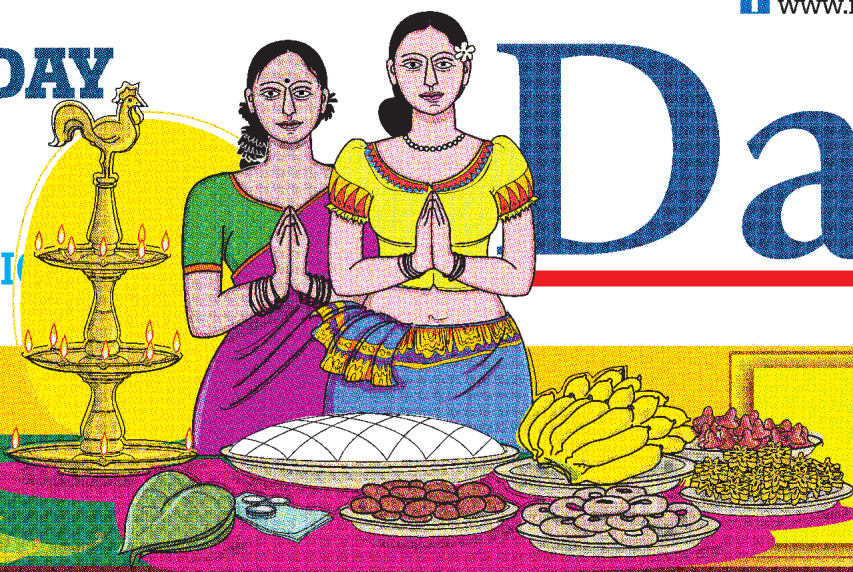




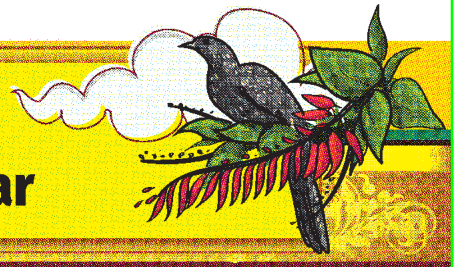
YOUR PAPER TODAY 12 PAGES

# Daily Mirror

www.dailymirror.lk



Wishing you a Happy Sinhala and Tamil New Year



## Sri Lankans must try to be more affluent and prosperous: President



Whilst highlighting that the commencement of this year has presented a salubrious environment for all, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said the nation should strive to be more affluent and prosperous by unitedly moving forward as one Sri Lankan nation.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Start the new year with new concepts to avoid hardships: PM



Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena yesterday called all Sri Lankans to start the Sinhala Tamil New Year enriched with new concepts to ensure that neither we, nor the future generation encounter hardships.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## All Lankans should be determined to end the dark era during New Year: Sajith



Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa called for the determination of all Sri Lankans to end the dark period they have spent during the recent past as the Sinhala and Tamil New Year dawns on April 14 2023.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Navy works on KKS harbour expansion to start ferry service as scheduled

In view of the proposed ferry service between KKS and Pondicherry, India, the Sri Lanka Navy had been working on the development of infrastructure facilities of the harbour since February, the SLN said in a media release.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## One million eggs stuck at port

Minister says process delayed due to influence by local suppliers, political reasons

- They are supposed to take three or four days. But, they deliberately delay the process. We are planning to import a few more stocks in the coming weeks to address the shortage

BY KELUM BANDARA

A consignment of one million eggs imported from India remains stuck at the Colombo Port pending clearance by the Department of Animal Health and Production, Trade Minister Nalin Fernando said yesterday.

The Minister told Daily Mirror the process was deliberately delayed due to influence exerted by the local suppliers and political reasons.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Cricket legend Wasim Akram's debut film to be screened in SL

The debut movie of former legendary Pakistani cricketer Wasim Akram and his spouse Shaneira Akram will be screened in Sri Lanka on April 21, the Pakistani High

Commission said yesterday. The movie Money Back Guarantee (MGB) will be screened in PVR and Savoy cinemas in Colombo and Kandy.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## MV X Press Pearl case to be heard in a Singapore Courts

It has been decided to file a case against the relevant parties with the Singaporean Court to seek damages caused by the Ship MV X Press Pearl, the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## No Daily Mirror on 14th and 15th

Daily Mirror will not be published on Friday April 14 and Saturday April 15 on account of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Your paper will be published again on April 17.

### EXCLUSIVE

## UN PROBE ON LANKAN WOMEN AUCTIONED AS SEX WORKERS IN OMAN

BY SUSITHA FERNANDO

The United Nations' Human Rights Council has initiated a probe on an alleged human rights violation of nearly 90 Sri Lankan housemaids who were said to have been trafficked to Oman and even some of them auctioned as sex workers.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## SLPP DIVISION VISIBLE AFTER REPORTS

### ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

- Inside political sources said the SLPP MPs who hold various portfolios in the government are behind the president whereas some others of the party remain loyal to Mr. Basil Rajapaksa
- Prof. Ranjith Bandara who is a loyalist of Mr. Rajapaksa said the party would get a new leadership after the festival season

Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) appears to be divided after media reports that President Ranil Wickremesinghe will contest for presidency at the next election scheduled for next year.

According to informed sources, the president has indicated that he will contest next time. After such media reports emerged, State Minister of Investment Promotion Dilum Amunugama who is an SLPP MP said we would definitely support the president if he contests.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Environmentalist questions move to export toque monkeys endemic to SL

- The decision to export animals merely to prevent crop damage cannot be taken lightly

Environmental lawyer Dr. Jagath Gunawardana, while questioning the government's recent decision to appoint a committee to study the export of 100,000 toque monkeys to China, said that the current legal provisions do not permit the export of animals.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

### SINHALA AND TAMIL NEW YEAR CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS (Auspicious Times)

APRIL 14 Dawn of the New Year Friday 2.59 pm

APRIL 14 Monagathaya (Inauspicious time) Friday Begins - 8.35 am Ends - 9.23 pm

The inauspicious time begins at 8.35 am and continues till 9.23 pm. During this time keep off from all forms of work and engage in religious observances.

APRIL 14 Preparing of meals Friday 3.29 pm

Light the hearth and prepare milk rice and sweets mixed with sesame seeds and popped rice while facing South and dressed in multicoloured clothing.

APRIL 14 Starting work, transactions and partaking of meals Friday 5.05 pm

Start your work, transactions and consume meals while facing South and dressed in multicoloured clothing.

APRIL 16 Anointing of oil Sunday 9.41 am

Place Imbul leaves on your head and Nuga leaves at your feet and apply oil mixed with extracts of Imbul leaves, while facing South and dressed in a mix of red and yellow colours (copper colours).

APRIL 17 Leaving for work Monday 6.28 am

Consume meals including milk rice and sweets, while facing South and dressed in white before leaving for work.

Illustrations: Wasantha Wijesiri @DM Graphics/Desk



## Proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission

## Chairperson should be like Dr Desmond Tutu: Minister

BY SUNIL JAYASIRI

While stating that the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill would be presented in Parliament in May, Justice and Constitutional Reforms Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapaksa said that it is important to have a prominent figure like South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu head the proposed Commission in Sri Lanka.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Group of Opposition MPs call for a joint opposition alliance

- The government had claimed a false success based on the way opposition parties behaved and the poor communication between them

BY YOHAN PERERA

A group of opposition MPs have called for the cooperation of all opposition parties and thereby form a grand alliance comprising all political parties in Parliament.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## As wild animals proliferate; damages to crops also increase: Ministry

BY CHATURANGA PRADEEP SAMARAWICKRAMA

A report submitted by the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Training and Research Institute showed that the wild animal population in the country had increased in an unsustainable manner compared to the existing forest density, the Agriculture Ministry said in a statement.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## SRI LANKANS MUST TRY TO BE MORE AFFLUENT AND PROSPEROUS : PRESIDENT

President said this in his Sinhala and Tamil New Year message. Following is the full message.

The dawn of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year subsequent to the transition of the Sun from the house of Pisces to Aries, is considered as an extremely momentous occasion by the Sinhala and Tamil communities in the country.

On this propitious celebration, people traditionally engage in observing New Year customs at stipulated auspicious times, with the wish of securing abundant prosperity.

Last year, amidst the unprecedented economic crisis which disrupted our daily lives, we partook in the New Year rituals with

untold hardship and was confined to a struggle in alleviating from this adversity.

However, I am gratified that the commencement of this year has presented a salubrious environment for us all, and therefore we should strive to be more affluent and prosperous, than today. We can undoubtedly achieve this aspiration by unitedly moving forward as one Sri Lankan nation. Accordingly, despite differences in political affiliation, ethnicity and religion, a fresh beginning is imperative to create a brighter future for us and our nation, in this New Year.

I wish all Sri Lankans here and abroad a happy Sinhala and Tamil New Year!

## SLPP DIVISION VISIBLE AFTER REPORTS ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

The president is from the United National Party (UNP). However, SLPP General Secretary MP Sagara Ariyaratne said his party's National Organizer Basil Rajapaksa would be the ideal candidate of his party to contest

the presidential election. Inside political sources said the SLPP MPs who hold various portfolios in the government are behind the president whereas some others of the party remain loyal to Mr. Basil Rajapaksa. Earlier,

SLPP MP Prof. Ranjith Bandara who is a loyalist of Mr. Rajapaksa said the party would get a new leadership after the festival season. The party is headed by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the moment.

## Navy works on KKS harbour expansion to start ferry service as scheduled

The ferry service is expected to commence on April 29. A discussion on the ferry service was held on Friday, March 24 between the two countries.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) provided a financial facility of Rs. 144 million for the construction and development of the infrastructure of the harbour.

The work is carried out by the Sri Lanka Navy. The terminal upon completion of its construction is expected to be handed over to the SLPA by the second week of April.

The expansion project will also include developing infrastructure to accommodate the ferries and other craft to provide better

service. "Following the directives of the Commander of the Navy Vice-Admiral Priyantha Perera, the Sri Lanka Navy has taken an active role in supporting the expansion of the Kankesanthurai harbour facility by enabling its manpower and expertise, in response to a request of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Aviation.

