



## RANIL TO CONTEST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HINTS AT POLL EARLY NEXT YEAR

- Ranil says he will consult all parties concerned and a presidential poll may be held early 2024
- Informs opposition MPs that he presently has the numbers in Parliament
- Will call for Parliament to work as one after IMF agreement presented in House
- Says country in a better position when compared to a few months ago
- If MPs want to crossover they should do so voluntarily and not under political pressure or expecting portfolios

BY JAMILA HUSAIN

President Ranil Wickremesinghe will contest the next Presidential Election and has hinted at a possible presidential poll to be held early next year, the Daily Mirror learns.

In a meeting held with minority political party parliamentarians this week, Wickremesinghe informed them that he would contest as a presidential candidate and would call for an election early next year following consultations with the Elections Commission, Treasury and Attorney General.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## PREZ, AMBASSADORS TO DECLARE ASSETS UNDER NEW ANTI-CORRUPTION BILL

- Special provisions to protect whistleblowers
- Also a condition stipulated by the IMF to approve the US \$ 2.9 billion programme

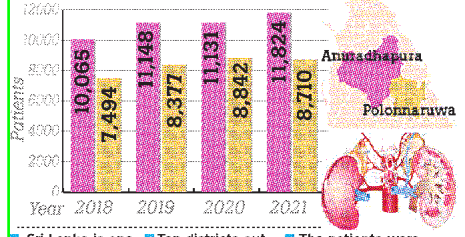
BY KELUM BANDARA

The new Anti-Corruption Bill, if enacted, will provide for the president, the provincial governors and members, the ambassadors, the high commissioners and the members of the independent commissions to declare assets to the proposed independent commission to be set up to investigate bribery and corruption, a Minister said yesterday.

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## China-SL Water Research Institute commended

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Patients North Central Province



Sri Lanka is one of the countries that is seriously affected by the CKD/CKDU. Ten districts out of 25 of the country were identified as high prevalence for the disease. The patients were of a specific geographic area of the country: North Central Province.

## Steps to be taken to develop the Research Institute as Asia's Higher Education Water Research Institute

Deputy Chairman of the Chinese Government's International Development Affairs Deng Boqing who is at present on a visit to Sri Lanka on the invitation of the government said China-Sri Lanka Water Research Institute has been conducting research of international standard and that the Chinese government would take steps to provide expertise and equipment required to develop the same.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## SL elected to UN Commission on the Status of Women

- By being elected to the CSW, Sri Lanka continues its international engagement in the area of women's empowerment

Sri Lanka was elected by acclamation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York on 5 April 2023 for a four-year term from 2024 -2028, a statement from the Foreign Ministry said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## SJB MP Fowzie hails President

- Dismisses reports about his plans to crossover to the government

BY YOHAN PERERA

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP A.H.M. Fowzie said yesterday that President Ranil Wickremesinghe is doing a good job, as attested by people in general today.

"One must speak the truth as it is clearly seen that the President is doing a good job. This is not just my personal opinion as it is what people say about Mr. Wickremesinghe," he said.

However he dismissed reports about his plans to crossover to the government, "I only spoke reality and I am not on the fence," he added.

Mr. Fowzie is the latest SJB MP to speak favourably about the President as some MP including Rajitha Senarathne also made similar remarks on Thursday.

## Easter Sunday attacks: BROTHER OF TWO BRITS KILLED WANTS ANSWERS

- Says I just want to know the truth. I am not a politician or a judge

BY EASWARAN RUTNAM

The brother of two Brits killed in the Easter Sunday attacks in 2019 is determined to know who is really responsible for the incident. David Linsey said that he and his family may never get closure, but he will continue to help the people of Sri Lanka in memory of his brother and sister who died in the Easter Sunday bombings at the Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo.



David Linsey

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## CHRISTIANS COMMEMORATE GOOD FRIDAY



Christian devotees commemorated Good Friday yesterday, the day Jesus Christ was crucified at Calvary. Picture shows devotees of the Wella Misson taking part in a procession in observance of Good Friday at Palliyawatta in Wattala. PIC BY PRADEEP PATHIRANA

## Alleged medical supplies from unregistered companies: SC grants leave to proceed with FR petition

- Petitioner had challenged the moves by the Ministry of Health to procure medical supplies from unregistered private suppliers through direct contracting and unsolicited bids

BY LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

The Supreme Court on Thursday (6) granted leave to proceed with a Fundamental Rights petition filed by the Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) against the procurement of medical supplies from unregistered private suppliers under the Indian Credit Line.

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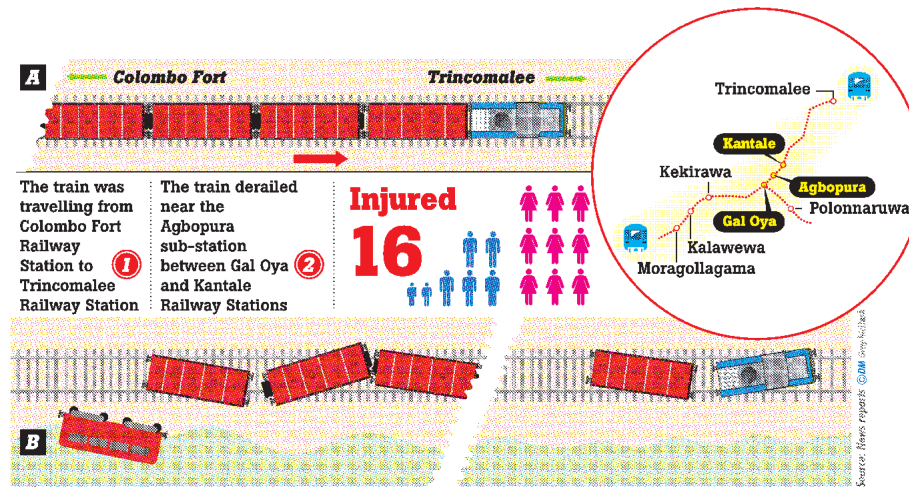
## Train derails injuring two guards, 14 others

- Nine women, five men and two boys were injured in the accident

BY AJITH SIRIWARDANA

At least 16 people including the chief and assistant guards were injured when the Trincomalee bound train from Colombo derailed near the Agbopura sub-station between Gal Oya and Kantale Railway Stations yesterday afternoon.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



The train was travelling from Colombo Fort Railway Station to Trincomalee Railway Station. The train derailed near the Agbopura sub-station between Gal Oya and Kantale Railway Stations. **Injured 16**

**WILPATTU NATIONAL PARK**  
Area: 131,667.1 ha  
Established: Dec. 25, 1938

Wilpattu is the largest and one of the oldest National Parks in Sri Lanka. Wilpattu is among the top national parks world renowned for its leopard population. The unique feature of this park is the existence of natural lakes, sand-rimmed water basins or depressions that fill with rainwater.

Sources: News reports ©DM GraphicDesk

## Group found clearing forest in Wilpattu

- Suspects taken into custody
- Officials say more than 300 year old valuable trees had been felled by the suspects

BY HIRAN PRIYANKARA JAYASINGHE

A group of individuals clearing the forest in the buffer zone of the Wilpattu National Park was taken into custody with their machinery and equipment yesterday by wildlife conservators.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Sun directly over Sri Lanka

- Thundershowers are expected to occur at several places

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKREMA

The sun is expected to be directly over Sri Lanka from April 5 to April 15, as a result of its apparent northward relative motion, the Department of Meteorology said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## No divisions in SJB: Kavinda

- Claims some government MPs are currently talking with the opposition to crossover

BY YOHAN PERERA

There are no divisions within the SJB and therefore no one will crossover to the government from the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), MP Kavinda Jayawardana said yesterday.



SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Efforts made to rescue 14 Sri Lankans stranded in Myanmar

- Myanmar FM assures victims will be rescued very soon

Sri Lankan Ambassador to Myanmar Janaka Bandara who met with the Foreign Minister of that country U. Than Swe discussed measures to get 14 Sri Lankans stranded there as victims of human trafficking, a statement from the Foreign Ministry said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Police to intensify drunk and reckless driving detections during Avurudu

- Offenders will be strictly dealt with law, says Police Spokesman SSP Nihal Thaldewa

BY KURULU KOJANA KARIYAKARAWANA

The Police Department will intensify detections targeting reckless and drunk drivers in the coming week of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year to make the roads a safe environment for all users, a senior official said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Brother of two Brits killed wants answers

Speaking on the programme 'On Fire with Easwaran Rutnam' on Daily Mirror, David Linsey said that the 2019 attacks must be investigated to the fullest extent. Linsey was in Sri Lanka this week to support cleft lip and palate surgery training through the Amelie and Daniel Linsey Foundation.

"I just want to know the truth. I am not a politician or a judge. But it (Easter attacks) needs to be

investigated to the fullest extent. Until that, it is really difficult for me to make assumptions," Linsey said when asked about concerns raised over ongoing investigations into the attacks. Asked if he feels that he and his family will get closure following the loss of his brother and sister, David Linsey said that it will be difficult to ever get closure. He said that helping Sri Lanka through the Amelie and Daniel Linsey

Foundation is one way to move on while the process of justice takes its course.

David also said that the terrorists must not be allowed to win and he also encouraged more people to visit Sri Lanka. Daniel, 19, and Amelie, 15, had been eating breakfast with their father in the Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive device in the restaurant.

Daniel and Amelie were killed in the attack, while their father survived. David was back in the UK with his mother and youngest brother, studying for his Oxford University exams. Following the incident David Linsey launched the Amelie and Daniel Linsey Foundation and brought a team of cleft lip and palate experts to Sri Lanka this week to support cleft lip and palate surgery training in Sri Lanka. The team attended a cleft surgery conference in Galle, and assisted with training surgeons at the new cleft lip facility in Nuwara Eliya.

## Group found clearing forest in Wilpattu

Officials said more than 300 year old valuable trees had been felled by the suspects using a permit issued by Karuwalagaswewa Divisional Secretary. They said the permit had been issued to cultivate a five acre land on lease. They also said the permit had been issued without any attention to the boundaries of the National Park.

However Divisional Secretary Janaka Thushara Balasuriya said he issued the permit on the report of the Grama Niladhari of the area. He pointed out that the boundaries of the Wilpattu National Park had not been marked to distinguish Wilwattu and Thabbona.

## China-SL Water Research Institute commended

He said so during his recent visit on inspection of Peradeniya China - Sri Lanka Water Research Institute, accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador in Sri Lanka.

"Spread of renal ailments in several agricultural areas of Sri Lanka had been reported to us. China as a country with long standing friendly relations with Sri Lanka founded a hospital in Polonnaruwa complete with all facilities to provide treatment for renal ailments. As a preventive measure, the China - Sri Lanka Water Research Institute, a joint venture of Chinese and Sri Lankan experts, was established to conduct research on the condition of ground water. It is commendable that the Institute has been fulfilling its mission to our utter satisfaction," he said.

The Deputy-Chairman of Chinese Government's International Development Affairs said the Chinese Government would provide expertise and accessories to develop the institute that commands international recognition for its research activities and that step would be taken to procure these accessories from the Western countries if required.

The delegation had talks on adopting modern technology on drinking water supply in Sri Lanka, improving the quality of ground water and streamlining waste water management for which the Chinese government would provide assistance.

The delegates who expressed satisfaction about the affairs of the China - Sri Lanka Water Research and Technology Institute put forward future plans for the next several years. They said steps would be taken to develop the Research Institute as Asia's Higher Education Water Research Institute. Vice Chancellor of Peradeniya University Prof. M.D. Lamahewa, Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Water Supply M. Nafeel, Head of the China-Sri Lanka Water Research Institute Dr. S.K. Weragoda, and several scholars were present at the occasion.

## Train derails injuring two guards, 14 others

A parcel compartment and another compartment had derailed while the brake van had toppled. Nine women, five men and two boys were injured in the accident and were admitted to the Kantale Hospital.

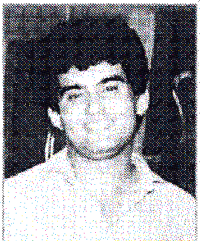
## No divisions in SJB: Kavinda

MP Senarathne said he will accept the Ministry of Health in any government

Asked about the comments made by MP Rajitha Senarathne about his desire to crossover and accept the health minister's post, MP Jayawardana said the former did not mean crossing over. "MP Senarathne only said he will accept the Ministry of Health in any government. What he had actually meant was that he would accept the Health Ministry in a future SJB led government."

Also he claimed that some government MPs are currently talking with the opposition to crossover. "There are different groups in government as some support President Ranil Wickremesinghe, some former Minister Basil Rajapaksa while there are others who back MP Namal Rajapaksa," he claimed.

