



YOUR PAPER TODAY 10 PAGES

Residents clash with Police in Weeraketiya: 10 INCLUDING 8 POLICE OFFICERS HOSPITALISED

An argument with the police officers during the search had reportedly turned into a clash

BY DARSHANA SANJEEWA BALASURIYA

At least eight Police officers and two civilians were injured following a clash when residents at Aththanayala in Weeraketiya had objected to the Police for carrying out their duties.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

SL'S 6TH PERIODIC REVIEW UNDER ICCPR TO BE HELD IN GENEVA

At Sri Lanka's request, the 6th Review will be conducted in hybrid format and will be led by Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Himalee Arunatilaka

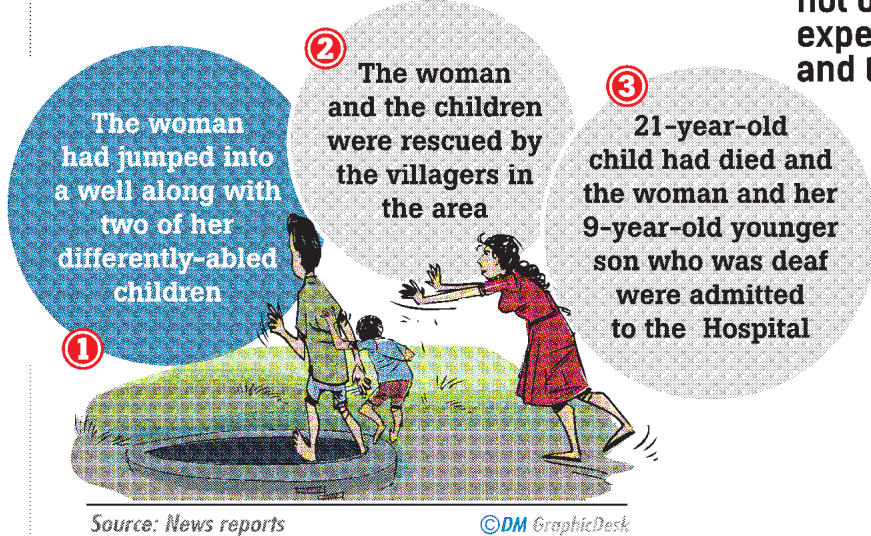
Sri Lanka's 6th Periodic Review under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) will be held on March 8 and 9 in Geneva. The Foreign Ministry said that the 6th Report was submitted on 22 February 2019 to the Human Rights Committee. It is recalled that Sri Lanka acceded to the ICCPR on 11 June 1980.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

MOTHER JUMPS INTO WELL WITH TWO DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILDREN

One child dies in the tragedy

Claims she could not bear the medical expenses of the two boys and the cost of living



Source: News reports

©DM GraphicDesk

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Price of bread should reduce to Rs.100: Bakery Owners

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

There are no plans to increase the prices of bakery items other than decreasing them, and it was further said that the price of a loaf of bread is expected to be reduced to 100 rupees, All Ceylon Bakery Owners' Association (ACBOA) chairman N.K. Jayawardena said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Major trains cancelled for the first time in history due to lack of crew

More than 90 locomotive drivers in rank three of the railway services have not been elevated to rank two position yet

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

Major train services in remote areas are now being cancelled for the first time in history, Locomotive Engineering Operators' Union Chairman K.A.U. Konthasinghe said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Basil played a greater role in securing IMF assurance: SLPP MP

Former minister of Finance Basil Rajapaksa played a greater role in securing IMF assistance, a SLPP MP and Chairman of Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) Ranjith Bandara said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

107,639 tourist arrivals; MRIA receives 11,926 with 72 aircraft movements: AASL

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

While Sri Lanka's tourism industry recorded 107,639 international tourist arrivals in February 2023, the MRIA has facilitated 11,926 international tourist movements (6,259 arrivals and 5,667 departures) over 72 international aircraft movements, Airport and Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) (Private) Limited (AASL) said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSION MEMBERS Constitutional Council meeting summoned on Thursday

BY YOHAN PERERA AND AJITH SIRIWARDANA

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena has summoned the Constitutional Council on Thursday March 9 to discuss the appointment of new members to the independent commissions.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

NPP candidate responsible for Chinese fertilizer import: Amaraweera

The executive officer who is responsible for the controversial shipment of Chinese organic fertilizer in 2021 is a candidate for the National People's Power (NPP) in Wattala, Agriculture Minister Mahinda Amaraweera charged.

He said the real masterminds of the controversial import which caused a diplomatic rift between the two countries are now exposed.

Stage is set for a Dictatorship in SL: Dullas

Whilst stating that stage is being set for a dictatorial administration in Sri Lanka, opposition MP Dullas Alahapperuma said some MPs have begged President Ranil Wickremesinghe not to dissolve Parliament till their vehicle permits and pensions are secured.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Advertisement for Friends Adult Diapers, featuring an image of a woman and child, and text: 'ENJOY THE FREEDOM, COMFORT & HAPPINESS IN YOUR LIFE WITH FRIENDS ADULT DIAPERS'.

US Treasury Secretary speaks to SL President & expresses support

US Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen yesterday spoke with Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and expressed support for Sri Lanka's steps towards an IMF-supported programme to advance economic reform and achieve a strong and durable recovery.



Devotees pour into temples to mark Medin Full Moon Poya

Devotees came in numbers to the Gangaramaya Temple in Hunupitiya on the occasion of Medin Full Moon Poya Day yesterday.

Polls Chief agrees to meet opposition MPs today

Chairman of Election Commission Nimal Punchihewa has agreed to meet opposition MPs today to discuss the local government elections, MP Dullas Alahapperuma said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Private buses lose Rs. 500 million due to protests in WP since January

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

Since January this year, there has been a loss of around Rs. 500 million in income for the private buses due to protests held in the Western Province (WP), Lanka Private Bus Owners' Association (LPBOA) Chairman Gemunu Wijerathne said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Principal interdicted on suspicion of being up to no good

BY PRASANNA PATHMASIRI

The principal of a leading school in Keppetipola in the Welimada zone was interdicted on suspicion of attempting to have clandestine relations with female students of the school.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Hikkaduwa is my favourite movie shooting location: Ryan Reynolds



He said this during a programme held in a London-based TV talk show

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

The Canadian-American born actor Ryan Reynolds recently said that Hikkaduwa is his favourite movie shooting location of all time. He said this during a programme held in a London-based TV talk show on Saturday. The actor spoke about his first movie, 'Ordinary Magic 1993' which was filmed in Sri Lanka.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Daily Mirror

www.dailymirror.lk

CONTD.
FROM PAGE 1

MRIA receives 11,926 with 72 aircraft movements: AASL

The top five source markets for Sri Lanka in February have been the Russian Federation, 29,084 (27%), India, 13,714 (13%), the United Kingdom, 8,575 (8%), Germany, 7,930 (7%), and France, 6,118 (6%).

Further, after 2021, MRIA facilitated the first flight of SCAT Airlines of Kazakhstan yesterday, with 188 international tourists arriving in the country. Altogether, 602 international tourists arrived in Sri Lanka yesterday, and also, Red Wings Airlines, a Russian regional leisure airline based in Moscow, carried 414 international tourists to the country while

407 tourists departed on the same flight yesterday.

AASL has made all the necessary arrangements to welcome the guests and facilitate smooth operations to process 1,009 tourist movements.

The top management of AASL appreciates the contribution of the Department of Immigration and Emigration, Sri Lanka Customs, and all other institutions at MRIA for their team effort and efficient operations in doing the needful. If the trend continues, the year 2023 will be one of the best recovery years for Sri Lanka, and tourism will support rebuilding the economy.

10 INCLUDING 8 POLICE OFFICERS HOSPITALISED

Police said a group of officers from the Weeraketiya Police had checked several men who were on the road in the Aththanayala area on their way back from an illicit liquor raid at Gonadeniya in Weeraketiya.

An argument with the police officers during the search had reportedly turned into a clash.

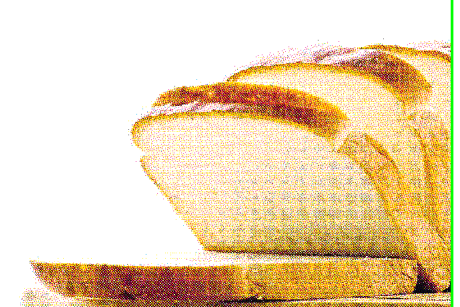
Several residents in the Aththanayala area gathered at the location in which later police had deployed additional officers including STF to control the situation.

Police said during the clash a man had bitten both the ears of a sub-inspector of Police.

He was later admitted to the Karapitiya Hospital.

The other officers and civilian injured in the clash were admitted to the Tangalle Hospital.

Police had arrested at least by standers over the incident and the Weeraketiya Police are conducting further investigations.



Price of bread should reduce to Rs.100: Bakery Owners

Due to the need to maintain the bakery industry, bakery owners have to bear the burden of various problems affecting the bakery industry

He said that the support of the government is expected for this and that the bakery industry, which is currently stalled, can be restored only if the prices of bakery products including bread buns are reduced.

A loaf of bread is currently being sold for Rs.150, Rs.160, Rs.170 and in some areas for Rs. 180. He said that the consumer cannot afford those prices which is why the sale of bread buns has decreased by 20 to 25 percent.

Due to the increase in electricity bills, the bakery industry has been heavily impacted, which has led to the collapse of the industry.

Due to the need to maintain the bakery industry, the bakery owners have to bear the burden and due to various problems affecting the bakery industry, 5,000 out of 7,000 bakeries are closed, Jayawardena said.

CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL MEETING SUMMONED ON THURSDAY

It is also expected that new members for the Bribery Commission, Judicial Service Commission, Police Commission, Audit Commission, Public Service Commission and Human Rights Commission will be appointed on that day. Sources

close to the Speaker told Daily Mirror that the Constitutional Council will meet this week while Deputy Secretary General and Chief of Staff of Parliament Kushani Rohanadeera said the meeting has been fixed for Thursday.

Major trains cancelled for the first time in history due to lack of crew

He told the media that major trains in Maho, Gal Oya, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa in the eastern zone, have been affected due to a lack of staff.

"Every essential grade in the Railways Department has been affected due to lack of staff. More than 90 locomotive drivers in rank three of the railway services have not been elevated to rank two position yet. Due to this reason, they are unable to operate locomotives," Konthasinghe said.

Meanwhile, there are protracted delays in receiving confirmations for

staff who are attached to the railway on contract basis, he said.

"For the reasons stated above, the number of train cancellations have increased. Therefore, we have to cancel the train that runs between Colombo Fort and Batticaloa for the first time in the history of the railway," he said.

If this practice continues, the trains will either be delayed or cancelled. If the government does not take any action, the union will be compelled to take trade union action to protect the Railway Department, Konthasinghe added.

Mother jumps into well with two differently-abled children

They were later transferred to the Anuradhapura Hospital for further treatment.

Police said the woman and the children were rescued by the villagers in the area.

It was reported that the husband of the woman who is a Civil Defence

Security person was on duty at the time of the incident.

Investigations revealed the woman had pushed the children into the well and jumped as she couldn't take care of the boys.

Police are to take legal action against the woman over the incident.

Hikkaduwa is my favourite movie shooting location: Ryan Reynolds

The video was posted on social media by a user named Aqeel Siraj. "My first movie that I started on was in Sri Lanka; it is so exotic and opened my mind to new horizons," actor Ryan Reynolds said.

SL'S 6TH PERIODIC REVIEW UNDER ICCPR TO BE HELD IN GENEVA

Currently, 173 countries have ratified the ICCPR. In addition to the implementation of the Covenant, all State Parties to the Covenant have undertaken a voluntary obligation to submit periodic reports to the Committee and participate in periodic reviews.

Accordingly, Sri Lanka has submitted 5 Periodic Reports in 1983, 1990, 1994, 2003 and 2013 and has participated in 5 Reviews in 1983, 1991, 1995, 2003 and 2014.

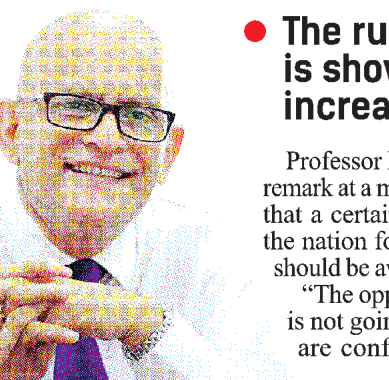
The Human Rights Committee is a body comprised of 18

independent experts that monitor the implementation of the ICCPR. The Reviews of all countries are conducted by the Committee.

At Sri Lanka's request, the 6th Review will be conducted in hybrid format and will be led by Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Himalee Arunatilaka. The Sri Lanka delegation also comprises senior officials from the Presidential Secretariat, Ministry of Public Security, Attorney-General's Department, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, and the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva participating in person. Senior officials from Colombo will join the Review virtually representing the Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, Ministry of Health, Department of Prisons, Department of Police, Office on Missing Persons (OMP), Office on Reparations (OR) and Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR).

BASIL PLAYED A GREATER ROLE IN SECURING IMF ASSURANCE: SLPP MP



The rupee is being stabilized today and the economy is showing signs of recovery, foreign reserves are increasing while tourism has picked up

Professor Bandara who came out with this remark at a media conference also highlighted that a certain group was out to destabilize the nation for the last seven years. "People should be aware of this group," the MP said.

"The opposition is saying that Sri Lanka is not going to get IMF assistance but we are confident that the assistance will

come by the third week of this month. The discussions with IMF has come to a final stage and the incumbent President should also be thanked for the progress," he said.

"The rupee is being stabilized today and the economy is showing signs of recovery, foreign reserves are increased while tourism has picked up," he also said.

Stage is set for a dictatorship in SL: Dullas

Election Commission should hold local government election in line with the recent ruling given by the Supreme Court

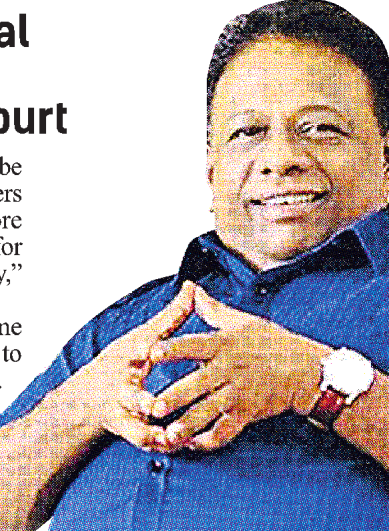
Speaking during a public gathering, the MP said Sri Lanka's representative democracy will soon end and stage will be set for a dictatorial administration in the country.