## GROUP OF OPPOSITION MPs CALL FOR A JOINT OPPOSITION ALLIANCE

A call was made by MP Dullas Alahapperuma, Professor G.L. Peiris, Dilan Perera, Charitha Herath, B.Y.B. Ratnasekera, Wasantha Yapa Bandara, K.P.S. Kumarasiri, Tilak Rajapaksha, Nalaka Godaehwa, Professor Channa Jayasumana, Lalith Ellawala, Dr. Upul Galappatti and Udayanga Kiridigoda who issued a joint statement.

"We have very clearly called for a joint opposition alliance to take on the government," Alahapperuma told Daily Mirror. The Nidahas Janatha Sabhawa which believed that it was the duty of all parties to study the current political trends which fluctuates at high speed. We studied the realities behind the economic and social developments

and political crisis. We also subjected the decisions we made during the last six months to a course of self-criticism. We also studied the behaviour of all opposition political parties. We took into our consideration the behaviour of the government and the confrontation among the opposition parties. We felt that the government had claimed a false success based on the way opposition parties behaved and the poor communication between opposition parties. We decided that a new political agenda has to be drawn up. Therefore we decided to call all political parties in the opposition for this purpose," the statement issued by the MPs said.

## Start the new year with new concepts to avoid hardships: PM

The premier made this remark in his New Year Message. Following is the full message.

Sinhala and Hindu New Year is the most significant cultural festival of Sri Lankans. We have inherited several ancient rituals that we consistently follow together at the same auspicious times and this is a unique feature that has not been practiced in any other country in the world.

We, as Sri Lankans always wish a prosperous and bountiful new year. In view of the food and economic crisis faced by the country this year, the effort taken by our farmers in making the country rich in rice produce, thus fulfilling that

aspiration should be gratefully remembered in this New Year.

Our forefathers who co-existed with nature added a new meaning to the New Year. As their children and grandchildren, there is no need for us to learn anew about food security, thrift, togetherness and harmony. What we need is to put them into practice.

The past few years have given us a lot to think about. The epidemics, economic and social crises are some of the most serious challenges we have come across in our recent history. Let's start the New Year, enriched with new concepts to ensure that neither we, nor the future generation encounter similar hardships.

## ENVIRONMENTALIST QUESTIONS MOVE TO EXPORT TOQUE MONKEYS ENDEMIC TO SL

The Sri Lanka toque monkey is an endemic species to Sri Lanka with two sub-species identified in the dry zone and the wet zone, Gunawardana explained.

The decision to export animals merely to prevent crop damage cannot be taken lightly. The decisions must be based on

scientific studies and facts," he said. Gunawardana said questions like on what basis the number of monkeys to be exported will be looked into, whether the monkeys would have suitable conditions in China, would also need to be considered before taking such decisions.

"Questions have emerged as to why such a large number of monkeys would be required even for zoological gardens in China. According to current legal provisions, animals can only be exported for conservation purposes or as an exchange programme.

## One million eggs stuck at port

Following a shortage in the local market, the Ministry decided to import eggs. Already, some stocks of eggs have been released for use in manufacturing bakery products such as cakes.

"We have one million eggs stuck at the port. We have imported them with health certification and all.

Still, the Sri Lankan authorities take longer time to do sample testing," he said.

"They are supposed to take three or four days. But, they deliberately delay the process. We are planning to import a few more stocks in the coming weeks to address the shortage," he said.

## MV X PRESS PEARL CASE TO BE HEARD IN A SINGAPORE COURTS

This was decided at a meeting that the authorities of MEPA held with the officials attached to the Attorney General's Department and other experts.

The Australian legal consultant firm hired by Sri Lanka has advised that a case could be filed in Singapore to seek damages.

Environment Damage Assessment Report prepared by MEPA for claiming more damages and to obtain similar reports from other foreign experts on the damages. Initially, it was intended to claim damages for environmental pollution only.

It was further revealed that Cabinet Approval has also been received to file a legal action in Singapore. Legal Advice was sought from an Australian legal firm concerning the incident.

A committee comprising marine experts and Academics were appointed to assess the damages.

The X-Press Pearl incident is said to be the worst maritime disaster to have struck Sri Lanka. It has had a significant impact on Sri Lanka's sensitive coastal environment, local communities and the economy.

It was also decided to use the

## Chairperson should be like Dr Desmond Tutu : Minister

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the chairperson of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"For Sri Lanka's Truth and Reconciliation Commission too should have the Chairperson like South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who did a commendable service as the chairperson of the Commission," the minister said.

Meanwhile, the Minister told the Daily Mirror that three

embassies had pledged their support in setting up of the Commission and the function of the commission.

"South African, Switzerland and Japanese embassies have already informed the Government of their readiness to support this initiative," the Minister said.

Last month, Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakse and Foreign Minister Ali Sabry were in South Africa to study South Africa's Truth and

Reconciliation Commission. The proposed commission will have 21 members and the Constitutional Council (CC) will recommend three members of the Commission. The President will appoint one of them as Chairperson, according to a concept paper, which has also been circulated among main stakeholders in the ethnic reconciliation process to educate about the proposed commission recently.

## ALL LANKANS SHOULD BE DETERMINED TO END THE DARK ERA DURING NEW YEAR: SAJITH

"May all citizens develop a determination to end the dark period they have spent during the recent past," Mr. Premadasa wished in his New Year message.

He said the following in his message.

"Sri Lanka which had an economic system which was based on self-sufficiency had currently become a land of tears as people have lost the opportunity of celebrating the New year with joy and peace. Lifestyle of our people have been challenged lately."

"Sinhala and Tamil New year

is a feast which sows the seeds of just qualities and values and a festival which brings national reconciliation. New Year is also a time where the people of this country pays tribute to nature in keeping with a long tradition closeness with the nature.

"New year dawned when people were facing various challenges during the last few years. The only wish of the people is prosperity and wellness. It is essential to safeguard the ancient traditions associated with the Sinhala and Tamil New Year."

## Cricket legend Wasim Akram's debut film to be screened in SL

Sri Lankans can watch Wasim Akram's acting skills in the teaser. The film features a star-studded cast of Pakistani actors,

including Fawad Khan, Mirza Gauhara Rasheed, Shahryar Munawar, Mani, Mikal Zulfikar, and others.

## MALAYS THANK PM FOR RENAMING SLAVE ISLAND AS KOMPANNA VEEDIYA

Sri Lankan Ambassador to Indonesia Admiral Professor Jayanath Colombage, who paid a courtesy call on Minister of Manpower of Indonesia Ida Fauziyah discussed employment opportunities among others for cooperation between the two countries, a statement from the Foreign Ministry said. SLMM President Rizwan Badoordeen and General Secretary Iqram Cuttilan called on Prime Minister at the Temple Trees early this week and briefed him on the social and cultural activities conducted by the Association.

The Prime Minister congratulated the SLMA which celebrates its 100th anniversary.

The Prime Minister mentioned with gratitude about the Malay members who served in the Armed forces during the fight against terrorism and made the ultimate sacrifice. He said the Malay community has set a valuable example for the minorities to emulate by totally integrating into Sri Lankan society.

### OBITUARIES

**CATHIRAVEL KATHIRAGAMATHAMBY** (Retired Director of Customs), passed away peacefully on 11.04.2023 at his residence. Beloved husband of Sarojindevi and son of late Cathiravel and late Thangamma, loving father of Baskaran, Bavani, (Canada) and Rudrani (Australia), father-in-law of Yogadinusha, Mayuran and Ravindran, grandfather of Mahesh, Tharani, Kailash, Nagulan Kevisha and Dhivyesh. Viewing will be at Jayaratna Funeral Parlour. **Creation today (13th Thursday) at General Cemetery, Borella (Hindu Section) at 4.30 p.m. 109107**

ONLINE OBITUARIES  
www.dailymirror.lk/obituaries


## As wild animals proliferate; damages to crops also increase: Ministry

The report was submitted to Minister Mahinda Amaraweera as a result of a discussion held

with the participation of university professors, members of animal rights organizations, and other

personnel regarding the measures to be taken to reduce damage caused to crops by wild animals.

### FIRST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY IN TREASURED MEMORY OF




**Susan Helen Sabrina Warkuss**  
(Nee: Van-Hoff)  
(08/03/1959 - 15/04/2022)

You had touched countless lives in your lifetime, and even after your death, you live through your good deeds, We miss you always!

Affectionately and lovingly remembered by Your ever-loving Husband: Norman Warkuss Children: Tamara, Jason & Daina Son-in-Law: Trevine Henderlin and the rest of the Family

### 1ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY In Loving Memory of Dinky



**Zerah Eileen Christobel Corea**  
nee De Alwis  
29.05.1938 - 13.04.2022

Blessed Are The Dead Who die in the Lord...  
Inserted by her family and loved ones

## SL looks into job opportunities in Indonesia

While expressing concerns about the current economic challenges faced by the Sri Lankan Government, Minister Fauziyah agreed to exchange information on employment opportunities between the two countries.

"Minister Fauziyah mentioned four national

priorities of the Indonesian Government to strengthen the manpower sector, notably, enhancing the national economic stability, improving the quality and competence of human resources, strengthening infrastructure facilities and strengthening the political and legal framework

to secure the manpower sector. Highlighting the decrease of unemployment rate in Indonesia in 2022 compared to 2020 and 2021, the minister expressed willingness to share best practices in the employment sector with the Government of Sri Lanka," the statement said.

### Annual General Meeting of Girl's High School Kandy (Colombo Branch)



The Annual General Meeting of Girl's High School Kandy (Colombo Branch) was held on March 18 2023 at Colombo HILTON Residences. Past Pupils of the school participated in the event.

