contradicted or challenged Nedomaran publicly on this out of deference for the veteran politician who had sacrificed much due to his steadfast support of the LTTE.

His views were treated with tolerance as the utterances of an old, embittered and frustrated politician. But some in Tamil Nadu believed Nedomaran.

IF ONLY PRABHAKARAN WAS ALIVE NOW

As the years passed by the Prabhakaran is alive belief began to wane. Life went on but there was an overwhelming feeling of sadness among many Tamils that the Tamil struggle had ended so pathetically without achieving anything tangible.

The loss of thousands of lives in the war and the lack of accountability saddened and troubled many.

There was also a lot of overt and covert sympathy for Prabhakaran who had died along with all the members of his family.

In a private conversation, some would wistfully yearn "If only Prabhakaran was alive now".

It is this frame of mind that was now being exploited by a set of fraudsters with former Tiger links to hoodwink Tamil civilians into donating money for the supposedly alive and sick LTTE leader to women posing as his wife and daughter.

The victims of this confidence trick were all LTTE sympathisers. The perpetrators orchestrating the "Madhivadhany - Duvaraka" charade were persons identified with the overseas LTTE in the past.

Thus it was easy to make suckers out of people with this mindset.

DRAMA OF DECEPTION

The drama of deception to milk sympathetic Tamil Diaspora cash cows was enacted several times in Switzerland in November and December. The two women would be in vehicles when visits to residences were undertaken. They would also meet people directly when visiting apartment buildings.

The two women - one young and one old - would not talk much and would appear worried and sad.

As the news of Prabha being alive and sick buzzed on the Tamil community grapevine, there was a backlash too.

Several Tamils with and without pro-Tiger leanings began to smell a rat. At the forefront of the doubting Thomases were former LTTE members who had been in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka during the final stages of the war.

They knew the truth about the demise of Prabhakaran and his family.

These persons started a counter-campaign emphasising that the leader had been martyred and urging people not to be deceived by the women claiming to be Madhivadhany and Duvaraka.

Among those exposing the fraud was Dayamohan, a former LTTE political wing head for Batticaloa and Amparai Districts who is now living in Switzerland.

IMPOSTOR DUVARAKA EXPOSED

An interesting encounter further exposed the fraudsters. Prabhakaran's daughter Duvaraka had been a member of the LTTE women's brigade.

She had received training to drive vehicles of different varieties. The woman who trained her then was now living overseas with her husband. When the two women went to a house soliciting funds for 'sick' Prabhakaran, the wife was not there.

The husband questioned 'Duvaraka' about the person who taught her to drive vehicles. The unsatisfactory answer demonstrated that this 'Duvaraka' was an impostor.

Details of this incident too began

spreading within Tamil society in Europe.

In January this year, a statement was issued in Tamil on behalf of the LTTE on its letterhead. The statement openly condemned the fraudulent exercise and entreated the people not to be deceived by these tricksters. The statement is believed to be the handiwork of some former LTTE members living abroad. There is no 'official' LTTE now and this statement too in a sense was counterfeit.

Nevertheless, it seemed to have made an impact and the attempts to garner funds in the name of a 'sick' Prabhakaran reportedly ceased in January.

It is against this backdrop that the February 13th announcement by TNM leader Nedomaran about Prabhakaran being alive along with his wife and daughter has to be viewed.

Many suspect that the veteran Tamil Nadu politician has been inveigled by fraudulent elements in Europe into making this pronouncement in order to continue with the fraud.

Though Nedomaran's announcement had created a stir and revived the "Is Prabhakaran alive or not" controversy, there seems to be no indication so far about fresh efforts to collect cash again in the name of Prabhakaran in Europe.

NO RESPECT FOR LTTE LEADER

The brazen fake news racket using two woman impersonators to collect cash in the name of a supposedly ailing Prabhakaran is despicable. Furthermore, it is being done by persons with past links to the LTTE.

This cheap fraud shows that these elements do not have any respect or regard for the LTTE leader or for the cause he believed in.

It is alleged that the mastermind behind this fraudulent racket is one Jeevaratnam Jeevakumar alias Chiranjeevi Master, a former deputy of ex-LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Ammaan.

The plan devised by Master was allegedly executed on the ground by one Abdullah, a former financial head of the LTTE's Switzerland network. Abdullah's real name is Chelliah Jeyapalan. He is from Anaikottai in Jaffna. Abdullah is the man suspected of coordinating and implementing this sting operation besmirching the name of former LTTE leader Veluppillai Prabhakaran.

D.B.S.Jeyaraj can be reached at dbsjeyaraj@yahoo.com



KANDY HIGH SCHOOL OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION (COLOMBO BRANCH)

The Annual General Meeting of the Kandy High School Old Girls' Association (Colombo Branch) will be held on **Saturday 18th March 2023** at the

Union Ballroom, Hilton Colombo Residences (JAIC), Union Place, Colombo 2

The Meeting will commence with registration at 10.00 am followed by fellowship and Lunch

Kindly Call **0722433412, 0779469824 or 0777715551** for ticket reservations and arrange to purchase your ticket on or before 10th March 2023

Mayanthi Kulatunga Jayakody
Hony. Secretary

TODAY
March 4
10.30 a.m
2.30 p.m

Prof. Sarachchandra's
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Sinhabahu

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EDITORIAL

"The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax."
-ALBERT EINSTEIN

OUR THOUGHT

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE MEAL

On Wednesday (1 March) a number of professional bodies, public sector trade unions, including power, petroleum, water, ports, teachers, university lecturers, bank employees and doctors unions called on their members to protest the new tax regime by taking a variety of trade union actions.

Government has hiked income taxes on an average, by up to 36 percent. It has also raised power tariffs by around 65 percent as it bids to put its public finances and debt in order.

The protests took the form of direct strike by doctors trade unions, to lunch-hour protests, to work-to-rule actions by other sectors. But was largely a flop.

Public sector unions are demanding a 'fairer tax regime'. Around 2,000 port workers -already staging a work-to-rule- on Wednesday held a demonstration in support of that demand during their lunch break, in Colombo.

In addition port workers did not work on four to five ships which were docked in port. Apparently the individuals responsible for allocating workers to particular ships did not allocate workers for the job. Resultantly the country had to bear an additional burden of paying demurrage costs for the delay.

The willful abdication of tasks cannot be called 'working to rule'. It is in fact direct sabotage. Worse, when one considers that the country is struggling to repay its foreign debt burden.

A Reuter report quoted the convener of the port trade unions speaking to reporters saying, workers were protesting as they were finding it difficult to live.

He added the tax bill must be removed.

There is no denying it, the cost of living has far out-stripped the wages of over 50 percent of the working class. Today the cost of having two square meals per day, costs between Rs.35,000/- to Rs. 40,000/- per month, whereas wages of ordinary workers are well below Rs. 50,000/- per month.

This in turn means workers are cutting down on meals for themselves and their children. In turn it confirms the UNICEF report that more than 5.7 million people, including 2.3 million children, require humanitarian assistance. It also means workers have no cash to spend on children's education, clothes, medicine, or hospitalization. This is bad. But, the fact of the matter is, that taxable income begins to be applied when an individual's monthly income exceeds Rs. 141,667/-. The rate of tax paid by a person who receives monthly income of Rs' 141,667/- per month is only 6 percent or Rs. 2,000/- per month.

Even most school teachers do not receive an income covered by the first slab of income tax payers. In fact, the 36 percent income tax applies only to those individuals earning over Rs. 350,000/- per month.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in the United Kingdom, the average single worker faced a net average tax rate of 23.7% in 2021. In 2020 the taxation rate in the UK was 32.6 percent.

In reality local trade union leaders seem to be calling on ordinary Lankan workers - who receive wages insufficient to provide even basics to their families to take trade union action on behalf of the well-to-do and super-rich class.

How does this call by union leaders benefit the working class whom union leadership are paid to represent? Taxes are the primary source of revenue for governments.

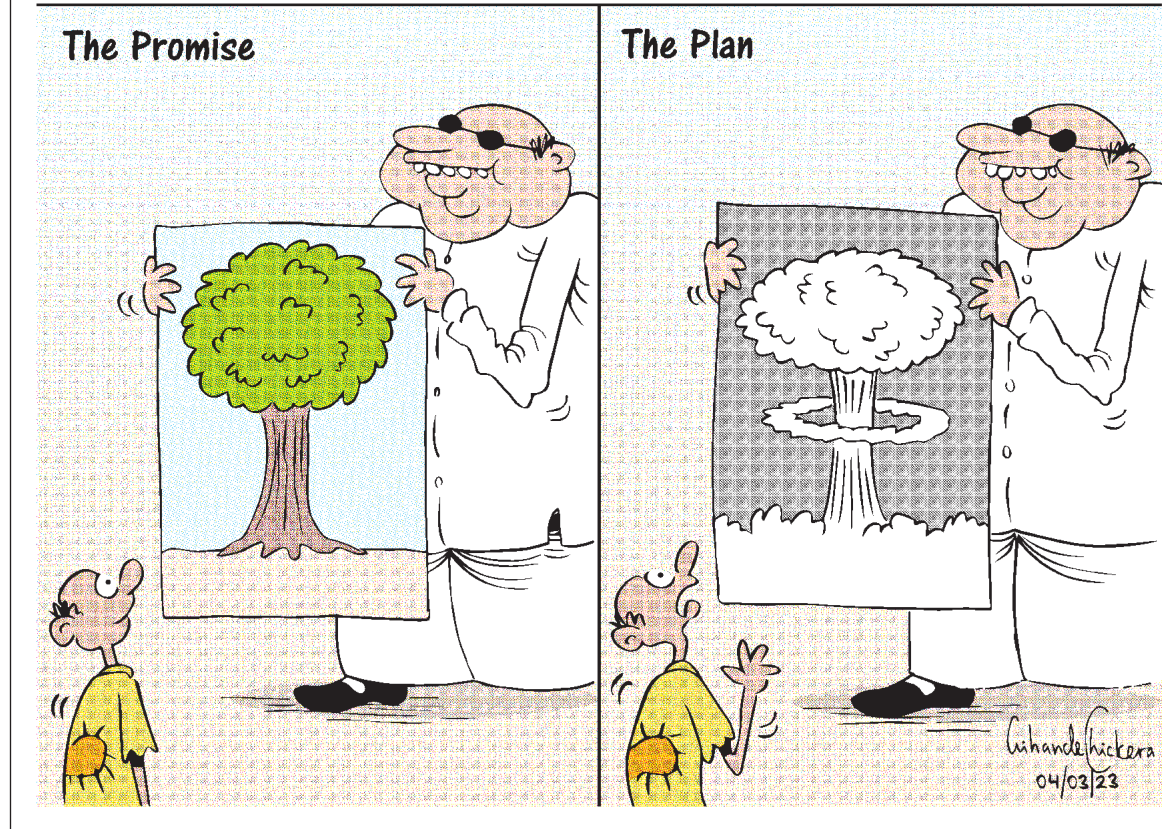
Among other things, these monies are spent to improve and maintain public infrastructure, including road and rail networks, public services, eg schools, hospitals, emergency services, and welfare programmes such as the Samurdhi scheme.

Taxes also enable government to pay salaries in government institutions. Over the years we Lankans enjoyed what we thought was 'free education', 'free hospitalization' 'food subsidies etc. In reality governments past and present were paying for these services with tax revenue.

As the proverb goes... "there's nothing called a free meal". Someone, somewhere has to pay. In our case it was our own taxes, until of a sudden, bad economic policy saw taxes cut and government revenue dropped. At the same time the Covid pandemic struck, cutting our foreign earnings, leading to our international debt default, shortage of money supply and goods in the market. Its time our trade union movement which literally died during past insurgencies re-learn whose rights they are supposed to protect.

Wages need to rise, let's work toward that, let's not pull workers to the street to protect the profits of a handful of super-rich.

SL to have nuclear power plant in near future - NEWS



FOR MORE CARTOONS LOG ON www.dailymirror.lk/cartoon

UNP FAST ERODING ITS LIBERAL IMAGE FOR POWER



By **M.S.M. Ayub**

If the relevant authorities are to go by what President Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament on February 23 about holding Local Government elections that had then been scheduled by the Elections Commission to be held on March 9, those elections have been laid to rest.

