



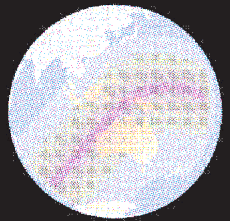
## A rare hybrid solar eclipse on Thursday

It will be visible only to 8.77% of the world's population

A rare hybrid solar eclipse will take place on April 20, Chairman Arthur C Clarke Center for Modern Technologies, Professor Chandana Jayaratne said.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

The Ningsaloo Eclipse: this hybrid solar eclipse takes its name from an Aboriginal word. The eclipse is visible for a few regions in Western Australia, East Timor, and the eastern Indonesian islands.



This eclipse is not visible to Sri Lanka as well as many parts of the world and the eclipse will be visible only to 8.77% of the world's population.

## Body of a two year old child from Aluthgama found in a canal

Police with the help of rescue teams and residents of the area had been searching for his whereabouts

BY D.G. SUGATHAPALA

The body of a two and half year old child who had gone missing from a house at Pamankada in Neluwa off Galle since Saturday evening (15) was recovered last morning from a near by canal.

The little boy Niven Devmina from Dharga Town in Aluthgama who had visited his grandfather's house with his parents in Neluwa had gone missing and Neluwa police with the help of rescue teams and the residents of the area had been searching for his whereabouts.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## EC still awaiting an indication of releasing funds for LG poll

The EC could announce a new date for the polls only after the Treasury released enough funds

BY SANDUN A JAYASEKERA

The Election Commission (EC) is still awaiting an indication from the Finance Ministry on a time frame in which necessary funds would be released to the EC to conduct the twice postponed Local Government (LG) polls, chairman Nimal G PUNCHIHEWA said yesterday.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## Heavy influx of pilgrims in Kataragama

BY SUMANASIRI GUNATILLEKA AND K.D. DEVAPRIYA

A heavy influx of pilgrims was experienced in Kataragama sacred city during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year festive season. Pilgrims from far and near flocked to Kataragama and among them were thousands of Hindu devotees from Jaffna and Batticaloa areas.

They attended religious observances at Kirivehera Cheithiya and Poojas at the Ruhunu Kataragama Mahadevalaya.

Several of them performed the boiling over of milk and other customs in the sacred city.



## PRESIDENT TO CALL FOR A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

SAMAGI JANA BALAWEGAYA MP MANO GANESAN TOLD DAILY MIRROR THAT PRESIDENT HAD INFORMED HIM AND MP RAUFF HAKEEM THAT HE WOULD MAKE A FRESH CALL TO ALL OPPOSITION MPs TO EXTEND SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA

BY YOHAN PERERA

President Ranil Wickremesinghe is expected to make a fresh call for a national government on April 25 when Parliament takes up the debate on the IMF extended Fund Facility (EFF) agreement.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

MEDIA REPORTS CLAIMING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SENT MESSAGES TO SAJITH PREMADASA OFFERING HIM THE PREMIERSHIP WERE FALSE AND BASELESS

## Defeat the new terror Bill to protect democracy

SJB calls on all Parliamentarians

ATB has not been drafted by the Legal Draftsman

BY SANDUN A JAYASEKERA

The main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) said yesterday that it is a national responsibility for all lawmakers to vote against the proposed Ant-Terrorism Bill (ATB) in parliament and prevent it becoming law in the country as the consequences of it will be extremely, inhuman, regrettable and irreversible.

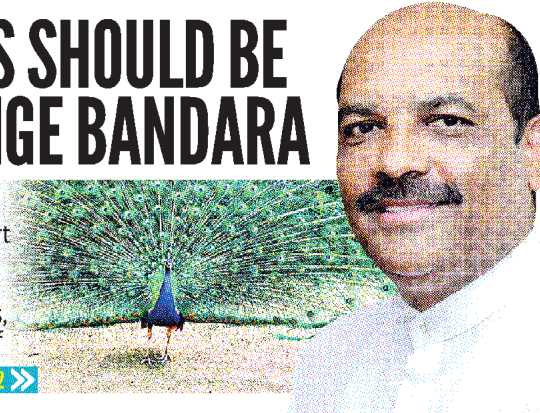
SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

## EVEN PEACOCKS SHOULD BE EXPORTED: RANGE BANDARA

BY YOHAN PERERA

Commenting on the proposal to export toque monkeys to China UNP General Secretary Palitha Range Bandara said over the weekend that not only monkeys, but even peacocks should be exported, if possible.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



## WORKER ASSAULTED AT DEMATAGODA FILLING STATION

OUR PUMPER SAID NO AND ONLY THE QR AMOUNT CAN BE GIVEN. THEN, THE CUSTOMER ON THE MOTORCYCLE STARTED USING BAD LANGUAGE AND ABUSED THE VICTIM

A filling station worker in Dematagoda, Colombo has sustained multiple injuries after being assaulted by a group of individuals enraged by the refusal to rank up more than the fuel quota approved in the QR code.

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## Seven remanded for assaulting police officer

BY SHANE SENEVIRATNE

A group of seven individuals who had been arrested on suspicion of assaulting a police officer on duty at a musical show in Getambe in Kandy causing him serious injuries were produced before Kandy Addl. Magistrate Jagath Peiris and remanded till April 27.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>

Though the Sinhala and Tamil New Year was celebrated on April 13 and 14, rituals related to the celebrations continue to be performed for several days. According to the 'Hisa Thel Gama' (oil anointing ceremony) where a specially prepared herbal oil is anointed on the head at an auspicious time is one such ritual. This year, this ritual was conducted on Sunday at various places. Here Ven. Dr. Kirinde Assaji Thera, Deputy incumbent of Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo is anointing oil at the temple.

PIC BY NIMALSIRI EDIRISINGHE



## Oil anointing ceremony at Gangaramaya

## STATE MINISTER RANJITH SIYAMBALAPITIYA INJURED IN AN ACCIDENT

State Minister Ranjith Siyambalapatiya was admitted to Hospital with minor injuries after his vehicle skidded off the road and crashed against a parapet wall at Karawanella.

## 15 injured in van double cab collision at Embilipitiya

Six children five women among the wounded

BY AJITHAL SHANTHAUDAYA

At least 15 passengers were injured in a head on collision between a van and a double cab in Embilipitiya town on Saturday evening (15). Six children and five women were among those injured. The injured, several of them in critical condition, were admitted to the Embilipitiya District Hospital.

SEE REST OF THE STORY ON A2 >>>



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# Daily Mirror

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CONTD.  
FROM PAGE 1

## EC STILL AWAITING AN INDICATION OF RELEASING FUNDS FOR LG POLL

Punchihewa told **Daily Mirror** that Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardana who is also the Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government has told the EC that he would discuss the financial issue of the EC with President Ranil Wickremesinghe who is the Finance Minister and inform the EC when the funds are available during the discussion held on last Monday (10).

The EC could announce a new date for the polls only after the Treasury released enough funds.

But, there was no firm word from the Finance Ministry or from the PM when the EC would get sufficient funds to conduct the much delayed LG polls. Therefore, we have no option but to wait for a positive response from the Treasury," Punchihewa lamented.

However, Prime Minister Gunawardana has told the EC that he would resolve the issue of the failure of the Attorney General to appear before Supreme Court on behalf of the EC for inquiries held in Fundamental Rights petitions filed by the main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB).

The SJB has filed an FR petition challenging the refusal by the Treasury to transfer funds to the EC even after the Supreme Court ruled against the withholding of budgetary allocations to the EC.

Asked whether he would expect to return to the EC, as the Constitutional Council (CC) is in the process of selecting new commissioners for the EC, Punchihewa said he had no intention to apply.

"But President has the authority to appoint a chairman to the EC outside the three nominees sent to him by the CC chosen from those applied," he added.

## Body of a two year old child from Aluthgama found in a canal

The police were preparing to continue the search with the help of the Police Kennel Unit when his body was found.

## PRESIDENT TO CALL FOR A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Mano Ganesan told **Daily Mirror** that President had informed him and MP Rauff Hakeem that he would make a fresh call on that day to all opposition MPs to extend support for the idea.

MP Ganesan told **Daily Mirror** that although the President said he would make the call when Parliament meets, he did not extend such an invitation when we met him.

Earlier, the MP said he together with MP Rauff Hakeem

initiated an effort to bring the UNP and SJB under one umbrella, but they had to abandon the idea since the SJB leadership did not respond.

"However the subject of 'premiership' never popped up in our discussion. All media reports claiming that the President had sent messages to opposition leader Sajith Premadasa offering him the Premiership were false and baseless," he added.

## A rare hybrid solar eclipse on Thursday

"It is known as a hybrid eclipse because it will shift from a total eclipse to an annular solar eclipse as the moon's shadow moves over Earth. For some locations in the solar eclipse's path on the world, viewers will witness a total solar eclipse, whereas in other parts, they'll witness a ring-like annular solar eclipse. In both cases, the moon will pass between the Earth and the sun, blocking out all or most of the sun's light falling on the Earth's surface" he said.

"Since the Moon's orbit around the Earth is elliptical the Moon's distance from the Earth can vary by about 6% from its average value. Therefore, the Moon's apparent size varies with its distance from the Earth, and it is this effect that leads to the transition between total and annular eclipses" Professor Jayaratne said in a statement. He said that unfortunately, this

• Unfortunately, this eclipse is not visible to Sri Lanka as well as many parts of the world and added however, the eclipse is visible for a few regions in Western Australia, East Timor, and the eastern Indonesian islands

eclipse is not visible to Sri Lanka as well as many parts of the world and added however, the eclipse is visible for a few regions in Western Australia, East Timor, and the eastern Indonesian islands, and viewers in those countries can get ready to see the show of a lifetime.

The eclipse will be visible only to 8.77% of the world's population. In Sri Lanka Standard Time, the eclipse will begin in the Indian Ocean at 7.04 a.m. and end at 12.29 p.m. over the Pacific Ocean on April 20, according to Professor Jayaratne.

"There are just two locations on Earth that will be able to witness the eclipse transition from annular to total before transitioning back to annular again. However, these locations are unfortunately in the middle of the ocean.

Hybrid eclipses are very rare. The last hybrid eclipse occurred nearly 10 years ago, on Nov. 3, 2013, and the next hybrid solar eclipse will occur in November 2031.

Though this eclipse is not visible to Sri Lanka, it can be observed live through several websites he said.

## Worker assaulted at Dematagoda filling station

Roshanth Eheliyagoda, the owner of the Dematagoda Ceypecto Petrol Shed, told **Daily Mirror** that a black shirted motorcycle customer wanted more fuel than QR.

"Our pumper said no and only the QR amount can be given. Then, the customer

on the motorcycle started using bad language and abused my pumper.

Another pumper said he will pump the QR volume only but the customer after getting his fuel attacked the pumper. The other staff came to their colleagues's aide and to stop the fight. The motorcycle

customer threatened all the staff that they will come back and "take care of them," he said.

Later, he said the customer had come with a gang and attacked the pumper causing him injuries. The victim has now been hospitalized.

## Even peacocks should be exported : Range Bandara

Range Bandara who was responding to a question raised by media at a New year festival said not only monkeys destroy crops but peacocks too cause extensive damage to crops.

"Those who oppose the exportation of Toque monkeys including environmentalists should go to Wanathawilluwa, Anamadawa and Anuradhapura to see the


damage caused by these monkeys and peacocks to the cultivations and witness the losses suffered by the farming community" He said.

"Some political leaders and government officers always created monsters whenever the government decides to do something. Now the environmentalists have joined the exercise of creating monsters" he added.

## 15 INJURED IN VAN DOUBLE CAB COLLISION AT EMBILIPITIYA

Police said the van had been knocked off the road due to the impact of the collision and that the double cab had been running on the right side of the road and rammed against the van.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Year Remembrance (15.04.2013) In Loving Memory of



**Soma Balasuriya**

My everloving Wife  
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Upright and just to the end of the day  
Sincere and true in your heart and  
mind Beautiful memories  
you left behind for me.

Sam Balasuriya




The Junior Mirror, together with the British Council, will hold an essay competition for kids between the ages of 8 to 12 years. An essay topic will be given each month and there will be a winner each week. The word count for your essay should be 150-200 words. Winners will receive a free annual subscription "Kids Membership" to the British Council Library.

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## SEVEN REMANDED FOR ASSAULTING POLICE OFFICER

The suspects Shehan Rukmal Bandara Disanayaka, Rashmi Shanika Ranasinha, Chamuditha Fernando, Lahiru Shammika Fernando, Bimsara Yohara Bandara Seneviratne, and Randika Silva were produced in court on the charge of obstructing the duty of the police officer and assault on him.

Investigations revealed that a son of a mayoral candidate contesting the local government election in Kandy, two sons of the coordinating secretary of a prominent politician of the area and two sons of leading personalities.

A spokesman for the hospital said the police officer had sustained a fracture due to the assault.

Kandy police are conducting further investigations.

### PHOTO CORNER








A CEREMONY WAS HELD RECENTLY AT SAMUDRADEVI BALIKA VIDYALAYA NUGEGODA TO WELCOME STUDENTS TO GRADE ONE FOR THE YEAR 2023. OUR PHOTOGRAPHER PRADEEP DILRUKSHANA CAPTURED THESE SCENES AT THE EVENT.

## Shoals of fish from the Kalawewa reservoir dying

Mahaweli Authority officials have taken steps to test samples of water from the reservoir

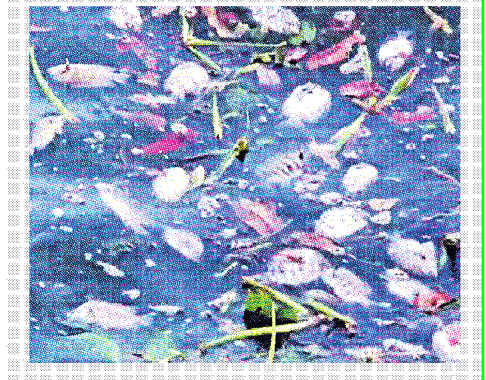
BY KUSHAN JAYAWARDENE

Shoals of fish in the Kalawewa reservoir have been dying over the last several days much to the anxiety of residents of the area who are facing a health hazard due to the nauseating smell of decomposed fish.