PIC BY PRADEEP DILUKSHANA

### CLASSIFIEDS

**FOR** drawing of plans for new buildings/ and create architectural plans for renovation of old buildings please contact Lakmalie 0721-942449, 0722-223287, 2360596 **DMR 108937**

I am 45 years old, having 22 years of experience in providing Home care service/Home nursing/ Elder care nursing/ Psychiatric nursing, is in search of employment. Please contact Chaminda 0768-047698 **DMR 108939**

I, Wijesundera Padege Chameera Nuwan Kumara holder of NIC No. 852951176V and residing at No. 147/16, Sodi Street, Nochchimune, Batticaloa, hereby inform the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the General Public that henceforth my name is changed as Wijesundera Mudiyanseleage Chameera Nuwan Wijesundera. **DMR 080474**

**RAMNEETH** Samaranyake - MD Sri Lanka Tourism Hub Wish Greet All Customers, Friends, Associates, Well Wishers a Prosperous New Year. Plant a heavy bearing coconut seedling given as gift to callers today to GSL Nursery Mutwal. Call 0772262688 for Collection. **DMR 109047**



# MYANMAR AIR STRIKES LEAVE DOZENS DEAD, INCLUDING CHILDREN

**T**he United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says he is "horrified" by the strikes in central Myanmar that have killed as many as 100 people. Among the dead are school children who were performing dances. Dozens of people in central Myanmar were killed in air strikes Tuesday, according to local

media reports and a witness contacted by AFP, as the United Nations and Western powers condemned the attacks and demanded accountability. The Southeast Asian country has been in chaos and its economy in tatters since the military seized power in February 2021 coup. UN rights chief Volker Turk said he was "horrified" by the deadly air strikes whose victims he said included

schoolchildren performing dances, with the global body calling for those responsible to be brought to justice. The United Nations, while not confirming a toll, said several civilians were killed, with Turk accusing Myanmar's military of once again disregarding "clear legal obligations... to protect civilians in the conduct of hostilities". UN Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres «strongly condemns the attack by the Myanmar Armed Forces today,» according to a statement by his spokesman Stephane Dujarric. Guterres «reiterates his call for the military to end the campaign of violence against the Myanmar population throughout the country,» the spokesman added. AFP.COM, 12 APRIL, 2023



## China's military must strengthen training for 'actual combat': Xi



A nuclear-powered submarine of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is seen during a military display in the South China Sea in 2018

AFP.COM, 12 APRIL, 2023- China's President Xi Jinping called on the country's armed forces to "strengthen military training oriented towards actual combat", state media reported Wednesday, after Beijing conducted military drills intended to intimidate Taiwan.

Xi's comments, made on a naval inspection trip on Tuesday, come amid heightened tension in the region after the show of force by Beijing, which sees self-ruled Taiwan as its territory.

China on Monday concluded three days of military drills launched in response to a visit last week by Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen to the United States, where she met a bipartisan group of lawmakers.

Xi on Tuesday told the People's Liberation Army's Southern Theatre Command Navy that the military must "resolutely defend China's territorial sovereignty and maritime interests, and strive to protect overall peripheral stability", state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Beijing is also enraged by a plan for US forces to use a growing number of bases in the Philippines, including one near Taiwan.

The United States and the Philippines are holding their largest-ever joint military drills this week, with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken committing to "standing with the Philippines against any intimidation or coercion, including in the South China Sea".

Xi added Tuesday that China must be "innovative in its concepts and methods of combat".



Despite tensions, Charles had reportedly been keen for his younger son to be at the coronation (AFP)

## Harry but no Meghan at King's coronation: Palace

LONDON (AFP), 12 APRIL, 2023 - Prince Harry will attend the coronation in London of his father King Charles III but without his wife Meghan, Buckingham Palace said on Wednesday.

The announcement follows weeks of uncertainty over the presence of Harry and Meghan, who have launched a barrage of criticism of the British royal family since announcing they were quitting royal duties in early 2020.

"Buckingham Palace is pleased to confirm that the Duke of Sussex will attend the coronation service at Westminster Abbey on 6th May," a palace statement said, using Harry's official title.

"The Duchess of Sussex will remain in California with Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet."

The day of the coronation, which formally sees Charles crowned king, falls on Archie's fourth birthday.

Archewell, Harry and Meghan's charitable foundation, issued a near identical statement to Buckingham Palace confirming his attendance.

The couple said in early March they had been in email correspondence with the palace over the ceremony but refused to say whether they would be there.



May  
**Good** thoughts  
deeds  
moments  
and humanity be celebrated

Happy Sinhala & Tamil New Year!

COMMERCIAL BANK

Our interest is in you

# Junior mirror

WE WISH YOU A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



## Sinhala and Tamil New Year Traditions

By Jeevani Pereira

The Sinhala and Tamil communities share the New Year celebrated on April 13th and 14th each year. The Sinhala community calls the New Year the 'Aluth Avuruddha', while the Tamils call it 'Puththandu'. Both communities have a mixture of traditions that are common and different as well. Here are some of them:



### THE DAWN OF THE NEW YEAR

Both communities often follow the same auspicious time for the dawn of the New Year, and get ready by cleaning their homes and wearing new clothes.

The Sinhala community has a time before the New Year dawns, where they stop all work (called the 'Nonagathe') and go to the temple to worship. In the Tamil New Year tradition, visiting the temple is a must after the dawn of the New Year.



### BATHING IN THE NEW YEAR

The auspicious time for taking a bath in the New Year is similar in both communities. The bath signifies washing away everything old and getting ready for something better in the future.

In the Tamil community, a special herbal water called 'Maruttu Neer' is prepared at the Hindu temple and gathered by households. Various herbal leaves, turmeric and flowers are used in this water, which is applied on the head before the first bath.



### SWEETMEATS AND DISTRIBUTING GIFTS AMONG FAMILY

You might be familiar with seeing Kavum, Kokis, Kiribath and various other sweetmeats filling tables at the dawn of the New Year, in most Sinhala households.

In Tamil houses, you can find Kesari, Murukku, Vadai, Payasam and Mango Pachadi.

### EXCHANGE OF MONEY

This happens in both communities at the same auspicious time. In Sinhala it's referred to as 'Ganudenu' and in Tamil it is called 'Kai Vishesham' where elders present the younger generation with money.

## Mr. Dogls and the Avurudhu Games

By Jeevani Pereira

Mr. Dogls' neighbourhood was a hive of activity the weekend before the New Year. The local playground was dressed in streamers, balloons and flags all set up for the Avurudhu celebrations.

Over the last three years there had been no real chance to celebrate Avurudhu with much fanfare - so this time the neighbourhood had gone all out!

Mr. Dogls and his new puppy friend Sneezzy, were watching the brightly clad boys and girls of the neighbourhood, including his Little Master, scurrying about preparing the games and arranging food to share with everyone.

Sneezzy sniffed the air. "Oh everything smells so good! I'm getting hungry," she said.

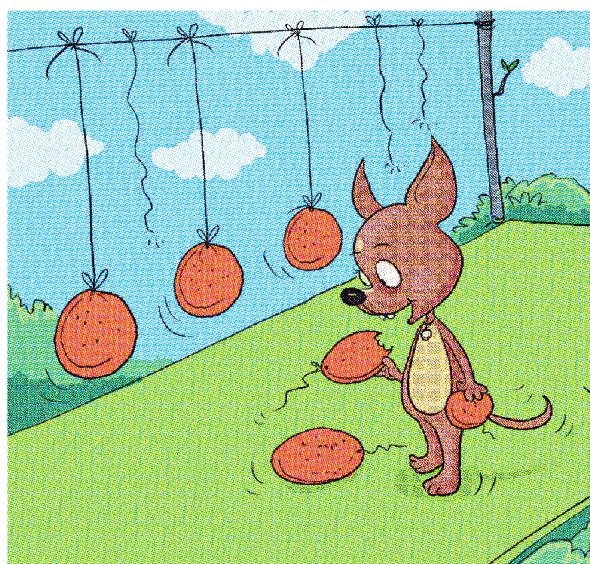
"Well little one, you have to wait. We can eat after they finish all their running games, and after the loud crackers are lit," Mr. Dogls said.

But Sneezzy being a puppy and a little impatient, began fidgeting about. "But it's too good to resist!" she whined. Mr. Dogls smiled remembering his own puppy days and how hungry he was all the time.

It was then that Sneezzy noticed the 'hanging food' as he would call it later. Two people were placing a long pole with strings and buns hanging at the end of it. The buns were hanging low, as the game was set up for the little children in the area. The first one to finish the bun without using their hands, was to be crowned the winner.

But that's not how the game ended, there was no chance for it to even begin. Because as Mr. Dogls was dreaming away about his own puppy days, he did not notice Sneezzy trotting towards the hanging buns and nibbling at them. In fact no one really noticed because they were so very busy.

Sneezzy was a fast eater, and after a few



seconds the nibbling turned into gulping down chunks of the bun. By the time Mr. Dogls noticed, she had managed to gulp down four out of the five buns.

"Stop! STOP!" barked Mr. Dogls, running as fast as he could towards Sneezzy. Because of his barking a few of the people in the grounds looked up, and they too started shouting and running towards her.

With the final piece of bun in her mouth, Sneezzy realising her mistake, started running away as fast as she could. And that was a sight! Sneezzy running, Mr. Dogls running right after her and a few of the people in the grounds running after both of them.

Sneezzy managed to run and hide among one of the bushes nearby. Mr. Dogls found her looking quite penitent and scared.

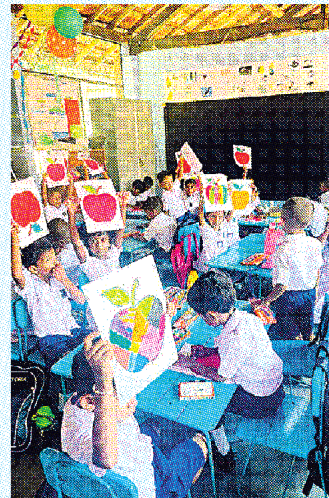
"You shouldn't take food that isn't offered to you!" Mr. Dogls scolded her soundly. "Don't you know the rules?"

"But I was so hungry!" Sneezzy replied but promised she would never do something like that again.

"Come on," said Mr. Dogls with a sigh. "I know a great spot where they won't see us and we can watch the rest of the games."

And that is what they did.

### PHOTO CORNER



THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO THE FIRST GRADE FOR THE YEAR 2023, TO WELIGAMA DHARMARA JA PRIMARY SCHOOL, WAS HELD RECENTLY. MRS. MAHESHA JAYAWEEERA, PRINCIPAL, TOGETHER WITH THE TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY.



THE KANDY GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL UNDER -11 GIRLS' BADMINTON TEAM BECAME RUNNERS-UP AT THE SAGA BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 HELD IN KURUNEGALA. RECENTLY THE TEAM COMPRISED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: AMASHA KARIYAWASAM AND NADITHI DASANYA SAMARAWICKRAMA (GIRLS' SINGLES QUARTER-FINALISTS, DOUBLES RUNNERS-UP), SITHULI SAMARASINGHE (GIRLS' DOUBLES SEMI-FINALIST), SIDASNA EPA (GIRLS' DOUBLES QUARTER-FINALIST), YENULI JAYATHILAKA (GIRLS' DOUBLES QUARTER-FINALIST)

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**TOPIC FOR APRIL 2023: ENJOYING THE APRIL HOLIDAYS...**

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- All entries must be certified by a teacher or parent/guardian as your own work.
- Please send your entries and details to [jm.dailymirror@gmail.com](mailto:jm.dailymirror@gmail.com)

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By  
**Gamini  
Jayasinghe**

# National New Year- Bak Maha Ulela

A festival binding people together, promoting goodwill and understanding

The most important cultural and national festival in our country falls in April. We in Sri Lanka, who believe in the solar influence on all living beings, observe this day as a day of religious and cultural significance.