## 22nd Death Anniversary BUDDHI ATHULATHMUDALI



Died on 8th April 2001

There's a face with me always  
There's a voice I long to hear  
A smile I'll remember forever  
In my heart you are always there  
Although I still shed tears  
Although I have my fears  
Your memories will always comfort me  
Today and through the years

We miss you my darling Putha your memories are very precious Ammi and loved ones

## RANIL TO CONTEST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, HINTS AT POLL EARLY NEXT YEAR

Wickremesinghe also informed the opposition parliamentarians that the economy was on an upward trend and would improve in the coming months. The President said the country was in a better position when compared to a few months ago and once the economy stabilizes, he would consult all political parties and other parties concerned and call for a presidential poll.

The President further said that he would call on all political parties in parliament to work as one to implement the IMF reforms in order to strengthen the economic revival after he presents the IMF agreement before Parliament in April or May.

To those opposition parliamentarians who want to join the government, Wickremesinghe encouraged these MPs to come with their respective groups or political parties and if the party leadership is not willing to join the government, then the MPs can crossover on their own.

Sources who attended the meeting told Daily Mirror that Wickremesinghe had however informed the parliamentarians that he presently had a comfortable majority in Parliament, and hence he was not in any rush to take MPs from the opposition. He said if these MPs want to crossover

they should do so voluntarily and not under political pressure or expecting portfolios in return and those who do not want to crossover, but yet want to support him can do so.

He said such MPs would be allocated tasks and designations to support the government while being in the opposition so that all parties could be united in taking the economy further.

Several opposition parliamentarians including from the Samagi Jana Balawegaya are in discussions with the President and have informed him that they are ready to support him in taking the country forward.

## Prez, ambassadors to declare assets under new Anti-Corruption Bill

They are not covered under current law for asset declaration.

Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe told Daily Mirror the bill, already announced in the gazette notification, would be presented to Parliament during the next parliamentary week. The bill, if enacted by Parliament, will provide for the establishment of a new commission to investigate bribery and corruption in place of the present commission. The Minister said

the proposed three member commission would be all powerful to prosecute anyone accused of bribery and corruption. "The current asset declaration law provides for the MPs to declare their assets to the Speaker, the Cabinet Ministers to the president and the government officials to their heads of departments."

The new law will provide for them to declare assets to the proposed bribery commission," he

said. Besides, the Minister said there are special provisions in the bill to protect whistleblowers.

"Today, government officials are reluctant to report about the misconduct of their superiors fearing reprisals. The new law will have special safeguards for them," he said.

The enactment of such a piece of legislation is also a condition stipulated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve the US \$ 2.9 billion programme.

## Police to intensify drunk and reckless driving detections during Avurudu

● We will intensify detections on reckless and drunk drivers who will pose a risk to the lives of the other road users

Police Spokesman SSP Nihal Thaldudu told the Daily Mirror that countrywide police stations have been given special instructions including all its traffic branches to closely

monitor violations of traffic laws in the coming days.

"We will intensify detections on reckless and drunk drivers who will pose a risk to the lives of the other road users.

People do tend to get behind a wheel once they are under the influence of alcohol during the festive season," he said. Similarly, this has led to a number of road related accidents during this festive period and we are being watchful. The offenders will be strictly dealt with law, SSP Thaldudu said.



## SC grants leave to proceed with FR petition

● The names of the said Private Entities have been proposed to the Cabinet of Ministers by the Minister of Health for the relevant procurements

Limited and Kausikh Therapeutics Limited in respect of the purported procurement of any medicinal supplies.

The petitioners stated that the Minister of Health Keheliya Rambukwella has sought the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers to utilize the Indian Credit Line and other unspecified means of funding to maintain an uninterrupted supply of medicine, with the purported view to prevent acute shortages in medical supplies in government health institutions in Sri Lanka.

The petitioners further said that the Minister of Health has on two occasions proposed the names of Savorite Pharmaceuticals (Pvt) Limited and Kausikh Therapeutics Limited as identified suppliers from whom the procurement and importation of medical supplies would be made to Sri Lanka, in respect of certain medicines. The names of the said Private Entities have been proposed to the Cabinet of Ministers by the Minister of Health for the relevant procurements, despite the said Private Entities not having the requisite registrations by the NMRA, and in the complete absence of a competitive procurement process.

The Supreme Court three-judge-bench comprised Justices Murdu Fernando, Yasanth Kodagoda and Achala Wengappuli. Counsel Senany Dayaratne with Nishadi Wickramasinghe, Sankitha Gunaratne and Lasanthika Hettiarachchi instructed by Attorney-at-law Thushari Jayawardana appeared for the petitioners. Deputy Solicitor General Nirmalan Wigneswaran appeared for the Attorney General.

The petitioner had challenged the moves by the Ministry of Health to procure medical supplies from unregistered private suppliers through direct contracting and unsolicited bids.

While noting that serious doubts have arisen regarding the lawfulness of the impugned procurement transaction, Supreme Court granted following two interim reliefs; Suspension of further importation of pharmaceuticals pertaining to the decision without obtaining a further order from the Court after proving that the quality and safety requirements are satisfied, and the procurement is lawful. Release for use of the two consignments that have already reached Sri Lanka only after conducting necessary tests, and the National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA) expressing its independent decision assuring the safety, quality, and efficacy of the already imported pharmaceuticals.

The TISL and its Executive Director Ashala Nadishani Perera filed this petition seeking an order preventing the Cabinet of Ministers and other officials from making any payments to Savorite Pharmaceuticals (Pvt)

## Efforts made to rescue 14 Sri Lankans stranded in Myanmar

According to the statement, the Ambassador requested the Minister to intervene in the matter immediately, and to take appropriate action to rescue the victims through the Myanmar authorities.

"The Foreign Minister of Myanmar took up the matter with serious concern and assured the Ambassador

that the victims will be rescued through the relevant authorities very soon. They cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to further enhancement of friendly bilateral relations between the two countries. The Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Myanmar and the Director General Consular Affairs also attended this meeting," the statement said.

## SL elected to UN Commission on the Status of Women

Sri Lanka's candidature was presented based on the country's longstanding tradition of promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls at the national level, and its commitment towards eliminating discrimination based on gender. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 and remains fully committed to adopting consistent and sustainable pro-equality and pro-empowerment policies towards women, including parity of status in decision making processes.

By being elected to the CSW, Sri Lanka continues its international engagement in the area of women's empowerment. It is recalled that in June 2022, Professor Rangita De Silva De Alwis of Sri Lanka was elected to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) for the term 2023-2026 - a body of 23 independent experts on women's rights from around the world that monitors the implementation of the CEDAW. The Government of Sri

Lanka continues to make progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and advancement in social, economic, and political settings through law reforms, formulating gender responsive policies and action plans.

The other countries elected include Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Colombia, Romania, and the Netherlands.

The CSW established in 1946 and comprising 45 member states, is the principal UN intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW has contributed to drafting of the CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, and other global policy frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The CSW works to put key gender equality issues on the global agenda and encourages action and implementation at the national level. The Commission also contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## OBITUARIES

**HEWAWASAM – NANDANA.**

(Retired hotelier, Hofheim/ Ts nr Frankfurt/ M Germany) passed away holidaying in his native Sri Lanka on 2nd April 2023. Beloved husband of Corinna Bode, loving father of Judy Hewawasam and Jane Hewawasam (Germany) and loving brother of Dhammika Hewawasam, Mallika Wijewardana and Indrajith Hewawasam (Sri Lanka), loving uncle of Asiri Madhubashini Wimalaweera and Thilina and Dilini Wijewardana. Fondly remembered and sadly missed by a host of friends and the "Frankfurt Spice Boys". His remains lie at Western Funeral Home No. 115, Colombo Road, Negombo. Open for viewing from 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. on 7th April and from 8.30 a.m. till 2.00 p.m. on 8th April. Cortege leaves at 2.30 p.m. Cremation at 3.00 p.m. at the Public Cemetery of Negombo. Tel: 0773552228. 572617

**PERERA – CECIL BERNARD.**

Called to rest with Jesus. Beloved husband of Malani Perera, father of Rajith, father-in-law of Ahinsa, grandfather of Aria, brother of Dudley, Beulah, late Percy, Alma, Bertie and Basil, passed away. Cortege leaves home at 3.00 p.m. for service at St. Matthews Church, Thalagama at 4.00 p.m. on Monday 10th April 2023. 108524

**SENANAYAKE – MR. WASANTHA RANJITH.**

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mr. Wasantha Ranjith Senanayake, Former Consul General, Department of Commerce, beloved husband of Lalani, father of Sanjaya and Dilini Senanayake. His remains lie at No. 27, Jayakantha Lane, Kirula Road, Colombo 05. Cremation at 4.00 p.m. at Borella Cemetery. Cortege leaves residence at 3.30 p.m. on the 8th of April 2023. 108672

ONLINE OBITUARIES www.dailymirror.lk/obituaries

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Today's partners can be your competitors tomorrow. And today's competitors can be your partners tomorrow."  
- SUZY KASSEM

OPINION



# SAJITH, SJB FACE GATHERING POLITICAL STORM



By D.B.S. Jeyaraj

**The leader of the Opposition Sajith Premadasa and his party, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) are very much in the news lately. There have been many reports in the mainstream as well as social media that a large number of MPs from the SJB are planning to join the ranks of the Ranil Wickremesinghe Govt soon. Some reports speculate that the number of SJB Parliamentarians contemplating a crossover is between 20 to 40.**

Predictably Sajith Premadasa has denied that his party MPs are going to defect. He has lashed out at the Govt and said such misleading reports are being planted in the media by the Govt.

He has also accused the Govt of conspiring to entice MPs from his party by offering Rs 200 Million to each MP. Premadasa has asserted that none of his party MPs will be tempted by such offers. He also claims that some Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MPs have joined the SJB. A news report in a morning newspaper stated as follows - "Members of the current Government create various news media and plant them in social media in an attempt to mislead the public," said the Leader of the Opposition of Sri Lanka, Sajith Premadasa.

He noted that a new political conspiracy was currently taking place in which the Government lies that a large number of MPs of the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) are going to join the Government.

"But Chandima Weerakody and Jayarathne Herath and a large number of MPs in the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) have joined our party and there are many more in line waiting to come," he said.

The Government, however, has weaved this lie against the country's only solution, the country's only answer, which is the SJB, he noted.

"We have gotten to know that the Government's estimate for an MP is Rs.200 million, the Government thinks that when they show Rs.200 million to our MPs they will beg to join the Government," said Mr Premadasa.

"I would like to say that the MPs of the SJB are not ready to take part in the Government's auction of MPs," he concluded.

Sajith Premadasa taking umbrage over the alleged attempt by the Wickremesinghe Govt to take away his MPs is quite understandable. After all, no party leader would like his MPs to split and join another party or form a new one.

The irony in this is that Premadasa himself took away the majority of MPs from the United National Party (UNP) of which he was a member and formed the SJB anew.

When that happened the UNP or its leader Wickremesinghe did not accuse him of offering financial "incentives" to woo the green elephants.

**Pre-emptive measures**

Notwithstanding Sajith's denial and assertion that his MPs would not split, it does appear that the SJB Leader is aware of a potential mass defection and is engaging in pre-emptive measures to prevent it.

Premadasa's allegation that MPs are being offered Rs 200 million can be seen as an attempt to deter potential defectors.

He is indirectly warning his party MPs that if the MPs break away, it would be insinuated that they did so for cash and that each MP's reputation would be tarnished.

Moreover, Sajith organized a dinner for his party MPs at the Monarch Imperial Hotel in Battaramulla on April 3rd.

Earlier it had been fixed for April 5 but was suddenly advanced by two days. One of the reasons attributed for this change was the "rumour" that a number of MPs from SJB were going to shift to the Govt when Parliament met on April 4. Sajith wanted to prevent this from happening by appealing to the MPs collectively and individually. Hence the dinner was held on the 3rd. 23 MPs including the host Sajith were at the dinner.

**Mistrust of SJB MPs**

Premadasa's anxiety and insecurity over the possibility of his MPs joining the Govt of President Ranil Wickremesinghe stem from his mistrust of his fellow SJB MPs.

It may be recalled that almost all the SJB Parliamentarians were UNP members in the past.

Most of them had no problems with Ranil Wickremesinghe's leadership and were not favourably disposed towards Sajith Premadasa's leadership ambition.

Yet, they deserted Wickremesinghe and the UNP en masse and together with Premadasa formed the SJB. This was not due to any ill will towards Ranil or any goodwill

towards Sajith. They had gauged the mood of the electorate through various means including opinion polls and had assessed that Ranil's stock was low while Sajith's was high.

They realised their electoral prospects were dismal if they remained with Ranil and the UNP.

So, they hitched their wagon to the Sajith star and turned to SJB. Politically what they did then seemed correct when the UNP was wiped out at the 2020 Parliamentary poll. The UNP hit an all-time low by not having a single elected MP. The party got only one MP on the National List.

