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# CEYLON TODAY



## Inside story Innocent Lives Lost

"It was around 7:10 in the morning when my kids kissed me goodbye and left for school. When leaving they told me that they might get onto the motor ferry with the other kids to get to..."

A4

Heavily mutated COVID variant detected in S Africa

# Health System on High Alert

Has potential to evade immunity provided by vaccines

Medical expert proposes strong border controls

By J.T. DE SILVA

Immediate steps should be taken to avoid the new coronavirus variant discovered in South Africa from spreading in Sri Lanka, President of Association of Medical Specialists (AMS), Dr. Lakkumar Fernando, said.

Speaking to *Ceylon Today's* sister paper, Dr. Fernando noted there is concern that the new

variant, known as B.1.1.529, has the potential to evade immunity provided by the vaccines.

Therefore, Sri Lanka has to take immediate steps to monitor those who arrived in the country from countries like South Africa and Botswana and if possible, such individuals should be prevented from entering the country, he said.

Dr. Fernando further said a border control programme should also be implemented to control...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

## 'Tinker Lasantha' death BASL concerned over extra-judicial killing

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) raising concerns on the death of a main murder suspect, H.L. Lasantha alias 'Tinker Lasantha' during a Police shootout said the incident has the hallmarks of an extra-judicial killing by the Sri Lanka Police, while calling on the IGP to explain his failure to protect the suspect who was in Police custody.

BASL in a statement noted that on 25 November 2021, the Attorney representing Lasantha contacted the...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

## Five-judge bench to hear petitions against Yugadanavi

By FAADHILA THASSIM

Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya, on Friday (26) appointed a five-member Bench of the Supreme Court chaired by him to hear the Fundamental Rights (FR) Petitions filed against the Yugadanavi Power Plant deal.

Story Continued on PAGE 5



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## Mobile service to administer booster dose

Presidential instructions were issued for the booster dose to be administered to those over 60 through a mobile service, the Presidential Media Division (PMD) announced.

The PMD said among the instructions issued at the COVID-19 Task Force meeting on Friday (26), President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had directed the health officials to carry out a mobile vaccination service to administer the booster dose to citizens over 60 who had received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine over three months earlier.

Story Continued on PAGE 2

## Another explosion at house in Nikaweratiya

By KANCHANA WIJAYABANDARA

Another explosion, believed to have been caused by a gas leak, occurred in a house at Kandegedera in Nikaweratiya on Friday morning (26).

Police said the house was extensively damaged by the ensuing fire but there were no casualties, as the house was unoccupied at the time.

Story Continued on PAGE 2

## Brandix named 'Exporter of the Year'

Leading Sri Lankan apparel manufacturer Brandix was named 'Exporter of the Year' for the seventh time, winning the Award for 2019/20 at the 25th Presidential Export Awards 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Organised by the Export Development Board, the event was held under the patronage of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The company celebrated the collective effort of its 60,000 Associates in cementing its position as the highest contributor to the national economy across all categories of exports during this period.



Story Continued on PAGE 2

## Easter attacks trial Summons issued on IGP

By HANSI NANAYAKKARA

The Colombo High Court Trial-at-Bar on Friday (26) issued summons on IGP C.D. Wickramaratne to appear before it, on 29 November, to give evidence in the case against former IGP Pujith Jayasundara, who has been indicted for failing to take proper action to prevent...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

## 'Tinker Lasantha' killed in Police shootout

By KEERTHI MENDIS

The main suspect in the murder of 'Sunshine Suddha', a criminal in the Southern Province, 'Tinker Lasantha' has died in an exchange of fire with the Police.

It happened when 'Tinker Lasantha' was preparing to hand over to the Police, the firearm used in the murder of 'Sunshine Suddha.'

Story Continued on PAGE 2

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Health System...

...those who arrive from South African region from air and sea routes, from entering into the country as well.

If someone from South African region enters into the country, then there should be a mechanism to collect specimens and test them at the laboratory at the University of Sri Jayawardanapura. PCR tests should be performed on such persons and they should be directed to quarantine, he pointed out.

Dr. Fernando also asserted the importance of obtaining advices from subject specialists like Prof. Neelika Malavige, Prof. Malik Peiris and

Dr. Chandima Jeewandara regarding the situation.

"It is reported that this new coronavirus variant is spreading rapidly than any other variant that has been discovered earlier. The World Health Organisation is also deeply concerned about this matter. Therefore, this should be taken very seriously. The specialists and scientists should be consulted on this, not the politicians. Immediate actions should be taken because if we fail to act, then the public trust on COVID-19 vaccination drive would be damaged. It will directly affect the economy of the country, which is recovering now," he pointed out.

## BASL concerned...

...President of BASL to state that his client has been apprehended by the officers of the Kalutara Divisional Criminal Investigation Bureau and that he has information that his client will be killed in custody by the Police under the pretext of it happening during a shootout whilst being taken to show weapons.

"Immediately thereupon, the President of the BASL informed the same to the Inspector General of Police via email and text message following which the Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission (HRCSL) in charge of Inquiries and Investigations as well as the Director Inquiries and Investigations of the Commission were informed" BASL added.

President of the BASL also informed Governor of the Northern Province Jeevan Thiyagarajah and HRCSL together with Thiyagarajah confirmed that they had contacted the authorities and informed them of the complaint and requested them to intervene to ensure the safety of the suspect, they said adding however that Lasantha was killed during a Police shootout.

BASL emphasised that this killing comes at a time when Sri Lanka's human rights record is under scrutiny and there are threats of consequences to the country and its economy as a result of the deteriorating human

rights situation adding that the fact that not only the BASL but also the HRCSL and a senior figure from the Executive had reached out to the police to prevent a grave violation and that the killing occurred despite such interventions are matters of very grave concern.

It was further noted that the Police appear to continue to pay scant regard to previous decisions of the highest courts in the land on the need for rights of suspects to be protected whilst in the custody of the State while adding that previous incidents too have not been investigated properly and no action has been taken by the authorities to bring the culprits to justice leading to allegations of a climate of impunity. "Such failures have resulted in the whole process of administration of justice being called into question and the loss of public confidence in its efficacy," BASL said.

Responsibility for these killings must lie not only with the persons who carried out the killings but also all those who command them and those who failed to ensure the safety and security of the suspect, it was stated adding that the BASL will take further steps on this matter and will keep its membership and the general public informed of the same.

## Mobile service...

The President had also instructed for the booster dose to be administered to those over 60 when they attended medical clinics. A decision was taken to administer the third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to the over 20s category who suffered from Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) after a one month lapse of having been administered the second dose.

Accordingly, the third dose of the vaccine would be administered to cancer patients, those being treated for cancer, patients who have undergone organ transplant surgery, haemodialysis patients, and all those who are immunocompromised due to NCDs would be vaccinated.

The PMD said Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Dr. Asela Gunawardena, had noted that these people could obtain the booster or the third dose from the relevant medical clinics or, from the Medical Officer of Health (MoH) in their area on Saturdays.

The issue of providing the 'Molnupiravir' Capsule which has been recommended by the

World Health Organisation for COVID-19 treatment was discussed.

President Rajapaksa had instructed the State Minister for Production, Supply and Regulation of Pharmaceuticals, Prof. Channa Jayasumana to take measures to import the relevant drug through the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation (SPC) following the procedure that was observed when getting down the COVID-19 vaccine.

The lack of concern among the rural population with regard to the spread of COVID-19 was also discussed. The President instructed the health authorities to take urgent action to control the viral spread in the rural areas and to create awareness among that population before it was too late.

Health Minister Keheliya Rambukwella, State Ministers Sisira Jayakody and Prof. Channa Jayasumana, Health Secretary Major General (Retired) Dr. Sanjeewa Munasinghe, and the Commanders of the Tri-Forces were also present at the meeting. **(DJ)**

## 'Tinker Lasantha'...

Amila Prasanna alias 'Sunshine Suddha' was shot and killed on 3 September at Kotawila, Matara.

Subsequent to arriving in a van and shooting to death 'Sunshine Suddha' 'Tinker Lasantha' had fled the area. Kotawila Police had conducted investigations and discovered that 'Sunshine Suddha' had been murdered by 'Tinker Lasantha' and his henchmen on instructions from Nadun Chinthaka alias 'Harak Kata', who is hiding in Dubai.

'Tinker Lasantha' who had been in hiding for a period of two and a half months since 3 September, was taken into custody by the Kalutara Division Crimes Investigation Unit.

Police said that at the time of arrest, 'Tinker Lasantha' had planned to kill another individual in Kalutara and had been hiding with a firearm in his possession.

When he was questioned subsequent to his arrest, it was revealed that in the house he was hiding, there was an automatic pistol and a live hand grenade to be used in assassinating individuals. The Police officers had taken the suspect Lasantha and gone to his house. Here there had been an exchange of fire between the suspect and the Police and it is reported that the Police had shot and killed him.

Two Police officers sustained injuries in this shootout and were admitted to the Kalutara hospital, the Police said.

They also said, 'Tinker Lasantha', who was killed, had quite a few cases filed against him at several courts in connection with 13 incidents of crime including murder, robbery, drug dealing etc. Further investigations are being conducted under the supervision of DIG in charge of the Kalutara District, Sarath Kumara.

