



YOUR PAPER TODAY 10 PAGES

IMF HAS DEVIATED FROM ITS STANCE ON SL: KIRIELLA

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had deviated from its original stance where they claimed earlier that the Government should obtain the people's mandate to implement the economic reforms of the IMF, Chief Opposition Whip Lakshman Kiriella said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Sri Lanka hopeful of resuming work on BIA expansion

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has extended its support to restore the economy of Sri Lanka and Airport and Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) Limited (AASL) can resume the Terminal 02 project with the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) with the assistance of JICA and the Government of Japan, Ports, Shipping and Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Rahul Gandhi disqualified from Indian Lok Sabha

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was yesterday disqualified as a member of India's Lok Sabha, a day after being convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment in a defamation case filed over his remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the foreign media reported.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Three military officers blacklisted for working with NPP: AKD

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA Three military officers including retired Air Vice-Marshal Sampath Thuyacontha had been blacklisted for engaging in politics with the National People's Power (NPP), NPP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

WILL SUMMON EC FOR A MEETING OVER UNCERTAINTY OF LG POLLS: DINESH

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA The Elections Commission will be summoned for a meeting to discuss the matters with regard to the uncertainty of the commission about holding the Local Government election, Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government and Prime

Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said yesterday. He told Parliament that the Elections Commission had not been able to come to a conclusion on holding the LG polls where the discussion had ended with looming uncertainty.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

HC Moragoda and President of ICCR review Indo-Lanka cultural relations

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India Milinda Moragoda met with the President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Dr. Vinay Sahasrabudde yesterday in New Delhi to follow up on the earlier discussions the two have had on the ways and means to further strengthen cultural cooperation between Sri Lanka and India.

Founded in 1950, the ICCR, is an autonomous organization of the Government of India, involved in India's external cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples. Over the years, a large number of Sri Lankan students have benefited from ICCR scholarships in various academic disciplines. The ICCR offers approximately 200 scholarships to Sri Lanka for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in India annually.



High Commissioner Moragoda presented Dr. Sahasrabudde with a copy of the publication 'Geoffrey Bawa; Drawing from the Archives'

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



PASTOR DIPLOMAT ARRESTED FOR GOLD SMUGGLING

EARLIER ANGEL HAD VISITED PASTOR JEROME FERNANDO IN SRI LANKA

One of Zimbabwe's most influential diplomats, Uebert Angel, offered to use his status to launder millions of dollars through a gold-smuggling scheme, during an undercover operation by Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit), the foreign media reported.

Angel, appointed ambassador-at-large and a presidential envoy by Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa in March 2021, told reporters he would be able to carry large volumes of dirty cash into the country using his diplomatic status.

The 44-year-old, who claims to be a prophet and heads a congregation - the

Good News Church - with branches in 15 countries, said he would facilitate a scheme through which unaccounted cash could be exchanged for Zimbabwe's gold. Recipients of the gold could then sell the precious metal for legitimate money, effectively turning their cash clean.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION MECHANISM

Sri Lanka, South Africa to set up joint working group

- South Africa agreed to provide technical support
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will also be signed

BY KELUM BANDARA

Sri Lanka will establish a joint working group with South Africa to work out the modalities of the proposed truth and reconciliation mechanism in Sri Lanka to address the ethnic question, a Minister said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Sabry, along with Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, visited South Africa between March 21 and 25.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

BROTHER AND SISTER DROWN IN CANAL



- THE VICTIMS UMESH SATSARA (10) AND DASMI NADEEKA (07) WERE RESIDENTS OF HALIELA
THEY HAD GONE IN SEARCH OF THEIR MOTHER WHO WAS LATE FROM WORK

BY PRASAD RUKMAL

Two children who, presumably, went in search of their mother who was late to be back after work had fallen into a canal at Bogoda in Haliela and drowned, the area police said. Their bodies were recovered yesterday afternoon by the Police and the Army.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Sustainable economic development cannot be accomplished without mitigating climate change: Sagala

The President's Senior Adviser on National Security and Chief of Presidential Staff Sagala Ratnayake said sustainable economic development goals cannot be accomplished without taking steps to mitigate climate change.

He said it at a function to mark the planting of 10,000 tree saplings programme, organized by the LEO Youth Vision 2048 Club and the LEO Club at Royal College, Colombo on March 23.

This programme was

organized in view of President Ranil Wickremesinghe's birthday, which fell yesterday, and the required plants were distributed to the main schools of the Colombo District.

LEO members, including Senula Dilana, President of LEO Youth Vision 2048, coordinated this programme.

Mr. Sagala Ratnayake emphasized the importance of working with understanding and commitment to mitigate climate change, as it contributes to economic development.

Sinopec to invest in an oil refinery in Hambantota

- The company currently offers bunkering services at Hambantota port

BY KELUM BANDARA

Sinopec, a Chinese company ranking fifth in the Fortune Global 500 list of 2022, is planning to invest in a multi-million oil refinery project in Hambantota, Daily Mirror learns.

Sinopec is a state-owned Chinese oil company based in Beijing. The company is a 'vertically integrated energy and chemical company that is engaged in oil and gas exploration and production.' The company currently offers bunkering services at the Hambantota port, which is also a Chinese investment.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Treasury will have to bear part of SriLankan debt even after restructuring: Minister

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA

The Treasury would have to bear a part of the debt burden of SriLankan Airlines even after it was restructured, Ports, Shipping and Aviation Services Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva said yesterday.

He told Parliament that the total debt of SriLankan was USD 1.2 billion and that they were expecting to raise about USD 500 million by handing over the ground

handling services and SriLankan Catering is also of some value.

'We will be able to pay off a considerable amount of the SriLankan debt by restructuring it. We will be able to raise some USD 500 million by handing over the ground handling services. SriLankan Catering is also of some value. The rest of the debt will have to be borne by the Treasury,' he said.

The Minister said the restructuring process was underway and that the Financial Advisory group Lazard was working with international guidance to prepare the expression of interest so that Sri Lanka could get maximum benefits.

The Minister said his first priority was to ensure job security of the SriLankan employees after the restructuring process.

Only way out is an all-party govt.: former president sirisena

BY SANDUN A. JAYASEKERA

The only rescue plan for Sri Lanka to use the IMF bailout package to salvage the country from the current political and socio-economic unrest is to form an all-party government and discuss the burning national issues with an inclusive trade union collective, the SLFP said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

SC SUSPENDS LAWYER FROM PRACTICING FOR SIX MONTHS For furnishing a letter to mislead British HC:

- Second Secretary of the HC had made a complaint to the BASL alleging deceit on the part of the Respondent Alwapillai Gangatharan

BY LAKMAL SOORIYARODDA

The Supreme Court yesterday issued a rule suspending a lawyer from practicing as an Attorney-at-Law for a period of six months over a complaint made by a Second Secretary (Migration) of the British High Commission in Sri Lanka. Edward Megarry, Second

Secretary (Migration) of the British High Commission in Sri Lanka had made a written complaint to the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) alleging deceit and malpractice on the part of the Respondent Alwapillai Gangatharan.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Tour guide arrested for sexual harassment

BY DAYARATNE EMOBAGAMA

A tour guide suspected of sexually harassing a Japanese tourist woman was taken into custody by the Anuradhapura Tourist Police yesterday.

He was arrested on a complaint received from the tourist. She said

she was subject to sexual harassment during her visit to Anuradhapura Sacred City.

The suspect was handed over to the Anuradhapura Police for further action. He was to be produced before the Anuradhapura Magistrate yesterday morning.

Grade six enrolment via Grade Five Scholarship goes online: Ministry

- Valid examination index number should be entered to access details

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

The details of students who have passed the Grade Five Scholarship Exams and the schools they have been admitted to in Grade six can be viewed on the website of the Education Ministry, the Ministry said.

Parents are requested to log on to https://g6application.moe.gov.lk/#/ to find out the details of the 2022

scholarship programme and other details pertaining to the new school admissions.

The Ministry said that a valid examination index number should be entered to access the details. This includes student details, current school details, selected school details, and details of the requested school list.

These details can then be downloaded

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

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Daily Mirror

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CONT'D.
FROM PAGE 1

Pastor diplomat arrested for gold smuggling

Angel and his business partner Rikki Doolan also claimed that their laundering operations had the approval of Mnangagwa, who has been in power since November 2017, when Zimbabwe's controversial former leader Robert Mugabe was ousted in a military coup. "You want gold, gold we can do it right now, we can make the call right now, and it's done," Angel told Al Jazeera's reporters. "It will land in Zimbabwe - Zimbabwe can't touch it too until I get to my house. So, there can be a diplomatic plan." Earlier Angel had visited Sri Lanka to meet Pastor Jerome Fernando.

Sri Lanka hopeful of resuming work on BIA expansion

While addressing the 40th Anniversary celebration of AASL yesterday, the Minister said, due to the economic crisis of the country, JICA suspended its loan extended to build the Terminal Q2 project of the BIA which is a much needed and timely development.

At the moment, AASL is managing five international airports in the country namely BIA, Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA), Colombo International Airport Ratmalana, Palali, and Batticaloa contributing to a large extent to the national economy.

ONLY WAY OUT IS AN ALL-PARTY GOVT.: FORMER PRESIDENT SIRISENA

Former President Maithripala Sirisena told a news briefing at the party head office that the government must restart talking to all political parties represented in Parliament with the final objective of forming an all-party government. The government must also appoint a board of trade unionists who will represent farmers, the working class, public and private sector employees, doctors, the estate sector, engineers, University academics and all other professionals to discuss and reach to a consensus on the national issues and how to use the IMF bailout package for maximum benefit.

The extended fund facility obtained by the government is not a bad thing. During the Yahapalana government, I also obtained a loan from the IMF.

Rahul Gandhi disqualified from Indian Lok Sabha

Earlier during the day, Rahul Gandhi attended Lok Sabha proceedings. He also attended a meeting of party lawmakers before the House proceedings started, reports our New Delhi correspondent. Congress Parliamentary Party Chief Sonia Gandhi was also present during the meeting.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION MECHANISM

The Minister told Daily Mirror that the South African authorities offered to provide technical assistance to Sri Lanka for the setting up of such a mechanism based on their experience after the end of Apartheid (The Apartheid between 1948 and 1994 in South Africa was the racial segregation under the all-white government).

Earlier, Sri Lanka informed the UNHRC that a Cabinet Sub-

Committee had been established under the Chairmanship of the President to bring about reconciliation among the different ethnic communities and the development of a truth-seeking mechanism was among the measures to be taken in this direction. Minister Sabry said the South African leaders shared with him about their approach to reconciliation through such a mechanism.

"A working group will be appointed to set up the mechanism in Sri Lanka based on insights from South Africa. The South African authorities shared with us their experience and challenges they faced," he said. Besides, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will also be signed. The Minister said any mechanism would be established according to the constitutional provisions of Sri Lanka.

HC MORAGODA AND PRESIDENT OF ICCR REVIEW INDO-LANKA CULTURAL RELATIONS

During the discussion, the High Commissioner and the President of the ICCR reviewed the status of the cultural cooperation between the two countries. In particular, High Commissioner Moragoda thanked the President of the ICCR for the support that the Council has extended towards organizing the two month-long Sri Lankan exhibition "Geoffrey Bawa: It Is Essential To Be There" at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi.

Grade six enrolment via Grade Five Scholarship goes online: Ministry

However, in the future, the online facility will be available for students who have not received a school or who want to change the school they have received due to other reasons or to submit appeals.

Those students who qualified on the basis of the Grade Five Scholarship cut-off marks, but did not get admission to proper schools, can lodge appeals via the web portal, the Ministry said. It said that from May 1, all

appeals must be submitted to the Education Ministry via the online programme. Appeals and applications delivered or forwarded on paper will be rejected, the Ministry said.

Three military officers blacklisted for working with NPP: AKD

Raising a question under Standing Order 27/2, he told Parliament that retired Air Vice-Marshal Sampath Thuyacontha had been banned from entering any Air Force base and participating in any Air Force events. The MP alleged that Thuyacontha had been put on the blacklist because he engaged in active politics with a political force against the Government. "There is no restriction for any retired military officer to engage in active politics. There are so many retired military officers such as Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka and Kamal Gunaratne in active politics. But, there is no issue or restriction on them carrying out their political ideologies. It is unfair to restrict these three officers, just because they do politics with a rival political party," he said.

IMF has deviated from its stance on SL: Kiriella

Kiriella said the Government was not in a position to implement the IMF conditions without seeking the mandate of the people. "The Government is planning to sell off profitable Government ventures. They can't do so without obtaining people's mandate. It is against the mandate of 69 million who voted for the SLPP and the mandate of the then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa as they pledged not to privatize State institutions," he said.

SC suspends lawyer from practicing for six months

The complaint had been made for furnishing a letter dated 5th June 2015 falsely affirming the existence of a case in the Magistrate's Court of Colombo, along with documents purporting to be Summons to be served and a warrant of arrest issued by the Kotahena Police station against one Machado, in order to mount support for a claim for asylum in the United Kingdom for the said person. The manner in which the Respondent has conducted himself in the instant case cannot be treated lightly nor condoned.

Brother and sister drown in canal

The victims Umesh Satsara (10) and Dasmee Nadeeka (07) were brother and sister and residents of Kokatiyimaluwa in Haliela and students of Bogoda Maha Vidyalaya.

One of the bodies has been entangled to a log afloat on the water away from the location of the incident and the other hanging on a branch of a tree over the Halaboya canal about three kilometres away.

Sinopec to invest in an oil refinery in Hambantota

A top delegation from the Sinopec Group and the China Merchants Group visited Sri Lanka recently to explore cooperation and further investment in petroleum chemicals, trade, and port and industrial park operation as announced by the Chinese Embassy in Colombo.

Negotiations are currently underway between the two sides on the proposed investment.

Meanwhile, Power and Energy Minister Kanachana Wijesekera said three global suppliers would enter the domestic retail market to bring about a healthy competition.

Will summon EC for a meeting over uncertainty of LG polls: Dinesh

"I hope to call the Elections Commission for a meeting soon about the uncertainty of the Commission regarding the LG polls," he said responding to questions of the opposition.

The Prime Minister said the opposition and the Elections Commission had filed several cases in the Supreme Court regarding the LG polls and added that the government would respect the court decisions and act accordingly.