"Provincial councils are being administered by the governors who are representatives of the President. The President has got control over Parliament and he is now able to dissolve it at any time. However some MPs are pleading with the President not to dissolve the House till they secure their pensions and vehicle permits. The local

government bodies will soon come to be administered by special commissioners appointed by the President. Therefore circumstances would be conducive for setting up a dictatorship in this country," the MP said.

"However the day will soon come when people would tell the president to 'shut up' and silence him," he added.

Also, the MP said the Election Commission should hold local government election in line with the recent ruling given by the Supreme Court.



Polls Chief agrees to meet opposition MPs today

MP Alahapperuma told Daily Mirror that Chairman of Election Commission has heeded the request made by the MPs to meet him today.

"We have got positive response to our request from the elections chief," the MP said. All opposition groups on Sunday sought a meeting with the Election Commission chairman and also requested him to conduct the local polls before March this year. The MP also said the opposition will agitate for local polls in Parliament today.



Principal interdicted

The suspect was a 55 year old father of two children. He is alleged to have made scandalous suggestions to the female students of the school through WhatsApp messages at night. A male student who disguised as a female student had sent photos to the principal who in reply had sent him his naked photos and informed him to come to school on a holiday.

The schoolboy who had proof of the scandalous behaviour of the principal had brought it to the notice of the parents, teachers and past pupils who drove away the principal from the school creating a tense atmosphere.

After a preliminary investigation of their complaints, Uva Province Ministry of Education interdicted the principal and initiated a formal disciplinary inquiry against him.

OBITUARIES

REVEREND FR. LEON GERARD BABAPULLE. OMI who was serving as an Assistant Parish Priest at Grand Street in Negombo, Sri Lanka, was summoned to everlasting rest on 6th March 2023 at the age of 66. His mortal remains will be brought to St. Mary's Church in Grand Street, Negombo Today, 7th March 2023 at 6.00 a.m. It will stay there until the Funeral Mass at 2.00 p.m. After that, it will be taken to General Cemetery, Borella for burial at about 5.00 p.m.

ONLINE OBITUARIES
www.dailymirror.lk/obituaries

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PRIVATE BUSES LOSE RS. 500 MILLION

Government workers conduct protests while receiving salaries at the end of each month

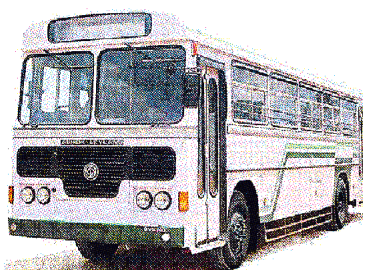
He told the Daily Mirror that there is a loss of Rs. 10 million daily.

Due to protests, we had to reduce the daily bus trips to two, and a large volume of fuel was wasted on the road waiting in traffic, he said.

"Including the fuel wastage, the total loss is closer to Rs. 10 million per day in the WP. The fuel loss is nearly Rs. 600,000 when considering the trips," Wijerathne said.

When compared to other provinces, WP suffered a heavy loss, he said.

"Government workers conduct protests while receiving salaries at the end of each month, but we have to earn for our living. There is no issue with the buses operating



under the Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB), as they also get their salaries regularly," he said.

Therefore, we have informed the police about this earlier to ease the traffic during protests or let the protesters continue protests without causing hindrance to the traffic flow, Wijerathne said.

J'pura Uni to conduct Int'l research conference

IRCHSS 2023 is an event that has attracted both local and international scholars over the last few years

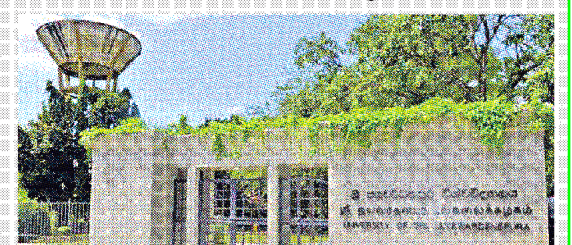
BY DINULI FRANCISCO

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, will hold the International Research Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) for the 8th time on 16th (Thursday) and 17th (Friday) March as a HYBRID Conference under the theme "Seeing through Testing Times and the Future."

The inauguration ceremony and the plenary speeches will take place at the Senate Boardroom of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura while the conference presentations will take place on a virtual platform.

IRCHSS 2023 is an event that has attracted both local and international scholars over the last few years. As it has been in the past, it aims at providing a platform for renowned intellectuals and emerging scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research on all aspects of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The keynote speaker of the conference is Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, Emeritus Professor, Sabaragamuwa University Sri Lanka. The plenary speakers are Prof. Charmalie Nahallage, University of Sri



Jayewardenepura, Prof. Rajesh Bhatt University of Massachusetts at Amherst, USA and Prof. Dr. Andrew Lian, Emeritus Professor, University of Canberra, Australia who is also a Professor at Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand.

The chair of the conference is Dr. Tharanga Weerasooriya and the conference secretary is Dr. Tharaka Ananda from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

This year timely research topics on challenges and opportunities posed by the current socio-economic situations and their implications to propose strategic plans are specifically given attention to at the conference.

FIRE RIPS THROUGH WORLD'S LARGEST REFUGEE CAMP



Rohingya refugees try to douse a major fire in their Balukhali camp at Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh (RT)

Authorities in Bangladesh have opened an investigation into the circumstances which led to an inferno at a Rohingya refugee camp on Sunday that destroyed around 2,000 shelters and left thousands of people homeless.

Local media has reported that one man – who is understood to be a refugee – has been detained in connection with the fire. Police are trying to determine whether or not the blaze was started “as an act of sabotage,” according to Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, the chairman of Bangladesh’s Refugee Relief Repatriation Commissioner.

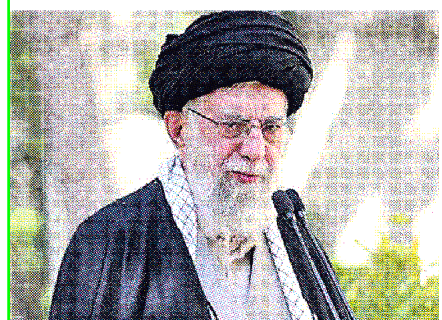
“Some 2,000 shelters have been burnt, leaving about 12,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals shelterless,” Rahman told the AFP. It is not yet clear how the fire, which occurred at 2:45pm local time on Sunday, began but it is thought to have spread quickly through tarpaulin shelters and by gas cylinders in kitchens. No casualties have yet been reported in the fire, which was brought under control after three hours.

The refugee camp in the country’s southeast is considered to be the largest of its kind. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) tweeted on Sunday that 90 facilities, including hospitals and learning centers, had been destroyed in the fire. Around 35 mosques were also reported to have been damaged or destroyed.

Bangladesh authorities are working with domestic and international aid groups to supply food and temporary shelter to those affected by the blaze.

RT.com, 6 March, 2023-

Girls' poisoning 'unforgivable': Iran's Khamenei



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (AFP)

Iran's supreme leader said Monday that if a series of suspected poisonings at girls' schools are proven to be deliberate the culprits should be sentenced to death for committing an “unforgivable crime.”

It was the first time Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, has spoken publicly about the suspected poisonings, which began late last year and have sickened hundreds of children.

Iranian officials only acknowledged them in recent weeks and have provided no details on who may be behind the attacks or what chemicals – if any – have been used.

Unlike neighboring Afghanistan, Iran has no history of religious extremists targeting women's education.

“If the poisoning of students is proven, those behind this crime should be sentenced to capital punishment and there will be no amnesty for them,” Khamenei said, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

AFP.com, 6 March, 2023-

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OUR THOUGHT

DUMP POLITICIANS' RUBBISH, EVALUATE THEIR POLICIES

In spite of the Supreme Court having issued an interim order preventing the Treasury Secretary from withholding funds for the local government elections from the allocations made for the purpose by the budget that was passed in December last year, the uncertainty in holding election still prevails. The Election Commission had told the Daily Mirror on Sunday that elections could be held only in the latter half of April and this might provide the government ample opportunity to create new issues delaying the elections.

However, political parties would continue their campaigns unless the events in the days to come did not put off the polls months behind. Yet, what is worrying is the propaganda programmes already launched by parties are fast turning into smear campaigns instead of being awareness programmes. The last year's Aragalaya stressed the need of a system change and not a mere change of heads in the name of regime change. A system change would be a remote possibility unless the voters are better informed of the plans and programmes of political parties for taking the country out of the mess that it is currently in.

The two parties in the government, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) and the United National Party (UNP) seem to be unfazed by the election either in some sort of certainty in the postponement of the elections or due to the apprehensiveness about the emerging political trends in the country against them. Against this backdrop the recent opinion polls justify the marathon campaigns by the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) and the Jathika Jana Balawegaya (JJB).

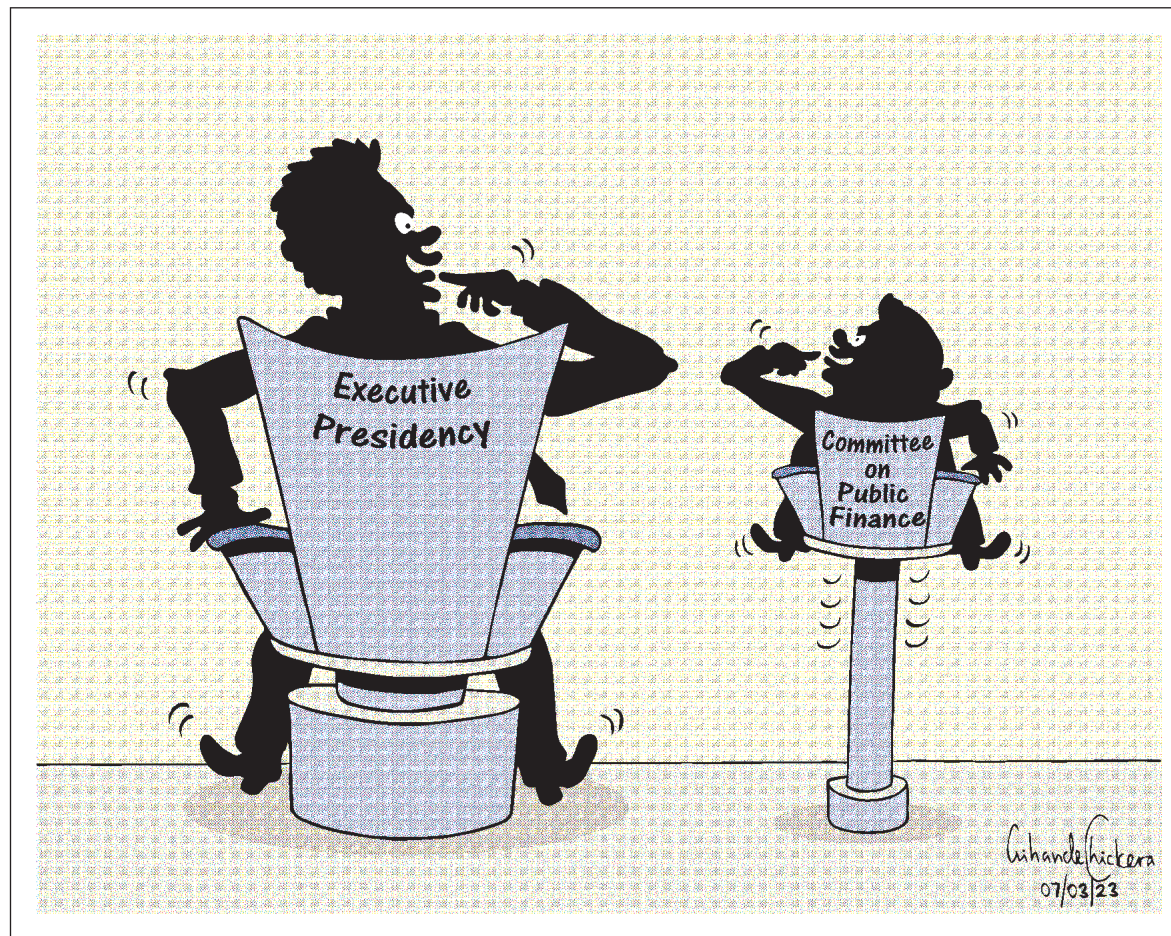
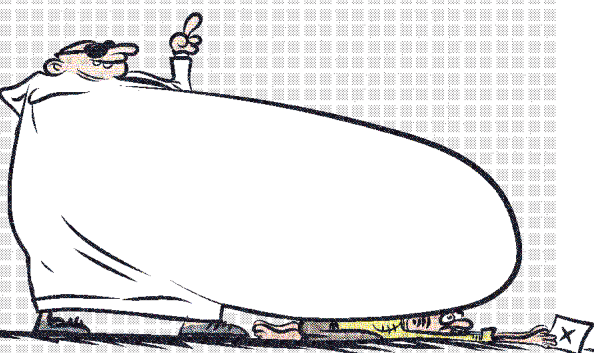
Nevertheless, all hopefuls and those hopeless have resorted to mudslinging against other parties. They are primarily spending time and energy to explain the people as to why they shouldn't vote for others rather than why they should vote for themselves. They refresh the older generation's memory about ruthlessness of others when armed clashes broke out between the armed forces and the rebels in the past. They recall how others behaved as political rogues or teamed up with such evil groups in the past. They accuse others of stealing or destroying public properties.

In fact, no political party in the country can absolve itself from these sins. Some of the past and present leaders of almost all parties have blood stains in their hands. The ruthlessness of the JVP during its two insurrections is well known, despite the governments of the day having pushed them to take to arms. It was during the government led by the leaders of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Lanka Samasamaja Party and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka in 1971 that Sri Lankans saw the tyre-pyres and bodies floating in rivers, for the first time after the Matale Rebellion in 1848.