The main argument in his speech was that the Local Government elections have not been legally announced on the Ground that the decision by the Elections Commission to hold the elections was not taken with a legally stipulated quorum.

Thus responding to the allegation that the Government was attempting to postpone the elections he said that there was no election declared to postpone.

Thus far, the Government's main argument against holding the Local Government elections had been that the Treasury lacks funds to release for the elections. However, going by his contention that no election has been legally announced, the President said that even if there are funds, there was no election to begin with.

The President also said after the 21st Amendment to the Constitution was passed by Parliament the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission ceased to function from the day on which the Amendment came into operation. As such, they should have discussed the matter with the House, which has not been done, and this is a defect, he argued.

However, only the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) which, like the President's party-the United National Party- views the election at this juncture as an evil spirit is prepared to subscribe to the President's views on the election.

Even relevant officials or the Speaker of the Parliament do not seem to accept it. Already the Supreme Court had told the Elections Commission to go ahead with the elections. TNA MP M. A. Sumanthiran PC, while speaking to the media in Jaffna said it was the height of absurdity of the President to claim that the Local Government elections have not been officially declared after all legal steps have been taken and nominations filed.

JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said if there was any issue with regard to the declaration of the election, it should be resolved in a court of law.

The Elections Commission immediately refuted the President's allegation that the announcement of elections was not in accordance with the law. The Commission, on February 24 issued a statement for this purpose without referring to the President's speech in Parliament.

The Commission chronologically explained the events leading up to the declaration of the election.

In fact, the President's claims are very clearly self-contradictory. He is calling the elections illegal after his party along with other parties, tendered nominations for so

many Local Government bodies. It is a well-known fact that the UNP has submitted a nomination paper for the Colombo Municipal Council in coalition with the SLPP. In many places, UNP candidates have opened temporary election offices in their respective wards.

Despite the President has said in Parliament that he would have to take action against the Secretary to the Treasury, if the latter released funds for the elections, which he considered not in accordance with the law, the Treasury has already released Rs. 100 million to the Elections Commission.

The Government Printer had told our sister paper, Lankadeepa on February 14 that the Treasury had granted Rs. 400 million to the Government Printing Department so far for printing ballot papers.

It was mainly the UNP that was instrumental to bring in the 19th Amendment to the Constitution clipping certain powers of the Executive President, without any outside pressure. The Right to Information was made a Constitutional right during that time. However, everything has changed, since July last year

Besides, Treasury Secretary Mahinda Siriwardana in an affidavit submitted on January 20 pertaining to a Writ Application filed by retired Army Colonel W. M. R. Wijesundara conveyed to the Supreme Court that securing additional funds for an election at a time state revenue is battered by the economic crisis will be extremely challenging. He did not argue that the elections concerned are not properly announced.

The Supreme Court, on February 10 decided not to continue with the Writ Applications that were filed by several MPs noted that the Elections Commission had already undertaken to hold the Local Government Elections in terms of the Law.

The decision was announced in relation to the petition filed by MPs Professor G. L. Peiris, Ranjith Madduma Bandara, Dayasiri Jayasekera, and M. A. Sumanthiran who were seeking an order on the Chairman of the Elections Commission to conduct the Local Government Election as scheduled.

The Court also granted permission for the Commission to go ahead with the elections as planned. Nobody thus far has submitted in Court anything against the validity of elections.

The President was correct when he said that the Chairman and members of the Elections Commission ceased to function from the day on which the 21st Amendment to the Constitution came into operation.

However, the Amendment also says "Provided however, a person holding office on the day preceding the date on which this

Act comes into operation, as a Chairman or a member of any such Commission referred to above may continue to exercise and discharge powers and functions of their respective offices until the such date on which the respective Commissions are constituted in accordance with Chapter VIIA of the Constitution."

Also, the Supreme Court at no point questioned the validity of the powers of the current Election Commission to declare elections.

These arguments have been placed against a backdrop of a plethora of hurdles put up by the Government on the way to the election.

They attempted to bring laws to reduce the number of members of Local Councils, to appoint a Parliamentary Select Committee to change election laws, while another such committee had submitted its report in June last year, presented a private member's Bill affecting the LG elections, passed a bill on election expenditure by the candidates.

The Secretary to the Public Administration Ministry had instructed the District Returning Officers not to accept deposits from candidates, for which he later apologized to the Elections Commission.

EC members received death threats on which CID investigations have been initiated while another member resigned from the Commission. All public officers were instructed to refrain from obtaining goods/services on a credit basis after which Government Printer informed the Elections Commission that he/she was unable to release the ballot papers for the elections until relevant payments are made. Also, the Printer lamented that adequate Police protection had not been provided to her office.

In fact, the Government could have postponed the elections at the beginning with the consent of the Opposition parties, if lack of funds was the real issue, by way of convening a meeting of party leaders and the relevant officials such as the Secretary to the Treasury, without resorting to ridiculous, outrageous and unethical hurdles to the elections. The Government's action eroded especially the image of the UNP as a political party with Liberal values.

The UNP which had earned a notorious reputation in respect of democratic values in governance during its 17-year rule came out as a Liberal democratic party in 2000 under Ranil Wickremesinghe.

It was under him that the party abolished the criminal defamation law and took drastic action to resolve the ethnic issue through a series of talks with the LTTE, during its rule between 2001 and 2004.

Yahapalana administration earned international acclaim for its positive dealings with the UNHRC and it was mainly the UNP that was instrumental to bring in the 19th Amendment to the Constitution clipping certain powers of the Executive President, without any outside pressure. The Right to Information was made a Constitutional right during that time. However, everything has changed, since July last year.

DM Poll

How motivated are you to vote in the coming Local Government election?

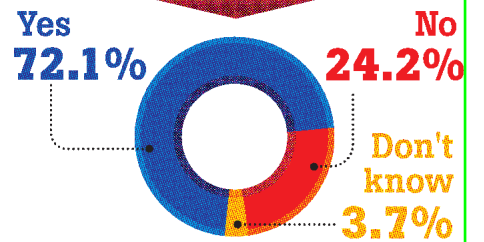
- Extremely motivated
- Somewhat motivated
- Not motivated
- Don't Know



Scan to Vote

LAST POLL

Can the holding of local government elections be justified from a financial perspective during a period of bankruptcy?



See web poll at www.DailyMirror.lk

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LG Polls: Why the President could have held it

As citizens of this country, we saw a Gazette Notification published under No.2317/2 and dated 30.01.2023 pertaining to the holding of a Local Government election on March 09, 2023.

It stated that the poll for those local authorities will be taken on March 09, 2023, from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Government Gazette notification further said that 80720 candidates from 58 registered political parties and independent groups will contest the local Government election which will be held for 339 Local Government bodies. The Chairman of the Elections Commission said that all relevant documents received from District Returning Officers to hold the Local Government Election on March 09 were sent to the Government Printer to be Gazetted.

On the 9th of January, The Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration, Mr. Neil Bandara Hapuhinna in a letter addressed to Returning Officers instructed to stop accepting deposits placed by the candidates for the Local Government election until further notice citing a decision taken by the cabinet. Hapuhinna withdrew his said letter within a few days. Later on, Hapuhinna was summoned before the Elections Commission and he apologized for any inconvenience caused by the said letter. The Government Printer Mrs G.K.D. Liyanage started printing ballot papers and from time to time she kept on issuing various contradictory statements. Once she said that sufficient Police protection had not been provided for the process of printing ballot papers.

On February 23 President tells Parliament that there has not been a quorum when the Elections Commission members decided on the date for the election to be held. As a citizen of this country, I feel that it is not the duty of the president to say it. It should be declared by a member of the election commission. Further, the President has stated that his priority is building the economy and not politics. Article 33 of the Twentieth Amendment to the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka provides that "in addition to powers and functions expressly conferred on or assigned to him by the Constitution or by any written law, the President shall have the power to ensure the creation of proper conditions for the conduct of free and fair elections at the request of the Elections Commission". The said article clearly provides the power on President to create a conducive environment for the election to be held.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe is the Minister of Finance who has the power to instruct Treasury officials to provide funds for the elections.

The President is the Minister of Defence who has the power to instruct the IGP to provide security to the printing of ballot papers. It is crystal clear that the President has power under the Constitution to create a proper environment to hold elections.

A.A.Thilakarathne
Fmr.Asst.Commissioner of Inland Revenue

China tells IMF willing to take a constructive part in debt talks

WEB COMMENTS

ADWANI - China also granted personal loans to win projects and gain a foothold, those loans are not recoverable, thus being a reason for the delay.

MIZARU - So the talks with China seem still at a primitive stage. In my humble view, Sri Lanka being bankrupt will have to come out of the hole on its own. No IMF help need to be expected. Easy to fall in

NIHAL - Hey, give us a break!! Defer loan payments for at least 5 years!!!

JUDE - What will happen after 5 years? back for another loan?

See more web comments at www.DailyMirror.lk

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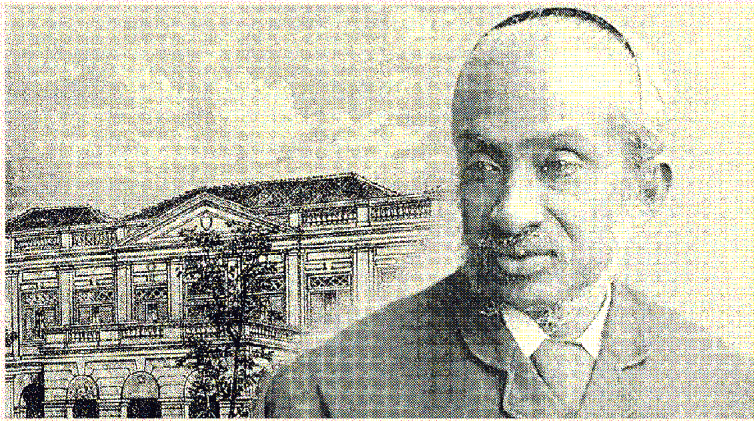
Charles Henry De Soysa

SRI LANKA'S LEGENDARY PHILANTHROPIST



By
**Ilca Malkanthi
Karunaratne**

Much has been written and countless stories told about the late Charles Henry de Soysa; mainly about his largesse and generosity to our nation and to many among the needy. The hospitals he gifted- perhaps the most famous is the De Soysa Hospital for women- and the rest were in other towns and of course his vision for education in giving Prince and Princess of Wales Colleges to Moratuwa, his home town. It is of great pride to us as his descendants that his record of philanthropy stands unequalled in the history of our nation. March 3rd is a memorable day for the descendants of Henry, the students, past pupils of Prince and Princess of Wales Colleges, mothers who have had their babies at The De Soysa Hospital for Women and countless others. As his great granddaughter, I am truly appreciative that this year, the ceremony in his memory at his statue will be restricted to the garlanding the statue, due to the present economic situation in the country. Instead the money spent for this and donations by his descendants will be used to buy shoes for students at Prince of Wales College who are unable to attend school because their parents are unable to buy them footwear. I'm sure he would be pleased by this gesture. He wanted the youth of Moratuwa to be second to none in this country in terms of learning and gathering knowledge. It was interesting to me to learn about the history of 'Alfred House' in an article written by Hugh Karunanayake; which book was recently published. I must thank him



for enlightening me about this as my late father, Professore C.C. de Silva, a grandson of the late Charles Henry, spent his childhood there with his grandmother, Lady de Soysa. C.H.'s widow after his own father's death when he was just five years old.

As his great granddaughter, I am truly appreciative that this year, the ceremony in his memory at his statue will be restricted to the garlanding the statue

It was named 'Alfred House' with the permission of Prince Alfred the then Duke of Edinburgh who visited Ceylon in 1870. He also donated generously to Churches, temples and other institutes. The Moratuwa Maha Sabha, which has also done much to keep the legend of Charles Henry alive, was inaugurated on April 5, 1924.

