



YOUR PAPER TODAY 14 PAGES

Fuel Cost Breakdown - Data for the formula from actual cost incurred during the immediate past 28 days period from 28th February - 28th March 2023.... Price difference (between the formula base price per litre and current retail price per litre) Petrol- 92 Rs.1.63...Lanka Auto Diesel Rs.0.04....

KANCHANA WIJESEKERA
Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna

- Official Twitter Page of Kanchana Wijesekera, 30 March 2023

FACT CHECK PARTLY TRUE

Minister Wijesekera claims low profits with unaccountable version of the fuel price formula

This fact check is based on the minister's recent tweet on the fuel price formula cost breakdown for a litre of petrol, diesel, and kerosene. The breakdown of the cost is meant to justify the price charged by the CPC for the following month. In his tweet, the minister claims the profit to the CPC is low with an unaccountable version of the fuel price formula. To check the tweet, FactCheck.lk estimated the cost per litre using the fuel price formula implemented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in 2018 and other data published by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL). In line with the MoF's formula, FactCheck.lk used average Singapore Platts petrol and diesel prices from 1 to 28 March. Data was available for 92-Octane Petrol and Auto Diesel only.

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LAST CHANCE FOR SL TO GET THINGS RIGHT CAUTIONS CB GOVERNOR

- Points out handwork is only yet to begin
- Says continuing with old ways will lead to an even bigger disaster than what is currently ongoing
- Asserts the need for SL to look at outperforming targets set to come out of crisis once and for all
- Unlike the previous 16 times we went to the IMF, this time the situation is complex.

BY SHABIYA ALI AHLAM

While Sri Lanka appears to be letting out a sigh of relief after the US\$ 3 billion bailout package received the approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board, the Central Bank pointed out the actual work in ironing out issues has just only started. The common sentiment in the past week is that the island nation has managed to sort out its issues that will ease the ongoing economic hardships. However, it is important now, more than ever, to be prudent in efforts taken and by no means take a step backward, Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe said.

X-Press Pearl Disaster MORE HARMFUL BIOTOXINS FOUND AROUND DIKOWITA AND SARAKKUWA SEAS

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

Almost a year after the X-Press Pearl Disaster off the Sri Lankan sea, harmful biotoxins were found around Dikowita and Sarakkuwa seas, Sri Jayawardeneperu University Animal Science Department Senior Professor Pathmalal M.Manage said.

PM thanks China's Buddhist community for meritorious assistance granted



"Faxian Charity Fund" with the participation of Buddhist devotees and Buddhist temples in China donated dry rations to low-income families at the Gangaramaya temple yesterday.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena yesterday said Sri Lanka is always grateful to the Chinese Buddhist community for their meritorious acts of helping the temples and low-income families in Sri Lanka.

SC order has not violated Parliament Privileges: BASL

BY LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

There has been no violation of the powers and the privileges of Parliament, by the interim order issued by Supreme Court on the Local Government Election, the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) announced yesterday.

Nine more doctors leave A'pura Teaching Hospital

Health Ministry and the Education Ministry informed about the latest situation

BY UPUL HERATH THALAWA

Weeks after the closure of the professorial unit of the paediatrics ward of the Anuradhapura Teaching Hospital, following the migration of four paediatricians, nine more General Doctors at the hospital left the hospital, officials sources said.

Some trade union leaders refrained from declaring assets: Labour Minister

Trade union leaders are bound to declare assets and liabilities as per the Establishment Code

BY YOHAN PERERA

Trade union leaders attached to government and semi government organizations have refrained from declaring their assets and liabilities in line with the Assets and Liabilities Act, Labour Minister Manusha Nanayakkara alleged yesterday.

Anti Terrorism Bill published sans consultation with stakeholders: BASL

BY LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

Issuing a statement regarding the recently gazetted Anti Terrorism Bill, the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) yesterday announced that it would not hesitate to challenge any bill that would deem to undermine the Rule of Law and the Liberty of the Citizen in the country.

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Lunch packets, kothu, and fried-rice to go down by 20%

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA

The price of lunch packets, kothu and fried rice was reduced by 20% from midnight yesterday, the All Island Canteen Owners' Association (AICOA) said. Its National Organizer Asela Sampath told the media that the decision to reduce prices was taken as a result of the decrease in domestic gas prices.

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CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

Nine more doctors leave A'pura Teaching Hospital

Due to the closure of the professorial unit of the paediatric ward of the Rajarata University's Faculty of Medicine, medical students have also lost the opportunity for clinical training

They said that in addition to that six other doctors have taken leave of two to five years. Accordingly, a total of fifteen General Doctors at the hospital have left the hospital in the recent past.

Confirming the report, the Director of Anuradhapura Teaching Hospital, Dulan Samarawera said that he had already informed the Health Ministry and the Education Ministry about the latest situation. He however refused to reveal how many doctors had left the hospital.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health are aware of the shortage of doctors in Ward 63 of professorial Medical Unit. There is no solution to that problem yet, the director said.

Due to the closure of the professorial unit of the paediatric ward of the Rajarata University's Faculty of Medicine, medical students have also lost the opportunity for clinical training.

He also said that a few doctors from the teaching hospital had taken leave to go abroad and it is a normal situation occasionally. The Ministry of Health has sent several doctors to replace them. As a result of the doctors going abroad, there has been no major impact on the patients."

Some trade union leaders refrained from declaring assets: Labour Minister

"Trade union leaders are bound to declare assets and liabilities as per the Establishment Code as well," he said.

Also he said the people should decide whether it is correct to pay salaries to trade union leaders who have not worked a single day for the last 20 years.

PM thanks China's Buddhist community for meritorious assistance granted

He said this at a function held at the Gangaramaya Temple, Hunupitiya to distribute dry rations donated by Chinese Buddhist to low-income families.

"By such meritorious acts, the Chinese people prove that they are Kalyana Mithras (True Friends) who stand by you at times of happiness as well as during difficulties," he said. He thanked Ven. Kirinde Assaji Thera, Chinese Ambassador Qi Zhenhong and the Sri Lanka - China Buddhist Friendship Society for organizing this meritorious deed.

Ambassador Qi Zhenhong recalled the age old friendship between the two countries and made a special mention of late Ministers R.G. Senanayake and Philip Gunawardena who maintained close contacts with Chinese leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. He said his country will always assist the friendly people of Sri Lanka.

After the ceremony, the Prime Minister and Chinese Ambassador visited the community food centre of Gangaramaya, where lunch is provided daily to needy people in the vicinity.

President of the Sri Lanka - China Buddhist Friendship Society Ajith Dharmawardena and Secretary Aruna De Silva and Gangarama Dayake Sabha member Priyantha Kariyapperuma were also present at this occasion.

LAST CHANCE FOR SL TO GET THINGS RIGHT CAUTIONS CB GOVERNOR

Addressing the Economic Outlook forum hosted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) this week, which also put the spotlight on the country's economic crisis, the Central Bank chief noted that Sri Lanka has learned a painful lesson last year and it must ensure the same mistakes are not repeated.

"Unlike the previous 16 times we went to the IMF, this time the situation is complex. Previously, after completing the programme (IMF) we forget why we opted for assistance and get back to what was being done before. We cannot do that again. This time, there are no more chances," stressed Dr. Weerasinghe.

Continuing with the old ways will lead to a "disaster", he implied, one bigger than what the entire economy and the people went through last year due to the relevant authorities

not being proactive and acting early enough.

In a bid to ensure Sri Lanka does not go back to square one, again, the governor said serious efforts are needed to not just deliver the commitments made to the major creditors and the Fund, but to outperform the expectations.

"It is good if we can perform better than what we presented. This is what we should target, so we can come out of this crisis once and for all. We need to achieve debt sustainability faster," he said.

According to the Governor, Sri Lanka already has experience in this regard as in 2022 it did outperform what was expected of it from the IMF, and a delay of three months was witnessed due to the need to obtain financial assurances from key creditors.

While reflecting similar sentiments, Member of Presidential Advisory Group on Multilateral Engagement and Debt Sustainability Sharmini Cooray noted that Sri Lanka must be more proactive in its efforts as the whole restructuring exercise is "all very new".

"We have to be very proactive and aggressive in coming up with proposals and putting it through to creditors. They are not going to volunteer. We have to do this.

"There is no playbook. We have to make it up as we go. We have to come up with specific debt options and get them to the table. They (creditors) will take a while. We shouldn't assume this will be an easy process. It will be very tough, therefore we need to move fast and take charge of the process," said Cooray.

More harmful biotoxins found around Dikowita and Sarakkuwa seas

"There were 1,486 containers in the vessel. 81 of them contained extremely harmful chemicals for the environment"

"Oil and grease were also found around the ship, along with heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper, and nickel found in these samples. Those heavy metals were found in sea snails, shrimp, sardines, and herrings in amounts exceeding the level approved for human consumption, and the amount of lead found in shrimp was 4.23 µg g⁻¹.

"In Perna viridis (green mussels), this chemical was found at a very high level, 68.5 + 0.9 mg kg⁻¹ + 7.1 ng kg⁻¹. This chemical was found in very high amounts in shellfish, shrimp, sardines, and herring. Even in small amounts, this chemical is harmful. The environmental pollution caused by the ship's sinking has adverse consequences for the neighbouring fishing communities through their fish consumption," professor Pathmalal said.

Meanwhile, the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) said on Tuesday that if the Sri Lankan government did not take legal action

within 45 days for the X-Press Pearl Disaster, Sri Lanka might not receive compensation.

CEJ Senior Environmental Scientist Hemantha Withanage told the media that a new research report finds heavy pollution in the marine environment around the Xpress Pearl Shipwreck.

"The CEJ believes that under Sri Lankan law, the case to claim compensation has to be filed within two years of the incident, that is, before May 29, 2023. Now we have only 45 days remaining," he said.

The accident involving the X-Press Pearl, which arrived near the port of Colombo on May 19, 2021, exploded on May 25 and sank nine nautical miles off Sri Lankan waters on June 2, claiming that the tragedy was the world's largest marine chemical accident.

"There were 1,486 containers in the vessel. 81 of them contained extremely harmful chemicals for the environment, and 349 contained epoxy

resin. Also, there were 6700 metric tons of various plastic pellets and various substances, including nitric acid. They were burning for several days, causing marine pollution along the sea area in Negombo, in the 750 km sea area around Sri Lanka, in other states located in the Indian Ocean, and in the sea and coastal resources as far as Somalia. Despite several containers remaining visible and the sea around the Sarakkuwa area being covered with plastic pellets, more than 90% of the total shipment was hidden underwater. Of the 80,000 metric tons of goods, only 1762 metric tons of goods have been recovered," Withanage said.

"If immediate action is not taken within the relevant time frame, Sri Lanka might lose their claim for the estimated 10 billion USD compensation for this incident. That would be a catastrophic failure on the part of the Attorney General's Department and the Cabinet," scientist Hemantha Withanage said.

Anti Terrorism Bill published sans consultation with stakeholders: BASL

No legislation should be introduced to curtail and suppress, directly or indirectly the fundamental rights of citizens, enshrined in the Constitution

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) observed that the Government published an 'Anti Terrorism Bill', on the 22nd of March 2023. This Bill seeks to abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and introduce an Anti-Terrorism Act.

The BASL is of the view that no legislation should be introduced to curtail and suppress, directly or indirectly the fundamental rights of citizens, enshrined in the Constitution and that this Bill if passed into law will have far reaching effects.

The BASL stated that the Bill has been published in the Gazette without adequate consultations with the relevant stakeholders including the BASL. Therefore, the BASL urges the Government to consider to defer the Bill until there is a wider stakeholder consultation and the concerns of stakeholders including the BASL are taken into account.

This statement had been issued by BASL President Kaushalya Nawaratne and its Secretary Isuru Balapatabendi.

SC order has not violated Parliamentary Privileges: BASL

In a statement, the BASL stated that the Supreme Court being an independent institution should not be called upon to explain judicial orders to any other person or institution.

The BASL stated that it was aware that an order made by the Supreme Court has been referred to the

Parliamentary Committee on Ethics and Privileges.

The BASL is of the view that the Judiciary should be allowed to operate independently, free from external pressures, threats or any interference, for a vibrant democracy to exist.

The BASL further viewed that it is the duty of all governmental and other

institutions to respect and observe the independence of the judiciary, and any interference in the judicial process, sets a dangerous precedent, which must be strongly condemned.

This statement had been issued by BASL President Kaushalya Nawaratne and its Secretary Isuru Balapatabendi.

Minister Wijesekera claims low profits with unaccountable version of the fuel price formula

Exhibit 1 contrasts the minister's estimates with the above figures. FactCheck.lk calculations show that there is a profit of LKR 35 for petrol and LKR 49 for diesel. However, the minister computes a profit of LKR 2 for petrol and zero profit for diesel.

The figures of the minister and FactCheck.lk vary mainly due to the minister using a higher cost than the Singapore Platts price. For example, in the case of 92-Octane Petrol, the minister claims the (the actual) cost is USD 107.5, whereas the Singapore Platts price is only USD 94 per barrel on average for March. The footnotes in the minister's tweet mention that the petrol was discharged in November 2022. However, the average Singapore Platts price was even lower in November 2022, at USD 93. However, it is not inconceivable - though not verifiable - that government procurement could have been irregular and at higher than global prices.

The MoF formula assumes that the CPC should not be purchasing at a price higher than the global Singapore Platts spot prices. A previous fact-check has shown that the CPC has also purchased at a lower price than that within the last year. Therefore, a price higher than the Singapore Platts price has not been considered for the purpose of computing the accurate market cost on the MoF formula.

The minister has applied the methodology of the MoF fuel price formula in breaking down the costs. But he has failed to apply the Singapore Platts prices as the correct basis for computing the maximum cost. However, his footnotes indicate he is aware of the problem. Therefore, we classify his tweet as PARTLY TRUE.

FactCheck.lk's verdict is based on the most recent information that is publicly accessible. As with every fact check, if new information becomes available, FactCheck.lk will revisit the assessment.

Exhibit 1: Summary figures on petrol and diesel

	Petrol 92		Auto Diesel	
	The minister's claim	FactCheck.lk estimate	The minister's claim	FactCheck.lk estimate
Current Market Price (LKR per litre)	340	340	325	325
Cost per barrel (USD)	107	94	114	96
Tax (LKR per litre)	78	76	53	50
Formula price (LKR per litre)	338	305	325	276
Profit (LKR per litre)	2	35	0	49

Lunch packets, kottu, and fried-rice to go down by 20%

Sampath said a packet of Kottu and fried rice of Rs.500 would be sold at Rs. 400 after the price reduction.

He requested all hoteliers and canteen owners to immediately reduce prices as announced. He said the price of a cup of plain tea will be reduced by Rs. 10 and it should be sold at Rs. 30 and a cup of milk tea at Rs. 90.

Customs seize Rs.300Mn worth fags smuggled in as gas cookers

BY KURULU KOJIANA KARIYAKARAWANA

A massive stock of counterfeit cigarettes worth over Rs.300 million, which had been smuggled into the country from Dubai falsely declared as gas cookers, was seized by Sri Lanka Customs yesterday.

Sri Lanka Customs Ports Control Unit following a lengthy investigation detected a container carrying three million sticks of a foreign brand of cigarettes, which the sale is strictly prohibited in the country.

The perpetrators had declared the illicit consignment as gas cookers in the papers and have smuggled the goods into Sri Lanka, which was examined at the Grayline Container Terminal in Thotalanga.



Customs Deputy Directors H M S Rajaguru and N S Kumanyake with Assistant Superintendents K M B N Wijepala, T A Jayakody, S Nitheepan, H M N I Bandara and B R Eritawala are conducting inquiries on the instructions of Senior Customs Director Asoka Ranjith and Senior Deputy Director Chandani Seneviratne.

GIZ, Nucleus Foundation partners with EPC to promote International Women's Day campaign

'DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality', a promotional campaign to mark the international women's day was held in Trincomalee recently, by GIZ Sri Lanka and Nucleus Foundation partnering with the Eastern Provincial Council and Trincomalee Divisional Secretariat.

The event supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) promoted gender equality in the technology industry by encouraging entrepreneurship, ICT education, employment opportunities, and celebrating women in the workforce.

Participants engaged in interactive sessions, panel discussions and networking opportunities with industry leaders and experts to learn about the latest trends in technology and innovation. The highlights of the event were the two 'converters' which housed the Rural Development Department's 'Robotics lab' and agricultural technologies and 'Dreams of Women', the sister organization of DreamSpace Academy, showcasing the latest tech solutions including 3D



printing, AI, VR and career guidance for young girls aspiring to enter the ICT industry. The event also allowed attendees to engage with policymakers and government officials, who expressed interest in promoting girls' engagement in ICT.

The event attracted many visitors, including youth from Trincomalee and other areas of the Eastern Province, with 75 stall holders showcasing a wide range of booths, including career guidance, ICT recruitment, ICT training, vocational training, telecom companies, women entrepreneurs, and food vendors.

Eastern Province Governor Anuradha Yahampath was the chief guest of the event whilst Trincomalee District MP Kapila Nuwan Athukorala, Government Agent B H N Jayawickrema and Chief Secretary Eastern Province R M P S Rathnayaka also attended. K.K.K.