Now the wheel seems to have turned full cycle. Ranil's stock seems to be rising. It appears that Ranil Wickremesinghe has the best chance of winning in the next Presidential Election.

His party the UNP or his tactical ally the SLPP doing well in Local authority, Provincial Council or Parliament elections are very, very slim.

However, this scenario is not prevalent in the Presidential hustings.

**Gulliver among Lilliputians**

It is Ranil who stands out among potential contenders in a future Presidential poll. He is like Gulliver among Lilliputians there.

Ranil knows it and therefore is firmly opposed to any other poll being conducted before Presidential Election.

What Ranil is aiming to do is to forge a broad alliance presumably named the United National Front (UNF) with the Elephant symbol and be its Presidential candidate.

This new pro-Ranil alliance will consist of the UNP, elements of the SJB and SLPP and parties representing the ethnic minority communities in Sri Lanka.

Since Sajith knows fully well that most of his fellow MPs lay down with him on the SJB bed only because of the desire to be in Parliament and not because of any love or admiration for him, the party leader is suspicious to the point of paranoia that they could desert him and return to their first love the UNP.

**UNP-SJB rapprochement**

Sajith Premadasa, therefore, is ultra-sensitive about any move to bring about UNP-SJB rapprochement or promote unity between both. Some months ago two former UNP stalwarts, one an Ex-Cabinet Minister and the other an ex-Corporation head, held an informal discussion with some SJB personalities about a tie-up between the UNP and SJB.

When Premadasa heard about this, he lost his cool and issued a harsh statement. In that, he mentioned the two ex-UNP members by the first letters of their names and accused them of a 'Kumanthranaya' (Conspiracy) to break up his party.

More recently TPA leader Mano Ganesan and SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem engaged in an 'Amity Mission' to bring about unity between Ranil Wickremesinghe and Sajith Premadasa with the Presidential Election in mind.

Ranil was amenable, subject to some conditions. He would be the Presidential candidate in 2024 backed by an alliance comprising the UNP, SJB and minority community parties. Sajith would be Prime Minister. Ranil will retire in 2029 clearing the field for Sajith to become the leader.

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

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

**Members of the Premadasa family too did not like the idea. Finally, Sajith Premadasa rejected the unity proposal.**

Upon hearing this Ranil Wickremesinghe too hardened his stance. So, Hakeem and Ganesan abandoned their unity moves (I have referred to this in these columns on 25 March 2023).

It is clear therefore that despite his statements to the contrary Sajith Premadasa is acutely aware that a defection from opposition/SJB ranks to the Govt/UNP ranks is very much on the cards. He is trying hard to prevent this from happening but events seem to be overtaking his efforts. Sajith and the SJB are certainly facing a political storm.

**Dr Rajitha Senaratne**

It is learnt that efforts are underway within the SJB to convince the hierarchy that the party should throw in its lot with President Wickremesinghe for the betterment of the country.

If the leadership remains unwilling, a group of MPs are likely to declare themselves independent and go over to the Govt.

A news report in the Daily Mirror of 6 April 2023 quoting Dr Rajitha Senaratne indicates this. Here is an excerpt -

"Several Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MPs are willing to support President Ranil Wickremesinghe and will do so as a group if the party fails to take a decision, SJB MP Rajitha Senaratne said today.

"MPs like Harsha de Silva are willing to support President Wickremesinghe no matter what anyone says. We will support the President as a group if the party fails to make a decision," the MP said responding to a question raised by journalists at a media briefing.

"Also, he said the notion that the President has put the country to a better position is a reality"

**It is Ranil who stands out among potential contenders in a future Presidential poll. He is like Gulliver among Lilliputians there. What Ranil is aiming to do is to forge a broad alliance presumably named the United National Front (UNF) with the Elephant symbol and be its Presidential candidate.**

What then has caused this change of mind among the UNP-turned-SJB Parliamentarians? Why are those who abandoned Ranil and accepted Sajith's leadership in 2020 now prepared to do the opposite?

There are three probable reasons.

**Ranil: From loser to winner**

The first reason is the fundamental change of perception towards Ranil. His image has changed from a loser into that of an achiever and winner.

Though attacked viciously as an unelected President lacking legitimacy and a Rajapaksa stooge, Ranil Wickremesinghe has done well.

Ranil has entrenched himself as President despite having only a solitary MP in Parliament. He has progressed considerably towards the goal he set himself namely the repairing of the economy.

Despite all the negativity of his critics and detractors, Ranil has been able to - with the collaboration of the Central Bank and Treasury-secure the much-awaited Extended Facility Fund (EFF) finances from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This has been a political game-changer.

Whether Wickremesinghe's critics acknowledge it or not, the reality is that his efforts in pulling Sri Lanka out of the dire economic straits it was in, are resonating with the 'ordinary' people who comprise what is termed as the silent majority.

Despite his faults and lapses, posterity will judge Wickremesinghe on what he did for the economy. Likewise, all MPs in the present Parliament will also be judged on those lines. Therefore these SJB Parliamentarians would opt to change sides now.

**Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna**

The second reason is the perceived increase in popular support for the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the corresponding decrease in support for the SJB.

An important pointer in this regard is the Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey (SLOTS) undertaken by the Institute for Health Policy (IHP). The survey gauges the level of support for political parties if Parliamentary elections are held currently.

According to the SLOTS, the JVP-led NPP and the SJB are the leading contenders. Both the SJB and NPP were running neck to neck for the months of November and December 2022 and January 2023. There was a marked change in February 2023. Support for the JVP-led NPP surged in February, giving it a clear lead with 43% of likely General Election voters, compared to 30% for the SJB.

The analysis also disclosed that in the

12 months from February 2022, the JVP-led NPP gained 30 points while the SJB gained 11 points.

So the SJB politicians are getting jittery about the rising popularity of the JVP and want to close ranks with Wickremesinghe, who they feel is the best option to counter the JVP.

**Sajith's leadership style**

The third reason is growing intra-party resentment and dissatisfaction towards Sajith Premadasa and his leadership style.

It is said that Sajith ignores senior partymen and runs things autocratically relying on a clique. This Cabal consists of Premadasa family members, a handful of MPs and an 'adviser'. This adviser, a businessman whose surname begins with a 'F' is supposedly influencing Sajith in many ways and has incurred the wrath of several MPs.

The disenchantment with Sajith Premadasa's leadership is a key reason for many MPs toying with the idea of exiting the SJB. Even minority party allies are disillusioned with this state of affairs.

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya party and its leader Sajith Premadasa are facing a gathering political storm.

This storm is likely to erupt anytime after the April New Year festivity.

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

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# EDITORIAL

Terrorism isn't insanity. It grows out of social conditions that are well known: poverty, social oppression, dictatorship, and a void of meaning in the lives of ordinary people.  
- DEEPAK CHOPRA

## OUR THOUGHT

### RESURRECTION AND TRUE SOCIAL PROGRESS

What is the deeper meaning of Jesus's death and resurrection? How does it serve his message? What is the importance of his Gospel message for our contemporary world? Is it still relevant?

The Gospel never invites us to pity. We read, rather "Feed the hungry, quench the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoner". We are invited to active involvement. The Gospel is in sharp contrast with our present-day culture which encourages people to "have a good cry", for easy emotional indulgence without costly involvement on behalf of others. This culture manipulates our emotions without challenging us to change things. Our involvement in the suffering of others is what leads us to change things.

If an event is simply past it is not possible for us to be involved in it. The same is true of the passion of Jesus. This is not an event isolated from the rest of human history.

It will never be understood unless placed within our ongoing reality. It is only if we understand it in continuity with all the suffering of the world that we can be properly involved in the passion of Jesus. It follows that the path to proper involvement in the passion of Jesus is openness to deeper involvement in the suffering of our world now.

It is not over yet. How, then, thus the passion of Jesus related to the ongoing story of human and sub-human suffering? The proclamation and praxis of the Kingdom were experienced as destructive and even blasphemous by others. It led to his death. But Jesus died as he had lived. He did not change. He refused to return evil for evil. He persisted in doing good and opposing evil and suffering to the end.

His death is what clinches the unconditional character of his proclamation and lifestyle: the Kingdom of God is at hand and there is only one way to live now. He did not swerve from living out the truth of God for us in the face of hatred and violence: his death suffered through and for others, asserts the unconditional validity of loving as God loves, the God whose sun shines on all alike, whose care for people cannot be affected by their response.

Because of this consistency, the death of Jesus is the climax of his witness to the God of the coming Kingdom. All his living had been a claim to be acting as God acts; it was through the creative "Finger of God" that he did what he did for suffering people. Fidelity to the Kingdom of God had brought him unavoidably to this place.

Therefore, in his dying we have the fullest historical expression of who God is. It is, of course, who we brought Jesus to the cross but nothing we did could make him betray the truth of the Father for us. He died loving, not hating. He experienced, as his deepest suffering, the eclipse of God, God-forsakenness, and accepted that too, for us and our well-being.

The 'Kingdom of God' is the metaphor of definitive salvation seen as a society of brothers and sisters, freed from all oppression and exploitation, where every tear is wiped away.

Resurrection faith is not a matter of dreaming. It is waking from our dream of reality to the reality in the dream. It is a way of living which proclaims the truth of the Risen One to the world. And the shape of this way of living is simply a continuation of the way Jesus responded to ordinary people in this sense of the God of the Kingdom. Resurrection faith is shown in our engagement with the people God loves wherever their dignity and life are being threatened. The resurrection of Jesus cannot be separated from his career and death. In the New Testament, the new thing that God the Father does for Jesus is understood, first and foremost, as recognition of the intrinsic and irrevocable significance of his lived proclamation of the Kingdom. He was right about God. It follows that the primary witness today to the truth of his resurrection lies in the quality of commitment and hope displayed in the lives of Christians for the sake of everybody. Jesus lived and died for the well-being of the whole of humanity.

To let God Easter in us involves a break with our fixed roots in the socially-induced unquestioning sense of "the way things are". We need to go beyond ourselves in a way that is not flight or evasion but rather a discovery of the possibilities of transformation of the everyday world.

The resurrection of Christ is also the restoration of the values he stood for. With the resurrection of Christ, what he stood for was also resurrected: peace, mercy, wisdom, clemency, humility, honesty, sensitivity, faith, hope, compassion, endurance, flexibility, harmony, justice, truth, empathy, healing, forgiveness, wholeness, etc.

To build a better world, we need people like Jesus. The more 'Jesuses' there are, the better for the true progress of a society. What Jesus stood for until his death is what humanity needs most. Nothing could defeat what he stood for. Resurrection is the sure guarantee that in the end good will triumph over evil.



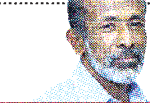
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## TERRORISM BILL: A MARCH FORWARD OR BACKWARD?

The Bill, if enacted in the current form might become counterproductive to those who vote for it as well.



The vague definition of a terrorist act is a concern



By M.S.M. Ayub

The Government has decided to postpone the presentation of the Anti-Terrorism Bill that seeks to replace the draconian Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1979 after wide criticism against it by local and international human rights organizations and civil society organizations. Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakse told the media on Thursday that the Bill would be presented in Parliament in late April or early May after giving opportunity for the lawyers and the Opposition to express their views on the Bill. However, he denied the allegation that the Bill is aimed at suppression of protests and dissents. Locally, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL), Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and several individuals concerned with human rights have expressed serious concern over the possibility of the bill, if enacted infringing human rights of the people. Internationally, the European Union, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), among others have expressed critical views on the Bill. Many opine that the new Bill, though expected to replace the PTA and purports to do away with the provisions of the PTA that were considered to violate international human rights law, is worse than the latter. Almost all agree with the view that the interpretation of the term "Terrorism" in the new Bill is vague and overbroad and paves the way for a crackdown on dissent and infringement of fundamental rights. The Bill cites certain intentions and acts separately, which in combination, make up the offences of terrorism. For instance, if a person or a group "causes serious obstruction or damage to or interference with Essential Services or supplies or with any critical infrastructure or logistic facility associated with any essential service or supply" with the intention of "wrongfully or unlawfully compelling the Government of Sri Lanka, or any other