When asked about allocating funds to the LG polls, he said the government has several priorities to meet in the coming days where two salaries of government workers and pensions have to be paid before the New Year. "We will pay the salaries of government servants at least from the IMF funds we received," he said.

OBITUARIES

SURIYABANDARA - A. CYRUS. (1st June 1932 to 22nd March 2023), retired Imports Manager of Volanka Limited (former Volkart Brothers) at peace with Jesus. Beloved husband of late Yvonne (nee Van Rooyen), loving father of Tammy and Angelo (Australia), father-in-law of Christopher Prins and Manuela (Australia), loving grandfather of Isaac (Malaysia), Rachel (USA), Daniel (SL), Rysham and Jordan (Australia), son of late John and late Elgin, brother of late Padmini Manikkaarachchi and Lakshmi Perera, brother-in-law of late Edward Perera. **The cremation took place at the General Cemetery Kanatte on 23rd March 2023, preceded by a private service, No. 408, 3rd Lane, Robert Gunawardena Mawatha, Battaramulla. 095129**

SP DENVER WIJESURIYA (STF (Retd)/SLAF (Retd). Husband of late Mignone, brother of late Zeme, Rex, late Annan, Kingsley and Brian, loving father of Tony, Dalrinc, Christine and Kenneth, father-in-law of Florence, late AVM Rohitha Ranasinghe and Michelle, beloved grandfather of Dharshana, Yovanka, Shyam, Shani, Andy, Nicolie, Kieran, Gabrielle and Mikeilla, loving great-grandfather of Yuvani, Miraya, Shanaya, Shenuk, Zoe, Shanudh and Shaalya. The mortal remains lie at A.F. Raymond Funeral Parlour. **Cortege leaves Parlour at 2.45 p.m. on Saturday the 25th for service at St. Thomas', Kotte and burial thereafter at 4 p.m. at St. Thomas' burial grounds. 093383**

ANANDAPPA - RUTH. Beloved daughter of late A. J. A. Anandappa and H. P. J. Anandappa, beloved sister of late Dr. (Mrs) Winifred Jayaweera, late Dr. (Mrs) Margaret Prins, late Dr. Augustus Anandappa, late Philomina Casie Chitty, late Anaclitus Anandappa, late Hermia Jayaweera and Dr. (Mrs) Marie Andradi, beloved sister-in-law of late Dr. Bede Jayaweera, late Dr. Dennis Prins, late Grace Anandappa, late Neville Casie Chitty, late Robin Jayaweera and Quintus Andradi. **Remains lie at Rohini Funeral Parlour, Maharagama. Cortege leaves the Parlour today, 25th March at 2.00 p.m. for burial at the General Cemetery, Borella (Roman Catholic section) at 3.00 p.m.**

JAYAWEERA - HENRY ROBERT MARY (ROBIN) (Sri Lanka Railway (Retired), (Called To Eternal Rest). Beloved husband of late Hermia, loving father of Rashanthi and Sureni, father-in-law of Sampath Perera and Sunjeewa Perera, grandfather of Mahen, Pooji, Marcha, late Marina, Nitaara and Marissa, son of late Robert and Muriel Jayaweera, brother of late Dr. Bede Jayaweera, late Daphne Herat, late Noel Jayaweera, late Yvette Jayaweera, and Marlene Jayasuriya. **Cortege leaves residence, 72/28, Mahalwarawa Road, Pannipitiya, at 3 p.m. on Saturday 25th March for burial at Roman Catholic Section, General Cemetery, Borella. 096361**

JAYAWEERA - JOHN. Ex Assistant Registrar, University of Peradeniya. Beloved husband of Chandrani, loving father of Jayanjali, loving son of late Bobby and Hyacinth Jayaweera, beloved brother of Doreen, late Anna, Henry, Aloy, Phyllis, Godfrey, Shiranee, Christine and Kumari, called to Rest. Respects can be paid at A.F. Raymond (PVT) LTD, No. 115, D.S. Senanayake Mawatha, Colombo 08 between 10.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. on 24th March 2023. **Cortege leaves the parlour at 4.00 p.m. on 25th March 2023, for cremation at the Borella Cemetery. "The Nook", 200/26, Fred. E. de Silva Mawatha, Katukelle, Kandy. 096364**

ONLINE OBITUARIES
www.dailymirror.lk/obituaries

DEATH NOTICES CLASSIFIED

First 25 words - Rs. 300/-
Additional word - Rs. 25/-
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Obituary Notice



Savitri Enoka Obeyesekere August 28th 1959 - March 24th 2023

With sadness we announce the passing of Savitri Enoka Obeyesekere on the 24th of March 2023. Beloved wife of Neil Obeyesekere, beloved Mother of Dhyneika Jayemanne, Tanika and Shelomi Obeyesekere, beloved Mother in law of Shane Jayemanne, Beloved Grandmother of Mikayla, Jayden and Rylan Jayemanne.

Daughter of the late Claude Staniland Fonseka and Iona Alicia Fonseka. Survived by siblings Suven Karunaratne, Nalin Fonseka, and Shyara Miles.

Viewing:

25th of March : 11.00 a.m - 7.00 p.m 26th of March : 10.00 a.m - 3.00 p.m

At the Restpect by Jayaratne's

Funeral Service will be held at 3.00pm on Sunday the 26th of March and thereafter Cremation will take place at 4.30pm at New Crematorium, Borella Cemetery

Live broadcast will be available on request via zoom (whatsapp only +971558971034)

Annual Medin Perahera of Devram Vehera Temple to begin today

BY PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

The annual Medin Perahera of the Devram Vehera Temple in Pannipitiya will be conducted on March 25 (Saturday) under the patronage of the temple's founder, Ven. Kolonnawe Siri Sumangala Thera. The Medin Poya in March is hallowed by the Buddha's first visit to his parental home after his enlightenment.

This colourful traditional, cultural, and religious Perahera will commence at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 25 and be conducted along the streets of the area.

After the placement of the casket containing the Sacred Relics on the caparisoned tusker, the street parade will commence.

Along with the tusker, the statue of Ravana will be taken around in the Medin Maha Perahera. The Perahera consists of several components, which are the Medin Perahera, Theruwan Pooja Perahera, Suddodhana Perahera, Mahamaya Perahera, and Maha Ravana Perahera.

Before the Medin Perahera, three additional Peraheras, such as the Sarana Mangala Blessing and Puja Perahera, the Pregnancy Mother Blessing and Puja Perahera, and the Infant Blessing Puja and Perahera, will be paraded through the streets of the area, covering a distance of one kilometre, starting on March 22.

Several ceremonial events relating to the Perahera will be held until April 1.

Four women to be felicitated by SLTWU



The Sri Lanka Tamil Women's Union (SLTWU) will be honouring four ladies who have distinguished themselves in their careers at a reception 'Celebrating Women' in the Ruby Room of Colombo Hilton today (March 25) at 9.30 a.m. Mrs Antonia Joseph, Mrs Anushya Coomaraswamy,

Mrs Vidyani Hettigoda and Mrs Farzana Jameel are the women to be felicitated. Northern Province Governor Jeevan Thiagarajah will be the Chief Guest. The Guest Speaker will be Mrs Ramola Sivasunderam. It will be followed by a panel discussion Why women?

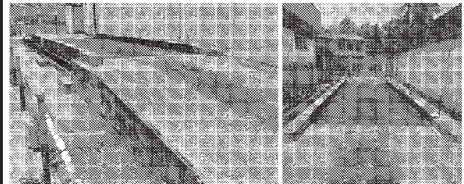
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The family of the late (Mrs) Bernadette Seneviratne would like to thank most sincerely all those who sympathized with them on their great loss

We offer our heartfelt thanks to family, friends, colleagues and well-wishers who visited us, offered prayers, sent floral tributes and messages of condolences, and provided emotional and practical support at this difficult time. We are grateful for your continued support and love during our time of need.

Rohan, Rangika & Rukshila Seneviratne.

SALE OF DISPOSED STEEL WEIGHBRIDGE



- AVERY J311SX STEEL WEIGHBRIDGE**
- 9m x 3m (length x width) (Structure: mild steel framework comprising of two main raised longitudinal beam members and transverse beam members)
 - 40,000kg (10kg resolution)
 - Avery T302x Compression type load cells (Six number of load cells)
 - Avery E1205 digital indicator & Epson lq300+ii ticket printer
- (All electrical items are from UK)

HASHAN DISSANAYAKE

0777 192 392

SITE VISIT AND INSPECTION - 23RD MARCH 2023
NO. 100, DELGODA ROAD, BIYAGAMA.

TODAY Mar 25 3.30 PM @ 6.45 PM



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Directed by **Udayasiri Wickramaratne**

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POLITICAL COMEDY

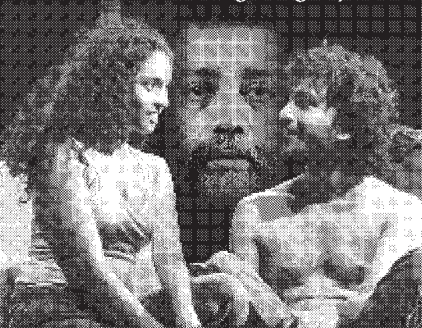
Directed by **Ashoka Handagama**

ANTIQUÉ

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WP CAG 5XXX Toyota Land Cruiser Prado (Diesel) 2014			
Cab:		Motor Coache:	
WP LO 6XXX Hino Crew Cab (Diesel) 2019		WP ND 0XXX Nissan Urvan NV350 (Diesel) 2017	
Dual Purpose Vehicles:		Lorries:	
WP HP 4XXX Toyota HiAce (Diesel) 1999		WP LC 0XXX Isuzu NQR7IP (Diesel) 2006	
WP GB 2XXX Toyota Town Ace (Diesel) 1997		WP HQ-1XXX Isuzu NKR (Diesel) 2003	
WP GP 4XXX Toyota HiAce (Diesel) 1997		WP HQ-1XXX Isuzu NKR (Diesel) 2003	
Trailers:		68-6XXX Isuzu NKR (Diesel) 1997	
67-1XXX Wimala Trailer 1993		42-3XXX Isuzu NKR (Diesel) 1989	
49-9XXX Swaraj Tractor (Diesel) 1998			

Viewing – Tuesday 28th Onwards
9.00 am to 5.00 pm at the venue of auction

Tractor & Prime Mover:

46-4XXX Lorry Trailer 1993
43-5XXX L/Ashok Leyland Prime Mover (Diesel) 1993

Viewing at
The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd,
35, Lake House, D.R Wijewardene Mawatha,
Colombo 10.

- Conditions of Sale**
- Entrance : By a **non-refundable** Ticket of Rs. 2,000.00 & a **refundable** deposit of Rs. 25,000.00 per Person on the day of auction.
 - Payment : Non Refundable - initial deposit of 25% in Cash at the fall of the hammer & balance 75% latest by 3:00 pm on **Friday 31st March 2023.**
 - The decision of the Auctioneer will be final.

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CALLING FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)
SLC SEEKS GROUND SPONSORSHIP RIGHTS, TV BROADCASTING RIGHTS & TV PRODUCTION FOR THE BANGLADESH NATIONAL WOMEN'S TOUR OF SRI LANKA 2023



Sri Lanka Cricket wishes to call 'Expression of Interests' from Local and International firms to acquire the Broadcasting Rights, Ground Sponsorship Rights & TV Production for the forthcoming the Bangladesh National Women's Tour of Sri Lanka 2023 from the 29th April to 12th May 2023.

MATCH SCHEDULE:

- ODI Matches**
- 1st Match - 29th April 2023 - 10.00 A.M. - P. Sara Stadium - Commencing at 10.00 AM
 - 2nd Match - 2nd May 2023 - 10.00 A.M. - P. Sara Stadium - Commencing at 10.00 AM
 - 3rd Match - 4th May 2023 - 10.00 A.M. - P. Sara Stadium - Commencing at 10.00 AM
- T20I Matches**
- 1st Match - 9th May 2023 - 1.00 P.M. - Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Grounds - Commencing at 1.00 PM
 - 2nd Match - 11th May 2023 - 1.00 P.M. - Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Grounds - Commencing at 1.00 PM
 - 3rd Match - 12th May 2023 - 1.00 P.M. - Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Ground - Commencing at 1.00 PM
- Note : Dates & Venues are subject to change

SLC seeks sponsorship on any of the following rights or as a combination of rights.

- 1. Terrestrial /Satellite TV Broadcasting Rights (Only in respect of the territory of Sri Lanka) + Global Digital Broadcasting Rights (Excluding local YouTube Broadcasting Rights)**
 - 2. TV Production**
Interested firms, should be equipped to carry out a LIVE Production for the above matches on par with accepted Broadcasting Standards, with the deployment of 11 High-Definition (HD) Camera's (inclusive of a drone camera) as a minimum with the capacity to provide required TV umpiring facilities.
 - 3. Ground Sponsorship Rights**
 - a. Ground Branding Rights Below 15 Feet of the stadium
 - b. Naming Rights of the Tour "Eg: <Sponsor's Name> Bangladesh National Women's Tour of Sri Lanka 2023"
 - c. Branding and designing rights of the trophies for following categories. (N.B. – trophies should be provided by the Ground Sponsorship Rights holder or its sub-licensee)
 - Champions
 - Player of the match in respect of each match - ODI & T20
 - Player of the series in respect of ODI & T20
 - d. Branding opportunities on Parameter Boards
Ground Sponsorship Rights holder or its sub-licensee should supply 72 Parameter Boards as a minimum (If Static: 60 for Event Rights Partner + 12 for Sri Lanka Cricket (Ground Rights holder must bear the cost of SLC parameter boards) , (If Digital: 20% Exposure to be given to Sri Lanka Cricket at no cost)
 - e. Boundary Rope Branding - 10% Exposure should be given to Sri Lanka Cricket at no cost, in the event there are no sponsors Ground rights partner must use fillers.
 - f. Advertising on 3rd Umpire Giant Screen - Ground Rights partner must provide a 30x15 Feet LED Digital Screen for each match
 - g. Branding on Sight Screens - Static/Digital Screens should be provided by the Ground Sponsorship Rights Holder
 - h. Branding on Pitch Mats - As per ICC rules and regulations
 - i. Branding Rights for Stumps
- In the event a sole organization acquires the complete range of rights, the chosen partner will be recognized as the 'Event Rights Partner of Bangladesh Women's National Tour of Sri Lanka'.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- a) Companies related to Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting, Online betting, Gambling shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- b) Marketing Agencies are eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- c) Sub-licensing of the rights to be granted herein will not be permitted for TV Production Rights. Any and all costs associated with Ground Sponsorship Rights Properties / TV Production / Broadcasting and exploitation thereof including without limitation any pandemic/medical related expenditure shall be solely borne by the respective rights holder/s. The rights fee to be offered to SLC shall be free from all such expenses and applicable taxes.