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SL MINISTER OF DEFENCE VISITS INDIAN NAVAL VESSELS AT COLOMBO PORT

State Minister of Defence Premitha Bandara Tennakoon visited the Indian Navy Ships taking part in the SLINEX-23 joint naval exercise, at the Port of Colombo, yesterday.

Both Ships, INS Kiltan and INS Savitri arrived in the island on Monday (03) to take part in the annual Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX) -23 being held in Colombo. High Commissioner of India H.E. Gopal Baglay was present at the occasion. Respective Commanding Officers of visiting Ships accompanying the State Minister Tennakoon and the Indian envoy in Sri Lanka within respective Ships explained the events intended to take place during the joint naval exercise.

They also described the capabilities and technical features of respective Ships to the State Minister and afterwards posed for a photograph with the crews of the Indian Ships during the session.



Both Ships, INS Kiltan and INS Savitri arrived in the island on Monday (03) to take part in the annual Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX) -23 being held in Colombo

Five young men arrested

BY SHANE SENEVIRATNE

A group of five young men including a 17 year old schoolboy had been arrested by Thalatuoya police for obstructing the duty of the police that raided a house on information that the young men were using illegal intoxicants there.

The suspects were residents of Thalatuoya, Weldambala, Etulgama and Kalagolla areas. Police said the suspects

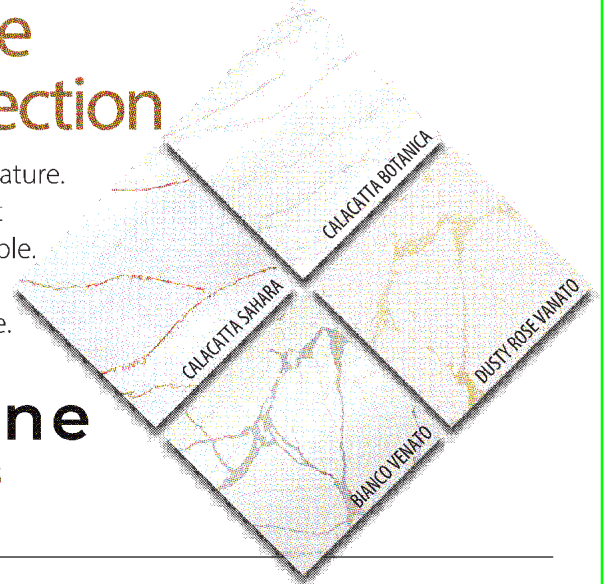
behaved in an unruly manner obstructing and accusing the police of introducing intoxicants into the house and attempting to arrest them. They had released to the social media the video recording of the incident.

OIC Crime Investigation Unit, Kandy Division CI Disanayake has initiated a formal investigation of the incident on the instructions of SSP Kandy, Chamil Ratnayake.



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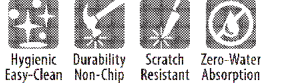
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INTERVIEW

PEACEFUL PROTESTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION INCLUDING CALLS FOR A LEADER TO QUIT OFFICE ARE ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE

-EX BASL PRESIDENT SALIYA PEIRIS PC



By
Susitha Fernando

President's Counsel, Saliya Peiris, immediate outgoing President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), the powerful professional body representing the legal practitioners including judges completed his two-year full tenure proving what an important role could be played by the legal fraternity to uphold democracy, law and order in Sri Lanka. Playing a vital role specially during the troubled period of the 'Aragalaya' where people specially youth took to the streets against the major failures by Gotabaya Rajapaksa government, the BASL under the baton of Mr. Peiris intervened at different intervals so that smooth transition of power from Rajapaksa to Ranil Wickremesinghe was ensured. It was the BASL President who first urged the leaders of the Aragalaya to handover public buildings once Gotabaya officially gave up his presidency leaving next leader to be appointed according to the Constitution.

Started as a state prosecutor attached to the Attorney General's Department,

Saliya Peiris, practices in the areas of criminal law, public law and the fundamental rights in the Appeal Court and the Supreme courts. From 2018 to 2020 he served as the founding Chairman of the Office on Missing Person, an institution established as part of country's much needed reconciliation mechanism and he was also a member of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka from 2015 to 2018.

Having graduated in law from the Open University of Sri Lanka, Mr. Peiris holds a Master's Degree in International Business Law from the University of London. He is an Eisenhower Fellow and also an alumnus of the Dealing with the Past (DwP) Programme, Switzerland and IVLP, USA.

Describing his role as the BASL President from March 27 2021 to March 25, 2023, the renowned Indian newspaper 'The Hindu' reported "Under his leadership since 2021, the BASL's public profile has drawn attention, for being resolute. Devoid of ambiguity and political rhetoric, its statements speak to immediate and specific concerns, basing itself on Constitutional freedoms, national laws, and leading judgments."

In a backdrop where those in politics and affiliated to party politics have hurled criticism, Daily Mirror spoke to Mr. Peiris, to discuss about his role specially during the period of the 'Aragalaya' and thereafter. Excerpts;

Q The two-year tenure as the President of BASL was one of the most important periods for our country especially with regard to politics and law and order. We saw that BASL under your leadership was active whenever and wherever it was required, especially with regard to Aragalaya. How do you assess the role played by you and the BASL during that period?

I see the role played by myself and the BASL as one which fulfilled the objectives of the Association in relation to the rule of law, human rights, and the independence of the judiciary. This was whilst performing the role of the Association to look after the members' interests.

The BASL as a professional association has multiple roles. On one hand it needs to secure the professional rights of the members and attend to their continuing legal education and welfare. However, the BASL has a role beyond that - a duty towards upholding the core values of democracy. That is what the BASL did in the last two years. The BASL stood up for the rights of the people and the people in turn drew strength from the legal profession. I must say it would not have been possible for the BASL to play this role without the wide support we received from the general membership.

As a result, there has been a largely positive view of the profession in the society at large.



Q The Aragalaya that started a year ago toppled a government and forced an extremely powerful President who won with a massive mandate to flee the country. How do you analyze this mass people's specially youth uprising? Was there anything illegal in it?

Peaceful protests and freedom of expression including calls for a leader to quit office are entirely legitimate. In other democracies too public protests have led to the resignations of leaders. For instance, General de Gaulle in the 1960s.

I think people were left with no option than to struggle for change. The former President, I believe, recognized that he no longer had the support of the people and resigned. To his credit President Rajapakse chose not to use force against the people.

The BASL took up the view that the occupation of public buildings was not consistent with peaceful protests and that is why the BASL called upon the protestors to withdraw from public buildings and not to allow lawlessness. We said so because those acts were counter-productive and would give those who wanted to suppress dissent an opportunity to do so. At the time we called for the withdrawal from public buildings, some of those in the Aragalaya were not happy. But we said so because that was the right thing to do.

Q However, you were accused as a 'Political' lawyer by none other than the President of this country during one of his speeches at the Parliament. This was referring to you representing the Election Commission in the case relating to the Local Council election. What is your response?

My representation of the Elections Commission is nothing new. I was first retained by the Commission in May 2020 in relation to the cases pertaining to Parliamentary elections.

I have never been a member of any political party and not engaged in active politics. Furthermore, I do not mix my professional work and my political opinion.

Ironically when Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe became Prime Minister and then President, there were people saying that I was sympathetic towards him! Even now I see some comments to that effect in social media. The President's remarks obviously negate that view.

What I did as BASL President was entirely objective and whether it was the Rajapakse regime or the Wickremesinghe regime we called them out when they did things that violated the rule of law, democratic principles and the rights of the people. It was the principle which mattered and not the person.

Q Then came the attack targeting your professional practice representing a suspect and complaining your conduct to be unethical. What have you got to say about the connection between code of ethics or accepted practice of an attorney and your conduct?

First and foremost, there is nothing unethical. Every single step has been within the four corners of the law and professional ethics.

These attacks must be understood in the context of the end of my term and the steps I took as BASL President including some crucial issues which arose during the last three weeks of my tenure.

The BASL called on the President and the Constitutional Council to appoint as Inspector General of Police a person with an unblemished record. This obviously ruffled the feathers of potential aspirants for this post- and some of their political backers. Secondly, we strongly criticized the Government for their interference with the independence of the judiciary.

The aspersions cast over social media and by politicians under the cover of immunity are totally false. This present attack on me is clearly orchestrated not because of my appearing for a particular case or a particular suspect but because of the role I played in the BASL.

There have been numerous other President's Counsel who have appeared for this suspect and for the other suspect arrested with him. How is it that they have not been the subject of protests or attacks on the social media?

Q This was not the first-time legal practitioners came under attack in Sri Lankan history. We have seen instances where not only lawyers but even judges have been attacked and pelting stones at their houses. Your view.

Yes. It is almost an occupational hazard.

After the Vivienne Goonewardene case a gang which clearly had the blessings of the State pelted stones at the judges' residences.

Judges and lawyers are needed for the proper administration of justice. Any attack on judges and lawyers have a grave impact on the rule of law.

Q Should a lawyer be selective on assisting the legal justice system and as a senior legal practitioner and also a teacher of law how do you explain?

I must say that we as lawyers are governed by the cab-rank rule.

We cannot refuse to appear for a client- unless there is a conflict of interest, or we cannot perform our functions with due diligence. The right of suspects to retain counsel

THIS PRESENT ATTACK ON ME IS CLEARLY ORCHESTRATED NOT BECAUSE OF MY APPEARING FOR A PARTICULAR CASE OR A PARTICULAR SUSPECT BUT BECAUSE OF THE ROLE I PLAYED IN THE BASL

THERE MUST BE A WIDESPREAD CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PASSAGE OF THE PROPOSED ANTI-TERRORISM BILL AND THE PUBLIC MUST BE MADE AWARE OF ITS DANGERS

WE STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR INTERFERENCE WITH THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

and the right of lawyers to appear for clients is fundamental to the rule of law and the constitutional right to a fair trial.

Without the Constitutional guarantees of a fair trial Sri Lanka cannot be a civilized nation.

Q You appeared on behalf of the particular suspect when he was arrested by Police and asking to ensure his protection while he was in custody. Sri Lanka police department has a bad record of suspects allegedly getting killed while in custody. How important is it for a responsible legal practitioner to intervene in instances like this?

I was retained by an Attorney-at-Law on behalf of the father of the suspect concerned to secure his safety in custody as the father feared that his son will be killed whilst in police custody.

Previously there have been instances when suspects have been killed in custody. These cause a huge blemish to our police and the country's human rights record. In a practical sense these killings can also be done to hide evidence which may implicate other people.

The Supreme Court in many instances have condemned in the strongest terms these custodial deaths which are known as encounter killings and pointed out that these have resulted in a loss of public confidence in law enforcement.

Q How important is the role of lawyers, especially in a country which has long record of violence, violation of human rights including abduction, disappearances, several youth uprisings etc etc.?

I do believe that lawyers have a vital role to play in society. It is important that they have professional independence and the space to perform their professional role. In addition, they have a role in securing the rule of law, protecting the independence of the judiciary and the rights of citizens.

Another important aspect is to create public awareness of these issues and there too lawyers and the BASL have an important role.

Q What is your view with regard to controversial new 'Anti-Terrorism Bill' which is to be introduced in place of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), a piece of law that was long criticized mainly due to it being misused by those in power?

Sometime in March the BASL wrote to the President and the Ministers in charge of Foreign Affairs and Justice calling for the draft to be made public so that a public discussion and debate could take place before the Bills are published in the Gazette. Unfortunately, the powers that be do not seem to think that taking the public into their confidence is important. It is amazing how the contents of such an important Bill was not discussed widely before being presented to Parliament.

I find several aspects of the Bill alarming. Given Sri Lanka's history of widespread abuse of the criminal law- whether the PTA or ICCPR Act and the tendency to abuse the provisions of these laws I am extremely skeptical about many provisions of the Bill including the definition of 'terrorism' which is far too wide.

There must be a widespread campaign against the passage of this Bill and the public must be made aware of the dangers of this Bill.

FEATURE

Prashanthi Mahindaratne speaks during a panel discussion hosted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives



DE FACTO IMPUNITY, ORDER OF THE DAY

A discussion on Sri Lanka's pressing legal challenges

By **Kalani Kumarasinghe**

At a time when the island nation of Sri Lanka is grappling with threats to its democracy, a crippling economic crisis and a deeply flawed political establishment, one of the most troubling concerns is its inconsistent application of the law, according to one of the country's top human rights advocates.

The comments were made by Attorney-at-Law Prashanthi Mahindaratne, Sri Lanka's first woman to serve as a war crimes prosecutor in an international criminal tribunal, at an event to discuss two publications by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA). The event attended by eminent legal personalities in the country was held in Colombo on Tuesday to discuss the CPAs two latest publications, 'Salient Aspects of the Public Interest Litigation Jurisprudence in Sri Lanka' and 'Elusive Justice and Emblematic Cases in Sri Lanka' edited by Bhavani Fonseka and Luwie Ganeshathasan.

"Among the multitude of challenges Sri Lanka faces at present, the most problematic issue is the inconsistent application of the law. The fact that the rule of law has not been upheld consistently across the board is problematic," Mahindaratne, who has served as State Counsel at the Attorney General's Department for a decade litigating civil, commercial and labour disputes, said.

"Take a step back and consider the less serious offences, let's take the anti-corruption laws for instance. From time to time we see regular persons such as school principals, junior to mid-level Police officers, Grama Sevaka officials being prosecuted for bribery and corruption. But how many members of Parliament, how many ministers, how many top-tier bureaucrats have been prosecuted and convicted under bribery and corruption law?" She questioned. Mahindaratne believes that the numbers are so negligible and not even worthy of discussion.

Despite the fact that the public is constantly receiving and reading reports of mass-scale corruption taking hold of government entities, the issue persists. According to Mahindaratne, what is even more worrying is that these reports emerge not from the media alone but from Parliament, the lawmaking authority itself.

"I've followed Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) sittings for instance. It's shocking to see some of the very senior bureaucrats being confronted, not with mere allegations but facts and documentation, which show very clearly corruption, and unjustifiable wastage. What's more shocking is that none of them even attempt to respond, or offer plausible excuses. Most of them just take refuge behind Cabinet approvals, stating that the transaction had Cabinet approval," she said.

Mahindaratne questioned as to why the next natural step is almost never taken by the authorities vested with powers to address the issue, namely the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption (CIABOC).

"The logical next step would be to summon the Cabinet Ministers who give approval, but that doesn't happen. Then CIABOC can easily use that information and initiate investigations and prosecution. So what you have is de facto impunity," she said.

"What I find most disturbing is that impunity is institutionalized. For instance, the '83 July violence, has there been a single investigation to date to identify the perpetrators who torched and killed? Going back another decade to the seventies, what about the crimes committed during the first two insurrections? Have we seen any investigations?" Mahindaratne questioned.

Institutionalized impunity she believes signals that the legal system too is thereby flawed. "That could indicate that our entire legal system is deeply flawed. I believe that it's a huge challenge. Instead of really addressing that, any other solution will be mere topical treatment. You need to treat the wound. That is the challenge we are faced with," she said.

The evening saw the discussion flow into the controversial counter-terrorism laws, addressing economic crimes and how well-suited the Sri Lankan legal system is to address these very issues.

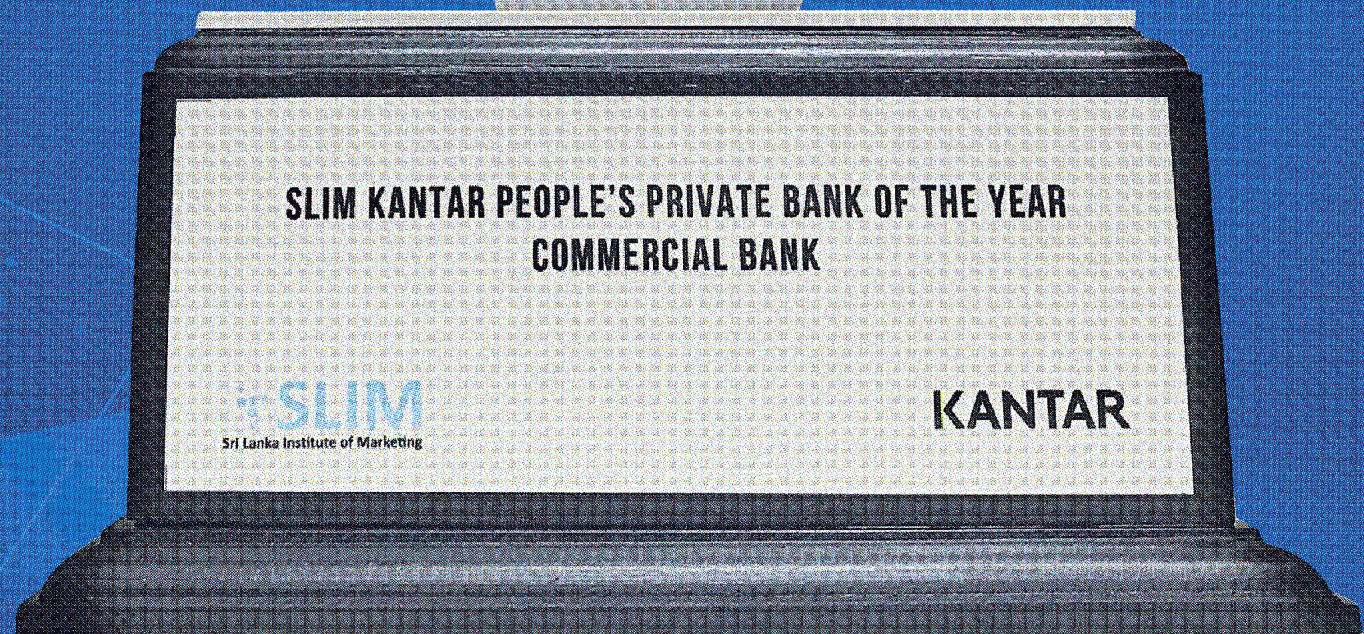
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INTERNATIONAL

More than 350 arrests after clashes erupt inside Jerusalem mosque

AFP.COM, 5 APRIL, 2023 - Israeli police clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque Wednesday, sparking a military exchange of rockets and air strikes in flaring violence as the Jewish Passover coincides with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

youths and masked agitators" who they said had barricaded themselves inside following evening prayers.