The month astrologically marks as a point in the circle in the sun-earth revolution. The sun is understood to traverse the twelve planets during the twelve months of the year. This change from the house of Meena (Pisces) to Mesha (Aries) is believed to be occurring on a day between April 12 and 15 in the Gregorian calendar.

Modern-day empirical scientists confirm the influence of the sun on living beings. Hindus in India come to the banks of rivers Ganges and Yamuna to observe the rising of the sun which they believe is auspicious to start the day. We in Sri Lanka observe this day as the Bak Maha Ulela. Bak, the month associated with luck (Bhagya)

**It is during this month that the new harvest is collected from the paddy fields. Even nature adorns this month with trees, plants and creepers bearing plenty of fruits and blossomed flowers. The month of Bak is the most important month for the agricultural community.**

**These celebrations terminate in the Esala festivals devoted to gods and are celebrated throughout the country from the southernmost point of the island Dondra to the northernmost point, Paruthithurai**

This month is of special significance to Buddhists because it is on Bak full Poya Day that Gautama Buddha paid His second visit to Sri Lanka to settle a dispute between Naga kings, Chulodara and Mahodara.

The dawn of the Bak festival is heralded by the musical call of the bird koel. Due to the festivities Vesak and Poson celebrated during the following months, the festivities and religious activities continue till the end of Esala. After Bak comes Vesak and Poson, which are months of utmost importance to devout Buddhists, who participate in religious activities and pilgrimages.

**These celebrations terminate in the Esala festivals devoted to gods and are celebrated throughout the country from the southernmost point of the island Dondra to the northernmost point, Paruthithurai. All the religious and cultural festivals bind the nation together and strengthen mutual friendship and understanding among the people.**

**RITUALS**

There are various rites and rituals associated with the national New Year festival. Most people renovate their houses, colour-wash and give a new look to their abodes.

The interim period between the sun's transition from Pisces to Aries is known as the *Sankranti Kalaya* and people refrain from working and engaging in religious activities during this period.

They are attired in new clothes in keeping with the prescribed colours for the year ahead.

People wait for the first meal of the New Year at the auspicious time and refrain from meals during the *Nonagetha* - the interim period between the old year and the New Year.

At the auspicious hour they light the hearth and prepare milk rice with the newly harvested paddy, mixed with ghee, and jaggery. Consuming this milk rice is also done at an auspicious time.

The head of the family will turn towards the direction prescribed by the astrologer, eat the first mouthful and feed the mother of the family followed by the children. This ritual is followed by other rites such as *Ganu-denu* which means the exchange of money, anointing medicinal oil standing on the prescribed medicinal leaves and starting the work at the auspicious hour.

Rites and rituals followed during the Sinhala and the Tamil New Year season strongly bind families together and strengthen the unity and understanding not only among the members of the family but also among other members of the society and the neighbourhood.

Offering a sheaf of betel to the elders and getting their blessings is a common practice observed on New Year's Day. Planting of tree apling is also one of the important rituals of the New Year.

**GANUDENU**

Our first interaction for the New Year is with the drinking water well. A coin washed with saffron and some medicinal herbs and seeds and tied to a bucket is dropped into the drinking water well and water is drawn to a new pot or bottle. This pot of water is kept intact until the following New Year's Day occurring after a period of one year.

We expect the water in the pot to remain the same throughout the year for the New Year to be prosperous. Keeping a pot of water preserved for one year is a token. They preserved water in numerous ways.

Another tradition observed by them is to refrain from using fire during the *Nonagetha*

period awaiting the arrival of the auspicious time to light the hearth.

**RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

**In Sri Lanka, the harvest season coincides with the National New Year. It is a tradition among farmers to make offerings of milk rice prepared from the new crop to the temples.**

**Often farmers combine these offerings with the offerings made on the occasion of the National New Year. Most Buddhists go to the temple on New Year's Day as well as on Old Year Day Nonagetha period is devoted exclusively to religious activities.**

**GOODWILL & BONDING**

During New Year's Day friends and well-

wishers exchange social visits carrying with them New Year gifts and presents. Visitors are treated with food and drink. Neighbours share milk rice and other eats prepared for New Year celebrations. Sports festivals organized in villages help people to cultivate qualities of co-existence, mutual assistance and reciprocity. The idea is to promote togetherness and mutual understanding among the participants.

Games such as Hiding the Comb (Mevara keliya), killing the Goat (Eluvan Mareema), and Raban Gaseema are played during the National New Year season. Some of these games are devoted to various Gods. We see that the Sinhala and Tamil New Year is the most important national festival in Sri Lanka that binds the people together promoting goodwill and understanding.



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THE COATINGS EXPERT

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We wish you happy holidays and a Happy Sinhala and Hindu New Year!

### Auspicious Times & Traditions for the New Year - 2023

- Sighting of the New Moon —

Sighting of the new moon takes place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March for the new lunar year and on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April for the new solar year.
- Bathing for the Old Year —

On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April, bathe in the essence of *Kohomba (Neem)* leaves and engage in religious observances.
- Dawn of the New Year —

The New Year dawns on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 2:59 PM
- The Inauspicious Period —

The inauspicious time will begin at 8:35 AM on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April and continue until 9:23 PM. Therefore, food should be consumed before 8.35 AM and all work should be stopped and religious observances carried out.
- Preparation of Meals —

The auspicious time for preparing meals is 3:29 PM on 14<sup>th</sup> April, dressed in multi-coloured clothes, facing the South, by lighting the fire and preparing milk rice using the second extract of milk and sweets using *Gingelly* and roasted rice.
- Start of Work, Transactions and Consuming Meals —

Start your work, transactions after consuming meals on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 5:05 PM dressed in colourful clothes and facing South.
- Anointing with Oil —

Apply oil on the head mixed with extracts of *Imbul* leaves after placing *Imbul* leaves on your head and *Nuga* leaves at your feet on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 9:41 AM dressed in a mix of red and Yellow/Copper colour clothes and facing South.
- Setting out for Professional Occupations —

Set out for work on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April at 06:28 AM dressed in white and facing the South, after consuming a meal of milk rice and sweets.
- Planting of trees —

Planting of trees should be done on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 6:38 AM, dressed in golden coloured clothes and facing the East.



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# EDITORIAL

*"Safety is not an intellectual exercise to keep us in work. It is a matter of life and death. It is the sum of our contributions to safety management that determines whether the people we work with live or die"*  
-SIR BRIAN APPLETON

## OUR THOUGHT

### Act together to build POSITIVE SAFETY AND HEALTH CULTURE AT WORK

For a state or private company, small or medium-scale industry to succeed, there needs to be consensus, cooperation and consultation on the basis that the management and employees work together for a common good and for the country's benefit. It is on this foundation that the United Nations on April 28 marks the World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

In a statement, the UN says throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen that having a strong Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) system, which includes meaningful participation of governments, employers, workers, public health actors and all relevant parties at the national and enterprise level, has been crucial in protecting working environments and safeguarding the safety and health of workers.

According to the UN through effective social dialogue, governments and social partners actively participate in all phases of OSH decision-making processes. This is important from the development and revision of OSH policy and regulatory framework to address persistent and new OSH challenges, to actual application at workplace level. Social dialogue not only contributes to improving OSH policies and strategies, but it is also essential to build ownership and commitment, easing the way for their rapid and more effective implementation.

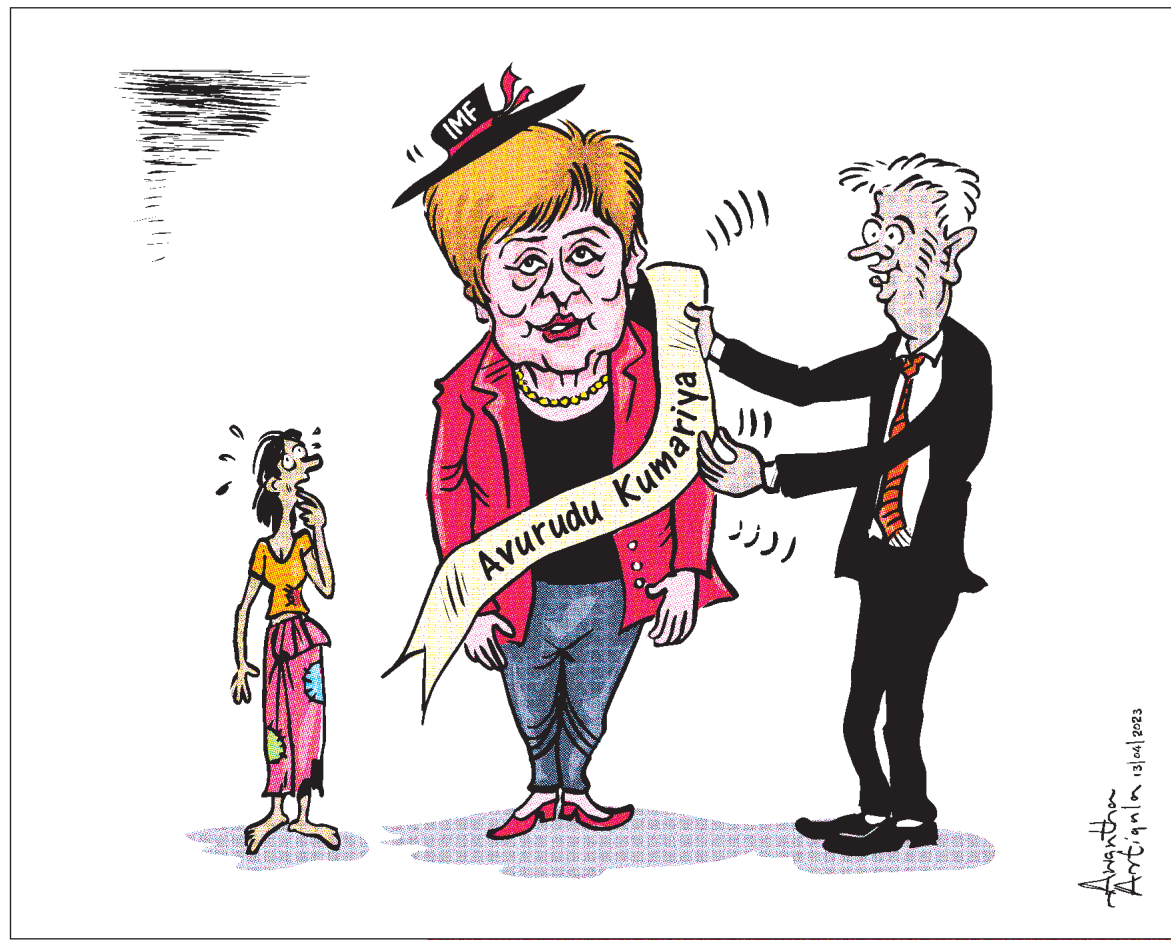
The UN says at the workplace level, a strong OSH culture is one, in which the right to a safe and healthy working environment is valued and promoted by both management and workers. A positive OSH culture is built on inclusion, through the meaningful involvement of all parties in the ongoing improvement of safety and health at work. In a workplace with a strong OSH culture, workers feel comfortable raising concerns about possible OSH risks or hazards in the workplace and management is proactive in collaborating with workers to find appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions. This requires open communication and dialogue built on trust and mutual respect. As we continue to live through a global health crisis and face ongoing OSH risks in the world of work, we must continue to move toward building a strong safety and health culture at all levels.