He was one of the original pupils when S.Thomas' College was started at Mutwal and he helped the school

in innumerable ways when they needed help. His other benefaction of paramount importance as it concerns youth and education was the vast acreage donated by him for the erection of the necessary buildings, playing fields etc for Prince and Princess of Wales Colleges, whose students have adorned the corridors of power in Church, State, Universities, as Captains of Industry and entrepreneurs. Although an Anglican, he thought far beyond the narrow peripheries of race and religion and gave most generously to other religions. His generosity to his fellow human beings and nation covered all the primary needs of man from the cradle to the grave, provided amenities for the study of medicine, roads, bridges, rest houses, tanks, irrigation and endowment to public institutions. It could well be said of him that seldom in the annals of philanthropy has so much been owed by so many to one single man. He established a Cooperative Society for the carpenters of Moratuwa, was the Founder of the Ceylon Agricultural Association and the first Ceylonese Banker. I'm proud that the blood of a man such as this flows in mine and that of my children.

By
**Dr Upul
Wijayawardhana**

MY REMEMBRANCES OF PROF C.C DE SILVA



First time I met Prof. CC was three or four months before I started working for him, as a final year medical student to do the 'Paediatric professional appointment' lasting two weeks

Though almost 59 years have elapsed since, I remember as if it was yesterday. It was 20th of April 1964; the day I started my medical career spanning 47 years across two countries. I was in ward one of Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children well before the 'boss' arrived and the first known person I met was the outgoing intern house officer. On seeing me she blurted "Upul, why the hell have you come to work with this nasty man". It was pretty obvious that she has had a tough six months and was keen on getting out! With a sense of trepidation, made worse by her comments, I waited anxiously for the arrival of the grey-haired, bespectacled, portly professor with a beaming smile. Seeing the fresh face, he looked down and asked me "So, you are the new intern. What made you come to me" when I replied "Sir, I want to start my career working under a great man". The widened smile, with his characteristic huff, not at all nasty, meant that I had made a good start. It indeed was the beginning of a treasured association that lasted till the death of Prof Cholmondeley Charners de Silva on 20th May 1987.

Memories of this remarkable, colourful personality came flooding back after reading Prof Sanath Lamabadusuriya's tribute "Remembering a remarkable personality on his 119th Birth Anniversary" (Daily Mirror, 18 February).

The first time I met Prof. CC was three or four months before I started working for him, as a final year medical student to do the "Paediatric professional appointment" lasting two weeks; an appointment medical students feared most as it concluded with a viva. If one failed it, the appointment has to be repeated and, in our case, would lead to postponing the final examination. Fortunately for us, at the end of our appointment, Prof CC gave us a choice; either face the viva or go with him to see small pox patients in IDH. No hesitation, all 10 in our group opted to go to IDH. One night a child was admitted with fitting and I did everything possible but the mean streak in me made me

disturb Prof CC around the time of his deepest sleep. I gave the story which was followed up by a series of questions which I answered, when Prof CC said "You have done everything, so why are you ringing me". I do not know where I got the strength from, but said "How does it feel sir, to be woken up from deep sleep?". I expected the worst the next morning but Prof. CC greeted me with a big smile. I could not have done that and got away with any other boss of mine and it stands testimony to the greatness of this colourful personality. In fact, I never got a 'nuisance-call' after that and when I came to know him better, I teased him by relating this episode

which met with his typical 'huff'!

All his toughness was forgotten come Christmas! He arrived with a huge suitcase with gifts to everyone, down to the labourers, which made all of them forget what a slave-driver he was! He did not forget Christmas gifts to the children in the ward either. Prof. CC enjoyed inviting medical staff, as well as ex-staff, to his country residence. On many an occasion I too was invited with my wife and children and we were fortunate to meet and associate with his charming wife Irene and daughter Ilka.

One day, in early 1984 when I was working as Assistant Cardiologist, Prof. CC burst into my office and chucked a piece of paper in front of me and said "Sign this and send". When I looked at it, it was a proposal for me to be elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London. I told him "Sir, it is too early, I have time" when he retorted "I know you have time but I don't. I want to see you honoured for your work before I die". I held back tears with difficulty realizing the rarity of such appreciation by a senior!

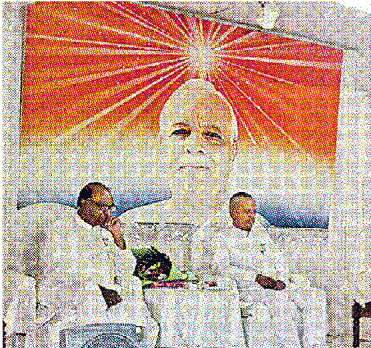
Another occasion he visited similarly was when he was diagnosed with heart failure, to tell me that I have to treat him. It was the greatest honour I had, to treat this giant of the profession, I started my professional career with. He was a wonderful patient, a model patient indeed, who accepted immortality with grace. When I suggested he goes abroad for a valve replacement, he said "Upul, I am too old for all these interventions. I have had a wonderful life and it is time to go!"

It is rare to meet such colourful, wonderful personalities like Prof CC and what I found was that he was just the opposite of what my predecessor described on my first day of work. It is a pity that we do not see such great characters anymore. I consider myself very fortunate that I was able to start my medical career by working under a great man; a giant of our profession!

Mr. B.Nadarajah

He earned both physical and spiritual wealth

Mr. B.Nadarajah was born to very simple parents in the central hills of Sri Lanka and after his basic education moved to Colombo for livelihood. A youngster full of energy and enthusiasm to forge a dynamic future he committed himself to hard work under the most difficult circumstances to launch his first business, Colonial Hardware Stores-situated in the hub of Colombo hardware market about 4 decades ago. His untiring efforts with spiritual inclination drew him to the company of brother Jegathesa, the head of the Brahma Kumaris Raja yoga Centres, Colombo, Sri Lanka in the early 90's. In a few years he diversified into other branches of hardware such as engineering, electrical, trade and multi trade to fulfil his dream as a very dynamic business entrepreneur and Colonial group of companies was founded. As a child born in a less affluent family, he knew the hardships of the poor and he gave opportunities to many youths from such families to forge a bright future by working under him. Today many of them have become entrepreneurs who are very successful. He also used his wealth to support the poor and have-nots to create a life



B.Nadarajah readily supported the activities of the Brahma Kumaris in Sri Lanka; which teaches Raja Yoga meditation

through sincere effort. He readily supported the activities of the Brahma Kumaris in Sri Lanka which was beginning to grow gradually and steadily to teach Raja Yoga meditation in different parts of Sri Lanka through its expansion of centres, service places and classes. His commitment drew the attention of many of the seniors of Brahma Kumaris such as Dadi Prakashmaniji, Dadi Jankiji, Didi Nirmala, Meera Bhenji and many others. He had established a very close relationship with all of them as one who dedicates himself to spirituality hence won their

respect, regard and good wishes. He respected every person and offered love unconditionally; promoting the principals and ideals of the Brahma Kumaris. He was appointed as board member of the Brahma Kumaris Rajayoga Centres, Sri Lanka due to his great role in the development of the activities of the organisation.

He was lovingly called as brother Nada by the members of the Brahma Kumaris.

He is a unique example of one who has earned both physical and spiritual wealth for his family which comprises his spouse Rajamani, the two daughters Sivamalar, Anoma and the three sons Sathishraja, Gokulraj and Mohanraja. He leaves behind a great wealth in terms of his organisations which are managed very well by his children. The greatest fortune he has given them is the goodwill, appreciation and good wishes of all and specially the Brahma Kumaris and Kumars of Sri Lanka, worldwide and the blessings of the seniors of the Brahma Kumaris.

**Brahma Kumaris Rajayoga Centres,
No 55 Peters Lane,
Dehiwala,
Sri Lanka**



By
**Maruthai
Ravindhiran**

REALISING GOD THROUGH REALISING YOUR INNERSELF

Everyone desires to lead a joyful life. The recent pandemic and the subsequent consequences have eluded happiness, joyous and peaceful moments due to struggles and struggles faced by humanity. The future seems to be bleak for people.

Hence, happiness has become obsolete and joyous thing and for some a distant dream for us.

Yet, we are eagerly waiting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

But, if the majority of the leaders and the public are muttering impatient imprecations under their breaths, will that bring back the current Economical, social and political crises to normalcy?

In my humble opinion, words expressed by a person have a positive or negative vibration and power.

If the majority is thinking negatively and express negative emotions and opinions then perhaps it will adversely affect the country in terms of ushering in peace and prosperity.

Hence, we must always have a

principle in our lives to have positive thinking and possess positive attitude besides values for our lives. In my humble opinion, Spiritual belief and spiritual life will mould and craft you to have implicit faith in you, your destiny and God, in that order.

If you practise the values of religious life, you will Happy and when you follow the spiritual life correctly it will give you Joy and peace in particular inner peace besides happiness in your lives.

This means those who want to lead a life full of joy, serenity, fulfillment, tranquility, wisdom, holistic life should realise that Spiritual life will immensely help you to reach the above-mentioned goals and your religious beliefs and life are the stepping stones to lead successful spiritual life.

Similarly one should not pray to God for personal gains rather collectively pray for God's mercy and love. Hence, be religious and be spiritual in your lives and bring glory to God.

Pray to God to dispel the "inner and outer darknesses" from our lives and be prepared to witness new horizons in our lives by fully surrendering ourselves to God.

Let us all together pray to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

May the tomorrow's rising Sun brings us rays of hope, peace, prosperity, divine grace besides joyous lives to all of us and our Motherland.

(The writer is a Specialist in Professional Communication Skills and an Inspirational Speaker. He is also a life Management coach)

Hilton
COLOMBO

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Hilton Colombo for and on behalf of Hotel Developers (Lanka) Ltd hereby invites bids for the Lease of One Unit each of Shop Space located at the Lobby Level and Ground level for either of the following categories

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- **Convenience Shop**

Collection of Specifications

Applicants are requested to collect a set of specifications for the preparation of Bid documents from the purchasing department of Hilton Colombo, No 2 Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 2, from 7th of March 2023 to 21st of March 2023 between hours of 9.00 am to 4.00 pm on weekdays. No collections of Specifications will be entertained after 4.00 pm on Tuesday 21st of March 2023.

Submission of Bids

Bids can be submitted from 7th of March 2023 to 21st of March 2023 between hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm during weekdays.

The Bid must be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked as:

BID SUBMISSION FOR THE LEASE OF SHOP SPACE AT HILTON COLOMBO

And submit to:

**Country Finance Director
Hilton Colombo
No. 2, Sir Chittampalam A Gardiner Mawatha
Colombo 2
Sri Lanka**

Closing Date for Bid submission will be 5.00 pm on 21st of March 2023

- Documents submitted after above timings will be disqualified for whatever cause or reason. The name and mailing address of the applicants shall also be indicated on the envelopes so that late submissions would be returned unopened.
- Hilton Colombo reserves the right to choose the best fitting tenant who best suits the purpose of the Hotel without any justification and the hotel is not bound to accept the offer with the highest bid.
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Wokeism

A Weapon of Mass Destruction?



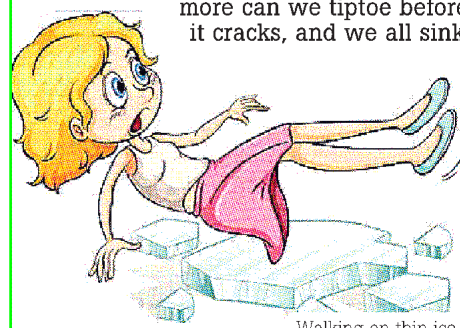
BY RISHINI WEERARATNE

Part One: Roald Dahl

Has the world become too woke?

When can one say they've had enough of being in a state of 'wokeness' and crawl and go back to sleep? Ok, maybe not fall back asleep, but perhaps stay awake but not 'woke'? Opting to spend more time in the UK has certainly expedited my awareness of the word, woke. Almost every publication has a blaring headline dominated by words such as, 'Woke,' 'Cancel Culture,' 'Cultural Inappropriation,' 'New Pronouns,' and so on. Everything revolves around the need to always be politically correct to a point where I feel like I'm constantly walking on eggshells. Psychologists have noted that walking on eggshells over an extended period can cause any individual to lose their authenticity and sense of self.