The number of unlawful killings and disappearances at the hands of armed force and state sponsored death squads during the 1988/89 JVP insurrection was said to be over 60,000. Neither the UNP nor the SJB can wash their hands of those crimes. The names of torture chambers that were said to be operating those dark days are also circulating in social media these days. Thousands of civilian casualties in the northern and eastern battlefronts as well as extrajudicial killings took place in places like the Welikada Prison during the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime are still haunting the country, every year when the UNHRC meets in Geneva. Yet, now pots are calling the kettles black.

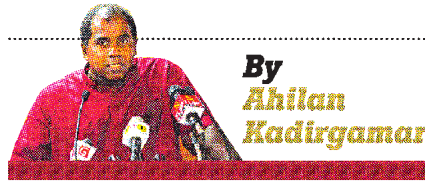
The fact that the current economic mess is the outcome of the 75 year-long mismanagement and large scale corruption has gone international and been accepted even by those who ruled the country. Unfortunately, the same politicians and groups that helped them are still in the field and people have to choose the future leaders from among them again. The people might have some hope, only if any of these individuals and groups have reformed, despite their dark history. Hence, it is up to the politicians to indicate that they have reformed.

Though the election that has been declared would not immediately change the regime, it has gained much significance since it is in a way the first opinion poll after the Aragalaya that immensely changed the political thinking pattern of vast number of people in the country. Definitely, this election is going to be a trend setter. Therefore, Politicians must come out with their policies and programmes to resolve the issues faced by the people and the people in turn must not be misled by the smear campaigns and rhetoric by politicians to commit the same mistake they did for over seven decades. Instead, they must critically and objectively evaluate the policies and programmes of political parties and their viability, before entering the polling booth.



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

INFLATION, INTEREST RATES AND ECONOMIC DEPRESSION



By Ahilan Kadirgamar

RED Notes

Inflation seems to be the only major concern for the economic policymakers shaping Sri Lanka. They include the Central Bank, the Finance Ministry, and the IMF. An economic depression is underway in the country with tremendous disruption of livelihoods, mass unemployment, and collapsing businesses. The GDP contracted by a tenth last year and it is likely to contract in similar proportions this year. But all this is of secondary concern to the economic establishment.

Austerity policies and the Central Bank policy rate, which was increased from 6 percent to 15.5% a year ago to satisfy the IMF recommendations, have strangled the economy. Given that the economy is grinding to a halt, the worst thing to do is what the Central Bank has done with its announcement of another interest rate hike of 100 basis points, increasing the policy rate on March 3, 2023 to 16.5%.

The policymakers' push for economic contraction, which they justify in terms of satisfying the IMF, and the IMF's rationale, which articulates as fighting inflation, are democratically unaccountable, economically flawed and merely meant to serve the long-term interests of global capital. The suffering of our people, who are being pushed to starvation, is merely reduced to collateral damage by our comprador elite and their masters. The IMF is the voice of the latter, and the guardian of global capitalist interests.

CENTRAL BANK'S POSITION

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka is no longer independent. It constitutes a clear and present danger to the country as an agent of the IMF. This is what the Monetary Board of the Central Bank had to say in its statement on March 3, 2023:

"Given the necessity of fulfilling all the 'prior actions' in order to move forward with the finalisation of the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement, the Monetary Board and the IMF staff reached consensus to raise the policy interest rates, in a smaller magnitude, compared to the adjustment, which was envisaged during the initial stage of negotiations.

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

the state of tremendous wage repression will continue with the fall in real wages by as much as 40% due to the cost-of-living increase. In other words, real wages will remain at that low level, even if official year-on-year inflation levels come down to zero later this year.

GLOBAL CAPITAL INTERESTS

What these extremely high interest rates in fact do is slow down the economy. Small producers and businesses are unable to borrow working capital, as commercial banks pass on the interest rate hike. Loans for production are now near 30%. Accordingly, many small producers and businesses are either stopping production or going bankrupt, devastating livelihoods and throwing people out of jobs. Such dispossession in turn reduces the bargaining power of labour, so that tremendous wage repression can be maintained.

The recent protests by the professionals against the Government for the income tax increases for those earning more than Rs. 100,000 per month, has now discovered a reality check as IMF officials have gone on record defending such taxes. Now, Rs. 100,000 per month for a family of four amounts to about US\$ 2.30 per person per day, a level just above the World Bank's line of extreme poverty set at US\$ 2.15 per person per day. Furthermore, the rise in interest rates has meant that personal loans that professionals had taken to build a house or buy a vehicle few years ago, now require much higher monthly payments. For example, ten-year loans of say Rs. 5 million or Rs. 10 million will require additional monthly loan payments of Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 50,000 per month respectively, reducing these households' disposable incomes by that much, even as cost of living has increased by 60%. The professionals are rightly up in arms against the Government, but they are yet to realise that those dictating the terms of their misery is the IMF.

This policy of high interest rates to curb so-called inflation is not only being applied in Sri Lanka. Since the neoliberal turn, and rise of the class project of finance capital, inflation is seen as the enemy to be defeated by global capitalist interests. The long economic downturn of the 1970s was solved in the interest of capital by the massive interest rate hikes introduced by Paul Volker of the Federal Reserve of the United States, earning the name the "Volker Shock", which initiated an era of much higher returns for finance capital. Furthermore, when there are higher levels of wage inflation - which is not the case now - even if it can be sustained in line with economic growth, it is opposed by the hegemonic policy makers because the returns to capital decrease. This orthodox doctrine of maintaining low inflation with high interest rates has become so entrenched that economists who curvy favour with the establishment dare not challenge it.

The world has been reconfigured to serve global finance capital over the last four decades. The global crisis underway is a fight over the question, who pays for the crisis? Will it be capital or labour? And in this great battle for the future of the global political economic order, the suffering and even starvation of the Sri Lankan people is of little concern for the IMF and for that matter the great powers that control it. If the citizenry of this country doesn't realise these dangers amidst the economic depression, and if we continue to accede to the dictates of the IMF, we are only digging our own graves.

DM Poll

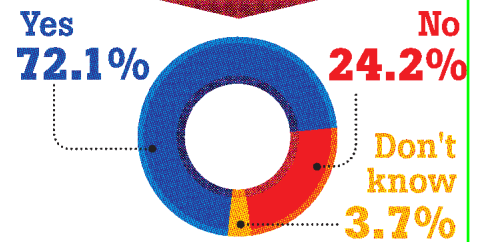
How motivated are you to vote in the coming Local Government election?

- 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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tear gas death

I am writing to express my deep concern about the use of tear gas by the police during the recent protests. While I understand that the police have a duty to maintain public order and safety, I believe that the use of tear gas in this instance was unsystematic and potentially dangerous. Tear gas should be aimed at the bottom of the crowd where they could disperse or run away towards vacant space backwards. Firing tear gas at the centre of the gathering or in front creates a havoc as people have no space to run - it's a 'choc a block' situation with nowhere to run. We know that the Police were ordered to disperse, not to kill the fellow countrymen and brethren. As you may be aware, tear gas is a chemical agent that can cause severe respiratory and eye irritation, leading to coughing, sneezing, and difficulty in breathing. It can also cause panic and confusion, which can be dangerous in crowded situations like the one we saw during the protests.

SUMITH DE SILVA

Excellence overshadowed by corruption

Recently my wife and I flew on Sri Lankan airlines, the service was excellent both ways. We have been on other airlines but our crew are the best. When we complimented the crew, they said they were short of four persons on this very flight and were told they had left to join other airlines.

In every sphere our staff and workers are the best and even surpass many countries. Our hotels, restaurants and other establishments prove this but unfortunately due to increased taxation and rampant corruption we are losing the best Human Resources. Other countries are grabbing our talent which in years to come will affect our country badly.

The most important step should be to probe all past corruption cases as a deterrent for the future.

Whatever the IMF deal or aid we get won't work unless we tackle the major issues like corruption and mismanagement. While the honest and hardworking people are still performing their best. The corrupt and some who have stacked millions and billions abroad are laughing while the people are asked to sacrifice and suffer to keep the ruling class in power with all the perks and still looking for appointments abroad and to make more deals.

R.D. COLOMBO

Foreign Min. under pressure for Appointing politicians' relatives

WEB COMMENTS

JUDE - Nepotism, we invented the word and we're practicing to the letter

DOON - This is a very good news. People who are on the fence can safely support anyone other than current politicians/parties in the govt. Definitely we have to

teach them a lesson.
EDIE - Get ONLY the qualified enrolled into the diplomatic positions through a special forum and ensure everyone demonstrates their capabilities in developing bilateral relationships which could benefit SL

See more web comments at www.DailyMirror.lk

'YOUR THOUGHT' is a space, a right of the readers to support or contradict and discuss the issues highlighted in the editorial and other articles in the editorial and op-ed pages. Designed as the reader's editorial; our readers can send in their writings, with a word count not exceeding 200, to 'Your Thought', Daily Mirror Political Features Desk, No 8, Hunupitiya Cross Road, Colombo 2 or email to dmreadersthought@gmail.com.

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Dr. L.B.L. de Alwis

REMEMBERING A RENOWNED CHIEF CONSULTANT JMO

Dr. Lucian Bernard Lalantha de Alwis, or Dr. L.B.L. de Alwis, retired Chief Consultant Judicial Medical Officer Colombo, went to be with the Lord, after a very brief illness. As inconspicuously as he sauntered into the workplace, the prestigious Office of the Colombo Judicial Medical officer, he left us silently leaving a void that cannot be filled.

All academic staff at the University Departments of Forensic Medicine, Professors, senior lecturers, lecturers alike as well as Judicial medical officers in the Health Ministry remember him with love and fondness. He was an honest person with integrity who made no compromise when it came to public service.



Dr. de Alwis graduated from the Colombo Medical College in 1972 and served in Talampitiya in the Kurunegala district and at Homagama before being appointed the Judicial Medical Officer at the then Ragama General Hospital in 1975.

Appointed to the Judicial Medical Office in Colombo in 1980, he was subsequently appointed Chief Consultant Judicial Medical Officer in 1992 and retired in 2007. He was the longest serving Chief Consultant Judicial Medical Officer in Sri Lanka.

Dr. de Alwis rendered an invaluable service to the development of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Pathology as a specialty in the country; being instrumental in founding the College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka in 2000 and serving as its founder President.

Due to the recognition he had gained, all controversial suspected murder cases from all parts of the country were referred to him. He would look hard and long, silently, at a cadaver, when we grappled with a mysterious death, and point towards a place and say, "Dissect this area". Lo and behold there

we found the seat of violence. Such was his high intelligence, insight, instinct and invaluable experience.

Dr. de Alwis was one of the humblest of doctors. One senior Board certified Specialist in Forensic Medicine of the PGIM Colombo, now working in the United Kingdom wrote sometime back, "the greatest teacher that I respect in my whole life is Dr. L.B.L. de Alwis who retired after rendering an excellent service to the country. Although I used to address him as "sir" by habit, he associated with us as a friend though with great respect".

He used public transport until the last days of his service, walking leisurely to the Railway station in humble attitude, not utilizing even the official vehicle provided for him. Wealth, fame and glory were never his objective, in all the ventures he undertook, but fame and glory followed him throughout his career.

As a Visiting lecturer and External Examiner in Forensic Medicine his services were utilised by the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Ruhuna, Jaffna, Kelaniya and Sri Jayewardenepura and the Sri Lanka Medical Council which appointed him as Co-ordinator and Chief Examiner in Forensic Medicine for the ERPM examination for foreign graduates.

During his tenure as Chairman, Board of Study in Forensic Medicine and Chief Examiner in Forensic Medicine of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo for 6 years, his hard work produced many Specialists in the field. The comprehensive Forensic Medicine books on Forensic Medicine and Toxicology written by him were sold at only the printing cost, true to his nature as he had no intention of making such profits.

Dr. L. B. L. De Alwis was greatly respected not only by those in his own profession,

but also in the other professions he came into contact with. Senior Legal luminaries branded him as the most excellent expert medical witness in the country, surpassed by none who followed him. In our eyes too Dr. Alwis, as he is fondly called, was an inimitable expert medical witness, who would express his opinion in criminal cases, without mincing his words, irrespective of the parties involved.

Many a court witness feigning illness would be brought to him for examination, to determine their fitness to attend courts. A number of such powerful men were certified as fit to appear in courts by him, in spite of their bringing 'dubious' medical certificates from doctors of high repute. He brought professionalism, integrity, honesty as well as compassion and humility to the profession of forensic medicine. It is with great respect that we bow to Dr. L.B.L. de Alwis, who left us a legacy. To follow his footsteps of competence, professionalism, integrity and humility is the best salute we could give this great man.

Teacher, teacher my hands are cramped

*The gems you throw I try to cram
No time to lose lest I forget
To store in my head before the day's spent
A world of Forensics unique to your own
With great learning and hard toil sown
Vocal mastery and little visual aid
In rapt attention as we all gazed
The humble man but ready wit
With nary a care for politics or wealth
Honesty integrity etched on the face
Calm confidence, but arrogance, not a trace
Adieu! Dear Teacher for a life well spent
Rejecting jingling coins as this life you tread
Your unwavering faith stood you in good stead
May you be the role model we all emulate!*

Thoughts shared on behalf of all Specialists in Forensic Medicine Board Certified by the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo Sri Lanka

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SPORTS

Reshan, Chalitha picked for Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship 2023



M. Chanaka Perera

M.U. Chalitha Pushpika



Reshan Algama

Chalitha Pushpika (Sri Lanka Navy) and fifteen year old school boy from Colombo International School, Reshan Algama both will participate at the ORION Group 36th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship 2023 which will tee off at Kurmitola Golf Club Course in Dhaka Bangladesh from March 8 to 11. Algama will make his debut at the Senior Amateur event. The duo will be accompanied by Chanaka Perera as a private entry, national champion invited by Bangladesh Golf Federation. The Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship is conducted over four rounds and Champion winner is the lowest gross score aggregate over the four rounds. (SJ)



Action from the women's race



Women's overall winner Dinesha Dilrukshi receiving the trophy from Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana

AIRWOMAN DILRUKSHI WINS TOUR DE AIR FORCE WOMEN'S RACE

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Dinesha Dilrukshi of Sri Lanka Air Force Cycling Club won the 12th edition of the Tour de Air Force (Sri Lanka) Women's one-day cycling race held from Habarana to Anuradhapura via

Dambulla.