In 2003, the International Labour Organization (ILO), began to observe World Day to stress the prevention of accidents and diseases at work, capitalizing on the ILO's traditional strengths of tripartism and social dialogue. This celebration is an integral part of the global strategy on occupational safety and health of the ILO, as documented in the conclusions of the International Labour conference in June 2003. One of the main pillars of the global strategy is advocacy, the World Day for Safety and Health at Work is a significant tool to raise awareness of how to make work safe and healthy and of the need to raise the political profile of occupational safety and health. April 28 is also the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers. This is organized worldwide by the trade union movement since 1996.

Referring to the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, the UN says the annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work promotes the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on the magnitude of the problem and on how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help minimize the number of work-related deaths and injuries.

The UN says that each of us is responsible for preventing deaths and injuries while on the job. As governments, we are responsible for providing the infrastructure — laws and services — necessary to ensure that workers remain employable and that enterprises flourish; this includes the development of a national policy and programme and a system of inspection to enforce compliance with occupational safety and health legislation and policy. As employers, we are responsible for ensuring that the working environment is safe and healthy. As workers, we are responsible to work safely and to protect ourselves and not to endanger others, to know our rights and to participate in the implementation of preventive measures.

Focusing on the emerging risks at work, the UN says new and emerging occupational risks may be caused by technical innovation or by social or organizational change, such as new technologies and production processes, e.g. Nano-technology, bio-technology; New working conditions, e.g. higher workloads, work intensification from downsizing, poor conditions associated with migration for work, jobs in the informal economy; emerging forms of employment, e.g. self-employment, outsourcing, temporary contracts. They may be more widely recognized through better scientific understanding, e.g. the effects of ergonomic risks on musculoskeletal disorders. They may be influenced by changes in perceptions about the importance of certain risk factors, e.g. the effects of psychosocial factors on work-related stress.



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## Restoring Economic Stability in Sri Lanka:

# AN OVERVIEW OF IMF EXTENDED FUND FACILITY

By **Udara Pieris and Raj Prabu Rajakulendran**

On March 20, 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board approved Sri Lanka's 17th IMF programme, under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement, aimed at addressing the significant economic challenges faced by the country. This approval comes at a critical time for Sri Lanka, as it continues to grapple with a severe contraction, high inflation and public debt levels, fiscal imbalances, and vulnerabilities in the financial sector.

Through the EFF, Sri Lanka will receive a total disbursement of US\$ 3 billion, over a period of four years (48 months), on a semi-annual basis (specifically in the months of March and September). However, receiving each disbursement will be contingent on a thorough review of Sri Lanka's progress towards fulfilling its commitments that will be conducted periodically.

### OBJECTIVE 1: REVENUE-BASED FISCAL CONSOLIDATION

Sri Lanka plans to implement taxation reforms to achieve fiscal consolidation, which includes strengthening Social Safety Nets (SSN) to protect the poor and vulnerable, improving core Public Financial Management (PFM) functions, and implementing cost-reflective energy and electricity pricing. These measures are aimed at improving the government's revenue generation and expenditure management to achieve fiscal sustainability. Fiscal consolidation is crucial for Sri Lanka as it has been grappling with high public debt levels, which have been a significant challenge to the country's economic stability.

### OBJECTIVE 2: RESTORE PUBLIC DEBT SUSTAINABILITY

Sri Lanka aims to reduce its public debt levels below 95% of GDP by 2032, as outlined in the Indian letter of assurances. This objective also includes improving public debt management and debt transparency, including the establishment of a debt management office to enhance debt management practices. Managing public debt levels is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability of Sri Lanka's finances and reduce the burden on future generations.

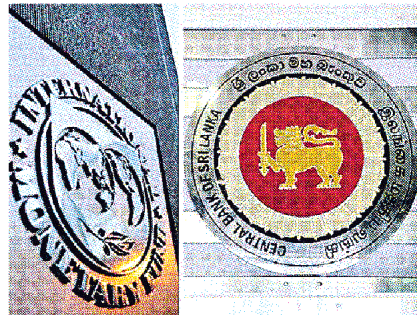
### OBJECTIVE 3: RESTORING PRICE STABILITY

Sri Lanka aims to restore price stability through measures such as a market-determined exchange rate and rebuilding international reserves. It also includes lifting foreign exchange control measures, which

will help improve the country's balance of payments position and boost investor confidence. Price stability is essential for creating a conducive environment for investment and economic growth.

### OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURING FINANCIAL STABILITY

This includes conducting asset quality reviews on selected banks to assess their financial health and stability. It also involves strengthening regulatory and governance frameworks for state-owned banks through the enforcement of the Banking Act and the Central Bank Act. These measures are aimed at improving the stability and resilience of Sri Lanka's financial sector, which is crucial for overall economic stability.



Though Sri Lanka has been granted the first IMF disbursement in March, it is important to note that it is yet to fulfill some of its most important commitments which were laid down by the IMF

### OBJECTIVE 5: REDUCING CORRUPTION VULNERABILITIES

Sri Lanka aims to address governance concerns and reduce corruption through measures such as conducting a governance diagnostic to identify and address governance concerns, drafting anti-corruption legislation, and improving fiscal transparency. These measures are aimed at promoting good governance, reducing corruption, and enhancing transparency and accountability in Sri Lanka's public financial management. Corruption has been a persistent challenge in Sri Lanka, and addressing it is crucial for improving the country's investment climate and attracting much-needed foreign investment.

### OBJECTIVE 6: RAISING POTENTIAL GROWTH IN SRI LANKA

This includes implementing growth-enhancing reforms, improving trade and investment, increasing employment opportunities for women and youth, reducing the role of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the government in the economy, reforming the electricity sector, and adapting to climate change. These measures are aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Sri Lanka.

### OBJECTIVE 7: RESTORING ITS ECONOMIC STABILITY

Sri Lanka has taken significant steps towards restoring its economic stability, as evidenced by the completion of all

nine prior actions enlisted in the IMF programme. These actions include crucial measures such as cabinet approval on fuel pricing formula, fiscal (revenue) measures for 2023, appropriation bill approval in Parliament for 2023, revised budget approval in Parliament for 2022, cabinet approval on Banking (Special Provisions) Act, new Central Bank Act, cost-recovery electricity price, policy rate increase by 100 basis points, and hiring an independent firm to conduct a banking sector diagnostic.

### LOOKING FORWARD: NEXT STEPS

The first review of the IMF programme is expected to take place in September this year. A successful review would lead to a disbursement of around US\$ 340 million to Sri Lanka, providing much-needed financial support to address its economic challenges. However, it is important to note that Sri Lanka is yet to fulfill some of its most important commitments, including enacting anti-corruption legislation, publication of the report of an IMF-led governance diagnostic technical assistance mission to assess Sri Lanka's anti-corruption framework, and obtaining parliamentary approval on the Central Bank Act and the welfare benefits scheme.

Sri Lanka's history with IMF programmes has been mixed, with only 9 out of the 16 programmes entered into in the past being successfully completed. Moreover, over the past 3 IMF programmes spanning 12 years, Sri Lanka has only met its targets on revenue, primary, and budget balance in 2 out of those 12 years. While Sri Lanka's achievement of the IMF board-level agreement and completion of the prior actions are reasons to celebrate, it is crucial for the country to maintain consistent commitment to the successful completion of the programme.

One of the writers of this article Udara Pieris is a Visiting Associate Professor of Economics at Oberlin College, USA. He was previously a tenured Associate Professor of Finance at HSE University (at the department ICEF) in Russia and has taught at the University of Warwick, and the University of Oxford (both in the UK). His research has a strong policy focus and covers the nexus between the macroeconomy and the financial markets.

While the other writer Raj Prabu Rajakulendran is a Senior Research Analyst at Verite Research. He holds a BSc degree in Economics and Management from the University of London with first-class honors. Raj's areas of expertise include public finance and macro-economics with a special interest in debt and the recent economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

## DM Poll

Government's main aim behind introducing new Anti-Terrorism Act is.....

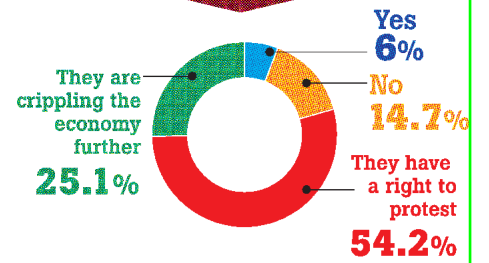
- To protect the country
- To control dissenting voice
- To respond to an urgent danger of terrorism
- To prevent any Aragalaya in future.



Scan to Vote

## LAST 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?



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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### PROPOSED ANTI-CORRUPTION BILL A RAY OF HOPE?