EOI SUBMISSION PROCEDURE:

The EOI along with financial offer qualifying the above mentioned criteria must be submitted to the Sri Lanka Cricket Headquarters at No 35, Maitland Place, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka **on or before 7th April 2023 - 3PM (Sri Lankan Time)** ['Deadline'] and should be in a sealed envelope addressed to: Chief Executive Officer, Sri Lanka Cricket.

Alternatively, firms are permitted to submit the EOI along with its financial offer (**Financial Offer as a Password Protected .pdf file**), qualifying the above mentioned criteria and necessary documentation electronically via email to; sponsorship@srilankacricket.lk on or before the deadline with all the hard copies of the same being couriered to aforementioned address.

The EOI needs to be accompanied with the following documents:

1. Certificate of Incorporation/ Business registration
2. Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.
3. Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with Certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents
4. Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
5. Reference from a reputed Bank certifying the financial stability (Bank Solvency Certificate)
6. Updated auditor's report on financial statements (in case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL STRUCTURE AND PAYMENT TERMS:

- a.) Financial proposal should state the figure of the Net Rights Fee offered in Sri Lankan Rupees and/or US Dollars (in words and numbers) excluding of VAT/Tax/any other deductions depending on local or foreign EOI Participant.
- b.) The following payment structure will apply in respect of the rights to be granted and rights fee thereto shall be payable by the successful EOI participant to SLC in the following manner:
 - a. The total Rights Fee (i.e. the Offered Value) should be paid in full on or before **20th April 2023.**
 - b. The Mode of Payment: Bank transfer to the SLC Designated Account/ Bank Draft issued in favor of SLC.

If you require any further information in relation to this EOI, please contact Business Development Manager - SLC via +(94) 779 429 035.

The SLC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The SLC also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing an addendum(s) at any time.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - SRI LANKA CRICKET

EDITORIAL

There is a broad sentiment that the IMF may be doing more harm than good. If the IMF weren't there, it would probably be reinvented. So the issue is fundamentally reform.
-JOSEPH STIGLITZ

OUR THOUGHT

FOIBLES AND FOLLIES IN UKRAINE, TENSIONS WITH CHINA

The war in Ukraine - Europe's latest war is into its 365th day. Columnists of major US and European news sites have from time to time expressed surprise that there could be an ongoing war in Europe in this day and age.

In reality, the war in Ukraine had its origins in the aftermath of the 2014 coup in Ukraine, which overthrew the elected pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in November 2013 when he (Yanukovich) refused at the last minute to sign an association agreement with the European Union and decided instead to join a customs union with Russia, which was offering loans, trade advantages and continued access to natural gas at below-market rates.

Opposition parties with ties to the west mobilized demonstrations which ended in the overthrow of the elected president.

The coup itself was openly supported by the US and West European countries which helped install a puppet regime on the borders of Russia.

The regime change prompted the outbreak of a civil war in the east of Ukraine, between Russian-backed separatists and the US-backed Ukrainian army. As the war between the separatists and the Ukrainian government troops heated up, in February Russian troops invaded Ukraine in February 2023.

Russian leader Putin has said Russia will deploy its new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile, nicknamed "Satan 2", as well as introduce hypersonic missiles and new nuclear submarines.

It looks as if, it's back to the bad old days where European monarchs in West and East European countries waged war on each other and the people suffered.

In Ukraine itself, the UN Human Rights Chief put the number of Ukraine civilian casualties at 8,006 dead & 13,287 injured. Statista.com reveals in total, more than eight million Ukrainian refugees were registered across Europe. A World Bank report released on Wednesday (22 March) puts the cost of Ukraine's recovery and rebuilding at \$411 billion over the next decade, with the cost of cleaning up the war rubble alone at \$5 billion.

On February 9 it was estimated the number of Russian troops killed and wounded in Ukraine was approaching 200,000.

To cripple Russia's economy the NATO bloc including the US sanctioned Russian oil. But the sanctions backfired, and countries outside the West including India and Saudi Arabia rejected the NATO-imposed sanctions. They continue to purchase Russian oil.

Bloomberg reports Saudi Arabia -the world's top crude exporter and a significant seller of petroleum products- imported almost 2.5 million barrels of diesel-type fuel from Russia in the first 10 days of March, far more than at any other time in the last six years.

The product is refined in Saudi and resold in the open market. NATO bloc countries are in fact purchasing Russian oil refined in Saudi Arabia to meet their domestic needs, at higher prices.

NATO countries, to meet the shortfall in domestic needs of petroleum products, are also forced to purchase oil and gas from the US at much higher costs.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has made the world a more unsafe place.

As though this was not bad enough, three Anglophonic nations -the US, the UK and Australia- are now opening a new front in Asia via a security pact -AUKUS.

The UK also attempted to draw India into the grouping but was unsuccessful. The unspoken aim of AUKUS is 'to contain the rising power of China' and to maintain a 'free Indo-Pacific region'.

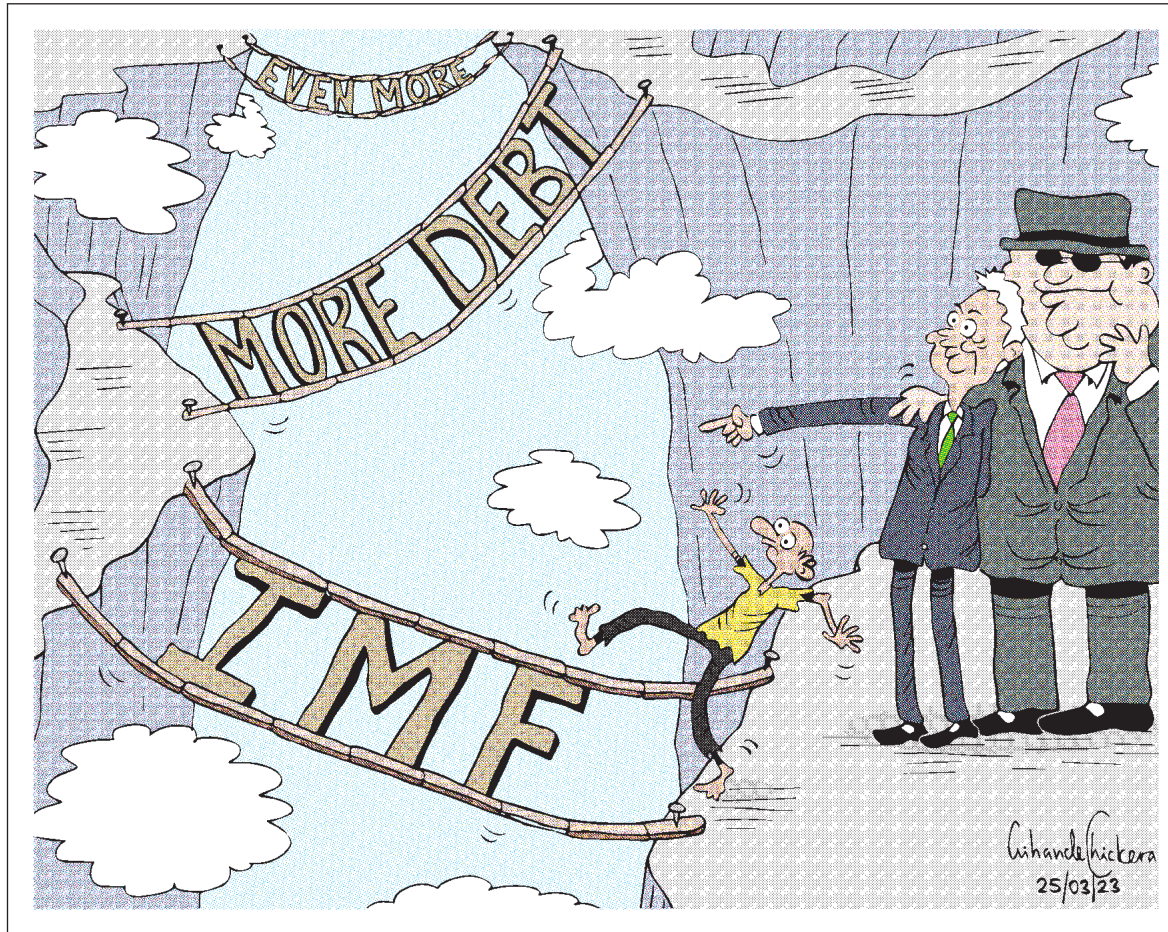
The question which arises is free for whom?

Asia has suffered immensely under imperial rule. We do not need our enfeebled old imperial ruler and his buddies back 'to ensure our freedom'. Nor do we need the 'opium wars' of old re-enacted under different guises. Asia is home to the majority of the peoples of this world, and as mentioned earlier suffered immensely at the hands of imperialist powers.

The war wounds of Afghanistan are fresh for all to see. The use of chemical weapons in Vietnam by the US is part of Asian history. We cannot forgive or forget the nuclear bombing of two civilian cities in Japan when that country was on the brink of surrender.

Referring to the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the late US president General Eisenhower (military leader during WWI), in 1963 said, objected to the use of the atom bomb. In his own words, 'I told Stimson (US Secretary of War) it was not necessary to hit them (Japan) with that awful thing' (A-bomb)

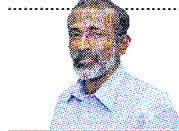
The peoples of our region DO NOT NEED such protectors. Our request is, to go back to your own countries and take your nuclear subs and other war-like devices with you.



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

IT'S TOO EARLY TO CELEBRATE

The IMF loan is going to be added to the already unpaid debts of more than 50 billion USD which has to be repaid



By M.S.M. Ayub

Some of the responses of the ruling parties and some in the Opposition parties on the approval of the bailout package for Sri Lanka by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday were amusing.

The package was agreed upon at the Staff Level discussions between Sri Lanka and the IMF on September 1, last year and was approved by the Executive Board of the IMF after much haggling over the restructuring of Sri Lanka's debts.

The IMF programme for Sri Lanka contained so many components, such as a loan from the International lender to Sri Lanka which is to be disbursed throughout a period of four years, debt repayments, restructuring of the country's external debts, conditions for increasing State revenue and reducing public expenditure, a safety net for the poor, a long-term plan to reduce public debt, proposals for public enterprises reform and addressing corruption vulnerabilities.

Only the loan which was then said to be around US\$ 2.9 billion that has to be approved was clearly in the public domain for the past six months since the Staff-Level agreement was made.

The Opposition demands for the submission of the details of that agreement in Parliament was repeatedly shot down by members of the Cabinet majority of whom too seem to be in the dark about those details.

When the news that the Executive Board of the IMF had approved the Staff Level agreement came on Monday, people knew only a loan of about US\$ 3 billion was on its way towards Sri Lanka and some of them in some areas in the country celebrated the news by lighting crackers.

It was a celebration of a loan which is going to be added to the already unpaid debts of more than 50 billion US Dollars which has to be repaid by us or our children in the future.

The fact that these incidents were Stage-managed by the local politicians of the two ruling parties is clear. They resort to such antics to provoke the members of the Opposition parties or to boost the morale of the members of their parties, the popularity of which is at a low ebb these days.

Considering the fact that the IMF programme is the only option the country had to escape from the current economic disaster, an apolitical person too would have justifiably been happy on Monday.

The Main Opposition in Parliament, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) endorsed the Government's move to seek the assistance of the IMF, while the National People's Power (NPP) or the Jathika Jana Balawegaya (JJB) led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has not decisively protested against the IMF involvement. In fact, the SJB has been pressing the Gotabaya Rajapaksa Government since mid-2021 to discuss the foreign exchange issue that the country had faced with then with the IMF.

The JVP too had pointed out the need to negotiate with the creditor countries to restructure the country's debts. Gotabaya Rajapaksa Government that rejected all those views finally reversed its stance in



Masahiro Nozaki (Left) and Peter Breuer (Right)

March last year and started talks with the Washington-based lender.

Whilst the country was in political turmoil as the protestors against the skyrocketing prices of essential items, and the unprecedented oil and gas shortages that created miles and weeks long queues, Gotabaya Rajapaksa Government in May, last year selected Lazard and Clifford Chance, two international firms to advise itself on financial and legal matters on debt restructuring, which has to go hand in hand with the IMF bailout programme.

Notwithstanding the political crisis that led to the regime change last year and the country having declared bankruptcy, the talks between the Government and the IMF went ahead and a Staff Level agreement was reached on September 1.

The agreement envisaged the IMF assisting Sri Lanka to rebuild its financial sector stability and offering an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of about 2.9 billion US Dollars but contingent on the creditor countries' willingness to debt restructuring.

In fact, there was no room for change in this programme or the nature of conditions of the IMF or the advice of two international firms, even if President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had continued to stay in power. Yet, there is no doubt that President Ranil Wickremesinghe's experience may have eased the process.

The SJB says that it would have changed the tax proposals which have been agreed upon by the Government and the IMF if it were in power.

However, during a virtual press briefing on the IMF-Supported EFF Programme, Peter Breuer, IMF's Senior Mission Chief for Sri Lanka strongly justified the tax reforms agreed upon, though while claiming that those adjustments are very brutal.

Responding to a question about the Government's recent statement after trade union protests that it will consider changes to the tax policy, he said Sri Lanka is amongst the countries that collect the least amount of fiscal revenue in the world.

He made a strong contention that the tax rates proposed under the programme are also in line with similar countries who are contributing to Sri Lanka's support package through the IMF.

He also argued that "there are many countries out there who have income levels comparable or maybe less than Sri Lanka with much higher income tax rates."

This indicates tough and tense days ahead between the Government and the trade unions. And a wealth tax is also a part of the programme, apart from the introduction of property tax and wealth transfer tax which has been envisaged in 2025, as Masahiro Nozaki, the IMF Mission Chief for Sri Lanka explained at the Press briefing.

Besides, the IMF says "it is now essential to continue the reform momentum under strong ownership by the authorities and

the Sri Lankan people more broadly." The country cannot renege on its commitments now as the disbursements of the EFF will be tied to reviews that take place every six months.