The 89km women's race was held in conjunction with the three-day Tour de Air Force Cycling Race organized by the Cycling Union of Sri Lanka Air Force.

Dilrukshi completed the race in 2:34.46 secs, while her Air Force mate Sudarika Priyadarshani riding by her

side took second place returning the same time as the winner.

Ann Shenali Perera of Sri Lanka Navy Cycling Club clinched third place in a time of 2:34.51.

The Women's Team Championship was also won by the Sri Lanka Air Force.

Five netball umpires leave for Asian camp in Singapore

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Five rising Sri Lankan first-class netball umpires left for Singapore yesterday (6) to participate in an Asian Netball umpiring camp. The Asian Netball International Umpires Camp is being held from March 7-10 targeting the 12th Asian Youth Netball Championship 2023 to be held in June in South Korea.



Sri Lanka netball umpires at Katunayake Airport before their departure

Korea are expected to participate in the camp, according to the Sri Lanka Netball Federation. The five participants from Sri Lanka are Buddika Suriyabandara (Colombo), Eranga Sithara (Monaragala), Niroshan Sadaranga (Badulla), Shiranthi Prasadika (Colombo) and Nimali Thushanthika (Colombo). The Asian Netball Federation will select the top umpires in the Asian Junior Netball Championships.

the countries competing in the Asian Junior Netball Championships in South

Umpires Camp to officiate at the Asian Youth Netball championships.

Markram named as South African T20 captain

South Africa's new white-ball coach Rob Walter unveiled his first squads on Monday with Aiden Markram named as the new T20 captain but there was no place for former skipper, Faf du Plessis. Although Walter had talks with Du Plessis, no agreement was reached for the one-day and Twenty20 international series against the West

Indies this month. Cricket South Africa director Enoch Nkwe said this did not mean the door was closed on Du Plessis, 38, who has not played for South Africa since February 2021, or other non-contracted cricketers. "We've always been open to talks with our freelance players, we're happy to engage and find the best

way forward," said Nkwe. As widely anticipated, Markram, who marked his return to the Test team last week with a fine 115 in the victory over West Indies, was named as captain of the T20 side. But there was no place in the T20 squad for Test captain Temba Bavuma, although he will continue to lead the ODI side.

Women's League exhibition matches Chamari Athapaththu to play in Pakistan

BY BIPIN DANI

Sri Lanka's women's team captain Chamari Athapaththu, or any of Sri Lanka's women's players for that matter, could not get a chance to play in the Indian Women's Premier League, but Athapaththu has been invited to play the Women's League Exhibition matches in Pakistan. This was revealed by Head of Women's Cricket, Tania Mallick. She said, "Chamari Athapaththu is one of the foreign participants to play these matches here."

"We are in the process of hosting the Women's Premier League in Pakistan and look out the window for it. These exhibition matches are the rehearsals." The 35-year-old batting all rounder Chamari reached Pakistan on Sunday night. After a long journey from Colombo to Islamabad, she reached here late night on Sunday and is not a part of the training session on Monday but will be practicing from Tuesday. "We have three matches to be played on 8th, 10th and 12th March," Mallick

added. "A total of 10 foreign players from seven Test playing countries (England, Australia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ireland and New Zealand) are participating. Chamari is a part of the Super Women team. The only other Asian player Jahanara Alam (Bangladesh) is also in the same team playing against Amazons team," she added. "In these exhibition matches only two teams are participating but there will be more in the Women's Premier League," another PCB spokesperson hoped.

Under 23 Cricket

Kalana, Kavindu, Nipun steer SSC to third win

BY M. SHAMIL AMIT

A match bag of 11 for 78 by Kalana Perera and half tons from Kavindu Nadeeshan and skipper Nipun Dhananjaya helped SSC to coast to a comfortable seven wicket win over Sebastianites C&AC which was their third successive outright win of the ongoing Major Club Under 23 cricket tournament in the match played at the SSC ground.

Ragama CC recorded their second outright win with an innings win over Badureliya CC played at Maggona while Moors SC and Ace Capital CC defeated Bloomfield and Air Force SC to chalk up their first outright wins of the tournament.

The other matches ended in first innings wins for Tamil Union, Negombo CC, Army SC, BRC, Galle CC and Police SC.

Results:
At SSC - SSC won by seven wickets

Sebastianites C&AC 81 (Ryan Fernando 29; Kalana Perera 6 for 20, Akmal Fazly 3 for 32) **and 219** (Ryan Fernando 64, Umayanga Suwaris 43, Thevindu Senaratne 32, Isiwara Dissanayake 30, Lohan de Zoysa 16; Kalana Perera 5 for 58, Kavindu Nadeeshan 3 for 57)

SSC 229 (Kavindu Nadeeshan 73, Nipun Dhananjaya 69, Sadisha Rajapakse 32; Sasika Perera 4 for 60, Lahiru Madusanka 3 for 50) **and 72** for 3 (Nipun Dhananjaya 26, Sadisha Rajapakse 19; Sasika Perera 3 for 24)

At Maggona - Ragama CC won by innings and six runs

Badureliya CC 186 (Hasitha Amarasinghe 56, Vishara Fernando 37, Dunith Jayatunga 33, S. Kasun 15; Shashika Dulshan 6 for 54, Eshan Malinga 3 for 51) **and 81** (Mithira Thenura 19; Kalhara Senaratne 4 for 21, Ashan Fernando 3 for 13, Shashika Dulshan 3 for 33)

Ragama CC 273 (Thevindu Dickwella 73, Dulaj Bandara 49, Yohan Liyanage 37, Lahiru Dewatage 26, Avishka Tharindu 23, Ranmith Jayasena 16, Kalhara Senaratne 27 n.o.; Dunith Jayatunga 5 for 48, Yesth Ranasinghe 2 for 73)

At Braybrooke Place - Moors SC won by innings and 71 runs

Bloomfield 69 (Nethma Karunaratne 16; Theesan Vithusan 7 for 27, Janishka Perera 2 for 13) **and 201** (Thinula Liyanage 48, Nethma Karunaratne 43, Mineth Premaratne 40, Bawantha Jayasinghe 23; Theesan Vithusan 4 for 62, Dinuka

Dilshan 2 for 41, Imtiyaz Slaza 2 for 51)

Moors SC 341 for 5 declared (Dinuka Dilshan 78, Mohamed Shannaz 78, Janishka Perera 67, Risira Weerasuriya 39 n.o.; Bawantha Jayasinghe 3 for 34)

At Katunayake - Ace Capital CC won by innings and 39 runs

Air Force SC 102 (Pulasthi Attapattu 22, Senash Fernando 21, Neluka Heshan 17 n.o.; Wanuja Sahana 8 for 43) **and 165** (Sahil Dias 83, Senash Fernando 28; Wanuja Sahana 6 for 57, Sithum Dissanayake 3 for 42)

Ace Capital CC 306 for 8 declared (Ravindu Ratnayake 91, Sakuna Liyanage 71, Kavindu Amantha 52, Ashan Dilhara 35, Wanuja Sahana 28, Moahmed Faisar 22; Asitha Heshan 3 for 48, Movin Subasinghe 2 for 109)

At NCC - First innings win for Tamil Union

NCC 107 (Amshi de Silva 36; Naveen Fernando 5 for 36, Samuditha 3 for 62) **and 310** (Kalana Wijesiri 64, Thaveesha Abishek 45, Vinuka Rubasinghe 39, Johanne de Zilva 20, Ashian Daniel 18, Ahan Wickramasinghe 90 n.o.; Vijayakanth Vijayakanth 5 for 107, Dilum Sudeera 2 for 64)

Tamil Union 331 for 5 declared (Sithara Hapuhinna 112, Tharindu Harshana 71, Navod Paranavithana 43, Kamesh Nirmal 43, Salindu Pathiran 20, Sahana Kosala 29 n.o.; Dilshan Nipunajith 2 for 40, Matheesha Pathirana 2 for 62) **and 70** for 4 (Kamesh Nirmal 32 n.o.)

At CCC - First innings win for Negombo CC

Negombo CC 249 (Sandaruwan Chinthaka 92, Sasanka Nirmal 47, Amoda Widanapathirana 29, Shenesah Saharsha 19, Dimuth Sandaruwan 19, Dulaj Ashen 16; Devindu Kekirideniya 5 for 81, Inuka Karanagoda 2 for 28) **and 75** for 2 (Amoda Widanapathirana 30, Sandaruwan Chinthaka 18, Shane Malisha 20 n.o.; Asanka Udayanga 2 for 14)

CCC 220 (Vinushka Silva 63, Sandun Mendis 36, Sachira Rashmitha 32, Pawan Pathiraja 28, Devindu Kekirideniya 16; Warun Imesh 3 for 52, Dimuth Sandaruwan 2 for 34, Dulaj Ashen 2 for 49)

At Panagoda - First innings win for Army SC

Kurunegala YCC 242 (Gayana Weerasinghe 82, Sathsara Navod 56, Deshan Seneviratne 46, Matheesha Weerasinghe 18, Muditha Premadasa 18; Shehada Zoysa 5 for 56, Manushka

Samith 2 for 48) **and 120** for 3 (Kosala Ravindu 34, Matheesha Weerasinghe 30, Gayana Weerasinghe 18, Muditha Premadasa 36 n.o.)

Army SC 293 (Shehan Fernando 109, Manushka Samith 74, Devainda Ekanayake 39, Lasith Wickramasooriya 17; Pramila Dhananjana 3 for 42, Nimanda Kirindage 2 for 49, Deshan Seneviratne 2 for 58)

At BRC - First innings win for BRC

BRC 301 (Bhagya Dissanayake 98, Dulaj Ashen 64, Lakshan Gamage 45, Bhagya Ediriweera 27, Sulekshana Wijewardena 22, Vindua Liyanage 17; Harshana Wickramasinghe 3 for 67, Avishka Perera 2 for 30, Chamod Battage 2 for 38, Muditha Lakshan 2 for 67) **and 200** for 8 (Vindua Liyanage 60, Bhagya Dissanayake 49, Sulekshana Wijewardena 36, Lakshan Gamage 23, D. Vinod 16; Sandun Abeywardena 5 for 75, Harshana Wickramasinghe 2 for 21)

Colts CC 217 (Dinal Anuradha 53, Muditha Lakshan 47, Yasiru Rodrigo 33, Shalin de Mel 28, Ravindu Rashantha 17; Brian Hansaja 5 for 45, Saviru Bandara 3 for 60)

At Reid Avenue - First innings win for Galle CC

Galle CC 345 for 6 declared (Vinura Dulara 157, Mithun Gamage 44, Kanishka Maduwantha 41, Sandew Induwara 38, Kaveesha Rajapakse 20; Kavinda Ishwara 3 for 90, Rahul Gunasekera 2 for 59)

Nugegoda S&WC 278 (Amitha Dabare 74, Shanuka Galagoda 52, Saroj Perera 22, Kevin Perera 15, Suwath Mendis 73 n.o.; Kaveesha Rajapakse 5 for 78, Sandun Madusanka 2 for 31, Kanishka Maduwantha 2 for 71)

At Police Park - First innings win for Police SC

Kandy Customs CC 175 (Nilantha Jayasinghe 67, Rashmika Madusanka 33, Harindu Jayasekera 31; Kasun Karunatileke 3 for 31, Rohan Sanjaya 3 for 33, Danal Hemananda 3 for 53) **and 241** (Irusha Akash 96, Hirantha Jayasinghe 50, Isuru Sandamal 40; Hirushan Perera 4 for 27, Kasun Karunatileke 4 for 77, Danal Hemananda 2 for 42)

Police SC 196 (Hirushan Perera 59, Dinan Senuka 36, Bihanga Mendis 33, Danal Hemananda 18, Rohan Sanjaya 17; Nisala Akash 3 for 32, Kushan Madusha 3 for 58, Rashmika Mevan 2 for 42, Methushan Thilina 2 for 48)

Kuruppu to conduct coaching camp to mark Women's Day



Brendon Kuruppu

Former Sri Lanka wicket-keeper opening batsman Brendon Kuruppu will conduct a cricket coaching seminar for school girls at Bloomfield Cricket Club on March 8.

This is organised by the Colombo District Women's Cricket

Association (CDWCA) to mark International Women's Day.

There will be donation of some dry rations packs to the poor in the Hendala area while the coaching camp will be held in the evening.

The participants will be given certificates at the

end of the programme along with a small gift as an encouragement.

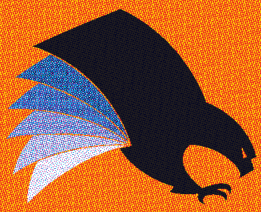
Astron Limited, Ratmalana., Cherish Biscuits (Pvt) Ltd, Majeed Products (Pvt) Ltd Wattala, Capital Maharaja Group and Easwaran Brothers have come forward to sponsor this event. (SP)

ON FIRE WITH EASWARAN RUTNAM

NAVIN DISSANAYAKE

"RANIL CONSIDERED WINDING UP OPERATIONS OF UNP"

DailyMirror ONLINE



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www.dailymirror.lk/business

P8 ComBank adjudged 'Best SME Bank' in Sri Lanka by Global Finance

P9 Tenth CPM International Management ...



Windforce's Mannar project's cost increases further as crane topples

Windforce PLC has flagged further cost increases in the two wind power plants it is setting up in Mannar.

In May, last year, the company informed the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) that the total project cost of the 10MW+5MW wind power plants would amount to Rs.6.65 billion, due to the rupee devaluation and cost increase in local material and services.

Last week, the company informed to the CSE that the cost would go up further to Rs.7.45 billion, due to a toppling of a crane on the project site.

"The company wishes to inform that during the erection of the wind turbine bottom tower at location 03, Nanattan, Mannar project construction site, the hired 500T main crane toppled. This crane is unrepairable and the company had planned to import another 750T crane on rental to continue the project. On a more positive light, no casualties were reported in the accident, due to the safety precautions in place," a stock market filing by Windforce said.

"The damage was recorded at Rs.995 million, out of which approximately Rs.377

million will be covered by the project insurance, excluding the finance cost and other incidental cost relating to the accident. In addition, there is also a Rs.179 million cost escalation, due to the increase of VAT and global raw material prices. Hence, the estimated cost of the project has increased from Rs.6,653,000,000 to Rs.7,450,000,000," it added.