One can no longer ask another, 'where are you from,' a question I use to freely ask my Uber drivers with South Asian names, as a conversation starter. The late Queen's Lady in Waiting, Lady Susan Hussey had to resign after posing this question to a British national who was of African heritage and Caribbean descent. 'One can no longer wear an outfit, symbol, or accessory not belonging to one's own culture; it's 'culturally inappropriate,' shouts the woke person. Where does one draw the line between being 'culturally appreciative' and 'culturally inappropriate?' We are all walking on thin ice, but for how long more can we tiptoe before it cracks, and we all sink!



Is it healthy to promote the creation of an overly sensitive society? 'Sticks and stones may break my bones. But words shall never hurt me,' no longer relevant? I was a sheltered child raised by an extremely overprotective mother. I couldn't say boo to a goose until I was at least well into my early twenties. In a world filled with internet trolls and keyboard warriors hell-bent on harassing, bullying, and traumatizing any public or private individual for either their own five minutes of personal fame, personal vendetta, or out of envy, or misery; should we be grooming children to face the world with an iron



'Sticks and stones may break my bones. But words shall never hurt me,' no longer relevant?

...fist or allow them in their adult life to disappear into the Metaverse draped in an invincible cloak?

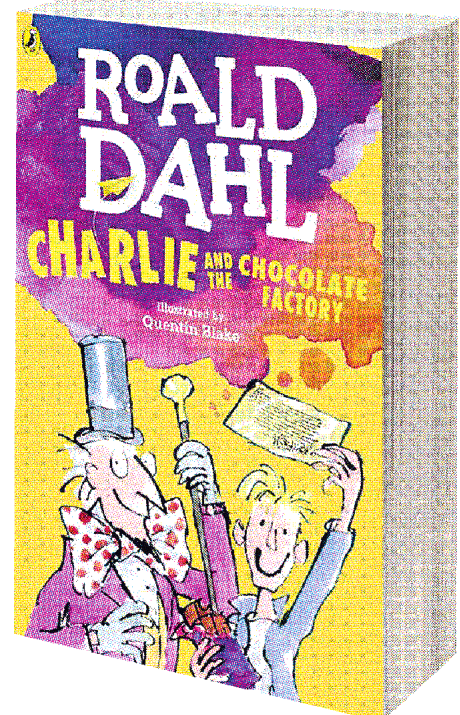
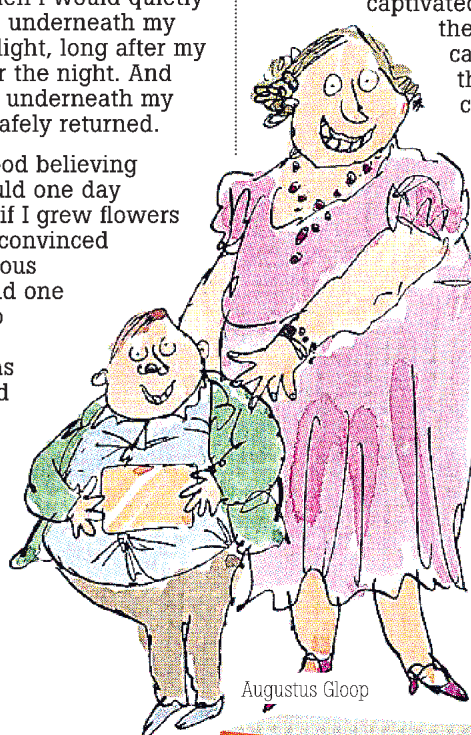
Growing up in Colombo, my afternoons were always spent curled up with a book in my pink bedroom. Seated on my pink chair, with my right ankle tucked under my left thigh, and my left foot always swinging to a rhythm, windows wide open, the warm afternoon wind occasionally making strands of my hair dance; I would read book after book from my carefully curated home library. Carefully curated by an over-protective Sri Lankan mother, who wanted to make sure her daughter read extensively, but never read anything that she disapproved of. Books were always age appropriate, content appropriate, and yes, believe it or not, gender appropriate too. My mother wasn't an avid reader, at least not when I was still a child. Her journey with books took a hiatus when she opted to getting married at eighteen, and only recommenced once I had enrolled at university and she followed me to the UK. My mother spent my university term time during my under-graduate years staying with me. Overprotective or controlling; understanding her true motive continues to remain an unsolved mystery.

It was drilled into my head from a young age that I was a girl and I needed to think, act, speak and behave like a girl; an ideology that left me quite confused and conflicted much of my adult life. But an ideology that formed the crux of my upbringing to a point that even the books I was allowed to read were carefully curated by my mother, with the help of my English Tutor. Roald Dahl, J.M. Barrie, Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, Ludwig Bemelmans, Beatrix Potter, E.B. White, L. Frank Baum, A.A. Milne, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Enid Blyton; these authors stole my imagination every afternoon. Judy



Blume and Francine Pascal robbed me of my sleep at night, when I would quietly read for hours at end, underneath my duvet using my nightlight, long after my mother had retired for the night. And would remain hidden underneath my bed until they were safely returned.

I spent all my childhood believing pixies and fairies would one day appear in my garden if I grew flowers or mushrooms. I was convinced J.M. Barrie's mischievous pixie, Tinkerbell would one night come flying into my bedroom if I kept my window ajar. I was certain she would find comfort sitting in my dolls house, speaking to my dolls when they came alive at midnight, all whilst I was sound asleep. I desperately wanted to be enrolled at Enid Blyton's Whyteleaf School, and spent hours wondering if I would be friends with the

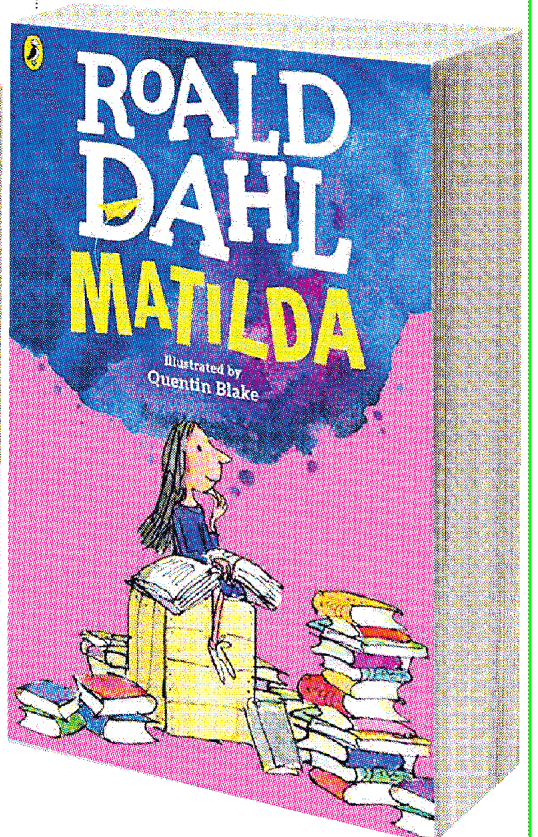
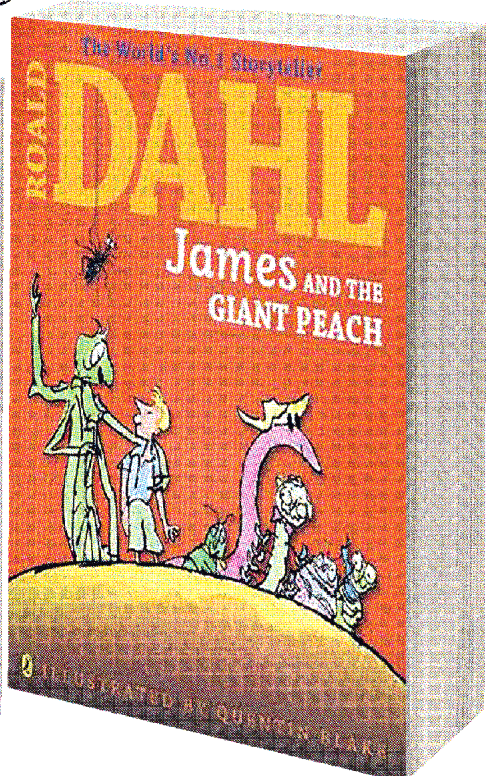
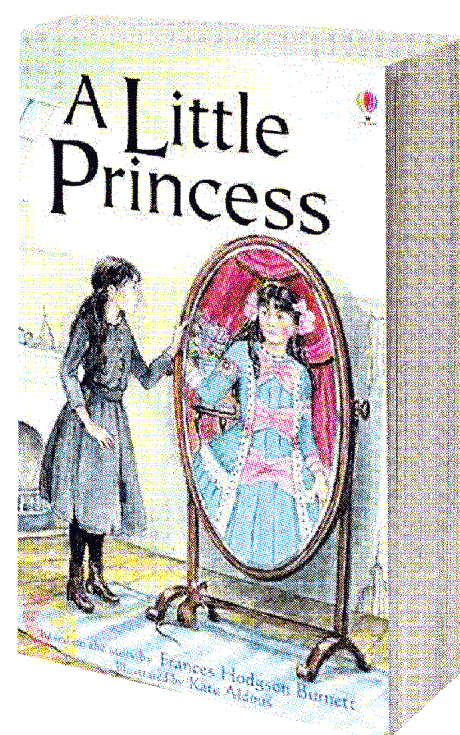


naughtiest girl in the school, Elizabeth Allen, or would I be the one to tell on her? Chances are, I would have been the goody-two-shoes who would have told on her, because my mind was always conditioned to 'behave like a girl,' and being cheeky or mischievous was out of the question and were traits to be frowned upon, not rewarded, or encouraged. I wanted my mother to adopt an orphan, perhaps a little girl like Frances Hodgson Burnett's, Sara Crewe, who could tell me tales from mysterious lands afar. I was also convinced that if I read as many books as I possibly could, I too would discover a magical superpower like Roald Dahl's Matilda. Yes, I have spent countless hours staring at a pencil hoping I can make it move with my eyes.

I giggled endlessly when greedy, Augustus Gloop got stuck in a glass pipe and was too enormous to wiggle out of it and had to be rescued by the Oompa-Loompas. Never for a minute did I get offended by words like, 'greedy,' 'enormous,' 'fat,' 'obese,' or 'horrible.' All words used by Roald Dahl to describe one of the four main antagonists of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.' I was aware of what each word meant, and to me they were always mere words used to describe a character, and words that allowed the reader to paint a picture of the character in their minds which would in turn allow their vivid imagination to run wild and remain captivated throughout

the story. To date I cannot fathom why these words are considered offensive.

I was flabbergasted to read an article published in the Daily Telegraph (UK) titled, 'The Rewriting of Roald Dahl: Across his beloved children's books, hundreds of the author's words have been changed or entirely removed in a bid for relevancy.' Relevancy? Do I need to be 'woke' to fully comprehend this article? According

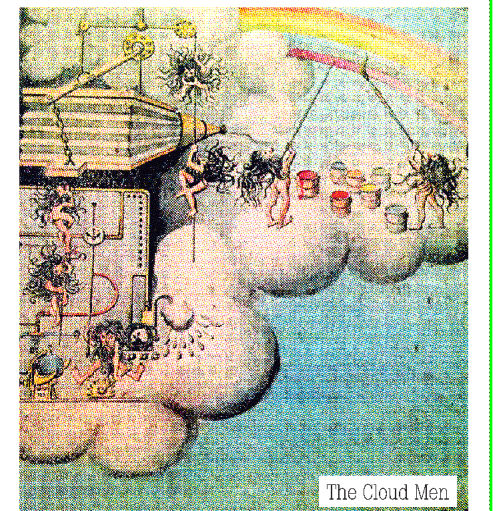


to the article, book publisher Puffin (Penguin House Random) has decided to make hundreds of edits to Roald Dahl's books by removing words suggested by 'Sensitivity Readers' employed by the publisher. 'Sensitivity Readers' are 'Specialist Editors' tasked to search and highlight terms they think will cause offence to a reader. Sensitivity Readers are members of varied minority groups, and belong to different racial minorities, religious minorities and include members of the LGBTIQ community. Publishers hope their own personal experiences will enable them to make informed decisions when searching for content that could be classified as being 'offensive.'

Words such as 'fat' and phrases like 'a hippopotamus, enormous, like a fat pig,' all words and phrases used by the beloved children's author to describe Augustus Gloop, were now deemed too offensive. Hence, in the revised book, the gluttonous Augustus Gloop is no longer 'enormously fat,' but merely 'enormous.'