## Brandix named...

In addition to the title award for 2019/20, Brandix's other awards included 'Contributor from the Regions to the Export Supply Chain,' 'Best Performing Exporter in Emerging Markets,' and the Sectoral Award for 'Best Exporter Award - Apparel - Large Category.' For the period of 2020/21, the company also secured the Overall Award for 'Contributor from the Regions to the Export Supply Chain' award. Moreover, Brandix's joint venture partner InQube Global was

recognised with an Overall Award for the first time as the 'Emerging Exporter of the Year' for 2019/20.

Ashroff Omar, Group Chief Executive Officer, Brandix expressed gratitude for the recognition.

Brandix is a leader in Sri Lanka's apparel industry with a purpose to 'deliver Inspired Solutions through Inspired People.' The company has delivered apparel solutions to world-renowned brands for nearly 50 years and employs more than 60,000 people across nine countries.

## Summons issued...

...the Easter Sunday bomb blasts and neglecting his responsibilities. This order was issued when the case was taken up for hearing on the fourth day yesterday. The Bench comprised Judges Namal Balalle, Aditya Patabendi and Mohamed Irshadin.

## Another explosion...

The quality of domestic gas in the market has come into question after several gas cylinder explosions were reported in various parts of the country within this month.

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By NABIYA VAFFOOR IN KINNIYA

"It was around 7:10 in the morning when my kids kissed me goodbye and left for school. When leaving they told me that they might get onto the motor ferry with the other kids to get to school on time, since the ferry stops close to the school. I left them on the road as I usually do. As soon as I reached home I saw a neighbour, who usually travels in the ferry at the same time, coming back. When I inquired from him, he only told me that the ferry on which both my daughters had got on to go to school, had toppled near the bank on the other side of the lagoon. I have no idea how I got to the hospital but what I saw in a couple of minutes when I reached there is something that no mother would ever expect to see in her life." The mother of eight-year-old Fathima Shreen and six-year-old Shahla couldn't stop sobbing over the loss of her daughters, who died in the tragic incident that took place at Kurunjankani Lagoon.

On 23 November 2021, a ferry which was carrying at least 25 people, including children, toppled drowning six including four beautiful children who started going to school after months of lockdown. In that unfortunate incident the ferry not only toppled, taking the lives of those on it but also shattered the lives of those who lost their loved ones in this incident.

The authorities have arrested the ones who are responsible and are seeking to compensate the families who lost their loved ones in the incident. But, all that money cannot compensate for the shattered dreams and lost ambitions which were lost in the dark Kurunjankani Lagoon.

#### Unfortunate incident

The ferry was travelling from Kurinjankani to the town of Kinniya along the country's eastern coast, about 260 kilometres (160 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo. Ferry accidents are relatively rare in Sri Lanka because many locations are now connected by bridges. However, the bridge that connects the two towns has been closed for repairs, forcing people to use rudimentary vessels to cross the river.

According to reports, a 30-year-old mother, her six-year-old son, a three and a half-year-old child, two sisters and a 70-year-old man were among the dead. The rest of the passengers included five girls, six boys, four women and four men. Of them, 12 persons have been hospitalised after being rescued.

The ferry had been used by residents in the area due to the refurbishment of the existing Kuringankerny Bridge.

There were complaints from the locals that the ferry service in question was operated sans standards. According to reports, Chairman of the Kinniya Urban Council S.H.M. Naleem had issued a permit to an individual named M.A.M. Riyaz to transport passengers across the Kuringankerny Lagoon. The relevant permit has been issued under the conditions of safe transport of passengers, transport of school children free of charge and assessment of the ferry's condition from time to time.

It has been revealed that with the commencement of the construction of the new bridge across the Kuringankerny Lagoon during the administration of the Government of Good Governance, the locals opted for a ferry service since the alternative route which stretches over 3 kilometres was considered too long.

Angry residents on 24 November burned tyres and surrounded Government offices, blaming officials for the accident, and the shop-owners in Kinniya town in Trincomalee staged a hartal on 25 November to protest against the incident, demanding justice for the six lives that were lost and the several others who were injured in the incident.

The owner and two operators of the passenger ferry that capsized at Kuringankerny, Kinniya in Trincomalee, who were arrested by Police, have been remanded until 8 December. In the meantime, the Chairman of the Kinniya Urban Council, S.H.M. Naleem, has been remanded till 9 December on the charge of being responsible for the fatal ferry capsizing in Kinniya, Trincomalee. He was produced before Court upon being arrested earlier on 25 November.



## Kinniya Ferry Tragedy

# Innocent Lives Lost



Shala & Shreen's Parents

#### Temporary service

A temporary service has been commenced by the Navy since 25 November and the Army officials who visited the spot have promised a temporary bridge to be used by the locals till the constructions of the actual bridge gets completed. The President has even advised the RDA to build the Kurunjankani Bridge in nine months.

Speaking with *Ceylon Today* Assistant district director DMC K. Sugunadas confirmed that the family members of the deceased will be compensated for their loss.

Meanwhile, MP M.S. Thowfeek noted that he has informed the Police not to take legal actions against the youth who attacked his Kinniya residence following this incident since the youth who were frustrated over the incident just found someone to blame and in this case, it was him.

"The construction works of the Kurunjankani Bridge started on 10 April 2021 and the bridge was closed to the public on the request of the constructors. Since the construction was taking too long, the public requested the ferry service as an alternative mode of crossing the lagoon.

At first the ferry service run by Akram charged, therefore, I spoke to Nimal Lansa and requested for a free ferry service from the RDA and other relevant government institutions and Rs 2 million was allocated to the Ferry service through the RDA. Initially it was supposed to be launched in two-three weeks. Due to lockdowns, curfews and office closures the constructions and the launch of the ferry service were delayed by months. Amidst all of these the UC chairman had given approval to ferry service owner Riyaz to continue the ferry service. The chairman hadn't consulted any engineer about the capacity that

At first the ferry service run by Akram charged, therefore, I spoke to Nimal Lansa and requested for a free ferry service from the RDA and other relevant government institutions and Rs 2 million was allocated to the Ferry service through the RDA. Initially it was supposed to be launched in two-three weeks

can be taken on the ferry or informed the council regarding approving Riyaz's ferry services," he added.

Speaking with locals in the area it was found that Riyaz's ferry service drew many to travel on it since he had an automated motor in his ferry. In the meantime the locals noted that he didn't charge from schoolchildren and the place he uses as the port is closer to the school, many kids and schoolteachers used his ferry.

#### Helping hand

Meanwhile, when we visited the project site the Project Manager's driver shared his first hand experience on witnessing the incident of helping some victims to come out of the lagoon. He revealed that the bridge construction was stopped for few days due to some wrong estimates taken by the



Abdul Azeem



Nauffer



Salem



Marriam Bibi

constructors.

"There was filling work going on though there was a delay at the work site. First they estimated the constructions to a depth of 27 metres but midway they found out that it was 37 metres, then the materials that were needed for the construction needed to be adjusted and there was some delays were going on," added Azeem.

He also noted that it took several minutes for him to realise what happened all of a sudden.

"There were many people around the lagoon at that time. We helped as much as possible and took many out of the lagoon. When we were taking out two schoolchildren one was conscious and the other had fainted and I managed to take a lady out who had fainted and I heard that she was in the ICU of Kilinochchi Hospital since she has swallowed mud," he added.

Nauffer, who lives near the lagoon managed to hold back his tears and spoke to *Ceylon Today*. He pleaded with us to record his message.

"I live close by and came rushing to the lagoon hearing the scream of many people and all I saw was drowning people and kids. I shouted as loud as possible crying for help and people started rushing to the bank of the lagoon. Some of those who were in the ferry managed to swim to the shore but many were dragged to the shore by others. Many children had fainted when we dragged them out. I never want to recall this incident or go

though something similar. No matter how strong we are, yet I couldn't make up my mind to carry a kid while he is struggling for his last breath."

#### Tragic sight

Nauffer broke into tears explaining about how they managed to bring bodies of the schoolkids who drowned and many other who fainted in the water who might have lost their life in the one or two seconds delay to pull them to the shore.

Heading to the Kurinjankani Hospital with a heavy heart we managed to visit six children who survived the tragic incident. Eight-year-old Shazaad, who lost his mother and brother and six-year-old Kadhaaf, who lost his grandfather in the similar incident were also admitted and six-year-old Thariq, who was saved by his mother who is yet receiving treatment at the Kurunjankani hospital ICU. The rest were seven-year-old Kaalidh, six-year-old Misa Absah and 12-year-old Malik.

The kids were trying their best to sneak out of their hospital beds and play around the ward when we were trying to talk to them, even Shazaad, who lost both his mother and brother and Kadhaaf, who lost his grandfather, clearly stated that they are dead but both didn't seem to know the real meaning of that word. Only 12-year-old Malik said that he managed to swim to the bank with another two friends but had to head to the hospital since he was continuously feeling

nauseous after the incident.

All the kids could only remember the fact that the ferry that they usually travel to school without any problem toppled, throwing every one of them into the water and they couldn't remember anything but a person pulling them onto the bank.