"Consequently, the equity infusion for the project from the company's IPO funds is to be increased to Rs.2,500,000,000, with an expected change in the debt equity ratio

from 75:25 to 65:34. The additional IPO funds will be sourced by reallocating the funds for the Tororo Phase II Project, which is delayed, due to the on-going grid study by the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) in Uganda. This project will commence upon the completion of the grid study in July 2023 and it will be funded by the remaining IPO funds, company's own reserves and debt financing," it further said.

However, Windforce said as the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is yet to be signed, an 80 percent upward tariff rate revision is

expected to the US dollar at the indicative LKR/USD rate published by the Central Bank, seven working days prior to the signing of the PPA.

"As a result of the tariff revision, the project will likely earn an equity IRR of 75 percent, with a project IRR of 9.2 percent, at 1.5.6 percent WACC. Moreover, negotiations are underway to further increase the tariff to compensate the prevailing high interest rates in the market, which will likely increase the equity IRR to 15.3 percent, with a Project IRR of 73.2 percent," the filing said.

China approves US \$ 1.3bn loan rollover for Pakistan

REUTERS: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd on Friday approved a rollover of a US \$ 1.3 billion loan for cash-strapped Pakistan, which will help shore up its depleting foreign exchange reserves, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said.

The facility will be disbursed in three instalments. The first one of US \$ 500 million has been received by Pakistan's central bank, Dar said in a tweet.

"It will increase forex reserves," he said.

The money, which Dar said has been repaid by Pakistan to the ICBC in recent months, is crucial for the South Asian economy, which is facing a balance of payment crisis, with its central bank foreign exchange reserves dropping to levels barely able to cover three weeks of imports.

MORE ON P8

Faster decline in inflation likely due to rupee appreciation

- CB projects inflation to return to desired 4 -6% range by December
- However, IMF's approach towards inflation remains cautious
- Inflation eased for fifth consecutive month in February to 51.7%
- SL tightened its monetary policy by a record 950 basis points in 2022



Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe PIC BY NIMALSIRI EDIRISINGHE

The Central Bank last Friday projected a faster decline in the rate of inflation in the coming months, as businesses and households will benefit from the relative strength in the rupee in recent times, which gets translated into lower imported goods prices.

However, Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe said some commodity prices such as energy could fall faster than the rest, as their prices are determined based on automatic pricing formula pinned to the global commodities prices.

The other prices in the economy could come down faster than the authorities previously anticipated in their inflation projections, in the absence of any exogenous factors.

The Central Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) had conflicting views on the future inflation path, which resulted in a 100-basis-point surprise policy rate hike last week.

While the Central Bank's projections show a faster decline in inflation towards its desired range of the 4 to 6 percent band by the year's end, the IMF appears to be taking a more cautious view and is feeling uneasy about the extremely high inflation prevailing at present.

However, Dr. Weerasinghe, who clearly showed displeasure towards the policy decision that had to announce on Friday, said people can judge whose projections were more accurate by the end of the year.

The monetary policy typically has

long and variable lags and hence, overdoing monetary tightening could break the economy, sometimes taking a lot more effort and time to recover.

Some analysts, including First Capital Research, have been calling for policy easing before the economy reaches an irrecoverable breaking point.

Sri Lanka tightened its monetary policy by a record 950 basis points in 2022, which helped the country to break the inflation spiral as early as September.

Sri Lanka's Colombo inflation further cooled down to 51.7 percent in February from a year earlier levels, declining for the fifth consecutive month.

MORE ON P8

Toblerone to drop Matterhorn from packaging

BBC: Toblerone is to remove the Matterhorn mountain peak from its packaging when some of the chocolate's production is moved from Switzerland to Slovakia.

The pyramid-shaped bar, which mirrors the Alpine peak, will undergo a labelling revamp and include its founder's signature, its maker said.

US firm Mondelez said the image of the 4,478m (14,692 ft) mountain will be replaced by a more generic summit.

Strict rules have applied about "Swissness" since 2017.

MORE ON P8



Dollars stashed finding their way back to market- CB

The Central Bank said it was overserving a trend where large amounts of foreign currency, which had been stashed away, now being released, further increasing the supply of dollars to the market and thereby strengthening the rupee.

Despite many attempts in the last two years, some exporters and others, who were earning in dollars and other foreign currency,

stashed away a substantial amount of dollars, expecting further devaluation of the rupee.

However, last week's rupee appreciation of around 5 percent against the US dollar prompted them to sell the foreign currency they stockpiled into the banking sector, boosting the foreign currency liquidity further in the domestic market.

The continued appreciation seen in the

rupee against the US dollar last week took many by surprise but the Central Bank said if it didn't intervene, the rupee would have crashed even further.

The Central Bank bought US \$ 308 million from the market in the five days last week, the most it bought in any five-day stretch to prevent sharp volatility in the exchange rate.

MORE ON P8

Lifetime Chartered Shipbrokers UK Medal conferred upon Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake



Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers UK International President Kevin Shakesheff conferred Lifetime award on Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake on February 24, 2023

The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers, which was founded in London in the year 1911 and Royal Charter awarded in 1920, has conferred its Lifetime Chartered Shipbroker's Medal to Aitken Spence PLC Deputy Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake.

Dr. Dissanayake pioneered commercial maritime education in Sri Lanka through the institution's branch in Sri Lanka as Founder/Secretary/Chairman. He was appointed as the first non-British International President of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (UK).

MORE ON P8

Singapore Court assists Colombo High Court obtain evidence in oil contamination case

The Commercial High Court (CHC), presided over by High Court Judge Pradeep Hettiarachchi, recently confirmed that it had received evidence obtained for it by the Supreme Court of Singapore under the very first request for foreign judicial assistance in the civil matter made by the CHC, under the Hague Evidence Convention of 1970, to which Sri Lanka and Singapore are both parties.

This first request by the CHC for judicial assistance under the Hague Evidence Convention was made under an erudite Order by now Justice M. Ahsan R. Marikar, given in December 2019, prior to his recent appointment to the Court of Appeal. The task of obtaining

the evidence was carried out by the High Court of Singapore, which summoned four witnesses to obtain the evidence required by Lanka IOC PLC (LIOC), the local unit of Indian Oil Corp, for the purpose of a long-running claim for alleged damages of over US \$ 2.5 million that it has pending in the CHC against the ship MT Vinalines Glory, an oil tanker owned and operated by Vietnam National Shipping Line. The dispute between LIOC and the ship owners concerns two shipments of fuel carried by Vinalines Glory for LIOC from Singapore to Colombo in February 2013, which were found to be off spec prior to discharge in the Colombo Port.

MORE ON P8

Central Bank announces fresh round of relief for borrowers

The Central Bank has issued two circulars, one to banks and another to finance companies, to support businesses and the individuals who fell into fresh difficulties, due to the ongoing economic crisis, which sent interest rates through the roof.

The final round of moratoria expired on January 7, this year and since then, there has been an uptick in the non-performing loans in the banks.

Hence, this new round of the relief will be offered on a case-by-case basis, after an objective assessment of the repayment capacity of each borrower.

When extending relief however, the Central Bank requested the banks to give priority to the small and

medium-sized enterprises, fixed-income earners and pensioners, who are badly affected by the present macroeconomic conditions.

The Central Bank also requested the banks to restructure and reschedule both performing and non-performing facilities, in view of the ongoing crisis, on a case-by-case basis. Meanwhile, the Central Bank further requested the banks to suspend any recovery actions against credit facilities, which fell into non-performing status on or after January 01, 2020, also on a case-by-case basis, subject to objective assessment on the future repayment capacity and viability of the business, upon the condition that the borrower submits an acceptable

repayment plan.

The banks were also requested to facilitate early settlement of facilities, if a borrower chooses to do so, without charging an additional fee such as early settlement charges and future interest recovery on lease facilities.

Until recently, the Central Bank maintained that it may no longer grant any more relief, after the final round of debt relief came to an end early January, this year.

However, it drew flak from several quarters, due to the need for further support for the small and medium-sized businesses struggling to recover from the fallout of the pandemic and then the economic crisis.

High-grade mineral sands project ready to commence development in Eastern province

Capital Metals PLC, a UK mineral resources company listed on the London Stock Exchange, is ready to commence development of its high-grade mineral sands project in Sri Lanka's Eastern province.

The extensive studies completed by the local Sri Lankan subsidiary Damsila Exports (Pvt.) Ltd indicated the availability of commercial quantities of high-grade mineral sands in this region. Local investment company Keynes Investments (Pvt.) Ltd was recently brought in to hold 60 percent of Damsila.

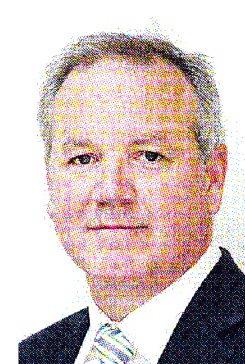
Keynes is principally held by Dinal Peiris, who is also Chairman of Lanka Aluminium Industries PLC Group and several other well-known companies in Sri Lanka.

The project commenced in 2015 with Capital Metals, a specialised mineral resource exploration and development company with significant international experience, acquiring ownership of Damsila, which held the initial exploration licences.

With investment from Capital Metals, Damsila completed numerous studies and obtained the approval from the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department



Dinal Peiris



Michael Frayne

for its environmental impact studies, following extensive local community and governmental consultation. With total expenditure to date of over US \$ 11 million, Damsila is now awaiting the final approval to commence development.

"We are delighted to partner with Capital Metals in this environmentally responsible mining project. This is a first of its kind in Sri Lanka with modern mining practices to protect the environment and bring the much-needed employment and training to the local

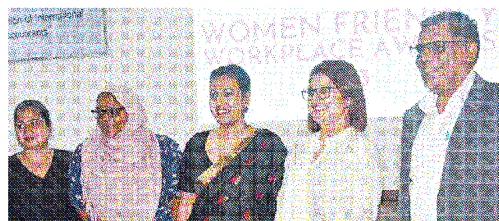
community," said Peiris. "With a development plan to ensure a win-win outcome from this project by adhering to rigorous standards for mining and rehabilitation principles, we will leave the area in a better state than we found it. The key advantages of the planned operations are that no blasting or chemicals are required and there will be continuous cleaning and restoration of the mined areas to remove the black mineral sands, leaving the golden sands in place. This project will also help to position Sri Lanka as a strategic and responsible source for these critical minerals in the global marketplace," said Capital Metals CEO and Director Michael Frayne.

The project requires a total investment of over US \$ 80 million and will bring a multitude of benefits to Sri Lanka and its people, as it will generate the much-needed foreign exchange from export income, significantly upgraded infrastructure, employment and skill transfer as well as various programmes to support local communities. It is estimated that over 300 new direct jobs will be created and the Sri Lankan government will receive over US \$ 100 million in royalties and taxes.

MORE ON P8

Satynmag, AICPA & CIMA launch Women Friendly Workplace Awards 2023

Sri Lanka's sole gender focused awards that measure the status of women in the Sri Lankan workplace, Women Friendly Workplace Awards 2023 edition, jointly presented by Satynmag.com and AICPA and CIMA, was launched formally on 01st March.



The launch was marked with the presentation of a Paper on Good Practices for Women that sheds light on the Status of Women in the Sri Lankan Workplace. The Paper highlights the current level of recognition for women in the Sri Lankan work environment.

Information gained through interactions with over 30 companies who employ a considerable female workforce, undertaken throughout the Awards process in 2022, was used to compile the first ever such report on the status of women in the Sri Lankan work place.

The Paper was presented by Prof. Arosha Adikaram, Chair of the Human Resources Department University of Colombo. Prof. Adikaram is also the Head of the Panel of Judges of the Satynmag, AICPA & CIMA Women Friendly Workplace Awards.

The awards commenced in 2021 and has been successfully recognized as the country's only awards measuring the wellbeing and progress of women in the work environment. This is a key metric for Sri Lanka in keeping with UN SDG 05 of ensuring gender equality as a country. With over 25 leading companies taking part in the first round, last year saw even a bigger number of companies including multinationals taking part.

In her presentation of the Paper, Prof. Adikaram states that the Awards empower

a process of achieving equality and equity which will result in a process of social, economic and business development. Given the fact that IWD 2023 theme is focused on Embracing Equity, this makes the proposition for women in the Sri Lankan workplace even more powerful.

"While women consist of over 52 percent of the population, we see a drastic decrease in the women participation in the workforce. They face numerous challenges in managing life events such as pregnancy, raising a family and child care; which calls for additional support to be made available when needed, so that the employment gap for women can be addressed," she added.

"We were able to gain insights into good practices of many organizations that have chosen to extend a high level of support to the women on their teams which is commendable indeed." Among the women focused initiatives that were considered exceptional and hailed as innovations, were those encouraging women to take up traditionally male dominated areas such as engineering, domestic violence support mechanism, anti-sexual harassment policies, anti-harassment and bullying policies, zero tolerance policy for harassment, whistle blowing policy, grievance handling, ensuring safe and secure employment, diversity, equality and inclusion policies (DE&I Policy), speak up policy, flexi work policies, code of ethics, human rights policy and back to work support policy.

Tenth CPM International Management Conference to be held on March 16

The theme of the 10th CPM International Management Conference will focus on 'Rebooting Management: Reimagine and Redesign' to alert members and Corporate Bodies to the need for the latest cutting-edge, advanced revolutionary thinking in management.

People and companies are subject to continuous change. Unless managers undergo change and harness it for reshaping corporate especially in challenging times with improved productivity, they will be fighting a losing battle.

This year's conference will be held on 16th March at Galadari Hotel, Colombo.

The Chief Guest at the conference will be Karu Jayasuriya, Patron of CPM Sri Lanka and Former Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka who was the recipient of Sri Lanka's highest National Award of Sri Lankaabhimana awarded by the President of Sri Lanka on behalf of the government. It is bestowed upon those who have rendered exceptionally outstanding and most distinguished service to the nation.