Government, or an international organization, to do or to abstain from doing any act" commits an offence of terrorism. When simplified, if a Trade Union strikes work or launches a street protest, "causing serious obstruction to essential services or supplies," "with the intention of compelling the government" to increase the salary of its members, it will amount to an act of terrorism under the Bill. The HRCSL says "As prescribed in section 3(2) (f) anyone who interferes with essential services or supplies is considered to be an act of terrorism. This would mean that anyone who takes part in a protest or rally, even if it is peaceful, can be deemed to be committing an act of terrorism." It further says "The definition of terrorism contemplated in the Bill shall make it difficult to distinguish between legitimate acts of dissent and actual acts of terrorism." The term 'Terrorist Act' has been described in such wide terms so as to bring in all legitimate, democratic, mass political and protest campaigns against government policies within the definition of a terrorist act, senior Attorney-at-Law KalyanandaTiranagama has stated in a newspaper article. Subscribing to the view, the CPA also notes that the definition of the 'offence of terrorism' in the Bill is overly-broad and some of the offences in it raise serious concerns for the freedom of expression, potentially giving the State an additional tool to crack down on dissent and criticism. The ICJ also says that the overbroad and vague definition in clause 3 of "acts of terrorism" in the Bill can be interpreted in a manner that stifles dissent and can be used to crush peaceful protests. Vague laws undermine the rule of law because they leave the door open to selective and arbitrary interpretation, law enforcement and prosecution, it has added. HRW is of the view that the "proposed counterterrorism law would permit the government to continue to use draconian measures to silence peaceful critics and target minorities. The Sri Lankan Government has been under pressure from international human rights organisations, especially the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for about a decade to repeal the PTA or to replace it with a new anti-terrorist law in

accordance with the international human rights laws and international standards. Based on the 2021 UNHRC resolution on Sri Lanka, the European Parliament passed a resolution in June 2021, which called on the European Commission to consider the possibility of annulling the GSP+ facilities awarded to Sri Lanka, if Sri Lanka did not improve its human rights situation including the repealing of the PTA. The Yahapalana Government which took an approach different from the one taken by the Rajapakses towards the UNHRC drafted a Counter Terrorism Bill in 2018 and presented it in Parliament. However, Gotabaya Rajapaksa Government rejected it claiming that it was forced on the country by foreign forces. Now, they are turning a blind eye to the new ATB, which contains almost the same provisions. The irony is that the Government has published a new Bill claiming to meet international standards and to replace the PTA, but the international forces that pressed for it have turned against it claiming that the new Bill is worse than the PTA. In fact, the new Bill has rectified some of the flaws in the PTA that were pointed out by the international players. It has removed the provision in the PTA for a detainee's confession to be admissible as evidence against him. It has also provided for the arresting officer to issue a document notifying the arrest to the next of kin of the accused and the Human Rights Commission, within 24 hours. The obligation to bring the detainee before a magistrate every 14 days when the person is detained without a Detention Order is also an improvement in the new piece of legislation. However, despite the new Bill having somewhat improved the situation of the persons who could be arrested under it, it has defined the term terrorism so that anybody who criticizes a Government might be arrested as a terrorist. Had this Bill been in force last year, even President Ranil Wickremesinghe might have been arrested, as he publicly supported the GotaGoGama! The Aragalaya and the GotaGoGama had fulfilled the two criteria needed to be a terrorist act under the new Bill - having an intention of compelling the government to do something and obstructing essential services (vehicular transport and the functions of the President's office). However, the allegation that the Government has drafted this Bill to implement the IMF conditions is unfounded as the offences of terrorism under the Counter Terrorism Bill of 2018 and those of the new Bill is the same, as Mr Tiranagama points out. However the timing of its presentation this time is questionable. The new Bill has some additional offences that affect the media as well. It also empowers the President to proscribe organizations based on its definition of terrorism. The Bill, if enacted in the current form might become counterproductive to those who vote for it as well. Apart from the danger of losing an annual GSP concession of about US\$ 500 and a stronger resolution being adopted at the next UNHRC session, the Bill might turn against them also, in case of a regime change. Besides, if a member of the current Government is disgruntled over a change of Ministry or not being offered a portfolio, he would not be able to express his views. Yet, all signs are that the Bill is going to be amended before it is enacted.

## 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?

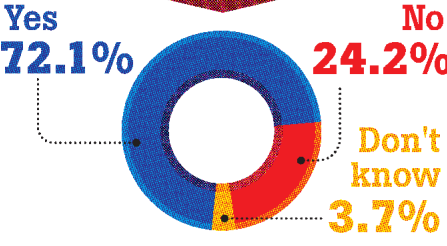
- Yes
- No
- They have a right to protest
- They are crippling the economy further



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](http://www.DailyMirror.lk)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### PTA to ATA: Delay is not the end of the story

The proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill which was Gazetted on March 22, 2023 came under much scrutiny as many factions condemned that its contents are far worse than those included in the Prevention to Terrorism Act. While some call it the incumbent Government's response to the Aragalaya, others claim that this Bill would give more powers to the Executive and the Armed forces. Even though the State will be introducing it in place of the PTA, concerns have been raised on its definition of terrorism, clauses on the proscription of organisations, imposition of the death penalty and other areas. Several international organisations including the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) issued statements highlighting the grey areas of the Bill. For example, Clause 4(1)(a) of the Bill, which, if adopted in its current formulation, would introduce the death penalty for "the terrorism offence of murder". In its statement, ICJ states that Sri Lanka has been a de facto abolitionist country for decades, given that a moratorium on executions has been in place in Sri Lanka since 1976. "The ICJ is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances, as a violation of the right to life, and as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment". The Bill was introduced in the wake of several trade unions launching strike action against various policy decisions taken by the government, one being the tax policy. Stating on Wednesday, the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) said it would not hesitate to challenge any bill that would deem to undermine the rule of law and liberty of the citizens of this country. However, as a response to widespread concerns and criticisms, Justice Minister Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakse said that the Government had decided to delay the tabling of the Bill towards the end of April or the first week of May. But the Government has not been clear on addressing the grey areas of the Bill before tabling it in Parliament. In the event the Bill receives a two-thirds majority and is passed in Parliament, the media too will be at the receiving end of State suppression.

A CONCERNED CITIZEN

### SL going through an 'Interval in Hell' - Tilvin

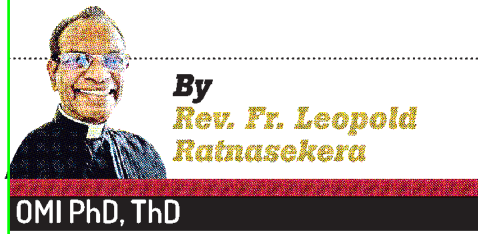
#### WEB COMMENTS

- I LOVE SRI LANKA** - Silva should provide specific and feasible alternative solutions. IMF loan is too small to be considered a burden. To be able to borrow at this moment is good. The priority should be cutting down the cost of governance and ensuring corruption is minimised while fast-tracking investments in a transparent system. Sri Lanka can easily come out of the rut with a committed leader at the helm.
- DEE** - These guys sure know how to create hell! We went through hell on Earth from 1987-1990. And looks like our majority Buffalo voters will be paving for another hell soon!
- BERNARD JAYATILAKE** - To overcome this persisting crisis, the Government recurrent expenditure has to be pruned drastically by retrenching employees in the public service across the board to reduce the present percentage of 90 paid as salaries of Government Servants (including pensions) from the annual income as the former ruler ballooned the size of the Public Service from 750,000 to 1.5 million to fulfil his election pledge and this is key to balance the annual budget.

See more web comments at [www.DailyMirror.lk](http://www.DailyMirror.lk)

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By  
**Rev. Fr. Leopold  
Ratnasekera**

OMI PhD, ThD

**E**aster, the greatest Christian religious festival is about the good news that Jesus of Nazareth, the guru and the prophet who through an unjust trial was condemned to death, crucified and buried, yet rising again to life after three days of lying in the tomb.

The tomb was empty and the Risen Lord was at first difficult to recognize and identify, sometimes looking as the gardener who watched over the tombs or a travelling companion on the road to some of his disciples distraught and weighed down with despair.

Another time he was walking on the beach and preparing breakfast for the disciples returning from a night's fishing round. Yet there were particular manifestations whereby he was easily recognized such as calling his disciples by their names, the sound of his voice revealing the Nazarene or sitting down in the inn near the village of Emmaus to break bread with two of his disciples. Often it was an appearance with the greeting: "It is I, do not be afraid, Peace be with you".

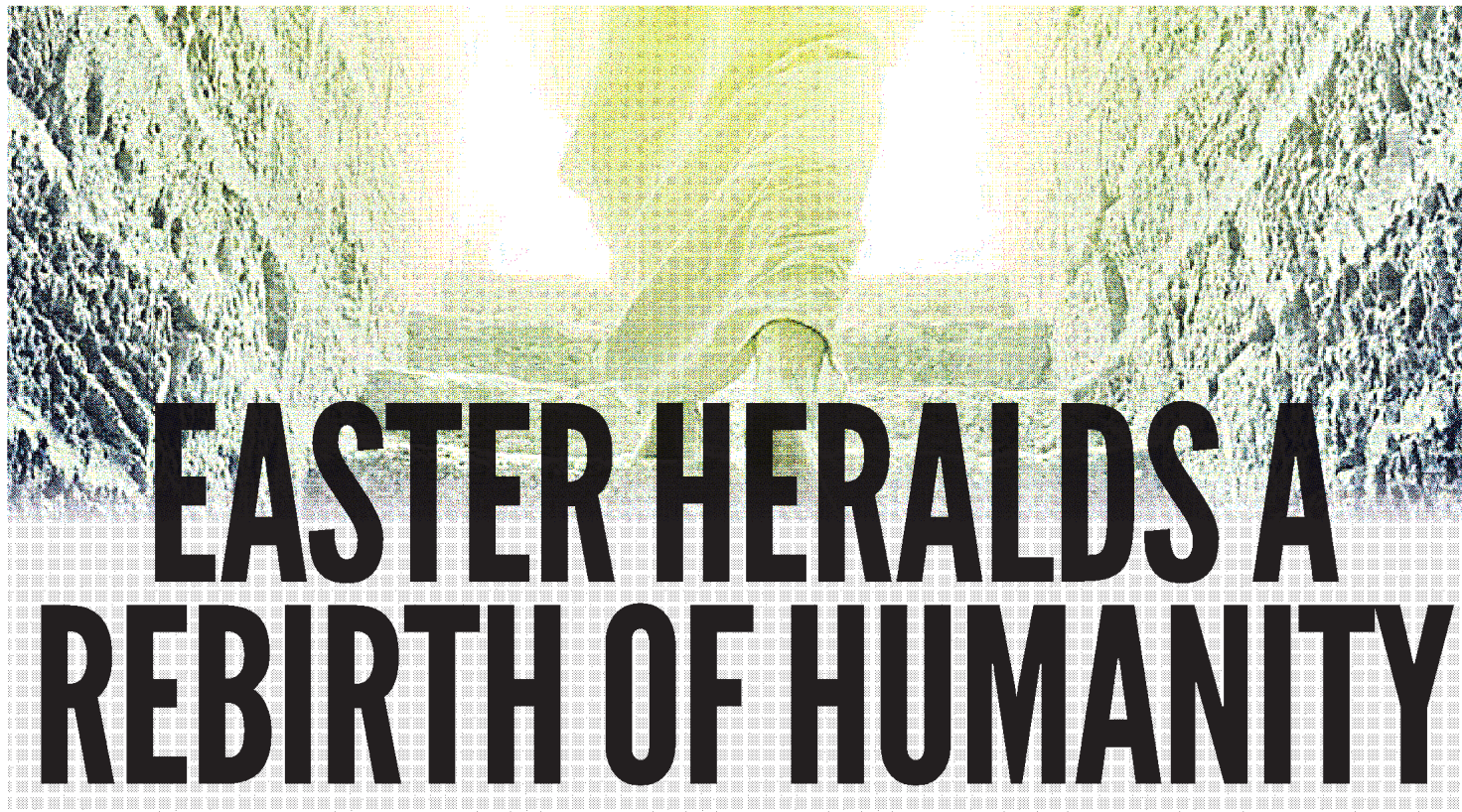
The Resurrection of Jesus validated all that was seen and heard of him during three years of public ministry and travels covering the city of Jerusalem, other cities and villages along beaches and on land.

We are told that many crowds used to gather in the hills, beaches and in the privacy of homes and synagogues to hear him and many sick were brought to him for healing and the possessed freed for demonic power.

To make the situation more incredible he used miracles to prove that he had the power to forgive sins and that wherever faith in him was present, even among gentile pagans, miracles were possible as in the case of the servant of the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman who had an issue of blood from which she was cleansed through the sheer touching of his garment.

**He welcomed children making them symbols and signs of his kingdom thus challenging the adult world to child-like attitudes. Many women followed him in his company with his disciples who assisted him with his material needs.**

He touched lepers in healing and exorcised the dumb, the blind and the deaf and made the lame walk again. He claimed to exercise and fulfil the task of a messiah of a kind other than a merely political one that many religious leaders and popular national belief expected would free the land from the colonial yoke of Roman rule. Jesus taught us a new way of universal love



# EASTER HERALDS A REBIRTH OF HUMANITY

that demands us to love even our enemies and do good to those who hate us. That teaching on neighbourly love was revolutionary. He manifest a new way of exercising authority as a humble service by washing the feet of his disciples, which usually was a task allotted to the slaves when the master of the house would host any guests.