Last week the govt. gazetted a new anti-corruption bill with a broad ambit for an independent commission to inquire, investigate and prosecute against bribery and corruption and offences related to declaration of assets and liabilities and associated offences.

The said bill, in line with the conditions laid down by the IMF and tagged to the bail-out package offered to SL, is quite important and timely and all patriotic citizens, no doubt await eagerly for its enactment in parliament pretty soon. The very pertinent fact that IMF is the proponent of the said bill is of great significance as at last we have an independent body to keep an eye on some of the incessant crooks in power.

On the other hand, the IMF must be more concerned on behalf of their stake holders as to the country they invest funds and to ensure that no siphoning of such funding takes place, according to the whims and fancies of some avaricious politicians and certain bootlicking state officials!

That said, it also should not be forgotten that SL already has enough and more legislation to curb bribery and corruption since 1954. Well, the much spoken and the focal point on bribery and corruption is the CIABOC, established in 1994. Unfortunately, it is considered a toothless tiger and quite famous for netting small fish and allowing sharks to go through the net!

To top it all, the infamous FCID, that was formed with much fan fare in 2015 to nab some of the so-called corrupt MPs in the then opposition too came a cropper.

Put shortly, in spite of the startling revelations in mass media regarding bribery and corruption, the perpetual perpetrators continue unabated with more joining the band

wagon! The deaf, blind and dumb attitude of the powers that be has made a bad situation turning to the worse, no doubt.

In this context, it is the new anti-corruption bill that has given a ray of hope for the civic conscious citizens who are at the receiving end of this ruthless swindling!

M. R. PATHIRAGE  
KOLONNAWA.

## US has no intention of setting up military base in SL: Envoy

### WEB COMMENTS

**JAGATH EKANAYAKE** - RW must be upset as he could not sell of more of the country to anyone willing to buy.

**LANKAN** - Thank you for this clarification and explanation. We don't want to be sandwiched between two giants in geopolitics.

**JUDE** - Yankees should concentrate on keeping Saudis happy!! Coz Saudis not happy with Yankees and dealing directly with

the Jewish state

**DANA** - It's better if the US Envoy clarifies the reasons for the secret visit by US delegation in two massive special aircraft in the midnight without any immigration checks.

**JUDE** - Lankans don't Care, if you give money to Lankan politicians they'll allow you to build anything and everything here!!

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

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Editorial: Tel: 011 2 436 998, 011 2 479 479 (ext.327,356). Fax: 011 2 304 545  
Advertising - 2479597 / 2479519  
Head of Circulation - (Dir.) 0112 479 672, 077 3 219 775  
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By **Susitha Fernando**

# UN PROBE

## ON LANKAN WOMEN AUCTIONED AS SEX WORKERS IN OMAN

### Govt. fails to respond even after 60 days

**S**hanthi Pushparaja (Real name withheld), mother of three children who was taken to Oman promising a job as a house maid is one of those nearly 90 Sri Lankan women who went to the Middle East and ended up in Oman with no way to come back home. Shanthi's husband who was living in the North and looking after the three children, died suddenly leaving no one to look after the three kids.

During father's funeral two-year-old youngest son had gone missing and there is no news about him upto date. A family relative managed to handover two elder children to a children's home. The agonising mother is pleading Sri Lankan authorities to allow her to return to Sri Lanka as now she has lost her husband and one of her children has gone missing.

This is one of the pathetic stories of Sri Lankan women who are stranded in Oman. A media report relating to a group of Sri Lankan housemaids revealed last November that nearly 90 women are stranded in Oman and some of them have been auctioned as sex slaves, one of the most disturbing factors in the modern world.

The tragic news had shocked the world and the United Nations' Human Rights Council has initiated a probe through Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, including its Causes and Consequences and Siobhán Mullally, the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons. They have issued a report dated February 7, 2023 and sent it to Sri Lankan President, Ranil Wickremesinghe seeking some of the salient information relating alleged human rights violation. Even though Sri Lankan government was supposed to respond to the report within 60 days, so far no responses has been sent.

The two Special Rapporteurs who had signed the report has informed President Wickremesinghe about the information on the human rights abuses faced by the Sri Lankan women victims who were trafficked to Oman for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation.

In their communication the UN Rapporteurs have informed Sri Lanka President that according to the information received there are reportedly some 90 Sri Lankan women who initially travelled to Oman on a tourist visa and who were trapped in shelters, including at a shelter run by the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman. "It is alleged that several women have been subjected to trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour and servitude after having been promised employment as domestic workers in countries such as the United Arab Emirates".

"Some of the women have allegedly been sold in auctions and held in private households where they are exposed to sexual and/or labour exploitation, insufficient food and inadequate sleeping facilities. Furthermore, it is our understanding that among the 90 women, some have been trafficked in groups through Dubai, where they had arrived on tourist visas and then were taken to Oman during the last two years. We understand that some had registered with the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau and others migrated irregularly to the Middle East.

"When seeking shelter at the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman, some women have reportedly been asked for sexual bribery by a Sri Lankan diplomat who was working at the Embassy in Oman. The same Embassy official reportedly threatened to report women at the shelter to the Oman police if they did not give in to his demands".

"We understand that the diplomat accused of deceiving, trafficking and sexually abusing women at the safe house of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman, was taken into remand custody in connection with the human trafficking allegations at the end of November 2022. He was reportedly suspended from service and his diplomatic passport was revoked but he was given bail on his return to Sri Lanka. We understand that other individuals who were allegedly involved in the trafficking of women to Oman have also been arrested.

"We are concerned at these reports of trafficking in persons, violence against women and forced labour, committed against migrant women from Sri Lanka, and the involvement of at least one Government official in trafficking of persons between Sri Lanka and Oman, as well as the abuse of women at the shelter run by the Sri Lankan Embassy and the inadequate conditions and lack of protection reported at the shelter. **We are also concerned at the lack of access to effective remedies for these victims, and the limited information available on the investigations undertaken and international cooperation to date**" the report indicated.

The situations described may be defined as trafficking in persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation and/or forced labour as per the definitions set forth in article 3 of Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, acceded

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

Ref.: UA LKA 1/2023  
(Obtain via the mirror in your reply)

7 February 2023

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences and Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 51/15 and 44/4.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the human rights abuses faced by a group of women victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual and/or labour exploitation. The women are Sri Lankan nationals who have allegedly been exploited in domestic households in Oman.

According to the information received:

There are reportedly some 90 Sri Lankan young women who initially travelled to Oman on a tourist visa and who are now trapped in shelters, including at a shelter run by the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman. It is alleged that several women have been subjected to trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour and servitude after having been promised employment as domestic workers in countries such as the United Arab Emirates. Some of the women have allegedly been sold in auctions and held in private households where they are exposed to sexual and/or labour exploitation, insufficient food and inadequate sleeping facilities. Furthermore, it is our understanding that among the 90 women, some have been trafficked in groups through Dubai, where they had arrived on tourist visas, to Oman during the last two years. We understand that some had registered with the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau and others migrated irregularly to the Middle East.

When seeking shelter at the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman, some women have reportedly been asked for sexual bribery by a Sri Lankan diplomat who was working at the Embassy in Oman. The same Embassy official reportedly threatened to report women at the shelter to the Oman police if they did not abide by his demands. We understand that the diplomat accused of deceiving, trafficking and sexually abusing women at the safe house of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Oman, the third secretary [redacted] was taken into remand custody in connection with the human trafficking allegations at the end of November 2022. He was reportedly suspended from service and

# EXCLUSIVE



A group of Sri Lankan women protesting in front of the Embassy in Oman

by Sri Lankan Government on 22 September 2006, and article 2 of the Forced or compulsory labour is defined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), ratified by Sri Lankan Government on 5 April 1950.

The human rights violations reported also constitute indicators of forced labour as established by the ILO, including the following: Abuse of vulnerability; deception; restriction of movement; isolation; physical and sexual violence; intimidation and threats; retention of identity documents; withholding of wages; debt bondage; abusive working and living conditions and excessive overtime.

Reiterating the major setback relating to the management of Sri Lankan migrant workers sometime by the respective Sri Lankan foreign missions themselves, the report reminded some of the concerns expressed by Tomoya Obokata the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. He visited Sri Lanka in November 2021.

On a report issued following his visit Mr. Obokata had pointed to gaps in the current migration management system in Sri Lanka. "many women who worked as domestic workers in various destination countries reported instances of abuse and exploitation in the workplace, ranging from the withholding of identity documents and wages to long working hours and physical, verbal and/or sexual abuse. **While the primary responsibility for addressing these abuses rests with destination countries, there appears to be insufficient support provided by Sri Lankan embassies and consulates. Not all officials are said to be trained adequately, and there are reports of migrant workers being turned away after seeking assistance.**

While there are established shelters in

some destination countries, these have been regarded as insufficient. The situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a large number of workers being stranded without access to adequate institutional support." In the same report, the Special Rapporteur also urged the Government to ensure the protection of migrant workers from exploitation and abuse.

Considering the urgency of the matter relating to Sri Lankan migrant workers harassed and stranded in Oman, two Special Rapporteurs had urged Sri Lankan government to safeguard the rights of the female in compliance with international instruments.

Acting under the mandates provided by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to their attention, they had sought observations of the Sri Lankan government of the following:

1. provide any additional information and any comment Sri Lankan may have on the above mentioned allegations.
2. provide details, and where available the results, of any investigations, prosecution or criminal charges, and other inquiries carried out in relation to the allegations, and the methods of international cooperation with the country of destination (Oman);
3. indicate what measures are taken to ensure the safe and voluntary return of the women victims of trafficking in persons for purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation to Sri Lanka and how these measures ensure a safe and voluntary return; with ongoing measures of social inclusion, assistance and protection;
4. indicate which channels/protocols for reporting human rights violations to Sri Lankan Embassies exist and how Sri Lankan Government is ensuring that complaints can be submitted safely,

without fear of retaliation, and what training is in place for diplomatic and consular officials on the prevention of misconduct such as exploitation and abuse; identification of victims of trafficking and on assistance and protection obligations, in particular for women migrant workers;

5. elaborate how the victims of trafficking and their families in Sri Lanka are protected from retaliation after having reported the trafficking and abuse suffered;

6. indicate what types of assistance (regarding access to health services, food, legal and socio-social support, etc) victims of trafficking and labour/sexual exploitation receive at the shelter run by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Oman;

7. provide information on the measures being taken to ensure compliance with the State's obligation of due diligence to prevent trafficking of women migrant workers, including through addressing the gender dimensions of risks of trafficking in persons and to ensure early identification, effective access to protection, and access to effective remedies, including to compensation;

8. provide information on measures taken to monitor offers of employment, to ensure that work contracts are valid and protect women's rights on a basis of equality with men in countries of destination, and to provide assistance to women workers on arrival at their destinations, in accordance with the obligations states for countries of origin in CEDAW GR no.26.