Marriam Bibi, Grandmother of the survivor Kadhaaf, who lost his Grandfather, 70-year-old Shiham Abdul Cader in the similar incident, blamed no one and noted that she has nothing to do but plead from God for justice. Sitting on a 'Musallah' (praying mat) inside a shanty which is half built with bricks and the rest covered with dry Palmyra leaves, she kept on praying for all the souls which were taken, including her husband's.

"I have nothing to say or no one to blame. Maybe, it's God's plan but God shouldn't have allowed a cruel fate for us. One of my daughters and her daughter is living with us, both are autistic. It is my husband who used to look after us. He is a fisherman he used to fish for a living in the same lagoon that he drowned. Though we had much financial crisis as a family, I have never feared about tomorrow because God gave me his support through my husband. Now without him I'm nothing but a lost woman with two women to look after. My husband was a good man though he didn't have much money he always managed to look after everyone. Even after saving our grandson he had swum back to save other lives and then a motor bike which was on the ferry has fallen on him and he drowned. May God bless his soul," she said grieving.

Though *Ceylon Today* headed to meet the parents of the three and half-year-old child and family they refused to speak about their loss.

#### Memories that linger

Then *Ceylon Today* met Saleem, survivor Shazaad's father, who lost his wife and his second child on the ferry accident.

"Sabriya is a Montessori teacher. She always goes to school on the ferry with our kids Shazaad and Zaid. I usually leave before them to work on my bike and even by 7/7.15 am she called and informed me that they are on the ferry to go to school. I came to the bank with my bike so I can pick Shazaad and drop him at the school while she and Zaid can walk to the Montessori. The ferry toppled in front of my eyes while I was looking. It wasn't that far to the shore but when we were taking my wife out she was hugging Zaid they were dead and Shazaad had already been sent to the hospital. This could have been prevented if the construction of the bridge was done on time or at least the Government should have provided us a safer ferry service, now there is no point in blaming anyone and breaking anyone's house and acting violently. Nothing is going to bring back the lost lives," he said while rushing back inside to hide his tears from the strangers.

Father of Shahla and Shreen also said that the ambulances which came to the spot didn't have at least a duty nurse to give the victims first aid, until they get to hospital, or even an oxygen tank.

"The facilities that we have around here, starting from the ferry service to the hospital everything wasn't taken seriously by the authorities. If not for the authorities' blind eyes this incident would have been prevented easily. My first daughter always dreamt of being a doctor, I'm not even sure whether she got basic medical assistance during her last minutes," he added.

After this incident the authorities were prompt enough to bring all the temporary solutions to the spot. Even the Navy managed to launch a boat service with life Jackets, safety rings and even building safer temporary ports within a day, the question remains what took the authorities' months to do what took less than one day. It is a shame to realise that we live under a Government which eagerly spends Rs 41 billion to build Golden Gates in urban areas while disregarding the need to spend the allocated Rs 2 million to launch a safer ferry service in a rural village.

(Additional Reporting by Rebecca Pavey and A.R.M. Rifas)

Pix by Manjula Dayawansa



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## Polonnaruwa Nephrology Hospital Severely Understaffed

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

Doctors urged the Health Ministry to urgently provide the fully-equipped National Nephrology Specialised Hospital (NNSH), Polonnaruwa with the required human resources for patients to be able to obtain maximum service.

Executive Committee Member of the Government Medical Officers' Association (Ex-Co GMOA), Dr. Prasad Ranaweera, on Friday (26) said the approved cadre for the Hospital totalled 247. The Hospital, constructed as a donation of the Chinese Government, following a request made by former President Maithripala Sirisena, had cost Rs 12 billion. With the unfortunate situation of patients suffering from chronic kidney disease (CKD) and chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology (CKDu), especially concentrated in North-Central Province.

"It is regrettable that completed and inaugurated over five months ago, the hospital remains highly understaffed and unable to provide its services to the fullest," he lamented.

Dr. Ranaweera, when contacted, said the initial trouble with the renal care facility was the lack of a full-time Director. Currently, the hospital functions under the administrative purview of the Director of District General Hospital, Polonnaruwa, who also happens to be the Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS) for Polonnaruwa. Already overwhelmed with duties, it is humanly impossible to pay attention to such a vast hospital, as the NNSH has a bed capacity of 200, a 100-bed dialysis unit, and six modern surgical theatres.

Currently, 2,550 such patients are registered with the NNSH. Clinics are conducted on all five days of the week, while currently each clinic attends to 200 patients.

Unfortunately, the number of medical officers and consultants available are adequate only to run 30 of its dialysis beds, while 70 more remain unused owing to the lack of staff. 250 of the patients are on Haemodialysis at present, while the hospital staff have no option, but to conduct dialysis in three shifts (morning session 35, evening 35, and night 15) owing

to the shortage of medical officers. "There are only eight medical officers permanently available, assisted by a total of 14 Registered House Officers (RHO) who would leave once they received their post-intern appointments. The cadre shortage for medical officers is 50. Also, there is a requirement for at least 10 consultants, inclusive of surgeons, anaesthetists, transplant surgeons, radiologists and microbiologists to enable the hospital to function to its fullest. Also, there is cadre approval for 100 nurses, eight nursing sisters or masters, and two matrons, six radiographers, and 10 medical laboratory technologists (MLT) and 12 pharmacists, he said, giving a breakdown of some of the required staff.

Dr. Ranaweera lamented that some of the high-tech equipment available had not even been removed from their packing, while the warranty period of some of those equipment was nearing expiry. He said the available facilities at the hospital surpassed those of any private sector facility, but unfortunately the lack of cadre crippled its functions.

## Dissanayake assumes duties as new Surveyor General

A. Dissanayake assumed duties recently as the 52<sup>nd</sup> Surveyor General of the Survey Department.

He received his primary education from Sri Sumangala Maha Vidyalyaya, Weligama and upon completing his Degree in Physical Science from the University of Ruhuna, he secured his first appointment in the Public Service on 1 March 1985 as an Assistant Superintendent, Surveys.

After successfully completing the Higher Diploma in Surveying from the Institute of Surveying and Mapping (ISM) Diyatalawa, he has been involved in the development chain of the country since 1988 by supervising surveyors in various parts of the country.

He received a scholarship



under the United Nations Programme in 1991. After successfully completing his Master's Degree (MSc) in Geodetic Science and Surveying from The Ohio State University in the US, he has contributed to various development activities by directing the Department in Geodetic surveying work, and has been working for a considerable period as a Senior Lecturer in Geodesy for ISM.

The Geodetic Survey

Control Network which was established in 1800 was improved to adapt to the accuracy required for modern surveying. Towards this endeavour he was a pioneer in establishing the new geodetic control network using modern technology.

He later functioned as the Director of ISM, and contributed towards its development. A. Dissanayake, who has held various positions during his tenure at the ISM has demonstrated excellent leadership through his skills and expertise in numerous aspects including the introduction of modern technology.

A. Dissanayake, who has served in various parts of the island counts 36 years of experience before being appointed as the new Surveyor General.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Five-judge bench to...

Supreme Court Justices Buwaneka Aluwihare, Priyantha Jayawardana, Vijith Malalgoda and L.T.B. Dehideniya were appointed as the remaining members to the judge bench.

The Petitions were heard before the Supreme Court before Justices Murdu Fernando, Gamini Amarasekara and Arjuna Obeysekera and was fixed for support.

Although the Attorney General represented the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers, a private attorney represented Ministers Udaya Gammanpila, Wimal Weerawansa and Vasudeva

Nanayakkara. The FR petitions were filed by the Archbishop of Colombo Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, Ven Elle Gunawansa Thera, former JVP MPs Sunil Handunnetti and Wasantha Samarasinghe and a few others including Dr. Wasantha Bandara, seeking an order to terminate the Yugadanavi Power Plant deal.

While protests were held by the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) trade unions against the Yugadanavi Power Plant deal, the Ceylon Electricity Board Engineers' Union (CEBEU) resorted to an indefinite work-to-rule campaign for the same purpose.

## OBITUARY NOTICE

Birth  
03  
09  
1943



Death  
21  
11  
2021

### Malini Abeysekera

Beloved daughter of the late Lionel and Leena De Silva, Sister of the late Lakshman and Nihal, beloved loving wife of Perakum Abeysekera, precious mother of Achala, Amal, Maduka and Thilanka. Loving mother-in-law of Sarangi, Surangi and Chanaka. Precious grand-mother of Diyana, Tanuri, Ranjaya, Vinuki and Rithuki, passed away peacefully on 21st November 2021

The Funeral last rites were performed on the 22nd November 2021

we apologise that it was not possible to inform in time given prevailing circumstances

Husband and Children  
No.6/2, Sumner Place,  
Colombo 8  
0777 701 801 / 0112 692 837

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Arumugam Annapoorani, bearing the NIC number 195868602774 is in the end stage of kidney failure and urgently needs an 'O' negative kidney for a transplant.

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Purchasing chemical fertiliser from private sector

# Who Will Monitor Govt's Quota System?

By **SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN**

## Hardcore mafia

The Government is sticking to its organic farming policy and has strategically revoked the chemical fertiliser ban, saying that the private sector can import it, but the government sector will stick to their policy of providing subsidies for organic farming, but the question remains as to how the Government will monitor who is using which fertiliser when using chemical fertiliser or a combination of organic and chemical fertiliser producing higher yields. Who will be in charge of monitoring the Government's quota system for purchasing chemical fertiliser from the private sector?