**Many great Pharaohs and Caesars have come and gone in the history of ancient kingdoms and epochs, but only the story of the humble son of a Galilean carpenter, Jesus of the village of Nazareth has stood the test of centuries.**

Those who believe him to be the saviour of mankind and the Son of God are more than a third of the world's nearly seven billion of humanity. The itinerant preacher of Palestine has touched to this day millions of believers worldwide and his Sermon on the Mount about beatitudes has become in the literature of religions, a spiritual classic that has touched many a spiritually minded person and mystics including the great Mahatma Gandhi, the founding father of modern India.

**Jesus Christ, his life, death and Resurrection are at the heart of the message of all Christian churches as they strive to make him known and loved by the modern world.**

His teachings have even inspired further applications in the area of socio-political and international issues that deeply touch

the hum-drum life of modern man, wherever they live. Being prophetic teaching, at times the Christian value system comes into stark conflict with what the technocratic and secular world believes and acts upon.

This struggle is seen in the field of scientific research, ethical and moral issues and those pertaining to life and health. The authentic view of the Christian churches on issues such as abortion, assisted suicide called euthanasia, artificial birth control, same-sex marriage and other issues bordering on sexual morality including homosexuality and gender change are well known for their stubborn defence and at times aggressive criticism.

The standard of Christianity is always rooted in the nobility and inviolability of life and the dignity of love inspired by the vision of the God of life and love. Hence, the work of the Churches is to establish a culture of life against all lethal forms of death and assist in building a modern civilization of love, mutual respect and dialogue among the people. In a poly-centric world with cultural, religious and political diversity, the only possible path to peace and collaboration is that of dialogue which helps in accepting differences realistically and pursuing areas of convergence and communion.

The religion instituted by Jesus of Nazareth is one of universal brotherhood. Even in his day, he treated the people of his race, which was Jewish and those non-Jews like those of Samaria and the Pagans of the Roman Empire equally. He

was open to all including women and children who were marginalized in his own society. The plague that was nailed to the top of the cross where he was crucified read: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

Pilate the Roman Governor of his region had it written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew which incidentally was a literal combination of Greek culture known for the earliest philosophies coming from Athens in Greece, the cultural center of that time; Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire and Hebrew: the language of the Sacred Jewish Scriptures.

**What a significant and imposing one indeed at that! Thus the cross of Christ is not only a sign of contradiction but also, by contrast, a symbol of incredible reconciliation, harmony and unity.**

Jesus of Nazareth who appeared in the occupied land of Palestine, was no mere historical individual. He has universal significance. Indeed all religious founders belong to the entire humanity. The dignity of man, the solidarity of peoples, the nobility of human work, the care for the earth, the mending of differences among peoples and nations, peace among nations and the building up of goodwill are some of the corollaries that seep down from the Christian teaching about the love of God and love of neighbour.

Jesus marvelled at the mysteries of nature as he contemplated the lilies of the fields and the birds. He loved the hills, the mountain ranges and the beaches from where he taught large

crowds and even fed them. Yet, he taught that we humans are more worth than any of these about which God cares, feeding the birds who do not spin and gather into barns and the lilies who are so elegantly beautiful. It was a virtue to break even the law of the Sabbath to go out in succour to someone in need. Religion is interior and that of the heart and not mere observance of external laws and prescriptions which at times may be needed.

But one should not be a whitened sepulchre: elegant from the outside and all rotten inside. Hence we are invited to judge the power of religions more from the inner spiritual experience that cleans the mind and disciplines the heart than merely by external rituals, rites and celebrations however exotic and popular they may be. The power of religions lies in their liberating potential to change and transform the adepts in their lives. Very often this inner reality does not happen through religious doctrines and codes of ethics are acclaimed from the roof-tops of temples, churches and shrines in question.

**Given the rather distressful state of the world, a rebirth of humanity across religions, cultures and civilizations appears to be a dire need of the hour. The moment being decisive, projects for renewal and reform have to be initiated effectively.**

The content of the Easter message is a halt to the sense of fear and insecurity to be accompanied by peace within and without. It is also the Risen Lord Jesus who commissions his chosen disciples to venture into the whole world and proclaim the good news about the Kingdom of God which is nothing by a world society animated, inspired, motivated and filled with the love of neighbour. It must help emerge a humanity which will make this earthly home a habitable one where all resources are shared equally without any country usurping what others have a right to have.

It has to be a world order where cultures, economies and political systems contribute towards achieving the common good. In light of the above considerations, Sri Lanka needs to achieve freedom from the oppressive cycles of karma that have precipitated us into the depths of tragedy and catastrophe. The country urgently needs to undertake the imminent task of a rebirth: one that rediscovers the spiritual core of her religions in the kind of multi-religious society we have, coupled with the preservation of the perennial cultural values we have long held as noble and reconciliation in the field of politics that has caused many a disaster in the country for the last seven decades.

We need people to elect wisely only future leaders who are truly patriotic and Statesmen of the calibre of our founding fathers. We need a citizenry which is truly introspective, exercising its franchise and democratic rights intelligently, entrusting to the seats of governance only those who would be true leaders spearheading a re-born Sri Lanka, harbingers of a new nation.

## Resurrection - Capstone of Christian faith



By  
**Fr. Edmund  
Tillekeratne**

Jesus, Christ rose from the dead and He appeared to His disciples who had abandoned Him at the time of His arrest. He, the risen Lord, ate with them, He walked with them, and He appeared to them, while they all were locked down in a room.

Finally, He taught them the doctrine, He preached before His death and most of them had not understood the deeper meaning of what He had taught them. He now made them understand the doctrine he had preached. Especially taking from the Old Testament the passages which were spoken about him. He made them realize that He was the Messiah that the Jews were expecting for ages - the fulfilment of the Old Testament.

What is Resurrection?  
Resurrection is not a resuscitation of a corpse, which means that a dead body comes to life with the same corruptible body, which will face material death in the future one day. During

the mission of Jesus Christ on earth, he raised Lazarus from death, but Lazarus died afterwards.

**Resurrection is a metaphysical reality. It is a resurrected body. The body is different from the material body that Jesus had when He lived his physical life on Earth.**

Yet, He is the same Jesus Christ, who lived physically on earth. If Jesus Christ, after resurrection had the same material body, which he had on earth, how can Jesus Christ enter into a closed room? We find in the gospel that Thomas, who was a disciple, doubted that He had risen, and when Jesus appeared, and showed His wounded hands, He asked him to testify to it.

Since He had a resurrected body that transcends space and time in the material realm, He could enter through closed doors and appear and disappear suddenly to His disciples. According to the early fathers of the church, the soul is imprisoned in a material body at birth, which escapes from this material body at our physical death. Our "being" acquires material existence at birth, and departs from our material body at our physical death. The Empty Tomb is not conclusive proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. One could argue that disciples stole His body and set the word around that



He is risen. Even the appearances of the Risen Lord could not give any conclusive proof for the fact that the Lord has risen from the dead. One could argue that delusion may have occurred in their minds due to various factors that they encountered. What cannot be disproved is the fact that all the disciples who fled away, when Jesus was captured by the Jews, bore witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is risen. On the day of the Pentecost they received a Divine power from the Risen Lord as he promised to send to them, and they, as brave men, went out. Out to people to bear witness to the fact that the Lord had risen from the dead, and people who heard Peter. On that day, according to the Act

of the Apostles, the 3,000 men were converted to Jesus Christ. On the first day of his sermon the immense power and strength they received was enough for them to understand the teachings of Jesus Christ to make them fully converted to believing in the person of Jesus.

To this conviction, they all gave their lives to Him and became martyrs except Saint John, who was the youngest among the disciples, who died in his old age and wrote the most profound gospel in the Bible. Those who embraced the teaching of Jesus Christ lived a life of grace and testimony, and as a result, many were converted by them and they experienced the power of the risen Lord and performed miracles. They were

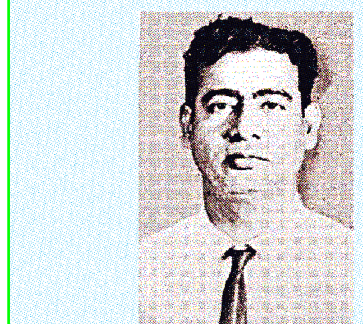
able to convert many people to the Lord because of the Divine power they experienced and by adhering to the teachings of the Lord.

Science cannot disprove the resurrection, as it is no longer in the empirical sphere. Resurrection goes behind the realm of the subject matter of science. A resurrection is a unique event. One-time phenomenon. It cannot be repeated as in empirical sciences. Scientific propositions: To be called a scientific proposition it needs to have certain criteria, which have to be fulfilled. Regularity and repeatability are considered as the sine qua non for scientific data. Therefore, resurrection falls outside of scientific data.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact. This fact was well documented. That Jesus died on the cross, that He was crucified by the Romans under Pontius Pilate, and that He was placed in the tomb and on the third-day tomb was empty. He had risen. Risen Lord appeared to many and changed their lives forever.

**The fact is that the power of the Risen Lord transformed the lives of billions of people throughout the centuries and continues to be so is an undeniable fact and it goes to prove that Jesus lives and that the mystical Union with the Risen Lord empowers the lives of those who believe in Him.**

### In memory of a special dad Gerry Crake



In memory of a special Dad  
May the winds of love blow softly and whisper in your ear,  
We love and miss you Daddy and wish that you were here.  
Deep in our hearts your love is kept,  
To love and cherish, not forget,  
No more tomorrows we can share  
but the yesterdays are always there.  
Happy birthday, darling daddy.  
From all your loved ones

# PROF MOHAN MUNASINGHE NAMED GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER SAVING THE PLANET

Professor Mohan Munasinghe, 2021 Blue Planet Prize Laureate and co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Peace, was featured on the front cover of the recently published book: Saving the Planet: The leading environmentalists. He is identified among 28 top global environmentalists who are saving the planet, including fellow Nobel Prize winners Wangari Maathai and Al Gore, the legendary Rachel Carson, Jacques Cousteau, and UK King Charles.

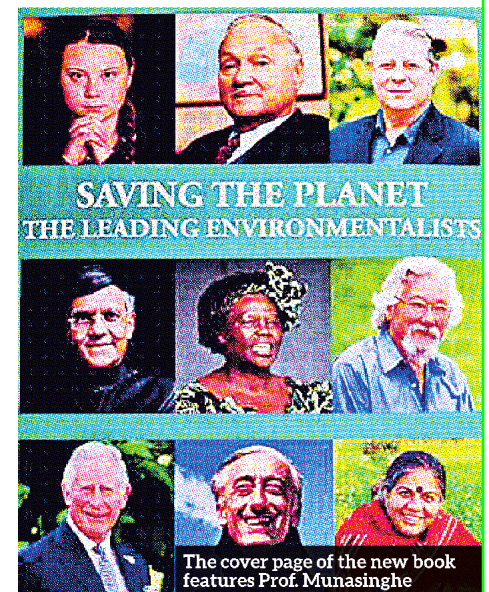
Featured in this magnificently illustrated book are captivating biographies of the men and women from around the world who have raised awareness about air, soil and water pollution, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss, and climate change. These scientists, economists, activists, princes, and Indigenous people have dedicated their lives to help solve the complex human-caused problems facing Earth today. To protect their territory and ultimately save the planet, some of these

environmentalists have written learned reports, others produced riveting documentaries about nature, and many have founded environmental organizations.

Prof. Munasinghe received the 2021 Blue Planet Prize (also called the 'Environmental Nobel Prize') and shared the 2007 Nobel Prize for Peace (as Vice Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). A globally recognized expert, his work has contributed to key international agreements like the 1992 Agenda 21 & UNFCCC, 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and the UN 2030 Agenda & Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). He first proposed the Sustainability transdisciplinary framework at the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, emphasizing the importance of integrating and balancing the sustainable development triangle, including economic, social and environmental dimensions. At the Rio+20

Earth Summit in 2012, he introduced the Balanced Inclusive Green Growth (BIGG) path for both developed and developing nations, as well as the innovative Millennium Consumption Goals (MCG) concept that was included as SDG No.12.

Professor Munasinghe is Chairman of the MIND Group in Colombo, which includes the non-profit Munasinghe Institute for Development (MIND), a UN-recognized centre of excellence working globally on all aspects of sustainable development, and MIND AM focusing on data analytics and management. He is Chairman of the Board of the Climate & Conservation Consortium (CCC), and his visit to UAE coincided with the soft launch of the Dubai office of the CCC. He is also the Board Director of the Eureka Group and a Distinguished Guest Professor at Peking University, China. He was Chairman of the President's Expert Committee on Sustainable Sri Lanka 2030 Vision.