9. provide information on measures to strengthen cooperation between the Government of Oman and your Excellency's Government in cross-border trafficking cases;

10. specify what policies and other measures are in place regarding the prohibition of misconduct of Sri Lankan diplomatic personnel and to what extent monitoring and oversight is carried out by the Government;

11. specify what measures are being taken to ensure safe and regular migration for employment opportunities for women, prior to departure from Sri Lanka;

12. specify what measures are taken to support the role of civil society in prevention of trafficking in persons from Sri Lanka, particularly of women migrant workers, and in identification, and protection of victims of trafficking and other forms of exploitation, including through survivor-led initiatives and programmes.

Two Special Rapporteurs who urged Sri Lankan government for all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible for the alleged violations. While sharing the same report with the Government of Oman, they further assured that any response received from Sri Lanka would be made public within 60 days.

According to the information received by Daily Mirror Sri Lanka, even after 60 days has not so far responded to the communication by two Special Rapporteurs.

More than 50 women and their family members who have stranded in Oman had complained to the Women Action Network seeking justice for the agonising plight they are going through.

"This is a big racket. There are Sri Lanka men who are working as sub-agents in Oman and rotating these women from house to house," said Shreen Saroor who is the Co-Founder of Women's Action Network, an organisation working for the right of women.

"The agents would not give the passports of these women and the women even don't know that they have overstayed. Once a woman had run away from one house and when she got onto a taxi and asked to be dropped at Sri Lankan embassy she was handed over to a police station by the driver." Saroor described the desperate situation of Sri Lankan women in Oman.

Responding to a request made by Ms. Saroor, Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFEB) said that it has taken appropriate measures to address the issue encountered by the female workers.

"However still many Sri Lanka females are going through informal channels to Oman violating the rules and regulations with regard to migration industry risking their lives." The SLBFE also has stated that it had repatriated nearly 100 female workers from Oman and out of them, the SLFEB had paid return air ticket cost for more than 40 individuals.

The response signed by Deputy General Manager- Foreign relations for Chairman also said that with regard to suspected Third Secretary, Employment and Welfare, E. Kushan, the domestic inquiry is conducted by the organisation.

### AGENTS SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE; SL AMBASSADOR IN OMAN

Responding to the incident of group of victim housemaids being stranded in Oman, Sri Lankan Ambassador at Muscat in Oman, said that they are at a safe house run by the SLFEB. He said following sending off of suspected third Secretary E. Kushan, now there is a lady officer as in charge of the safe house.

He said that the main problem faced by the Embassy right now is sending back those who had come on visit visas.

"When a person on visit visa overstayed (more than one month), 10 Rial or around Sri Lankan Rs. 8500 per day has to be paid as a penalty. We appealed on behalf of those overstayed and Omani government was good enough to cancel and repatriated around 200 people within this year alone," the Ambassador said.

"But people who come on employment visa it is a contract between the employment agent and the employer. If he files a case against the housemaid who wants a premature termination of the employment contract, it causes a huge financial loss to the employer. It is a dispute between the house maid and the employer. But in this instance the SLFEB should ensure that the agent should be responsible for the contract and not the housemaid. If the housemaid wants to return or terminate her job, the agent should be asked to pay from his commission. Instead what is happening right now is agent is seeking big sums like Rs. One million from the family of housemaid and harassing her and the family members. There should be a mechanism to return the commission taken by the agent and release the housemaid," he said.

The Ambassador insisted that the Sri Lanka police should be strict with these foreign agents who harass the housemaids and their families.

He also said that the SLFEB's decision not to allow those unregistered workers to safe house facilities has created a big problem for the embassy. "If a housemaid come and say she doesn't have a place we have to provide an accommodation and we have a responsibility to help them".

Attempts to contact Labour and Foreign Employment Minister Manusha Nanayakkara failed.

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# SPORTS

## MINISTER APPOINTS COMMITTEE TO STABILIZE SLR

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Former national rugby football player Chula Dharmadasa was appointed as Chairman of a Standing Committee to stabilize the administrative structure of Sri Lanka Rugby (SLR) yesterday after Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe dissolved SLR.

Ranasinghe on Monday withdrew a gazette that was issued by former Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa that suspended SLR and replaced the elected committee headed by Rizly Ilyas with this nine-member committee to oversee amendments to the SLR constitution.

The committee has been given a six-month term.

President's Counsel Shanaka Ranasinghe will serve as Secretary of the Committee, while President of Havelock SC Thusitha Peiris will serve as Treasurer.

Also in the committee are Damitha Vitharanage, Kishan Musafar, Savantha de Saram, Group Captain Subash Jayatilake, Pradeep Basnayake and Brigadier (ret) Sunil Ranasinghe.

"The sport has fallen to a new low in the last two years and this committee will also be expected to discuss with various stakeholders and uplift the sport again," Ranasinghe said.



Minister Ranasinghe and the chair of the committee Chula Dharmadasa (R)

"The sport has also lost a significant amount of corporate backing in the last two years, to the effect of Rs. 180 million. We want to bring those sponsors back," the Minister added.

"Each member of this committee is also expected to work with one provincial to facilitate the changes required at SLR." The minister also said that he intended to speak to the President of Asia Rugby (AR) Qais Al-Dhalai, adding that he had received a letter from Al-Dhalai that suggested they were open to working with him.

"Not being able to compete under the Sri Lanka flag was a big disadvantage for us, so we hope that after these discussions we will be able to compete under the national flag again," Ranasinghe said.

"We have missed many international competitions in men's and women's rugby and that has led to a decline in the sport," he added.

"The men's team were fourth in Asia in 2014, but now we are seventh. We have dropped seven places in the World Rankings as well, currently at 46."

The committee has been given the primary task of amending the voting structure at SLR, where currently only Provincial Unions are eligible to vote.

"In several provinces, their clubs do not even have players, but the provinces still retain their voting rights," the Minister said.

The Daily Mirror learns that the amended structure is expected to give voting rights to "A" Division clubs, while retaining the rights of Provincial Unions if they meet a new criterion.

They will be required to play in either an "A" or "B" Division tournament, organised by SLR, if they wish to maintain their voting rights.

## Under 19 Division Three Tier 'A' Final Jaffna Central emerge champions with easy win



The champion Jaffna Central team

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

Jaffna Central emerged Under 19 Division Three Tier 'A' inter-schools two-day cricket tournament champions when they recorded an easy first innings win over Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa in the final played at the St. Joseph's ground in Darley Road.

The Centralites having taken first lease of the wicket made a modest score of 223 runs and Maris Stella,

resuming from their overnight score of 116 for 3, lost wickets at regular intervals, succumbing to Sutharshan Anushanth who ended with a five wicket haul. He was supported by Vikneswaran Paruthi and Maris Stella was able to only muster a score of 181.

Jaffna Central batting the second time made 216 runs leaving Maris Stella a target of 259 runs for victory and they ended the day on 60 for 2.

### RESULT

**At Darley Road - First innings win for Jaffna Central**  
**Jaffna Central 223** (Ranjithkumar Newton 82, Jegaththeswaran Vithusan 32, Sutharshan Anushanth 32, Nishanthan Ajay 20, Shakadevan Sayanthan 18, Sathakaran Similtan 17; Vishwa Peiris 6 for 72, Yohan Fernando 2 for 29, Savindu Perera 2 for 52) **and 216** (Ananthan Kajan 62, Sathakaran Similtan 40, Thakuthas Abilash 46 n.o.,

Shakadevan Sayanthan 22 n.o.; Vishwa Peiris 7 for 82, Savindu Perera 3 for 87)

**Maris Stella Thimbirigaskatuwa** (116/3 overnight) **181** (Sonal Nethmina 59, Savindu Perera 32, Suwasaha Yapa 19, Shesh Panchama 15; Sutharshan Anushanth 5 for 38, Vikneswaran Paruthi 3 for 61) **and 60 for 2** (Savindu Perera 18 n.o., Vinila Perera 18 n.o.)

## Uncapped Hemantha in SL Test squad, Dickwella axed

Uncapped leg-spinner Dushan Hemantha was included in Sri Lanka's 15-member squad for the two-Test series against Ireland, with a return for left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya.

There was also a return to the Test team for wicket-keeper batsman Sadeera Samarawickrama, replacing Niroshan Dickwella, who was dropped after the first Test in New Zealand.

Also losing their places in the squad were opening batsman Oshada Fernando

and all-rounder Chamika Karunaratne, although for the latter it is probably a case of the conditions not suiting a medium-pace bowling all-rounder.

Pathum Nissanka, who was not included in the Test squad against New Zealand as it was deemed that it was too soon after his recovery from injury, remains omitted from the side, which is likely to have Nishan Madushanka in the opening slot.

Further down the order, Lahiru Kumara

and Kasun Rajitha have been rested, with Vishwa Fernando, Asitha Fernando and Milan Rathnayake making up the fast bowling contingent, though it is unlikely more than one of them will feature, if the wicket plays like a typical Galle pitch.

This will be Ireland's first multi-Test series, having played four single-Test series against Pakistan, Afghanistan, England and Bangladesh.

Ireland, along with Afghanistan, were granted Test status in 2017. (SMD)

## Under 19 Division One Tier 'B' Final St. Servatius' clinch maiden Under 19 champions' title

BY M. SHAMILAMIT

St. Servatius' College Matara clinched their maiden Under 19 inter-schools title when they emerged champions of the Under 19 Division One Tier 'B' inter-schools two-day cricket tournament with a convincing first innings win over Maris Stella College Negombo in the final concluded at the Ace Capital CC ground in Kirimandala Mawatha.

Servatians bowlers Kushan Wijerama bagged four scalps, with Chathum Bimsara, Chiran Neththaru and Tharush

Damindu together sharing six wickets between them to help bowl out Maris Stella for a low score of 110 runs.

This was in reply to St. Servatius' score of 199 which came on the back of a half-ton made by Viran Chamuditha.