The Extended Fund Facility has repayment periods ranging from 4.5 to 10 years, according to Breuer who said the profile of repayments to the IMF from Sri Lanka includes repayments of funds just approved, as well as outstanding balances, a matter difficult to celebrate.

Although the official bilateral creditors have given their assurance on debt restructuring, the specifics have to be discussed between the Sri Lankan authorities and those countries.

However, Sri Lanka needs to present that restructuring strategy and it has committed to do that by the end of April.

Transparency and comparability of treatment for all external creditors in this process might be a challenging task, but President Wickremesinghe has given that assurance in an open letter to official bilateral creditors. And the IMF says its staff will continue to assist Sri Lankan authorities with creditor coordination in line with the IMF's policies.

The fact that the IMF's disbursements are not tied to specific spending and restructuring local debt is a matter that has to be decided by the government and would be a consolation for the Sri Lankan leaders.

Nozaki said the Government can transform the IMF disbursement into rupees and then use it for Government expenditure or repaying Government loans.

However, one of the most difficult tasks might be to keep the commitments with regard to introducing structural reforms to address corruption vulnerabilities and to maintain a corruption-free environment at least till the last disbursement of the EFF reaches the shores.

The Government is to introduce anti-corruption legislation in line with UN Convention against Corruption. IMF representatives said it includes both asset declaration and asset recovery.

In a country where abusing laws and impunity is the norm, this would be a Herculean task. And if the law takes its course, only a few of the current politicians would be in the field.

Sri Lanka has been given several important specific long-term targets under the IMF programme such as public debt which was at 128 per cent of GDP as of the end of 2022 should reach 95 per cent of GDP by 2032.

It is not clear whether the Government has such a long-term recovery plan with a specific road map.

Such a plan would indeed be a matter of celebration. If the Government failed in this, the country might slip into the same abyss and will have to take to the begging bowl again.

DM Poll

Which political party leader has the vision and the capability to put Sri Lanka on a recovery path and lead to sustainable development?

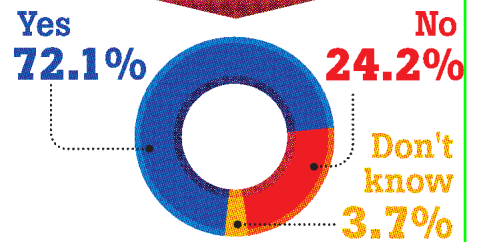
- Ranil Wickremesinghe
- Sajith Premadasa
- Anura Kumara Dissanayake
- None of them



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

Pay heed to the National Poultry Association

Certain species of Salmonella bacteria found in hens can pass into their eggs and cause disease in humans - particularly in children. The bacteria are passed during the formation of the egg yolk in the ovaries. Since there is no way to disinfect the egg yolk, the only method of control is to identify and remove any infected hens in a laying flock. In Sri Lanka, Salmonella enteritidis - a human pathogen - is present in flocks and all registered hatcheries are subjected to regular inspection under the Animal Diseases Act to ensure that these procedures are carried out.

Import of eggs or yolk into Sri Lanka carries the risk of introducing new varieties of Salmonella and is analogous to the attempt made by the Government - fortunately prevented by the plant quarantine services - to import compost containing harmful bacteria and infect our soils for evermore. The call from the National Poultry Association to prevent the import of eggs and yolk should be heeded.

PROF.SIVALI RANAWANA
FORMER DIRECTOR,
ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND HEALTH



"I will not allow school children to be held hostage by various groups" - RW

WEB COMMENTS

- TISSA FERNANDO** - Excellent, that is the way to go. These Trade Union goons are trying to destabilize the country after receiving money from subversive political parties who are basically contractors for international NGOs and governments. As long as there is no large scale corruption, the government can get respect.
- PRADEEP** - You and your clan have already destroyed even the future of many children yet to be born.
- SHELLY** - Excellent. Children should not be held ransom to these political demands.
- MAN** - A person without any mandate of not more than 0.248 million and no election held like Mr. Dudley in 1952, has kept the remaining people of Sri Lanka, hostage with draconian rules and more to come.

See more web comments at www.DailyMirror.lk

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"But such IMF pressure is very much helpful for me to push such a, you know, reform. So in this sense I think IMF is very much helpful for alien society"
-KIM DAE-JUNG

WITH IMF BOOST, RANIL WILL TARGET 2024 PRESIDENTIAL POLL



By
D.B.S. Jeyaraj

Friday, March 24 was the 74th birthday of Ranil Sriyan Wickremesinghe. The Sri Lankan President was born in Colombo on 24 March 1949.

This Birthday would have been a delightful one for Ranil for two reasons. This is the first birthday he celebrated as the Executive President of Sri Lanka. The other is the 'gift' received by Sri Lanka from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a few days earlier.

As is well-known, the IMF program was made possible largely due to the untiring efforts of the President.

Opposition parties, Trade Unions, NGOs, Civil Society organizations, Professional Associations, Academics, sections of the intelligentsia and the media have all been critical of Ranil Wickremesinghe from the time he was appointed Prime Minister on 12 May 2022 by former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Subsequently, he became Acting President on 9 July. Ranil's house and belongings including valuable books and antiques were burnt down by 'Aragalaya' elements in a bid to make him quit.

The criticism intensified after Wickremesinghe was elected by 134 out of 225 Parliamentarians on 20 July 2022. He was sworn in as the eighth Executive President of Sri Lanka on July 21st.

This criticism of Wickremesinghe was not entirely without merit but in many instances, it was grossly unfair.

Nevertheless, the much-maligned Wickremesinghe did not wilt or quit. With single-minded determination, Ranil persisted with his mission of repairing and reviving the economy.

Though Wickremesinghe was under severe attack by his opponents and critics, there is grudging admiration and even respect and support from the ordinary people for his attempt to salvage the economy.

As a three-wheeler driver told a journalist Monawa kivvath, Ranil Mahathaya try ekak denawa ne (Whatever said Mr Ranil is trying to do something, no?)

CHALLENGES HE FACED

After the IMF agreement was tabled in Parliament, President Wickremesinghe made a special statement in the House. A justifiably elated Wickremesinghe was visibly pleased with himself for his accomplishments under very adverse circumstances. Ranil referred to the dire straits the economy was in when he assumed office and the challenges he faced. The President emphasised that his only strength in surmounting these obstacles was his inner conviction that he was capable of rebuilding his country. This is what he said –

"On the 9th of July last year, I took over a country that was on fire. A country that was in chaos. A country that seemed to be without an iota of hope for the future. A country that had officially declared itself bankrupt. A country where inflation had risen to 73.7%. A country where people suffered for days in queues for fuel and gas. A country with schools closed. A country, where ten or twelve-hour power cuts were imposed. A country without fertilizer hampering cultivation by farmers. A country where anarchy prevailed in place of law and order. A country where outsiders had forcefully entered public buildings and were in occupation. A country where mob attacks were widespread. A country where the homes of opponents were set ablaze. A country where people were assassinated on roads in broad daylight."

"No one was willing to accept responsibilities in such an environment. Some were reluctant. Some asked for time to check their horoscopes. Some sneaked away. Some panicked. I was requested to take over the country at a time when nobody came forward to shoulder that responsibility."

"I unconditionally accepted the challenge. I had no power in Parliament. I had no Members of Parliament from my Party to call my own. Even though I had none of these, I had just one strength. This was only my own conviction that I am capable of rebuilding my country. I had numerous experiences to support this conviction of mine."

"I only had the confidence gained from previous experiences when I accepted this serious challenge. I accepted the challenge with the conviction that even if I failed, the country would not."

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

President Wickremesinghe also outlined the salient points in the economic blueprint being followed by his Government. He specified the immediate goals to be achieved in the context of a post-IMF arrangement. Ranil was mindful of the marginalized, underprivileged sections of society and pledged to prioritize the setting up of an effective social security system. Expressing confidence that the four-year IMF program could be implemented in three to three and a half years, Wickremesinghe warned that failure may result in the country being affected drastically. This is what he said:-

"If we implement the economic reforms with proper financial discipline throughout the next four years in accordance with this Agreement, a strong economic foundation will emerge for the future of the country. If we deviate from this path, the entire country will find itself in a worse situation in April, than it was in, sometime back."

"We need to emphasize a few points here. First, we must prioritize the establishment of a robust social security system for the most vulnerable individuals in our society. Second, we are currently executing plans and strategies to enhance the value of the rupee. Strategies and a formal plan to strengthen the rupee are being implemented. Third, anti-corruption legislation must be passed and implemented immediately. Fourth, we should focus on implementing necessary structural reforms in our society. These reforms should be identified and carried out accordingly."

"The IMF-approved plan should be implemented and completed in four years. However, depending on our strength and determination, we should be able to finish it in three to three and a half years. Let's give it a try. Let us put in the effort."

EARLY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

With the boost received through the IMF bailout, President Wickremesinghe is very likely to set his sights on an early Presidential Election.

The irresponsible conduct of most MPs in Parliament as well as potential aspirants for Presidential power does not inspire much confidence.

It appears that only Ranil Wickremesinghe has a clear idea of what must be done to salvage the economy in the short run and how to lay the economic foundation for future prosperity in the long run.

The IMF package is only a lifeline that gives Lanka breathing space to resuscitate the economy. To achieve this, Wickremesinghe is firmly convinced that he needs to be in power for a few more years.

Though...under severe attack by his opponents, there is grudging admiration and even respect and support from the ordinary people for his attempt to salvage the economy

RW regards Presidential hustings as the best bet... It is only as Executive President that he could authoritatively plan, coordinate, direct and execute his economic revival program best

Furthermore, with more than 45 years of experience as a Parliamentarian, **Ranil Wickremesinghe** knows that the lack of a proper mandate is his Achilles' Heel.

His United National Party (UNP) was wiped out at the 2020 polls. Ranil himself entered Parliament as a national list MP. He was elected as President by an assortment of MPs from the Government and Opposition. The bulk of MPs supporting him were from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP).

Independent opinion polls and analytical surveys show that the UNP and SLPP have negligible support in the country if an election is held now. The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) led by Sajith Premadasa and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) led by Anura Kumara Disanayake are the leading contenders for the electoral crown currently.

Hence Ranil Wickremesinghe is portrayed by his detractors as an 'legally' elected President lacking 'legitimacy'.

This perception is invigorating the political opposition against Wickremesinghe and is somewhat undermining his credibility as President.

Moreover, Ranil Wickremesinghe is essentially a Liberal Democrat at heart. He knows that his lack of an effective mandate is a Damoclean Sword hanging above him.

More importantly, Wickremesinghe knows that the far-reaching economic reforms he seeks to bring about could be seriously hampered by his lacking a proper mandate.

Also, Ranil realises that his securing a fresh firm mandate through elections will strengthen him politically and reinforce his economic reform task. Lending institutions and donor nations too would prefer to do business with a Govt possessing a solid mandate. As such he needs and wants a mandate sanctioning poll.

FOUR POSSIBLE POLLS

There are four possible polls. Local Govt (LG) Elections, Provincial Council (PC) Elections, Parliamentary Elections and a Presidential Election.

The chances of the UNP or a UNP-led coalition securing a sweeping victory at the LG or PC polls seem extremely remote. The Opposition parties, who are most likely to do well at these polls would use that victory to intensify demands for a Parliamentary election. Also, a crushing defeat would undermine the President and his Govt and draw glaring attention to the question of a lack of a legitimate mandate.



Ranil Wickremesinghe addressing Parliament this week

The same applies to Parliamentary Elections also. If elections are held soon, there is every chance that the SLPP will lose the slender majority it enjoys now. Since Opposition parties are unwilling to cooperate with President Wickremesinghe, he has been compelled to depend upon the SLPP to push bills through.

So, if elections result in the SLPP and allies losing badly, the President will not have a supportive majority in the House. The victorious SJB and JVP may exert the maximum possible pressure on the President. Besides, Ranil has already assured the SLPP MPs that he would not dissolve Parliament early.

Thus LG, PC and Parliamentary elections are ruled out from the President's perspective. This leaves only the Presidential Election.

Wickremesinghe regards Presidential hustings as the best bet to gain a mandate. It is only as Executive President that he could authoritatively plan, coordinate, direct and execute his economic revival program best.

A mandate obtained as President would strengthen and empower him politically.

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

Ranil perceives himself as a unique selling proposition in a Presidential election campaign. Given the stature and ability of his potential rivals, Wickremesinghe certainly towers above them. But then as Ranil knows very well, electoral success does not always favour the best and the brightest candidate. Finally, there is the personal angle. The Presidency has for long eluded Ranil who has been branded a serial loser. As such he would very much like to be a President elected by the people before retiring from Politics.

All signs, therefore, point to a Presidential election. Given the current political situation, there is every likelihood that the SLPP would not field a Presidential candidate in 2024. As of now, the SLPP is aiming for the 2029 Presidential poll with Namal Rajapaksa as a candidate. The SLPP would prefer Ranil to be President until 2029 as opposed to another.

Therefore sections of the SLPP may overtly or covertly support Ranil. Ranil Wickremesinghe is a lesser evil to the SLPP compared to others like Premadasa, Disanayake or Sarath Fonseka.

If this scenario unfolds as stated, Wickremesinghe would contest with the backing of the UNP, Minority parties and elements of the present SJB and SLPP.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Some UNP stalwarts and SLPP members have stated that an early Presidential Election is on the cards. The Constitution enables the incumbent President to call for an early Presidential election after completing four years in office if he intends to seek re-election for a second term.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected in November 2019. Though he has resigned, the presidential term of office would have completed four years in November 2023.

Wickremesinghe succeeded Rajapaksa for "the unexpired period of the term of office of the President vacating office." Hence Wickremesinghe should be able to call for an early election any time after November 2023. But then the Constitution also states that this provision applies only to Presidents elected by the people at an election. It does not apply to Presidents unelected by the people. So Ranil cannot have an early presidential poll.

UNP sources however say that this could be altered by a Constitutional Amendment enabling the President to call for an early election. If the Opposition parties are really genuine about early elections, they should support the bill to garner a two-thirds majority.

If they refuse, then the opposition parties will be exposed as insincere about polls, point out UNP circles.

If there is no amendment, President Wickremesinghe will continue as usual. Instead of early next year, the Presidential poll will be in the last quarter of 2024.