Other notable changes include several edits to Roald Dahl's book, 'The Witches,' whereby an enchantress no longer exists discreetly among humans posing as, "a cashier in a supermarket or typing letters for a businessman, or driving round in a fancy car," instead, she is now described as "working as a top scientist or running a business." I am all for Girl Power but is it really demeaning to work as 'a cashier' or as 'a secretary.' Shouldn't we instead focus on teaching our children to respect all professions and not just a doctor, lawyer, or an engineer? Furthermore, in the same book, 'The Witches,' there are no longer any old hags, only old crows.

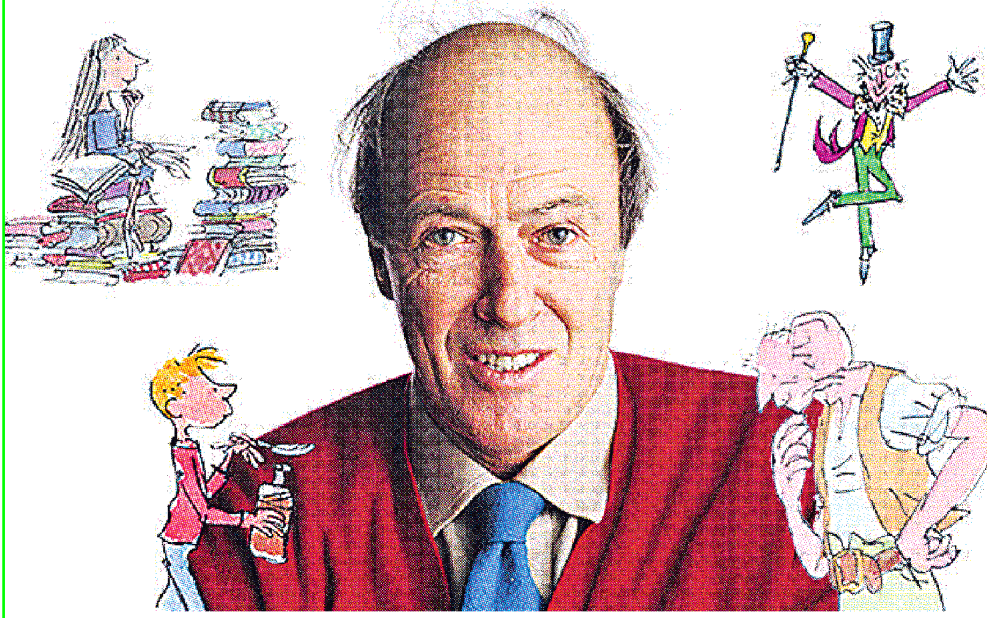
In the book 'James and the Giant Peach,' a rhyme by the Centipede originally read,



"Aunt Sponge was terrifically fat, and tremendously flabby at that. Her tummy and waist were soggy as paste. It has worse on the place where she sat!"

It has now been edited to read as, "Aunt Sponge was a nasty old brute, and deserved to be squashed by the fruit! We all felt a big bump when we dropped with a thump. We left Aunt Sponge behind us, but you needn't remind us, that we shouldn't feel rotten, for we haven't forgotten, how spiteful she could be!"

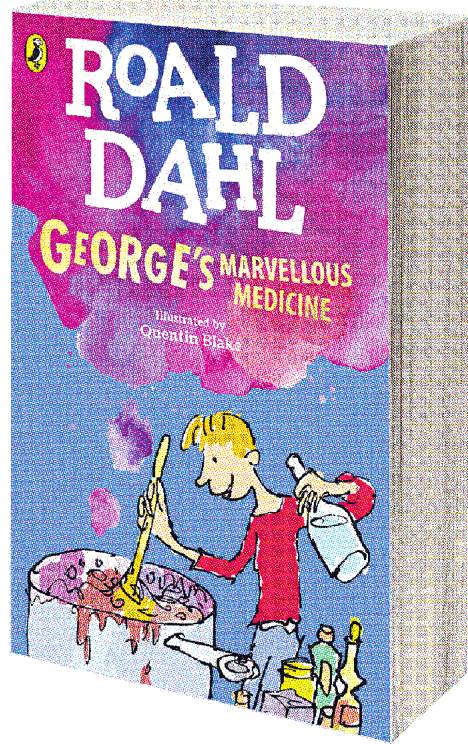
In the same book the Cloud-Men have now become Cloud-People. What's wrong with an antagonist being identified as a man? Must we now gender neutralize everything? As per the book, the Cloud Men are the secondary antagonists, besides Aunt Spiker and Aunt Sponge.



Are we really, as evolved, intelligent beings living in 2023, offended by words penned by an author between 1961 and 1990?

"Once, as they drifted silently past a massive white cloud, they saw on the top of it a group of strange, tall, wispy-looking things that were about twice the height of ordinary men. Ssshh! James whispered back. Don't let them hear you! They must be Cloud Men!" wrote Roald Dahl.

Even my favorite, 'Matilda' wasn't spared. The original version of 'Matilda' states that, "she went on olden day sailing ships with Joseph Conrad. She went to Africa with Ernest Hemingway and to India with Rudyard Kipling." The new edition now states that, "she went to nineteenth century estates with Jane Austen. She went to Africa with Ernest Hemingway and California with John Steinbeck."



In 'George's Marvellous Medicine,' the author wrote, "it was exactly as though someone had pushed an electric wire through the underneath of her chair and switched on the current." The new edition, today, reads as, "it was as though someone had switched her chair with a fighter-jet seat and pressed the eject button."

Other alterations include the words 'mothers' and 'fathers' being switched to 'family,' and the term, 'ladies, and gentleman' changed to 'folk.' 'Boys, and girls' were also switched to 'children,' and colours too were changed from, 'lovely pink skin' to 'lovely smooth skin,' and Miss Spider's head from 'James and the Giant Peach' is no longer described as being black. Furthermore, the publisher also opted to deleting several illustrations by Quentin Blake.

Do I laugh or cry? Are we really, as evolved, intelligent beings living in 2023, offended by words penned by an author between 1961 and 1990? Roald Dahl inspired generations of children through his books, offering them stories in which children always triumphed over villainous, silly adults. He is hailed as one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century. How could we possibly allow his work to be tampered with! While we are at it, are we also going to cancel Cinderella for portraying a stepmother as a wicked, cruel being? Edit the Little Mermaid for giving up her voice? Off with Rapunzel's head for letting down her hair and allowing a stranger to climb up and enter her bedroom? Smack Snow White for living with seven strangers? Ban Peter Pan and Tinkerbell for breaking and entering? Perhaps cancel all Disney classics? The list will be endless. Where do we draw a line?

A notice printed at the bottom of the copyright page of each book explain the changes as, 'Words Matter: The wonderful words of Roald Dahl can transport you to different worlds and introduce you to the most marvellous characters. This book was written many years ago and so we regularly review the language to ensure that it can continue to be enjoyed by all today.'

What message are we trying to share with young people? Generation Alpha needs to be raised sheltered from the harsh realities of the real world? Do we really need more overly sensitive, ticking timebombs running the world or running around the world, aloof? Offended by every word, every conversation, every illustration, every song, and every dance? Arm them with a 'cancel culture' rose-tinted, glass-shield waiting to crack? My own mother attempting to raise me in a very sheltered environment only resulted in her having a daughter prone to multiple allergies and illnesses as a child (and to a great degree even as an adult) and eventually resulted in two anaphylactic shocks experienced in my twenties. As a child, I have spent more time lying in hospital beds, drawing thank you cards for doctors and nurses than any of my other classmates, and to date I have a sensitive stomach unable to digest most food; food poisoning to me is as common as a weekend hangover for a university student. Choices she made for me as a child and as a young adult, unconsciously created several diversions in my journey as an adult. Diversions I perhaps may not have willingly opted for had I been encouraged to be more independent from an early age. But my mother was also raised in a very conservative household by a beautiful woman, who was born in the 1920's in southern Sri Lanka, and who thought words like 'divorce' and 'gay' were taboo, and so offensive that it should never be spoken of in a 'proper household.' My dear grandma passed away in 2019, peacefully at the age of 92 never knowing that two out of her six daughters were legally separated from their husbands, and at least one or two of her own army of grandchildren to date lives quietly inside the closest, afraid to come out.

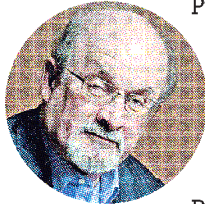
Do we really need more overly sensitive, ticking timebombs running the world or running around the world, aloof? Offended by every word, every conversation, every illustration, every song, and every dance?

These are indeed generational cycles (curses) that need to be broken. Children should ideally be raised with a firm grip on reality and not be raised in a bubble, and freedom of speech, thought and expression should be applauded not absurdly censored. This doesn't mean one must rob an individual of their childhood or expose too much, too early. But there can always be a sensible balance without tipping the scales.

Today, children start surfing the internet before they put aside their gender-neutral toys. They have more access to information than any other generation before them. Their young, impressionable minds consume varied content online, which a mother such as mine would have fainted in her day had I had access to the same. In a digitalized world, with constant access to information, why edit classics written decades ago? Wouldn't reading these be a rite of passage to any child and enable a child to understand how authors minds worked in a pre-internet era? Appreciate the same stories their parents grew up reading? Story books will continue to remain one of the primary sources of entertainment for any child with a wild imagination. Books will always surpass the internet in being food for our hearts, minds, and souls. Why are we denying our children the opportunity to have a hearty chuckle at an 'enormously fat' Augustus Gloop stuck in a glass pipe?



Joining in on the ongoing conversation, Michael Bollner, who starred as Augustus Gloop in the original 1971 film, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,' when he was only twelve years old, stated that, "the story is actually very good, it shows you bad things and bad behaviours, like that kids should not watch TV and should not eat too much. All these are good things, I think, so why stop children knowing about this?"



Puffin's decision sparked a debate in the UK and several renowned authors and celebrities joined in on the conversation. Salman Rushdie, who is published by Penguin Random House, criticised Puffin, via a statement shared on Twitter. "Roald Dahl was no angel, but this is absurd censorship. Puffin Books and the Dahl estate should be ashamed."



Even Her Royal Highness, Camilla, The Queen Consort, made a statement at a Clarence House reception for her online book club. She informed authors present at the event to, "please remain true to your calling, unimpeded by those who may wish to curb the freedom of your expression or impose limits on your imagination."



In a video posted on the 'Bookish Realm YouTube Channel,' the host claimed that some of the edits are, "actually pushing us backwards." She went on to state that, "they are erasing the word 'fat' from a lot of his books, and for someone who is fat, who is reclaiming the use of the word fat, I don't think that fat is an offensive word for everyone. And it's not something that everyone who is fat feels like we should shy away from."



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak also joined on the conversation, and criticised the decision to rewrite Roald Dahl books for a modern audience and stated, "you should not Gobblefunk around with words." The word 'gobblefunk' is from the book, 'The BFG,' and means to play around with words to invent new ones or meanings.

Following widespread backlash, Penguin Random House announced last week that they would republish seventeen of Roald Dahl's unedited titles later this year as part of, 'The Roald Dahl Classic Collection.' The altered versions released by Puffin Books will also continue to remain in circulation, thereby giving readers the 'choice' to select which 'version of Roald Dahl's stories they prefer.'

As human's our opinions are often influenced by our own personal experiences. To highlight different perspectives, I spoke with five mothers and one headmistress to understand how they interpret the changes being made to Roald Dahl's books.