The Government said the private sector will be allowed to import chemical fertilisers, weedicides, and pesticides from 24 November 2021. Agriculture Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage, revoking the Gazette Notification of 26 April banning the import of chemical fertilisers, said. Farmers will now be able to purchase chemical fertilisers from the open market, the Minister added.

This realisation came much later, after witnessing people and farmers take to the streets, causing a total breakdown in the system. Not only did the Sri Lankan Media cover the issue, but the international Media did as well, because it was perceived as a short-lived move, and scientists and economists weighed in on how foolish it was to switch to organic farming overnight. The same ideas continue to dominate, and people are tired of repeating themselves on the outcome.

The ban's impact is already being felt, but introducing organic farming by the government sector with subsidies given to farmers for organic fertiliser can only result in compound fertiliser (a mix of chemical and organic fertiliser) and no one will notice. Who would be in charge of ensuring that this was carried out or not? No one!

Prof. B. Marambe, a weed scientist, maintained in order to be an expert on organic fertiliser, a crop area must be chosen and a new organic farm must be set up at least four seasons later.

Currently, 72 hectares of agricultural land in Sri Lanka is used for organic farming, accounting for about 2.5 per cent of total agricultural land. This is in light of the fact that 1.5 per cent of the world's organic farming is carried out on 48,889 million hectares.

The Government is attempting to eliminate chemical fertiliser by introducing a subsidy for organic fertiliser, despite the fact that yields from organic fertiliser have not yet been satisfactory. The soil is accustomed to chemical fertiliser, and it takes time to prepare the soil.

Subsidies for farmers cultivating organic food crops have their own benefits, but only in the context of organic food fetching a high price.

Agriculture Minister Aluthgamage maintains that a hardcore mafia controls the agriculture sector in Sri Lanka, which he has attempted to minimise, but there is still a long way to go.

The new attempt to allow the private sector to import chemical fertiliser will also cause further havoc because the 'process of importing fertiliser' has not changed, because it is the State department that sees to the private sector's requirements and the permit is issued through the National Fertiliser Secretariat (NFS) Advisory Committee. They determine the amount and quantity of chemical fertiliser that a company can order. The fertiliser order is made under Act No. 68 of 1988, and the importation is handled by the Ceylon Fertiliser Company (CFC) and Colombo Commercial Fertilisers Ltd (CCF) on a quota basis.

Those who want it would buy it in this context, where high yield is guaranteed by the use of chemical fertiliser. When the Government offers a subsidy for organic fertiliser use, the private sector has a provision to sell it to the paddy sector for increased yield. When the paddy sector is now urged to use organic fertiliser, the highly corrupt paddy sector can engage in nefarious activities, such as using chemical fertiliser or a mix of it and still claim it is organic and fetches double the price in the market.

If the sector is corrupt, organic or chemical yield testing can be proven incorrect. There may be more interference from the private sector, which collaborates with the government sector to obtain permits. It would be the same case even with the tea industry and nothing could be more confusing when the tea taste, smell, and colour would change due to a mess up with the fertiliser.

No soil in any part of the world is able to continuously supply the full requirement of nutrients for the production of economically significant crop yield without being supplemented by fertilisers. Any deficiency of essential plant nutrients will retard growth and development and will eventually result in decreased growth, structural abnormality, and death of tea plants, as 20-50 harvestable shoots are removed from tea bushes every week, continuously for 5 years, said Roshan Rajadurai, who has over 36 years of experience in the plantation sector and is currently the Chairman of The Planters' Association of Ceylon.

In Sri Lanka, extensive field trials on use of inorganic synthetic fertiliser have been conducted since the beginning of the 20th century and synthetic fertiliser for tea industry introduced in 1905. Eden started trials with different NPK levels as a balanced fertiliser in 1931. Fertiliser recommendations for tea have been issued by the Tea Research Institute



(TRI), Tolhurst 1954, Joachim 1963, Fernando 1969, Sivasubramaniam and Jeyaram 1976, Wettasingha & Watson 1980, Wickramasinghe 1986, Hettiarachchi 2003, Zoysa & Loganathan 2003. In the 1970s, TRI recommended ERP as a source for Phosphorus, in the 1980s, Urea based Regional Specific Fertiliser replacing Sulphate of Ammonia, in 1985, Fertiliser Based on Yield Potential, in 2000, Site Specific Fertiliser Recommendations (SSFR) based on soil testing for P, K, Mg., S, pH and Yield Potential for different Agro Ecological Regions. In 2010, Regional Specific Fertiliser applications were recommended, he added.

Site Specific Fertiliser Recommendations (SSFR) based on soil testing for P, K, Mg., S, pH and Yield Potential for different Agro Ecological Regions. In 2010, Regional Specific Fertiliser applications were recommended. Nitrogen is the most critical nutrient for Tea and Tea requires Nitrogen than any other plantation crop because of the vegetative nature of its harvest done every 6 to 7 days, he stressed.

The country, which is now widely perceived to be corrupt in terms of policies and finances, may face another chaotic situation similar to the poor quality gas sold to households.

Despite the fact that this claim has been rejected, all roads lead to suspicions about the activities of traders and those who interact with traders on a daily basis.

## Qingdao Seawin fiasco

Looking at the overall picture, the order of Qingdao Seawin Fertiliser is

the first of four shipments of 99,000 metric tonnes of organic fertiliser from Qingdao Seawin will be rejected, with the remainder being imported. It is unclear whether this agreement has been reached because 'there is no such mention' in the most recent statement issued by Qingdao Seawin. On 16 September 2021, the Chinese company screenshotted and circulated a WhatsApp conversation between Mahesh Gammanpila and Mr. Jurian, which said:

"Please inform Qingdao to issue an undertaking, that the product is compiled to the standards of SLSI 1704 and confirm that the fertilisers are free from pathogenic organisms with respect to human animals and plant health, however it may contain harmless organisms."

"Above is the instruction given by the Secretary to the President. Once this undertaking is received, the State companies should open their LC tomorrow itself."

To this WhatsApp message, Jurian replies to Gammanpila that "this is already agreed upon." "I will compose a letter and send it for further confirmation. Do you want me to send individual letters to both Ceylon Fertilizer Company (CFC) and Colombo Commercial Fertilizers Ltd (CCF)," he inquires. The Chinese company also said it was based on the Sri Lanka Standard Institute's instructions that they contacted Schutter Lab to test the samples further.

Qingdao Seawin participated in the government tender following the required procedures and gets awarded the tender with its good quality and complete certification system. Buyers are fully aware and recommend importing organic fertiliser which is free of pathogenic organisms with respect to human, animal, and plant health. However, it may contain harmless organisms. But the buyers have wrongly suppressed the fact there may be "harmless microorganisms" in the fertiliser and misleading the Court, the Chinese company said.

All of these allegations have been refuted by the Department of Agriculture, which maintains that the third-party lab test conducted by Schutter is invalid and that the report, too, refutes that the samples are contaminated.

The Ministry of Agriculture, the National Plant Quarantine Service, and the Department of Agriculture are unable to respond to this news because they have been warned not to speak to the Media individually because the matter is now before the Courts.

The fertiliser mayhem has only just begun. With the introduction of subsidies for organic fertiliser for farmers, whether or not that is practiced to the core, the Government should take full responsibility, not allowing anyone to dupe the citizens of Sri Lanka, who cannot be duped repeatedly.

(amiesulo@gmail.com)

Evidence-based Agri decisions

# FUTA Demands Prompt End to Interference

By SULOGHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

The Federation of University Teachers' Association (FUTA) strongly criticised the Government, on Friday (26), over reversing its agricultural policies in order to capitalise on geopolitical advantages and urged them to immediately cease unnecessary interferences in evidence-based decision making by Agriculture Scientists and officers of Sri Lanka. FUTA was irked over the Government taking steps to silence those scientists and agriculture sector experts, who advised the Government on the 'impromptu move' it made in terms of establishing organic farming and banning chemical fertiliser, only to later realise and revoke the ban. "Dignity of government officers have been shattered purposely and shamelessly in order to achieve the short-sighted objectives of the political leadership of the country," FUTA charged.

They also demand that the Government take immediate action to provide the agricultural sector with the agrochemicals it requires, as well as to protect their officers from both internal and

external threats.

They emphasised that the Government has continued to devote public funds and resources to this 'heinous cause,' particularly by importing urea-based nitrogen fertiliser, developed using Nano-technological approaches, from India and organic fertiliser from China (which is allegedly contaminated with crop disease-causing microorganisms).

Only those countries that seek to capitalise on geopolitical advantages and international market opportunities will benefit from such a situation, FUTA said.

"We vehemently condemn the Government's false accusations levelled against agriculture professionals and the academia and are opposed to the authoritarian and meaningless decision making by the top management of the Government, demanding government officers and academia to implement and/or support the disastrous policies adopted in the agriculture sector of Sri Lanka in a blind-folded manner."

"We demand the Government revisit its policy decision on the move towards organic/green

agriculture, and immediately initiate a dialog with agricultural professionals and academia prior to an imminent irreversible devastation of the agriculture sector and national economy. We strongly demand that the Government take urgent measures to provide the agrochemicals needed for the agriculture sector."