Fishermen said it was after several years that fish in the Kalawewa reservoir had died in this manner.

Mahaweli Authority officials have taken steps to test samples of water from the reservoir.

A senior official of the Mahaweli Authority said the intense heat prevailing at present could result in the death of fish.







By Mytili Bala



# LIPSTICK ON A PIG: MAKING SENSE OF THE ATA

## ප්‍රතිලාභයට පත්වන

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## ජාතික වෘත්තීය සමිති මධ්‍යස්ථානය



Sri Lanka can and must do better to protect its citizens' fundamental rights

For forty years, human rights activists have demanded repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) of 1979. Ultimately it was money, not human rights (the threat of losing GSP+ trade status) that forced Sri Lanka's hand. A close read of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) reveals it for what it is: lipstick on a pig. It tinkers at the margins without changing what is rotten at its core. Through its overbroad definition of terrorism and backdooring of deradicalization regulations, the ATA vastly expands state power at the expense of citizens' fundamental rights.

### DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS

A major problem with the PTA was its failure to define terrorism. The ATA makes matters worse by defining terrorism too broadly. Any crime consists of two components—a prohibited act and a criminal intent. Both have problems. Starting with the act element, the ATA prohibits “causing serious obstruction... with essential services or supplies” (§ 3(2)(f)). That could encompass last summer's protests or a labour strike. The ATA also prohibits being “a member of an unlawful assembly” for committing a prohibited act (§ 3(2)(l)). Defining a crime as serious as terrorism on group membership alone is deeply problematic given Sri Lanka's past.

After the Easter Sunday attacks, police arrested R. Mazahima for wearing a dress printed with a ship's wheel (misconstrued as Dhammachakra) and Ashraf Jazeem for writing a “jihad” poem (that actually spoke against extremism and violence). The ATA would not prevent these arrests; it defines terrorism to include incitement through words, signs, or visible representations that are “likely to be understood by some or all of the members of the public” as encouraging terrorism (§ 10(1)(a)). While statements must be taken in context (§ 10(4)), do we really think officers would act differently tomorrow? Detainees can say that the image or writing did not express their views or was published without consent (§ 10(5)), but not that it was grossly misconstrued.

Gathering or sharing “any confidential information” can amount to an independent offence, raising threats to media freedom despite the carveout for information “published in good faith with due diligence for the benefit of the public or in the national interest” (§ 9). The ATA bans sending a “terrorism publication,” which includes anything that could be viewed as useful for a terrorist offence (§ 11(1)(e), (3)(b)). Third party platforms that provide “a service to others that enables them to obtain, read, listen to or look at a terrorism publication” also face liability (§ 11(1)(d)).

The mental state element is even worse. The ATA bans acts committed with the intent to compel action by the state, any other government, or an international organization (§ 3(1)(b)). It bans acts committed to incite discrimination, hostility, or violence (§ 3(1)(e)). While the latter sounds fine on paper, the subversion of the ICCPR Act of 2007 raises obvious concerns. Racist monks who terrorize minorities will incite violence with impunity under the ATA while the state arrests minorities for hamming majority feelings.

The ATA punishes not only direct perpetrators, but also those who abet “any act preparatory to the commission of an offence” (§ 5(1)). There is liability for failure to report or provide information to police (§ 15). In the United States, where I practice, there is generally no duty to report a crime, except for mandatory reporting by teachers, doctors, and social workers of child abuse or neglect. Singapore imposes such a duty under section 424 of its Penal Code, but violators face only six months imprisonment whereas the ATA imposes 7 years and up to a Rs. 500,000 fine (§ 15(b)).

A hypothetical might help put it all together. Imagine that Tamil and Muslim mothers occupy public roadways protesting the years-long detention of their loved ones under the PTA. They intend to press the government to release or charge those detained. Human rights activists join in seeking legal reform and urging the international community to act. After the first day, protesters meet to share ideas. They post information about this meeting on social media and in local newspapers. Lawyers for PTA detainees attend and give updates about their clients' cases. Some curious locals attend, while others stay home. Media outlets cover the meeting and the protests. How many potential crimes have been committed under the ATA, and by whom?

■ Mothers and human rights activists could be liable for taking part in the protests. These protests on public roads obstructed essential services, and they were undertaken with the intent to influence government action and rally the international community.

■ By attending the strategy meeting, protesters could also be liable for engaging in an act preparatory to the commission of a terrorist offence, as well as for being a member of an unlawful assembly for the purpose of committing that offence.

■ Lawyers who attend the strategy meeting could be liable for sharing confidential information at the strategy meeting. By offering potentially helpful information, they might be liable for abetting a preparatory act to terrorism or being a member of an unlawful assembly.

■ Social media companies and data or internet service providers could be liable for transmitting information about the strategy session or protests, which

could be understood by some as useful for preparation.

■ Media outlets are at the whim of a DIG, who must assess if their coverage was published in good faith and with due diligence for the public interest.

■ Locals who attend the strategy meeting or protests out of sheer curiosity could be liable for being a member of an unlawful assembly.

■ Those who do not attend but were reasonably aware of one or both could be liable for failing to report information to police.

The ATA is so comically broad that any communal gathering faces the prospect of being deemed a terrorism offence, thereby justifying abandonment of due process safeguards. In a country where existing counterterrorism laws have been abused to trample fundamental rights for minority communities, the ATA's definitional overbreadth makes things worse, not better. Everything flows from this definitional problem. Positive procedural changes are small comfort at the margins with vastly more people facing arbitrary detention under the proposed ATA.

### DERADICALIZATION

Less publicized is how the ATA backdoors banned deradicalization regulations to the PTA that were gazetted in 2021. Seeing alarming parallels to China's Uyghur reeducation camps, the EU Parliament recommended suspending GSP+ again (for the first time since the war) based in part on these regulations. Sri Lankan activists took the matter to court, and the Supreme Court stayed their implementation. The ATA revives these regulations by giving the Attorney General authority to defer criminal proceedings and recommend rehabilitation of the accused (§ 71, 77). Rehabilitation in turn would be administered by the new Bureau of Rehabilitation, created by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Act of 2023. Through these twin bills, the government attempts an end to run around the Supreme Court by incorporating a deradicalization bill into the ATA's framework.

This would have drastic real-world consequences. Masses of ordinary Muslims were detained after the Easter Sunday attacks, like masses of Tamils detained after the civil war. The ATA gives the Attorney General power to defer an indictment and recommend rehabilitation, reparations, apology, and community service in ordinary cases (§ 71(1)-(3)). As to persons who have yet to be charged with a crime, on what legal basis may the state order rehabilitation, payment of compensation, or other penalties? Similar powers are bestowed to the Attorney General after charges are filed. The ATA permits the chief prosecutor “at any time before the judgement is given by the High Court” to withdraw the indictment and impose rehabilitation, payment of reparations, and community service in lieu of trial (§ 77(1)-(3)). Once the indictment is withdrawn, on what legal basis may the state order an uncharged suspect to forego liberty and pay reparations?

A poor family cannot withstand loss of their sole breadwinner for three months of detention or 12 months of remand custody, much less years waiting for a case to reach trial. Even if innocent of any crime, the prospect of freedom is too great to forego. Detainees will opt for rehabilitation whether or not they have a strong defense. Viewed in conjunction with its definitional problem, the ATA's rehabilitation scheme is abusive and coercive. Sri Lanka can and must do better to protect its citizens' fundamental rights.

Mytili Bala is a California attorney who has been an advisor to the Women's Action Network

The ATA is so comically broad that any communal gathering faces the prospect of being deemed a terrorism offense, thereby justifying abandonment of due process safeguards

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# EDITORIAL

*"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."*  
-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

**OUR THOUGHT**

## SPY BALLOONS, PENTAGON FILES AND IMF FACILITIES

**U**S President Joe Biden's administration is in serious trouble. Just last month (March), a cache of secret documents was leaked showing the US spied on its allies.

In early January this year, through the first week of February, the US charged China was conducting surveillance in its airspace. On February 4, the US Air force shot down the 'spy balloon' upon a direct order of President Biden.

The US umbrage was so great that US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken indefinitely postponed a proposed trip to China later that month (February), citing the Chinese reconnaissance balloon moving east across the United States that posed a threat to national security. Blinken had been scheduled to depart for Beijing, on a trip that was intended to reinforce communication and co-operation between the two countries. He told China's Director of Central Foreign Affairs Office, Wang Yi, through a phone call that the balloon was an "irresponsible act and a clear violation of US sovereignty and international law that undermined the purpose of the trip".

Anita Anand, Canada's Federal Defence Minister said Canada "unequivocally supported" the US government's decision to shoot down a high-altitude surveillance balloon. She even went to the extent of thanking the US for its close collaboration. Just when the US appeared to have one-upped China, a large batch of leaked classified US government information, including top-secret briefings, were discovered over the past week online, and that included surveillance not only on China, but on US allies as well.

The leaked documents showed US as spying even on the Secretary General of the United Nations. The Pentagon leak showed the US believed the UN Secretary General's stance on a key grain deal was undermining attempts to hold Russia accountable for the war in Ukraine. The leak showed Washington had been closely monitoring the Secretary General in the belief that Antonio Guterres was willing to accommodate Russian interests! Another set of documents based on intelligence from late February provides details of discussions among senior Jordanian officials over whether or not to shut the Chinese firm Huawei out of its 5G rollout plans.

Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein, in charge of the rollout, is said in the document to be worried about the retaliation from China if they keep Huawei out. Another batch of documents suggest that Russian officials are at loggerheads over the reporting of casualties in Ukraine. A document, dated March 23, refers to the presence of Western special forces operating inside Ukraine.

According to the 'Washington Post', one document from February expresses misgivings about Ukraine's chances of success in its forthcoming counteroffensive. The Washington Post obtained access to another document from mid-February, where they found that Egypt had plans to produce 40,000 rockets for Russia in secret. The Post said President Abdul Fatah al-Sisi told officials to keep production and shipment secret "to avoid problems with the West". A classified document, seen by the BBC reveals that South Korea was uncertain about selling weapons for use in Ukraine. The report, details a sensitive conversation between national security advisers torn between US pressure to send ammunition to Ukraine and their policy not to arm countries at war.

The Post also found that Beijing tested one of its experimental missiles - the DF-27 hypersonic glide vehicle - on February 25. The missile flew for 12 minutes over a distance of 2,100km (1,300 miles), according to the documents. (573) To cut a long story short, the leaked Pentagon files reveal that America is involved not only on eavesdropping on those whom it identifies as foes, but on its friends and allies alike.

However, illegal spying is a brazen violation of national sovereignty. No leader can afford to accept this without suffering domestic political ramifications. In order to repair the public opinion damage and survive future elections, the victims of US spying might be forced to reduce their level of support to the US in response to the surveillance campaign. It is also becoming clear that most countries supporting the US role in Ukraine and joining sanctions against Russia are under the US nuclear umbrella and they all have US troops stationed within their borders. Today, the US is keen to push our country into signing a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The agreement (SOFA) is between a host country and a foreign nation for stationing military forces in that country. According to Dr. Palitha Kahona, agreements such as ACSA, SOFA, MCC etc. - once concluded there is no walking away from the treaties.

Overcoming our present financial crisis should not force rulers to blindly accept such treaties in exchange for a mess of pottage in the form of IMF help.



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By **Ahilan Kadirgamar**

**A**t the 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last week, there was considerable discussion about the deteriorating global economic situation and the debt crisis affecting developing countries. A major concern now are the consequences of IMF packages for developing countries in debt distress. How will IMF imposed austerity affect the social protection of people ravaged by economic crisis?

I was part of a hybrid panel at a side event in Washington titled: "IMF's strategy on social spending facing austerity: New direction or band-aid?" I provide below a write up based on my intervention.

### SOCIAL WELFARE

Sri Lanka is going through its worst economic crisis since the 1930s; the time of the Great Depression. It is out of that earlier devastating crisis, including a malaria epidemic in 1935 that was worse than the Covid pandemic in costing the lives of 2% of our population, that free education and universal healthcare systems were built, and remain to this day. A universal food subsidy system was also created then, but that was made into a targeted cash transfer in the late 1970s with the IMF led Structural Adjustment policies, and eventually inflated away into insignificance. How much more resilient Sri Lanka would be today if that food subsidy had continued, to address the ongoing food crisis with malnutrition ravaging the country.

Sri Lanka has a history of strong universal welfare measures which have been a great boon to its people. Even though social welfare has been underfunded in recent decades, and median incomes are low with rising inequalities, the country managed to keep much of the population above poverty. In this context, the current crisis has been gruelling for working people; poverty levels have doubled to 25% and a third of the population is food insecure.

### AUSTERITY MEASURES

Sri Lanka having defaulted on its external debt exactly a year ago in April 2022, turned to the IMF. In fact, over the last year, the island nation has stringently implemented IMF recommendations, as prior actions to ensure IMF Executive Board approval, which only came last month.

The austerity measures have been devastating; the sudden depreciation of the rupee with the attendant price hikes of 80% on imported goods passed onto consumers; the Central Bank policy rate increased two-and-a-half-times to 16.5% with effective lending rates of commercial banks on the order of 30%; policies of market pricing energy tripled petrol and diesel prices, kerosene used by fisher folk and small farmers quadrupled, and electricity costs on the average tripled; and the sudden halt of government projects drastically reduced incomes streams. Fuel consumption has halved with people not travelling, and the consumption of cement has halved undermining the livelihoods of the mass of day wage labour involved in construction.