Sasha Wickreematne-Jayamaha

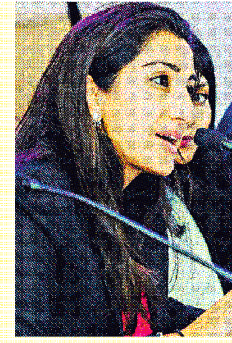
Eight-year-old son, six-year-old-son, five-year-old-daughter, and a three-month old baby boy

To change classic works of children's literature is completely unacceptable. Books being scrubbed by "sensitivity readers" sets a dangerous precedent of censorship reminiscent of China's "cultural revolution." It also raises the question of "whose sensitivity?" Sensitivity, after all, is subjective and I would be curious as to how many people actually find the sentence, "The machines were both black," to be offensive, not to mention the changes that neutralize a nuclear family structure. The changes are rather bizarre especially when that was not the writers vision for the book. Roald Dahl was many things but being politically correct is not one of them and if you read his books, he is rude on purpose not accidentally. In a culture that encourages coddling, over-sensitivity and over-protection, where we see unprecedented rates of anxiety and depression among young children and adolescents, we must teach our children to be resilient, instead of assuming they need protection and sheltering from mere words. If it offends you don't buy it. Teach your children values and principles and don't expect the world to alter itself to do that job for you."



Sonia Dandona-Hirdaramani

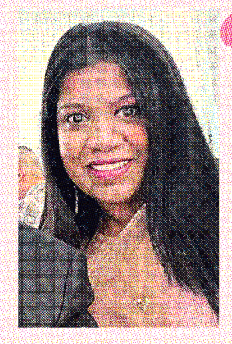
Eleven-year-old son and a nine-year-old son



Words have power to shape minds, especially young impressionable ones. Language is dynamic and has continually evolved to fit our ever-changing world. I support the voluntary tweaking of classics to make them more in line with modern sensibilities, so younger generations can enjoy them. In lieu of that option, I used to read my children my favourites, with a very policing eye, calling out any inappropriate terms and sentiments. That said, when evaluating books of the past with a 2023 lens, I think we need to be more understanding of the historical and cultural context in which the art was created. There are words that were socially acceptable ten years ago, that are no longer. Similarly, some words are grossly offensive, in one country, but may not evoke the same indignation in another. We must be careful not to use one barometer across time periods and countries. We can amend the language, but we need not vilify. After all, when future generations read the most politically correct and culturally sensitive of books from 2023, they will likely find something to fault; this phenomenon is a 'tale as old as time.' I feel Penguin Random House's decision to publish both editions, the original and the modified, is a happy medium, offering the reader the freedom of choice, one of the most important freedoms of all."

Oshini Mahanama-Dayaratne

Eleven-year-old son and a nine-year-old son



Roald Dahl's books are a lot of fun to read, and my children have really enjoyed his work. However, I'm happy with these changes as they are much needed and will allow diversity and inclusivity to be explored and embraced by readers from a very young age. I don't necessarily monitor the books that my children read, but I do encourage them towards good authors. Moving forward, I think these changes are important and Dahl's original work, being quite controversial, should only be used as a comparison by advanced students. These changes will instil diversity and inclusion which are necessary to bring up kind and accepting individuals who are able to empathize and respect one another."

Shaleeka Jayalath

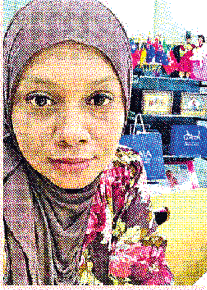
Founder / Principal, Colombo School of Arts

I don't agree with publishing houses editing children's books to such an extent on several counts. I am reminded of the instance of J.K Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone being published as Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in the US, allegedly because children growing up in the US were unfamiliar with the concept of a philosopher. In my opinion, publishing with the original title would have made so much sense. Firstly, as it would have been an opportunity to get students curious about a new word and profession, and secondly as the Philosopher's Stone has its place in the history of alchemy, again giving students the opportunity to learn something new. In the case of Penguin Random House changing gender offensive words, while the intention may demonstrate consideration of others' feelings, the reality is that children need to understand that bullying does happen in a real world



Mifra Sadikeen

Eleven-year-old daughter and seven-year-old daughter



I am most delighted by the changes made to Roald Dahl's use of words in his books. I was quite appalled at the words used in his book Matilda, when I first started reading it with my oldest, which is widely used and encouraged to read as a literary resource. His words certainly elevated our imagination and made us giggle! However, as a mum, I would never want my children to be called, 'fat,' 'ugly,' or far worse 'a filthy little maggot,' then why should one encourage and read these texts to kids at an early age when their personalities are being shaped? Certainly, there are far more enjoyable texts that teaches kids the importance of respect, inclusion, and the importance of celebrating diversity, which fosters respect and open mindedness to other cultures."

Anusha Sethwala

Fifteen-year-old son and Thirteen-year-old daughter

No, I don't agree with the changes. I think we need to be open to people's feelings and respect a person's sexuality, but that does not mean that you need to change the way an author has expressed himself in a book. Some of these books have been published over fifty years ago, and until now they have not been seen as derogatory. My personal opinion is that everyone is trying to go along with the new 'woke culture' and attempting to be seen as being 'relevant.' If the new or old authors for that matter want to write in that form now then so be it. When my kids were smaller I used to monitor what they read but now that they are older I don't monitor everything they read. In my opinion the world does not need extra sensitive kids who's emotions need to be tip toed around every time. However, I also strongly feel we need to be respectful and tolerant of others opinions, feelings and sexuality. Happiness in life is where balance exists."



SPORTS

AUSTRALIA EASE TO RARE TEST WIN IN INDIA, QUALIFY FOR WTC FINAL

Sri Lanka's chances hang in the balance

Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne held their nerve on a viciously turning Indore pitch to guide Australia to a nine-wicket victory Friday and only their second Test win in India since 2004.

The dogged victory secured Australia's berth in the ICC World Test Championship final in June at The Oval.

India, who are currently second in the WTC points table, remain in contention themselves, but will need to win the final Test in Ahmedabad to be certain of a place in the final.

Sri Lanka is the only other country that came make the June final, but they will need to sweep the two-Test series in New Zealand this month.

After Australia were thrashed in the first two Tests inside three days, the series now stands at 2-1 to the hosts with one match remaining.

Set just 76 to win, the tourists lost opener Usman Khawaja to only the second ball of the day for a duck, before Head and Labuschagne eased them to a famous triumph.

Head finished on 49 and Labuschagne was 28 not out.

"I just tried to take it one step at a time," said Head.

"We have seen it throughout the series that with the wickets, the quality of bowling, anything can happen."

"We had to make some changes (after the earlier defeats) but I think we've done a fantastic job to come back after being under pressure in the first two games."

In a low-scoring and frenetic encounter, Australia skittled India for 109 on day one with spinner Matthew Kuhnemann giving the hosts a taste of their own medicine with



Australia's Travis Head (C) greets India's Virat Kohli (2R) next to India's Umesh Yadav (R). Australia's Marnus Labuschagne (2L) and India's Ravindra Jadeja (L) after Australia's victory during the third day of the third Test cricket match between India and Australia at the Holkar Stadium in Indore

five wickets.

In reply Australia made a solid start before collapsing to 197 all out before lunch on day two, their last six wickets tumbling for just 11 runs.

Eight wickets for spinner Nathan Lyon saw India bundled out for 163 in their second innings, setting up a victory target which -- on paper at least -- seemed comfortably within Australia's grasp.

But they made the worst of starts with Khawaja, the hero of the first innings, out almost immediately when he edged Ravichandran Ashwin to keeper Srikar Bharat.

A stunned Khawaja, who had looked supremely assured in the first innings, reviewed the decision but the dismissal was upheld -- to jubilation from the noisy Indore crowd.

Virat Kohli was convinced he had caught gum-chewing Labuschagne, the world number one Test batsman, at slip off Ashwin in the seventh over but India's review was unsuccessful.

After 45 minutes, Labuschagne and Head changed gears.

Head launched Ashwin for a six over mid-on and the next over drilled Ravindra Jadeja down the ground for a four as the

shackles came off.

Labuschagne got in on the act, hitting Jadeja for a four and dismissing a short Ashwin delivery on a half-volley for four more to bring a rare Australia win in India in view.

A flurry of more boundaries quickly reduced the deficit and silenced the home crowd.

It is only the third time that India -- who have won their last 15 home series -- have lost a game at home in the last decade.

Skipper Rohit Sharma said his batsmen should have been more "brave", especially against Lyon.

"We wanted a few guys to stand up and put their hand up and put their hand up and take the team through, but it didn't happen," Rohit said.

"We were slightly behind and we didn't adapt as we would have liked to."

Steve Smith, captaining Australia in place of Pat Cummins, who went home to be with his ill mother, called the victory a team effort.

"Yesterday we had to toil really hard... but we really stuck at it. Nathan got all the rewards with eight wickets but I think our bowlers as a collective were really good," Smith said.

"I like captaining in this part of the world. I feel like I understand the conditions really well. It's a lot different to other parts of the world," he added.

"We fought back here and played our style for longer periods of time than we perhaps did in the first two Test matches."

"Hopefully we can put up a similar performance and finish the series really well."

(AFP)

Dambulla takes lead, match evenly poised



Ashan Priyanjan plays a shot



Sonal Dinusha in action

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

Dambulla cleared the first hurdle as they succeeded in taking a first innings lead over Galle when play ended on day two of the National Super League final played at the Galle International Stadium.

However with Dambulla having a lead of 177 runs and two days of play left, the match is evenly poised as it could turn either way given how dangerous bowlers have looked so far.

The second day's proceedings began with Galle continuing their reply to Dambulla's first innings score of 248, losing two quick wickets inside the first five overs of the day and reduced to 39 for 6.

They made a recovery thanks to two partnerships involving Pathum Kumara, who made a top score of 78 with five boundaries and a six.

The first was an 82-run stand for the seventh wicket with Suminda Lakshan, who made 41 with three

boundaries, and the other of 57 runs for the eighth wicket with Kavishka Anjula, who chipped in with 26.

Kumara's dismissal which was the ninth wicket to fall enabled them to end their innings with a respectable score of 187 runs.

Wanindu Hasaranga added two more wickets to his tally to end up with four scalps while right arm pacie Lahiru Samarakoon who did the early damage in the morning bagged three and Sonal Dinusha two.

Dambulla batting the second time too found the going tough as they lost their top four wickets with the score on 55 before Dinusha, who remained unbeaten on 51, and Ashan Priyanjan rescued them with an unbroken stand of 61 runs for the fifth wicket to help them end the day on 116 for 4.

The match will be continued today.

RESULTS

At Galle Dambulla 248 (Abishek Liyanaarachchi 54, Minod Bhanuka 50, Sanoj Dharshika 37, Pavan Ratnayake 31, Chamindu Wijesinghe 15, Dushan Hemantha 27 n.o., Dunihi Wellalage 5 for 58, Kavishka Anjula 2 for 38) and	116 for 4 (Sonal Dinusha 51 n.o., Ashan Priyanjan 34 n.o., Mohamed Shiraz 2 for 27) Galle (26/4 overnight) 187 (Pathum Kumara 78, Suminda Lakshan 41, Kavishka Anjula 26, Wanindu Hasaranga 4 for 64, Lahiru Samarakoon 3 for 42, Sonal Dinusha 2 for 32)
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CICT wins CASA softball cricket championship 2023

Colombo International Container Terminals (CICT) won the 2023 six-a-side softball cricket tournament organised by the Ceylon Association of Shipping Agents (CASA) beating Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) in the final last month.

Batting first, the CICT team led by Captain Anju Jayashantha scored an impressive 108 for no loss and restricted the SLPA team to 93 for five wickets to win the men's final by 15 runs.

On the way to annexing the championship trophy, Team CICT defeated teams from Colombo Dockyard and Sri Lanka Customs.

A popular annual sporting event involving companies in the ports and shipping sectors as well as in related services, this year's CASA six-a-side cricket tournament was held at the NCC, Maitland Crescent, and attracted a record 64 men's and 28 women's teams.

The CICT team for the 2023



The CICT Team

CASA six-a-side softball cricket tournament comprised of Anju Jayashantha (Captain), Asanka Chamara, Sharika Lakmal, Madusha Randunu, Madusha Lakshan and Anjelo Johns.

CICT which is managed by China Merchant Port Group (CMPort), operates the South Terminal of the Port of Colombo,

the first deep-water terminal in South Asia, which is equipped with facilities to handle the largest vessels afloat. It is also the flagship terminal of China Merchant Port Group.

Pictured here is the victorious CICT team and its captain receiving the CASA champions trophy.

HNB wins inaugural inter-bank netball title



The winning HNB team

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Hatton National Bank (HNB) Sports Club won the inaugural Inter Bank Invitation Netball Championship 2023, held at Torrington, Colombo.