"This policy decision to ban the importation of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, which is likely to be based on the ill-advice received by the President of Sri Lanka, has left the country short of required quantities or volumes of plant nutrients and pesticides," they pointed out.

Problems experienced during this Maha season 2021/2022, resulted in many farmers demanding synthetic fertilisers or effective alternatives, and taking to the streets despite the COVID-19 Pandemic situation, as farming is their only lifeline.

For the last six months, the academia, scientists as well as agriculture experts have constantly highlighted that 100 per cent organic agriculture cannot be achieved overnight, but the pleas have ended up on deaf years, the FUTA said.

Inclusion of Law in School Curriculum

# Tech Committee report handed over

By GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

The report of the technical Committee, appointed by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, on the Inclusion of Law as a Subject in the School Curriculum was submitted to the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Education by State Minister Susil Premajayantha this week.

Addressing the Committee, the State Minister said that it is proposed to change the subject of Citizenship Education, which is currently a compulsory subject from Grade 6 to Grade 9 in the school curriculum, to Law and Citizenship Education after these reforms.

According to the report of the technical committee, the inclusion of law as a subject in the school curriculum will create awareness among children about the law, create awareness about the consequences of disobedience and punishment, provide an understanding of the rights



protected by law, legislation and law enforcement mechanisms. It is expected to develop skills such as providing an understanding of the duties and responsibilities established by law in a civilised society.

The State Minister further stated that the Final Report on the Policy Framework compiled in three sections on Educational Reforms in Vocational Education and

Educational Reforms in Higher Education Educational Reforms from Early Childhood to Advanced Level in Relation to Expected New Education Reforms, has been released in August 2020.

He also stated that a digital platform for anyone to express their views on general education was launched on 28 March 2021 under the patronage of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

# SLN provides craft to ferry passengers of Kinniya

Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) has made arrangements to provide safe passenger transport services at the now being built Kurinchankerny Bridge, Kinniya, starting from Thursday (25).

A ferry disaster near Kurinchankerny Bridge on Tuesday (23) killed six, including four children.

Meanwhile, the SLN said the residents in the area will be able to use this mode of transportation until the construction of the Kurinchankerny Bridge in Kinniya, Trincomalee is completed. The SLN craft made available for this purpose, called a 'lagoon craft,' is capable of carrying 25 passengers 'safely' at a time, effective from 25 November, under the supervision of the Eastern Naval Command. The lagoon craft will be in service from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.



and from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. each day. Further, the SLN has erected a temporary

jetty to allow passengers to board the vessel safely.

(PA)



## University Grants Commission University Admission - Academic Year 2020/2021 Special intake for the applicants with exceptional abilities/skills in Sports to Universities

The University Grants Commission will entertain applications from candidates who have excelled in the field of sports to follow a course of study in Sports Science & Management conducted by Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, University of Sri Jayewardenepura and University of Kelaniya and to follow a course of study in Physical Education conducted by Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka and University of Jaffna.

**The requirements to be fulfilled for Special Admission:**

- Winning medals or participation in Olympic Games.
- Winning at least Gold, Silver or Bronze Medals in Commonwealth Games, Asian Games or SAARC Games.
- Member of a national team representing Sri Lanka at Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, SAARC Games or in a recognized World Cup in a sport such as Cricket, Football, Rugby, Volleyball, Netball or any other sport as decided by the University Grants Commission.

The candidates selected for admission under this special category should complete a suitable foundation course conducted by the Open University of Sri Lanka before commencing of the academic programme. The applications will be called from the applicants who fulfilled the aforesaid requirements until **28<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The duly filled application form complying with the following format should be enclosed with the certified copies of the relevant Certificates and should be submitted by registered post to the Senior Assistant Secretary /University Admissions, University Grants Commission, No: 20, Ward Place, Colombo 07 on or before **28<sup>th</sup> December 2021** Closing date of the Applications will be **28<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The application forms received after the closing date and which are not duly completed will be rejected.

No: 20, Ward Place,  
Colombo 07.  
28<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Chairman  
University Grants Commission.

**University Grants Commission  
For the applicants with exceptional abilities/skills in sports  
Application Form for University Admission- Academic Year 2020/2021**

1. Name of the Applicant (with initials) : .....  
Names denoted by initials : .....

2. Permanent Address : .....

3. Date of Birth : .....Age: .....

4. Nationality : .....Sex: .....

5. National Identity Card No

6. Telephone No : (Fixed)   
: (Mobile)

7. Educational Qualifications : .....

**G.C.E. (O/L)**

Index No: ..... Year: .....

Subject	Grade

**G.C.E. (A/L)**

Index No: ..... Year: .....

Subject	Grade

**8. Qualifications in the field of Sports:- (Please attach the certified copies of the relevant certificates)**

Year	Participated Sport/Event	Country held	No of Countries Participated	Junior/Senior	Place / Medal

**9. State the order for preference of the courses of study you intend to follow if you are selected to the University (only for the courses of study in Sports Science & Management and Physical Education)**

Course	University

**10. Declaration of the Applicant:**

I hereby certify that the particulars provided by me in this application form are true and accurate. Furthermore, I am aware that my application form will be rejected or I will be eliminated from the course of study and the relevant Higher Educational Institution even after the admission if the details stated in my application are found to be false and incorrect.

Herewith I pledge to be bound by the written constitution, by-law, rules and regulations of the relevant Higher Educational Institution and to behave disciplined towards the lecturers and officers of the relevant Higher Educational Institution and not to behave to tarnish the name of the relevant Higher Educational Institution.

Date: .....

Signature of the Applicant





Sunday, 28 November 2021, marks eight years since Sri Lanka lost one of its proudest citizens and a renowned educator, who shaped a number of generations throughout his lifetime.

As the founder of not one but two leading schools in the country, which continue to carry forward his legacy of excellence, discipline and kindness, the service rendered to this country and its younger generations by R.I.T. Alles is second to none.

The fact that scores of his former students commemorate him on this day, no matter which corner of the Earth they are currently domiciled, is a testament to the lasting impression he had made in their lives.

The sons and daughters of the D.S. Senanayake College and the Gateway College, even those who joined the schools after his passing away, hold him in the highest esteem and strive to follow in his footsteps to become exemplary citizens of this country.

### Brilliant student

Ralph Ignatius Thomas Alles was born on 3 October 1932, in Galle, the capital city of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. The colonial rule in Ceylon was in its 136th year then. The first election of Ceylon's State Assembly, the Parliament then, was held in 1931. Senior Mr. Alles belonged to a family of rural elite in Kaluwella, Galle. With hopes to provide a good English medium education to his children, Mr. Alles admitted his son to St. Aloysius College, Galle. His peers in the Aloysius College were veterans in many fields from writing to business.

R.I.T. Alles received his senior education at St. Anthony's College, Kandy. St. Anthony's College moulded him as a disciplined young man who was brilliant in the English language.

R.I.T. Alles' story of success, as a renowned educationist, has a modest start. Alles passed junior exams at St. Anthony's and passed the Senior School Certificate at the Bennet Commerce College in Colombo. He joined the teaching staff of the same school. After that, he qualified to enter the Teacher Training College in Maharagama in 1956.

After two years of education at the Teachers' Training College, he joined the teaching staff of Royal College in 1957. Soon, he became a popular teacher there. On 31 August 1959, he married a teacher named Rohini whom he met at the Teacher Training College. She was a teacher at Piyathissa Vidyalaya, Galle at that time.

Alles family settled in Uluvitike, Galle. Mr. Alles attended school every day. He taught English and mathematics while serving as the master-in-charge of the cadet platoon. His commitment was recognised and rewarded. He was later selected to establish the D.S. Senanayake College, Colombo and served as its founding Principal.

### Great surprise

This is how he remembered the day he got that promotion: "I was 35 years old then. I was teaching a lesson to an Ordinary Level class. The school peon brought a note from the principal, Mr. Bogoda Premaratna. Saluting me as RITA, he informed me that Secretary of the Ministry of Education, M.J. Perera, and educational director Hettiarachchi had wanted to meet me. I ran to the office suspecting what would happen. I criticised the education white paper at the convention of the Secondary Teachers' Union. I was afraid they had wanted to question me on that. I entered the office muttering, "I am finished." Mr. Premaratna heard me but did not say anything but smiled.

"The two officials asked me to meet the Minister of Education I.M.R.A. Iriyagolla. He was a strict gentleman, and I went there in fear. I was wearing a coat without a tie. However, the gatekeeper did not notice my anxiety. He abruptly rejected entry for me.

"Hon. Minister is waiting for me. I am R.I.T. Alles, I said. After a few minutes, I was called in. Mr. Perera and Mr. Hettiarachchi, who came to Royal College to meet me, were also there. I was perplexed, but the Minister relieved me quickly.

"Mr. Alles, we want to start a new school to reduce the competition to enter Royal College. We have chosen you to

# 3 October 1932 – 28 November 2013

# Remembering

# Renowned

# Educationist

# RIT Alles



With Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and J.R.P. Sooriyapperuma



Having a chat with President R. Premadasa and Minister Sirisena Cooray



With President D.B. Wijetunga and Minister Sunethra Ranasinghe at his son Harsha Alles' wedding



With Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike during a prize giving at D.S. Senanayake College

start the school. Therefore, you will have to start the school in the land we have chosen on Gregory's Road. We shall construct a new building there," the Minister stated.