The Keynote Speaker will be Prof. Neharika Vohra - Specialist in Behavioural Science and currently Professor in Organizational Behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad,



Chief Guest - Karu Jayasuriya



Keynote Speaker - Prof. Neharika Vohra



Prof. Lakshman R. Watawala Founder and President CPM Sri Lanka



Dr. Samantha Rathnayake - Technical Head of the Conference 2023



Dilshan Arsakularathna - Director CPM Sri Lanka

India. Prof. Neharika Vohra will present her keynote address on 'Courageous Organizations: The Role of the Leader and the Team in Creating Psychological Safety'. Organizations are compelled to get ready for continuous change. This requires shifting focus away from rigid operational systems, processes, and practices that were built for long periods of relative stability. Leaders and managers have an implicit responsibility to radically change their management style in line with changing demands. It is not the case in every institution.

To make a lasting change we must properly prepare before rebooting our management style. Do you ever wish management practice had a reboot button like a computer where you can

shut it down and restart it if something goes wrong? Rebooting our practice, similarly, does not mean closing the door on our practice or selling it and moving to a new domain just to get a change.

This thought may have crossed our minds from time to time, and some practitioners have gone ahead and done just that. Instead of a complete "restart" reboot, maybe what you are looking for is a "revive or give fresh impetus" type of reboot.

Eminent speakers and panelists will cover the technical sessions as per the following main topics;

- Reboot and Reimagine Government and Public Sector, Business, and Strategy
- Reboot and Redesign the

SMEs, Entrepreneurship, and Corporate Thinking

A special feature of the conference will be five case study presentations chosen from among the outstanding companies that showed Best Management Practices during 2022 while recognizing their leadership, policies and strategies, people management, partnerships & resources, processes, and performances.

CPM Sri Lanka invites all those who wish to participate in this Management Conference to register without delay. Any interested parties or corporate who wish for bulk nominations can reach CPM Sri Lanka Secretariat via 0112590995/0706590997 or email: event@cpmsrilanka.org for prior registration.

Dialog Axiata recognized winner of ACCA Sustainability Reporting Awards 2022

The ACCA Sustainability Reporting Awards 2022 has recognized Dialog Axiata PLC as the Overall Winner and the Winner of the General Services category for its exceptional commitment to sustainability and transparency in reporting.



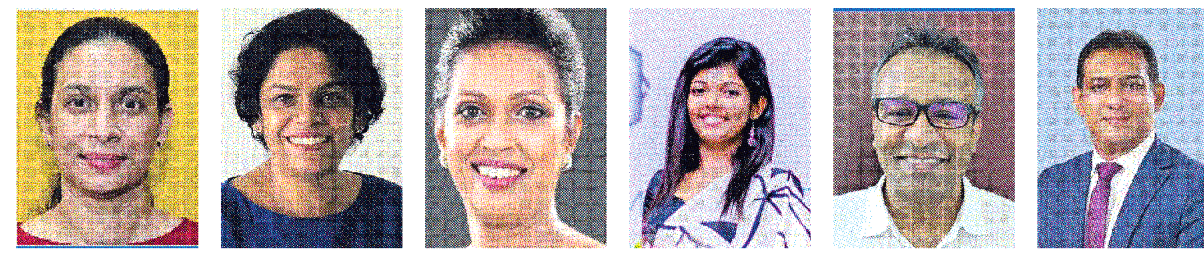
From left: Disha Perera, Specialist, Digital Inclusion, Dialog Axiata PLC, Asanga Priyadarshana, Group Chief of Risk and Compliance, Dialog Axiata PLC, Hong Zhou Wong, Group Chief Financial Officer, Dialog Axiata PLC, Ashini Pothupitiya, Specialist, Sustainability Execution, Dialog Axiata PLC, Munesh David, Vice President, Group Corporate Planning and Strategy, Dialog Axiata PLC, Asith De Silva, Senior Manager, Social Innovation, Dialog Axiata PLC, and Rakshika Nedomaran-Specialist - Sustainability Execution, Dialog Axiata PLC

The awards for this year had received an impressive range of entries from various industries, with Dialog being recognised for its comprehensive and well-structured sustainability report. The company was commended by the judging panel for its country-first strategy, clear understanding of the materiality of sustainability issues and its resolute dedication to addressing them. Moreover, the panel recognised Dialog's transparent and informative disclosure of its sustainability performance, which showcased its unwavering commitment to

continuous improvement. "We are honoured to receive this recognition from ACCA, which endorses our commitment to sustainability," said Supun Weerasinghe, Group Chief Executive of Dialog Axiata PLC. "Sustainability is at the core

of our business model and is embedded in everything we do. We are committed to continuously improving our impact to society and the standard of sustainability reporting. We will continue to work towards a sustainable future for all our stakeholders."

CMA Sri Lanka to celebrate International Women's Day via virtual forum tomorrow



Darshini Watawala Annie Mathew Chamila Cooray Pulani Ranasinghe Dr. Chaminda Ranasinghe Conrad Dias

The Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka celebrates International Women's Day 2023 organized by the CMA Sri Lanka Women Development Activities Committee on the theme 'Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality' on March 8th from 2.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. via online zoom platform.

The welcome address will be delivered by Chairperson, CMA Sri Lanka Women's Development Activities Committee and Associate Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Darshini Watawala.

The keynote address on 'Innovation

and Technology for Gender Equality' will be delivered by Annie Mathew advocate for a more inclusive and humane tech industry who is Director Developer Relations and Digital Natives at Microsoft Asia Pacific with the mission of empowering. She has received the Chief Minister's recognition for her work with startup ecosystem and was nominated for Sthree Shakti award for women in Science and Technology in her home state in India. Presentation will be followed by a panel discussion, which will be moderated by Chamila Cooray, General Manager - Operations,

WNS Global Services (Pvt) Ltd. The panelists are Pulani Ranasinghe, Founder & CEO, Loons Lab, Dr. Chaminda Ranasinghe, Founder & CEO, Ideahub (Pvt) Ltd and Conrad Dias, CEO, LOLC Technologies Limited.

The webinar will conclude with a question and answer session where participants will also have an opportunity to discuss practical applications and obtain clarifications via chat option.

Those who wish to attend are requested to send an e-mail to: registrations@cma-srilanka.org

Contd. from Page 7

Faster decline ...

Meanwhile, the so-called core inflation, barring often-volatile food, energy and transport, declined to 43.6 percent, from 45.6 percent through January.

Sri Lankan economy has turned a corner faster than many would have expected and political and social stability are sine-qua-non for the full recovery, which could be expected from as early as end of this year.

Dollars stashed ...

It said excessive volatility on either side isn't good for the market and hence, will not shy away to intervene going forward, although it allowed greater flexibility in the exchange rate from today onwards by removing the forex trading band.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank also said that despite the relaxation of the import controls, it hasn't seen a significant pick up in the imports.

It estimated an import bill of US \$ 1.38 billion for last month, which is only 73 percent of the country's peak-level imports.

The Finance Ministry has removed most of the remaining controls on imports, which were imposed last year.

Commenting on the foreign exchange debt repayments earmarked for the first half of this year, which was estimated at US \$ 2.5 billion and received the Cabinet nod a week ago, the Central Bank said it was a misunderstanding on the part of the Cabinet, which hadn't taken the debt restructuring into consideration.

Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe said the debt obligations would become true obligation, only after the debt restructuring was finalised.

However, he said the US \$ 200 million swap facility with Bangladesh Bank would be settled in September.

Toblerone to drop ...

They state that national symbols are not allowed to be used to promote milk-based products that are not made exclusively in Switzerland. For other raw foodstuffs the threshold is at least 80 percent.

In a statement to the BBC, Mondelez said it was moving some production outside of the country to "respond to increased demand worldwide and to grow our Toblerone brand for the future". It said its new packaging would include a "distinctive new Toblerone typeface and logo that draw further inspiration from the Toblerone archives and the inclusion of our founder, Tobler's, signature".

Toblerone, the mountain-shaped chocolate made from Swiss milk with honey and almond nougat, first went on sale in 1908 in Bern, the capital city of Switzerland.

But it was not until 1970 that the Matterhorn's jagged silhouette debuted on its packaging, with the Bernese bear and eagle featuring before then, according to the Toblerone website. Mondelez said Bern was an "important part of our history and will continue to be so for the future".

In 2016, Toblerone courted controversy by changing the design of the chocolate bar to space out the distinctive triangular chunks in a bid to keep down costs.

After much criticism, the company reverted to the original shape two years later.

High-grade ...

Most importantly, Capital Metal's pioneering project is set to open up a new industry in mining heavy mineral sands and other valuable mineral resources in the country and pave the way for similar projects in the future, opening up a much-needed new export industry.

China approves ...

Pakistan has already received a US \$ 700 million loan from China to help boost its forex reserves.

Dar said the total US \$ 2 billion is in effect Pakistan borrowing back the debt repayments it has paid to Beijing for previously agreed loans.

He said Pakistan will need US \$ 5 billion external financing to close its financing gap this fiscal year, which ends in June.

More external financing will be coming to Pakistan only after Islamabad signs a deal with the International

Monetary Fund, which the minister said should be done by next week.

The lender has been negotiating the deal with Pakistan since early last month to clear its ninth review, which if approved by its board will issue over US \$ 1 billion tranche of US \$ 6.5 billion bailout agreed in 2019.

"We will, God willing, take this country out of this quagmire," Dar said, dismissing concerns of a default risk.

Lifetime Chartered ...

Dr. Dissanayake has authored and presented numerous articles on maritime and logistics. He was the first-ever industry professional to be appointed as Chairman of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority and for two stints.

He has held several other positions as Secretary to the Cabinet Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Southern Development, Chairman of Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Sri Lanka, Chairman of Advisory Council, Sri Lanka Transport Board, Board Director of Ceylon Shipping Corporation and Chairman/CEO of Aitken Spence Maritime and Logistics, the first Sri Lankan company to venture into port efficiency management and launch two public-private partnerships on ports outside Sri Lanka.

He is a Professor in Maritime Studies (visiting) at Shanghai Maritime University, Dalian Maritime University and Co-Chairman of CINEC Maritime Campus. He has also served on the UN/UNCTAD Panel as a Shipping Expert and is a Member of the International Association of Maritime Economist.

Singapore Court ...

The cargoes were supplied to LIOC by Glencore, the Anglo-Swiss multinational commodity trading and mining firm based in Baar, Switzerland and insured under an open policy with Lloyd's of London. The four witnesses were all present or former employees of SGS Testing and Control Services of Singapore (SGS Singapore). SGS Singapore, which runs the Singapore Laboratory of Geneva-based global inspection giant SGS, was appointed by LIOC to report on the quality of the cargoes before the shipment

from Singapore aboard Vinalines Glory and had confirmed that they were on spec in all respects prior to loading. The dispute arose when the Vinalines Glory arrived in Colombo on February 8, 2013 and the cargoes were sampled and tested by the laboratories at Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited (CPSTL) and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation Refinery.

The CPSTL lab reported that the samples of diesel and marine diesel taken from the vessel in Colombo failed to meet the required specifications in appearance and colour. SGS Singapore came under the microscope in the CHC when LIOC asked the global inspection firm to give evidence about the quality tests carried out in Singapore prior to the cargo being loaded. SGS Singapore said that it needed Glencore's permission to testify in the CHC and declined to provide LIOC with the evidence sought, on alleged grounds of confidentiality owed by SGS Singapore to Glencore.

Being based outside the jurisdiction of the CHC, SGS Singapore could not be compelled to appear before it and give the evidence required by LIOC. LIOC then made an application to the CHC to make a Request for Judicial Assistance from the Singapore courts to compel the global inspection firm to give the required evidence before the Singapore HC and have that evidence transmitted to Colombo. The ship owners opposed LIOC's application. High Court Judge M. Ahsan R. Marikar, as he then was, rejected the ship owner's objections and ordered the Justice Ministry in Sri Lanka to issue a Request for Judicial Assistance to the Supreme Court of Singapore. The Covid-19 pandemic delayed matters but on the application of LIOC's Singapore lawyers Drew & Napier, the Singapore HC permitted LIOC to summon the required witnesses to give evidence before it with regard to the quality tests carried out by SGS Singapore. The examination of witnesses concluded on October 7, 2022 and the Singapore High Court ordered SGS Singapore to pay SGD 20,000.00 to LIOC for its costs. The evidence obtained by the High Court of Singapore and transmitted to Sri Lanka is now admissible as evidence in the Colombo High Court.

Dr. Niranjan Abeyratne with Counsel Rukshala Goonetilleke and Thanuja Meegahawatta, instructed by Dhammika Gabadage, appeared for LIOC in the CHC. Counsel Murshid Mahroof and Dushantha de Silva instructed by Julius & Creasy, appeared for the vessel and her owners.

Ceylinco General Insurance customers to receive digital policies and certificates

Envisioning a greener digital future, Ceylinco General Insurance has commenced issuing its policies and certificates in digital form, thereby offering greater convenience to its customers.

This move is also an integral part of the company's commitment to reduce harmful environmental impact and promote sustainable business practices. By replacing the plastic card with digital alternatives, the company aims to significantly reduce the consumption of natural resources and decrease its carbon footprint.

Dr. Jagath Alwis, Chairman of Ceylinco General Insurance, commenting of this latest initiative said, "We understand the importance of protecting the environment for future generations and that every small step we take towards sustainability can make a significant difference in combating environmental degradation.

This move also helps to conserve foreign exchange at a time when the nation



is desperately trying to revive the economy. Our company joins other insurers around the world who are transforming to digital policies and certificates while assuring customers of our continued commitment to serve them with our signature service standards."

Rex Gunatileke, Director / Chief Operating Officer of Ceylinco General Insurance said, "The growing significance of digital technologies is transforming societies and economies. In the digital transition, we aim to harness digital technologies for sustainability and

prosperity, and to empower our customers.

Electronic policies and certificates offer heightened convenience and greater security as our highly secure digital platform ensures total privacy and data security. We invite our customers, partners and other stakeholders to join and support our mission to create a sustainable future for all."

Issuing of digital policies and certificates is in accordance with the provision of Section 3 of the Electronic Transactions Act No 19 of 2006 which says, "No data message, electronic document, electronic record or other communication shall be denied legal recognition, effect, validity or enforceability on the ground that it is in electronic form."

For the convenience of the customers and to overcome any obstacles, the relevant section of the Electronic Transactions Act will be attached to the digital certificate. In line with the provisions of the Electronic Transactions Act, all authorities will be bound to accept digital certificates and policies as valid proof.