This is the second time HNB netball players have won a National Level Championship within two weeks. Previously, they won

the 2023 Netball Nationals.

The final match of this tournament conducted by the Bankers Club of Sri Lanka, was held between HNB and Commercial Bank.

HNB's veteran players, who have won the Netball Nationals 17 times, defeated Commercial Bank 29-9 to win the championship.

Malmi Hettiarachchi

of HNB was adjudged Netball Queen of the Inter-Bank Invitation Netball Championship.

Utthara Rajarathnam (HNB) was awarded as Best Center Court Player, St. Mandoli of Commercial Bank was awarded as Best Defending Player and Sajini Rathnayaka (HNB) was adjudged the Best Shooter.

Dharmapala host Rahula for 7th Limited Over encounter today

TEXT & PICTURES BY PD DE SILVA

The first XI cricket teams of Rahula College Matara and Dharmapala College Pannipitiya will meet for the 7th Limited Over encounter of the Battle of the Golden Lions series at the P. Sara Oval today (4).

The inaugural two day encounter was played in 2012 and took place annually until 2019. The 2020 and 2021 two day editions were not played due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is regretted that the 2022 two day match has also been scrapped.

The inaugural Limited over

encounter was played in 2013 but was not played again until 2017 after which it was played continuously until 2019. The 2020 and 2021 editions were played in 2022 affording the opportunity for cricket teams that represented the schools in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 schools cricket seasons to represent their schools at a big match encounter.

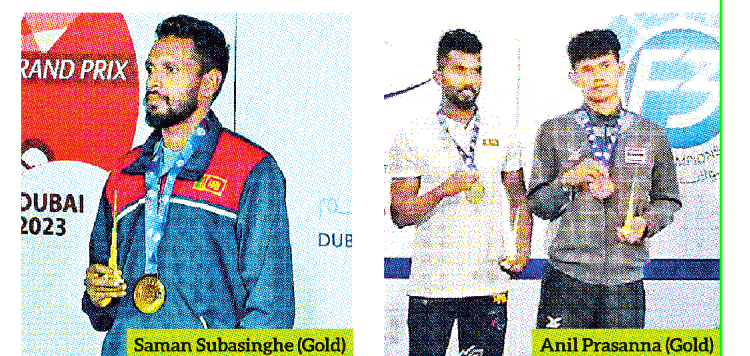
Dharmapala lead the one day series 4 games to 2 having won the 2013, 2018, 2019 and 2021 editions. Rahula won the 2017 and 2020 editions.

The encounter is being hosted by Dharmapala College.

THE TEAMS

- Rahula College:** Pasindu Avishka Ediriweera (captain) G.H. Sithum Anjana, H. Thathsara Dilshan, A.P. Duniidu Duranda, Pasindu Shehan Liyanage, H. G. Sadev Rithmika, Sasindu Dulmal Hewa Battage, T.G. Dineth Thathsara, W. Minuga Lakvindu, Akash Ambeepitiya, R.P. Dilmitth Laktharana, Gevindu Imeth Manamperi, J. Rithika Himash, Lakshitha Wimalaguna, E.G. Sandaneth Ranvinda, M.A. Nadil Sandesh, Thejana Wijewardena, P.W. Deshan Kavinda, Hasika Kumarapperuma
- Dharmapala College:** Thisara Wickremasinghe (captain) Dumindu Gavishita Kaluarachchi, G. Rasmithima Emantha, H. Hirupawa, Sayuranga, T.A. Uditha Sandaruwan, Ushan Galagedara, Ashen Wickremasinghe, Rukshan Devinda Bandara, Praveen Kumarapperuma, Ravindu Nirmal Colombage, Pasindu Theekshana, K.V. D. Menusha Pabasara, Nulan Lakvindu Seneviratne, Sithum Chamalka Hettiarachchi, Kavindu Chanuka Wijesinghe, Dihindu Herath, Chithun Bedhdhage, Chithma Hettiarachchi

Para athletes shine at Fazza Meet in Dubai



Saman Subasinghe (Gold)

Anil Prasanna (Gold)

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

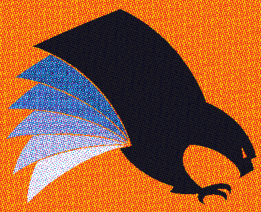
Sri Lanka's para-athletes won four medals, including two golds, at the 14th Fazza International Athletics Championships being held in Dubai.

Saman Subasinghe and Anil Prasanna won gold medals, Indika Gamage claimed a silver medal, and Pradeep Somasiri clinched a bronze medal as the Sri Lankans beat more fancied European and North American rivals.

Subasinghe won the T47 category 400m event, clocking 50.89 seconds, while Prasanna won the T42 category

100m dash, clocking 13.50 seconds. Indika Gamage finished second in the T44 100m dash, clocking 12.43 seconds, while Somasiri was placed third in the T46 1500m event, clocking a personal best time of 4:02:89 minutes.

The four-member Sri Lanka team was accompanied by Roy Samantha as coach and Brig. Bandula Bandara as manager. Their tour was funded by the Department of Sports Development and commercial sponsors Dialog Axiata and MAS Holdings.



Key segments for Sri Lanka tourism in India remain untapped: Indian envoy

- High Commissioner Baglay highlights potential of 'religious tourism' to boost tourist arrival numbers in SL
- Highlights need to promote "two-way" tourism
- Tourism Minister Fernando reiterates negative publicity of SL in Indian media a major challenge

By Shabiya Ali Ahlam

Sri Lanka expects more tourists from India and is looking to make it the largest source market for the local tourism sector but some of the key and high-potential segments remain untapped, according to the Indian envoy in Sri Lanka.

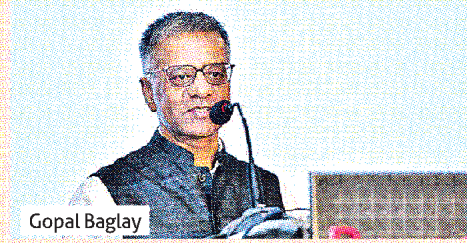
While efforts are underway by Sri Lanka Tourism authorities and the private sector players to lure more Indian tourists, the bulk of the focus thus far has been on the leisure segment.

Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay recently pointed out that the island

nation would stand to reap greater benefits by targeting pilgrims, by promoting the religious sites that are of importance to the Indian audience.

"The focus of Sitha in the so-called Ramayana circuit is enormous; do not underestimate it. If there is enough awareness in India, in various parts of the country, on the Ramayana circuit – the Shiva trail in Sri Lanka, it will add tremendously to the number of tourists coming from India to Sri Lanka," said Baglay.

He shared his views addressing the launch event of a private sector-led tourism



Gopal Baglay



Harin Fernando

PIX BY WARUNA WANNIARACHCHI

promotional campaign, 'And You Thought You Knew Sri Lanka', this week. The envoy also asserted the need to promote 'two-way' tourism between the two countries.

"They (Indian tourists) are enthusiastic and inquisitive about Sri Lanka. It's the duty of the governments to make that happen, help them come."

MORE ON P10

Notice

Mirror Business will not be printed on Monday, March 6, 2023, in view of Madin Poya. The next edition will be on Tuesday (7).

CB delivers 100bps surprise rate hike on IMF insistence



Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe

PIC BY NIMSAL SIRI EDIRISINGHE

- Cites differences between CB and IMF staff on inflation outlook
- CB believes increase in policy rates unlikely to have an impact on market interest rates
- Says with this rate hike, SL has completed all 'prior actions' required to finalise IMF financing
- Expects policy decision to pay way for faster-than-expected deceleration of inflation

Taking everyone by surprise, the Monetary Board of the Central Bank yesterday raised the policy interest rates by 100 basis points, though many predicted the monetary authority to either maintain the status quo or signal a dovish tilt by cutting rates.

Inflation, which peaked almost at 70 percent, has been steadily coming down and the Central Bank is hopeful that it will come down to the desired 4-6 percent band by the end of this year, as the island nation appears to have firmly embarked on a disinflation path.

However, yesterday's monetary policy decision showed differences of opinion between the Central Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), when it comes to inflation projections and expectations.

MORE ON P10

To do away with forex trading band, mandatory sell-down rule

- However, repatriation and conversion rules will stay
- CB says Fx market is returning to normalcy and market-driven Fx rate is possible
- CB purchased US \$ 308mn from Fx market this week, highest for any five-day stretch

As the liquidity in the foreign exchange market is improving steadily, the Central Bank said it would fully lift the trading band introduced in last May along with the complete removal of the foreign currency sell-down rule imposed on exporters, from next week onwards.

The Sri Lankan rupee saw significant appreciation during this week, with the spot rate trading at 338/339 levels against the US dollar yesterday, from over 360 levels at the start of the week on a flurry of positive developments and news on the foreign exchange market.

As a result, the Central Bank gradually widened the forex trading band from the original Rs.2.60 to Rs.5.00 to Rs.7.50 to Rs.10.00 yesterday (Friday).

MORE ON P10

Adani Group: Embattled Indian giant strikes \$1.87bn US deal

Indian multi-billionaire Gautam Adani's embattled business empire says it has secured US \$1.87 billion (£1.6 billion) of investment from a US-based asset management firm.

Florida-headquartered GQG Partners has bought shares in four of the group's companies, Adani told investors.

It marks the first major investment made public by the firm since it was accused of engaging in stock market manipulation and financial fraud by short-seller Hindenburg Research.

Adani Group has denied the allegations.

Adani Group's seven stock market-listed companies had an estimated US \$135 billion wiped off their value since Hindenburg Research's report was published on January 24.



Gautam Adani

The GQG investment will be split across four Adani companies, including flagship firm Adani Enterprises. "This transaction marks the continued confidence of global investors in the governance, management practices and the growth of Adani portfolio of companies," said Adani Group Chief Financial Officer Jugeshinder Singh. "We value GQG's role as a strategic investor in our infrastructure and utility portfolio of sustainable energy, logistics and energy transition," Singh added.

MORE ON P10

Citi Foundation announces inaugural Global Innovation Challenge

The Citi Foundation recently announced its first-ever Global Innovation Challenge to help scale the impact of nonprofits around the world that are developing innovative solutions to improve food security.

The inaugural challenge will provide a collective US \$25 million to 50 organisations to support the piloting or expansion of ideas and projects that are designed to address this issue and strengthen the physical and financial health of low-income families and communities.

With 770 million people suffering from some form of malnutrition around the world, food security is one of today's top global crises. A recent study from Citi Global Perspectives and Solutions found that the estimated impact of malnutrition on the global economy could be

as high as US \$3.5 trillion per year — or close to US \$500 for every individual on the planet — stemming from record-high food prices and other macroeconomic factors that have led to civil unrest, global displacement and more.

"Far too many families around the world face the daily struggle of not knowing when and where their next meal will come from," said Citi Foundation President and Citi Community Investing and Development Head Brandee McHale.

"We understand the economic factors that contribute to this ever-growing crisis and our goal with this RFP is to help empower diverse, mission-driven nonprofits that are pioneering game-changing, scalable solutions in their communities."

MORE ON P10

Expolanka says latest US acquisition will help strengthen brokerage operations

Expolanka Holdings PLC, through its wholly-owned subsidiary EFL Global LLC (EFL USA), a leading global supply chain and logistics solutions company, acquired 100 percent equity interest in Trans American Customhouse Brokers LLC and its related companies, for a purchase consideration of US \$42.5 million, on a cash-free, debt-free basis.

"The acquisition will enable EFL Global to strengthen our brokerage operations, enhance service capabilities to our customers and further consolidate our position in our key North America market," said Expolanka Holdings PLC Director and Group CEO Hanif Yusooif.

Established in 1984, Trans American Customhouse Brokers, Inc. has evolved into an industry innovator in Customs and global trade. Over the last 40 years, it has empowered clients with real, customised and competitive Customs services, global logistics and technology solutions. By acquiring Trans American Customhouse Brokers, Inc., EFL Global will now offer a powerful suite of products and services to customers looking for Customs brokerage and trade solutions. Commenting on the acquisition, EFL Global Group CEO Senthilnathan Shanmugam said, "We are in the midst of exciting times at EFL Global, as we look to consolidate our strengths today as a business. The acquisition is an important part of our strategy, as we continue to build infrastructure and capabilities within our business portfolio with the long term in mind."