UNP-SJB UNITY

This then is the position as far as the Presidential election is concerned. Meanwhile, TPA leader Mano Ganesan and SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem are engaged in an 'Amity' Mission to bring about unity between Ranil Wickremesinghe and Sajith Premadasa with the Presidential elections in mind.

It is learnt reliably that Wickremesinghe was amenable, subject to some conditions. Ranil would be the Presidential candidate in 2024 backed by an alliance comprising the UNP, SJB and minority community parties.

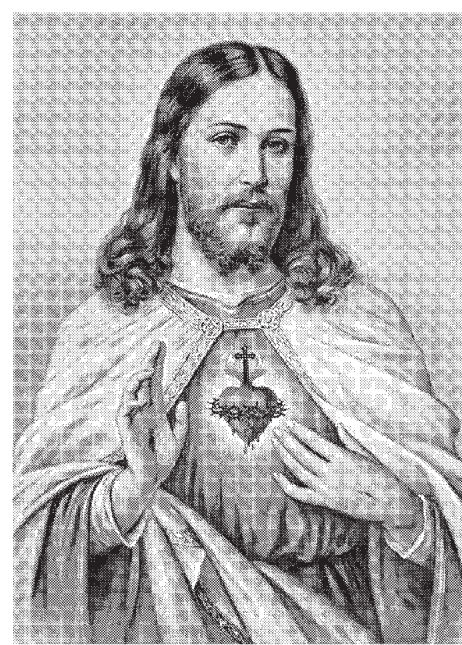
Sajith Premadasa would be Prime Minister. Ranil will retire in 2029 clearing the field for Sajith to become the leader.

Apparently, this proposal was welcomed by most SJB stalwarts like Thalatha Atukorale, Kabir Hashim, Eran Wickramaratne, Harsha de Silva, Rajitha Senaratne and Rohini Wijerathne.

But others like Ranjith Madduma Bandara, Tissa Attanayake, Imtiaz Bakeer Markar, Lakshman Kiriella, Sujeewa Senasinghe and Hirunika Premachandra opposed it.

Members of the Premadasa family too did not like the idea. Finally, Sajith Premadasa reportedly rejected the unity proposal. Upon hearing this Ranil Wickremesinghe too hardened his stance. So, Hakeem and Ganesan have abandoned their unity moves for now.

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



PRAYER FOR PROTECTION THROUGH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

Prayer

Lord JESUS, by faith in your merits, I now take your precious blood and sprinkle it over myself and my family right from the crown of my head to the very soles of my feet. I claim total and complete protection for my life and my family.

Lord JESUS, keep me free today from evil, sin, temptation, Satan's attacks and afflictions, fear of darkness, fear of man, sickness, diseases, doubts, anger, all calamities and from all that is not of thy Kingdom.

Fill me Lord JESUS with gift of your Holy SPIRIT and grant me the gift of wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment so that I will live today in your glory by doing that which is right.

I praise you, Jesus - I Thank you, Jesus

I love you, Jesus - I Adore you, Jesus

Holy Spirit, you make me see everything, and show me the way to reach my ideals, you who gives me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me, and you who are in all instances of my life with me, I in this short dialogue want to thank you for everything and affirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the material desire may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your Perpetual Glory.

(MENTION YOUR REQUEST)

Thank you, Holy Spirit for your love towards me and my loved ones.

AMEN

This prayer should be said for 03 consecutive days. After the third day the request will be granted, no matter how difficult it may be. While making the request one must either.

1. Promise to publish on granting of favour or
2. Promise to Circulate copies of it, to as many people as possible.

(THIS IS TO SPREAD THE WONDER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT)

THANKSGIVING FOR THE GREAT FAVOUR

SPORTS

Kingswood take first innings lead in low scoring first day

BY SHAMSEER JALEEL
Kingswood College took a first innings lead in their 116th Battle of Maroons encounter against Dharmaraja College which commenced at the Pallekelle International Cricket Stadium yesterday.
Kingswood won the toss and put the Rajans in to take first lease of the wicket.
The Rajans never settled down and they were shot out for 114.
Only Usuru Panbala played with

some authority to top score with 25. Kenula, Amesh and Hakam all took three wickets a piece.
Kingswood in their turn were in deep trouble losing half of their side for only 26 runs but a brave partnership between skipper, Amesh Rupasinghe and all-rounder Abdul Hakam for the sixth wicket for 57 runs, took them out of danger.
Kingswood skipper Amesh Rupasinghe batted well for an unbeaten 66. Kingswood scored

132 in their first innings.
Dharmaraja 114 in 39 overs (Isuru Pannala 25, Maleesha Rajakaruna 14, Onajith de Silva 12, Arosha Mahagedera 12, Kavindu Gunarathne 11, Kenula Pihillianga 3 for 19, Amesh Rupasinghe 3 for 30, Abdul Hakam 3 for 31) and 0/0 in 1 over
Kingswood 132 in 51 overs (Amesh Rupasinghe 66 not out, Abdul Hakam 28, Kavija Gamage 18, Pulindu Perera 4 for 43)

41st Battle of Gold St. Mary's on top

St. Mary's College were on top at the end of the first day's play against traditional rivals Kegalu Vidyalaya in their annual 41st Battle of Gold big match played at Kegalle.
Kegalu Vidyalaya batting first were bundled out for 91 runs and St. Mary's in reply were 121 for 5. **Kegalu Vidyalaya** 91 (Kasun Bandara 37,

Thaviru Rajapakse 15: Chamod Akarsha 4 for 30, Supun Lakmal 3 for 22, Thanuja Sampath 3 for 29)
St. Mary's Kegalle 121 for 5 (Samitha Sandaruwan 23, Maleesha Akash 21, Naveen Themiya 26 n.o.; Kavindu Jayantha 2 for 32)
-MSA

DASUN CONFIDENT OF CLAIMING SERIES WHITEWASH

De Silva rejects rumours of refusing to bat at number 7

Sri Lanka's limited overs captain Dasun Shanaka was confident his team could complete a series whitewash against New Zealand to claim an automatic spot in the Cricket World Cup later this year.



Black Caps at Auckland's Eden Park more than a decade after skipping South Africa's juniors at the 2012 Under-19 World Cup before moving to New Zealand.

Ravindra has already played three Tests and six Twenty20s for New Zealand. "Both guys have earned their spots through performances in the domestic white-ball arena, so we're really excited about the opportunity," said New Zealand captain Tom Latham.

Sri Lanka open their three-match ODI series at Auckland today, needing to win all three ODIs against the hosts to guarantee direct qualification to the World Cup.

Sri Lanka could qualify with one or two wins, but that would depend on the results of South Africa's two match series against the Netherlands.

work to win the series," Shanaka added.

Failure for Sri Lanka would result in them having to take part in a qualification tournament to gain entry into the World Cup.

"It's possible. It depends on the day. New Zealand is a good side and we aren't taking anything for granted. We need to do the hard

that he always stands with the team. "The story circulating in social media saying that I have refused to bat at No. 7 during tomorrow's game is false, and I wish to state that I am a player who always stands with the team," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, ex-South Africa Under-19 captain Chad Bowes and all-rounder Rachin Ravindra will make their ODI debuts for New Zealand. Bowes is set to open the batting for the

There was controversy on the eve of the first ODI, with reports suggesting that Dhananajaya de Silva had been dropped for the first two matches after refusing to bat down the order.

De Silva took to Twitter to refute the rumours, stating

After whitewashing Sri Lanka 2-0 in the Tests, New Zealand have released several stars including Kane Williamson, Tim Southee and Devon Conway to their Indian Premier League teams.

The sides are looking to break their ODI losing streaks -- New Zealand and Sri Lanka both lost all three ODIs on separate tours of India in January. (With agency inputs)

VACANCY

QUANTITY SURVEYOR

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) intends recruiting an experienced Quantity Surveyor for the development of facilities for developing, training, managing and promoting cricket related activities throughout the island.

Principle Responsibilities

- Prepare cost analysis from the architectural, structural, MEP drawings, engineering estimates, material required, labour involved etc.
- Prepare cost plans to enable design team to produce practical design for construction projects, which involves liaising with Architects, Engineers and contractors
- Prepare tender and contract documents, including Bills of Quantities and Engineer's Estimates
- Evaluate tenders from contractors and subcontractors and where appropriate, negotiate with the contactors
- Control all stages of projects within predetermined budget and expenditure
- Monitor and keep track of project progress and are responsible for the measurement and valuation of variations in the work during the contract, for agreement of interim payments and the financial account

Qualifications and Experience

- A Bachelor's Degree in Quantity Surveying which is recognized by the UGC with IQSSL Graduate Membership Or An Associate Membership / A similar professional qualification obtained from a recognized professional institution in the Quantity Surveying Or Having obtained a certificate of proficiency not below than the National Vocational Qualification Level 7 issued by a Technical/Vocational Training Institution accepted by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission for a post related to Quantity Surveying And
- At Least 03 years of post-qualifying experience in the required area of specialization
- HND/NCT/ NVQ Level 5/Professional Level Examination from IQSSL or equivalent qualification in the Quantity Surveying with IQSSL Technical Membership And
- At Least 05 years of post-qualifying experience in the required area of specialization
- Should have solid experience in Project Estimation, Tendering & Contract Administration in building related projects
- Experience in Ground Construction Projects would be added advantage
- Should have in knowledge of CIDA & FIDIC Conditions of Contract
- Excellent skills in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Projects, CUBIT Pro & Auto CAD

Competencies

- Exceptional planning, coordination and organizational skills
- High level interpersonal, written, verbal and communication and influencing skills
- Self-motivated with the ability to work independently or as part of a team
- Ability to travel any part of the country

All applications should be forwarded to vacancies@srilankacricket.lk along with the names of two non-related referees within 7 days from the date of this advertisement.

*Please mention the post applied for on the subject line of the email
*Please ensure all employment criteria is met prior to applying

Human Resources Dept. Sri Lanka Cricket, No. 35, Maitland Place, Colombo 7

Rehan, Uvin help Royal to retain Mustangs Trophy

BY M. SHAMIL AMIT

Royal College made it a double as they retained the Mustangs Trophy, coasting to a convincing seven wicket win over traditional rivals S. Thomas' College in the 46th Mustangs Trophy limited over encounter played at the SSC ground yesterday.



Rehan Peiris



Uvinu Weerasekera Pix by Pradeep Dilrukshana

The architects of the win were the heroes of the side Rehan Peiris and Uvinu Weerasekera who both cracked half tons and together helped Royal, in pursuit of 166 runs for victory, to race to the target in just 37 overs.

Royal, with this win chalked up their 24th win of the series to the 21 achieved by S. Thomas'.

Royal in their run chase underwent some anxious moments when they lost two early wickets with the innings five overs old. The pair joined together and frustrated the Thomian bowlers with Peiris, who made an unbeaten 69 inclusive of seven boundaries, and Weerasekera, a half-century with four boundaries and two sixes putting on a valuable 107 runs for the third wicket.

They were made to struggle for their runs and were in a bad position of 105 for 5 in the 31st over before being bowled for a low score of 165 runs.

Peiris was joined by big match hero skipper Dasis Manchanayake, after the dismissal of Weerasekera, and he continued his form sharing an unbroken 39 runs for Royal to reach the target with ease.

In the process Royal won both the big match and the limited over after a lapse of ten years with the last time this was achieved being in 2013 under the leadership of Devindh Pathmanathan.

The morning session of play saw S. Thomas' taking first lease of the wicket let

St. Thomas' plod whole day

St. Thomas' Matara plodded the whole of day one to make a score of 193 for 7 against traditional rivals St Servatius Matara in the 123rd Battle of the Blues

big match played at the Uyanwatta Stadium in Matara. **St. Thomas' Matara** 193 for 7 (Ochintha Chamika 79, Pesandu Sanjan 35, Abdul

Majeed 18, Senura Perera 18 n.o.; Thisan Dewmith 4 for 38, Kushan Wijeratne 2 for 36) vs **St Servatius' Matara**

39th Battle of the Rocks

St. Anne's 164, Maliyadeva 34/2

Maliyadeva College Kurunegala was on 34 for 2 in reply to traditional rivals St Anne's score of 164 for 9 declared on the opening day's play of the 39th Battle of the Rocks big match played at the

Welagedera Stadium in Kurunegala. **St. Anne's Kurunegala** 164 for 9 declared (Kushan Subasinghe 26, Mahima Kotuwila 24, Mannan Muzamil 22, Adithya Nirvan 21, Kevin Nanayakkara 18, Yomesh

Subasinghe 17 n.o.; Gayana Weerasinghe 6 for 35, Dimath Abeyasinghe 2 for 75) **Maliyadeva Kurunegala** 34 for 2 (Pasindu Menaka 21)

Battle of the Lords

Exchanges even on day one

Exchanges were even on day one of the Battle of the Lords big match between St. Aloysius Ratnapura and Prince College Ratnapura played at the Seevali College in Ratnapura. St. Aloysius' taking first lease of

the wicket made 149 and Prince College ended the day on 47 for 3. The match will be continued today. **St. Aloysius' Ratnapura** 149 (Chanuka Dhananjaya 47, Kalpa Bhanuka 39, Thuhina

Handagala 27; Mohamed Minhaj 3 for 15, Pasindu Malshan 3 for 32) **Prince College Ratnapura** 47 for 3 (Thejan Jayaratne 27 n.o.)

17th Battle of the Golds

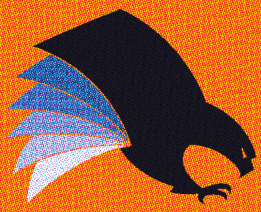
Manura, Kavindu shine on day one

Half tons by Manura Perera for D.S. Senanayake College and Kavindu Amameth for Mahanama College were the highlights of the first day's play in the 17th Battle of the Golds big match played at P. Sara Stadium.

RESULT
At P Sara Stadium
D.S. Senanayake College 203 (Manura Perera 98, Gaviru Senhas 27, Senura Silva 18, Chenul Pinarsa 15, Adeesha Bandaranayake 24 n.o.; Inuka Karannagoda 5 for 62, Rashmika Perera 2 for 38, Dulnith Sigeru 2 for 50)
Mahanama Colombo 120 for 3 (Koojana Perera 24, Kavindu Amameth 75 n.o., Anjala Bandara 21 n.o.; Adeesha Bandaranayake 3 for 47)

Manura's knock of 98 helped DSS taking first lease of the wicket make a modest score of 203 runs and Kavindu's unbeaten knock of 75 saw Mahanama in their turn ending the day on 120 for 3. The match will be continued today.