ComBank adjudged 'Best SME Bank' in Sri Lanka by Global Finance

Commercial Bank of Ceylon's impactful efforts to support the local SME sector were recently acknowledged on a global platform when the bank won the award for the 'Best SME Bank' in Sri Lanka from the New York-headquartered Global Finance magazine.

This award honours financial institutions that best supported their small and medium enterprise clients during tumultuous times by preparing them to thrive in the new, post-Covid landscape, the magazine said.

Commenting on winning this accolade, Commercial Bank Managing Director and CEO Sanath Manatunge said, "According to the South Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank, SMEs represent more than 75 percent of the enterprises in Sri Lanka and account for more than 20 percent of exports, 45 percent of employment, and 52 percent of GDP. These are significant statistics that prove the SME's indispensable role in the local economy.

By supporting this vital sector, Commercial Bank contributes



Commercial Bank's Chief Operating Officer S. Prabagar (left) accepting the award in London

to the economic growth of the country. This latest award is not only an acknowledgement of our efforts in this regard but also a vote of confidence that identifies the bank as a reliable financial partner that provides unique services to entrepreneurs."

The bank received the award at the annual Best SME Bank Awards

ceremony hosted in London where financial institutions from 69 countries and territories and six US regions were recognised for their exceptional performance in meeting the specialised needs of the SMEs in their markets during the period in review between April 2021 and March 2022.

The bank's initiatives to assist

the local SME segment include launching the 'Dirishakthi' Micro Entrepreneurs loan scheme and Value Chain Development Programme to strengthen rural value chains. Facilities such as 'Biz Loans' and 'Agri Gold Loans' schemes, capacity building programmes, support to women entrepreneurs in the country, and continuous disbursement of COVID-19 support loans too played a role in the bank's SME-centric services during a challenging period.

The bank accords special emphasis to supporting women in business under its 'Anagi Women's Banking' portfolio designed in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The portfolio comprises of the 'Anagi Women's Savings Account' and the 'Anagi Business Loan for Women Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (WSME)' and the bank has pledged to introduce many more new products and services in the future. It also conducts special seminars to empower women entrepreneurs with the knowledge they need to grow their businesses.

Allianz Lanka ranks #1 as Loyalty Leader in Global NPS Survey 2022

Allianz Lanka announced that its recently conducted Global NPS Survey results indicate that Allianz Lanka is currently leading in the market, achieving the Loyalty Leader position amongst the competition.

This is an achievement that shows that Allianz has outperformed the competition across all 5 customer journeys and further has scored highly across top business drivers.

NPS Survey is an annual study conducted by Allianz Group with all its DEs to measure the customer loyalty towards the Brand. Net Promoter score (NPS) is measured by deep diving insights from Insurance Policy Holders' on their opinions to find out their willingness to recommend any insurance brand to another by taking business drivers such as Price, Brand, Service quality, Product Quality and customer touch points such as Sales, Renewals, Claims, Communication and Contract management into consideration. A sample of Island wide General insurance policy holders were



Mangala Bandara and Alan Smeed interviewed from January to December 2022 to gather these research insights.

Explaining the significance of the achievement, CEO at Allianz Lanka, Alan Smeed said, "The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a crucial tool in measuring customer loyalty and predicting future business growth for any organization. A high NPS score is a testament to the strength of a brand and its exceptional service quality. We are grateful to both our employees, for their dedication to delivering outstanding customer journeys, and our customers, for ranking us #1. We aim to continue providing the same level of customer

excellence in 2023 and beyond!" Mangala Bandara, Chief Marketing Officer at Allianz Lanka also added, "This is the first time in Allianz history that we have achieved this position and it demonstrates the results of our hard work and strong brand recognition among our customers.

All our departments and teams worked seamlessly together to launch several initiatives in 2022, including COVID-prevention awareness programmes, mental health programmes, our brand campaigns, innovative insurance solutions, digital apps, and continuous and ongoing CSR and sustainability campaigns.

These efforts have greatly contributed to our success. I also believe the launch of our corporate campaign, and series of innovative initiatives, such as the simply insurance educational video series for social media platforms, developing digital apps for claims journeys, have strongly contributed towards this success."

Softlogic Stockbrokers launches digital on-boarding

Softlogic Stockbrokers, the full-service brokerage arm of Softlogic Capital PLC, recently made waves in the financial services sector by introducing an industry-first digital solution for new investors joining the Colombo Stock Exchange.

Through this innovation, new investors have the ability to open their Central Depository System (CDS) accounts on the CSE, in under an hour, shattering the 24-48 hour account opening timeline practiced in the industry.

The innovation comes on the back of Softlogic being the first in Sri Lanka to onboard over 5,000 clients through a 100 percent digital process, placing the company on the path for explosive growth.

Deployed in November 2022, the online platform is the first of its kind, and propels the Sri Lankan stock market forward by offering a seamless digital service for prospective investors to invest in the CSE with greater ease. The online platform is user-friendly and intuitive, making the account opening experience convenient, faster and more efficient.

Dihan Dedigama, Director/Chief Executive Officer, Softlogic Stockbrokers (Pvt) Ltd stated, "We are excited to launch a digital platform which makes investing in the CSE accessible to anyone from anywhere at any time. Our teams have worked hard to develop this solution, and we are proud to be the first stockbroker company in Sri Lanka to offer this service. Being the first to open 5,000 accounts digitally, we have been at the forefront of technological innovation and the online platform clearly displays our commitment to adapt, whilst providing our clients with the best possible trading experience. We look forward to continuously drive innovation and lead with novel solutions which will transform Sri Lanka's capital market making it accessible in all parts

of the country without the requirement for brick and mortar infrastructure." Ifthikar Ahmed, Executive Director, Softlogic Stockbrokers (Pvt) Ltd added, "This solution was born out of a desire to digitize the elaborate financial system and encourage more Sri Lankans to begin investing in the stock market. Like most other sectors, it is vital that the finance industry is equipped to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of modern investors, especially in terms of convenience and time-efficiency. Customers today need quick and easy solutions, and that's exactly what our online account opening system provides. We believe that this innovative offering will open the stock market to a whole new segment of prospective investors."



HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC Resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under section 4 of the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 04 of 1990

Branch: RATNAPURA
KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA Also Known as JAGATH KALUARACHCHI PERCY PREMANATH NIHAL KALUARACHCHI VAJIRA NIRMALLEE JAYASINGHE and KUMUDU KUMARAI KALUARACHCHI Partners of M/s Samurati auto Traders

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC held on 24th November 2022 it was resolved specially and unanimously:

Whereas KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA Also Known as JAGATH KALUARACHCHI PERCY PREMANATH NIHAL KALUARACHCHI, KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA, VAJIRA NIRMALLEE JAYASINGHE and KUMUDU KUMARAI KALUARACHCHI carrying on business in Partnership under name style & firm of M/S Samurati Auto Traders as the Obligors mortgaged and hypothecated property more fully described in the Schedule hereto by Mortgage Bond No. 4745 dated 27.11.2013 attested by N C Jayawardena, Notary Public of Colombo in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of the Permanent Overdraft of Rs. 25,000,000/- Short term Revolving Loan I of Rs. 24,900,000/- and Short Term Revolving Loan II of Rs. 25,000,000/- totalling a sum of Rs. 74,900,000/- granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA also known as JAGATH KALUARACHCHI, PERCY PREMANATH NIHAL KALUARACHCHI, KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA, VAJIRA NIRMALLEE JAYASINGHE and KUMUDU KUMARAI KALUARACHCHI.

And whereas the said KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA also known as JAGATH KALUARACHCHI, PERCY PREMANATH NIHAL KALUARACHCHI, KALUARACHIGE DON JAYAWARDENA, VAJIRA NIRMALLEE JAYASINGHE and KUMUDU KUMARAI KALUARACHCHI have made default in Payment of the sums due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Mortgage Bond No. 4745 dated 27/11/2013 and on the said Permanent Overdraft of Rs. 25,000,000/- short term Revolving Loan I of Rs. 24,900,000/- and short term Revolving Loan II of Rs. 25,000,000/- and there is now due and owing to Hatton National Bank PLC as at 16th October 2022 a sum of Rs. 27,531,057/97, Rs.27,823,500/- and Rs. 27,736,895/92 totalling to a sum of Rupees Eighty Three Million Ninety One Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Four and Cents Nine Only (Rs.83,091,454/09) on the said Mortgage dated 27/11/2013 and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990, do hereby resolve to sell mortgaged property as described in the Schedule hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Mortgage Bond No. 4745 dated 27/11/2013 be sold by Public Auction by J W E Jayawardena Licensed Auctioneer of all island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 83,091,454/09 together with further interest at the rate of AWPLR +2% p.a from 17th October 2022 on the capital outstanding of Rs. 25,000,000/-, Rs. 24,900,000/- and Rs. 25,000,000/- respectively and to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

- All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 1 depicted in Plan No. 337 dated 20.04.1997 made by S G Ranasinghe - Licensed Surveyor from and out of the land called NIDANMULAWATTI and KONGAHAWATTI together with the buildings and everything standing thereon situated at Walana within the Grama Niladhari Division of Walana and Divisional Secretariat Division of Panadura within the Thanthirimulla Sub Office of Panadura Pradeshiya Sabha Limits in Panadura Talpiti Debadda of Panadura Totamune in the District of Kaluthara (but within the Registration Division of Panadura) Western Province and Which said Lot 1 is bounded on the North by Lot 2B in Plan No. 217 and Lot A in Plan No. 8071 (Property of Jayantha Gunathilake) on the East by Lot 4 on the South by Lot 2 (Reservation for Lot 10ft wide) on the West by Wappapola Road and Containing in Extent One Rood and Two Decimal Six Nought Perches (A0-R1-P2.60) according to the said Plan No. 337 and registered under title F 516/130at the land Registry of Panadura.
- All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 3 depicted in Plan No. 337 dated 20.04.1997 made by S G Ranasinghe - Licensed Surveyor from and out of the land called NIDANMULAWATTI and KONGAHAWATTI together with the buildings and everything standing thereon situated at Walana within the Grama Niladhari Division of Walana and Divisional Secretariat Division of Panadura within the Thanthirimulla Sub Office of Panadura Pradeshiya Sabha Limits in Panadura Talpiti Debadda of Panadura Totamune in the District of Kaluthara (but within the Registration Division of Panadura) Western Province and Which said Lot 3 is bounded on the North by Lot 2 (Reservation for Lot 10ft wide) on the East by Lot 4 on the South by Property of B Wimalaratne and on the West by Wappapola Road and Containing in Extent Nine Decimal Three Nought Perches (A0-R0-P9.30) according to the said Plan No. 337.
- All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 4 depicted in Plan No. 337 dated 20.04.1997 made by S G Ranasinghe - Licensed Surveyor from and out of the land called NIDANMULAWATTI and KONGAHAWATTI together with the buildings and everything standing thereon situated at Walana within the Grama Niladhari Division of Walana and Divisional Secretariat Division of Panadura within the Thanthirimulla Sub Office of Panadura Pradeshiya Sabha Limits in Panadura Talpiti Debadda of Panadura Totamune in the District of Kaluthara (but within the Registration Division of Panadura) Western Province and Which said Lot 4 is bounded on the North by Lot 2B in Plan No. 217 and Lot A in Plan No. 8071 Property of Jayantha Gunathilake on the East by Property of M Walter on the South by Properties of M D Lalchandra M D Rathnapala and Wimalaratne and on the West by Lots 3, 2 and 1 and Containing in Extent One Rood and Five Perches (A0-R1-P5) according to the said Plan No. 337.

By order of the Board of Directors.
K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC Resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under section 4 of the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 04 of 1990

Branch: PUTTALAM
SUBRAMANIAM RAVI
At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC held on 24th November 2022 it was resolved specially and unanimously:
Whereas SUBRAMANIAM RAVI as the Obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property more fully described in the Schedule hereto by virtue of Mortgage Bond Nos. 5868 dated 19.06.2017 and 6124 dated 21.02.2016 both attested by G M M Fernando, Notary Public of Negombo in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of Term Loan facility of Rs. 6,200,000.00 granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to SUBRAMANIAM RAVI.

And whereas the said SUBRAMANIAM RAVI has made default in payment of the sum due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Bonds and on the said Term Loan of Rs.6,200,000.00 extended to him among other facilities and there is now due and owing to Hatton National Bank PLC as at 20th July 2022 a sum of Rupees Five Million Seven Hundred and Eighty Seven Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Four and Cents Nine Only (Rs. 5,787,684.09) on the Said Bonds and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990, do hereby resolve to sell mortgaged property as described in the Schedule hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Bond Nos. 5868 & 6124 be sold by Public Auction by A S Kumari Licensed Auctioneer of all island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 5,787,684.09 together with further interest at the rate of AWPLR + 3% p.a from 21st July 2022 on the capital outstanding of Rs. 5,570,759.52 to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 1 depicted in Plan No. 763 dated 09.02.2017 made by D J Pullai Licensed Surveyor from and out of the land called Attaville Kela together with the buildings and everything standing thereon situated at Attaville in the Grama Niladhari's Division of 607/B Madhyama Attavilluwa and in the Divisional Secretariat of Puttalam within the limits of Puttalam Pradeshiya Sabha in Puttalam Pattu North in Pattu Division in the District of Puttalam North Western Province (within the Registration Division of Puttalam) and bounded on the North by Lot No. 229 of FTP 01 (Road Pradeshiya Sabha) on the East by Lot No. 144 of FTP 01 (Road Pradeshiya Sabha) on the South by Lot No. 571 of FTP 01 and on the West by Lot No. 226 of FTP 01 and containing in extent Ten Acres Two Roods Sixteen Perches (A10:R2:P16).

By order of the Board of Directors.
K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC Resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under section 4 of the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 04 of 1990

Branch: SIYAMBALANDUWA
DISSANAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE DAMMIKE DISSANAYAKE
At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC held on 24th November 2022 it was resolved specially and unanimously:
Whereas DISSANAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE DAMMIKE DISSANAYAKE as the Obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property more fully described in the Schedule hereto by virtue of Mortgage Bond No. 5667 dated 09/04/2021 attested by K S B Wijerathne, Notary Public of Kandy in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of a Term Loan facility of Rs.7,420,000/- granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to DISSANAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE DAMMIKE DISSANAYAKE.