"I was amazed. I said that I was a simple teacher who had no knowledge of administration. But the Minister ignored my protest and told me that they had already decided on the matter.

"1967 was a life-changing year for me. The building construction started. I was sometimes the contractor or the supervisor and once in a while, the watcher too. There were times I acted as the principal too, but there wasn't a single teacher on my staff. When I first went to see the land, I was shocked. It was about a quarter acre. A dirty gutter carrying waste from the General Hospital

went across the land, which was a thicket called Koombikele. The name meant 'jungle of ants'. The slums nearby were called Uniport. As I perceived, the land was not suitable for a school.

"However, I accepted the challenge. Since there was no staff to help me, I sought the support of the cadet platoon and the mathematics section of Royal College. In return, I taught them in the evening to prepare them for the Ordinary Level examination. The students cut 23 huge trees and prepared the land for the building construction.

"According to construction method proposed by engineer Nandasena Kulasinghe, a 100X20-foot building and a 80X20 building were initially constructed at the cost of Rs

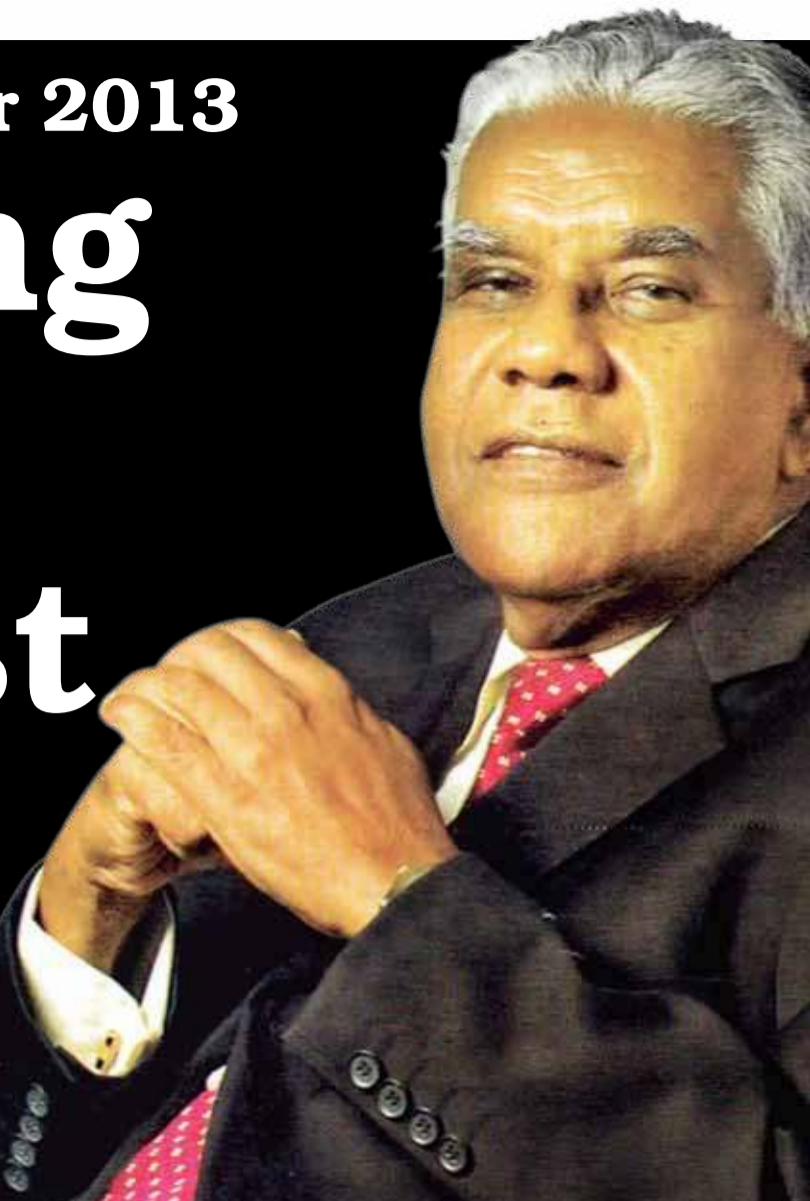
54,000. The challenge was achieved and D.S. Senanayake College was started on 10 February 1967, with 167 students and five teachers.

"I must thank my wife, who gave me full freedom to commit to my duty, relieving me from family burdens."

### 'Country before self'

In 1968, R.I.T. Alles was selected for a scholarship at Cambridge University to learn new educational methodology. The staff was 13 at that time. 'Country before self' was the school motto.

There are many students who remember the brilliance of their teacher R.I.T. Alles. President's adviser and former Secretary to President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Lalith Weeraratna, learnt from



With President J.R. Jayewardene and Minister Sirisena Cooray during a school function



Addressing students at D.S. Senanayake College

R.I.T. Alles' story of success, as a renowned educationist, has a modest start. Alles passed junior exams at St. Anthony's and passed the Senior School Certificate at the Bennet Commerce College in Colombo. He joined the teaching staff of the same school. After that, he qualified to enter the Teacher Training College in Maharagama in 1956

him when he studied at Royal College.

"Mr. Alles was very kind, although he was a highly disciplined personality. He did not let any student fall behind. He was our class teacher cum English teacher. He had an inborn talent in teaching English. I was thorough in grammar, thanks to my father, who taught me. I could read and write, but Mr. Alles gave me the strength to use the language boldly. I must thank him for making me a person who is not afraid to speak before any audience. He taught us the longest word in the English language. It was floccinaucinihilipilification which meant nil or nothing," Weeraratna said.

Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardane was another student of R.I.T. Alles. This is how he remembered his teacher. "He gave us a wealth of knowledge on discipline, virtues, country and nation. His teaching exceeded curricula and textbooks.

"I remember how I was encouraged by him to be promoted as a sergeant of the cadet platoon of Royal College. I still remember his commands as our officer at Diyathalawa and Hanwella training camps. He taught us to challenge the challenges," Gunawardane said.

### Stint at Zahira

Another significant milestone in Mr. Alles' life is becoming the Principal of Zahira College, Maradana, one of the leading Muslim schools of Sri Lanka. He describes the experience in his autobiography.

"Ministry of Education issued a circular that the principal of a school must belong to the religion of the majority of students. To bypass this law, chairman of the school board of Zahira College changed my

position as Director of Education instead of Principal. Thus, I became the first Sinhala Buddhist Principal of Muslim Zahira College. I streamlined the school and changed the entire system. I called the students 'son'. There was a practice of being late to school. To correct this, I closed the gate at 7:30 a.m. The parents were against this. I pointed out to them that every Muslim prayed at 6 a.m. and asked why the Muslim students could not come to school at 7.30 a.m.

"I understood that it was easy if all students go to the same mosque for midday prayers. I negotiated with the caretaker of the mosque in Maradana and got the left-wing of the mosque allocated to the students of Zahira College. When the white-capped Zahira boys went to the mosque, I monitored whether all of them would observe religion. My principle was that they must observe religion as same as I do. Parents liked this move."

Mr. Alles held the position of principal of Zahira College from 1983 to 1986.

In 1986, he founded the network of Gateway Colleges. He remembers the experience as follows: "At D.S. Senanayake College, I called students 'son' because there were only boys. I continued the principles of D.S. Senanayake College with the sons and daughters of Gateway schools. The schools network grew independently, and we were happy and free."

Meanwhile, D.S. Senanayake College was losing its former glory. Therefore, he was again invited to lead the school and retired from D.S. Senanayake College on 31 March 1992. He was promoted as the State Secretary of Education and served the future generation of the nation promoting the principle - "all good things are for children".

# COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters Effective and Safe



By Prof. Suranjith L. Seneviratne

In recent months, an increased number of SARS-CoV-2 infections have been observed in several countries and this in spite of hitherto successful vaccination campaigns. This may be due to the greater transmissibility and infectiousness of the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant and the waning of immunity from COVID-19 vaccines that were administered earlier. The rapid global spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOC), raised several immunological, public health, and ethical questions about the duration and effectiveness of vaccine-induced protection and the need for vaccine boosting. During the past few months, many experts from around the world have recommended the roll out of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses. In the summer of 2021, Israel administered booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine and thus far several countries have put in place COVID-19 vaccine booster programmes. Questions have been asked about the effectiveness of the booster vaccine doses and its potential side effects. This article would outline the current status of COVID-19 booster vaccination in certain regions/countries of the world and discuss what is known so far about its effectiveness and safety.

## Status of booster COVID-19 vaccine rollout in selected countries/regions

### United Kingdom (UK)

In the UK, the administration of booster doses started in September 2021. This was given to those aged 50 and over, health and social care staff, at risk under 50s, above 16s living with immunosuppressed people, and those in long-stay care settings. They were offered the Pfizer vaccine six months after the second vaccine dose, regardless of which vaccine the person had initially received. The COV-Boost trial had found the Pfizer vaccine to be well tolerated as a third dose and to provide a strong booster response. This finding helped the authorities recommend mixing of vaccine doses. Since 15 November 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine booster is being offered to all persons aged 40 years and above. Recently, the British Prime Minister mentioned that to be fully vaccinated no longer meant having two COVID-19 vaccine doses but rather three doses.