-MSA



Mirror Business

www.dailymirror.lk/business

Full Stock Market POB

SL begins negotiations with India for fresh US \$ 1bn equivalent INR currency swap

By Nishel Fernando

Sri Lanka has kicked off negotiations with India for a fresh US \$ 1 billion equivalent Indian rupee (INR) currency swap facility to facilitate bilateral trade.

“... the negotiations are also underway to secure an Indian rupee swap from RBI. The amount is still uncertain; it could be up to the equivalent of US \$ 1 billion. That’s

still being worked out. This is expected to facilitate Sri Lanka-India trade,” former Central Bank Governor and senior economist Dr. Indrajith Coomaraswamy told an expert panel discussion organised by the Centre for Banking Studies of the Central Bank, yesterday.

Meanwhile, the government has also begun negotiations with Indian authorities to extend

the repayment of the US \$ 1 billion credit line received last year and debt under the Asian Clearing Union by five years.

“... we are trying to settle that money over a five-year period. It’s still at early levels of negotiations,” he added.

However, Dr. Coomaraswamy noted that Sri Lanka is unlikely to receive a such long extension for the US \$ 400 million multi-

currency swap facility, which has already been extended.

Commenting on the possible inflows from China, which is by far the country’s largest bilateral creditor, he noted that the government mainly expects foreign direct investments from China for the Chinese-funded mega projects such as Colombo Port City.

He stressed the relationship with both India

and China would be critical for the economic recovery of Sri Lanka.

With the International Monetary Fund programme in place, Dr. Coomaraswamy was upbeat that foreign investor sentiment would turn positive and it would in turn bring in new FDI and inflows to the Colombo Stock Exchange and government securities market.

Bank of England governor warns firms raising prices ‘hurts people’

BBC: Raising prices could drive up the cost of living even further and would hurt the least well-off most, the Bank of England governor has warned firms.

“If all prices try to beat inflation we will get higher inflation,” Andrew Bailey told the BBC’s Today programme.

He said higher inflation “hurts people” and warned the Bank would raise rates again if prices continued to increase.

Bailey was speaking a day after the Bank raised interest rates to their highest level for 14 years.

The move came after prices jumped unexpectedly last month.

“I would say to people who are setting prices - please understand, if we get inflation embedded, interest rates will have to go up further and higher inflation really benefits nobody,” he added.

Soaring inflation in the UK and around the world has been squeezing households’ finances as energy and food prices rise.

Cost of living pressures hit the least well-off hardest, because they spend a bigger part of their income on food and fuel.

The Bank has been steadily increasing interest rates as it seeks to make borrowing money more expensive and encourage people to spend less, with the aim of stopping prices rising so quickly. But higher interest rates also hit some people with existing loans such as mortgages.

Bailey said firms should bear in mind that the rate of inflation is likely to drop sharply this year.

MORE ON PB

Export earnings cross US \$ 1bn for first time in 2023

■ Feb. merchandise exports total US \$ 1.0052bn

■ Feb. export revenue dips 8.06% YoY

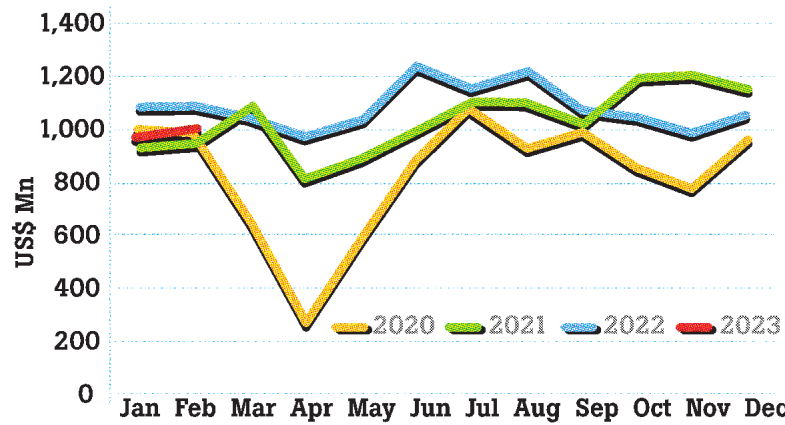
■ Jan.-Feb. 2023 cumulative export revenue reaches US \$ 1.98bn

■ Export earnings from apparel, tea, rubber and coconut contract

■ Revenue growth seen in electric and electrical components and spices sectors

■ Exports to top three markets – US, UK and India, dip while positive performance seen from Italy, Canada, UAE and Bangladesh

MONTHLY MERCHANDISE EXPORT EARNINGS: 2020 - 2023



Source: CBSL, SL Customs

Sri Lanka’s export sector saw the earnings cross the US \$ 1 billion mark for the year 2023, with the month of February fetching a revenue of US \$ 1.0052 billion for merchandise exports.

The provisional data released by Sri Lanka Customs shows that when compared with the corresponding month of the previous year, the revenue contracted by 8.06 percent but is a 5.62 percent increase when compared to February 2021.

This brings Sri Lanka’s cumulative

export earnings for the first two months of 2023 to US \$ 1.98 billion. When compared with January-February 2022, the revenue has contracted by 9.68 percent year-on-year (YoY).

In January 2023, the earnings from merchandise exports declined by 11.3 percent YoY to US \$ 978 million.

The apparel sector remains the largest export earnings generator, bringing in US \$ 485 million for February 2023. However, its revenue contracted by 2.32 percent YoY when compared with February 2022.

MORE ON PB

SL to use part of IMF’s first tranche to settle Indian loan scheme

Sri Lanka will use part of the recently received bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to pay back its loan from India, the Finance Ministry said.

Finance State Minister Ranjith Siyambalapatiya yesterday shared that from the US \$ 330 million that was received from the IMF as the first tranche, the government would settle the installments of the Indian loan scheme.

Accordingly, a sum of US \$ 121 million has been allocated to settle India’s loan.



Ranjith Siyambalapatiya

The island nation will receive the second tranche in September 2023, where the IMF will release another US \$ 331 million.

Dialog Axiata claims top honours at e-Swabhimani Awards 2021



From left: Dialog Axiata PLC Specialist Social Innovation Nuwan Jayasinghe, Senior Executive Digital Inclusion Hadhili Nasly, Specialist Social Innovation Ishani Gamage, Group Chief of Risk and Compliance Asanga Priyadarashana, Assistant Manager Social Innovation Lyngararaj Jeyarajasingham, Assistant Manager Innovation for Sustainability Tharusha Wanigasekera and Product Manager AgriTech Mudith Jayasekera

Dialog Axiata PLC, Sri Lanka’s premier connectivity provider, was recognised at the prestigious e-Swabhimani Awards 2021, for its outstanding digital inclusion and community investment initiatives, including Sayuru, Yeheli and Saru for their contribution to inclusion, empowerment and environmental sustainability.

The e-Swabhimani Awards, organised by the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, recognise outstanding digital initiatives across a range of industries that have made a significant impact on society. Sayuru, a free, trilingual weather and warning SMS service for day-boat fishermen, was awarded as the winner in the Inclusion and Empowerment category.

Yeheli, an anonymous, free and trilingual platform that

connects users with expert advice in the categories of medical health, mental health and well-being and legal, was awarded the joint winner in the Health and Wellbeing category. Saru, a precision automated agriculture automation solution designed to enhance crop quality, was awarded the joint winner in the Environment and Green Energy category. The panel of judges meticulously evaluated Dialog’s digital inclusion products, assessing various aspects, including their product objectives, user impact, uniqueness, innovativeness, target audience, promotional strategies, usage statistics and guidelines for product use.

Commenting on the achievement, Dialog Axiata PLC Group Chief Executive Supun Weerasinghe said,

MORE ON PB

Good demand at Colombo Tea Auction this week

The Colombo Tea Auction saw 5.2 MnKgs come under the hammer this week, which was met with good demand, particularly for the teas at the lower end of the market (the tea for price category).

The Ex-Estate offerings were fairly similar to last week and totalled 0.74 MnKgs. The overall quality was lower to last, particularly the teas from the Western planting districts.

The Best Western BOP/BOPFs, which were limited in offer, were firm to marginally dearer on last following special inquiry, whilst the others declined by an average Rs.50 per kg. In the Below Best and Plain categories, the BOPs declined Rs.50-100 per kg, whilst the corresponding BOPFs were mostly firm.

The Nuwara Eliya BOPs were irregular and marginally easier following quality, whilst there were hardly any BOPFs on offer. The Uda Pussellawa – Better BOPs were irregular, whilst the others were barely steady. The Uva BOPs – Better sorts declined Rs.100 per kg and more, whilst the others were lower to a lesser extent.

The Uva/Uda Pussellawa corresponding BOPFs – Best available were firm

and tended dearer, whilst the others sold around last week’s levels though irregular following quality.

The High and Medium Grown CTC teas were mostly firm. The Low Grown types – BPIs, select invoices were substantially dearer, whilst the others together with the PFIs were firm and up to Rs.50 per kg dearer.

The Low Growns comprised 2.1 MnKgs. The market met with fair demand.

In the Leafy and Semi Leafy catalogues, a few select Best OP1/BOP1s were firm to dearer, whilst the balance was firm. The well-made OP/OPAs were firm to selectively dearer following quality, whilst the Best and Below Best together with the poorer varieties eased. The well-made PEK/PEK1s were firm to selectively dearer. The Best and Below Best varieties too met with fair demand, whilst the poorer sorts were fully firm.

In the Tippy catalogues, a selection of select Best FBOPs were firm to selectively dearer on special inquiry, whilst the balance was firm. However, the teas at the bottom appreciated. The well-made FFIs were firm to marginally easier.

MORE ON PB



Kedella Construction Expo 2023 kicks off in Colombo

Sri Lanka’s premier build and architecture trade show Kedella Construction Expo 2023 kicked off in Colombo yesterday. The event, organised by Asia Exhibitions and Conventions (Pvt.) Ltd, is held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo and is open to the public till Sunday, March 26.

PIC BY KITHSIRI DE MEL

Tania Polonnowita selected for EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women Asia-Pacific class of 2023

IAS Holdings (Private) Limited Group Managing Director Tania Polonnowita Wettimuny is among the 15 women founders selected to take part in the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women Asia-Pacific class of 2023.

The bespoke executive education programme identifies and supports savvy, ambitious female entrepreneurs with established, profitable businesses to unlock their full potential and show others what is possible.

Commenting on the selection, Wettimuny said the recognition for the entire industry and paves the way for young entrepreneurs to see opportunity in the field of logistics.

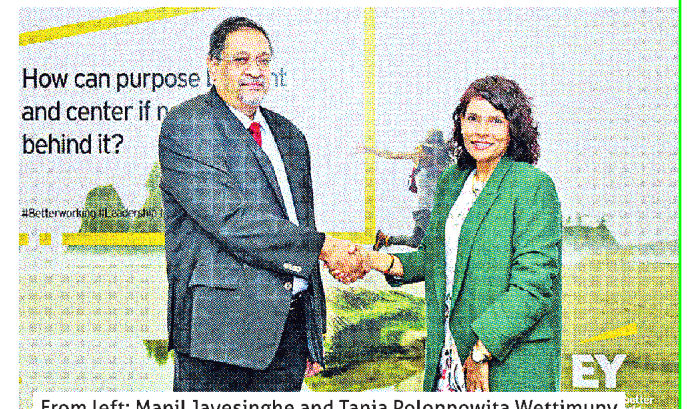
“It breaks the perception that the industry is male dominated. This recognition comes at a time when the country is struggling and brings positivity and proves that Sri Lanka can always strive to do better and thrive during tough times,” she said.

Country Managing Partner Sri Lanka Manil Jayasinghe stated that EY Sri Lanka takes pride in recognising and helping our women entrepreneurs to grow and scale globally through this programme.

“This is the seventh year we have sent nominations for the programme and it is indeed a credit to our women entrepreneurs that they have secured a nomination each year. This shows that we have

entrepreneurs that have the capacity to be recognised globally. I wish Tania all the best and we will do our best to help her with the next stage of her journey to be globally recognised entrepreneur,” he said.

This year’s cohort of new entrepreneurs are focused on solving the world’s significant challenges of today. Representing Australia, Greater China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Sri Lanka in the Asia-Pacific region, they bring an innovative and disruptive mindset, as well as a vision with sustainable development, which has led to their successes in the market and ambition for the global network.



From left: Manil Jayasinghe and Tania Polonnowita Wettimuny

According to EY Asia-Pacific Risk Management Leader and EY Asia-Pacific Women. Fast Forward Executive Sponsor Claire Cardno, the programme

is designed to support women entrepreneurs to break down barriers and become global market leaders.

MORE ON PB



Market data table with columns: SECURITY, VOLUME, VWAP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, VWAP TODAY'S CHANGE. Lists various stocks like ABANS, AMANA TAKAFUL, ANTON HOLDINGS, etc.

Exchange Rates

24.03.2023

(1) The average rates of the following currencies quoted by commercial banks in Colombo for Telegraphic Transfers (TT) at 9.30 a.m. are as follows.

Table with columns: CURRENCY, BUYING RATE, SELLING RATE. Lists currencies like Australian Dollar, Canadian Dollar, etc.

(2) The approximate exchange rates of GULF Currencies based on previous day's market weighted average rate for the US\$ are as follows.

Table with columns: COUNTRY, CURRENCY, INDICATIVE RATE. Lists countries like Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE.

Bearish sentiment continued during the week



The ASPI closed in green as a result of price gains in counters such as Sampath Bank, Melstacorp and Commercial Bank with the turnover crossing Rs 1.9 Bn. Meanwhile, the S&P SL20 edged up. High net worth and institutional investor participation was noted in Ceylon Tobacco Company, Sampath Bank and Hatton National Bank. Mixed interest was observed in Sri Lanka Telecom, Hayleys and Melstacorp whilst retail interest was noted in Waskaduwa Beach Resort, Browns Investments

and Eden Hotel Lanka. Furthermore, foreigners remained active closing as net sellers.