# IMF, AUSTERITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION



Though lengthy queues for fuel, food and LP gas have disappeared lately, tough IMF conditions compel the common man to adopt strict austerity measures on every steps he takes

**Sri Lanka having defaulted on its external debt exactly a year ago in April 2022, turned to the IMF. In fact, over the last year, the island nation has stringently implemented IMF recommendations, as prior actions to ensure IMF Executive Board approval, which only came last month**

**Sri Lanka, however, is now caught in a trap, what I would characterise as an IMF trap. The IMF is imposing conditionalities on government policies into the future, even as it also plays the role of arbiter for restructuring the country's external debt**

The consequence of such austerity measures is that the GDP contracted last year by 7.8%, and is expected to contract further by 4.3% this year.

### WORRYING RESTRUCTURING

Such social and economic devastation was to be balanced, the people were told, with the targeted social protection measures with cash transfers, as opposed to the universal social welfare measures they were entitled to for decades. However, the IMF report of March 20, 2023 released with its Executive Board approval recommends a mere 0.6% of GDP for social protection. The people will of course demand much more, because of the unaffordable costs of fuel, electricity and not to mention food; where food prices have doubled. Indeed, the cost of living has skyrocketed, as nominal wages have remained stagnant, and even declined for many people.

Sri Lanka, however, is now caught in a trap, what I would characterise as an IMF trap. The IMF is imposing conditionalities on government policies into the future, even as it also plays the role of arbiter for restructuring the country's external debt. In fact, the IMF is playing multiple

restructuring roles in Sri Lanka today; it is arbitrating the restructuring of external debt to creditors; it is restructuring the fiscal space with impossible primary surplus targets; and it is restructuring the universal social welfare system claiming to promote a better system of social protection that is targeted and based on cash transfers.

Let's look at the priorities of the IMF, its debt sustainability analysis calls for 4.5% of GDP per year in foreign debt servicing. That amounts to 30% of the proposed revenues targeted in future budgets. However, while it is pushing for cuts on many subsidies affecting a range of public services, its focus is on a few categories of social protection, where the allocations have hardly changed and are limited to a mere 0.6% of GDP or 4% of future budget allocations.

The meagre social protection allocation is a mockery of redistribution needed for relief to the people. Worse the austerity push is being used to undermine what remains of universal social welfare. Clearly, targeted measures will not work for an economy with 65% of the population part of the seasonal informal sector, and therefore no regular wages. Hence one season, the farmers fall into poverty, the next season fisher folk and so on. And that is why targeted social protection will certainly not work during a deep economic crisis that disrupts livelihoods.

### POLITICAL RESPONSE

The IMF agreement, the imposition of austerity, and the dispossession underway serves the interests of the wealthy in Sri Lanka and the financiers that form external creditors. The working people whose welfare is being cut and wages repressed, have no recourse but through a political response. Last year the people of Sri Lanka chased away a despised president, and are now confronted by an unelected authoritarian president.

An IMF package serving the interests of powerful creditors and the elite in Sri Lanka, taken forward by a regime without legitimacy, will eventually be opposed by the overwhelming majority of the citizenry. As the big lie about social protection unravels, the people will have no option at the next election but to reject the IMF agreement wholesale. Sadly, for now, deceived by the projection of an IMF solution, the Sri Lankan public are forced to endure painful years of austerity. The reality is a prolonged crisis, which can only be addressed by a different economic trajectory that rejects austerity, reinforces universal social welfare and rebuilds the livelihoods of working people.

Panel Organised by Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, Chaired by Alex Campbell, Director, Washington Office, International Trade Union Congress. Panel: Rodrigo Cerda, Division Chief, Expenditure Policy Division, Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund (IMF); Shahra Razavi, Director, Social Protection Department, International Labour Organization (ILO); Alexander Kentikelenis, on behalf of Oxfam International; Ahilan Kadirgamar, Senior Lecturer, University of Jaffna.

# RED Notes

## DM Poll

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

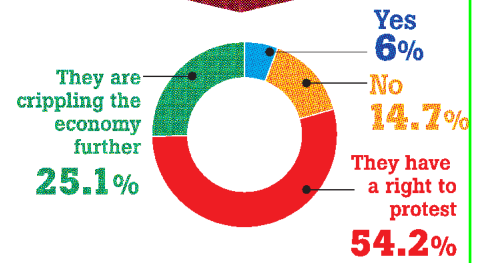
- To protect the country
- To control dissenting voice
- To respond to an urgent danger of terrorism
- To prevent any Aragalaya in future.



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)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Cops and Beggars

Beggars at traffic lights have increased in large numbers. We notice this activity at busy Ayurveda intersection at the Rajagiriya Flyover junction Kotte, Borella, AAT junction Narahenpita which we pass regularly.

The beauty is that 2 to 3 traffic policemen busy with manual operation of lights in these points also appears to allow begging in their very presence and beggars are also not deterred by police presence. They cross between slow moving vehicles posing a danger to them as well as to owners. Some reported that beggars have scratched vehicles (with a coin) which do not give any money to vent their anger.

Urgent police action is required to curb this menace at traffic lights on permanent basis. Vehicle users in turn must support police by not giving out money.

-SUMITH DE SILVA

### X-press Pearl compensation:

## Another miss...?

Discussions regarding the X-press Pearl inferno and the compensation matter have once again come to the fore following remarks by Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Rajapakse regarding an alleged solicitation of a US\$250 million bribe.

While the party in question is not yet known as orders to investigate the matter has been sent to the Police Chief, interested parties claim that Sri Lanka will miss its opportunity to file compensation as the expiry date is drawing closer. Environmental organisations such as the Centre for Environmental Justice have been fighting for this matter ever since the incident took place. However, due to vested interests and differences in opinions, Sri Lanka dragged itself into a mess.

Authorities also claim that the insurance company had been interfering with the legal proceedings from time to time. In this backdrop, the authorities have now come to an agreement to file the case in an International Arbitration Court in Singapore and not in a local court. But here again, legal experts are divided on this decision as some claim that 'Sri Lanka's jurisdiction is well-equipped to handle such a claim'.

As of now, the compensation to be received by Sri Lanka is estimated at US\$6.2 billion, but it could be even more than that if sufficient evidence on damages is being presented.

-A CONCERNED CITIZEN

## We endeavoured to merge UNP, SJB - Mano

### WEB COMMENTS

**SRI** - This is the best option for Ranil after all he and Sajith come from the same Politics and political parties...and People have little bit trust and faith in both of them than MR and co

overall majority, if an election is held.

**AMARAN** - Sajith's popularity has significantly dropped since the last election. He will learn a lesson in the next election. He is still dreaming that "HE IS POPULAR". He is a THICK-HEADED PERSON

**KARALASINGAM SIVALINGAM** - Neither SJB, nor JVP has an

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

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# WORLD'S FIRST WOMAN PM

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We really stunned the world, as makers of the first woman Head of State. The world wondered how it materialised in Ceylon; A record that will endure eternally in mankind's history

Her tears created a wave of sympathy which drew massive crowds. This gave the novice lady all the courage, dynamism and vitality to win 75 seats out of 146, a clear ruling majority

First Woman Head of State, an exceptional distinction welcomed universally



By  
**KKS PERERA**

**Two general elections followed the assassination of the Prime Minister, her husband in 1959, and at the party hierarchy's invitation, she hesitantly joined the fray and agreed to appear on the election platform**

Leelananda de Silva, [economic adviser] in his autobiography says, "in November 1976, returning from the Non-aligned summit via Rome, we visited the Boca Verita (mouth of truth). There you put your hand into the mouth of a lion made of stone, and the mouth keeps closing and opening. If your hand gets caught, then you are supposed to be a liar. Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike was amused by this and she called me from a distance and asked me to put my hand in to check my 'reliability'. Luckily for me, my hand was not caught. The Prime Minister had a great sense of humour.

The Adikaram, an up-country aristocrat took safeguards to ensure a non-recurrence of two misadventures when their daughter lost the baby. Soothsayers emphasised that the lady should deliver the third, away from the ancestral home. He had a sister married to an Ellawala and living in Ratnapura. On April 17, 1916, the Ellawala Walauwa made preparations for welcoming a new member to the family. Ratwatte, later a member of the Senate of Ceylon, was a descendant of a family that held high office in the courts of ancient Sinhalese monarchs. Quite a few writers and speakers on Sirimavo Bandaranaike, inadvertently or erroneously refer to her place of birth as Pussaliyadda Walauwa, Mahawelatenne in Balangoda; also they believe that she was named 'Sirima', and only as PM in 1960, that respectful suffix '-vo' was added, calling her Sirimavo. Her original Birth Certificate issued by the state, the marriage certificate, wedding invitation and admission documents from St Bridget's Convent which are preserved and displayed at Sirimavo Bandaranaike Museum at BMICH, confirms this truth.

**"We came in a Philippine Airlines aircraft, and the Prime Minister was travelling Economy class, as was her policy to cut down on costs. When the plane stopped on the tarmac, the guard of honour was drawn outside the First class exit of the plane"**

"Sirimavo had to wait till she was six for schooling, but attended kindergarten for one year, travelling by buggy cart. The little girl insisted that a particular bull be bound to the cart, and she confounded the carter whenever he attempted to use a different bull," says, Maureen Seneviratne, Sirimavo's biographer. Her amazing longing or passion for things close to her sentiments, she amply demonstrated later in her political life as well. Bradman Weerakoon, the PM's official Secretary endorses this, "She insisted fresh mangosteens from Horagolla, Rambutan and mangoes from Attanagalle, be airlifted to London to be served for the guests at a dinner, she hosted for several distinguished VVIPs; her hand-written personal note to me, specifying, where exactly to pick the fruits, types and details of varieties". -"Rendering unto Caesar" -B Weerakoon-2004: Pp-91/92.

Volumes had been published on her Temple Trees days: now for a glimpse of her nursery, pre-teen, adolescent and young

housewife days at Ellawala Walawwa, Mahawelatenne, Horagolla, Wentworth, Tintagel and Temple Trees.

Leelananda continues, "We came in a Philippine Airlines aircraft, and the Prime Minister was travelling Economy class, as was her policy to cut down on costs. When the plane stopped on the tarmac, the guard of honour was drawn outside the First class exit of the plane. The Prime Minister came out of the Economy class entrance and she had to walk a little distance on the tarmac to be greeted by the guard of honour. All this was watched by a large crowd, some of whom were not pleased with what happened. I had to explain that the Prime Minister's view was that there was no need to live beyond our means, using public money.

The senior Adikaram, maternal grandfather was a linguist and a man of wide reading. He knew German and French, Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi and Bengali. His library consisted of Astrology, Literature, Medicine, Botany and numerous other topics. Young Sirimavo and her siblings had free access and exposure during their school days to the valuable volumes which the eldest in the family read keenly and gained considerable knowledge from text and periodicals.

Proposed in June 1940, the couple was wooing till the wedding planned for October. On July 8, the 'boyfriend' West Ridgway paid a visit to Balangoda, spent the day and left in the evening; the next day she wrote a 'love letter' to her fiancé, the Minister of Health, Solomon W Ridgeway D Bandaranaike—her choice of words, courteous unfaltering and 'naughty' to express the deepness of emotions—obviously, S.W.R.D. did cherish forever. A short extract from the letter written 83 years ago is preserved at the Sirimavo museum.

*"My own precious darling... Why did you leave me and go away yesterday? I am feeling wretched after you left me... my sweetheart I never felt so helpless..."*

On October 2, 1940, the bridegroom, the Oxon Barrister, was ushered to Mahawelatenne Walawwa, in a procession, in the company of his father Maha Mudliyar Sir Soloman Dias Bandaranaike and the advisor to the British Governor; an elite from low country Sinhalese Anglican family. Oriental music was played throughout, while the bride carried a spray of white lotuses. The marriage was described by Sir D. B. Jayatilake, the leader of the House in the State Council as a historic occasion, worthy of a niche in the records of the country. Shortly after her wedding, in November, the husband and Minister of Health had to make an official visit to New Delhi with a delegation led by D. S. Senanayake; DS invited Sirimavo, the newly married lady to accompany her husband.

The couple moved into Wentworth, a residence in Guildford Crescent where

Sirimavo developed a fancy for tennis, the husband's game, and was seen walking to Women's International Club with cousin Mrs. Danton Obeysekera. At Wentworth she gave birth to her three children and then from Guilford Crescent they moved to Rosemead Place. Sirimavo played an active role in Mahila Samithiya women's institution linked to the All Ceylon Women's Association and became its President.

On another occasion, Leelananda wrote, "... the Prime Minister had to make a speech at the reception given to her by Prime Minister Takeo Miki. We prepared this speech by making a reference to Sri Lanka's close friendship with Japan and the role that J.R. Jayewardene had played in San Francisco in 1951 when the Japanese peace treaty was signed. Sri Lanka had waived any kind of reparations from Japan for war damage, and proposed full freedom,

**At Wentworth she gave birth to her three children and then from Guilford Crescent they moved to Rosemead Place**

a generous offer to Japan advocated by D. S. Senanayake. One member of our delegation was not happy with the reference to J.R. We showed the draft to PM and she had no objection to what we had included in her draft speech. This was a very gracious act on her part, as J.R. was then the leader of the opposition."