### United States of America

On 19 November 2021, the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) amended the Emergency Use Authorisations (EUA) for both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. They authorised them for use as a single booster dose for all individuals 18 years and older, after they had completed primary vaccination with any FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. For the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine booster dose, the FDA analysed the immune response from around 200 persons, between 18 and 55 years, who received a single booster dose about six months after their second dose. One month after a booster vaccine dose, the SARS-CoV-2 antibody response, was higher compared to levels found one month after the two-dose primary series. For the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster dose, the FDA analysed the immune response from 149 persons, 18 years of age or older from the original clinical studies who received a booster dose at least six months after their second dose. This was compared to the immune responses of 1,055 individuals who had completing their two-dose vaccine series. The antibody response against the SARS-CoV-2 virus 29 days after a booster vaccine dose was higher. The FDA stated that the benefits of a single booster dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines outweigh the risks of myocarditis and



pericarditis in individuals aged 18 years and older, when used following the completion of primary vaccination. They also stated that those who were initially vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine would benefit the most from a booster dose.

### Europe

In recent weeks, many European countries have launched their COVID-19 booster vaccine campaigns. Currently, around 3.7 per cent of population in Europe has received a booster vaccine dose. Iceland (where 90 per cent have already received two vaccine doses) leads the way, with nearly 20 per cent of persons already receiving a booster dose. The Icelandic Government announced a booster dose for all over the age of 16 years. In France, the over-65s have been offered a third vaccine dose since September 2021. Those who do not receive the booster dose, risk having their COVID-19 health pass suspended in mid-December 2021. Spain and Sweden have currently limited its booster campaign to those aged 70 and over and 80 and over respectively. In Serbia and Hungary, 16 and 14 out of every 100 persons respectively, have received booster vaccine doses. A few days ago, Austria announced that COVID-19 vaccination would be made compulsory from 1 February 2022. It is the first EU country to issue such a mandate.

### Israel

On 30 July 2021, Israel approved the administration of a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine for persons 60 years or older and who had received a second dose of vaccine at least 5 months earlier. In Israel, a person needs to have received a booster COVID-19 vaccine dose to become eligible for a green pass, unless they have only received the second dose within the last six months. Such a pass is needed for persons to enter gyms, restaurants, and other venues.

### Australia

From 9 November 2021, Australia's Department of Health started offering booster vaccine doses to the public. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and recommended as the booster dose. A person is eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose if they are 18 years and older and have had the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccination at least 6 months ago.

### Singapore

The Health Ministry started administering booster vaccines, six months after the second dose for people aged 30 to 59, and five months for those aged 60 and above. This was decided as waning of antibodies can clearly occur by around six months after the second dose and may occur earlier in the older age groups. From 24 November 2021, all eligible individuals would be able to receive their COVID-19 booster vaccine, five months after completing their second dose. The expert committee on COVID-19 vaccination recommended a standardised interval of five months to pre-empt waning of antibodies for all eligible persons. It is mentioned that 1.5 million booster vaccine doses would be given by the end of December 2021, and this would raise Singapore's booster vaccination

During the past few months, many experts from around the world have recommended the roll out of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses. In the summer of 2021, Israel administered booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine and thus far several countries have put in place COVID-19 vaccine booster programmes

coverage from 21 to 50 per cent.

### India

As vaccine supplies have increased, some public health experts in India have urged the Government to start a booster vaccine programme for the most vulnerable. Currently, India has still not considered authorising a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose. The authorities are concentrating on getting most of India's 944 million adults to complete two-dose vaccination by January 2022. So far, 81 and 43 per cent of India's adults have received at least one and two vaccine doses respectively. Vaccination for those under 18 is still to commence. It has been stated that once most adults have had two vaccine doses, the Government may make vaccine boosters optional.

## Findings from studies on COVID-19 booster vaccines

### Israeli study

Data from 728,321 individuals aged 12 or above who had received the booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine between July 2020 and September 2021 were obtained from Israel's largest healthcare organisation (Clalit Health Services) and analysed. They were matched 1:1 with individuals who had received only two doses of the Pfizer vaccine at least five months before. The matching was based on an extensive set of demographic, geographic and health-related attributes associated with risk of infection, risk of severe disease, health status and health seeking behaviour. The primary outcomes included hospital admission related to COVID-19, severe disease, and mortality. Compared with individuals who received only two doses five

months prior, individuals who received three doses of the vaccine had 93% lower risk of COVID-19-related hospitalisation, 92% lower risk of severe COVID-19, and 81% lower risk of COVID-19-related death. Effectiveness was assessed starting from day 7 after the third dose. The estimated effectiveness of the third dose against hospital stays and severe complications were similar for males and females, and between individuals aged 40-69 years and over 70 years.

The study's large size allowed a more precise assessment of the vaccine's effectiveness across different time periods, different sub-populations (for example sex, age and number of comorbidities), and different severe outcomes (which are rarer and thus need a bigger sample size). However, in this study, reliable estimates could only be obtained about secondary outcomes such as infection and symptomatic infection. Furthermore, as it was an observational study, it could not account for every factor that may have influenced the outcomes. Due to the relative scarcity of events in individuals younger than 40 years, it was not possible to evaluate vaccine effectiveness in this age group. Furthermore, this study did not explore potential adverse clinical events and excess healthcare utilisation associated with the administration of a third dose.

### UK Health Security Agency study

This study found that at least 20 weeks after being vaccinated with two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, effectiveness against symptomatic disease was 62.5%. For the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine it was 44.1%. It was apparent that protection from the first two vaccine doses was beginning to wear off in the older age groups. Two weeks after receiving a vaccine booster dose, protection against symptomatic infection increased to 94% and 93.1% in those who had initially received two doses of the Pfizer or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines respectively. A booster dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine provided significant increased protection against symptomatic disease in those aged 50 and over, irrespective of whether the person had the Oxford-AstraZeneca or Pfizer vaccines as their first doses. This is real world evidence of the effectiveness of the booster in an UK setting and confirms the findings from Israel. It is too early to know how effective the booster will be at reducing the risk of hospital admissions in the UK. However, from the Israeli experience we can expect the booster to be even more effective at preventing severe disease than at preventing symptomatic infection.

### REACT study

Recent data from the REal-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) study showed that SARS-CoV-2 infections in the UK are now at rates similar to that seen in January 2021. Home swab tests were taken by 100,112 people in England between 19 October and 5 November 2021. Of them, 1,399 (1.6%) or 1 in 64 were infected (that is had a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result). Of the positive samples, 841 were sequenced and the Delta variant was identified in all. Almost 12% were of the AY.4.2 sub-lineage, and these individuals were less likely to have any symptoms or the 'classic' symptoms (such as loss or change of sense of taste or smell, fever, new

persistent cough). This study also looked at the effectiveness of booster doses at preventing infection. The risk of infection was around three times lower in those who had received a third dose, compared to those who got two doses. For those aged 50 and above, having a third dose reduced the infection risk by around half compared to two doses.

### Australian Study

According to a study that was recently published in the journal 'Lancet Microbe', in order to keep vaccine efficacy above 50 per cent, a booster vaccine dose would be necessary within one year of receiving the initial two doses. The authors found a major loss of protection from symptomatic infection with the current variants of concern, during the first year after vaccination. They suggest this would be reversed by a third booster vaccine.

## Side effects of COVID-19 vaccine boosters

The side effects of booster vaccine doses are similar for the three (Pfizer, Moderna, J&J) studied vaccines. They include muscle and joint pain, swelling or soreness at the injection site, fatigue, headache, chills or fever, and swollen lymph nodes. Most people have effects that are similar to the initial doses and severe reactions are rare. Swollen axillary lymph nodes are more likely to occur following a Pfizer vaccine booster than from the others. Data released in September 2021, shows that 74.9% of people who received a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine reported local reactions such as pain or swelling at the injection site. Nearly 70% reported systemic reactions like fever or loss of appetite. This mostly occurred on the day following their vaccination. The most common specific reactions were: pain at the injection site (71%), fatigue (56%), and headache (43%). For most, the side effects were mild or moderate in severity and transient. Of the 6,200 participants who received three doses of the Moderna vaccine, local reactions were marginally more common after the booster (84.7%) than after the second dose (83.5%). Systemic reactions were less common.

Among the 6,300 three-time Pfizer vaccine dose recipients, a similar trend was noted. Local reactions increased slightly (from 71.7% to 74.1%), and systemic reactions reduced marginally (from 71.7% to 69.2%). In its Phase III clinical trial data, J&J noted that recipients of its booster had fewer local and systemic side effects than seen in its Phase I/II study. A National Institutes of Health study found that people who received the Moderna vaccine booster were slightly more likely to experience an adverse reaction such as vomiting, fatigue, or insomnia at 15.6% than those who received Pfizer (14.3%) or J&J (12%). A small number of cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have also been reported in relation to both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, mostly in young men. In a recent Israeli study of 5.4 million people over the age of 16, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, 283 people reported 'probable or definite' myocarditis. Of those, 142 cases were related to the Pfizer vaccine, and 95% were mild. After medical treatment, most of those who experienced the myocardial inflammation, recovered quickly.