The officers were met with a barrage of rocks and fireworks, police video showed. More than 350 arrests were made in the raid, which drew threats from Palestinian groups and wide condemnation from Muslim countries

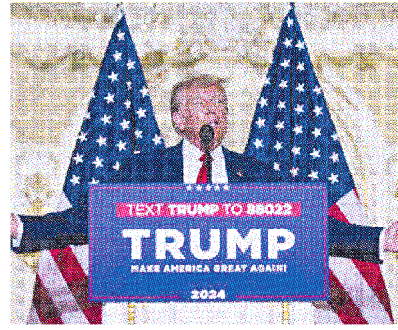
Armed police in riot gear stormed the mosque's prayer hall before dawn, with the goal of dislodging "law-breaking

TRUMP CONDEMNS ARREST IN MAR-A-LAGO SPEECH

In a speech from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, former US President Donald Trump railed against New York prosecutors after pleading not guilty to 34 criminal counts, also accusing Democrats of political persecution and "fraudulent investigations."

Trump delivered the address to a live audience on Tuesday night, insisting there is "no case" against him after returning home from New York, where he was arraigned on charges of falsifying business records earlier in the day.

"I never thought anything like this could



Former President Donald Trump speaks at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida (RT)

happen in America... The only crime that I have committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it," Trump said, claiming that the latest case is part of an "onslaught of fraudulent investigations" brought by Democrats.

Trump argued that since his rivals "can't beat us at the ballot box," they have tried to "beat us through the law," reiterating some of his previous allegations of widespread election fraud in the 2020 presidential race. He rejected the charges against him as "fake," arguing that

their purpose is to "interfere with the upcoming 2024 election," and should be "dropped immediately." Taking the tone of a presidential candidate, the former leader went on to fire a litany of criticisms at Democrats and President Joe Biden, slamming them for high inflation "crippling" the US economy, "raging crime statistics," and "open borders" immigration policies. He warned that Biden could lead the country into "an all-out nuclear World War III," apparently referring to US involvement in the conflict in Ukraine. RT.COM, 5 APRIL, 2023

HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC

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

Branch: NAWALAPITIYA

JAYAWICKRAMA ARACHCHILAGE BUDDHIKA SAMPATH GUNATHILAKE

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

Whereas JAYAWICKRAMA ARACHCHILAGE BUDDHIKA SAMPATH GUNATHILAKE as the Obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property morefully described in the schedule hereto by Mortgage Bond Nos. 4169 dated 11.12.2015 and 4596 dated 30.05.2017 both attested by M S Perera Notary Public of Kandy in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of a Development Loan Rs. 25,000,000/- granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to JAYAWICKRAMA ARACHCHILAGE BUDDHIKA SAMPATH GUNATHILAKE.

And whereas the said JAYAWICKRAMA ARACHCHILAGE BUDDHIKA SAMPATH GUNATHILAKE has made default in payment of the sums due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Bonds and on the said Development Loan of Rs. 25,000,000/- and there is now due and owing to the Hatton National Bank PLC as at 31st August 2022 a sum of Rupees Twenty Million Two Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Five and Cents Thirty Only (Rs.20,265,875/30) on the said Bonds and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990, As amended do hereby resolve to sell the mortgaged property as described in the schedule hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Bond Nos. 4169 and 4596 be sold by Public Auction by L B Senayake Licensed Auctioneer of All island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 20,265,875/30 together with further interest of AWPLR +3.25% p.a from 01st September 2022 on the capital outstanding of Rs. 19,749,150/01 to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 1 depicted in Plan No. 10714 dated 12.12.2013 and 06.01.2014 made by P Gnanaprakasam - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called DAMBAGOLLA now called GONDENAWA ESTATE bearing Assessment Nos. 140, 140/A and 140/B, Gampola Road situated in Ward No. 08, Gondennawa in the Grama Niladhari's Division of Nawalapitiya South 1086 within the Urban Council Limits of Nawalapitiya in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Pasbage Korale in the District of Kandy Central Province and bounded

On the North by : Remaining portion in Plan No. 7966 made P Gnanaprakasam LS
On the East by : Remaining portion in Plan No. 7966 made P Gnanaprakasam LS and Lot 2 in Plan No. 532 made P Gnanaprakasam LS

On the South by : Remaining portion in Plan No. 7966 made P Gnanaprakasam LS
On the West by : Road (H)

And containing in extent One Rood and Twenty Four Decimal Seven Nought Paches (A.0R.01.P24.70) together with the buildings and everything else standing thereon.

By order of the Board of Directors.

K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC

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

Branch: MAHIYANGANAYA

POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC held on 29th September 2022 it was resolved specially and unanimously:

Whereas POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA as the obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property morefully described in the First schedule hereto by virtue of Mortgage Bond Nos. 2907 dated 29.08.2012 3058 dated 31.01.2013 both attested by Muttukuttige Sharmila Perera Notary Public of Kandy in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of a Term Loan of Rs.13,311,341/77 granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA.

Whereas POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA as the Obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property morefully described in the Second schedule hereto by virtue of Mortgage Bond Nos. 3562 dated 31.03.2014, 4328 dated 18.05.2016 both attested by Muttukuttige Sharmila Perera Notary Public of Kandy in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of a Term Loan of Rs. 13,311,341/77 granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA.

And whereas the said POLOMMANNE WELEGEDARA WASANTHA WIJEBANDARA has made default in payment of the sum due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Bonds and on the said Term Loan facility of Rs. 13,311,341/77 and there is now due and owing to Hatton National Bank PLC as at 05th May 2022 a sum of Rs 13,064,766/43 (Rupees Thirteen Million and Sixty Four Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Six and Cents Forty Three Only) on the said Bonds and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990. As amended do hereby resolve to sell the mortgaged properties as described in the First and Second Schedules hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Bond Nos. 2907, 3058 and 4328 be sold by Public Auction by K P N Silva Licensed Auctioneer of All island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 13,064,766/43 together with further interest at the rate of 13% p.a on the capital outstanding of Rs. 12,755,464/21 to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE FIRST SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 01 depicted in Plan No. 219 dated 08.05.2011 made by P R N S Rathnayake - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called "UPAWELE KUMBURE PILLEWA" (Hettipola new Nagara Idama) situated at Hettipola Village within the Grama Niladhari Division of Hettipola, Wilgamuwa (E394) in Laggala Pallesiya Pattu of Matala West of Wilgamuwa Divisional Secretary's Division in the District of Matala Central Province and bounded:

On the North by : Land claimed by P G Thepans
On the East by : Road (RDA)
On the South by : Lands claimed by Kannangara and land claimed by Health Department
On the West by : Road

And containing in extent Fifteen Perches (A:0 R:0 P:15) together with the buildings and everything else standing thereon.

ABOVE LAND HAS BEEN RECENTLY SURVEYED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 01 depicted in Plan No. 13102 dated 28.01.2012 made by J M Jayasekera - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called UPAWELE KUMBURE PILLEWA situated at Hettipola Village within the Grama Niladhari's Division of Hettipola, Wilgamuwa (E394) in Laggala Pallesiya Pattu of Wilgamuwa Divisional Secretary's Division within the Pradeshiya Sabha Limits of Wilgamuwa in the District of Matala Central Province and bounded

On the North by : Land claimed by P G Thepans
On the East by : Road (RDA) from Hettipola to Handungamuwa
On the South by : Lands claimed by Kannangara and land claimed by Health Department
On the West by : Road from Bus Stand to Sathipola

And containing in extent Fifteen perches (A:0 R:0 P:15) together with the buildings and everything else standing thereon

THE SECOND SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 01 depicted in Plan No. 218 dated 08.05.2011 made by P R N S Rathnayake - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called UDAWELE KUMBURE PILLAWA (Hettipola New Nagara Idama) situated at Hettipola Village in Laggala Pallesiya Pattuwa of Matala West in the Grama Niladhari's Division of Hettipola 394 A within the Pradeshiya Sabha Limits of Wilgamuwa in the Divisional Secretary's Division of Wilgamuwa in the District of Matala Central Province and bounded

On the North by : Land claimed by D S P Rajapaksha
On the East by : Road (RDA)
On the South by : Land claimed by New Rathna Motors
On the West by : Road

And containing in extent Eleven Perches (A:0 R:0 P:11) together with the buildings and everything else standing thereon.

By order of the Board of Directors.

K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF MARAWILA SALE OF PROPERTY BY THE FISCAL

Case No: 188/MB
Nature: Mortgage Bond
Value: Rs. 1,628,532/10
Procedure: Regular

Commercial Bank of Ceylon P.L.C. Bank having its Registered Office at No. 21, Sir Raziq Fareed Mawatha, Colombo 01 and / or Branch Office referred and known as "Nattandiya Branch" at No. 62, Marawila Road, Nattandiya.

Plaintiff

- VS -
- 1. Sirima Vitharanage Nishantha
- 2. Galgamu Kankanamlage Siriyaawathi

Both at No. 02, St. Anthony Place, Mudukatuwa, Marawila.

Defendants

Notice is hereby given that I, the Registrar, District Court, Marawila, in pursuance of the decree of terms of settlement entered dated 06th of March, 2014 in this case to recover a sum of Rs. 500000/- and an interest of 24% per annum from 01-10-2013 till the full payment of the said amount and Rs. 866400/- and Rs. 262132.10/- totaling Rs. 1128532.10/- and Rs. 866400/- on the said amount from 27.09.2013 until the full payment of that amount, 24% interest per annum together with costs as defendants have made default in payment, will sell the land in extent Twenty Perches and situated at the village of Mudukatuwa morefully described in the Schedule below by public auction at the location of the property on 28th April, 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked as No. 01 depicted in Plan No. 2818 /98 and dated 19.9.1998 made by K.L.A.F. Fernando, Licensed Surveyor to the land called "Keenakele No. 09" situated at the village of Mudukatuwa in the Meda Palatha of Pitigal Korale South within the Land Registration Office of Marawila in the Puttalam District of North Western Province is bounded on the North by: the remaining share of this land itself claimed by S.W. Leelarathna, East by: the land claimed by W.M. Alice Fernando, South by: Amarasekara Mawatha leading from the beach to hospital junction. West by: the remaining share of this land itself claimed by S.W. Leelarathna within these boundaries and containing in extent of Twenty Perches (A:00, R:00, P:20) together with trees, fruits and everything else standing thereon

inquiries

Registrar of District Court, Marawila
(032-2254291 / Auctioneer 076-3230964)
T. M. Senarathne

Court Authorized Auctioneer and Valuer, Retired Registrar of Court /Fiscal / Probate Officer Justice / of the Peace for Whole Island / Jaya Mawatha, Nattandiya Road, Marawila.

HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC

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

Branch: MALABE

ATTYGALAGE DON SUSANTHA DASSANAYAKE

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

Whereas ATTYGALAGE DON SUSANTHA DASSANAYAKE as the Obligor mortgaged and hypothecated property morefully described in the schedule hereto by virtue of Mortgage Bond No. 3329 dated 18.04.2018 attested by A M D A K Adikary Notary Public of Colombo in favour of Hatton National Bank PLC as security for repayment of Term Loan facility of Rs. 7,600,450.00 granted by Hatton National Bank PLC to ATTYGALAGE DON SUSANTHA DASSANAYAKE.

And whereas the said ATTYGALAGE DON SUSANTHA DASSANAYAKE has made default in payment of the sum due to Hatton National Bank PLC on the said Bond and due on the said Term Loan facility of Rs. 7,600,450.00 extended to him among other facilities and there is now due and owing to the Hatton National Bank PLC as at 31st May 2022 a sum of Rupees Eight Million Two Hundred and Thirty Four Only (Rs. 8,000,234/-) on the said Bond and the Board of Directors of Hatton National Bank PLC under the power vested by the Recovery of loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act No. 4 of 1990, do hereby resolve to sell the mortgaged property as described in the Schedule hereto and mortgaged to Hatton National Bank PLC by the said Bond No. 3329 be sold by Public Auction by A S Kumari Licensed Auctioneer of All island for recovery of the said sum of Rs. 8,000,234/- together with further interest at the rate of 10.5% p.a from 01st June 2022 on the capital outstanding of Rs.7,600,349.82 to date of sale together with costs of advertising and other charges incurred less payments (if any) since received.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 32 depicted in Plan No. 32/1996 dated 18th March 1996 made by K D W D Perera - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called "Polgesmelanda and Ketapatagodella" now known and called as Supreme City situated at Malabe within the Grama Niladhari Division of 476 Malabe East and Divisional Secretary's Division of Kaduwela within the Municipal Council Limits of Kaduwela in the Palle Pattu of Hewagam Korale in the District of Colombo Western Province and which said Lot 32 is bounded on the NORTH by Lot R5 (Road Reservation 6m wide) on the EAST by Lot R 4 (Road Reservation 6M wide) on the SOUTH by Lot D3 and on the WEST by Lot 31 and containing in extent Ten Perches. (A0:R0:P10) according to said Plan No. 32/1996.

The aforesaid allotment of land according to a resurvey is described as follows:

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 32 depicted in Plan No. 016009 dated 13th January 2016 made by K D W D Perera - Licensed surveyor from and out of the land called "Polgesmelanda and Ketapatagodella" now known and called as Supreme City situated at Malabe within the Grama Niladhari Division of 476 Malabe East and Divisional Secretary's Division of Kaduwela within the Municipal Council Limits of Kaduwela in the Palle Pattu of Hewagam Korale in the District of Colombo Western Province and which said Lot 32 is bounded on the NORTH by Lot R5 (Road Reservation 6M wide) in Plan No. 32/1996 on the EAST by Lot R4 (Road Reservation 6M wide) in Plan No. 32/1996 on the SOUTH by Lot D3 (Drain 1M wide) in Plan No. 32/1996 and on the WEST by Lot 31 in Plan No. 32/1996 and containing in extent Ten Perches (A0:R0:P10) according to said Plan No. 016009.

By order of the Board of Directors.

K A L T RANAWEERA
DGM (LEGAL)/BOARD SECRETARY

Notice of Sale under section 09 of the Recovery of Loans by Banks (Special Provisions) Act. No. 04 of 1990



NATIONS TRUST BANK PLC PUBLIC AUCTION



Whereas by Mortgage Bond bearing No. 568 dated 14th September, 2016 attested by M. Sajani C. Peiris, Notary Public of Colombo and Mortgage Bond bearing No. 1871 dated 08th February 2017 attested by A.R.W.M.M.M.S. Amarakoon, Notary public of Colombo, Suresh Janaka De Silva as obligor /mortgagor mortgaged and hypothecated the rights, property and premises morefully described in the Schedule here to in favour of Nations Trust Bank PLC of No. 242, Union Place, Colombo 02 as a security for the due repayment of the financial facilities obtained by the said Suresh Janaka De Silva.

All that divided and defined allotment of land marked Lot 01 depicted in plan No. 11867 dated 08th August, 2016 made by Gaminu B Dodanwala, Licensed Surveyor bearing Assessment No. 84, Campus Road, of the land called "Delgahawatta and Eteraheriyagahawatta" situated at Boralesgamuwa within the Urban Council Limits of Boralesgamuwa (within the Grama Niladhari Division of 533A - Rattanaipitiya) in the Divisional Secretariat Division of Kesbewa in the Palle Pattu of Salpiti Korale in the District of Colombo Western Province and which said Lot 1 containing in extent Seventeen decimal six six perches (0A. 0R. 17.66P) or 0.0447 according to the said Plan No. 11867 together with the trees, Plantations and everything else standing thereon, registered in Volume / Folio C719 / 51 at the Delkanda-Nugegoda Land Registry.

LAND EXTENT 17.66 PERCHES (A.0-R.0-P17.66)

Together with buildings, trees, plantation and everything else standing thereon.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY GRANTED TO ME BY THE NATION TRUST BANK PLC

I SHALL SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION ON 2nd MAY 2023 AT 11.30 A.M. AT THE SPOT

MODE OF ACCESS: From Boralesgamuwa Junction proceed along Colombo road towards Colombo for a distance of about 950m up to Rattanaipitiya Junction and turn right on to Old Kesbewa road and proceed only 30m to 50m and finally turn right onto Campus road also known as Soratha Mawatha. Then proceed along this road for a distance of about 600m to reach the subject property which is located at right side at the sharp right angle bend. It bears Assessment No. 84, Campus road.

Mode of Payment: The successful purchaser will have to pay the following amounts in cash at the fall of the hammer.