The two general elections followed the assassination of the Prime Minister, her husband in 1959, and at the party hierarchy's invitation, she hesitantly joined the fray and agreed to appear on the election platform. When emotionally

charged, inexperienced Sirimavo shed tears on stage as an expression of grief, the minority UNP government repeatedly played Dayananda Gunawardena's Nari Bena song, 'Kumatada sobaniye kandulu salanne' [My dear lady, why do you weep] ad nauseam over the two channels at Radio Ceylon, the sole electronic media. Her tears created a wave of sympathy which drew massive crowds. This gave the novice lady all the courage, dynamism and vitality to win 75 seats out of 146, a clear ruling majority. Sirimavo Bandaranaike took oaths as the Prime Minister of Ceylon and as 'First Woman Head of State', an exceptional distinction welcomed universally. We really stunned the world, as makers of the first woman Head of State. The world wondered how it materialised in Ceylon; A record that will endure eternally in mankind's history.

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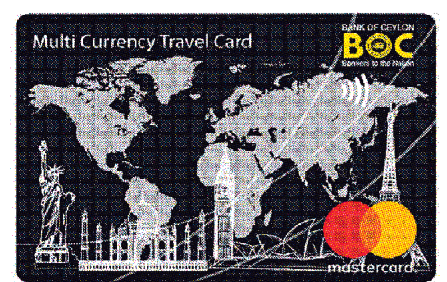
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## Members Day of Sri Lanka China Society

The Sri Lanka China Society is organizing a Members Day on **April 30th, 2023** at Bird Park, Butthagamuwa Road, Rajagiriya and this event will be open to members of the S. L. C. S. and their guests, stated its President Jimith de Silva.

He also said that it will be a day full of fun and fellowship with a sumptuous buffet lunch and the programme will be from **9.30 am to 3 pm.**

**Members are requested to confirm their attendance on or before April 20th 2023, by mail or over the phone to Mr Nanda Corea, General Secretary (nandacorea1992@gmail.com or Mobile 0710 700 929)**



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SPORTS

Minister of Tourism and Land, Harin Fernando presenting the RTC Queen's Cup to owner of Royal Crystal, Poomi Edwards and jockey Nikhil Parmar in the presence of RTC committee members Ryoata Hakariya (Secretary), Panduka Keerthinanda (President) and Nisitha Rupasinghe (Treasurer)



Winners of the Nippon Super Challenge Cup with their awards

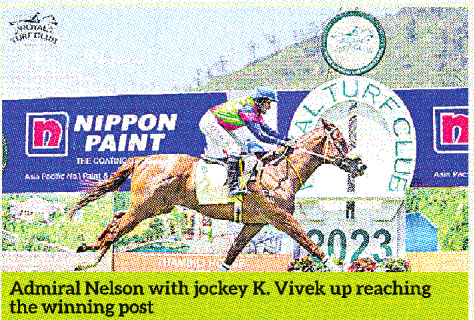


RTC Governor's Cup Race Day 2023

VICTORY AT HIGH ALTITUDE: ANOTHER ACE CLINCHES RTC GOVERNOR'S CUP IN NUWARA ELIYA



Winner of the RTC Governor's Cup race Another Ace together with jockey K. Sai Kiran



Admiral Nelson with jockey K. Vivek up reaching the winning post



Royal Crystal (R) with jockey Nikhil Parmar up, finishing ahead of Here and Now with jockey L. Ravi Kumar up, to win the RTC Queen's Cup powered by Nippon Paint



The winner of the Sporting Star Challenge Trophy, Crack of Dawn with jockey L. Ravi Kumar up, trainer S.D. Mahesh and the representative to owner Dagmar Woehrl

In an electrifying race held at the picturesque Nuwara Eliya racecourse, Another Ace emerged victorious in the RTC Governor's Cup at the RTC Governor's Cup Race Day 2023 powered by Nippon Paint. The horse, ridden by jockey K. Sai Kiran, trained by S.V. Mathialagan and owned by Hasanga Jayaratne, showcased its mettle in the race for horses rated above 60, run over a distance of 1600 metres.

As the race began, it was anyone's guess which horse would emerge as the winner, with all the runners vying for the coveted trophy. However, as the race progressed, it became apparent that a four-way battle was unfolding between Mauritania, Legendary Princess, Western Wind and Another Ace.

In a nail-biting finish, it was Another Ace who crossed the finish line first, closely followed by stablemate Western Wind, ridden by K. Vivek and owned by Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne. Legendary Princess, ridden by Nikhil Parmar and owned by Dagmar Woehrl, finished a close third, while Mauritania, ridden by P. Ajeeth Kumar and owned by Edwards Stables, had to settle for fourth place.

In a thrilling start to the day's proceedings, Admiral Nelson claimed the first victory of the day by winning the Sporting Times Challenge Trophy, in the handicap race for horses rated 20 to 45 with a distance of 1400 metres.

Indian jockey K. Vivek gave an impressive ride, as Admiral Nelson challenged Glittering, ridden by local jockey L. Ravi Kumar and trained by S.D. Mahesh, who had taken an early lead. The two runners from Jayaratne Stables, Street Cat and Admiral Nelson, then stepped up the pace halfway through the race to give Glittering a run for its money. By the final 400 metres, the competition became fierce, with Krabi making a late charge, but Admiral Nelson managed to cross the winning post to give Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne their first win of the day.



Action from the RTC Governor's Cup race

Street Cat, ridden by K. Sai Kiran, trained by Prasanna Niroshan and owned by Gmini Jayaratne and J.R.S. Irugalbandara, finished a close second, while Krabi, ridden by N.S. Parmar, trained by S.D. Mahesh and owned by Edwards Stables, finished third.

In the next race, Crack of Dawn, ridden by local jockey L. Ravi Kumar and trained by S.D. Mahesh, emerged victorious in the Sporting Star Challenge Trophy, a handicap race for horses rated 41 to 61. After trailing behind early leader Vigorous, ridden by jockey G. Pagan and trained by Jayantha Wijesinghe, Crack of Dawn made a brilliant late surge during the final stretch to edge past the other runners. The intense competition became a three-way battle between Queen's Hall, Godsword, and Crack of Dawn, with L. Ravi Kumar's experience and skill helping him guide Crack of Dawn to an impressive victory, to the delight of owner Dagmar Woehrl and trainer S.D. Mahesh.

Queen's Hall, ridden by K. Sai Kiran, trained by S.V. Mathialagan, and owned by Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne, finished a close second, with Godsword, ridden by P. Ajeeth Kumar, trained by S.D. Mahesh and owned by Edwards Stables, taking third place.

Royal Crystal dominated the RTC Queen's Cup, a Terms Race for horses rated above 60 and covering a distance of 2000 metres, by leading the race from start to finish. Indian jockey Nikhil Parmar made a spectacular start to take an early lead and held it throughout the entire run, giving owner Edwards Stables and trainer S.D. Mahesh their big win.

S.D. Mahesh had a remarkable top-three finish, with Here and Now ridden by local jockey L. Ravi Kumar coming in at second, and Cosmic Feeling ridden by P. Ajeeth Kumar and owned by S.L.N. Infrastructures, finishing in third place.

The last race of the day saw Fancy Face and jockey M. Isahan triumph in the Nippon Super Challenge Cup, a terms race with penalties for 3/4 breed horses over a 1000-metre distance. The Prasanna Niroshan-trained and Naveen Madawa- and Sanjaya Kumarasinghe-owned Fancy Face ran a great race, winning by almost three lengths ahead of Malee and Crown Fried.

Malee, owned by R.M.A. Jayatissa and trained by Jayantha Wijesinghe, finished second with jockey G. Pagan. The third-placed Crown Fried, owned by Niranjani Sivakumar and trained by Prasanna Niroshan, was ridden by H. Siva Kumar.

RTC GOVERNOR'S CUP RACE DAY 2023

RTC Governor's Cup
1. Another Ace, K. Sai Kiran (Hasanga Jayaratne)

2. Western Wind, K. Vivek (Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne)
3. Legendary Princess, Nikhil Parmar (Dagmar Woehrl)

Sporting Times Challenge Trophy
1. Admiral Nelson, K. Vivek (Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne)
2. Street Cat, K. Sai Kiran (Gmini Jayaratne and J.R.S. Irugalbandara)

3. Krabi, N.S. Parmar (Edwards Stables)
Sporting Star Challenge Trophy
1. Crack of Dawn, L. Ravi Kumar (Dagmar Woehrl)

2. Queen's Hall, K. Sai Kiran (Hasanga Jayaratne and Paba Jayaratne)
3. Godsword, P. Ajeeth Kumar (Edwards Stables)

RTC Queen's Cup
1. Royal Crystal, Nikhil Parmar (Edwards Stables)

2. Here and Now, L. Ravi Kumar
3. Cosmic Feeling, P. Ajeeth Kumar (S.L.N. Infrastructures)

Nippon Super Challenge Cup
1. Fancy Face, M. Isahan (Naveen Madawa and Sanjaya Kumarasinghe)

2. Malee, G. Pagan (R.M.A. Jayatissa)
3. Crown Fried, H. Siva Kumar (Niranjani Sivakumar)



INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Football: PREMIER LEAGUE
Leeds United vs. Liverpool - Elland Road

Cricket: TEST MATCH SERIES
Sri Lanka vs. Ireland - Galle
INTERNATIONAL TWENTY20 MATCH
Pakistan vs. New Zealand - Lahore
INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE
Royal Challengers Bangalore vs. Chennai Super Kings - Bangalore

DMSportsDesk

Sri Lanka to send seven athletes for Asian Youth (U-18) meet



File photo

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

Sri Lanka Athletic (SLA) has received the approval of Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe to send a youth athletic team consisting of seven athletes for the 5th Asian Youth (U-18) Athletic Championship 2023.

Conducted by the Asian Athletic Association (AAA), this meet is scheduled to be held from April 27-30 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. According to the AAA and the Uzbekistan Athletic Association, nearly 1,000 athletes from 30 Asian countries are expected to compete in this tournament.

Conducted by the Asian Athletic Association (AAA), this meet is scheduled to be held from April 27-30 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

The Sri Lanka Youth Athletic Team proposed for the tour will consist of five boys, two girls, and three officials, said SLA Acting Secretary Palitha Jayathilaka.

The Sri Lanka Youth Athletics team is scheduled to leave for Tashkent via Dubai on April 24.

In the history of Asian Youth (U-18) athletics, Sri Lanka has won 14 medals from 2015 to 2022, comprising one gold, nine silver, and four bronze. SLA is hopeful that several Sri Lankan athletes have the potential to win medals.

SRI LANKA YOUTH ATHLETIC SQUAD:

Boys: Nilupul Thenuja (High Jump), G.L. Arthavidu (High Jump), Ayomal Akalanka (400m Hurdle), Malindarathne Silva (Pole Vault) and Jathya Kirulu (400m)
Girls: Nirmali Wickramasinghe (800m) and Duljanjana Predepani (1500m)
Officials: Chandana Ekanayaka (Team Leader), Buddika Madusanka (Coach) and Poornima Weerakoon (Lady Chaperone)

Advertisement for 'පරිගණක' (Computer) magazine, featuring various software and digital content. Includes QR codes for digital versions and contact information.

SL Ratnayake Memorial U-17 Badminton from April 21-25

BY SUSIL PREMALAL

The SL Ratnayake Memorial All Island Schools Under-17 Badminton Championships 2023 will take place at the S. Thomas' College Indoor Sports Complex, Bandarawela, from April 21-25.

The championships, organised by S. Thomas' College, will be under the guidance of the Sri Lanka Schools Badminton Association and Sri Lanka Badminton.

Shuttlers from 90 schools will be in action, with 47 boys' and 43 girls' teams competing under six groups,

namely Super (A), A, B, C, D, and E.

The opening ceremony will take place at 8.30 a.m. on April 21, while Sri Lanka Badminton President Rohan de Silva will be the chief guest at the closing ceremony, which begins at 2:00 p.m. on the final day.

Sri Lanka - Ireland 1st Test Match

Dimuth, Kusal on leather hunt, Sri Lanka amass 386/4

BY M. SHAMIL AMIT

Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne and Kusal Mendis went on a leather hunt as the pair cracked tons to help Sri Lanka end the first day's play of the first Test match against the visiting Ireland team at the Galle International Cricket Stadium with a formidable score of 386 for 4.

The morning session of proceedings saw skipper Karunaratne winning the toss and electing to take the first lease of the wicket. He opened the innings with Nishan Madushka, giving the home side a sound start and putting on 64 runs before being separated by the dismissal of Madushka, who made 29.

From there on skipper Karunaratne, joined by Kusal Mendis, had things their own way as the pair held on with Karunaratne having reached his half-ton and for Sri Lanka to go into the lunch break on 119 for 1.

The post-lunch session saw the pair go on the rampage while posting the home side's 150 runs, which was followed by Mendis racing to his half-ton and the duo's 100 runs stand for the second wicket.



Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis plays a shot (Photo credit: AFP)

Sri Lanka

Table with 2 columns: Player Name and Runs. Includes 1st Innings and Extras information.

The pair made the Ireland bowlers toil in the sun, and Sri Lanka reached the 200-run mark with the minimum of fuss, with the pair posting a 150-run partnership, followed by skipper Karunaratne racing to his ton in 139 balls, which had seven boundaries.

They went into the tea break with the score at 245 for 1 before Mendis reached his ton which came off 145 balls that included 14 boundaries and a six, followed by the pair's 200 runs

stand for the second wicket and Sri Lanka's 300 runs being posted on the scoreboard.

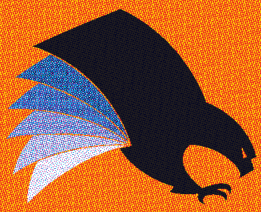
Skipper Karunaratne reached his 150 runs in 190 balls, which had 13 hits to the ropes.

The pair continued their dominance as they went on to post the 250-run stand for the second wicket, adding a further 31 runs. Ireland left-arm spinner Henry Dockrell made the breakthrough for the visitors with

the wicket of Mendis, who made 140 runs that included 18 boundaries and a six and had associated in a massive stand of 281 runs for the second.