The cover page of the new book features Prof. Munasinghe

# SPORTS

Under 19 Div. 1 Tier "A"

## ST. JOSEPH'S, TRINITY IN FINAL BATTLE



The St. Joseph's team



The Trinity team

**BY M. SHAMILAMIT**  
St. Joseph's College and Trinity College will battle for supremacy when they clash in the final of the Under 19 Division One Tier 'A' two-day inter-schools cricket tournament scheduled to be played today and tomorrow at the Ace Capital CC ground in Kirimandala Mawatha, Narahenpa.  
St. Joseph's, who are defending champions by virtue of having won for two years before the Covid-19 pandemic limited any sports activities, will be aiming to bag the title for a third successive time.  
On the other hand, Trinity will be coming into the final with the aim of bagging the double having clinched the limited over title this season.

Looking back the performance of the two teams, the Josephians led by Sri Lanka youth player Sadeesh Jayawardena have had a successful stint in the league encounters and they possess experienced players in the likes of Lahiru Amarasekera, Sri Lanka youth skipper and last year's captain Shevon Daniel, Hirun Matheesha, Hirun Jayasundara, Naren Muralitharan and Yenuka Dewthusa to name a few.  
The Josephians ended the league segment as the second-best team and made it to the final having recorded wins against Wesley College and St. Benedict's College in the quarter- and semi-final encounters.  
Trinity led by Rahal Amarasinghe has been the most successful team this year, due to the dedication and determination put in by their players Vinhavith Ehelapola,

Theeraka Ranatunga, Supun Waduge, Tharana Wimaladharm, Kusal Wijetunga, Dinusha Peiris, Dinuka Tennakoon and Jayavi Liyanagama, who have all made their contributions.  
Trinity booked their berth to the final having ended the league segment as the top team in their group before chalking up wins against Royal Colombo and Maliyadeva College Kurunegala in the quarter- and semi-final encounters.  
**The Teams:**  
**St. Joseph's** – Sadeesh Jayawardena (Capt), Lahiru Amarasekera, Shevon Daniel, Hirun Matheesha, Sahana Dabare, Abishek Jayaweera, Hirun Jayasundara, Muditha Lakshan, Dinuk Serasinghe, Kaven Pathirana, Yenuka Dewthusa, Naren Muralitharan, Rishma

Amarasinghe, Maanasa Madubashana, Dunick Perera, Gagan Chamod, Achintha de Alwis, Sasanka Ranaweera, Senod Soysa, Ashan Vilukshan, Asiri Caldera (Master in Charge), Dylan Ramanayake (Head Coach), Dinal Damburage (Asst. Coach), Torin Pitigala (Asst. Coach).  
**Trinity** – Rahal Amarasinghe (Capt), Vinhavith Ehelapola, Theeraka Ranatunga, Supun Waduge, Manula Kularatne, Tharana Wimaladharm, Kusal Wijetunga, Dinusha Peiris, Dinuka Tennakoon, Jayavi Liyanagama, Janith Warnakula, Malith Ratnayake, Lakvin Abeysinghe, Vathila Udara, Yewran Hulangamuwa, Viduka Dharmage, Nareen Ekanayake (Head Coach), Lakshitha Alahakoon (Asst. Coach), Brian Senaratne (Master in Charge).

## Under 19 Semi-Final Jaffna Central Maris Stella advance to final

**BY M. SHAMILAMIT**  
Jaffna Central and Maris Stella Thimibirigaskatuwa advanced to the final of the Under 19 Division Three Tier 'A' two-day tournament when they came out on top in the semi-final encounters played at the Thurstan College ground and Zahira College ground in Maradana.  
Jaffna Central coasted to a convincing outright win by nine wickets over Mahinda Rajapakse MV at Thurstan ground, while Maris Stella recorded a comfortable first-innings win over President's College Maharagama in the match played at Maradana.  
**Result:**  
**At Thurstan – Jaffna Central won by nine wickets**  
**Mahinda Rajapakse MV Homagama** 114 (Pasindu Lakshitha 25, Theja Deeman 17, Janul Ranjula 15; Sutharshan Anushanth 3 for 12, Ranjithkumar Newton 3 for 43, Vikeswaran Paruthi 2 for 25) and **133** (Kavindu Heshan 35, Pasindu Lakshitha 26, Navindu Nimsara 21; Sutharshan Anushanth 4 for 38, Ananthan Kajan 2 for 19, Ranjithkumar Newton 2 for 38)

**Jaffna Central** 225 (Nishanthan Ajay 83, Sutharshan Anushanth 43, Thakuthas Abilash 23, Ranjithkumar Newton 21; Navindu Nimsara 3 for 21, Dinuja Venusara 3 for 69) and **25 for 1** (Ranjithkumar Newton 22 n.o.)  
**At Maradana – First innings win for Maris Stella**  
**Maris Stella Thimibirigaskatuwa** 223 (Vinila Perera 24, Samod Appuhamy 22, Sonal Nethmina 21, Suwas Yapa 19, Savindu Perera 18, Chanod Santhisa 18, Sathsara Agalla 73 n.o.; Nayana Kaushalya 4 for 41, Vihanga Pathirana 3 for 63, Maleesha Udayanga 2 for 31) and **245 for 8 declared** (Yohan Fernando 118, Sonal Nethmina 44, Chamodh Santhisa 34, Samod Appuhamy 23; Inusha Umayanga 5 for 54, Vihanga Pathirana 3 for 118)  
**President's Maharagama** 163 (Inusha Umayanga 38, Pasindu Amarasinghe 28, Chaveen Sashmika 26, Vihanga Pathirana 21, Ruchith Rodrigo 20; Vishwa Peiris 8 for 41, Savindu Perera 2 for 43) and 46 for 2 (Ruchith Rodrigo 35)

## Final netball selection for World Cup on April 10

**BY SUSIL PREMALAL**  
The final selection for the 16th World Cup Netball 2023 will be held on April 10 from 9:00 a.m. at Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo, the Netball Selection Committee has decided.  
The World Cup Netball Tournament will be held from July 28 to August 6 in Cape Town, South Africa.  
A 16-member senior netball pool is training for this tournament.  
Australia-based Tharjini Sivalingam who is in this pool will not be taking part in the final selection.  
She has informed the Netball Federation that she will join the Sri Lanka squad

which is expected to play practice matches in Botswana two weeks before the World Cup.  
As a result to accommodate Tharjini, the national netball selectors have decided to pick 11 players and three stand byes in the final squad. Sixteen teams representing five continents are taking part in the World Cup.  
Sri Lanka is Asian champions while Singapore were runners-up.  
Sri Lanka were placed 15th at the last World Cup in Liverpool in 2019 while Singapore were placed 16th. Sri Lanka head coach Tilaka Jinadasa was also the coach that time.



Tharjini Sivalingam has been included into the squad despite not taking part in trials

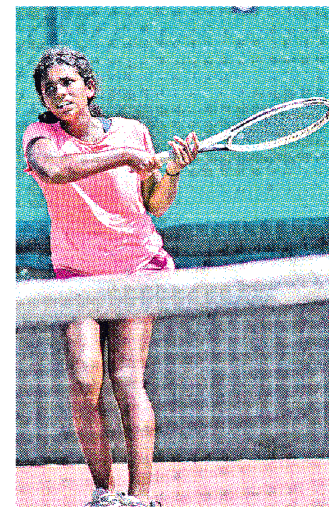
## SLTA Hard Court Tennis Nationals DINETHYA, SANDAS BAG SECOND SUCCESSIVE TITLE



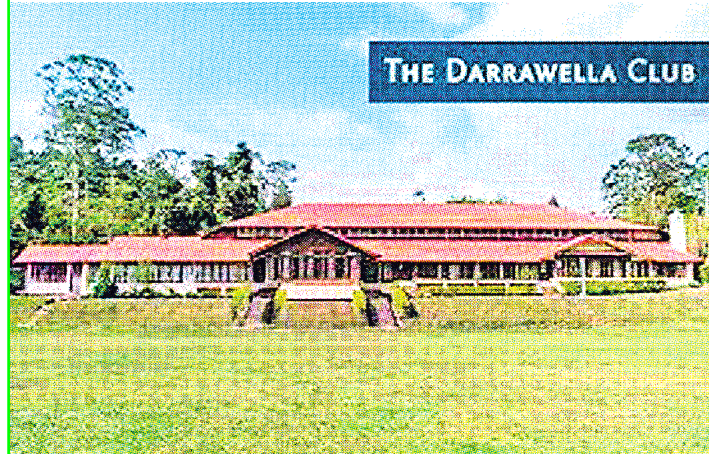
Sandas Usgodaarachchi in action

**BY M. SHAMILAMIT**  
Dinethya Dharmaratne and Sandas Usgodaarachchi bagged their second successive titles of the SLTA Hard Courts Tennis Nationals by coming out victorious in the two finals that were played yesterday at the SLTA tennis courts in Greenpath, Colombo.  
Dharmaratne, who bagged the women's open singles title, clinched the Girls Under 18 title with a comfortable two sets to nil win over Arushi Thomas while

Usgodaarachchi who clinched the Boys Under 18 doubles title bagged his second title by taking the Boys Under 18 singles, with a hard fought two sets to one win over Ganuka Fernando. The tournament will be continued today.  
**Results:**  
**Finals: Girls Under 18** – Dinethya Dharmaratne beat Arushi Thomas 2-0 (6/3, 6/2); **Boys Under 18** – Sandas Usgodaarachchi beat Ganuka Fernando 2-1 (2.6, 6/3, 6/2)



Dinethya Dharmaratne in action



Dickoya Darrowella Cricket Club ground will host the Plantation Rugby Sevens

## Annual Plantation Rugby Sevens 2023 Pools for Plantation Sevens decided

**BY SHAMSEER JALEEL IN DICKOYA**  
The Inter-Plantation Rugby Sevens will be worked off today (8) at the Dickoya Darrowella Cricket Club (DMCC) ground. This will be the 20th edition in the series with the last event taking place three years ago, due to Covid-19 pandemic.  
Kick-off is expected to be at 8 a.m.  
There will be 12 teams playing in this year's battle with Thalawakele Plantations being the defending champions. The winners will be awarded the

Colombia Trophy.  
The pools were announced for the event with the defending champions Thalawakele Plantations playing in Pool 'A' alongside Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation (SLSPC) and Horana Plantations.  
**Pool 'A'** – Thalawakelle, SLSPC, Horana; **Pool 'B'** – KV, Kahawatte, Malwatte, Balangoda, **Pool 'C'** – Bogawantalawa, Elpitiya, Namunukula/Kegalle, Mathurata; **Pool 'D'** – Maskeliya, Agrapathana/Kotagala, Hatton

## Former football presidents, ExCo members accused of financial fraud and misdeeds

**BY SUSIL PREMALAL**  
The football investigation report commissioned by Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe has revealed that there has been large-scale financial fraud and various misdeeds in the past because former presidents and certain executive committee members of the football governing body took turns in the administration of football in the country.  
It is against this backdrop that Sri Lanka suffered a drastic decline in the football world ranking, from 122 in 1998 to 207 out of 211 countries in the world by 2022, according to the report of the five-member football investigation committee headed by retired High Court judge Kusala Sarojini Weerawardena.



Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe

leagues established with the aim of increasing the votes of the former presidents of the football administration.  
It is reported that many of these bogus football leagues have not prepared annual accounts and have not held annual general meetings.  
Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan football authorities should take responsibility for not working to amend their constitution in accordance with the FIFA constitution, and that responsibility should not be transferred to a third party, the Kusala Sarojini five-person report has indicated.  
The report pointed out further that everyone who held positions in the past should take full responsibility for bringing football to a lower level in this country.



### INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- Football: PREMIER LEAGUE**  
Manchester United vs. Everton - Old Trafford  
Aston Villa vs. Nottingham Forest - Villa Park  
Brentford vs. Newcastle United - Gtech Community Stadium  
Fulham vs. West Ham United - Craven Cottage  
Leicester City vs. AFC Bournemouth - King Power Stadium  
Tottenham vs. Brighton - Tottenham Stadium  
Wolverhampton vs. Chelsea - Molineux Stadium  
Southampton vs. Manchester City - St. Mary's Stadium
- Cricket: INTERNATIONAL TWENTY20 MATCH**  
New Zealand vs. Sri Lanka - Queenstown

### LOCAL EVENTS

- Cricket: U 19 Inter-Schools Division 1 Tier 'A' Two-Day tournament**  
St. Joseph's vs. Trinity - ACE Capital CC Grounds
- Wushu: Youth Wushu Championship - Polonnaruwa**

## MCA Top Quality Cricket this weekend

The Mercantile Cricket Association (MCA) will dish out top quality competitive cricket this weekend, April 8 and 9.  
The 30th Singer – MCA Super Premier League 2023 gets underway today (8) with a card of four matches.  
On April 9, the semi-finals of the fifth Fairfirst Insurance MCA "F" division 25-Over League tournament 2023 will take place.  
**MCA Super Premier League 2023 – At Katunayake** – Hayleys Group vs. BKB Partnership, **At NCC** – John Keells vs. HNB "A", **At P. Sara Oval** – CDB vs. Mode Engineering, **At Colts** – Fairfirst Insurance vs. CL Synergy.  
**MCA "F" Division Final** – At MCA – Expolanka Holdings vs. Astron Lanka, **At Thurstan** – 3DH International vs. HNB "B" (BM)

## Mediwake Trophy One-Day encounter tomorrow

The 34th One-Day encounter between St. Sylvester's College and Vidyarthi College will take place on Sunday (9) at the Asgiriya Stadium. This encounter will be played for M. B. M. Mediwake Trophy.  
Sylvester's are leading the tally with 26 wins under their belt while Vidyarthi have won on four occasions with rest ending in no decisions.  
Malith Lakshan will lead Sylvester's while Adithya Kalalpathiya who took over 100-wickets this season will lead the Vidyarthi outfit.  
Former Sylvestrian Roshan Jayatissa, who represented Kandy at the National Super League (NSL) four-day tournament, will be the Head Coach of St. Sylvester's while former Rajans player Senaka Dissanayake will be the Head Coach of Vidyarthi. (SJ)



Tissa Jayasinghe, Ravin Wickremaratne and Janaka Pathirana at the cricket items distribution event

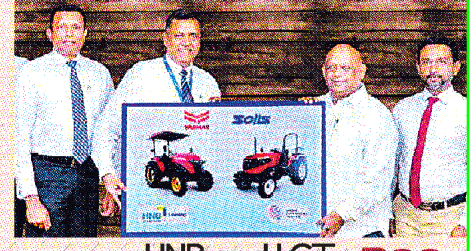
## KDCA Distribute Cricket Items to Schools in CP

**BY SHAMSEER JALEEL**  
Kandy District Cricket Association under the guidance and support from Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) handed over Cricket materials for 40 schools from Central Province.  
The event took place at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. Ravin Wickremaratne (SLC Vice President), Secretary of Central Province Cricket Association (CPCA) and Kandy District Cricket Association (KDCA) and President of KDCA participated at this event.



# Mirror Business

www.dailymirror.lk/business



HNB and LCT team... P08

## World economy faces weakest growth since 1990- IMF

**BBC:** The global economy is set to grow at roughly 3 percent over the next five years - the slowest pace since 1990, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said. Kristalina Georgieva said the path ahead was "rough and foggy" - and warned that cooperation to address the problems was becoming more difficult. She spoke in Washington ahead of the IMF's annual meeting. In her remarks, she called for more help for low-income

countries. "For the weakest members of our global family, additional support from wealthier countries is essential," she said, calling for countries to boost funds for the IMF, which makes low-cost loans to countries in need. The organisation is bracing for a wave of requests for help or debt restructuring, as the shocks from Covid-19 crisis, the war in Ukraine and soaring cost of living continue to reverberate.

Last year, global growth dropped almost in half to 3.4 percent, following a post-pandemic surge in 2021. That was below the 3.8 percent average growth of the last two decades. The slowdown has continued this year, despite strong job markets in countries such as the US. The IMF said it expected growth to dip below 3 percent in 2023, with India and China accounting for more than half of the growth.

Roughly 90 percent of advanced economies are expected to see growth decline, reflecting the weight of higher borrowing costs, after central banks raised interest rates sharply to stabilise soaring prices. For low-income countries, higher borrowing costs come at a time of weakening demand for their exports. "That is a severe blow, making it even harder for low-income nations to catch up," Georgieva said.

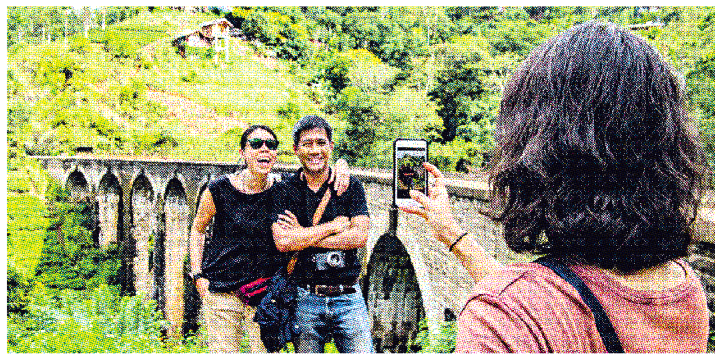


Kristalina Georgieva

MORE ON P8

## Tourism earnings in first quarter top US \$ 500mn

- March revenue up 22% YoY to US \$ 198mn
- Tourist arrival target for this year revised to 2mn
- Improved tourism activity expected going forward as economic crisis eases



Earnings from tourism almost touched the US \$ 200 million mark in the month of March, while such earnings for the first quarter topped US \$ 500 million.

According to the provisional data released by the Central Bank, the local tourism sector generated revenue of US \$ 198.1 million in the month of March. In rupee

terms, the earnings amounted to Rs.65.3 billion. Compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, March revenue expanded by 22 percent. In March 2022, the tourism sector fetched earnings of US \$ 161.2 million.

During the first three months of the year, the tourism sector's contribution to the national economy crossed the US \$ 500 million mark. For the January 01 to March 31, 2023, the total earnings amounted to US

\$ 529.8 million. Compared with the corresponding period in 2022, the earnings expanded by 9.8 percent. For January 01 to March 31, the cumulative earnings amounted to US \$ 482.4 million.

Despite grappling with the challenges prevailing in the economy, Sri Lanka's tourism sector is witnessing a steady improvement in tourist arrivals.

For three months straight, the island nation has been successful in luring over 100,000 international travellers, which in turn has helped in fetching higher earnings.

Given that the sector is performing at levels better than expected,

MORE ON P8

## Bosch Sri Lanka inaugurates new corporate office in Colombo



Bosch Limited Managing Director and Bosch Group in India President Soumitra Bhattacharya inaugurated new Robert Bosch Lanka Private Limited premises in the presence of Managing Director Navaneetha Krishnan and stakeholders including Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka (AHK Sri Lanka) Chief Delegate Marie Antonia von Schönburg and business partners

- New office will represent Bosch divisions automotive aftermarket, power tools and building technologies
- Bosch Limited Managing Director and Bosch Group in India President Soumitra Bhattacharya inaugurated new Robert Bosch Lanka Private Limited premises



Robert Bosch Lanka Private Limited has unveiled its new corporate office in Colombo, showcasing the company's commitment to further strengthen its foothold in Sri Lanka.

The move is a significant milestone for the company,

which has been a trusted brand in the country since its inception.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of Bosch Limited Managing Director and Bosch Group in India President Soumitra Bhattacharya and Robert Bosch Lanka Private Limited Managing Director Navaneetha Krishnan. Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in

Sri Lanka (AHK Sri Lanka) Chief Delegate Marie Antonia von Schönburg also attended the inauguration, demonstrating the strong relationship between Sri Lanka and Germany in promoting business and economic growth.

Being the sole representative Bosch office in the country, the new office boasts a seating capacity of over 20 associates, along with four discussion rooms and ample space for collaboration. The office will represent the Bosch divisions automotive aftermarket, power tools and building technologies, underlining the company's commitment to providing technologically advanced products and services to its valued customers in Sri Lanka.

## Tesco reiterates confidence on Sri Lanka's apparel sourcing amid obstacles

- Says Sri Lanka will remain a significant sourcing destination for retail giant
- Notes that country must leverage on its strategic and accessible location

- It will be essential to promote Sri Lanka as a potential investment destination

In the late 1990s, global retail giant and Britain's largest retail chain Tesco sought to establish its apparel sourcing

for its own apparel brand from Sri Lanka. Formally setting up the Sri Lankan sourcing office in 2001, the company started working with a number of manufacturers and suppliers who have become crucial to the success and standards of its 'F&F' clothing brand.

MORE ON P8



Azmina Kareem

## Sri Lanka India Society commemorates SL's 75th independence day, India's 74th republic day



The Sri Lanka India Society (SLIS) commemorated the 75th independence day of Sri Lanka along with the 74th republic day of India, at an elegant sit down dinner in the presence of a large gathering of members and guests.

SLIS President Kishore Reddy was honoured with the presence of Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera as the chief

guest and High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay, who also is the patron of the society, to celebrate an evening of togetherness and strengthen the bond of friendship between the people of both countries.

The keynote address was delivered by Wijesekera, highlighting the journey of friendship and bonding through

the 75 years of independence for both countries.

In his address Wijesekera thanked Baglay for all the support the government and people of India extended to overcome the economic crisis Sri Lanka was facing and continuing the assistance to date.

Wijesekera said, "We hope to develop the Northern and

Eastern provinces, specially the Trincomalee port development, industrial zone, energy hub with the assistance of India and also we would be finalising in the next few weeks the long-awaited Indo Sri Lanka power grid connectivity and we hope by next year we can actually start physical work on the grid connectivity development and this would give a strong statement on the India-Sri Lanka friendly relationship."

The minister also stated that the foundation that has been laid in the last 12 months will open business opportunities to both Indians and Sri Lankans.

MORE ON P8

## Sri Lanka airline boss says 'don't be a CEO during Covid'

**BBC:** Sri Lanka's national carrier has been struggling against even more headwinds than many of its rivals.

Airlines around the world have been buffeted by the impact of countries closing their borders during the pandemic and soaring fuel prices due to the Ukraine war.

State-owned SriLankan Airlines is also facing the worst economic crisis for decades in its home country.

Its British-born boss told the BBC how he plans to turn the firm around.

"I think the first lesson for me is don't ever go and be a CEO during Covid," Richard Nuttall, Chief Executive of SriLankan Airlines, jokes when asked what his biggest takeaway is from the



Richard Nuttall

last two years.

Nuttall has spent decades in the airline industry, working with names including Cathay Pacific and Philippines Airlines.

He became Chief Executive of SriLankan Airlines in April last year, after joining the company in November 2021 as its Chief Commercial Officer.

He joined the loss-making



carrier after Sri Lanka eased its coronavirus border restrictions and hopes were high that the firm was set to see a recovery in passenger numbers.

However, the economic problems that had been dragging on the country since before the pandemic deepened in the summer of 2021.

A series of missteps by the government resulted in the worst economic crisis since the country's independence, depleting Sri Lanka's foreign reserves needed to import everything from food to fuel. Soaring prices saw protesters

taking to the streets, which hammered the country's tourism industry, which was vital to its economy.

Countries that advised their citizens to not travel to Sri Lanka smacked of "double standards", Nuttall said.

"In the west, protest is a sign of democracy and nobody issues travel advisories. But when you have a protest in somewhere like Sri Lanka, everybody slaps on travel advisories."

In February, Sri Lanka secured a US \$ 3 billion (£2.4 billion) bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

MORE ON P8

## Tesla cuts US prices for fifth time since January

**CNN:** Tesla cut prices in the United States between 2 percent and nearly 6 percent, its website showed on Thursday, as the company extends a discount drive on its electric vehicles that analysts caution could hurt profitability.

The fifth such cut in Tesla's largest market since the start of the year comes as the United States prepares to adopt tougher standards this month that are expected to limit EV tax credits.

Tesla (TSLA) cut prices on both versions of its Model 3 sedan by US \$ 1,000 and on its Model Y crossover by US \$ 2,000, the website showed. It also cut prices on both versions of its more expensive Model S and Model X by US \$ 5,000.

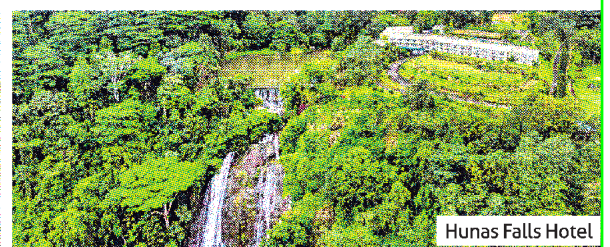
The company has said the tougher U.S. standards would reduce the US \$ 7,500 tax credit available for its base, rear-wheel drive Model 3 since January.

MORE ON P8

## Hunas Holdings announces landmark partnership with Adrian Zecha



Adrian Zecha



Hunas Falls Hotel

In an exciting and highly positive development for Sri Lanka's rebounding tourism industry, Hunas Holdings PLC - the company that owns the legendary, multigenerational favourite, Hunas Falls Hotel - has announced a landmark partnership with Azotels, a company owned and managed by the Hotelier of the Century, Adrian Zecha.

The partnership will see Azotels developing the present Hunas Falls Hotel into a high-end luxury hotel with villas, whilst also undertaking the management of the establishment, which is guaranteed to bring it in

line with the best hotels in the world.