1. Ten percent (10%) of the purchased price.
2. One percent (1%) Local Sale Tax payable to the Local Authority.
3. Two and a half per cent (2.5%) as Auctioneer's charges.
4. Attestation fees of conditions of sale Rs. 3000/-
5. Clerk's and Crier's wages Rs. 2000/-
6. Total cost of advertising incurred on the sale.
7. Balance ninety per cent (90%) of the purchase price together with any other statutory levies, duties, taxes or charges whatever applicable and imposed by the Government of Sri Lanka or any other authority should be paid to the Nations Trust Bank PLC within 30 days from the date of sale.

If the said Balance amount is not paid within 30 days as stipulated above, Bank shall have the right to forfeit 10% of the purchase price already paid and resell the property.

The Bank has the right to stay/cancel the above auction sale without prior Notice.

M. H. T. Karunaratne (J.P.)
Licensed Auctioneer
and Court Commissioner

T & H Auction
No. 50/3, Vihara Mawatha, Kolonnawa.
Tel : 011 3068185, 011 2572940

Manager - Litigation,
Nations Trust Bank PLC,
No. 256, Srimath Ramanathan Mawatha, Colombo 15.
Tel: 011-4682502, 011-4685590



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STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY AND THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH

"GOVERNMENT SHOULD UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY OF THE COUNTRY"



Police fire tear gas during a recent protest

It is the duty of all Governmental and other institutions to respect and observe the Independence of the Judiciary

CBC calls upon the government to preserve the Freedom of speech and expression of all its citizens

The Catholic Bishops' Conference, the main decision-making body of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka has strongly urged the government to uphold the Constitution and the Democracy of the country and not to proceed with any such unwarranted measures to interfere with the independence of the Judiciary and preserve the freedom of speech and expression of all its citizens.

Signed by Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera, Bishop of Kurunegala and President of Catholic Bishops' Conference and its Secretary General Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. Dr. J.D. Anthony Jayakody, the full statement is as follows;

It has been reported in the media that an Interim Order had been given by the Judges of the Supreme Court regarding a Fundamental Rights case on March 03, 2023, directing the Secretary of the Finance Ministry and the Attorney General to not withhold the funds already allocated for the holding of the Local Government Elections under the Year 2023 Budget.

Subsequently, it had been reported that a Member of Parliament had requested the Speaker of the Parliament to refer the conduct of the Judges of the Supreme Court that delivered the aforesaid Interim Order as a breach of Parliamentary Privileges, that the Speaker had accepted the said request, and made a referral to the Parliamentary Committee on Ethics and Privileges. It had also been reported that a State Minister had thereafter requested the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament to advise the relevant authorities to not proceed and take any action based upon the aforesaid Interim Order made by the Supreme Court with regard to the Local Government election until the Parliamentary Committee on Privileges concludes its inquiry.

In these circumstances, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL) wishes to officially express that such conduct demonstrated by persons holding positions of responsibility within the organ of the Government amounts to interfering with the entire Judicial process and undermines the very independence of the organ of the Judiciary of the Nation. Accordingly, it is our view that such conduct demonstrated shall directly violate the independence of Their Lordships to perform their powers and functions without any interference as enshrined under article 111C of our Constitution and shall also threaten to disrupt the very Doctrine of Separation of Powers of our Motherland.

It is the duty of all Governmental and other institutions to respect and observe the Independence of the Judiciary. Accordingly, such interference demonstrated by these individuals of the Government has already been widely criticized locally and internationally as being a serious and unwarranted encroachment on the Independence of the Judiciary and the judicial function in Sri Lanka, which is wholly unnecessary at this very crucial juncture of our beloved Nation.

We also firmly call upon the Government of this Country to at the same time restrain and defend any attempts made by certain individuals under the cover of privileges to curtail media institutions that are critical towards the activities of the Government and as a consequence which directly threaten to infringe the freedom of speech and expression including publication enshrined in our Constitution.

Therefore, we strongly urge the Government of Sri Lanka in these circumstances to uphold the Constitution and the Democracy of this country and not to proceed with any such unwarranted measures to interfere with the independence of the Judiciary and preserve the Freedom of speech and expression of all its citizens.



On this day 9 years ago, the might of the Sri Lankan lion was established world over.

Against all odds and expectations, only with self belief, an inbuilt fighting spirit and team cohesiveness we arose to become ICC Twenty20 World Champions in 2014.

Conquering glory a second time, we earned the rite of passage as the mighty lions of cricket!

EDITORIAL

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."
- MUHAMMAD ALI

OUR THOUGHT

SPORT FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

This is not a sports page, but an editorial comment on the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) on the theme scoring for People and the Planet. The day is marked by the United Nations today and the theme reminds us of the famous verse by the early 20th-century American sportswriter Grantland Rice known for his elegant prose. It goes like this, "For when the One Great Scorer comes to mark against your name, He writes not that you won or lost, but how you played the game!"

Sport really began on Olympian and voluntary display of skills but today with One Day Internationals (ODIs) and T20s getting the spotlight on the pitch, sport has become big business and often bad business with match fixing and most players giving priority to money rather than the character-building dimensions of sport. Sri Lanka has made great achievements in cricket with spinner Muttiah Muralitharan being the highest wicket taker in the world and the country scoring a record of more than 900 runs in Test cricket, besides what could be the greatest achievement of winning the ODI World Cup with the team being strategically led by famous Arjuna Ranatunga, who later went into politics and somewhat spoiled his reputation, as did the 1996 ODI World Cup master blaster Sanath Jayasuriya.

In a statement, the UN says sport presents an opportunity to recognize the positive role sport and physical activity play in communities and in people's lives across the globe. Sport has the power to change the world; it is a fundamental right and a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and promote sustainable development and peace, as well as solidarity and respect for all. As in previous years, this overarching theme "Scoring for People and the Planet" allows for IDSDP activities to broadly focus around the impact and influence of sport on sustainable development and peace.

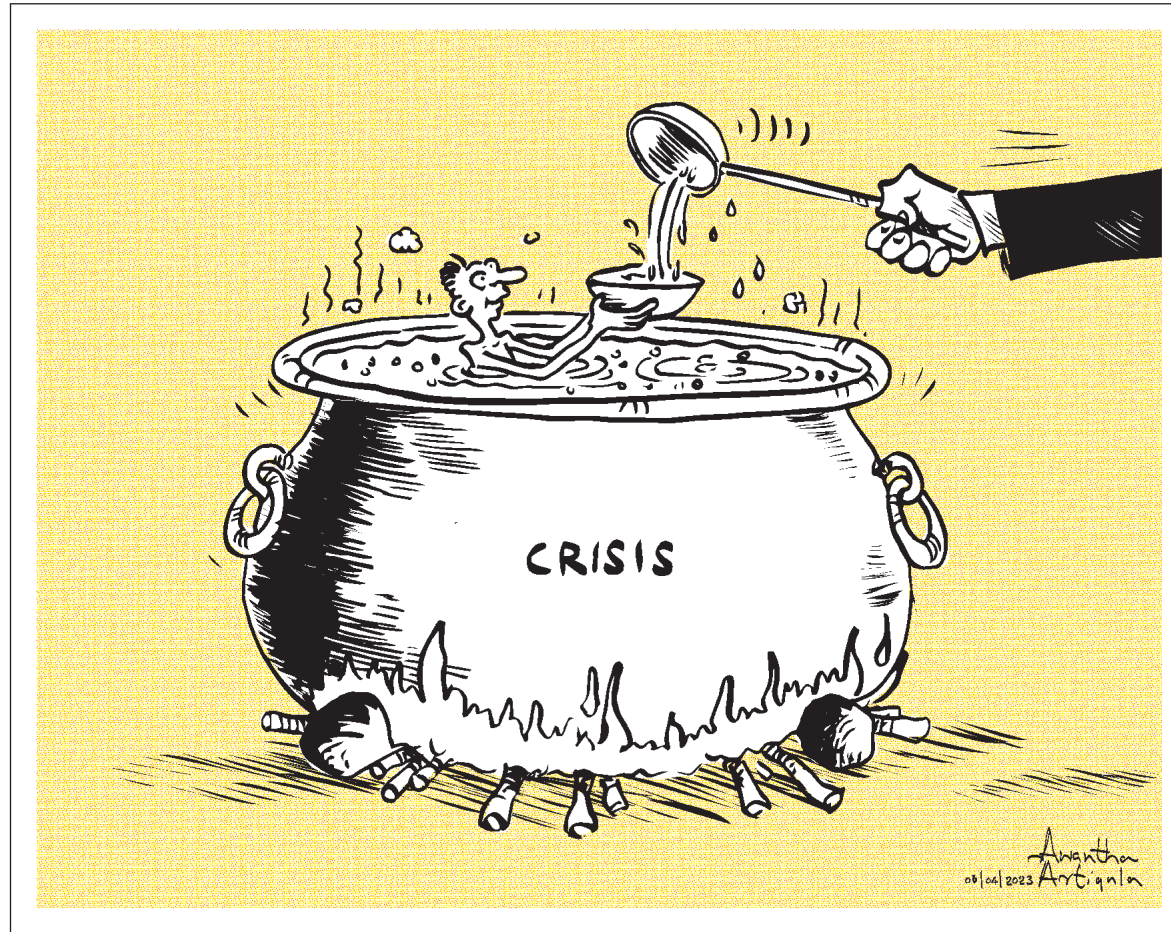
From empowering women and girls, young men and women, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups to advancing health, sustainability, and education objectives, sport offers tremendous potential for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for promoting peace and human rights. The United Nations has long recognized the power and universality of sport, using it to unite individuals and groups through supporting sport for development efforts, participating in events from the global to the grassroots level, and developing its own sports-related campaigns and initiatives.

Within IDSDP 2023's global theme, "Scoring for People and the Planet," a number of Davos-style conversations, highlighting the power of football and other sports in advancing the SDGs and human rights will be held today at UN Headquarters in New York. The discussions will focus on three main themes: sustainability and climate action, gender equality, and the fight against racism and hate speech.

Due to its vast reach, unparalleled popularity and foundation of positive values, sport is ideally positioned to contribute towards the UN objectives for development and peace. To raise awareness of this potential, April 6 was declared as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) by the UN General Assembly. The adoption of this Day signifies the increasing recognition by the UN of the positive influence that sport can have on the advancement of human rights, and social and economic development.

Sport has proven to be a cost-effective and flexible tool in promoting peace and development objectives. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, sport's role for social progress is further acknowledged by the General Assembly. «Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young men and women, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.» Football for the Goals (FFTG), is a UN membership-based initiative that provides a platform for the global football community to engage with and advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is an opportunity to build on football's powerful and influential reach and for football organizations to work together to become agents of change by aligning messaging, strategies and operations with the aspirations of the SDGs.

This initiative inspires and guides the world of football - from grassroots clubs and international confederations - to build on existing sustainability approaches and to implement SDG-related strategies that lead to behavioural change. Members also use their visibility and outreach power to raise the profile of the SDGs through amplification and advocacy.



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

KANCHANA WIJESEKERA AND NECESSARY RESTRUCTURING

By **Malinda Seneviratne**

A few weeks ago, the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) posted a 'wanted' advertisement for a Financial Consultant 'to provide guidance on investment decisions, cash management and day-to-day organizational expenses

On the face of it, this is a good move. In fact, all state-owned enterprises, statutory bodies, state institutions including ministries ought to be regularly monitored and evaluated, inefficiency and incompetence determined and action taken against those responsible if that be the case. The flip side — and we say this taking into consideration the history of such exercises — is to place an agent or set of agents in such positions with an informal but specific brief: deliver 'findings' that can justify policy directions already envisaged.

In any event, power and energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera has been saying a lot about cost-reflective pricing, amending legislation and restructuring. All good, except that we are yet to hear him talk specifics in relation to legislative enactment in relation to doing away with archaic clauses which in the name of energy security ensure continued dependence on dollar draining imports.

Sri Lanka, not too long ago, was ahead of India in terms of national coverage. India at the time was heavily dependent on coal and thermal energy. Power cuts were normal. In 2015 Premier Narendra Modi essentially told the Indian counterparts of CEB officials that India will go for solar power. They were required to fall in line or else. Today most of India's state grids are completely self-sufficient and India is even exporting electricity to Bangladesh.

What's Sri Lanka's story? Given the relative total generating potential, scale, population and demand, Sri Lanka could have produced a surplus. Had the CEB got its act together, looked at global trends and technological development, Sri Lanka wouldn't have ended up in this pathetic dollar-deficient, import-dependent situation. To put it bluntly, it's a matter of monkey-sees, monkey does. No expertise, no vision, no compulsion; not since Wimalasurendra.

The CEB and Wijesekera must know, cannot be ignorant of the fact that Sri Lanka has tremendous renewable generation potential well in excess of even projected increase in local demand. Today countries such as Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are talking of importing solar based electrical energy from Australia via an undersea cable almost 2,800 km in length. Sri Lanka is just 1,800 km away from Bangladesh, a fact that can only become significant, if Sri Lanka aggressively pursues the eminently logical option of developing the renewable sector.

The general rule of thumb for the CEB to meet peak demand is to depend on thermal energy. 'Emergency power,' when required all the time, makes the adjective meaningless.

The CEB has no plan to reduce reliance on emergency power which translates in practical terms to that which a preferred supplier can deliver upon a quick call. Greasing of palms then? Kanchana's Financial Consultant (FC), if appointed and if possessing any integrity, may find out.

The CEB, it is well known, fought hard to scuttle plans for enhancing the contribution of renewables which, theoretically could satisfy the entire demand for electricity and even double it for export. The CEB grudgingly agreed to a plan to bump the slice to 70% but this hasn't moved from policy to implementation. Interestingly, no other country in the world has quibbled over numbers related to targets.

Engineers simply say 'more expensive, it's not worth it.' And they point to archaic legislation related to unwarranted concern about energy security which, interestingly, goes against the economic model that successive governments have embraced for close to fifty years now, namely the limitation on installed capacity, 50MW. So, 'Mega Solar' is out of the question.

The CEB sites 'inertia,' as an inhibiting factor. In other words, thermal energy is constant whereas solar is dependent on factors that cannot be controlled, bad weather days, cloud cover etc. In consistency plugged into the grid could trigger it to trip, this is correct. However, the concern of instability is easily addressed and indeed has been addressed in countries with worse 'inhibiting factor' not just those that are developed but by countries in Latin America. Maybe the CEB is ignorant, lacks expertise or, worryingly, knows very well that such transformation could trip outbacks.

Perhaps this is why the CEB seems to be so averse to digitizing the grid. The know-how and technology exist, however, to put in place a highly digitized oversight system based on predictive artificial intelligence on both the generation and demand side, capable of even a 15-minute dispatch. Instead, someone can make a call to a power generator, fiddle with numbers, scaremonger governments into submission and make a sweet deal with a supplier, thereby cutting into Sri Lanka's exchange reserves.

Digitization would make things transparent. Accountable. Good for all except whoever is making bucks by blocking the move towards renewables. One wonders if Kanchana would ask his buddies in the World Bank and IMF to facilitate digitization? Would they say 'no'? Unlikely.

The CEB has also talked of the problem

posed by grid infrastructure or lack thereof, e.g., 'we need to build more high-tension transmission lines.' This is a barefaced lie. To put it crudely, no transformer on the planet will argue about the source. Doesn't know, doesn't care. As long as you feed the electricity to the specification the transformer is built to receive.

For example, if floating solar panels were installed in all the reservoirs currently producing hydropower, ensuring that less than 15% of the relevant surfaces are used in order not to infringe upon environments, the very same transformers could be used. The hydropower could be used as back up, again based on a system of AI-based generation governance that is transparent and accountable and greasing-free.

The truth is that we would not be needing any backup or 'emergency power generation' if we utilized the Negombo, Kalpitiya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna lagoons, all locations there are currently touched by transmission lines. No additional infrastructure expenditure, but enabling massive solar generation even at using just 15% of the surface so that there are no environmental concerns.

Back to numbers. The current peak demand is projected to double by 2030, requiring an additional 15,000 MW to be provided to the grid. As is, the lagoons and the Mahaweli reservoirs could generate 8,000 MW, meaning that at any given time there's at least 4,000-4,500 MWs for export, provided of course that there is investment for installation of cables. If the full solar potential of just floating solar capacities is obtained, Sri Lanka could become a dominant net energy exporter in the region. CEB will never be a bankrupt institution, never be a dollar-demanding institute but actually a dollar-earning institute. Good, isn't it?

If the story takes too much space, please cut the last 2 paras in blue.

Yes, there are costs. Floating solar panels don't fall from the sky or drip along with sunbeams. If, say, the installation cost is US\$1.5 million per MW, the total cost would be in the region of US\$6 billion. Obviously, it should be opened to private investors. If Kanchana and this government is truly ok with that kind of economic policies, then, why not? We would not be needing a single dollar on imports to produce coal or thermal power. Bad idea? What would the FC say?

As of now, neither Kanchana nor anyone in the CEB seem interested. If no one is, it means that rank idiocy and corruption could be the main reasons. Or rank incompetence. The FC could tell us, of course. And maybe we will have meaningful change which of course requires the necessary restructuring of thinking-ways, frames of reference and of course overall, long-term objectives of energy security and insulation against dollar-dependency.