This followed with Sri Lanka losing two quick wickets as Angelo Mathews was able to face only three balls before being dismissed for a duck, followed by skipper Karunaratne, who slammed 179 with 15 boundaries before Sri Lanka ended the day on 386 for 4. The match will be continued today.





# Mirror Business

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**P9** Lion Brewery and Luxury Brands sweep SLIM NASCO Awards 2022

**P8** Hapag Lloyd Lanka consistently recognised for...



## Sri Lanka's bondholders send debt rework proposal to government, sources say

**REUTERS:** A committee of Sri Lanka's international private creditors sent its first debt rework proposal to the country's authorities regarding more than US\$ 12 billion in bonds outstanding, according to three sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

It is the first bondholder proposal after the island nation of 22 million people defaulted on its debt a year ago. It marks a first formal step to engage with the country's authorities, said one of the people, who asked not to be named because discussions are private.

Details of the proposal were not immediately available.

Representatives for the government did not respond to a request for comment. A spokesperson representing the creditor committee declined to comment.

The group of about 30 creditors includes global investment companies Amundi Asset Management, BlackRock, HKB Capital Management and T. Rowe Price Associates.

Bondholders and government officials met in Washington this week, with legal and financial advisers for both sides present, two sources said.

Separately, the Paris Club of creditor governments said on Friday it aims to start negotiations to restructure Sri Lanka's bilateral debt after a committee was set up by French, Japanese and Indian finance ministers, and representatives of Sri Lanka.

China, Sri Lanka's biggest bilateral creditor, did not join the announcement even though it holds the key to solving debt woes for some low- and middle-income countries.

"If we can cooperate, if we can equally and fairly share the burden, I think we can solve the problem," People's Bank of China Governor Yi Gang said in a seminar during

the International Monetary Fund and World Bank spring meetings in Washington, when asked whether China could join a Japan-initiated common platform to coordinate restructuring of Sri Lanka's debt.

After the COVID-19 pandemic that ruined the tourist sector, a spike in prices of imports following the start of the war in Ukraine, and economic mismanagement, Sri Lanka fell into its worst financial crisis in more than seven decades.

The country secured last month a US\$ 2.9 billion programme from the IMF to tackle its huge debt burden.



## Foreign interest in G-Secs increases on hopes of economy's swift recovery

- Total foreign holding of bills and bonds stock stood at Rs. 102mn as at April 11, 2023
- As of 2015, foreigners held US\$ 3.5 bn worth Sri Lankan treasuries
- SL making fast headway through debt restructuring with both its bilateral and private creditors

Foreign interest in Treasury bills and bonds was seen growing steadily in the recent few weeks reflecting their readiness to bet on the future trajectory of the Sri Lanka's economy.

As per the data available through the week ended on April 11, foreigners brought Rs.28.52 million equivalent treasury bills and bonds, logging a sharp increase of 38.59 percent.

Now the total foreign holding of the bills and bonds stock stands at Rs.102.43 million.

The optimism over the reform trajectory and the recovery story of

the Sri Lankan economy may have led foreigners to return to Sri Lankan treasuries after nearly 8 years.

As of 2015, foreigners held US\$ 3.5 billion worth of Sri Lankan treasuries, which was equivalent to Rs.453.43 billion in rupee terms.

During the 2015-2019 period, they exited from those holdings as growth impulses in the Sri Lankan economy waned and they looked for better returns elsewhere.

Foreigners first showed their interest again on Sri Lankan treasuries when the country entered into a staff-level agreement with the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) in September, last year.

Sri Lanka is making fast headway through debt restructuring with both its bilateral and private creditors who have already indicated their initial willingness to reset the debt servicing schedules.

Sri Lanka is seen regaining its debt serviceability in record time as it has cut its imports at least by half and tourism and remittances are fast picking up, while exports largely holding up despite some pressure on textiles and garments.

**MORE ON P8**

## Sri Lanka targets US\$ 14 bn in foreign reserves when it comes out of IMF programme

Sri Lanka will emerge with its highest ever foreign currency reserve buffer when it comes out of the four-year economic stabilisation package with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) entered in March, according to First Capital Research which took a closer dive into the investor presentation the Sri Lanka officials made to the country's creditors a fortnight ago.

Accordingly, Sri Lanka is aiming to achieve a gross official reserve of Rs.14.0 billion, the highest ever reserve buffer the country will have in four years.

Sri Lanka has suspended

repaying billions of dollars of foreign currency loans and is negotiating with both its bilateral and commercial creditors for debt relief for up to 10 years.

By the end of March, Sri Lanka's external reserves stood at US\$ 2,691 million, including the US\$ 1.4 billion equivalent swap facility from China, which has conditions on its usability.

First Capital further said the contemplated debt treatment will enable the country to reach the debt sustainability targets in the IMF framework, which has its debt stock target at 95 percent of GDP by 2032.

## Maliban wins SLIM Kantar People's FMCG Brand of the Year 2023

Maliban has been awarded the SLIM Kantar People's FMCG Brand of the Year 2023 Award – which recognises its outstanding commitment to quality and excellence, a reputation it has maintained for almost 70 years.

The SLIM Kantar People's Award is an accolade for brands in Sri Lanka. It is a people's choice award that recognizes the most popular and trusted brands in the country, as voted by the public.



**MORE ON P8**

## Paris Club says aims to start Sri Lanka debt negotiations

**REUTERS:** The Paris Club of creditor governments aims to start negotiations to restructure Sri Lanka's debt, the group said last Friday after a creditor committee was set up this week.

The Paris Club said the Japanese and Indian finance ministers along with its president and representatives of Sri Lanka set up a creditor committee on Thursday on the sidelines of the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington.

"The Paris Club intends to

keep the momentum and start the restructuring negotiations in coordination with all relevant stakeholders, to ensure fair burden sharing, transparency and comparability of treatment," it said in a statement.

It added that all public sector creditors were welcome to participate in the process.

Sri Lanka last month secured a US\$ 2.9 billion IMF programme to tackle its suffocating debt burden and its worst economic crisis in more than seven decades.

## How much does it cost to have a Kevili table in 2023?

**2.4 times Surge in Kevili Table Ingredient Costs Since 2019 (Prices in LKR).**

Cost of Ingredients in Preparing:	April 2019	March 2023	Increase in the cost of ingredients
<b>Kokis</b> 20 pcs	149	361	<b>2.6x</b>
<b>Banana</b> 1kg	94	254	<b>2.7x</b>
<b>Milk Rice</b> 10pcs	72	162	<b>2.2x</b>
<b>Aluwa</b> 15pcs	124	254	<b>2.0x</b>
<b>Butter Cake</b> 1kg	370	910	<b>2.5x</b>
<b>Kavum</b> 20pcs	723	1,674	<b>2.3x</b>
<b>Dodol</b> 1kg	452	978	<b>2.2x</b>
<b>Mun Kavum</b> 15pcs	192	522	<b>2.7x</b>

Note: 1) Expenses related to utilities such as electricity, gas and spices were not included as they were not quantifiable.  
2) The average size of a household is 4 as of HIES Report (2019) by DCS.  
3) The Cost of ingredient were calculated based on the recipes from the Appe Amma Youtube channel.  
Source: Open Market weekly Average Retail prices in Colombo District (DCS), April 2019W1&March 2023 W4. Additional data received directly from the Department of Census and Statistics(DCS)



## Japan approves plan to open its first casino

**BBC:** Japanese officials have approved controversial plans to build the country's first gambling resort.

The complex will open in the western city of Osaka in 2029.

Casinos have long been illegal in Japan. But, a law was passed in 2018 providing exceptions to games, such as poker or baccarat, to create jobs and boost tourism.

Public opinion has been split, with some concerned about a rise in crime and gambling addiction.

Besides the casino, the 5.3 million square-foot (49ha) complex will include a hotel, conference centre, shopping mall and museum.

"We hope (the casino) will become a tourism base that promotes Japan's charms to the world," according to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

**MORE ON P8**

## Russia's oil exports back to pre-war levels despite Western sanctions

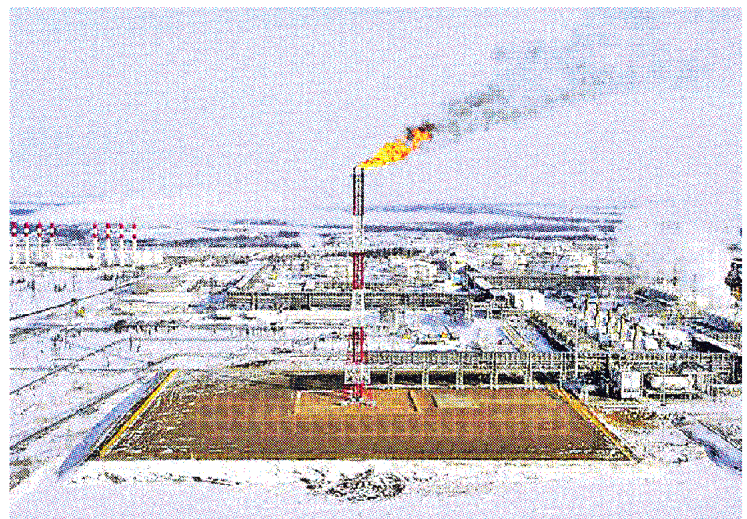
**CNN:** Russia's oil exports have bounced back to levels last seen before it invaded Ukraine, despite a barrage of Western sanctions.

Moscow's exports of crude oil and oil products rose in March to their highest level since April 2020, jumping by 600,000 barrels a day, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its monthly oil report Friday. The rise lifted Russia's estimated revenue from oil exports to US\$ 12.7 billion last month.

The revenue is still down 43 percent from a year ago, the IEA said, as Russia is forced to sell its barrels to a more limited pool of customers who can negotiate greater discounts.

Western countries have imposed a raft of sanctions on Moscow's energy exports since President Vladimir Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine in February last year. The most significant are a ban on Russian seaborne crude imports into the European Union and a ban on refined oil products such as diesel into the bloc.

But Russia, the world's second-largest exporter of crude, has found willing buyers in China and India to



replace European customers.

Still, sanctions have made a significant dent in Russia's coffers. Last week, the government said declining energy revenues had contributed to a budget deficit of 2.4 trillion rubles (US\$ 29 billion) in the first three months of this year. Its overall income plunged nearly 21 percent compared with the same period in 2022, Reuters reported.

Russia relies on the oil and gas sector to finance about 45 percent of its budget, according to the IEA.

The IEA also said surprise cuts to crude production announced this month by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies, a group known as OPEC Plus, risked "aggravating" an expected oil shortage in the second half of 2023.

**MORE ON P8**

## Leasing Council of the Bankers launches high-tech website



From left: Asanka Patabadige (DFCC Bank), Dilum Amarasinghe (NDB Bank), Shiyana Perera (PABC Bank), Kanchana Karunagama – President (HNB PLC), Jeewantha Perera (Union Bank), Siddeeqe Akbar (Amana Bank), Lahiru Ekanayake (SDB Bank), Keshan Dabare (Sampath Bank)

The Leasing Council of the Bankers of Sri Lanka (LCBSL) launched its state-of-the-art website with the patronage of President Kanchana Karunagama and Executive Committee members recently.

Speaking at the launch Karunagama said that this is an important event and a much-awaited milestone in the LCBSL agenda, where both the internal and external customers would benefit by accessing this informative website.

Further, he said that basic information such as current committee members, operating guidelines relating to leasing, past events and important activities etc. are covered by the website.

The website provides the first set of selected valuers who have been appointed after a stringent selection procedure. Anyone who is interested in obtaining a lease facility can visit this comprehensive and informative website and get an understanding of how safe and sound he or she would be when a lease facility is obtained from a licensed bank.

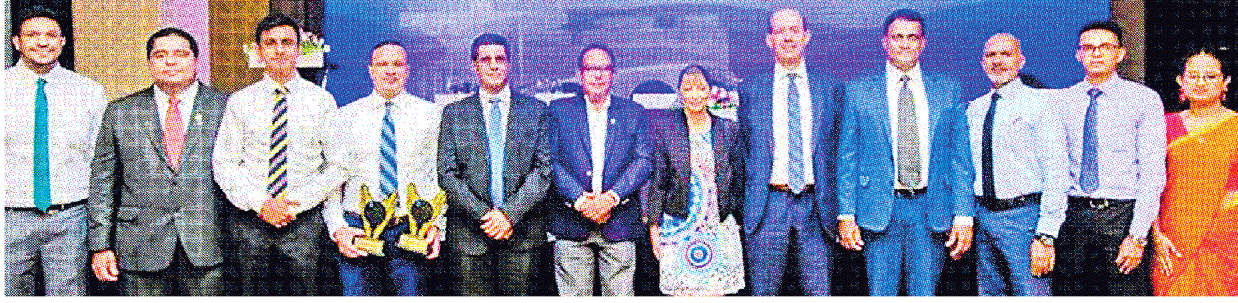
**MORE ON P8**



# Hapag Lloyd Lanka consistently recognised for exceptional customer service



Kirk Balding, Assistant General Manager (Europe and Mediterranean Sector) receiving the best customer service provider award from Jean-Francois Pactet, H.E Ambassador of France in Sri Lanka



Jean-Francois Pactet, H.E Ambassador of France in Sri Lanka, Keith Bernard, Chairman of Sri Lanka Ports Authority, Ison Hiscox, Principal of University of Technology Sydney (UTS) College- Sri Lanka, Kingsley Abeywickrama, Chairman - ICS (UK) Sri Lanka Branch, Lalith Witanachchi, Director/Vice President - Hapag-Lloyd Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, Geeth Kumarasinghe, General Manager - Hapag-Lloyd Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, with the Marketing and Customer Service team members

Hapag-Lloyd Lanka, a subsidiary of Aitken Spence PLC and the local representation for Hapag-Lloyd-AG- Hamburg won two Customer Service Awards for the Europe Trade, for the third consecutive year and Mediterranean Trade, for the second consecutive year at the recently held award ceremony by the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (UK) - Sri Lanka Branch.