During the week, the ASPI and the S&P SL20 lost 2.6% and 4.0%

respectively whilst recording an average daily turnover of Rs 2.03 Bn. Food, Beverage & Tobacco sector was the top contributor to the market turnover (due to Ceylon Tobacco Company) whilst the sector index gained 0.25%. The share price of Ceylon Tobacco Company edged down by Rs 0.75 (0.12%) to close at Rs 642.00. The Banking sector was the second highest contributor to the market turnover (due to Sampath Bank and Hatton National Bank) whilst the sector index increased by 1.20%. The share price of Sampath Bank gained Rs 1.40 (2.77%) to close at Rs 52.00. The share price of Hatton National Bank moved up by Rs 1.00 (0.78%) to close at Rs 129.75. Sri Lanka Telecom and Hayleys were also included amongst the top turnover contributors. The share price of Sri Lanka Telecom recorded a loss of Rs 0.50 (0.45%) to close at Rs 111.50. The share price of Hayleys declined by Rs 4.70 (5.90%) to close at Rs 75.00.

Contd. from Page 7

Export earnings...

Although the earnings from the export of apparel decreased by 14.75 percent, the earnings from the exports of textiles increased by 146.67 percent in February 2023 compared to February 2022. The export earnings from tea, which accounted for 12 percent of the merchandise exports, increased by 9.14 percent YoY to US \$ 204.13 million in February 2023. The earnings from the export of tea packets (21.24 percent) and instant tea (27.52 percent) increased in February 2023 from the corresponding month of the previous year, while the earnings from the export of bulk tea (-15.33 percent) and tea bags (-27.03 percent) decreased in February 2023. The export earnings from the rubber and rubber finished products followed suit, as their revenue contracted by 17.81 percent YoY to US \$ 76.58 million in February 2023. According to the Export Development Board, the negative performance was noted in the export of pneumatic and retreaded rubber tyres and tubes (-6.10 percent) and industrial and surgical gloves (-45.38 percent).

The export earnings of kernel products and fibre products, categorised under the coconut-based products, also decreased by 14.65 percent and 37.63 percent YoY but the earnings from the coconut shell products increased by 28.67 percent YoY. The export earnings from liquid coconut milk dipped by 16.68 percent YoY to US \$ 8.69 million. Being the largest contributor to the coconut-based sector, the coco peat, fibre pith and moulded products decreased by 35.87 percent YoY to US \$ 10.55 million in February 2023. Showing an increase in the YoY export earnings performance is the electrical and electronics components (13.72 percent YoY), which fetched US \$ 43.01 million in February 2023. A strong performance in export of other electrical and electronic products (22.12 percent) is seen. Similarly, the export earnings from spices and essential oils increased by 27.0 percent YoY to US \$ 34.48 million in the month of February 2023, with a solid performance seen from cinnamon (20.16 percent) and cloves (412.82 percent). However, despite the increase in the sector, the earnings from pepper and essential oils decreased by 37.90 percent and 43.41 percent YoY in February 2023. Meanwhile, the US, UK and India emerged

as the largest contributors to Sri Lanka's export revenue, though their performance dipped by 20.94 percent, 15.77 percent and 9.22 percent. Out of the top 15 export markets, Italy, Canada, the UAE and Bangladesh recorded a positive performance in February 2023. During the period of January to February 2023, only the UAE recorded a positive performance compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. For February, the exports to the free trade agreement partners accounted for 6.5 percent of the total merchandise exports, which decreased by 52.01 percent to US \$ 128.08 million. Looking at the region-wise performance, the exports to the European Union (EU), which comprised 21 percent of Sri Lanka's exports during the month of February 2023, decreased by 14.48 percent YoY to US \$ 417.71 million. During the period of January to February 2023, the top five EU markets that accounted for 80 percent of Sri Lanka's total exports to the EU were Germany - US \$ 98.61 million (-18.44 percent), Italy - US \$ 100.28 million (-2.56 percent), the Netherlands - US \$ 54.1 million (-24.6 percent), Belgium - US \$ 37.36 million (-21.28 percent) and France - US \$ 35.22 million (-18.15 percent).

Dialog Axiata...

"We are honoured to receive e-Swabhinani Awards for our digital inclusion and community investment initiatives. Dialog has always been committed to leveraging technology to create a positive impact on society. These awards are a testament to our efforts in driving digital inclusion and promoting sustainability."

Dialog Axiata PLC continues to pioneer digital inclusion and community investment initiatives that make a meaningful impact on society. Sayuru, Yeheli and Saru are just a few examples of Dialog's commitment to leveraging technology for social good. More information on Dialog's sustainability efforts can be accessed via - https://dlg.dialog.lk/sustainability.

Good demand...

whilst the balance sold around last levels, Forbes and Walker Tea Brokers said. In the Premium catalogues, the very Tippy teas together with the Best declined, whilst the Below Best varieties sold around last levels. The teas at the bottom too were easier but the leafier varieties appreciated.

Tania Polonnowita...

"We celebrate women's achievements not just today but every day and we are here to help them realise their ambition and contribute to a better future for the world," she said. This year's participants run high-growth businesses across a wide variety of sectors including health, logistics, IT, education, biopharmaceutical and automotive. According to EY analysis, these companies generated a combined revenue of more than US \$ 200 million in 2022 and employed more than 1,500 people.

Bank of...

He said he had not yet seen evidence of companies putting up prices more than necessary, and said that he understood they needed to "reflect the costs they face".

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Callous Cultural Casualties



BY DINESH CHANDRASENA

'Cultural appropriation' is something we all are, or should be familiar with, as it is a global phenomenon, that has a great deal of interest heaped upon the very notion, thereby making more people learn, and educate themselves on what is and what is not 'apropos.' We live in times where we are expected to have self-awareness, with a sense of how those around us can interpret, and re-interpret, our actions. Rightly, so I might add. Unfortunately, self-awareness, let alone any form of 'awareness' is sadly lacking, and in many instances, we see huge cultural 'snafus' which shows, and highlights the massive divide between simply 'right' and 'wrong.'

UNFILTERED with Dinesh Chandrasena

There were times of blatant illiteracy and absolute arrogance where it was seen as ok to imitate another culture, another race, or another faith, simply for one's own base entertainments. Eras which, thankfully gone, where one could and would dress up, wear 'black face,' pretend to speak in a culturally unique accent or badly derived version of a dialect, and 'acquire' the symbols of other faiths, purely for amusements. These horrible times, where the lack of any sensitivity towards other's feelings, marched alongside one's very own inflated ego, that permitted one to simply think that doing, "what we want, and how we want," is simply a right, regardless of consequences. Much to my, and am sure many others' delight, this is now as unacceptable as 'trophy hunting' where one would go out and massacre some poor animal, simply to boost one's miniscule bravado. Now with knowledge and awareness at or very fingertips, there is really no reason to behave like colonizers in the 16th century, with a 'Me Myself, and I' attitude of inflated self.

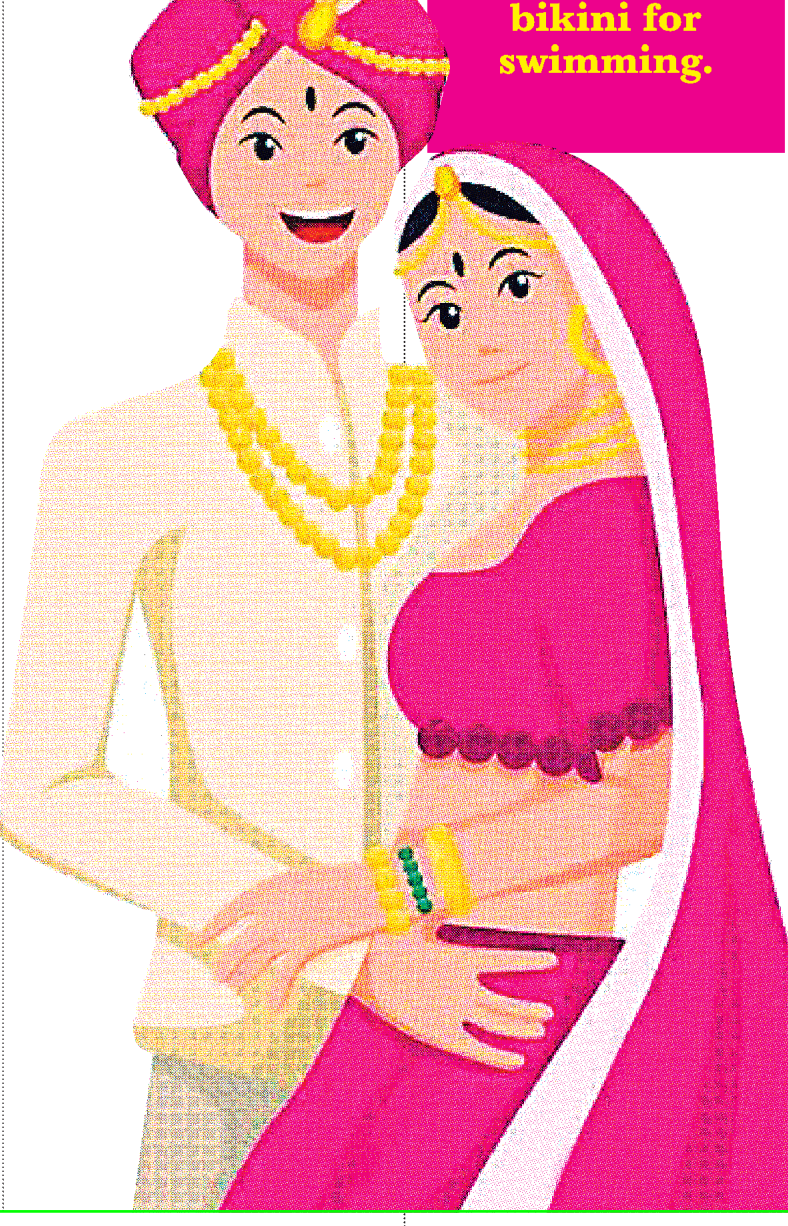
So why is it, that I see so many instances, that are supremely cringe-worthy, with folks who should know better, behaving like the 'know' in 'know-better' does not even exist? We see this happen the most at celebratory events and soirees, where the entire cohort seem to have left their dignity, sense of self, and intelligence at the entrance with the valet! Let us begin with the most obvious and 'in your face' offenders, who are the 'desperate housewives.' These brash and bored women, whose very purpose for existing, is simply to throw parties for their tasteless, tacky friends, do not even attempt to find an excuse to dress like streetwalkers in 1950s Havana, when they entertain (and this they certainly do!) with some mind-bogglingly crass party. With hosts and guests matching the décor, in a bile inducing palette of horror, balloons, and flowers, dresses and faces, all take on the same senseless hues.

Taking all this to the next level of madness is when these hostesses decide that they will take on a whole new race, faith, and identity when they throw a party. Suddenly we have grown women dressed as the girl on the 'milkmaid' can, women who are closing in on a century of existence deciding that they are teenage damsels in Kashmir, and some taking it upon themselves to play the bashful tribal beauties in pre-revolutionary Iran! Now just as a side note, these are not 'fancy dress' parties, or 'masquerade balls' where this would be somewhat acceptable. These are simply bored 'socially unaware' socialites, and their completely 'unaware' and talentless 'party-planners.'

Weddings, and the overly zealous participants are the next group that seems to fly in the face of propriety. Until quite recently Poruwa ceremonies, Church ceremonies, Hindu marriage ceremonies etc. were relegated to the area of revered sacred beliefs steeped in deeply rooted traditions and symbolisms that all held profound spiritual meaning for those participating. Usually, at least one half of the couple belonged to the faith that was solemnizing the marriage, and it was a celebration of spiritual blessings on the union.

The attire, the décor etc. were also in keeping with the core values of the belief systems, and this was greatly honored and respected. Those seem to be the good old days. Many weddings we see around us today are such a riotous 'mish-mash' of anything and everything that catches anyone's fancy, that we are left with more than a slight quizzical look on our faces. Thrown out are any significant parameters of respect for being appropriate, with a splashy over the top headline grabbing 'show how much money we have' themed events being de-rigueur.

Part of this frightful 'role-playing' also includes attire, and that sees the most inappropriate culturally polar-opposite looks being splashed around. Speaking of 'splashing around' a saree jacket is supposed to be a 'saree jacket' and not a bikini for swimming.



Considering the wedding couple's attire, the fiascos only fast-track, as the simple waive of a magic wand, reminiscent of the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella, changes a bride and groom into a whole other race, faith, and culture. We have Sinhalese couples doing multiple ceremonies from Sangeeth's and Mehendi's which are usually for those descended or directly from our Northern neighbor to statuary of Hindu deities used for decoration, etc. We have the same with couples deciding that they will have a poruwa ceremony, simply because they love the drummers and dancers accompanying them in, and the beauty of the setting, along with attempts at having church solemnizations when neither party belongs to the delegated faith. It could be the obsessions with escapism and wanting to be ensconced in Bollywood, Kollywood etc. that makes entire families decide that for the 'special day' they are going to be a whole other nationality! Drawing inspiration is one thing, but becoming another completely different faith, and race, and just 'playing the part' because it looks 'pretty' is just completely beyond comprehension.

Part of this frightful 'role-playing' also includes attire, and that sees the most inappropriate culturally polar-opposite looks being splashed around. Speaking of 'splashing around' a saree jacket is supposed to be a 'saree jacket' and not a bikini for swimming. Brides walk into churches, get to the poruwa, etc. looking like they are either coming from, or going directly to a strip club for the next shift! Suddenly we also behold top to toe, 'Rajasthani brides and grooms,' 'Bengali brides and grooms,' 'Assamese brides and grooms,' etc. when neither the couple nor any relative have any connection, geographically or spiritually to any of those regions, traditions, or belief systems!

We all loved taking on characters we saw in the movies, when we were kids, and there is nothing wrong, whatever one's age, with having a vibrant and vivid imagination. The only place where lines can be crossed into the murky mire, is when it involves other cultures, beliefs, and spiritual ideologies. While I truly believe that showing appreciation for another culture is awesome, the way we show that appreciation is crucial in not creating a situation that changes what could be joyous, into absolutely revolting. As a person who respects all faiths, and appreciates the nuances of varied cultures, I am thrilled to see authenticity shine, and true beliefs honored. Let us, as we now live in times when we are surrounded by knowledge, look at embracing the world around us, while keeping traditions alive and respecting unique values and beliefs. Living in the now means living in a collective society where we make the best of who we are while appropriately highlighting the best of those around us as well.