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SUBTERRANEAN TRANSCRIPTS

DM Poll

Do you agree with the continuous strikes by Trade Union members? Is it fair to be inconveniencing the general public in return for their demands?

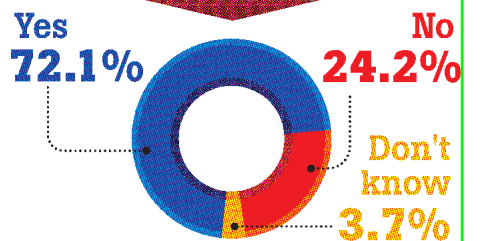
- Yes
- No
- They have a right to protest
- They are crippling the economy further



Scan to Vote

LAST POLL

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



See web poll at www.DailyMirror.lk

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

HEALTH SECTOR IN TURMOIL

It is apparent that let alone the present crisis that has plagued the state hospitals due to various shortfalls since last year, are now in further turmoil with the shocking and sudden migration of scores of medical professionals from the state sector, as never before!

It is on record that close upon five hundred doctors - both young and not so young - including specialists have already left our shores. Many are in the waiting list to do so! The numbers that are usually on the annual retirement lists are also on the increase and so are the post graduates not returning from overseas training, making a bad situation worse indeed.

So much so, it was recently revealed by the GMOA through media that few of the remote hospitals in the country are threatened with closure while certain specialty units such as pediatrics, surgery, medicine, anaesthesia, etc. in some state hospitals (including teaching hospitals) are also facing a dearth of consultants in the said units.

That said, it is quite evident that migration of doctors which has been a normal side-effect for the MOH all these years, has now become an adverse effect, placing the state health care sector in a bind. Further, the much important clinical aspects of medical students too would be hampered, if this unfortunate situation continues. To top it all, the conditions at govt. hospitals would also be a double whammy for the helpless and hapless patients who are already being pushed from pillar to post to get their drugs, blood tests, X-rays etc. as more severe problems are in the offing for them by not having the requisite doctors at various clinics and OPDs, which would be yet another trauma, no doubt.

Let it be also said, that not only the economic crisis that hit Sri Lankans like a bolt from the blue but also the harsh and harassed Payee tax imposed on them have all contributed for the present unprecedented exodus of intellectuals from many other fields as well, thus depleting the precious and prime human capital of our motherland.

In this background, it is up to president Wickremesinghe - without hiding behind the IMF curtain - to stem this damaging outflow by seriously and sensibly considering the alternative proposals put forward by any professional associations and reach a consensus, as all are agreeable to pay taxes accordingly.

The ball is now in president's court.
M.R.PATHIRAGE

Earning Rs. 200,000 per month, need to pay only Rs. 1,700/- as tax: Bandula

WEB COMMENTS

JOSHUA - What nonsense is he talking? If you draw Rs.200,000 monthly salary, the tax is Rs 126,000 per year from April 1, 2023, which works out to a monthly tax of Rs.10,500. President, please appoint him as the CEIR as we need some jokers there too

ANONYMOUS - Why does Bandula talk about such fleeting benefits. Today, prices go down, but tomorrow they go up 10-folds. While PAYE tax is minimal, our insane citizens want to live beyond our country's means so demand for the impossible relentlessly

See more web comments at www.DailyMirror.lk

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P12

ComBank launches two platforms to link local biz to global markets



P10

Actress Yashodha appointed Brand Ambassador for Soorya



Timely and credible structural reforms key to resetting Sri Lanka's economy: WB

Projects economy to contract by 4.3% this year amid tepid demand

Sri Lanka's heightened fiscal, external and financial sector imbalances and its fluid political situation pose significant uncertainty for the country's economic outlook, said the World Bank in its twice-a-year update, underscoring the need to address the root causes of the country's economic crisis and build a strong and resilient economy to prevent future crises.

Sri Lanka Development Update (SLDU) titled 'Time to Reset', released this week, projected the country's economy to contract by 4.3 percent in 2023, as demand continues to be subdued, job and income losses intensify and supply-side constraints adversely affect production.

"The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has had deep impacts with over half a million jobs lost and 2.7 million additional people falling into poverty between 2021 and 2022," said World Bank Country Director for the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka Faris H. Hadad-Zervos.

"The prolonged recovery from the scarring effects of this crisis in addition to a slow debt restructuring process, limited external financing support and an uncertain global environment pose significant risks to the country's economic growth."

SLDU said the economy would continue to face significant challenges in 2023 and beyond. A lower-level external trade equilibrium could have contagion effects on domestic trade, economic activity, jobs and incomes. Combined with adverse effects from revenue-mobilisation efforts, which are essential for regaining fiscal

sustainability, poverty projections could worsen, it warrened.

It also stressed that the country's financial sector needs to be managed carefully, given rising non-performing loans and large public sector exposures.

Meanwhile, the development lender noted that mitigating the impacts on the poor and vulnerable remains critical during the adjustment and stressed that reducing poverty requires better-targeted social assistance, an expansion of employment in industry and services and a recovery in the real value of incomes.

MORE ON P10

Stock market trading hours extended as normalcy returns

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) will return to regular trading hours, with effect from April 10, 2023, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) said.

Accordingly, the SEC has directed the CSE to extend regular trading hours from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Regularising of trading hours comes with the normalising of operating conditions, market sources said.

The COVID-19-related mobility restrictions and power cuts were among the key reasons for the market to opt for limited trading hours.

MORE ON P10

CB confident of sealing debt deal before IMF first review



Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe
PIC BY PRADEEP PATHIRANA

"We will finalise debt restructuring before next IMF review" - CB Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe

■ SL secured a US \$ 3bn IMF programme on March 21 and first tranche of about US \$ 330mn was disbursed a couple of days after

■ SL kicked off formal debt restructuring process last week and said any DDR shouldn't threaten stability of country's banking system

■ Shrugs off reports about GDP-linked bonds for foreign debtholders

officials expressed confidence in wrapping up a deal even earlier.

"We will finalise the debt restructuring before the next IMF review," said Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe, who appeared more relaxed and accomplished than when he sat on the hot seat roughly a year ago, when the country was gripped by multiple crises.

After nearly a year of talks, Sri Lankan authorities managed to unlock a roughly US \$ 3.0 billion lifeline from the IMF on March 21, on the promise of staying on course on the reform path in the next four years.

The first tranche of about US \$ 330 million was released a couple of days later, further easing the liquidity conditions in the domestic foreign currency markets and also rekindling confidence among investors and other creditors to loan again to Sri Lanka.

Dr. Weerasinghe and Treasury Secretary Mahinda Siriwardana last week made an investor presentation, kicking off the formal debt restructuring process, where they said any domestic debt restructuring (DDR) shouldn't threaten the stability of the country's banking system.

MORE ON P10

Rules revised to ensure consistency with new SEC Act

Pursuant to the enactment of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of Sri Lanka Act No 19 of 2021 (new SEC Act), the stockbroker rules of the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) and Central Depository Systems (CDS) have been revised.

This is in order to ensure consistency with the said new SEC Act.

Accordingly, the Trading Participant Rules will replace the stockbroker rules and the Central Depository Rules will be replaced with the previous CDS rules, with effect from April 3, 2023.

In addition, the CDS - Clearing House Rules and Dispute Resolution

Rules of the CSE Group will also be implemented.

The CSE said the Dispute Resolution Rules of the CSE Group will facilitate the fair and efficient resolution of disputes between the distinct stakeholder groups of the CSE and CDS.

"The CDS Rules have been suitably amended and restructured as 'CDS - Central Depository Rules' and 'CDS - Clearing House Rules', with a view to facilitate the requirements applicable to a Central Depository and Clearing House set out in the new SEC Act," the CSE said.

US firm secures US \$ 3.2mn tender to provide computer software solutions to SriLankan

Houston-based PROS Holdings Inc. has secured a US \$ 3.24 million tender to provide computer software solutions for optimising the income generation in state-owned SriLankan Airlines.

Ports, Shipping and Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva this week sought the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers to award a five-year contract to PROS Holdings Inc. to procure computer software solutions for optimising the income generation of SriLankan Airlines, based on the recommendations of the

Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

"... Pros, Inc. company of the United States of America, who is the bidder, furnished the minimum quotation responding to the substantive response in accordance with the recommendations of the Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers," the Government Information Department said.

MORE ON P10

JPMorgan chief warns banking crisis 'not yet over'

BBC: The crisis facing the US banking system "is not yet over", the head of America's biggest bank has warned.

JPMorgan Chase Chief Executive Jamie Dimon made the comments in an annual letter to shareholders just weeks after the dramatic collapse of two major US banks. He said he did not expect the turmoil to lead to a global crisis akin to 2008, noting that it involved "involved fewer players and fewer issues". But he warned the impact would linger.

"While this is nothing like 2008, it is not clear when this current crisis will end," he said.



Jamie Dimon

"Even when it is behind us, there will be repercussions from it for years to come."

Dimon is a veteran of Wall Street, who steered JPMorgan through the 2008 financial crisis, when exposure to bad home loans in the US caused problems throughout the global financial system.

MORE ON P10

Ceylon Chamber welcomes moves to liberalise petroleum sector, address both economic and ethnic issues

■ Says opening of fuel retail distribution business to three additional players will allow for competition

■ Calls for transparent processes and governance structures that will facilitate divestiture of non-strategic commercial assets/stakes

■ Praises President Wickremesinghe for his resolve to address both economic and ethnic issues to achieve real progress

In a statement, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce yesterday welcomed the government's move to liberalise

the country's petroleum sector and its resolve to address both economic and ethnic issues to achieve real progress.

"The chamber appreciates the steps taken by the policymakers in the power and energy sector. It is encouraging to note that competition is being introduced to the petroleum sector, which was previously dominated by the state," the statement said.

"Opening the retail distribution business to three additional players will allow for competition, an increase in quality of service and for outlets to be set up in remote areas of the country. New players being able to import and supply fuel to the country will also reduce the over-reliance on CPC to procure dollars and distribute fuel, thereby reducing the vulnerabilities

faced in 2022, due to a shortage of dollars in the banking system," it added.

However, citing the recent media reports, the chamber pointed out that the EOI responses towards the Hambantota refinery should be analysed with caution.

"Any process, which lacks governance and transparency, could lead to corruption, which is an issue that has hindered the progress of economic development and attracting genuine foreign direct investments.

Given the complexities inherent in reforms and changing processes, we advise the government to set in place transparent processes and governance structures that will facilitate the divestiture of non-strategic commercial assets/stakes as well as encourage

investment in strategic assets such as the Hambantota oil refinery.

This would also complement the IMF's engagement with the government, which is aimed at improving the governance framework through a diagnostic analysis, which is a structural benchmark under the Extended Fund Facility with the IMF," the statement said. The chamber also hailed the statement made by President Ranil Wickremesinghe at the recent 'Economic Dialogue - IMF and Beyond' forum, organised by CA Sri Lanka, where he referred to the two Es in the country - the ethnic issue and economic issue - and the importance of addressing both these issues in order to achieve real progress.

MORE ON P10

Private sector commits Rs.525mn to maintain operations of Suwa Seriya

As the 1990 Suwa Seriya ambulance service has run into a Rs.1.5 billion shortfall in funds this year, a number of leading corporates have stepped up to fill the void by committing Rs.525 million up to now, to maintain the operations of the critical service unimpeded.

In light of the funding shortfall

from the government, due to the economic crisis, the board of directors and management of the Suwa Seriya ambulance service recently introduced the 'Adopt an Ambulance' initiative to raise funds from the private sector to maintain the operations intact, with the facilitation of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

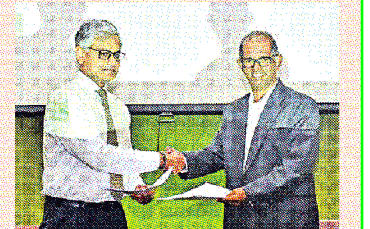
MORE ON P10

John Keells Group commits Rs.100mn

The John Keells group has signed an agreement to contribute Rs.100 million toward the Suwa Seriya Foundation for use in the operations of the Suwa Seriya ambulance service.

The contribution aims to support the ambulance service, which has been facing financial constraints and will allow the service to continue, providing lifesaving emergency medical assistance in Sri Lanka.

This support from the John Keells group is a significant boost to the Suwa Seriya ambulance service, as it will allow the service to purchase new medical



From left: John Keells Group Chairman Krishan Balendra and 1990 Suwaseriyaya Foundation Chairman Dumindra Ratnayaka
PIC BY PRADEEP PATHIRANA

equipment and continue to maintain the ambulances as well as recruit and train additional medical personnel.

MORE ON P10

Softlogic Life decked up to catch eyes of potential investors

By Shabiya Ali Ahlam

Softlogic Life, Sri Lanka's second largest life insurer in terms of market share, was decked up this week to catch the eyes of potential investors that will help improve the future prospects of the entity.

The subsidiary of Softlogic Capital and part of the Softlogic group, was put under fresh spotlight to showcase the value of the entity at an investor forum that shared the details of the company operations, financial performance, growth trajectory and future plans.



Iftikar Ahmed
PIC BY PRADEEP PATHIRANA

MORE ON P10

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Arpico Supermarkets are ready to delight their shoppers with massive discount of 50 percent off for more than 250 items this Avurudu season. In addition to providing unbeatable offers on over 1,000 items, including daily essentials, household, electronics and furniture items throughout the season, Arpico is also offering exciting rewards to the Arpico Privilege customers with 'Arpico Avurudu Super Shopper Campaign'.

Arpico Privilege members who shop for over Rs. 7,500 including 5 nominated brands at any Arpico outlet, will be eligible to receive a massive 50 percent off on more than 250 products ranging from daily essentials, households, electronics & furniture items. The nominated brands include Munchee, Sprite, Coca Cola, Fanta, Anchor Pedia Pro, Anlene, Anchor Newdale, Ratthi, St. Clairs Tea, Prima, Maggi, Astra, Edinborough, Sustagen, Anthony's, Crizzly's, Crescent, Ruhunu, Magic, Arpico, Rancrisp, Chupa Chups, Mentos, Spinner, Lux, Sunsil, Softny, Baby Cheramy, Clogard, Fems, Dettol, Comox, Gliz, Safel, , Champion, Nature's Secrets, Surf Excel, Norfolk, Janet, Cycle, Lioncoco, Dash, Phoenix, Promate, Rathna, Mango, Richpower, Rich, Capralac Gold and Richsonic. On top of these amazing deals, shoppers will also be treated



to the best bank offers, together with special weekend offers with a flat 25 percent off on a range of essentials, household items & electronics at all Arpico retail outlets, island wide. Arpico Privilege members will also be further eligible for various exclusive in-store offers and lifestyle offers from partner merchants across categories such as restaurants, apparel, jewellery and hair and beauty. The Arpico retail chain now comprises of 22 Supercentres, 09 Superstores and 26 Arpico Daily Supermarkets island wide. Arpico Supercentres are the company's flagship outlets, offering extensive parking, utility bill payments, banking facilities, lifestyle needs and the widest range of products with the guarantee of being the most convenient shopping destinations in the country.

Ann Balakrishnan joins Richardson as Chief Revenue Officer

Richardson Outdoor (Pvt) Ltd recently announced the appointment of Anjolie Anne Balakrishnan as its new Chief Revenue Officer.

Balakrishnan brings with her a wealth of experience and will steer the company to new revenue streams and accelerated levels of profitability.

She is media marketing professional with over 25 years of experience in the media industry. She began her career in 1997 at Maharaja Broadcasting and subsequently joined Asia Broadcasting Corporation in 1998. Balakrishnan's leadership and marketing prowess were evident during her tenure, serving as the Group Director of Marketing for 13 years at ABC Network.

Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the media landscape, with a keen ability to identify emerging trends and translate them into successful marketing strategies. Her remarkable track record speaks volumes about her skills and expertise in the industry.

The Managing Director of Richardson Holdings, Nazri Nizar commented, "We are excited to have Balakrishnan join the Richardson team. She complements our strong performance-oriented culture, and we believe her impressive reputation for execution and achieving results makes her the right choice to our team. Her extensive experience will be a valuable addition to Richardson."

Richardson Outdoor has changed the face of Out-of-Home advertising in Sri Lanka. Initially having started as a CSR project, the Company has made significant strides with over the last 2 decades, through its modernized airport advertising, quadrupled bus shelters and increased street signage, making it easier for consumers to find your business.

Established in 1962, Richardson Holdings is a diversified company that delivers high quality electrical engineering, infrastructure and advertising solutions for both public and private sector customers. Over the past 6



Anjolie Anne Balakrishnan

decades Richardson Holdings has helped electrify a fifth of the island and is the largest electrical pole and railway sleeper manufacturer in Sri Lanka. The company is also responsible for modernizing Colombo through its pioneered smart street lighting project.

Richardson has grown its reputation for consistency and reliability, while diversifying its product portfolio through its subsidiaries, Richardson Electric, Richardson Engineering and Richardson Outdoor, the largest outdoor advertising company in Sri Lanka.

Singer launches premium smartphone brand 'Honor'

Singer, a household name in the country's consumer electronics and appliances industry, has announced the launch of the world-renowned 'Honor' brand in Sri Lanka.

Singer is the sole distributor of Honor in the country, under a long-term partnership with the brand. The partnership aims to bring Honor's range of high-quality smartphones and accessories to consumers in Sri Lanka at competitive prices - led by the Honor X Series.