The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS) (UK) founded in 1911 and received the 'Royal Charter' in the year 1920; is fundamentally dedicated in promoting professionalism in the international maritime industry. Its worldwide acceptance affirms the 'Institute' as the only professional body that sets the highest standards of professional service to the shipping industry world over.

The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers

(ICS) Sri Lanka Branch commenced in awarding 'Customer Service Awards' at their Annual ICS Awards Ceremony in the year 1997 under the leadership of Dr. Parakrama Disisanayake the Former Chairman of the ICS Sri Lanka Branch, who later on became the first non-Britisher to be elected as the International President of the Institute, in the year 2017-2019.

Receiving multiple awards from reputed industry and professional bodies in regular intervals over the last three years emphasises the commitment alongside the successful quality-centric and customer-focused initiatives taken by Hapag-Lloyd Lanka. These initiatives are further supported by Hapag-Lloyd strategy 2023 that focuses on quality, digitalization, and differentiations including customer interaction.

"From its inception, the ICS customer

service awards are accepted by the major industry players as an important tool to establish the much-needed customer service benchmarks in Sri Lanka. Receiving many awards from ICS, which is one of the most reputed professional bodies in Sri Lanka, and from some other industry bodies that represent our customers, is a clear indication of the strength of Hapag-Lloyd Lanka to provide exceptional service to its customers.

As a service organization, we have upskilled our talent and in turn has been successful to improve customer satisfaction levels. We believe this investment to further develop the capacity levels, domain knowledge, and the leadership and managerial qualities of our people amidst the extremely volatile macro-economic situation in the country will raise the benchmark in

the industry" commented, Hapag-Lloyd Lanka Director/ Vice President Lalith Witanachchi.

"During the last three years, we closely analysed the feedback of our valued customers, and we were able to introduce some radical process, system, and structural changes to enhance the customer service levels. We foster a learning and an innovative culture and we have formed cross-functional teams and encouraged even our junior-level team members who directly deal with our customers to give their suggestions to change our processes, systems, and structures. We are seeing the positive outcomes of these initiatives" said Hapag-Lloyd Lanka General Manager Dr. Geeth Kumarasinghe.

Hapag-Lloyd Lanka is a joint venture between Aitken Spence Maritime and Hapag-Lloyd-AG.

## SAGT awarded for excellence in environment protection initiatives and best safety practices

South Asia Gateway Terminals (Pvt) Ltd (SAGT), Sri Lanka's first Public Private Partnership Container Terminal was awarded the 'Container Terminal with Best Safety Practices' and the 'Best Container Terminal for Environment Protection Initiatives at the Global Ports Forum Awards 2023.

SAGT's sustainability strategy is focused on addressing topics that are material to the organization's business operations. The awards are a testament to SAGT's commitment to its four pillars sustainability strategy inclusive of environmental stewardship and enabling a work environment focused on health and safety, wellbeing and security.

Health and safety are a priority at SAGT and are embedded into the company's core value system. SAGT's health and safety strategy encompasses both the long terms health and wellbeing of its employees and workplace safety. Every year the company invests in an annual health check-up for its employees.



Udara Cumaratunga, Senior Manager Commercial and Marketing receiving the award

In addition to this SAGT conducts multiple awareness sessions for its staff focusing on both physical health and mental wellbeing to raise awareness and educate employees on the importance of maintaining good health and wellbeing.

SAGT strives for zero accidents in the workplace fostering a culture of safety taking every precaution to maintain a safe working environment for its employees. The company continuously strives to improve its safety conditions and achieved an 87.5 percent reduction in the number of recordable injuries in the FY 2021/2022 in comparison to FY 2020/2021.

## Shippers' Council clarifies position on implementation of Gazette No. 2321/62

The import and export sectors of Sri Lanka, which comprise the critical and crucial economic segments of Sri Lanka and which contribute to the country's overall commercial activities, have been seriously affected by the recent action of the Minister of Ports and Shipping by introducing and implementing the gazette No.2321/62.

The new gazette annulling the Gazette No. 2041/10 dated 17th October, 2017, which was originally introduced on 27th October, 2013, to the benefit of Importers and exporters, since its introduction.

The benefits to Importers and Exporters which have accrued since the implementation of the Gazette No. 2041/10 dated 17th October, 2017, have prevented several anti-competitive practices which have been carried out by service providers for several years before its implementation.

The annulling of the Gazette No. 2041/10 has created a ripple effect, which will result in Sri Lanka's imports and exports becoming costlier and uncompetitive, due to the unethical surcharges which will be levied, and which will lead to the loss of the country's market share in the global market.

After 2017, the relevant legislation in Sri Lanka recognized the concept of an all-inclusive freight cost for imports and exports, which was payable by the contracting party.

A Delivery Order payment was the only fee that was payable outside of the all-inclusive freight cost. What this meant was that when importing goods on a Cost Insurance Freight (CIF) basis, the importer was only required to pay the local delivery order fee. It is the responsibility of the

shipping line to subsequently pay the Sri Lanka Ports Authority for the unloading and loading of vessels, which is the stevedoring charges. In an all-inclusive freight payment, these charges are in turn, paid in US dollars by the shipping line to the Sri Lanka Port Authority (SLPA).

A recent article which was published on 10th April, 2023 in the printed media, incorrectly alludes to a leakage of foreign currency which prevailed prior to the implementation of the new Gazette 2321/62. This is completely untrue.

The information contained in the media article regarding dollar leakage is a gross misinterpretation of the facts. Paying the cost of goods in international trade is an accepted norm and has to be the total of all services rendered for the goods to reach the buyer.

The original Gazette No. 2041/10 strongly supported this by establishing the need for the contracting party to pay all charges so that there is no breaking of costs at different points. On the contrary, rescinding the Gazette No. 2041/10 has now authorized any operator/provider of a service, to levy any amount, at any point, irrespective of the terms of the contract.

This has paved way, as in the case of the 'Zero freight Bills of Lading' in the past to the introduction of numerous surcharges, which number over 40, for operators to collect illegal and unethical fees from uncontracting parties and remit the proceeds collected back to overseas agents deceitfully and the collection of charges which the local parties should not pay as part of sales contracts. The result will be a further erosion of already scarce foreign

exchange which will only benefit rogue third parties to whom it is a sole profit-making item in disguise of moving cargo from one place to another.

The very fact that transportation costs not being negotiated in the all inclusive freight rate, after rescinding the gazette, results in the inability for the users to negotiate and benefit from the best price. This constitutes unethical profiteering by local agents / representatives to transfer out of the country, illegal profits to their principles overseas.

Payment of Port Handling Charges to the SLPA is the responsibility of the shipping line, irrespective where the so-called Terminal Handling Charge is paid. In containerized freight, the International Commercial Terms (INCOTERMS), clearly defines where the cost and responsibility of the seller ends and those of the buyer starts. They are well defined in the sales contracts between seller and importer or exporter and buyer.

It becomes farcical when contractors attempt to define sales terms which are exclusively between buyers and sellers, while they only have to be concerned with and maintain service levels they agree on with consignees on contract - in containerizing CY, CFS or door.

For clarity, all 3 service levels demand the carriers/ forwarders/ consolidators to deliver freight beyond the terminal, therefore, the so-called Terminal Handling Charge should and must be a part of contracted freight cost that should be paid by the party contracting and not by the other party to the sales contract. These cardinal principles were carefully thought

of when the structure of the charges gazette was introduced.

When importing on a CIF basis, the importer remits foreign currency to the shipper, but it is then the duty of the shipper to pay the costs in US\$ to the SLPA. As such, the stevedoring charges are a net inflow in US\$ to the country. Since the publication of Gazette no 2321/62, shipping lines have already informed their customers that a component called a Terminal Handling Charge will be payable locally. In the SLPA tariff charges, there is no such charge, and this is a word coined by the logistics groupsto include a line item that can be collected locally.

Shipping lines are already talking of a cost of US\$ 151 for a 20ft container (US\$ 6 per CBM). The lines claim that this amount was previously included in the all-inclusive freight rate. However, when freight rates out of for example, India are at US\$ 9 to US\$ 12 per CBM, to imply that there is a US\$ 6 per CBM charge within the port, is a clear indication of the opportunistic conduct of the groupsto use the relaxation in the legislation to feather their own nest.

It is known that prior to the 2017 regulations, shipping lines had more than 40 plus different line items which were being levied from importers. The return to this regime will inevitably lead to higher prices for items like dhal, onions, rice and other basic food items that are imported.

Because of the resulting increased costs to the Sri Lankan consumer, according to the media article which claims that they would not support any measures that negatively affect the economy, this is totally incorrect, because of the serious

impact that it would have.

Costs will increase for all importers - those serving the domestic market will pass them onto the consumer, and those importing for value addition and re-export will only make exports less competitive... at a time when an export driven economy is a key component of the recovery of the economy. With the government required to raise the GDP over the next few years, with the increase of FDI into the country, this will be severely impacted when investors and current investors cannot identify fixed logistics costs. This will immediately make Sri Lanka uncompetitive for foreign direct investment as well.

The new requirement of charging the so-called THC locally, will also lead to a loss of revenue to the government as duty would be calculated net of these costs. At a time when tax revenue is desperately needed for the development of the economy, it must be questioned why legislation is being introduced that will reduce tax revenue to the government.

The media article also claims that the 2017 regulations threaten the loss of business to the Port; this statement is completely false. An examination of the Colombo Port's performance, especially the movement of containers through the Port of Colombo will disprove and clarify the statement.

It is the hope of the Sri Lanka Shippers' Council that the unacceptable and hasty decisions which have been taken will be re-visited, to address the interests of the country first and not to cater to the selfish and own advantage of a section of the logistics community.

## Contd. from Page 7

### Foreign interest...

Sri Lanka faced Balance of Payment (BOP) crisis due to the loss of foreign incomes during the two years of the pandemic and decided to seek the assistance of the IMF in 2022 to ride the storm.

This was Sri Lanka's 17th jaunt to the IMF, which suggests that country never addressed the deep imbalances in the economy to prevent BOP crises re-emerging at regular intervals.

On the contrary, India's last programme with the IMF was way back in 1991.

### Maliban wins...

Thus, Maliban winning this award is a significant achievement as it reflects the brand's ability to connect with its consumers and deliver products that meet their needs and expectations.

Winning the SLIM Kantar People's Award is considered a testament to Maliban's exceptional quality and popularity, and highlights its unwavering commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction.

As a household name for biscuits for generations, Maliban is also one of the few Sri Lankan food businesses to have obtained ISO 22000 certification

for food safety management systems. It is also the first biscuit manufacturer to have been awarded super-brand status, as well as receiving numerous other international and local awards for quality and management excellence.

Maliban biscuits are enjoyed in over 40 countries in 5 continents worldwide, and the brand's impeccable reputation has made it the number one manufacturer of high-quality biscuits and snacks in Sri Lanka. Maliban's commitment to quality and sustainability has also led to it becoming the first biscuit manufacturer to receive accredited carbon footprint certificates against the ISO 14064-1:2018 Standard from the Sri Lanka Climate Fund.

Through its efforts over 70 years, Maliban has emerged as the largest manufacturer and exporter of biscuits and confectionaries in Sri Lanka, and set the benchmark for food safety and management systems in Sri Lanka and continues to be a brand that is trusted by customers worldwide - including in jurisdictions with some of the strictest food safety standards in the world, such as the UK, USA, Australia, the EU and the UAE.

### Japan approves...

The project has an initial investment of 1.8tn yen (US\$ 13.5bn, £10.7bn) with US-based casino operator MGM and Japan's Orix Group each owning

a 40 percent stake in the company.

The other 20 percent will be owned by local companies such as West Japan Rail, Kansai Electric Power and Osaka-based Panasonic.

Officials expect the resort to attract around 20 million visitors annually and bring in roughly 1tn yen in annual economic benefits to the region, according to a Japanese news service.

The project was proposed years ago, but it was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a corruption scandal involving a ruling-party lawmaker who was accused of accepting bribes while in charge of casino policy.

Japan is seen a promising market for gambling. It is the world's third largest economy with a population of roughly 126 million.

It also has close proximity to wealthy Asian gamblers, particularly from China. Macau is the only Chinese city where casino gambling is legal.

A similar plan has been submitted by the Nagasaki prefecture to build a casino at Huis Ten Bosch, a Dutch-themed theme park.

### Leasing Council...

Additionally, the inquiry portal and other communication avenues will clear doubts a potential customer would have in any of the areas relating to product leasing.

LCBSL takes this opportunity to thank E-Beyonce for providing a user-friendly and state-of-the-art website.

### Russia's oil...

The IEA said OPEC Plus' cuts were likely to reduce global oil supply by 400,000 barrels per day by the end of this year. Meanwhile, demand is expected to climb by 2 million barrels per day to hit a record of almost 102 million barrels per day this year.

That comes in addition to a 2 million barrel-per-day reduction the cartel announced in October.

The cuts risk "boosting oil prices at a time of heightened economic uncertainty," despite slowing industrial activity in the world's biggest economies and increasing oil production in countries outside of OPEC Plus, the IEA said.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, was last trading at US\$ 87 a barrel, up nearly 8.6% since OPEC Plus announced the latest round of production cuts.

The predicted oil shortage could weigh on economies already grappling with slowing growth and historically high inflation.

OPEC Plus unexpectedly announced on April 2 that it would slash crude oil output by 1.66 million barrels per day. The cuts will start in May and last through the end of the year, according to an official with the Saudi energy ministry.