Hunas Holdings PLC, formerly known as Hunas Falls Hotels PLC, is a diversified conglomerate operating across five industries with a presence in hospitality and tourism, real estate, renewable energy and tea plantations, factories and tea brokering. The Hunas group continues to strive forward with a keen eye on sustainability, fully aware that progress and preservation goes hand in hand and that it is a testament to the unwavering vision and tireless efforts of Hunas Holdings PLC.

Discussing the significance and value of the partnership, Hunas Holdings PLC Chairman Dhanuka Samarasinghe said, "This partnership is an incredible milestone for Hunas Falls Hotel as we celebrate 50 years of memories. We truly believe that Hunas Falls Hotel is a beautiful asset of Sri Lanka. It will be an honour to work together with Zecha, a distinguished outlier in the hospitality industry, with over 50 years of experience and only an ever-increasing passion for the industry."

MORE ON P8





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# A State of Oblivion



BY CHANDRI PERIS

*During a recent visit to my island home, I met several people in various stages of life's ever-changing palimpsest. As someone who continues to socialize twixt the haves and have-nots, my recent experiences in Sri Lanka were a startling revelation of the inequalities within our society which (I thought) needs addressing. Even though this piece may turn out to be an exercise in, "how to lose friends and influence people," it is what I have seen with my own eyes and heard of from both sides.*

At first glance, everything seems to be back to normal after the upheavals and protests that took place in 2022, but its only when you mingle with the common man that the underlying issues seem to unfold. The truth that all this was caused by a handful of rogue politicians whose deceitful dealings have brought this country to a standstill seems astonishing to all those who are impacted by the huge increase in the cost of living. Some simply exist from one day to another. It has also left our country with a society so unequal that the gap between abject poverty and immeasurable wealth seems too wide to be bridged. As we are aware, the wealthy did nothing to stop the fraudsters. The poor and desperate seem to have protested in vain. Nothing seems to have changed!

The distance that exists within the strata of society that can do something about these problems is increased by their very own detachment from reality which is why the twain shall never meet.

The carefree smiles that one usually encounters almost anywhere in our country were no longer easily visible. Worried and anxious beings in various states of depression and desperation unburdened themselves if you gave them the slightest inkling that you had some time to lend them an ear. From trishaw drivers to the cloth vendors, the familiar pharmacists to the man who works in the 'sillara kade', the stall holders in the markets and the man who repairs your broken slippers, it a never-ending tale of woe that expresses a unified concern about endless and mounting debt.

**Servants do almost everything for them and all their needs are paid for by parents who fool themselves to thinking that they are doing their best for their children.**

They looked at me with vacant eyes and asked me, "how did we get to this?" even though they knew the answer. "Why did we let this happen to us?" they say, wracked with guilt about casting their votes for the wrong candidates and expecting to live in a land that they thought would be theirs to own and theirs only to live in.

If the conversations had time to develop, it invariably ended up with endless curses being heaped on the powers that were, the powers that are and those who don't give a damn! The polarization between the haves and the have nots is stark. A burning hatred of those who don't seem to care and party-on as if tomorrow is just another day simmers beneath the surface. It is patently obvious that the common man is suffering as never before

Concurrently, there are those who seem to be living the life of Riley unaffected by the ongoing economic crisis. The smiles are wider than ever, making one wonder if its genuine or fake. The celebrations in Colombo are thriving and one dares not question the ethics of this imbalance in case an accusation of jealousy is flung in your direction. The sense of 'me, myself and I,' has indeed overcome the community spirit which we once knew. Even the simplest requirements of a proper spiritual life such as meditating, going to temple, or giving alms is broadcast as a 'look at me' event by those who flaunt their affluence, triggering a vision of a banquet being held in the middle of a shanty town!

The haves defend their extravagance by never failing to mention that they keep so many in employment whenever their excessive expenditure is frowned upon by those who see it as unnecessary, especially at times like the present. Yet, how can you argue when a man of great wealth wants to have an unforgettable wedding for his only daughter? Would it be a crime if a lavish celebration is held even after thousands have just lost their lives in a natural disaster? Do we expect everyone to feel the pulse and mood of a country and tone down, or do we (as most Sri Lankans do) accept such blatant selfishness when it suits us and blame those who do the same when they are not within our fold? These are arguments that no one can ever win.

After all, even florists, hairdressers, designers, caterers, drivers, travel agents, event organisers et al do need to make a living. And thereby the dealings within the worlds of business and commerce go on unquestioned simply because they keep the money-go-round in operation. Everyone has a justifiable explanation for the way they manage their finances yet most explanations I have heard thus far have felt quite hollow. This is exacerbated by a set of people whose sheer lack of consciousness about anything (or anyone) is superseded by their own egotistical machinations. Superficiality and selfishness have trumped common sense, sensibility, and selflessness. Me, mine, and ours - is all that seems to matter.

In the less selfish world that our parents inhabited and in some memories of the distant past that I have lived through, people were happy to comply with particularly stringent rules that reflected the state of the nation. At the time my parents married everything was done in moderation due to the aftermath of the second world war and the rationing that the public were expected to abide

by. Everyone bought and shopped locally regardless of their status in society and did not feel ashamed to do so. Celebrations were considerably moderate. People toned down to support a full and vital resurgence to normalcy.

During the "self-sufficiency" measures put in place by Mrs. Bandaranayake in 1960, restrictions were placed on foreign goods being brought into the country. No one was allowed to bring more than two silk saris from India. Second-hand clothing shops such as those formerly situated in Aloe Avenue and Glen Aber Place including boutiques such as Nearly New and Ranmal's flourished as a result. The general public was asked to buy local produce and wear cloths made of local fabrics. Let one forgets - this was what began the huge influx of batiks, tie, and dye and 'amu redi' garments in Colombo. Entrepreneurs such as Ena De Silva, Sakuntala Rajagopal, Swanee Jayawardene produced and designed exquisite clothes setting new trends. They were worn with pride by young and old alike. People adapted admirably and found ways of being glamorous and fashionable despite these restrictions being enforced. Only one hundred guests were allowed at weddings! Though some people grumbled, they complied by these rules. Nobody thought less of anyone for restricting numbers at occasions. It was done and done with grace.

My uncle (the former Inspector General of Police who was also the Chief Advisor and Permanent Secretary to Mrs. B during her premiership) did just that. He had an elegant yet simple wedding for his eldest daughter even though he could have put on a show with enough bling that could have blinded the nation. But I suppose such exhibitionism was not required at a time when social media was not even thought of. Only a few photographs in sepia stand as a testament to the dignity of such events.

Alas, we have reached an age were those who promote the so-called wealth of our nation are the very people who are ashamed of being seen in anything local. It HAS to be designed, created or made anywhere other in Sri Lanka to be accepted by the hoity toity set.

**In the less selfish world that our parents inhabited and in some memories of the distant past that I have lived through, people were happy to comply with particularly stringent rules that reflected the state of the nation.**

And worse still, I know of quite a few people who think its beneath them to be seen in a trishaw. They rather be dead than be seen boarding a bus. They don't wear local and only order in or go out. Servants do almost everything for them and all their needs are paid for by parents who fool themselves to thinking that they are doing their best for their children.

Even though these princelings and princesses have the trappings of university educations (albeit a foreign one) their lack of compassion and common sense is palpable. Everything about them and their lives are completely fake and that truly is a hallmark of bad parenting by those who feel they need to compensate for something they lacked in the past. No parent expects this outcome as most of this grooming is being done with the best intentions for the children to become good human beings. Yet that grim determination to show that one is better off, lives in a bigger house and has all the trapping of privilege has led us to the state we are in. This has created a wealthy young generation that have been systematically separated from the realities of life. Especially the reality of those who live on the other side of the wall. Remember the story of Prince Siddhartha?

He was also a spoiled and pampered young man shielded by his father from interacting with the world outside. It was only on the day that he stepped out of the confines of the walls of his father's three palaces and mingled with the common people that he witnessed their reality. It is only then that he saw poverty, starvation, suffering diseases, old age, and death.

People outside such palace walls interact with suffering with increasing frequency from childhood, but inside them, great pains are taken to engineer a suspended reality, a state of oblivion. This is what creates an inevitable tension between the super-rich and any outsider living among them.

I think it's time that all of us began to rethink, reconnect, reach out and enlighten ourselves of what really is occurring on the other side of the wall.

**FULL FRONTAL**  
BY CHANDRI PERIS





Prince Harry and Prince William

# Heir, Spare & the Heartache of the Bromance



BY SONIA HIRDARAMANI

*Like the rest of the world, I probably have had my fill of the headlines of the trials and tribulations of the dynamics between the two British royal siblings. As a mom of boys, however, I must admit that I find the Harry-William split particularly heartbreaking, despite how common an occurrence their estrangement actually is. Two brothers, prior to getting married, are often the best of pals, and then the wives come in and somehow, a chasm appears between the siblings. This commonly occurring pattern is referred to, in Hindi, as a “ghar, ghar ki kahaani,” the story of everyone’s home.*

By contrast, it seems sisters tend to keep their closeness intact, despite what squabbles they might endure. Come to think of it, in terms of the British royal family itself, Queen Elizabeth and her sister, Princess Margaret, apparently had their share of jealousies, but interestingly, remained as close as ever until the end. Calling each other regularly, confiding in one another, traveling together, sisters’ relationships are typically not disrupted by the addition of brothers-in-law. However, generally speaking, post-marriage brothers, more often than not, disappear from one another’s innermost circles.

Of course, I am grossly generalizing, based on what I have observed in many families in South Asia, and also across the world. There are also countless counterexamples of heartwarming bromances which are sustained for life. In fact, before any inciters read into this, there are so many beautiful ones in our own immediate and extended families, touch wood, which give me great hope for my own boys’ long-term relationship.

That said, one never knows what the next generation will bring and it is this specific concern about gen Alpha boys that prompts my ruminations. As we move forward in a world rife with mental health issues, we should normalise men having continued, independent friendships with their brothers, and if their wives get along, that’s a bonus. In my case, I am very grateful for my (many!) sisters-in-law many of whom have been my greatest sources of support and affection.

That said, not all women (or men) are meant to be best friends, and it is an unrealistic and unfair assumption that two sisters-in-law will be.



Queen Elizabeth and her sister, Princess Margaret

*“The mental health crisis is a pandemic of its own, and as a mom of boys, I am especially concerned.”*

Much has been documented about women being pitted against each other in the past, but I am hopeful that a younger generation will be less likely to fall into such a trap, perpetuated by society and social media. Who is prettier? Who is smarter? Who is more popular? Currently, women are increasingly demanding equality in the workplace for their fellow female colleagues, stressing the importance of lifting each other up; hopefully this will continue to extend to the home front.

Just to be clear, I am certainly not laying the blame of failing bromances squarely on women’s shoulders. Actually, I would like to highlight the lack of honest conversations to iron out misunderstandings between the men as more of the issue.

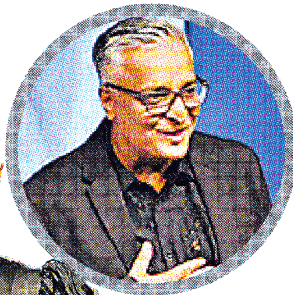
Many of the sisters I know have epic fights, but also know how to make up, and “forgive and forget.” On the other hand, as a result of obfing habitually swept under the rug, trivial problems between brothers often end up manifesting into deeply embedded wounds, some of which unfortunately develop into generational divides.

When raising boys, the onus is on all of us, not only parents, but also society-at-large, to teach boys to express and share their emotions, without the stigma of it being seen as a “threat” to their masculinity. We should make it a commonplace practice for men to speak to their brothers candidly and sincerely. Shouldn’t they admit when they are hurt and work through those disagreements? Shouldn’t they be able to cultivate their independent relationships with each other? Shouldn’t they also develop the ability to trust and lean on their brothers for emotional support?

The mental health crisis is a pandemic of its own, and as a mom of boys, I am especially concerned. As we push for a world where men can let their emotional guard down, we must make sure that they have a solid support structure in place to catch them when they fall.



# LIMAK by Kamil



BY RISHINI WEERARATNE

Kamil Hewawitharana, the renowned Sri Lankan fashion designer, unveiled his latest collection for his fashion label LIMAK at Colombo Fashion Week, on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023. The new season collection reflects Kamil’s signature style of blending modern and traditional elements, showcasing his unique vision for sustainable and ethical fashion. Kamil’s use of eco-friendly fabrics, and his commitment to responsible manufacturing, underscores his dedication to sustainability and ethical fashion practices. “We have always believed that fashion can be a force for good, and we strive to create clothing that is not only beautiful but also responsible and ethical,” Kamil Hewawitharana.

The new collection showcased his creativity, talent, and unique sense of style, which has always been the hallmark of his brand. His designs have been showcased at various fashion events around the world and Kamil is undoubtedly one of Sri Lanka’s most talented and creative designers.

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