THE SRI LANKA FESTIVAL OF MUSIC, DANCE & SPEECH 2023

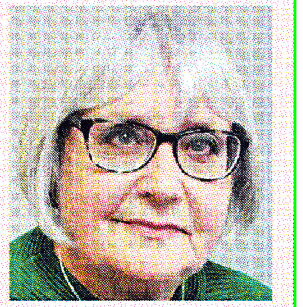


BY TARUSHI PERIS

International Institute of Music, Speech, and Drama (Pvt) Ltd. headed by Shyama Perera presents the 26th annual Sri Lanka Festival of Music, Dance and Speech. The Sri Lanka Festival of Music, Dance and Speech is a Festival Member of The British and International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech, UK. This is the umbrella body for festivals of the performing arts in the UK and beyond.

There are over 300 festivals across the UK and Ireland which are affiliated to The British and International Federation of Festivals. There are also affiliated festivals organizations in Australia, Bermuda, Canada, France, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A festival provides many things: the stimulus of preparing for a public occasion; the opportunity to hear the work of others; and the chance to receive verbal and written educational feedback from a professional adjudicator someone who they might never meet in any other way. Festivals bring forward the educated audiences of the future - those who will keep the arts alive in years to come. The British and International Federation of Festivals has been moving ahead through the encouragement of new work. The Federation forms a unique interface between the amateur and professional worlds in the performing arts.

Since the pandemic he has gained a broad range of digital and online experience in both Festival adjudication and examinations.

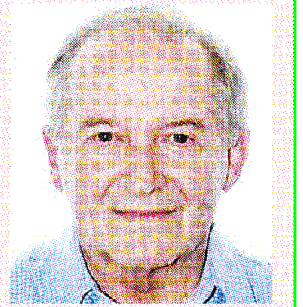


SUSAN MACKAY
For 10 years, Susan ran The Fylde Stage School teaching levels of RAD and ISTD dance and LAMDA Speech and Drama before graduating from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Susan says her role as an adjudicator as a combination of bringing new ideas and approaches to text and performance as well as fresh encouragement to every participant. She feels that everyone should leave a festival with a sense of achievement.

THE ADJUDICATORS



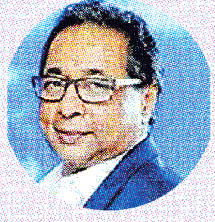
TIMOTHY MCCARTHY
Timothy studied Speech and Drama at the Cork School of Music; graduated from the National University of Ireland with an MA Degree in Drama and Theatre Studies and the Higher Diploma in Education; he holds the Post Graduate Certificate in Adjudicating. Timothy is an Adjudicator-Member, Hon. Adjudicators' Vice-President and former Vice-Chair of The British and International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech. He is happy to adjudicate virtual/on-line Festivals.



JOHN NORRIS
John has been involved in music education for over forty years as examiner adjudicator, teacher of piano, classical and theatre organ and multi keyboard. He founded the world's first graded certificate examination for the multi-keyboard in 1974 and subsequently acted as chairman of examiners for the UK's first graduate recital on that instrument at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. John is delighted to enjoy, once again, the performance from the many young musicians in Sri Lanka during this, his sixth visit to your wonderful country. He wishes all concerned to have a really enjoyable musical experience.

The upcoming summer festival is conducted by the International Institute of Music, Speech, and Drama (Pvt) Ltd, located at No. 62, Lauries Road, Colombo 04, Sri Lanka. For further information please contact the institute via email on: iimsd_ferdi@yahoo.com

One Night In Bangkok



BY IMRAN SAIBO

Thailand, Bangkok, in particular, has been one of my favorite destinations, and I have been visiting this vibrant city without a break for the past 25 years till Covid19 interrupted life as we know it and turned our worlds upside down. My return to this city after a two-year hiatus saw a few changes, a slight decrease in the tourists that filled its streets and malls, a few familiar places closed, victims of the economic crunch that Covid19 brought with it, but all in all the city was alive once again.

Dinner with the Seneviratne's, Shehan and Gimi almost invariably became a part of the tradition, since their move to this bustling metropolis some years ago and it was revived this year as well. And as usual our hosts put up a feast of mouthwatering dishes that didn't do my carefully curated diabetic diet any good but left my taste buds asking for more.

Did I mention that my better half and our good hostess were products of the same educational institution that has its headquarters down Flower Road Colombo 07, and goes by the name Ladies College? Anyone who has hitched his wagon to a product that has been churned out of this seat of learning would understand when I say that these ladies somehow seem to possess an iron will and strength of purpose that would put Maggie Thatcher aka the Iron Lady seem like a babe in the woods (to those who intend to spend the rest of their lives with one of them, here is a bit of sage advice from a veteran, "never argue, always agree," and peace will reign supreme).

Anyway, hostess and better half took off to a comfortable couch after dinner and began dissecting the world and the people around them with a precision that would have brought tears of joy to my long-suffering biology teacher's eyes, while the gentleman exchanged anecdotes from their carefree bachelor days, when they had more hair on their heads and less money in their wallets. I always had the feeling that these nostalgic wanderings were tinged with a little regret that they could not relive these days, a malady that can be seen when big match fever comes along and boys (who are no longer boys) revert to those days gone by fueled with copious amounts of the cup that cheers. Anyway, with the midnight hour upon us, replete with delicious food served up by our hosts, my better half and I returned to our temporary abode right in the heart of Sukhumvit, which is Bangkok's bustling center of nonstop action lined with 24-hour restaurants, filled with a cosmopolitan collection of people from around the world.

Middle Easterners enjoying coffee and conversation, Europeans with bemused expressions on

their faces taking in the street life, the locals plying their wares, street walkers with their radar working overtime looking for a unsuspecting mark, weed shops offering a variety of substances with the promise of taking you to never never land, masseurs kneading the aches of weary bodies after marathon shopping sprees, lady boys who looked prettier than some of the females plying their trade on the pavements (some unsuspecting gentleman have at times accompanied these Goddesses for an intimate evening, only to discover to their shock and consternation at discovering what lies south of the border was what they had not imagined). One of my pastimes being people watching I was loath to leave the street and retire to bed, so I suggested a coffee, which to my surprise my better half agreed to (late nights are not exactly her forte) so we entered the Arabic restaurant conveniently situated right next to our hotel and lining the street from where we had birds eye view of all the little stories being enacted around us.

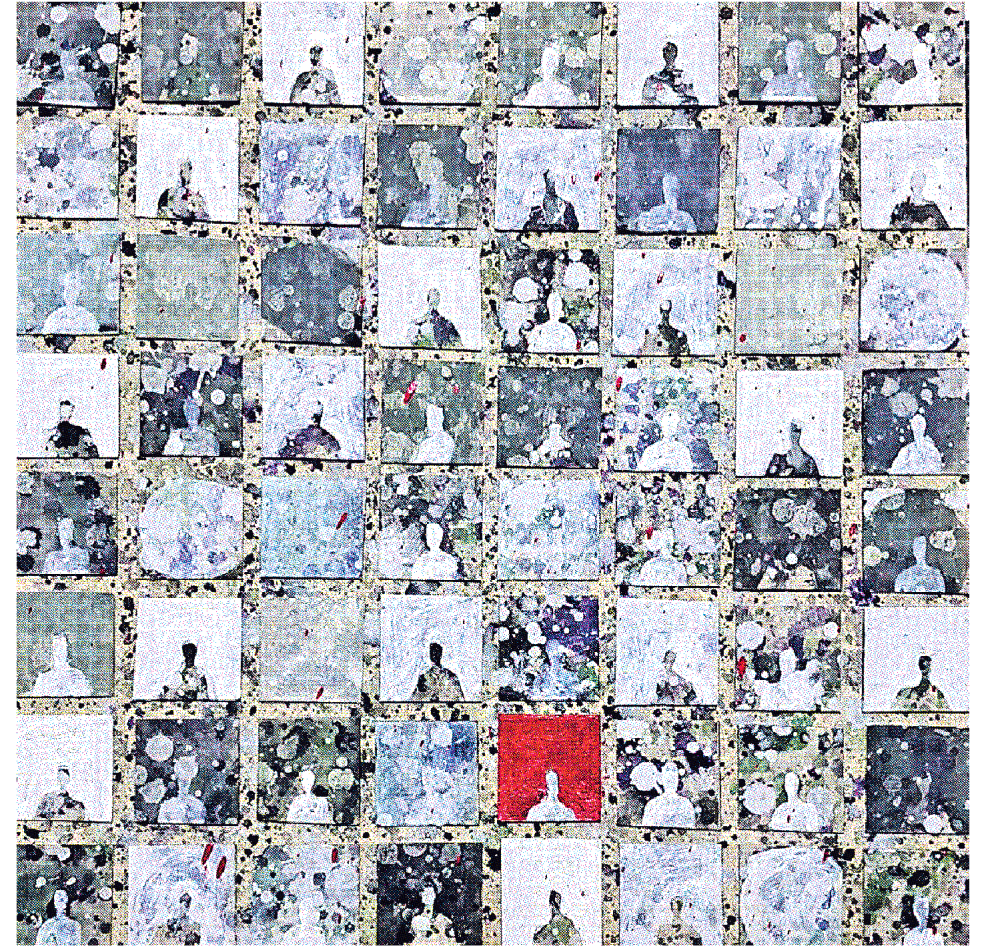
Did I mention the effect that coffee has on my companion, let me take a slight pause here and enlighten you on this. I on the other hand can drink jugs full of the stuff and sleep like Rip Van Winkle, in fact my nightly routine usually has a coffee in it and bar of kit kat to help the diabetes along. Whilst on my life companion's metabolism it has the opposite effect, the mists of sleep evading her and the slightest noise awakening her in battle mode. Since I am a nocturnal creature, after much practice I have begun to master the art of opening a bag of chips in total silence (try it if you haven't, it requires a certain skill set that requires practice) then comes the actual consuming of this thin slice of potato without the crunch and crackle it usually brings, you insert the chip into your mouth, bring lips together, let the chip moisten and then bite down, if you do miscalculate be prepared to awaken a sleeping tigress. Anyway, back to my coffee shop.

Our coffee arrived at our table, a thick Turkish brew in which you could stand a teaspoon up straight in. The cups they came in immediately caught the eye of my companion; gold rimmed white cups with the familiar Harrods of

Did I mention that my better half and our good hostess were products of the same educational institution that has its headquarters down Flower Road Colombo 07, and goes by the name Ladies College?

London logo emblazoned on its side. Immediately all thoughts of coffee went out of the window to be replaced by the collectors gleam in the eye of my travelling companion. Using a mixture of pidgin English and sign language the waiter serving was informed of her wish to purchase the cups, he interpreted this as wanting more coffee, after much gesticulation and a repeat of the arm waving pantomime the Manager was called, and we repeated the request. The manager oozing all smiles and charm informed us that this unusual request had to be conveyed to the owner. The owner appeared, a sprightly, elderly looking gentleman with all the hallmarks of an astute businessman. Seeing our desire to possess these items he smiled, I feared for my already thinning wallet, but I was thankfully surprised when he gave the green light for the crockery changing hands at a very reasonable rate, after saying thank you and the typical middle eastern gesture of the hand over the heart to express our thanks (and a sense of relief on my part that my wallet had survived) we repaired to our room with the cups in my companions possession and me hopefully to my book and my bedside munchies.

I remained blissfully uninterrupted from any onslaughts from my better half that night with complaints of lights kept on and crunching sounds from my side of the bed, largely I am assuming due to the fact that my successful negotiations had met with success and coffee can be served within the walls of my humble abode in gleaming Harrods crockery. I was left to my munchies and reading with only the sound of contented deep breathing, (I refrain from using the word snoring just in case these words are read and objections raised) a day's work well done, though I say so myself.



OVER 25 RENOWNED ARTISTS AND COLLECTORS DONATE WORKS TO AID RCCI

Over twenty-five renowned artists and collectors have donated their works to aid the not-for-profit Rehabilitation Center for the Communication Impaired (RCCI) that cares for persons with special needs. The exhibition and sale will on the 1st and 2nd of April at the Barefoot Gallery Loft. All proceeds from these generous donations will fund the continuing work of the RCCI / Shiranee Joseph de Saram Foundation supporting its skills development programmes for people with cognitive disabilities and outreach efforts to increase awareness and facilitate integration.

The works donated to the Charity Art Sale include those from the collections of Dominic Sansoni, Pala Potthupitiya, Kingsley Gunathilake, Tilak Samarawickrama, Malinda Jayasinghe, Prasadani Kumari, Parageeth Manohansa, Prageeth Rathnayake, Siva Kajendran, Susiman Nirmalavasan, Ajantha Ranaweera, Layla Gonaduwa, Lester Perera, Prameesha Abeyssekera, Saashya Rodrigo, Kamika Perera, Aruni Wijegunewardena, Dila Weerasinghe, Janaki Perera, Shasheema Ambegoda, Lochana Abeyssekera, Sithila Dassanayake, Praveena Joseph de Saram, Veen Redwood, Champika Waidyaratne, Donna Baitey, Sarath Prematillake and Habeeba Haroon.

The sale will feature over fifty pieces of artwork including oils, acrylics, tapestries, prints, photographs as well as crafts produced in the RCCI workshop by individuals with disabilities.

RCCI was founded in 1993 by Sri Lanka's very first speech and language therapist, Shiranee Joseph de Saram, to care for children and adults with special needs including persons with autism, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, learning disabilities and other speech and cognitive disorders. The RCCI strives to help people with disabilities gain skills, confidence, and independence to enable their integration into wider Sri Lankan society. This includes life skills, functional literacy, travel training, survival skills, cookery, gardening, and other vocational activities. The RCCI also



The sale will feature over fifty pieces of artwork including oils, acrylics, tapestries, prints, photographs as well as crafts produced in the RCCI workshop by individuals with disabilities.

works to build awareness around diversity and inclusion and share best practices for the creation of sustainably inclusive workplaces. Conducting development and social communication, training in vocational skills, cookery, gardening, travel training, survival and life skills and instilling confidence and independence to facilitate integration into society, the diversity of the persons with disabilities in the school-like setting, includes the buy-in of the families as well.

The RCCI Board comprises of Lalini Kobbekaduwa, Shyama Perera, Deshal De Mel, Dr. Jagath Wijesekera, Nilusha Kapugama, Kaushalya Bandara, Chiranthi Cooray and Chamindi Ekanayake, while the center is managed by Praveena Joseph de Saram.

The media sponsors for this event are, HI!! Online, Daily Mirror Online, Weekend Online, TNL Radio and Lite87.



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