# Lion Brewery and Luxury Brands sweep SLIM NASCO Awards 2022

Leading members of the Lion Brewery and Luxury Brands trade marketing teams were honoured at the recently held SLIM National Sales Congress (NASCO) Awards. The awards recognize that the sales function is crucial to the total marketing strategy and highlight the outstanding contribution of professionals who propel their businesses, brands and industries forward. Now in its twenty-second year, the awards for 2021 and 2022 financial years returned to an in-person gala ceremony on 22nd March.

Entries to the NASCO Awards are reviewed by a judging panel drawn from a cross-section of industry dominating brands.

Front-Liners and Executives are evaluated on their individual performance and ability to advance in their careers.

Territory Managers are assessed on their ability to increase sales revenues, enhance market reach and other key performance indicators within assigned geographical areas.

Regional Sales Managers must embed brand and category building and customer development plans in route-to-market strategy while demonstrating outstanding leadership and meeting overall business objectives.

Under the Alcohol and Tobacco Sector,



Front row (from left): Rajith Lakmal – Luxury Brands Territory Executive, Thuwan Basheer – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Subashana Herath – Luxury Brands Sales Coordinator, Amal Kulathunga – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Dinesh Rathubaduge – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Prasanna Wimalaranga – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Kanagaraj Prashanth – Lion Sales Representative, Hemal Herath – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Nirosh Harshana – Lion Sales Representative, Priyantha Wijesundara – Luxury Brands Territory Manager, Dilanka Mapa – Luxury Brands Sales Coordinator. Back row (from left): Sanjula Hettiarachchige – Luxury Brands Territory Manager, Ryle Madena – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Madura Buddhika – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Crisho Melroy Silva – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Saminda Hitibandara – Field Sales Manager, Nipuna Wijerathna – Lion Brewery Territory Manager, Sahana Sandeepa – Lion Sales Representative, Sandeep Madumal – Lion Sales Representative, Thashindu Thenuwara – Luxury Brands Sales Coordinator.

winners from Lion Brewery and Luxury Brands, its sister company operating in the premium segment of the larger alcohol market, received nineteen awards for efficient and exceptional performance across different categories.

Under the Front-Liners category, Thashindu Thenuwara and Sahana Sandeepa were awarded Gold, Subashana Herath, Nirosh Harshana, Kanagaraj Prashanth received Silver,

and Dilanka Jayanath Mapa and Sandeep Madumal claimed Bronze in the same category.

Under the Executive category, Prasanna Wimalaranga and Thuwan Basheer grabbed a Gold and Silver respectively, while Rajith Lakmal, Amal Kulathunga and Ryle Madena received Bronze awards.

In the Territory Manager category, Madura Buddhika and Hemal Herath

received Golds whilst Sanjula Hettiarachchige and Dinesh Rathubaduge sealed Silver awards. Priyantha Wijesundara, Nipuna Wijerathna and Crisho Melroy Silva were awarded Bronze under the same category.

In the Regional Sales Manager category, which is one of the most senior classifications in NASCO, Saminda Hitibandara was awarded a Bronze.

## Richardson appoints Finance Director

Richardson Holdings announced the appointment of Portia Jayamaha as their new Finance Director, an experienced finance leader who has worked in senior roles across several industries.



Portia Jayamaha

from University of Sri Jayewardenepura in BSc accountancy Sp. and an MBA holder from University of Queensland. She also serves as the Alternate Chair of Women

Empowerment and Leadership Development Committee of ICASL Sri Lanka.

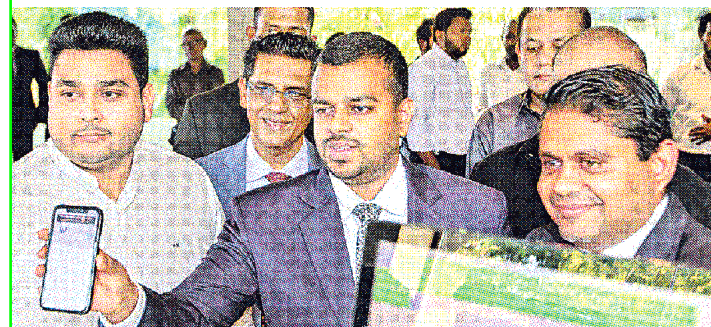
Portia brings with her a wealth of industry-related financial experience with responsibilities in Finance, Strategy, Technology, Lean and Business Transformation. Over the years she has accumulated experience in different industries which include Healthcare, Engineering, Leisure, Technology, Banking, Garments, Manufacturing, Retail, NGOs, etc.

"I am pleased to welcome Portia as the newest member of Richardson's leadership team. She brings a wealth of knowledge and successful leadership experience that I know will be a tremendous asset to the organization," said Nazri Nizar, Managing Director of Richardson Holdings.

Portia is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, Member of Chartered Institute of Management Accountants UK, Graduate

Prior to joining Richardson Holdings, Portia worked as Director Finance and Transformation Lead at Hemas Hospitals Group heading Finance, IT & Digital, Lean, Strategy & Transformation and chaired many committees. During this time, she also implemented a Business Intelligence platform to support real time decision making and has led the implementation of front & back-end systems, taken the Hemas hospitals network into digital leadership with many innovative products & introduced Electronic Health records. Furthermore, she was appointed the Project Lead to transform the hospital & Lab group with the consultation of the Boston Consultancy Group (BCG).

## Waters Edge introduces Smart Digital Billing at outlets



The Waters Edge hotel has taken another leap forward in its digital transformation journey by launching a state-of-the-art digital billing platform at Bakery at the Edge recently.

Waters Edge has built a reputation as a hotel that continuously invests in future technology to provide customers with greater convenience and unparalleled user experiences. Over the years, some of the major achievements of the company on the technological front include the Cloud Customer Feedback System and the fully automated Online Ordering System to name a few.

The launch of this digital billing platform is yet another example of the hotel leading from the front in Sri Lanka's hospitality industry. The platform is the first step in the hotel's journey towards becoming a paperless organisation with the long-term goal of achieving 90 percent reduction in paper usage.

It is an innovation that will help the hotel reduce its environmental impact through reduced paper usage and food wastage and will provide customers with superior service at every restaurant.

Malith Perera, Chairman of Waters Edge commented, "In keeping with our vision, we thrive to extend our customers unmatched lifestyle experiences with the introduction of timely technological innovations. Introduction of e-billing will be the new dawn of technological innovations of the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka."

With the launch of this cutting-edge system, customers at The Bakery at the Edge will now be provided only with an

e-bill instead of a printed bill. The e-bill also allows them to rate the products and services and even submit a compliment, complaint or suggestion. Customers' ratings and feedback are collated and analyzed to enhance the hotel's products and services, minimize food wastage, increase operational efficiencies and reduce costs. Additionally, the platform will be utilized to disseminate the hotel's offers and promotions to customers, thereby eliminating the need for printing promotional material.

Rohan Fernando, CEO of Waters Edge stated, "We want to be efficient and provide convenience to our customers in every aspect. Sustainability is key for the success of the organisation. Our aim is to reduce wastage and increase efficiency through technology."

Waters Edge is currently working through a strategic plan that focuses on enhancing its digital transformation. In addition to working towards creating a 90 percent paperless environment, the hotel is also looking at introducing many more future technologies to maintain its competitive advantage.

Enoj Muthukumarana, Director Business Development & IT of Waters Edge stated, "We started the digital transformation at Waters Edge many years ago. This is not just a SMS billing platform. This is connecting with our customers from the first purchase and continuing the relationship."

Chairman of Urban Development Authority (UDA) Nimesh Herath and the Board of Directors of Waters Edge were also present at the launch ceremony.

## Friends Adult Diapers make donation to enhance elders' comfort

Friends Adult Diapers, marketed in Sri Lanka by Darley Butler & Company, continues to contribute towards enhancing the comfort of the elderly population.

The latest initiative of their ongoing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes to benefit this often neglected segment of society was a financial contribution on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 with presence of Rasika Hirimuthugoda (CEO – Healthcare), G. Udayamohan (Head of Business Development), Kushan Buddhika (Trade Marketing Executive), Jinu Thomas (Assistant General Manager – Nobel Hygiene, India) of over Rs. 2 million to HelpAge Sri Lanka and accepted by Samantha



Liyanawaduge (Executive Director), Chaminda De Silva (Head of Programme) which was utilized to facilitate the equipment for the disabilities personals and for the mobile medical camps specially focus on rural areas and making it the 5<sup>th</sup> such CSR initiative by Friends Adult Diapers to improve the quality of lives of senior citizens

To mark the corporate commitment of Darley Butler towards the elders, a financial contribution from each Friends Adult Diapers

pack sold goes to HelpAge Sri Lanka. Every purchase by Friends customers contributes towards senior citizens, enabling them to lead a better and more comfortable life.

Friends Adult Diapers area true friend of elders, known to enhance the comfort and confidence of those adults who need extra support in their lives. Friends Adult Diapers help the elders to live with pride and inspire a better sense of self appreciation in them by giving them much-needed attention.

## Swiss Ceylon Associates announces expansion plans in Sri Lanka

Swiss Ceylon Associates has announced expansion activities in Sri Lanka and South East Asia.

Their main activities in Sri Lanka are in the field of Raw Materials from Luzi – a Swiss company with manufacturing facilities in several countries – under its slogan "Creativity, Competence and Quality".

Luzi specializes in the development of unique scents for fine fragrances, personal care, home and air care. Luzi scents are carefully created to contribute to the success of its clients' products, always considering the latest trends and innovations.

"Being fully aware of the difficulties many companies are facing in this moment, we are providing solutions for the local industries to enhance their products.

We are confident that Sri Lanka will emerge strong again!" the management said in a statement.

Swiss Eyewear Group with key brands Innu and Smarty spectacles and sunglasses has entrusted several markets in Asia to Swiss Ceylon and 2022 saw a net growth of 43 percent. Swiss Eyewear Group is a Swiss company and one of the fastest growing group in the eyewear market.

With further activities in the pipeline, the company will be expanding its presence in the near future to several countries in South East Asia.

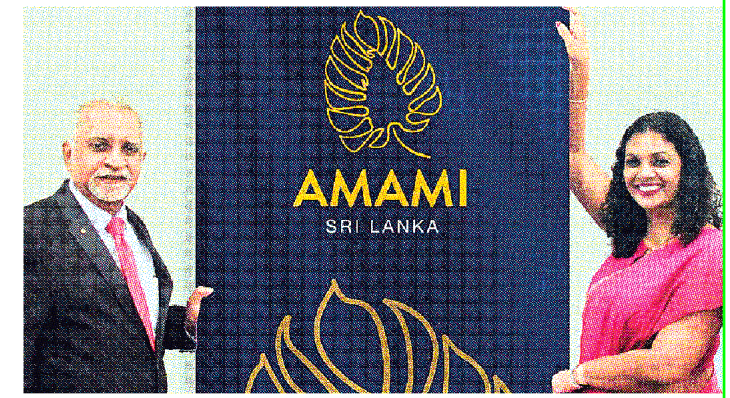
Swiss Ceylon recognises the importance of its collaborators as its main asset and has further strengthened its team under the leadership of the well-known businessman Vernon Manilal

Fernando as Chairman. The main collaborators are Dr. Manil Fernando, Malik Fernando, Thomas Daetwyler, Nawziya Hossen, Deshani Liyanage, Mahendra Gunewardene, Suresh Herath and M.N. Imran.

Swiss Ceylon – as a Sri Lankan Swiss Company – follows the footsteps of a traditional company with the values of the oldest Swiss Company established 1857 in Colombo – Volkart Brothers:

"In no less a degree are we indebted to the number of those who, occupying less prominent positions, have scrupulously and faithfully fulfilled their duties, and above all to that "esprit de corps" which draws us together irrespective of differences in position, nationality or race, and unites us under the banner of the firm."

## Amami brand expands operations under new logo



Chairman Ranil de Silva and Executive Director Harshala de Silva

Ranyan Industries Pvt Ltd, the company that pioneered production and supply of locally manufactured amenity kits to the burgeoning leisure and hospitality industry, recently launched their new logo for their popular Amami brand.

Nurtured from its inception in 1980 by its founder Chairman Ranil de Silva, Ranyan Industries today is under the active direction and guidance of its Executive Director Harshala de Silva, who is spear heading the re-branding exercise in carrying the company to a higher plateau.

Ranil de Silva, who has experience as an entrepreneur has been a mentor, guide and coach to Harshala de Silva who now intends to lead the company to greater heights after carefully navigating the Company through the dark times of the deadly Covid pandemic and subsequent Economic downturn both of which have stunted the growth of the Company during the past few years.

"We have always been overly optimistic about the Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka which keeps bouncing back no matter what you throw at it and such is the case even now as we see signs and clear indications of a rapid rebound of tourism within the next few years. Stability and good governance is the need of the hour in this current environment and tourism in this small Island Nation will grow on its own and contribute immensely to the economy as it

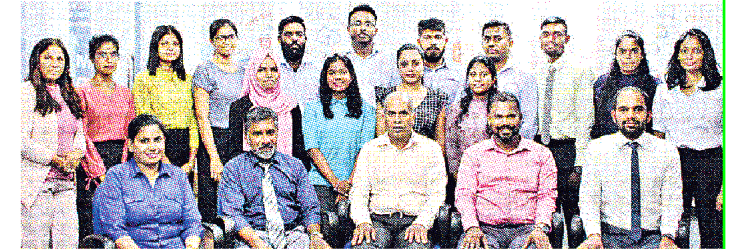
has done in the past," Ranil De Silva stated.

The Amami product range has expanded exponentially from the manufacture of mere air fresheners at its birth to producing high quality, shampoos, shower gels, toothpastes, glycerin soaps, varied detergents, and a number of ayurvedic and herbal products which are now highly sought after by the leisure industry both locally and overseas.