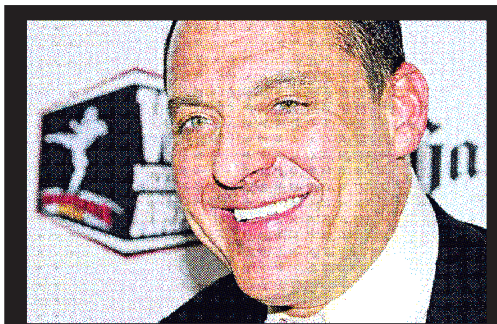
And whereas the said DISSANAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE DAMMIKE DISSANAYAKE has made default in payment of the sum due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Bond and on the said Term Loan of Rs. 7,420,000/- and there is now due and owing to Hatton National Bank PLC as at 14th September 2022 a sum of Rupees Six Million Nine Hundred and Ninety Eight Thousand Four Hundred and Sixty Three and Cents Eighty Seven Only (Rs. 6,998,463/87) on the Said Bond and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990, as amended do hereby resolve to sell mortgaged property as described in the schedule hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Mortgage Bond No. 5667 be sold by Public Auction by NU Jayasuriya Licensed Auctioneer of all island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 6,998,463/87 together with further interest at the rate of 10% p.a from 15th September 2022 on the capital outstanding of Rs.6,777,504/- to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 2 depicted in Plan No. 1237 dated 20.05.2015 made by S A Dissanayake Licensed Surveyor (being Lot 1 in Plan No. 1220) from and out of the land called 'LEWELLA KOPIWATTA' situated at Lewella (which has been erroneously entered at the Land Registry as Ampitiya) in the Grama Niladhari's Division of Lewella 222 (which has been erroneously entered at the land Registry at Ampitiya) within the Municipal Council Limits of Kandy in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Kandy & Gangawata Korale in the District of Kandy Central Province and bounded on the North-East by Lewella Kapiwatta Premises bearing Assessment No. 115/2B Lewella Road claimed by D M Podimienika depicted as Lot 3 in Plan No. 3236 dated 09.02.1957 by F Mapalagama L/S on the South-East by retaining wall separating Lewella Kapiwatta premises bearing Assessment Nos. 117/3 & 117/3B Lewella Road claimed by Rathnayake & E M U Ekanayake on the South-West by 3M wide Means of Access leading from Lewella Road (being Lot 4 in Plan No. 1220) and on the North-West by Lot 1 hereof and containing in extent Twelve Perches (A0:R0:P12) or 0.03035 together with the buildings and everything else standing thereon.

Full and free right light liberty leave and License of Ingress, egress passage and way with or without vehicles or animals laden or un-laden and right to lay install electric cables overhead wires posts water lines and other contrivance and convenience in common, similar rights in along under over along 3 meters wide Means of Access depicted in the said Plan No. 1237 leading from Lewella Road (being Lot 4 in Plan No. 1220)

By order of the Board of Directors.
K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

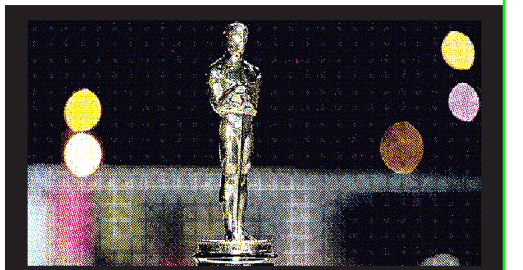


ACTOR TOM SIZEMORE DEAD

Tom Sizemore, a talented but troubled actor who made a career of playing tough guys, but struggled to stay on the right side of the law, has died at the age of 61, his manager said Friday. He suffered a brain aneurysm in February and on Friday was removed from life support, days after doctors concluded no more could be done for him, Charles Lago said. **AFP**

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

When "All Quiet on the Western Front" first premiered back in September, there was little to suggest it was about to wage an all-out campaign for Oscar votes. "All Quiet" has emerged from the crowded trenches of awards season hopefuls as an Oscars frontrunner, with nine nods, including for much-coveted best picture honors. **AFP**



OSCAR FILMS HIGHLIGHT MAN'S DESTRUCTION

While James Cameron's ecological sci-fi fable "Avatar: The Way of Water" is vying for best picture at the Oscars, his fellow nominees in the documentary categories have been busy chronicling very real threats to our own planet. From the smoggy skies of New Delhi to the melting sea ice of Siberia, "All That Breathes" and "Haulout" each use complex, local stories to shine a global spotlight on man's desecration of nature here on Earth. **AFP**

Tehani Mathew



Chief Trustee Tyrone Fernando Foundation Moratuwa, Managing Director Vision Packaging (Pvt) Ltd, Director Packwell Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, Director LJM Peiris & Co Ltd

1 The Government must make ICT access a policy priority to open up avenues of long distance learning, bridge the gap between knowledge and training, make sectors traditionally dominated by men accessible to women, revolutionize healthcare options for women and help women entrepreneurs gain access to private equity and venture capital.

Blessie Keegel

Founder - Women in Media / Brand Entrepreneur - Twinery (Innovations by MAS)

3 Access to technology will always be key. Prioritising the education budget to ensure that EVERY SCHOOL ISLANDWIDE has the technology it requires to educate the next generation to find their place in the future, especially girls is a MUST.

More often than not, girls are discouraged to pursue a career in technology. It is vital to encourage girls to pursue their own interests in the STEM fields.



Chethika Hapugalle

Country Manager Double A Paper

1 Firstly lets remind our selves that companies such as Virtusa, Millenium IT, Cake Labs, GenC which are 200 percent home born, were all started

by Sri Lankans in Colombo and Sri Lankans world wide. With the help of these companies plus our world wide Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim diaspora technocrats, the education ministry can tap in to them to research, identify and categorize the education system students from a tertiary level to post graduate.

Neluka Silva

Senior Professor in English, University of Colombo

1 More affordable packages to obtain internet, mobile data, laptop facilities etc., targeted at school children and young adults (especially women) will encourage wider usage.

4 Social equity needs to begin from childhood. From an early age, at school or home, children should be made to understand that all human beings are equal and treated without gender preference. Encouraging questions, instilling the value of education and contributing to society, enable changes in mindset and worldviews that prejudice girl children.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

BY ANUSHA DAVID

International Women's Day, March 08, is a global day, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also calls a mark to action for accelerating women's equality. This year we combine two themes in order to better communicate the message of IWD 2023. **DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality and #EmbraceEquity**

Q1 AS PER THE UN WOMEN'S GENDER SNAP SHOT REPORT, 54 % OF GIRLS WHO LIVE IN CRISIS AFFECTED COUNTRIES ARE NOT IN FORMAL EDUCATION. HOW COULD TECHNOLOGY BE USED TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION HERE IN SRI LANKA?

Q2 HAS THE GOSL FAILED TO ENHANCE AND EMBRACE EQUITY - CITE EXAMPLES IF SO ?

Q3 SRI LANKA'S INTERNET PENETRATION RATE

STOOD AT 52.6% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AT THE START OF 2022. HOWEVER SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN WERE COMPELLED TO CLIMB ON TO ROOF TOPS IN ORDER TO STUDY, WHILE COMPUTER FACILITIES IN MOST SCHOOLS ARE STILL A LUXURY. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO DIGITALLY EMPOWER WOMEN IN OUR COUNTRY ?

Q4 WHAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO INSTILL THE NEED FOR SOCIAL EQUITY IN SRI LANKA AND WHERE SHOULD WE BEGIN ?

Maljini Jayasekera

Group Manager - Marketing Cargills (Ceylon) PLC

Sri Lanka's literacy level is high but sadly, our girls, especially those who live in rural areas, are

kept back from attending school at an early age due to economic difficulties. I believe we could reach the young girls through smartphones as the penetration of smartphones in our country is fairly high. We could conduct online classes for them in the evening when the mother or father who owns a smartphone is at home. They could be taught basic language skills, science, social studies etc. so they are better prepared to join the workforce when they grow up. Even issues such as gender-based violence, cyberbullying and the digital gender gap could be addressed via these classes as well as on electronic media. Young girls should be aware of their rights and capabilities and step out with confidence when seeking jobs and careers as young adults.

Dr Sujatha Samarakoon

MBBS (Cey), MSc, MD, Dip GUM (Lond), FCCP(SL), Consultant Venereologist & Public Health Specialist

1 The best would be to introduce e-learning platforms and provide opportunities for women and girls to access internet facilities via computers, tablets or cellular phones. However, there is a cost attached and those who really need it may not be able to afford it.

2 Sri Lanka has not totally failed but neither have they taken adequate steps to address gender equity. Sri Lankan girls have greater educational attainment on average compared to boys of the same age. However, female representation in

parliament is 5.3% and women's labour force participation is 34% compared to 72% in men and traditional cultural norms and political violence prevents women participating in the country's development.

3 Teach women information technology from the basics upwards. Conduct free e learning classes at government institutions and Women's Organizations.

Caryll Tozer

Social and Women's Rights Activist

2 Female teachers have a dress code and the Ministry for Women is headed by a man. Only one percent of parliamentarians comprise women. This in itself demonstrates the lack of Equity in our country. Women are an underutilized resource and the Nation is poorer for it

3 National budgets must include funds for Digitization which will then ensure that information is readily available, even if a young girl or woman doesn't want to travel far to obtain it.

Jumana Dohadwala Lukmanjee

Principal / Dramaturgist at Conte School & Institute of Speech, Drama and Communication Skills

1 "If we are going to see real development in the world; then our best investment is women" Desmond Tutu.

Bridging the gender gap in education and leveraging technology needs to be urgently met. A steady plan could be devised with the help of non-profit organizations - with voluntary motifs to conduct superior virtual learning workshops, especially allowing contingency for women to reverse negative trends, in turn promote

employment and prosperity. Technology will only grow in relevance in the future, therefore harnessing its power for good, will ensure its utmost benefits for all.

2 Education is acquired of one's own volition, rather than engaging in 'blame game', a change could be worked upon. Opportunities are widespread but the courage to embrace them with a vision is required.

3 Technology such as computers are mere tools - motivation of students begin with a great teacher. In my opinion, it is the teacher-education aspect that demands a reform in most schools in SL.

Monica Menon

Education Consultant

1 Work with big players in the market such as Microsoft, Google, Apple and other players who have big CSR projects and would like to help with repurposing digital equipment.

3 UNICEF has a Digital Literacy Equity Outcome fund which is intended to empower girls and create gender equity in education. We can begin by providing phones and working with educational institutions to provide asynchronous learning materials and begin with the use of the mobile phone.

4 Creating awareness in schools and organizations, demonstrating how women are able to multitask and that women are the first "teachers" to their children and therefore the nation benefits.

Hirunika Premachandra

National Organiser, Samagi Vanitha Balawegaya

3 It is indeed sad that kids have to go through such hardships. During my time in school, students in the North didn't have electricity. They

were studying under lamp posts, while around them bombs were exploding. During the Covid 19 pandemic too whilst schools were closed a large percentage of children did not have access to online education. A great deal has to be done, to bridge this gap.

Dr Deborah Wyburn

Independent Consultant

The Sri Lanka Ministry of Education has been conducting ICT training for teachers ever since I arrived in this country 20 years ago. Many schools have also been provided with computer labs. However, to achieve gender

equity in digital literacy one needs to think from a gender transformative perspective. Computer labs should not only be used to teach computer science if the data shows a lack of gender equity in uptake of the subject. Across the world,

this approach has resulted in a gender gap in entry-level tech employment. However, the international NGO, 'Girls who Code' claim to be on track to closing this gap with their beneficiaries through providing fun coding activities that girls find meaningful. Our schools should look to doing the same.

The one mistake that the SL Ministry of Education has made is in thinking that the Internet is the key to online learning. Yes, students in rural areas or from poorer families were disadvantaged during the pandemic because of an inability to access online learning materials. But those materials could have been made available offline. An example of this in operation is the Cambodian government's Tabs on Wheels project where students access eLearning materials stored on an offline content server using a class set of tablet computers stored for safety in a mobile charging cart. Many great learning apps work offline and are available in local languages (e.g. Google Read Along and the PHET STEM simulations). The ToW project also solves the common problem of a lack of device ownership. It also temporarily solves the common problem of parents being reluctant to allow their daughters to go online because of the risk although, ultimately, to be digitally empowered, girls do need to go

online. Google's 'Be Internet Awesome' programme teaches young people the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety so they can explore the online world with confidence. Learning with technology is the key to empowerment. After all, for every challenge we face, "There's an App for That".

Nimshi Wjekoorn

Country Manager, Controlled Shelf Space for Sloggi / Triumph

2 We once took pride in producing the first female Prime Minister in the world, however the representation of women legislators at the national level

has never exceeded 7 per cent throughout electoral history since 1931 which is a matter of concern.

3 Many Asian countries have implemented various digital learning solutions for different purposes, from expanding classroom boundaries to reaching more children in areas which have lower infrastructure, to facilitating teacher training and personalizing learning and many more such initiatives. GOSL should consider the same implementations locally.

Chandi Dharmaratne

Chairperson Lankan Angel Network, Vice President HR, Virtusa

1 Technology is the vehicle that can reach across barriers and the only sustainable approach to provide access to information, leaving no one behind. Virtual classrooms, e learning with basic infrastructure (connectivity, community centers with smart devices, relevant content, up-skilled educationists) at grass-root level is mandatory.

2 We can do more towards women entrepreneurs - they create opportunities for many in their communities enhancing our economy at the grass-root level.

3 Having half of our population literally 'on bench' due to lack of digital connectivity has massive economic setback. Hence policy makers and regulators must have in their mandate - to have 100% penetration as a non-negotiable KPI.



Manisha Dissanayake
 Attorney-at-Law

Sri Lanka's pride in its free education system is misplaced to a great extent, as is evinced by school-going children climbing trees and roofs to connect to online lessons during lockdowns, or not being able to connect to them at all. The GOSL's failure in ensuring equity in education is conspicuous, and warrants taking measures to allocate the resources to provide young girls with the technology and related facilities they need to participate in the classroom experience meaningfully, increasing their chances of enjoying higher education and a place in the workforce in the future.