"We are thrilled to partner with Honor and introduce the brand to our customers," said Mahesh Wijewardene, CEO of Singer Sri Lanka PLC. "We know that the brand's cutting-edge features and affordable prices will provide Sri Lankan consumers with a unique mobile experience. Honor has great potential in the Sri Lankan market and we are excited to help make it a success."

Emerging as the No. 1 Android smartphone in China, Honor is well-renowned in the global smartphone market and is one of the fastest-growing mobile brands in the world.



The brand's strengths lie in its commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction and the smartphones are known for their exceptional camera quality, battery life, and overall performance. Moreover, Honor has more than 8,500 global patent applications and employs a workforce of over 13,000 people, over 60 percent of whom are dedicated to Research and Development.

"We are excited to make our mark in the Sri Lankan market with Singer Sri Lanka. At Honor, we pride ourselves on delivering innovative products at an affordable price point, and we believe that our partnership

with Singer will enable us to bring this ethos to Sri Lankan customers," said Lang Guo, Country Director of Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Honor Device Co.

With its exceptional capabilities and strengths, Honor has established itself as the ideal brand for consumers conscious of both quality and price, delivering products that offer great value for money. As a result, Singer is launching Honor's X-Series at varying price levels for all consumers in Sri Lanka.

In light of the current economic climate, consumers are looking for high-quality

products at competitive prices, and the Honor brand is well-positioned to meet those needs. Honor offers an unbeatable combination of quality and affordability that will resonate with the Sri Lankan market, especially in these challenging times.

Honor's products have always maintained brand awareness and communications, thereby adding brand recall to an already attractive offering. The brand is poised for success in Sri Lanka, and Singer is excited to be at the forefront of bringing this exceptional brand to consumers.



From left: Tharaka Warnakulasuriya (Marketing Manager - Digital Products, Singer Sri Lanka PLC), Jagath Perera (Operations Director, Singer Sri Lanka PLC), Mahesh Wijewardene (CEO, Singer Group of Companies), Lang Guo (Country Director of Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Honor Device Co.), Kun Cheng (General Manager - Sri Lanka, Honor Device Co.), Shamil Perera (Marketing Director, Singer Sri Lanka PLC), Vajira Tennakoon (Sales Director, Singer Sri Lanka PLC) and Thulitha Mendis (Commercial Director, Singer Sri Lanka PLC)

Actress Yashodha appointed Brand Ambassador for Soorya

Sun Match Company, producer of the iconic brand, "Soorya," has appointed respected Sri Lankan actress Yashodha Wimaladharmas as its Brand Ambassador.

This strategic move is intended to enhance the brand's visibility and reach a wider audience, while leveraging the goodwill and credibility that Yashodha brings with her. With her popularity in the entertainment industry, Yashodha will help promote the brand and build a strong relationship with consumers, reinforcing the trust and loyalty that the company has earned over the years.

Soorya is the first wax coated safety matches in Sri Lanka was introduced to the market by entrepreneur T. R. R. Rajan at a time when the market was dominated by wooden matches is today the market leader with an island wide distribution supported by a fully automated sales and distribution system.

The brand has extended its product line to locally manufactured high quality incense sticks which is inspired by 14



nontoxic unique fragrances and dripless candles which we are confident of taking to even greater heights, as we focus on expanding our reach in illuminating every household. Yashoda is a combination of traditional and contemporary charm that makes for a perfect match to represent our brand," said the company founder's daughter and Group Marketing Director Gowri Rajan.

with my own life, such as authenticity, hope, trust, and reliability. As someone who takes responsibility for my actions and endorsements, I am very selective about whom I choose to work with, and I am thrilled that we have joined forces. My personal values align perfectly with those of the brand, and I always strive to stay true to my soul and innermost beliefs. I am delighted to be associated with a brand that shares the same principles as I do and look forward to promoting it with sincerity and dedication."

The recent signing of the MOU between Yashodha and Deshamanya Suri Rajan, Executive Chairman of Sun Match Company, marks the beginning of a promising partnership between the iconic brand and the respected screen actress and signifies a milestone in the history of the company.

Yashoda will represent Soorya across various platforms, including advertising campaigns.

Contd. from Page 9

CB confident ...

The slump in the prices of US bonds held by the US regional banks, in response to the sharp hike in rates by the US Fed, shook the banking sector there and brought down two regional lenders while causing distress to a few other regional banks with similar profiles. The recent banking sector turmoil has caused global central banks to either slowdown or pause their aggressive rate hike plans to tame inflation.

Dr. Weerasinghe affirmed that no restructuring would occur for the Treasury bills belonging to others outside what the Central Bank holds and added that the bonds could be restructured if the holder requests to do so.

Out of the total outstanding bill stock, the Central Bank holds about 60 percent.

Responding to a question on offering what some started calling as GDP-linked bonds when restructuring foreign debt, Dr. Weerasinghe said he too only heard it in the media and knew nothing about it.

Stock market ...

"With no pandemic-related restrictions and regular power cuts, extending the trading hours is the next logical step," a stock market stakeholder said.

JPMorgan chief ...

In recent weeks, he worked with government officials to coordinate a rescue plan for the California-based bank First Republic, which many feared was also on the verge of collapse.

In the near term, he said the failures of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank and the rushed takeover of Credit Suisse in Europe, had provoked "lots of jitters in the market" and were likely to prompt lenders to pull back in the months ahead,

increasing the odds of an economic recession.

But he said it was not clear if the crisis would affect regular consumers in the US, who are the main drivers of the world's largest economy.

"While the current crisis has exposed some weaknesses in the system, it should not be considered... anything like what we experienced in 2008," he wrote.

SVB failed last month after fears about its financial position prompted customers to withdraw nearly a quarter of the firm's deposits in a few days, overwhelming its ability to supply the funds. Regulators shut down Signature amid signs of a similar bank run.

As the failures led to scrutiny of other potentially troubled firms, Credit Suisse saw shares plunge, leading to its rushed takeover by rival UBS in a deal brokered by the Swiss government.

Dimon said the recent turmoil should push regulators to scrutinize risks to banks that arise from having a high proportion of uninsured deposits or many customers with similar profiles, as SVB, which was known for catering to the tech industry, did.

But he added that many of the risks - including a sharp rise in interest rates last year that have hurt the value of some kinds of assets typically held by banks - had been "hiding in plain sight". He criticised regulators for not considering the increase in rates in tests designed to test bank stability.

"This is not to absolve bank management - it's just to make clear that this wasn't the finest hour for many players," he said.

As US President Joe Biden and others call for stronger rules for banks, he warned against "knee-jerk, whack-a-mole or politically motivated responses".

"We should carefully study why this particular situation happened but not overreact," he said.

"Erratic stress test capital requirements and constant uncertainty around future regulations damage the banking system without making it safer," he added.

US firm secures ...

PROS Holdings provides artificial intelligence-based software

as a service platform that optimises shopping and selling interaction, enabling companies to deliver personalised offers to buyers with speed, precision and consistency.

Private sector ...

"We thought of launching this initiative to raise the shortfall, instead of burdening the government or shutting down the number of ambulances that we operate." 1990 Suwa Seriya ambulance service Chairman Dumindra Rathnayaka told reporters in Colombo this week.

Accordingly, a number of top corporates have come forward in committing Rs.525 million in funds so far, adopting 105 ambulances. "It's just amazing. It is also an endorsement that we, at 1990, are doing it right. It is also an encouragement to continue to do what we do at our best," Rathnayake said.

By pledging a Rs.5 million per one 1990 ambulance per annum to support the maintenance cost of the valuable service, the private sector has ensured the continuity of emergency medical care to the public.

Rathnayaka was optimistic of meeting the balance Rs.1 billion shortfall in funds through the private sector for the year. Further, he noted that the initiative would extend to next year, if the funding shortfalls continue to arise.

The service operates a fleet of 297 ambulances equipped with the necessary emergency medical equipment and staffed by trained personnel. The maintenance funding allows the ambulance service to operate its full fleet by conducting vehicle and medical equipment maintenance, staff uniforms and safety gear upkeep and conducting continuous training to the staff.

The Suwa Seriya ambulance service was launched in 2016 as a government service through Suwa Seriya Act No 16 of 2018. Since then, it has built up a national service footprint and handled over 1.4 million emergencies. Over 1000 calls are attended to daily, making it an essential lifeline for patients islandwide.

John Keells ...

This will enable the service to both sustain and expand its operations and continue to serve people in need of emergency medical assistance.

John Keells Group Chairperson Krishan Balendra said, "At John Keells, we believe that it is our responsibility to support and empower the communities in which we operate. Given that health is one of the key focus areas of our CSR initiatives implemented through the John Keells Foundation, we are proud to support the Suwa Seriya ambulance service and the outstanding work that is done every day by these first responders to save lives across Sri Lanka. We urge the corporate community and other benefactors to continue to support this vital service."

Timely and credible ...

However, strong and effective implementation of the government's reform programme, supported by financing from international partners, could boost confidence and attract fresh capital inflows that are key to improve job prospects and restore livelihoods, the World Bank said.

"The current crisis is not a temporary liquidity shock that can be resolved by external financing support from outside. Instead, the crisis provides a unique opportunity to implement deep and permanent structural reforms that may be difficult in normal circumstances," added Hadad-Zervos. "Sri Lanka can use this opportunity to build a strong and resilient economy."

Softlogic Life ...

The inaugural investor forum aimed at "reimagining" and substantially communicating the business prospects in an "optimistic" environment, as Sri Lanka is gradually coming out of an unprecedented economic crisis. Interestingly, the investor forum was held a couple of months after an announcement was made via a filing to the Colombo Stock Exchange that

Softlogic Capital was evaluating a bid received for the purchase of the shares held by the company in its subsidiary Softlogic Life Insurance. When queried about the share purchase offer, Softlogic Life Managing Director Ifkhar Ahmed's response was vague. "When it comes to the financial situation, we have outlined how investments are made as far as the company is concerned; we make sure that we look at the security and safety of these investments. This is a Softlogic investor forum, so the matters that the shareholders need to deal with, we will let them make those decisions. We are here today to showcase what we have performed and developed and to show the value of this company," said Ahmed.

Meanwhile, in the backdrop of a domestic debt restructuring, which the authorities confirmed last week after months-long uncertainty, Softlogic Life said its key concern is to ensure the security and safety of its investments.

"We are a company that basically has numbers audited once in three months. In terms of whatever obligations that we, as a company, need to make, we are 100 percent sure that these commitments are all secure. They are properly planned and they are properly locked in. We need to see how domestic debt restructuring pans out. The good news for us is that we kind of doubled our investment yield. So, we have some cushion there to face any kind of situation that comes about," said Ahmed.

During FY22, Softlogic Life reported a 10-year CAGR of 28 percent of gross written premium (GWP), while for the industry it was 14 percent. The company posted a GWP of Rs.23 billion, with an increase in the top line growth of 15 percent when compared with the previous year.

Ceylon Chamber ...

"The chamber recognises these as fundamental anchors for the future direction of the country. The recognition of the nexus between reconciliation and ethnic harmony and economic reform, is vital. The chamber supports this initiative and will strive to initiate programmes at business level that will complement this agenda," the statement said.

NSB's effort to Digitize the Traditional Sri Lankan Banking endorsed at the TECHNNOVATION Awards 2023 with Two Gold Awards

National Savings Bank won two Gold Awards and one Merit award at the recently concluded TECHNNOVATION Awards 2023.

The Fifth TECHNNOVATION Awards organized by LankaPay is dedicated to rewarding innovations and achievements in the Payment Technology Industry.

National Savings Bank was awarded two golds at the latest iteration of the TECHNNOVATION Awards, being ranked the Bank of the Year for Excellence in Customer Convenience Category C and being ranked the Best Common ATM Enabler of the Year Category B.

Both gold awards are a testament to NSB's commitment to bring the latest in cutting edge technology to the banking and finance industry and thereby innovate the delivery of financial services across a growing demography. Further, these awards were the result of a fierce competition amongst all established players in the Banking and Finance industry, in twelve categories, evaluated in two stages by an imminent panel of judges.

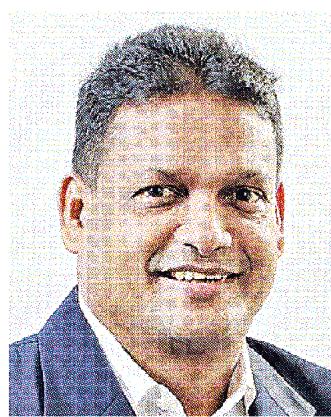
The TECHNNOVATION Awards unveiled in 2017 is dedicated to recognizing the contribution rendered to the entirety of society by Banks, Non-Banking Financial Institutions (NBFI) & Financial Technology (FinTech) entities which work silently in the background to bring financial inclusivity to a great segment of society.

This year's awards were appropriately focused on entities who have strived to bring financial services without interruption to the people whilst facing hitherto unknown challenges and yet overcoming them via innovation.

Therefore, NSB is really honored to be a winner of two gold awards, under such a challenging environment. NSB is the largest savings bank and the third largest Government bank in Sri Lanka and has a multi-million customer base Island wide. NSB, is a bank with deep roots which runs to the year 1832, which was declared for regular business operations in 1972. Ever since then, we have been on a memorable journey while empowering Sri Lankan households and currently, we are pioneering in moving of the traditional banking system towards the innovative world of digital banking.

Digitizing traditional banking with fintech innovation involves incorporating technology and digital solutions into traditional banking services to improve efficiency, accessibility, and customer experience. NSB has bundled all the Digital Initiatives of the bank under the name NSB NEXT GEN and introduced the same recently. Hence, customers can enjoy our digital products in the likes of NSB e-connect, NSBPay App, e-KYC facility and e-Post Digital Account at ease.

One of the ways to do this is by developing mobile applications that allow customers to access their accounts, view transactions, make payments, and manage their finances on-the-go. NSB introduced NSBPay mobile app in 2021 which changed the traditional banking system and the existing mobile banking apps at that time. In other banks, multiple mobile apps were



Ajith Peiris, GM-CEO, National savings bank

required to make a payment, check the account balance, make a QR payment etc. But under NSBPay all banking activities, utility payments, even insurance payments and all financial requirements can be achieved within this single app. The major uniqueness of this app introduced by NSB is that for the first time in Sri Lanka, a customer does not require to be a NSB customer to perform activities through the app. If the customer has a bank account in any licensed bank in Sri Lanka they can register their account and perform the transactions. Because of the user friendliness and convenience compared to other apps NSBPay massively gained around 235,000 users within a short period of time and has been able to perform transactions worth of LKR 73 billion within 18 months. Not only that we have also been able to reduce the carbon footprints by eliminating the need of paper, need of fuel for transportation and been able to achieve a great financial success while doing our part to protect the nature. NSB's success in NSBPay led us to revamp the existing web banking platform.

NSB postal banking service has been a main companion for the people in rural areas for their banking activities. As a variation of Agency banking, NSB has introduced NSB Postal Pay service under the brand name of NSB e-post to implement a digitalized banking solution for customers in rural areas. Under this service, Sub Post Masters using a POS device can perform transactions, bill payments as per the customer requirements.

We identified that a robust web platform is also essential for digital banking, providing customers with easy access to their accounts and a range of financial services through a user-friendly interface. Currently, NSB is in the process of implementing a new version of web banking experience for customers and planning to complete the project by February.

Under the new platform, we will also introduce eKYC (electronically Know Your Customer) process which is a digital process that allows financial institutions to verify the identity of their customers securely and efficiently. This will help the bank to attract an additional customer base, mostly the millennials who are tech-savvy and keen on exploring convenient ways to improve the quality of life. This process not only makes the onboarding process more convenient and quicker for customers, but also improves the security and compliance of the financial institution.

This also helps to prevent paper, usage of storage, printing costs and helps to move the bank towards a greener tomorrow. The Customer onboarding and Blockchain based eKYC would be the first eKYC platform to be launched by a government bank as per the Central Bank guidelines and this is an opportunity for NSB to take the helm as the technology leader in the banking sector. NSB e-connect is another product in the new outlook and facilities bundled with NSB NEXT GEN which was originally launched nearly 5 years back, where customers could make their payments and do their transactions easily and securely via NSB website, www.nsb.lk

Overall, NSB is digitizing traditional banking with fintech innovation offering many benefits, including improved customer experience, increased accessibility, and reduced operational costs. By embracing digital transformation, financial institutions can stay ahead of the competition and better serve the evolving needs of their customers while stepping into a greener tomorrow.

THE NEXT EVOLUTION IN SRI LANKAN DIGITAL BANKING

NSB introduces



e-kyc

The ability to open accounts from anywhere, anytime.

e-Post
Digital Account

The ability to open digital postal accounts without passbooks.

NSB Pay

The ability to make all transactions easily through your mobile phone.

NSB e-connect anytime

The ability to make the transactions through the website.

You too enjoy safe and reliable Banking of the Digital world with NSB NextGen.

HNB bags two major accolades at Asiamoney Awards for excellence in trade finance

HNB PLC continued to showcase its trail-blazing market leadership in international trade services after being declared Sri Lanka's 'Best Service in Trade Finance (Asia Banks)' and 'Market Leader in Trade Finance (Asia Banks)' for 2023 by the Asiamoney Magazine.