Batting the second time, St. Servatius' were helped by a knock of 115 by Diniru Abeywickramasinghe, making a score of 211 for 6.

St. Servatius' having gained a comfortable first innings lead claimed their first major school cricket title.

### RESULT

**At Kirimandala Mawatha - First innings win for St. Servatius'**  
**St. Servatius' Matara 199** (Viran Chamuditha 50, Denuwan Pramod 36, Diniru Abeywickramasinghe 30, Chiran Neththaru 30, Vishwa Supun 19; Hasindu Perera 5 for 54, Shean Adithya 2 for 58) **and 211 for 6** (Diniru

Abeywickramasinghe 115, Vishwa Supun 43, Mitila Charles 19; Hasindu Perera 4 for 54)

**Maris Stella Negombo** (110/0 overnight) 110 (Shean Adithya 45, Kaveen Fernando 15; Kushan Wijerama 4 for 22, Chathum Bimsara 2 for 2, Chiran Neththaru 2 for 15, Tharush Damindu 2 for 38)



The champion St. Servatius' team

## Old Thomians Hockey Sevens 2023 Kingswood champions

BY SHAMSEER JALEEL

Kingswood College became champions beating in the Ritzbury Thomian Hockey Sevens which was worked off at the University of Peradeniya ground recently.

They won the A J Wijesinghe Memorial Trophy.

The first semifinal between St. Aloysius' and Ananda ended in a nil all draw in full time. After game going in to extra time the School from Galle won 1/0 in penalty shootout.

The second semi-final too

was a nil all draw between the home town lads, Hindu College and Kingswood College. Going in to extra time Randles Hill school was able to win by a solitary goal.

Kingswood beat St. Aloysius 1/0 in the final while Ananda got the better of Hindu College in the third-place encounter.

Kushan Rathnasooriya (St. Aloysius) was the Player of the Tournament while Janidu Harshana (Kingswood) was the best Goal-Keeper of the tournament.



Kingswood Hockey Champions

## Expolanka and HNB "B" in MCA "F" division Final

Expolanka Holdings and HNB "B" advanced to the final of the fifth Fairfirst Insurance sponsored MCA "F" Division 25-over League Tournament 2023, winning their semi-finals, played recently.

In the top half semi-final at MCA, Expolanka Holdings helped by a fighting knock by Heshan Hewanayake (42 in 52 balls inclusive of 4 fours) and a hostile spell of pace bowling by L. Speering (3 for 23), coasted to a 21 runs win over Astron Lanka.

In the bottom half semi-final at Thurstan, HNB "B" hung on to a three runs win over 3DH International.

Fancied HNB "B" batting first were restricted to 139 for 9 in 25 overs by the disciplined bowling attack of E. Bandara (3 for 19), Vihanga Gunasekera (2 for 32) and Roscoe Thattil (2 for 34).

Once again the bowlers dominated, as HNB's S. Palihapitiya (4 for 20) and Dinesh Panditharatne (3 for 35) put the shackles on 3DH International, who fell at the post short by three runs - 136 for 9 in 25 overs.

The tournament will now take break and the final, between Expolanka Holdings vs. HNB "B", will be played on April 22 at the MCA Grounds, commencing 10:00 a.m. - BM

## Sri Lanka invited for South Asian invitation Hockey Quadrangular



File Photo

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

The South Asian Hockey Association and Bangladesh Hockey Federation have agreed to hold a South Asian Invitation Women's Quadrangular Hockey tournament in mid-June in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Three countries in the South Asian region Sri Lanka, Nepal and the host country Bangladesh have already expressed their interest for the tournament, Sri Lanka Hockey Federation President G. Vishvanathan told 'Daily Mirror'.

The decision was taken during a discussion between the South Asian Hockey authorities after the Asian Hockey Congress held in South Korea recently by the leadership of the Asian Hockey Federation.

Apart from India and Pakistan, the leading teams in the hockey women's world ranking, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh have expressed their interest to participate in the first Quadrangular tournament for women's hockey.

The Bangladesh Hockey Association has agreed to provide food, accommodation and internal travelling free of charge for the teams of the two foreign countries participating in the tournament.

The Sri Lanka Hockey Federation is to discuss the matter at an Executive Committee meeting and establish a women's hockey pool to start training.



### PROCUREMENT NOTICE

### SRI LANKA CRICKET

### EXTENSION OF BIDS

**Identity of the Contract;**

**Design, Build, Testing & Commissioning and Maintenance of Roof Mounted Grid Tied Solar Power Systems for International Cricket Stadiums in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Cricket Head Quarters.**

**Contract No:- SLC/ADM/025/2023**

Last Date of issuing bids, Closing Date of bids, Validity of Bids and Bid Securities of the captioned tender is extended as follows;

**Last date of issuing Bids : 4.00 pm on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
**Closing of Bids : 3.00 pm on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
**Validity of the Bid : 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023**  
**Validity of the Bid Security : 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

All other informations related to this advertisement shall be in accordance with the Paper Advertisement published on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in The Sunday Times, Sunday Morning.

**Sri Lanka Cricket**  
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12.04.2023

Table with columns: SECURITY, VOLUME, V.W.A. CHANGE, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, V.W.A. TODAY'S CHANGE. Includes sections for MAIN BOARD, LANKEM DEV, DIRI SAVI BOARD, and EMPPOWER BOARD.

Exchange Rates

12.04.2023

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

Market shows a bullish sentiment during the week

The ASPI edged up as a result of price gains in counters such as Sampath Bank, Hatton National Bank and DFCC Bank with the turnover crossing Rs 947 Mn. Meanwhile, the S&P SL20 closed in red. High net worth and institutional investor participation was noted in Hemas Holdings, John Keells Holdings and Singer Sri Lanka. Mixed interest was observed in Expolanka Holdings, First Capital Treasuries and Lanka IOC whilst retail interest was noted in Browns Investments, Marawila



Resorts (rights) and Beruwala Resorts. Foreign participation in the market activity remained at subdued levels with foreigners closing as net sellers. During the week, the ASPI and S&P SL20 gained by 1.7% and by 2.5%

respectively whilst recording an average daily turnover of Rs 1.3 Bn. Capital Goods sector was the top contributor to the market turnover (due to Hemas Holdings and John Keells Holdings) whilst the sector index lost 0.82%. The share price of Hemas Holdings decreased by Rs 1.00 (1.54%) to close at Rs 64.00. The share price of John Keells Holdings recorded a loss of Rs 1.25 (0.90%) to close at Rs 137.50. Transportation sector was the second

highest contributor to the market turnover (due to Expolanka Holdings) whilst the sector index decreased by 2.52%. The share price of Expolanka Holdings lost Rs 4.25 (2.52%) to close at Rs 164.25. First Capital Treasuries and Lanka IOC were also included amongst the top turnover contributors. The share price of First Capital Treasuries moved up by Rs 0.50 (2.04%) to close at Rs 25.00. The share price of Lanka IOC declined by Rs 2.00 (1.11%) to close at Rs 178.00.

Contd. from Page 11

Int'l Monetary...

India's forecast was downgraded from January, but it is still predicted to expand by 5.9 percent this year and 6.3 percent in 2024, providing some much-needed stimulus to the global economy. And Russia is now expected to grow by 0.7 percent this year, up 0.3 percentage points on January's forecast, despite its invasion of Ukraine. The IMF raised its Russia forecast on the "very strong source of revenues" from high energy prices last year and during the first half of this year, Gourinchas said at the press conference. Looking forward, the IMF predicts that global growth will fall to three percent in 2028, its lowest medium-term forecast since the 1990s. Slowing population growth and the end of the era of economic catch-up by several countries, including China and South Korea, are a large part of the expected slowdown, said Daniel Leigh, who heads the World Economic Studies division in the IMF's Research Department.

Other issues include concerns about low productivity in many countries, Leigh said. "A lot of the low hanging fruit was picked," he said ahead of the WEO's publication. "On top of that now, with the geopolitical tensions and fragmentation, this is going to also weigh on growth," he said.

IMF chief...

Such a move would put additional strains on a financial sector already rocked by the dramatic collapse of Californian lender Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) last month. SVB's fall was swiftly followed by the failure of another US regional lender and the merger under pressure of Swiss investment banking giant Credit Suisse with its regional rival UBS. Gourinchas said "very forceful intervention" by the Fed, Swiss National Bank and others had helped to tackle the immediate challenges unleashed by SVB's failure but warned that "pockets" of potential challenges remained. "We're in a situation where there is elevated levels of nervousness in the

market," he said. An area of concern is the real estate sector, in part due to the slow post-pandemic return to offices in many cities around the world. Gourinchas warned that there may be other financial institutions like SVB that are over-exposed to interest rate risks, which could cause problems if rates stay high while central banks fight inflation. Countries without the fiscal tools to help fight inflation could also suffer, Gourinchas warned. "One should be very vigilant going ahead to make sure that the places that look weak are reinforced, are buttressed," he said.

De La Rue...

The factory floor feels very familiar with hi-tech machinery, pallet carriers and staff that appear typical of many production centres. But the "product", as it is called, turns your head. Millions of banknotes, in various stages of production, are here.

Obviously, the security is extremely tight. So many banknotes printed every day feels at odds with our everyday lives - when, for many people, cash use is a rarity as we pay for goods and services with cards and smartphones. De La Rue is also printing the new banknotes featuring the image of King Charles, although those will not enter circulation until the middle of next year. The company, which is headquartered in Basingstoke, Hampshire, has contracts with central banks around the world. For some of those banks, it prints money, while for others, it provides polymer for banknotes well as other services.

Japan, India...

President Ranil Wickremesinghe will take part in the press briefing virtually while Finance State Minister Shehan Semsinghe, who is attending Spring Meetings in Washington DC, will take part in person. Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki, Japanese Vice Minister Finance

Masato Kanda, Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and France's Treasury Director General Emmanuel Moulin will be representing the three creditor nations.

Treasury bill ...

The yields follow the disinflation path as well as the successful end to the final board approval for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, which unlocked nearly US \$ 3.0 billion funds through four years. The investors across equities and fixed incomes were further reassured by the comments came from the local officials a fortnight ago that they would safeguard the local banking system stability under whatever the form of domestic debt restructuring. Former Central Bank Governor Dr. Indrajith Coomaraswamy last week said that he is confident that both domestic and foreign debt would be restructured by the end of June, when the officials are required to lodge the data with the IMF for the first review coming up in September.