This acquisition marks the latest in a series of strategic moves for EFL Global, growing at the forefront of innovation in the supply chain and logistics sector for over 40 years. It continues to invest in its core business capabilities and global operations and the acquisition of Trans American Customhouse Brokers, Inc. is further evidence of this commitment to excellence.



Medicare 2023 brings healthcare sector under fresh spotlight

Medicare 2023, Sri Lanka's national healthcare expo, kicked off in Colombo yesterday, under the theme 'Cure Sri Lanka'. The event that will be held till March 5 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardhana. Medicare 2023 featured over 100 stalls that are represented by local and international organisations from the pharmaceutical, medical equipment and hospital sectors. The participating organisations are offering a variety of free services to the visitors while also hosting several educational seminars.

PIX BY KITHSIRI DE MEL

Disproportional impact of ongoing crisis clearly evident on households, especially women-headed: Save the Children

- Households that have managed to increase their income have failed to provide adequate childcare
- Stresses need to refocus or redesign present humanitarian interventions

There are clear indications of a disproportional impact of the crisis on households depending on demographics, particularly in households with children where women are the sole breadwinners, the latest country assessment by Save the Children Sri Lanka revealed.

The households with insufficient labour contributions or an inability to boost income through alternative revenue sources have struggled significantly to meet their fundamental needs. The report observed that

the households that have managed to increase their income have failed to provide adequate childcare, thereby increasing the risk to children's well-being, as evidenced by the fact that more children in this category have begun exhibiting signs of stress compared to children in other households.

"It is necessary to refocus or redesign the present humanitarian interventions to improve focus and to meet the urgent or lifesaving needs of households experiencing a significant level of impact, due to the current crisis and enabling them to properly recover from shocks," said Save the Children Sri Lanka in its Rapid Assessment Report - Phase Two that was released on Thursday.

"Women-headed and women-led families with children or other vulnerable household members must receive greater attention to enable income creation to support



children's access to school and their survival," it added.

The phase two report presents findings from a six-month follow-up survey to the June 2022 report, with households surveyed under the first RNA phase.

The first household survey, with a representative sample of SC Sri Lanka programme

participants across the nine districts of Anuradhapura, Nuwara Eliya, Monaragala, Badulla, Ratnapura, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Colombo, was conducted in June 2022. A follow-up survey (Phase 2 assessment) was conducted with the same households from November 21 to December 17,

2022. Nearly all households taking part in Phase 1 of the study (2,309 households) participated in the second phase (2,308 households).

Some of the key findings revealed by the report include that between June to December 2022, there has been a 7 percent drop in households that can meet all or most of their basic needs (from 69 percent to 62 percent). However, the remainder of the respondents reported that they were still struggling to fulfil their basic general needs.

For the same period, there has been an increase in the percentage of households that lost most of their income from 47 percent to 55 percent. As a result, one in three households (34.1 percent) reported that their spouse had to take on additional work. Over one in five (22 percent) households reported that another adult in the household had to work and 9.2 percent reported sending their daughter/son to work.

MORE ON P10



SARVODAYA DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

SARVODAYA DEVELOPMENT FINANCE PLC

1319 www.sarvodayafinance.lk



SARVODAYA DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

03.03.2023

Table with columns: SECURITY, VOLUME, VWA, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, WVA, CHANGES. Contains multiple columns of stock market data including LANKA TILES, LANKA VENTURES, LANKA WAREHOUSES, etc.

Exchange Rates

03.03.2023

Table of exchange rates for various currencies including Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Chinese Yuan, Euro, Japanese Yen, etc.

ASPI gains 1.4% during the week

The ASPI closed in green as a result of price gains in counters such as Vallibel One, Commercial Bank and Sampath Bank with the turnover crossing Rs 2.8 Bn. Similar behaviour was witnessed in the S&P SL20. Crossings were witnessed in Sampath Bank, John Keells Holdings, and Lanka IOC, accounting for 43.2% of the turnover. Mixed interest was observed in Expolanka Holdings, Hemas Holdings and Capital Alliance whilst retail interest was noted in Co-Operative Insurance

Company, Browns Investments and Distilleries. Foreign participation in the market activity remained at subdued levels with foreigners closing as net buyers. During the week the ASPI and the S&P SL20 gained 1.4% and 0.2% respectively whilst recording an average daily turnover of Rs. 1.64 Bn. The Banking sector was the top contributor to the market turnover (due to Sampath Bank) whilst the sector index gained 3.80%. The share price of Sampath

Bank increased by Rs 1.70 (3.15%) to close at Rs 55.60. Capital Goods sector was the second highest contributor to the market turnover (due to John Keells Holdings and Hemas Holdings) whilst the sector index increased by 0.82%. The share price of John Keells Holdings recorded a gain of Rs 1.75 (1.28%) to close at Rs 139.00. The share price of Hemas Holdings appreciated by Rs 2.20 (3.45%) to close at Rs 66.00. Expolanka Holdings and Distilleries were also



included among the top turnover contributors. The share price of Expolanka Holdings lost Rs 8.25 (4.72%) to close at Rs 166.50. The share price of Distilleries moved up by Rs 1.50 (8.11%) to close at Rs 20.00. Furthermore, Soflogic Life Insurance announced its interim dividend of Rs. 3.50 per share.

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CB delivers...

"There have been some differences between the CBSL and IMF staff on the inflation outlook," the Central Bank said in its monetary policy review document. In this backdrop, Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe said the Central Bank and IMF reached a consensus to increase the policy interest rates by 100 basis points, though what was agreed with the IMF at the time of entering the staff-level agreement in last September was 250 basis points. "Projections are projections. When we move forward, we would know whose projections are right," Dr. Weerasinghe said, referring to the clear difference of opinion between the Central Bank and IMF about inflation projections. Accordingly, it was decided yesterday to raise both the Standing Deposit Facility Rate (SDFR) and Standing Lending Facility Rate (SLFR) of the Central Bank by 100 basis points to 15.50 percent and 16.50 percent. The monetary policy review was originally scheduled to be announced on Thursday morning but was postponed to Friday afternoon. The reason for the delay could be that the Central Bank and IMF wanted more time to reach a consensus on the policy action. However, Dr. Weerasinghe said the increase in policy rates is unlikely to have an impact on the market interest rates, though he said the rate hike would narrow the spread between the policy rates and market interest rates, which have stayed stubbornly high, largely due to the uncertainties stemming from the delay in the IMF bailout and worries pertaining to debt restructuring. "The most important thing is that with this rate hike, we have completed all the 'prior actions' that will facilitate the unlocking of the IMF financing," Dr. Weerasinghe said. "This decision demonstrates Sri Lanka's commitment to the IMF-EFF arrangement, which has been pursued by the government, in order to ensure stability in the economy on multiple fronts. The finalisation of the IMF-

EFF arrangement is expected to benefit all stakeholders and bolster confidence, which would help restore stability in the economy on a sustained basis. This will incentivise more foreign exchange flows in the period ahead that would aid the economy to overcome the prevailing economic crisis. The board was of the view that the economy has already traversed through the most difficult and unprecedented times, with tremendous resilience and strongly believes that today's decision would pave way for a faster-than-expected deceleration of inflation," the monetary policy review document stated.

To do...

With the continuous improvement in foreign exchange liquidity, the Central Bank yesterday said it decided to completely do away with the band, effective from the next market day, which falls on Tuesday, next week. Along with that, the Central Bank will also do away with its dollar sell-down rule on banks from next week, after a week into relaxing the requirement to 15 percent, from the earlier 25 percent levels. Until this week, the licensed commercial banks and National Savings Bank were required to mandatorily sell 25 percent back to the Central Bank out of the converted inward worker remittances, converted services sector-related export proceeds and receipts and the residual value of the mandatorily converted export proceeds of goods. "We announce today, the guidance of 10.0 rupees will be removed from next Monday and there will be no mandatory purchases by the Central Bank from next Monday," said Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe. "We are coming back to a normal situation in the foreign exchange market now," he added. But the repatriation and conversion of foreign currency requirements would continue to stay. However, the Central Bank will continue to intervene in the market to rebuild its reserves and also to smoothen the excessive volatility, Dr. Weerasinghe said.

The Central Bank had purchased US \$ 308 million in foreign currency in the last five days, a record for such a short stretch; to prevent excessive appreciation of the rupee against the dollar.

Key segments...

Let us make it our joint endeavour to attract more tourists from India to Sri Lanka. And also make better and stronger two-way connections of tourism," added Baglay. Further, Baglay pointed out that India has always been supportive of Sri Lanka's economic recovery efforts. Just as it has extended a helping hand to the island nation, as it grapples with the worst economic crisis, the neighbouring giant has also helped in tourism recovery in the past. Meanwhile, at the same event, Tourism Minister Harin Fernando shared that the road show Sri Lanka Tourism authorities carried out in India towards the latter part of 2022 has not brought the expected results. While initially the Tourism Ministry called the 'Three Cities' road show in India an immense success, Fernando shared that the tourist arrivals from the country have not improved to expected levels. Fernando attributed the negative portrayal of Sri Lanka by a few television channels in India as the key reason for the tourist arrivals from the Indian market not picking up. Since the opening of Sri Lanka after the Covid-19 pandemic, Indian continues to rank as the second tourist traffic generator for the island nation. It contributes to about 13 percent of the monthly tourist arrivals to the country.

Adani Group...

Rajiv Jain, Chairman and Chief Investment Officer at GQG, said he believed the "long-term growth prospects for these companies are substantial".

He added that Adani was "widely regarded as among the best entrepreneurs of his generation".

In a separate regulatory filing, Adani Enterprises denied media reports that the conglomerate had secured US \$ 3 billion in credit from a sovereign wealth fund. "We would like to clarify that the said news item appears to be a market rumour and hence it would be inappropriate on our part to comment on it," the firm said. Earlier on Thursday, India's Supreme Court said it had appointed an independent panel to investigate US short-seller Hindenburg Research's allegations against Adani Group firms. The firm alleged that Adani companies had engaged in decades of "brazen" stock manipulation and accounting fraud. It also claimed the companies had "substantial debt" which put the entire group on a "precarious financial footing".

Citi Foundation...

For this RFP, the Citi Foundation will prioritise projects in four areas: 1. Access: Support efforts that increase access to affordable and healthy food to low-income communities. 2. Affordability: Improve food affordability through community finance efforts that help reduce the financial burden placed on low-income communities. 3. Availability: Address challenges in the food supply chain that lead to positive community benefits, such as the creation of new jobs and businesses. 4. Resilience: Increase the number of available resources that enable low-income communities to more effectively prepare for and respond to disruptions in food security during crises. "The food security crisis is one of the most urgent issues our world is facing today," said Global Citizen President Liza Henshaw. "Having proudly partnered with Citi for over 10 years,

we have seen first-hand the positive impact the Citi Foundation has had helping lift underserved communities out of poverty. This global initiative is going to provide the much-needed funding to industrious organisations working to combat food scarcity with the innovative solutions we desperately need."

The first Global Innovation Challenge builds upon Citi and the foundation's history of support of addressing food security: Citi and Citi Foundation's support has helped No Kid Hungry provide 300 million meals for kids facing hunger since 2014. Citi volunteers have packed over 1.7 million meals on behalf of U.S. Hunger since 2017. In 2020, during the height of the pandemic, the foundation supported the Global Food Banking Network's COVID-19 relief efforts across Central and South America.

In Asia, the foundation's support for Think City in 2020 helped them partner with four community organisations in Malaysia to ensure vulnerable populations received food and medical supplies. Most recently in Europe, financial support from the foundation helped Crown Agents International Development purchase and deliver nutritional support for premature infants in Ukraine amidst the conflict.

The deadline to register is March 22, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. EDT. For more information on this opportunity, including the eligibility requirements and target geographies, please visit: www.citifoundation.com/challenge.

Disproportional impact...

Save the Children Sri Lanka asserted there is a gap in the coverage of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable households. Only one in three households has received cash support/remittances since June 2022. The support was mostly received from the government, followed by non-governmental organisations, community and others - including other family members/relatives.