The recognition follows on the heels of the Bank's recognition at the Euromoney Awards 2023, where HNB bagged the 'Best Service in Trade Finance' and 'Market Leader in Trade Finance' Awards.

"At a time when our nation is vying to resuscitate itself from the economic crisis, these prestigious back-to-back accolades from Euromoney and Asiamoney endorse our international trade services teams' strong commitment to support the country's trade business.

Moving forward, we are firmly dedicated to an unwavering delivery of best-in-class trade finance services and facilitating growth opportunities for Sri Lankan enterprises in order to help revitalise the national economy," HNB Head of Trade, Rozanne De Almeida

Notably, this year marks the fourth time that HNB has won awards for Trade finance from both magazines, making it the first home-grown Sri Lankan bank to achieve a dominant leadership position in international trade services.

"We are delighted with this double affirmation by Euromoney and Asiamoney of HNB's ability to innovate and deliver service excellence in our Trade Finance business. This recognition further prompts us to strive all the more strongly to continuously

elevate our solutions and service levels by leveraging on our people, technology, processes and data to enable transformative growth at every level of the Sri Lankan economy." HNB Deputy General Manager – Wholesale Banking Group, Damith Pallewatte said.

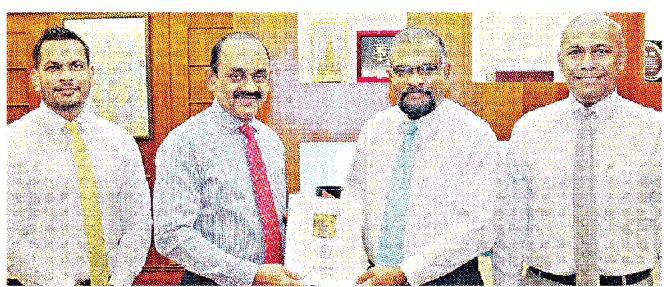
Organised to showcase excellence among leading banks in the Asia Pacific region, this year's awards were presented following stringent financial performance evaluation, strategic business models, and customer and competitor feedback.



Damith Pallewatte



Rozanne De Almeida



PB presents Annual Report to Treasury Secretary

People's Bank Chairman Sujeewa Rajapakse presented the People's Bank's Annual Report for the year 2022 to Secretary to the Treasury of Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization & National Policies K. M. Mahinda Siriwardana at the Finance Ministry recently. Also present at the event were People's Bank Acting Chief Executive Officer/General Manager Clive Fonseka and Head of Finance Azzam A. Ahamat.

Dr. Kumaratunge appointed senior advisor to FASL

Dr. D. Kumaratunge, former Assistant Governor of Central Bank of Sri Lanka was recently appointed as senior advisor to the Fintech Association of Sri Lanka (FASL).



Dr. D. Kumaratunge

He Kumaratunge has over 30 years of experience in the Central Bank and has worked in the Departments of Economic Research, Centre for Banking Studies, Information Technology, and Management Audit in different capacities and served as the director of Payments and Settlements Department before resuming his role as Assistant Governor. Dr. Kumaratunge holds a PhD in Business and an MSc

in Information Technology. FASL is an MoU-signed partner of the Fintech Associations in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, etc. FASL also an MoU signed partner of ASEAN Financial Innovation Network (AFIN), a Singapore-based not-for-profit organisation founded by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the ASEAN Bankers Association (ABA) and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), to collaborate on the Application Programming Interface Exchange (APIX), a global fintech platform.

LOLC secures people's top choice for 6th consecutive year



LOLC receiving the People's Financial Services Brand of the Year award at the SLIM-Kantar People's Awards

LOLC Holdings PLC has once again proven its unwavering commitment to excellence by clinching the coveted title of "People's Financial Services Brand of the Year" at the 2023 SLIM-Kantar People's Awards. This marks the sixth consecutive year that LOLC has been recognized by the Sri Lankan public as the top choice in the country's financial services industry. Year after year, LOLC has remained the most preferred and trusted brand, as evidenced by its consistent presence at the top of the list. This award is a measure of the strength of the LOLC brand and a fitting tribute to the organization's unblemished dedication to the nation.

As LOLC continues to set new benchmarks for financial services in Sri Lanka, it remains committed to delivering innovative solutions that enhance the financial wellbeing of its customers.

Expressing thoughts on the noteworthy recognition, Kapila Jayawardena, Group Managing Director/CEO of LOLC Holdings PLC stated, "We are honoured and grateful to receive this prestigious award from the Sri Lankan public yet again. LOLC has cemented its position as a brand that has empowered the people to have confidence in tomorrow.

The company's commitment to its stakeholders is second to none, and this has earned the trust

and support of the Sri Lankan public. LOLC's brand name, synonymous with financial excellence and untiring support for the people of Sri Lanka, has emerged as a beacon of hope for millions of Sri Lankans. As we continue to evolve and innovate, we remain committed to our core values of excellence, integrity, and customer-centricity."

SLIM-KANTAR People's Awards 2023, themed "Choices Define Us" as per the people's mandate, displays the importance of consumer choice. The impression was to bring life to the voice and choice of the Sri Lankan people for the 17th consecutive year in a night full of excitement and entertainment.

People's Awards is an annual, flagship event organised by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM) jointly with the research arm of Kantar Lanka (Private) Limited. It holds the significance of being the only award ceremony in the country to be based on a nationwide independent survey. The SLIM-KANTAR People's Awards employs a rigorous scientific methodology to determine the most beloved brands, individuals, institutions, commercials, tunes, and performers among the Sri Lankan populace. What sets this award ceremony apart is its unique approach, relying on a jury composed of everyday people to accurately reflect the sentiments of the general public.

ComBank launches two platforms to link local biz to global markets

■ Collaborates with IFC to develop comprehensive business eco system - 'Commercial Bank LEAP'

■ Introduces 'Trade Club' to provide full spectrum of services to importers and exporters

The Commercial Bank of Ceylon has significantly expanded trade opportunities for its business clients through the launch of two new platforms, one in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the other developed independently.

While both platforms are designed as ecosystems that create networking prospects across borders and within the country, 'Commercial Bank LEAP' developed with support from the IFC, is a comprehensive business ecosystem



Prof. Ananda Jayawardane



Sanath Manatunge

that will focus on elevating businesses through digitizing enterprises, and 'Trade Club' the bank's own platform is designed to empower importers and exporters by providing them easy access to the bank's trade services.

Commenting on the development of these platforms, Commercial Bank Managing Director/CEO Sanath Manatunge said, "Supporting and empowering local businesses to grow

and conquer global markets has been more than just a business goal for Commercial Bank.

As the largest private bank in Sri Lanka, we consider it our national duty. Innovative, digitized methods are the need of the hour to boost export businesses to grow international trade and foreign exchange earnings. With the launch of these two platforms, Commercial Bank is taking its support for SMEs and corporates to the next level by offering them access to global networks, cutting-edge technology, and a wide range of business services that will help them stay competitive in today's rapidly evolving business landscape."

Via Commercial Bank LEAP which is built in compliance with international standards and is powered by Global Linker, an international business enabling platform, SMEs and the bank's corporate customers will be able to create online stores

for free to sell their products and services, expand their network of customers, investors, and suppliers from across the world, improve business networking, tap overseas markets, access exclusive offers and benefits from partners, attract feasible business opportunities, and get discovered by a wider audience. As it is a secure platform for communication, it is also feasible for sharing ideas, collaborations and learning, the bank said.

Developed as a sustainable business model, Commercial Bank LEAP offers a range of business services, such as legal, financial, marketing, logistics and shipping services, and provides businesses with access to various business intelligence tools. These tools provide valuable insights by enabling entrepreneurs to analyse their performance, track their sales and marketing activities, and monitor their online reputation.

M Power Capital appoints new CEO

M Power Capital, one of the corporate finance and investment banking firms in the country, announced the appointment of Lakmal Jayarathne as its new CEO with effect from April 2023.



Lakmal Jayarathne

Lakmal, a qualified management accountant, is a competent investment banker with over 20 years of varied and comprehensive experience in the fast-paced banking industry. Following a stellar career at People's Bank's Treasury as Assistant General Manager, Lakmal brings with him an extensive knowledge of investment banking, investment management, treasury operations, and accounting to the table. He holds an MBA from Federation University, Australia, a Diploma in Investment and Portfolio Management, and is also an Associate Member both at the Certified Practising Accountants of Australia and the Institute of

Bankers, Sri Lanka. Speaking on his new role, Lakmal stated, "I am honoured and excited to join M Power Capital as its CEO. The firm has an exceptional reputation in the industry together with a dynamic, talented young team and I look forward to working with them to further enhance value and the services offered to its diverse client base. M Power Capital has come a long way since its establishment back in 2014 by a group of industry professionals with operational specialization in a multitude of fields. With Lakmal at the helm as the new CEO, M Power Capital is confident that its position as a leading financial solutions provider in the country will be further strengthened, using his experience to streamline operations and continue innovating for its growing and discerning client base.

Union Bank Team excels at Bancassurance Diamond Awards



Indrajit Wickramasinghe, Director/Chief Executive Officer of Union Bank and Jude Gomes, Chief Executive Officer with the Bank award recipients

Union Bank team was recognised for their outstanding performance at the Union Assurance - Union Bank Bancassurance Diamond Awards 2022 held recently.

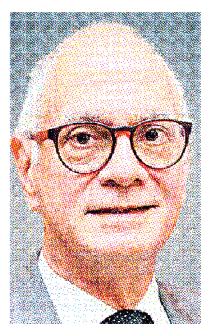
This event is the most esteemed event in the bancassurance calendar and recognises and rewards top performers. Union Bank team received several top awards in the key categories for the year 2022 for individual and team performances.

The CEO's Lounge Award for the highest individual achievement for Annualised New Business Premiums (ANBP) was awarded to Lakshika Hedigalle of the Borella Branch whilst the branch performance awards were secured by Borella, Pettah, Kurunagala, Gampaha, Piliyandala, Nawala, Maharagama & Anuradhapura branches respectively. The Diamond Award in the Zonal category was secured by Chaminda

Fernando, Zonal-Head of Zone 1B. Zones 1A, 1B & 2 were recognised as the top three contributors to ANBP. The Annual Shield Champion award for the year 2022 was awarded to Borella Branch for their outstanding performance. Several branches and staff members who achieved over and above the annual targets were also recognised during the event with accolades.

Cargills Bank reports profitability turnaround with robust income growth and operating cost mgt.

- Total Operating Income of Rs. 4.28 bn, up 74% YoY
- Profit Before Tax of Rs. 206 mn, up 156% YoY
- Profit After Tax of Rs. 488 mn, up 276% YoY



Richard Ebell - Chairman



Senarath Bandara - Managing Director

Cargills Bank reported a profit before tax of Rs. 206 million for the financial year 2022, recovering from a loss before tax of Rs. 369 million in the previous year, driven by robust growth in operating income that offset erosions due to increased provisioning and operating costs.

Total operating income rose 74 percent year-on-year to Rs. 4.28 billion on account of growth in both Interest and Fee-based income in similar proportion.

The bank prudently managed its lending portfolio with the intention of preserving liquidity and maintaining asset quality, leading to a slight decline in the portfolio. However, the bank was able to expand its net interest margin over the previous year, resulting in significant growth in interest income. Meanwhile, robust performance in card operations, trade finance and remittances resulted in 75 percent year-on-year growth in fee-based income.

Mindful of the challenging environment and its impact on customers, the bank proactively increased its provision cover ratio, resulting in a 114 percent year-on-year growth in impairment to Rs. 1.46 billion. The bank's Stage 3 Loans (Net of Stage

3 Impairment) to Total Loans ratio consequently improved from 6.43 percent in 2021 to 4.85 percent in 2022.

The bank prudently managed its operating costs to limit the increase to 16 percent year-on-year, resulting in the bank's Cost to Income ratio improving from 82.8 percent in 2021 to 55.4 percent in 2022. Consequently, the bank reported an operating profit before taxes on financial services of Rs. 448 million.

The bank maintained healthy capital and liquid asset ratios during the year, reporting a Total Capital Ratio of 22.85 percent and Liquid Asset Ratio - Domestic Banking Unit of 26.70 percent as at 31st December 2022.

Senarath Bandara, Managing Director/CEO of Cargills Bank commenting on the performance of the bank stated, "Cargills Bank navigated the uncertain economic climate of 2022 with resilience and pragmatism. The bank adopted an agile approach in response to the challenges to seek growth and stability in

spite of external pressure. Our approach has borne fruit with the bank achieving profitability within the year under review, while also pursuing our long-term growth aspirations to create sustainable value for all stakeholders."

The bank continued to expand its network, opening two new branches in Negombo and Anuradhapura, and complemented branch expansion by opening eight new MINI service locations in Cargills Food City outlets. Furthermore, in line with its objectives to promote financial inclusion and financial deepening, the bank launched a mobile branch vehicle to serve underbanked customers in the Central, North Central and Northern provinces. These channels are complemented by the bank's access to the Cargills Food City network that allows customers to make deposits and withdrawals from Cargills Food City outlets islandwide, and its digital offerings which include customer onboarding and mobile banking for personal banking customers and internet banking services for corporates.

Ranjit Page stepped down as Chairman of the Board of Cargills Bank in January 2023, having served the maximum term permitted by the Central Bank as a Director on the Board of a bank. Reflecting upon the purpose for which the Cargills group decided to set up a bank, Page said, "Understanding the need of the country, we decided to invest more aggressively in building infrastructure to support the agriculture and dairy farming communities and

sought a banking license to support the ecosystem we were building.

We applied for a license under the banner of Cargills Agriculture & Commercial Bank, reflecting our vision to be the most inclusive bank by improving financial access for underserved communities across Sri Lanka."

Richard Ebell, who previously held the position of Senior Director, was appointed as Chairman of the Board, Highlighting the merits of the bank's ecosystem-based business model, Ebell stated, "Our access to the Cargills ecosystem benefits the bank, and at a societal level, gives its customers increased convenience and ease of banking, opening doors to previously underserved sectors of the population. Through this access, the bank seeks to bring vibrantly alive its motif 'Banking on the Human Spirit.'"

In other changes to the Board during the past year, Faisal Salieh, Senior Director, retired from the bank's Board in August 2022 having reached 70 years of age, in line with the directions on Corporate Governance issued by the Central Bank.

Furthermore, Prabhu Mathavan retired from the Board in January 2023 having served the maximum permitted term of nine years on the Board. Mathavan remains with the bank as Chief Operating Officer. Meanwhile, Asoka Pieris, Managing Director, Cargills Foods Company (Pvt) Ltd, was appointed to the Board in January 2023 as a Non-Executive Director.

DailyMirror

Life

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NZ FIREFIGHTERS RELEASE COOKBOOK FOR WOZZY COOKS

Firefighters have served up a cookbook for heavily intoxicated New Zealanders, hoping to stop befuddled chefs from burning down the kitchen. "You're Cooked" offers recipes for a select audience of Kiwis who are desperate for a bite but too incapacitated to be trusted near an oven or stovetop. The menu promising "recipes to cook if you're drunk or high" features a touch of humour and instructions simple enough for even the most addled of chefs.

AFP

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A 'Locally Sourced' culinary experience with Celebrated Chef Simon Toohey

Text **Kamanthi Wickramasinghe**

Following a week's expedition around the island, dynamic TV Chef and MasterChef Australia finalist Simon Toohey presented a rare culinary experience to a select crowd before he returned to his homeland.

PHOTOS PRADEEP DILRUKSHANA

During the special edition of 'Locally Sourced' Toohey introduced the art and special beauty of Sri Lankan cuisine through his masterwork dish, a delicious result of all the knowledge and experience accumulated throughout his weeklong adventure. Toohey was hosted by Dilmah Conservation and during his adventure he also visited small producers, organic growers and permaculture practicing growers while trying his hand at various Sri Lankan dishes.

Toohey introduced a butterfly-pea infused tea cocktail using a local spirit which was an absolute thirst quencher to beat the heat. This was coupled with a side dish inspired by young jackfruit, cassava, garlic,

curry leaves, onions, a gotukola paste and chillie flakes, definitely a must-try for vegan foodies. The in-house chef then presented a brownie made of purple yam (*Dioscorea alata* also known as Rajala) which settled our taste buds on a sweeter note.

Having been involved in the hospitality industry since 15, Toohey had spent most of his life in restaurants and bars.

With a passion to better understand the world of cooking and food, Toohey had then pursued a Masters in Gastronomy,



which inspired him to initiate the concept of sustainable cooking. "That was my idea of searching for a way to fix the world's food waste," he said in an interview with the Daily Mirror Life.

Toohey feels that people need to focus on loving their ingredients and be smart about cooking

and what they are buying. "There's consumer waste and cooked food waste.

As markets grow, people start buying. Therefore people are spending more than saving money. But if

you save people from wasting food, it's great for the climate for example. So people need to be smart about choosing their ingredients and also realise that more doesn't equal more."

He then spoke about the discovery of the velvet bean during his travels in Sri Lanka. "It has the highest protein count than any legume that I know of! But most people I spoke to, either didn't know about it or even if they knew, they have never tried it."

When asked how Sri Lankan cuisine could be used as an element to attract tourists to the country, Toohey invited all visitors to get a bus, a convoy and go on a giant food tour around the country from top to bottom. "Apart from Sri Lankan cuisine, there's the coast, the surf, relaxation, yoga, religion which is the icing on the cake!" he said in conclusion.