"I have been a witness to the hard work my father contributed in developing the business. He is an ardent believer in the phrase 'true success is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration'. From our humble beginnings of manufacturing and producing goods from a room at the rear of our house the company has steadily and firmly grown to be housed in its own 15,000/- square feet fully equipped factory at Kadawatha.

With the knowledge and experience we have gathered during the past 30 years as result of the dedication and hard work of my father Ranil, my mother Dr. Priyani, my husband Johann and my brother Ranuka who continue to assist and guide me we were able sustain the company and ensure that none of the staff members, most of whom are women, lost their jobs during the negativities we faced during the past few years. My aim is to contribute positively to the betterment and advancement of the tourism industry," Harshala de Silva said.

## Mobizz Elite celebrates 10 years in recruitment trade



Despite its modest entry in 2013, the company has managed to grow rapidly in stature within a short span and is now recognized as a premier HR solutions company, serving the requirements of several high-profile business organizations.

The dynamic founding director of Mobizz, Sundaralingam Muguntharaj said, "Our core business is recruitment, staff outsourcing and payroll management. However, we would like to be recognized in the future as an end-to-end HR solutions provider. In order to achieve this status, we have added several new services to our portfolio and have made

strategic investments in the right personnel."

Commenting on the secret behind the company's success he said, "It's very simple, my team and I share the same burning desire to be the best at what we do. Secondly, clients are managed professionally and their requirements are catered to at a rapid pace," the director said.

Group Mobizz has also diversified its operations to include outsourced telecommunication services to mobile phone operators in the country. The organization's newest service offering is outsourced medical claims.

## Nestomalt 'Salary for Life 2022' concludes

Nestlé Nestomalt concluded Salary for Life 2022, powering the ambitions of yet another consumer.

Having received a record number of entries, the brand announced B. K. Sriyamin Dilini Rodrigo from Pamunugama as the winner of the third leg of its signature consumer promotion, rewarding her with Rs. 50,000 every month until she turns 55, subject to the competition's terms and conditions.

"As a mother of three, winning last year's Salary for Life is truly life changing. The past few years have been quite challenging for us, and I have no words to express the gratitude I have for Nestlé Nestomalt for conducting such a worthy competition. This reward will no doubt help me power my family's ambitions towards a brighter future and make a significant difference in

their lives," said Dilini Rodrigo.

Organized for the third consecutive year, Salary for Life 2022 was conducted digitally and required consumers to send via SMS, the unique code printed on the inner top flap of 400g Nestomalt packs to be eligible.

The winner was selected at random at a digital draw held with the participation of Ruwan Welikala, Director – Dairy, Nestlé Lanka, Jagath Wedage, Director – Sales, Nestlé Lanka, Keerthi Pathiraja, Assistant Director – Legal, Nestlé Lanka and Sriyani Napagoda, Senior Tax Officer, Revenue Department, Western Province.

Sharing his thoughts on the competition, Ruwan Welikala said, "Having been a part of Sri Lankan lives for over 60 years, Nestlé Nestomalt has always been



committed to positively charging the progress of its consumers by helping them be 100 percent ready to take on every day.

During this challenging time, we wanted to show our support and

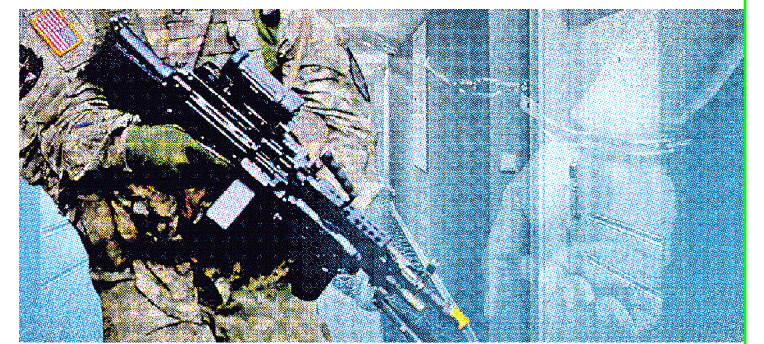
gratitude to our loyal consumers by offering a helping hand. As such, Salary for Life is a true reflection of Nestlé Nestomalt's purpose of powering ambitions of Sri Lankan families."



## REINDEER RACING KING CROWNED IN ARCTIC TOURNAMENT

Finland crowned its reindeer racing king on Sunday when 14 reindeer and jockeys competed for the title in the season's final match of the increasingly popular Arctic sport. Wearing skis, helmets and ski goggles and pulled by harnesses attached to the reindeer, Finland's top 14 competitors

raced one kilometre around an oval against the clock in the northern town of Inari. Reindeer Vernereri and jockey Janne Alatalo came out on top in one minute and 35.26 seconds, in mild six-degree Celsius (43 Fahrenheit) weather that made for slushy snow conditions at times. **AFP**



## ROOM SERVICE? US SPECIAL FORCES NAB WRONG GUEST IN MOCK HOTEL RAID

US special forces burst into the wrong hotel room in the middle of the night and detained a sleeping guest during a training exercise, drawing a shamefaced apology Thursday from the military. The unfortunate guest a Delta Air Lines pilot in his 30s was handcuffed and questioned

in the shower of his Boston hotel room for nearly an hour, according to US media reports citing unnamed sources. The training exercise "was meant to enhance soldiers' skills to operate in realistic and unfamiliar environments," US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) said. **AFP**

BY NUZLA RIZKIYA

Enveloped in a sphere of light sitting with grandeur in the centre of the stage was an extremely beautiful concert grand piano, along with arrangements to perform the Piano Trio composed by Clara Schumann. 'Unsung Heroines' presented by the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka, at the Lionel Wendt Theatre on 31st March aimed to honor 4 of the greatest women composers of all time,

- Clara Schumann
- Amy Beach
- Cecile Chaminde
- Fanny Mendelssohn

and bring the spotlight for their invaluable contribution to classical music. Opening the tribute was Shashini Pandithasundera (piano), Lydia Goonethilleke-Jayamanne (violin) and Nilupul Siva (cello) who began a delightful performance of Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17.



**1<sup>st</sup> PERFORMANCE** - Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17 by Shashini Pandithasundera (piano), Lydia Goonethilleke-Jayamanne (violin) and Nilupul Siva (cello)



**2<sup>nd</sup> PERFORMANCE** - Amy Beach's Romance for flute and piano, Op. 23 by Anouk Obeysekere (flute) & Shashini Pandithasundera (piano)

# UNSUNG HEROINES

*A striking performance presented by the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka*

Composed in 1846, Schumann presented the piece as a gift to her husband Robert Schumann's on their 7th wedding anniversary. The composition is in four movements: Allegro moderato, Scherzo and Trio, Andante and Allegretto. Interweaved with the skillfully balanced exchange of views and ideas between the instruments, the composition showcases the brilliance of Schumann as an extraordinary concert pianist.

Bringing justice with their performance for the piece exceptionally well were Pandithasundera, Jayamanne and Silva with their carefully mastered skill in the piano, violin and cello.

Next showing her prowess on the piano again was Pandithasundera joined by Anouk Obeysekere (flute) who delicately delivered a crafted version of Amy Beach's Romance for the flute and piano.



**PERFORMERS OF THE NIGHT (L / R)** - Anouk Obeysekere, Lydia Goonethilleke-Jayamanne, Tiyanie Sahabandu, Amani Tissera, Nilupul Siva, Shashini Pandithasundera

It is certainly the work of deep significance by the women composers and the women performers of the night that spoke volumes while narrating the endearing stories, a well-served spotlight on the 'Unsung Heroines'.

Op. 23. Written in the Romantic Style of the late 19th century, the piece features an emotional communication and connection between the piano and the flute while highlighting the complex work, range and dynamic versatility of both the instruments. Continuing the magical aura of the evening was the next tribute for acclaimed composer Cecile Chaminade.

Involved in almost all music genres, Chaminade was the first female composer to be awarded the Légion d'Honneur in France. Compiled with the 3 movements Andantino, Romanza and Bohemienne, the piece first encompasses a beautifully melodic vibe through Andantino gradually flowing to a more turbulent episode bracketed by Romanza. As suggested by its name, the Bohemienne lives up to its lively and vigorously demanding



**3<sup>rd</sup> PERFORMANCE** - Cecile Chaminade's Trois Morceaux for violin and piano, Op. 31 performed by Nilupul Siva (violin) and Shashini Pandithasundera (piano)



**4<sup>th</sup> PERFORMANCE** - Fanny Mendelssohn - Hensel: Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 11 performed by Tiyanie Sahabandu (piano), Lydia Goonethilleke-Jayamanne (violin) and Amani Tissera (cello)

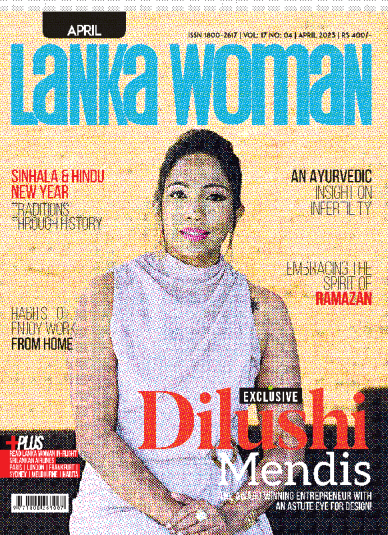
demeanor both to the performer and the listener. Not failing the audience was yet again Shashini Pandithasundera with her prowess with the piano and Nilupul Siva with the violin, garnering a loud ovation from the audience at the end of their delivery. The final tribute of the night honoured Fanny Mendelssohn with one her final compositions of her lifetime: Hensel: Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 11. Fanny was a prodigiously talented pianist, who was equally, if not more gifted than her younger brother Felix, but sadly her family strongly opposed her ideas of becoming a concert pianist. Therefore, most of her compositions were published posthumously including this piece. The trio is in four movements: Allegro molto vivace, Andante espressivo, Lied: Allegretto and Allegretto moderato. The rather melancholy introduction of the piece gives away to the strings moving toward a dance-like second theme. The finale recalls the soaring melody of the second theme of the first movement, leaving listeners with the most striking and memorable melody of the entire work.

Showcasing their heartfelt affection towards the 'Unsung Heroines' of the night were Tiyanie Sahabandu (piano), Jayamanne yet again with the violin and Amani Tissera with the cello. Delivering the demanding writing for all the instruments, the trio successfully brought out the perfect ending for the very graceful evening, garnering a standing ovation by the audience for the entire tribute. It is certainly the work of deep significance by the women composers and the women performers of the night that spoke volumes while narrating the endearing stories, a well-served spotlight on the 'Unsung Heroines'.

## Lanka woman

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## SRI LANKAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

# Leveraging the power of social media to grow their businesses

Despite being faced with an uncertain economic future and gender-related barriers, women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka have risen to the challenge and demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability by turning to social media to not only sustain but to grow their businesses to new levels.

Meet Nishadi Gamage, a young woman from Yatinuwara who turned her dream of starting a business into reality. She came up with Crafting Hawi, a home-based business that actively uses social media as a primary tool to promote her handcrafted wedding invitations, wedding cake boxes, party invitations and similar handcrafted products. Her captivating creations are posted on Facebook and Instagram to help build engagement with potential customers and obtain orders.

Nishadi commenced her business in early 2019 using Facebook where she simply uploaded photos and details of her creations to her page. However, her business was transformed later that year once she was presented with the opportunity to participate in the Suhuruliya programme in



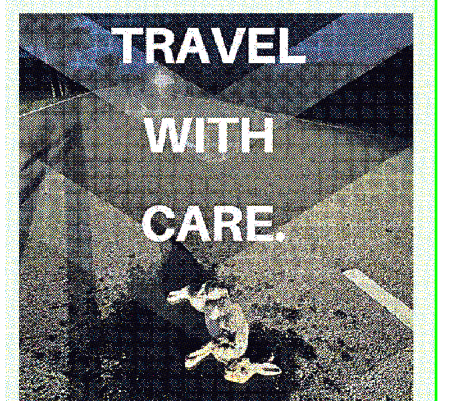
*"I have been successfully running my business on social media for four years. There is a lot of interest in wedding and party invitations. Thanks to digital tools, I can reach a wider audience with a much lesser investment and can take on a lot of orders."*  
**- NISHADI GAMAGE -**

Yatinuwara where she gained an in-depth understanding of how to market and grow her business using digital tools.

The Suhuruliya programme is a programme of the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) and the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment. Meta, formerly known as the Facebook company, partnered with the initiative through its SheMeansBusiness programme to support women-owned businesses and to enable the social and economic empowerment of women in Sri Lanka through ICT-enabled entrepreneurship. SheMeansBusiness is focused on leveling the playing field by ensuring women have equal access to tools and networks that will allow their businesses to thrive. It also seeks to celebrate and spotlight women who despite the additional challenges they face, continue to drive their businesses to success.

Nishadi immediately put her newly-acquired knowledge into action by using Facebook and has been receiving a very positive response ever since, leading to impressive growth of her business.

She is also making plans to open her own store in Yatinuwara in the near future.



## KILL SPEED, NOT WILDLIFE

Remember that speed can kill. Here's five tips from WNPS to help you drive with care, prevent roadkills and stay safe as you head out of town.

Slow Down when driving through forested areas. This helps you react quickly if an animal suddenly appears in your path.

Pay attention to your surroundings and be alert in known animal zones, such as areas where there are warning signs or crossing structures.

Use your headlights to help spot animals on the road, especially at dawn and dusk.

Avoid distractions that can take your eyes off the road, such as using your phone.

Keep your distance if you see an animal on or near the road. Slow down and give it plenty of space to move. Don't try to scare it off the road by honking your horn or flashing your headlights.

Remember that driving with care in forested areas not only helps prevent road kills of animals, but also keeps you safe on the road.