Iftar buffet @ Ramada

Ramada's famous Iftar buffet, priced only at LKR 5900/= net per person, is happening as the sun sets for guests to break-fast at the Gardenia Restaurant. From fresh juices and dates to salads and mezze, the buffet presents culinary fusions of Mediterranean, Indian, and international cuisines. Group discounts and bank card offers are also available for the Iftar buffet.

You can enjoy many classic Iftar specials like Kanji, Hummus, Tabbouleh, Um-ali, Samosas, and more. Grill action stations, a hot snacks

range, and the North Indian corner with Naan, Paneer, Chicken and Mutton curries, and flavourful Biryani are some mouthwatering additions to the Ramada Iftar Buffet.

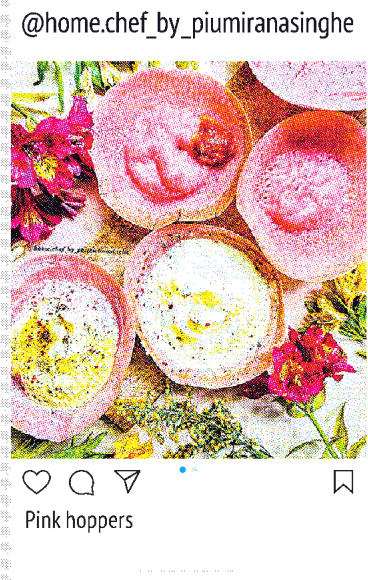
Ramada has assembled delightful Iftar delivery and pick-up packs, including Mutton Rolls, Kanji, Samosas, Adukku Roti, Fresh Dates, and unique Ramadan desserts like Baklava and Basbousa. Biryani Sawans, with a wide array of accompaniments, are also ready for you to feast on. All of this can be delivered right to your doorstep from the Ramada online ordering platform. If you want to taste the best and most authentic flavours this Ramadan, Ramada Colombo is the place to be!

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WHAT DID YOU EAT THIS WEEK?

Here are a few photos sent by our readers.



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SPORTS

National Super League Final Dambulla aiming for Super League double

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

Dambulla, the National Super League four-day tournament champions, will seek to make it a double by clinching the limited over title when they meet reigning champions Jaffna in the final scheduled to be played under floodlights at the R. Premadasa Stadium today.

Led by Minod Bhanuka, Dambulla has had a good run since the tournament got underway last month as they chalked up seven wins from the eight matches that they played.

On the other hand Jaffna led by Janith Liyanage has had fluctuated fortunes and ended the league matches by securing four wins and suffering two defeats, both to their opponents whom they are meeting today with one match being abandoned.

Dambulla have a strong batting side as they possess two centurions in skipper Bhanuka and Pavan Ratnayake who has been consistent with the bat right throughout the tournament.

Ratnayake is their top scorer and apart from the pair they have batsmen in the likes of Kamindu Mendis, Dushan Hemantha, Sonal Dinusha, Lasith Abeyratne and Lahiru Samarakoon who all will be expected to make their contributions to bolster the scoreboard.

Dambulla's bowling will revolve around Samarakoon who is their top wicket taker, Ashan Priyanjan and Lakshan Sandakan, with support

expected from the pacies Nuwan Thushara and Asitha Fernando.

Jaffna will depend on skipper Liyanage along with Ravindu Fernando the only centurion of the side, Navod Paranavithana, Ron Chandragupta and Kasun Abeyratne while Nishan Madushka, who has so far failed, will be able to make his contribution when it matters most.

The bowling will be in the hands of Dilum Sudeera, Lahiru Madusanka and Shiran Fernando along with Binura Fernando and Jeffrey Vandersay who will be expected to combine in preventing the strong batting of their opponents.

However, Dambulla will come into the game with their heads held high and confidence and it's left to be seen whether they would be able to achieve the double or Jaffna would be third time lucky in their quest if retaining the title for yet another year.

The Teams:
Dambulla - Minod Bhanuka (Capt), Pavan Ratnayake, Kamindu Mendis, Lasith Abeyratne, Sonal Dinusha, Dushan Hemantha, Ashan Priyanjan, Lahiru Samarakoon, Lakshan Sandakan, Nuwan Thushara, Asitha Fernando, Chamindu Wijekoon, Ranitha Liyanaarachchi, Abishek Liyanaarachchi, Duvindu Tilkeeratne
Jaffna - Janith Liyanage (Capt), Nishan Madushka, Navod Paranavithana, Kasun Abeyratne, Ron Chandragupta, Lahiru Madusanka, Ravindu Fernando, Dilum Sudeera, Binura Fernando, Jeffrey Vandersay, Avishka Tharindu, Kamesh Nirmal



Hiruna Warusawithana (L) and Bimandee Bandara (R) receiving their awards

Hillwood's Bimandee Bandara bags four Junior Nationals TT titles

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Bimandee Bandara of Hillwood College, Kandy bagged an unprecedented four titles at the Junior National Table Tennis Championship at S. Thomas' College Indoor Stadium.

She won the Under 17 and 19 singles titles and then teamed up with Ayla Chitty of Ladies College and Shaifullah Akram (Hill Country International School) to win the Under 19 Girls Doubles and Mixed Doubles finals respectively.

RESULTS

BOYS
Under 11: Champion - Kenura Silva (Ananda College), **Runner-up** - Darshana Bambarange (Vidyarthi College); **Under 13: Champion** - Aken Bojith (Dharmasoka College), **Runner-up** - Mathil Sasdinu (Dharmasoka College); **Under 15: Champion** - Diran Haner (Royal College), **Runner-up** - Hareen Nimdinu (Dharmasoka College); **Under 17: Champion** - Thisum Gamage (Ananda College), **Runner-up** - Hareen Nimdinu (Dharmasoka College); **Under 19: Champion** - Yasiru Maleesha (Vidyarthi College), **Runner-up** - Hiruna Warusawithana (Ananda College); **Under 19 Doubles: Champion** - Hiruna Warusawithana (Ananda College) / Thisas Ranchagoda (Royal College), **Runner-up** - Aken Suranga (Colombo International School) / Sehas Weerasinghe (Nalanda College)

GIRLS
Under 11: Champion - Muthuli Sahanya (Southland College), **Runner-up** - S. Hulangamuwa (Visakha Vidyalaya Colombo); **Under 13: Champion** - Nikelya Fernando (Musaeus College), **Runner-up** - Yoshini Jayawardena (Mahamaya College); **Under 15: Champion** - Lesanya Sethumdi (Dharmasoka College), **Runner-up** - Thamadi Kavindya (Devananda College); **Under 17: Champion** - Bimandee Bandara (Hillwood College), **Runner-up** - Navindi Senananyake (Kegala Balika); **Under 19: Champion** - Bimandee Bandara (Hillwood College), **Runner-up** - Ayla Chitty (Ladies College); **Under 19 Doubles: Champion** - Bimandee Bandara (Hillwood College) / Ayla Chitty (Ladies College), **Runner-up** - Shenali Mendis (Musaeus College) / Heshi Nirmal (Prajapathi Balika); **Under 19 Mixed Doubles: Champion** - Bimandee Bandara (Hillwood College) / Shaifullah Akram (Hill Country International School), **Runner-up** - Hiruna Warusawithana (Ananda College) / Nadithi Rehansa (Visakha Vidyalaya); **Best Player Girls** - Bimandee Bandara (Hillwood College); **Best Player Boys** - Hiruna Warusawithana (Ananda College).

Sri Lanka Planters beat Indian UPASI Team at Golf

Sri Lanka Planters Golf outfit beat visiting Indian UPASI Golf outfit in their annual golf encounter which took place at the Royal Colombo Golf Club (RCGC) recently.

The last win for the Sri Lankan outfit came way back in 1993. The outfit was led by former Sri Lanka Air Force Commander, Harsha Abeywickrema with Tharindu Wickremasinghe, Gamini Jayaweera, Sunil Udalagama, Lakshman Athukorala, Amal Cabraal, Vish Govindasamy and Dilan Polonowita forming the team. Sri Lankan outfit aggregate was 174 point while the Indian UPASI team got 144 points. Former Andanian and top class



Tharindu was in sparkling form golfer Tharindu Wickremasinghe was the winner of the individual Stableford event while the runner-up was Sunil Udalagama. Nearest to the PIN was N. Sriram. (SJ)

NEW ZEALAND DEMOLISH SRI LANKA IN 2ND T20

New Zealand demolished Sri Lanka with a nine-wicket victory in the second Twenty20 international to level the series Wednesday, as opener Tim Seifert finished on 79 not out.

Black Caps bowler Adam Milne had earlier taken five wickets for just 26 runs in a man-of-the-match performance as Sri Lanka were skittled for just 141 runs.

"You always dream of taking five wickets for New Zealand. As I had three in the last over with a couple of tailenders in, I started feeling a little bit greedy," Milne later admitted.

Seifert then helped steer New Zealand to victory as the hosts hit a rapid-fire 146-1 in reply after 14.4 overs.

New Zealand captain Tom Latham hailed his side's "pretty clinical performance." "The way we were just able to keep taking wickets, that's the best way really to stall a run rate," he added.

"I thought our bowling performance was outstanding." New Zealand's victory in Dunedin levelled the series 1-1 ahead of the decider this Saturday in Queenstown.

Sri Lanka had won the opening T20 match last Sunday in Auckland.

Milne's impressive bowling display left New Zealand with a target of 142 to win. Opener Chad Bowes was caught after hitting 31 off 15 balls before Seifert peppered the boundary in a partnership of 106 alongside Latham, who finished 20 not out.



New Zealand's Adam Milne (L) celebrates with teammates after taking a wicket during the second Twenty20 international cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in Dunedin

Seifert then wrapped up New Zealand's innings in style with two towering sixes. It was a brutal defeat for Sri Lanka, who had made a good start.

Kusal Perera (35) and Dhananjaya de Silva (37) put on a middle-order partnership of 62 off 46 balls to steer the visitors to 99-4 after 12 overs.

The tourists then collapsed by losing their next six wickets for just 42 runs as New Zealand's seamers found their length to devastating effect.

Charith Asalanka was the last Sri Lankan

batter to offer any resistance, chalking up 24 runs off 19 balls.

Milne did the most damage for New Zealand, picking off Sri Lanka's tailenders Dilshan Madushanka and Pramod Madushan without a run being scored.

"We got a good start but lost the momentum in the middle," said Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka, who paid credit to Milne's superb bowling.

"Losing wickets at regular intervals

SRI LANKA

P. Nissanka c Lister b Milne	09
K. Mendis c Latham b Lister	10
K. Perera c Neesham b Milne	35
D. de Silva c Lister b Ravindra	37
C. Asalanka c Sodhi b Milne	24
D. Shanaka c Lister b Shipley	07
W. Hasaranga c Milne b Neesham	09
M. Theekshana c Latham b Lister	00
P. Madushan b Milne	01
K. Rajitha not out	01
D. Madushanka b Milne	00
EXTRAS: (b 1, lb 2, w 5)	08
TOTAL: (all out, 19 Overs)	141

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-18, 2-29, 3-91, 4-99, 5-122, 6-134, 7-135, 8-140, 9-141, 10-141

BOWLING: Milne 4-0-26-5, B. Lister 4-0-26-2, H. Shipley 3-0-25-1, R. Ravindra 3-0-24-1, J. Neesham 2-0-20-1, I. Sodhi 3-0-17-0

NEW ZEALAND

C. Bowes c Hasaranga b Rajitha	31
T. Seifert not out	79
T. Latham not out	20
EXTRAS: (lb 1, w 15)	16
TOTAL: (1 wicket, 14.4 Overs)	146
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-40	

BOWLING: M. Theekshana 4-0-18-0, D. Madushanka 1-0-18-0, K. Rajitha 2-0-25-1, P. Madushan 2-0-21-0, D. Shanaka 1-0-10-0, W. Hasaranga 3-0-22-0, D. de Silva 1-4-0-31-0

Jayanthan slams ton as 'St. John's dominate

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

St. John's College Nugegoda dominated proceedings of the drawn 23rd Battle of Sri Jayawardenapura against tradition rivals Ananda Sashtalaya Kotte which concluded at the P. Sara Stadium yesterday.

The second day's proceedings saw St. John's resuming from their overnight score of 258 for 8 going on to make 282 with overnight

batsman Jayanthan Abinash reaching his ton, and remaining 115 n.o., hitting 12 boundaries.

Ananda Sashtalaya in their turn lost wickets at regular intervals and with no significant partnerships coming their way they were bowled out for 170 runs with Piumal Devranga, who bagged four scalps, doing the damage and the Sashtalains made to follow on ended the day on 44 for 1.

RESULT

St. John's Nugegoda (258/8 overnight) 282 for 8 declared (Anusara Fernando 70, Lakshitha Lakindu 38, Vochan Lakshan 27, Jayanthan Abinash 115 n.o.; Poshitha Madanayake 2 for 47, Janitha Chaturanga 2 for 62, Charuka Eshan 2 for 71)

Ananda Sashtalaya Kotte 170 (Kushith Madushan 44, Janitha Chaturanga 31, Nitheesha Kamalasureya 29, Nadeem Majeed 29; Piumal Devranga 4 for 27, Anusara Fernando 2 for 18, Obasha Malintha 2 for 47) **and 44 for 1** (Nitheesha Kamalasureya 22 n.o.)

SLTA Hard Courts Tennis Nationals Dinethya, Apna emerge champions



Dinethya Dharmaratne in action



Apna Perera in action

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

Dinethya Dharmaratne and Apna Perera emerged the women's and men's Open singles champions of the SLTA Hard Courts Tennis Nationals when they came out victorious in the finals played at the SLTA tennis courts in Greenpath, Colombo yesterday.

Dinethya had an easy

passage when she outclassed fancied Janali Manamperi by two sets to nil while Apna continued his winning

streak when he got the better of the experience Kiran Vairawanathan with a hard fought two sets to one victory.

Under 19 Semi-Final Maris Stella advance to final

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

Maris Stella College Negombo advanced to the final of the Under 19 Division One Tier 'B' inter-schools two day

cricket tournament by virtue of having gained bonus points in the drawn semi-final encounter against St. Aloysius' College Galle played at Maggona.



Sri Lions President Kelum Sujith Perera presenting a jersey to Sri Lanka Netball Federation President Lakshmi Victoria - PIC BY SAMANTHA PERERA

Sri Lions come to Sri Lanka

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

UAE-based sports institute Sri Lions announced the launch of their Sri Lanka branch at a press briefing held at the SSC pavilion Colombo.

Sri Lions will initially begin their journey in Sri Lanka on eight sports namely athletics, badminton, cricket, football, golf, hockey, netball, rugby and volleyball.

Their aim is to improve the skills of Sri Lanka players with the help of world class coaches from here and abroad.

In addition to the senior teams in various sports, Sri Lions Sri Lanka will also have its academy paving room for the younger generation to be mentored by globally recognised players, such as the 17-time best Rugby Sevens player in the world, Cecil Afrika of South Africa, and Sri Lankan netball coach Thilaka Jinadasa.

Founder and President of Sri Lions Sri Lanka Kelum Sujith Perera believes that establishment of this institute in Sri Lanka will exponentially boost the standard of sports in the country, especially during these tough times.

"Sri Lanka may have had their struggles in the recent past financially, but we are a country that has produced thousands of top-class sports personalities. We observed that sports in this nation are deteriorating due to what's happening around the country, which is why we felt that it's our responsibility to contribute in a way that the sports will be uplifted," Perera said.

Founded by Kelum Sujith Perera, Sri Lions is recognised

as a functioning body by the Dubai and Abu Dhabi Sri Lankan Consulates.

Sri Lions made huge strides in 2022 playing in the prestigious UAE's Bukhatir League 2022. They became the first Sri Lankan side in over a decade to play a semi-final match in the biggest cricket league in the UAE and their top-class performances saw their very own Waruna Perera sealing a spot in the UAE national team following some strong performances.

Sri Lions will compete in the T20 as well as T10 tournaments of the Bukhatir League having brought former Sri Lanka fast bowler Vikum Sanjaya.

Sri Lions' badminton team has been a dominant force in Dubai having clinched the Dubai All Sports and All Summer as well as Dubai Air Badminton Tournament.

Meanwhile, its cricket team has been in splendid form having secured the Sri Lions Under 25 Asia Championship 2021.

Sri Lions rugby team on the other hand has won the Gulf Men's Sevens Championship in 2019 and 2020 as well as the Harfa Trophy in 2019.

The club management has been able to involve some of the top players from Sri Lanka over the years including Srinath Sooriyabandara and Mithun Hapugoda. The Sri Lankan pride of UAE - the Sri Lions have also organised a tag rugby tournament with the participation of local clubs as well as school teams.

RESULTS

At Maggona - Maris Stella prevail on bonus points
Maris Stella Negombo 311 for 8 declared (Kaveen Fernando 109, Shean Adithya 57, Ramith Bandara 50, Hasindu Perera 28, Anshen de Silva 18; Oshada Devinda 3 for 30, Induwara Udena 2 for 69)
St. Aloysius' Galle 80 for 3 (Charya Paranavithana 32, Oshada Devinda 19 n.o.; Chirath Adithya 2 for 34)