## World Health Organisation (WHO) perspective

The WHO position is that it makes no sense to give boosters to healthy adults, or to vaccinate children, when health workers, older people and other high-risk groups around the world are still waiting for their first dose. They state that six times more booster doses are being administered around the world on a daily basis than primary doses in low-income countries. According to the WHO's special envoy on COVID-19, relying only on a full vaccination strategy is a gamble for rich countries. A call has been made for a combined approach consisting of masks and other health interventions so that people could avoid being infected by the virus.

### Conclusions

Because of the observed waning of immune responses following two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, booster vaccine doses have started to be given in several regions and countries. Different countries follow varying regimes and the currently available data points to the effectiveness and safety of the COVID-19 booster vaccine programme.

# Quarter Bottles

## A Health and Environment Hazard

By **THAMEENAH RAZEK**

Most of us are familiar with the sight of empty quarter or 180ml bottles of alcohol heaped at various locations, including the Pettah Bus Station. Anyone who has witnessed a passenger drinking from a 180ml bottle and abandoning it at the bus stop would not be surprised. People nowadays do not hesitate to carry quarter bottles of alcohol in their pant pockets on their way to work. A 'Nattami' holds the 180ml bottle in one hand while pushing his cart and gulps down its contents in broad daylight. The bottle is then randomly disposed of. The number of bottles scattered around per week are in the thousands.

According to the Excise Department, 300 million bottles of liquor were sold in Sri Lanka in 2019. There are 52 million 750ml bottles of liquor, 40 million 375ml bottles and 108 million 180ml bottles in all.

Environmental and health organisations have long cautioned about the consequences of throwing small-sized bottles and beer cans to the environment on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) Dr. Samadhi Rajapaksa, noted that a new legislation should be enacted to prohibit the use of the 180ml or mini bottle. He claimed that as bottle sales increased over time, social and environmental difficulties arose, and that taxes on cigarettes and alcohol should be raised more to mitigate the impact. He also said that the Government's expenditure on treating ailments caused by alcohol consumption would be greater than the income generated through liquor tax.

So, why is it that glass is no longer accepted for recycling in some markets? Why is it so difficult for Sri Lanka to prohibit specific glass objects that have genuinely harmed the environment?

The reasons are numerous. The Minister of Environment recently said that an astounding 105 million quarter bottles of liquor were consumed in 2018, with 100% of the empties being disposed of, to the environment. As a result, the Ministry is planning to ban the use of quarter bottles.

Even though the proposed ban on quarter-sized liquor bottles has been discussed for a long time, the authorities have yet to implement the same, despite the fact that it creates significant health and environmental risks. However, a recent survey carried out by the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) on 1,000 people revealed that there is an urgent need to ban the said bottles in order to save daily loss of life.

### The survey of 1,000 people

NATA Chairman Dr. Rajapaksa said that the ban is being proposed following a survey of 1,000 people who said that the bottles must be outlawed. He outlined the survey results, including the questionnaire on whether alcohol and cigarettes should be banned in public places, where 95 per cent replied 'yes'.

95 per cent agreed that sales of alcohol and tobacco should be prohibited within half a kilometre of a school, and the 'survey' also inquired as to whether the quarter arrack bottle should be outlawed or discontinued.

Results indicated that 72.4 per cent felt the quarter bottle should be outlawed. Dr. Rajapaksa said that the survey would be used to amend NATA legislation and influence legislators in future policies, and he thinks it would become a vital factor to influence people's representatives and deliver public opinion directly to the legislators.

He said that these small-sized bottles are simply thrown or dumped in a haphazard manner and farmers were complaining of having seen empty bottles being tossed into their



In Sri Lanka, there are now two distilleries and 23 breweries in operation. The majority of people in our country are refreshed by the liquor they manufacture, and artificial toddy and toxic liquor are not excluded. There are still a considerable number of persons who have died as a result of the impacts of widespread unlawful female genital mutilation, as well as those who have been chronically ill

crops or fields. He stated that Authorities from the Ministry of Environment were also in favour of a ban. We have to put an end to this," he said.

### More than 105 million quarter bottles

The alcohol quarter bottle with a volume of 180 ml has been the most serious environmental issue in recent years. Minister of Environment Mahinda Amaraweera said, he had received petitions from various sources to ban the said

bottles, including Environmental Organisations and farmers.

"A considerable number who consume liquor are always in the habit of throwing the 'empties' all over the place. Paddy farmers have had their legs amputated and more often than not remained in hospitals for months. So, this time around, I had convened several rounds of meetings and discussions to ban the said bottles. However, none of the relevant institutions have responded favourably. Be that as it may, they are now showing some signs of interest and attention," quipped Minister Amaraweera. Furthermore, he said he cannot comprehend and comment on the rising number of empty quarter bottles left unattended in the environment.

### Bottle collectors are obstinate

It has been observed that empty bottles are not properly disposed and that there is no demand from those who earn an income by collecting such bottles. Sadly, even the producers do not have a system in place to recycle them.

When contacted, some merchants who used to collect empty bottles but have since stopped said that used glass is frequently recycled and turned into bottles elsewhere in the country, and that in order to recycle glass, it must first be separated from the waste stream, then sorted and washed for re-bottling, or reprocessed into new bottles and other glass products.

When questioned why they are refusing to purchase these bottles, they said that glass is heavy and costly to transport. Due to the exorbitant expenses, certain contactors purchase them and use the glass professionally broken for construction.

### The year 2018

The total number of bottles of alcohol sold in our country in 2018 was 201,221,181, out of which 105,532,169 were 180ml bottles of alcohol. Quarter alcohol bottles account to about 52% of total liquor

bottle volume. The point here is that in 2018 there was a decline compared to 2017.

Not even 5% of these are recycled. As a result, 180ml bottles are highly detrimental to the environment. Another fact is that in 2018, 43,115,920, 375ml bottles of arrack and 52,568,092, 750ml bottles were consumed.

### The demand is never ending

According to Dr. Rajapaksa and Environmental Groups, the 180ml bottle and other alcohol packaging, pose a severe threat to environment. With 300 million bottles of liquor and 160 million cans of beer sold each year, it is quite difficult to release a large quantity of them into the environment without reusing or recycling them.

Whatever the severity of the problem is, it is impossible to avoid discussing the thirst for alcohol in our society. Alcohol is used to satisfy appetites of people from all walks of life, from the hardworking layman to the affluent and the intellect.

### The large scale tax earning industry

In Sri Lanka, there are now two distilleries and 23 breweries in operation. The majority of people in our country are refreshed by the liquor they manufacture, and artificial toddy and toxic liquor are not excluded. There are still a considerable number of persons who have died as a result of the impacts of widespread unlawful female genital mutilation, as well as those who have been chronically ill. True, the 'small man' cannot afford to consume whiskey or brandy in this situation. Liquor with foreign brand tags is also served during large gatherings. The bottle that cheers, for those who can afford it is not a huge deal, but for the plantation worker, who cannot afford to lose the money in hand, the quarter bottle brings his sweet drink.

The Excise Department is in charge of collecting taxes from the

Even though the proposed ban on quarter-sized liquor bottles has been discussed for a long time, the authorities have yet to implement the same, despite the fact that it creates significant health and environmental risks. However, a recent survey carried out by the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) on 1,000 people revealed that there is an urgent need to ban the said bottles in order to save daily loss of life

alcohol and tobacco industries through efficient and effective management. Among their goals is the creation of a healthy Sri Lankan society. As a result, just as billions of gallons of liquor are sanctioned for sale, it would be advisable to initiate and implement a special remedial project before abandoned sachets, beer cans and pint-sized bottles cause dengue or other health hazards.

### Change in business

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Excise Kapila Kumarasinghe said that they hope to propose a remedy to the problem with regard to the 180ml liquor bottles and beer cans as soon as possible.

He said that it is intended to install simple beer canning machines at all 2,900 registered liquor outlets, which will be implemented in the form of a project by the Central Environmental Authority, the Ministry of Environment, and the Excise Department in the near future. "We also do not wish to spend even a penny of 'federal money'. It is hoped that the industry, particularly breweries, will bear the burden. They have agreed. Changes in the liquor business over the last decade and a half have generated problems. It is an offence to drive under the influence of liquor," he remarked.

"If a person who paid Rs 1,600 for a bottle of whiskey is advised to keep Rs 30 as a deposit and bring the empty bottle later, it never materialises. This gives rise to devise a mechanism that would encourage individuals to return the empty bottle and obtain the refund. For the purpose of recycling, this deposit system is implemented for bottles of all sizes. During the colonial period, the wholesale price of a gallon of arrack was Rs 100. An arrack distillery licence fee was Rs 100 at the time. It is reported that seven gallons of toddy were required to distil a gallon of arrack," he said.

However, Kumarasinghe stated such a mechanism should deter the 'helpless' plantation worker, 'Nattami', who have stamped their day-to-day living in the county of their birth, from returning to the cheap artificial cup of toddy or the illegal liquor bar and drink poisonous portions.

By FAADHILA THASSIM

Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050

# Does SL Have A Clear National Road map?



Climate change undoubtedly has its own consequences and is continuously affecting countries including Sri Lanka in several different ways, making the need to promptly address matters that contribute to such climate change vital.

This is reason enough for countries to achieve carbon neutrality, which seeks a balance between carbon emissions, and that of the absorption of carbon emissions from the atmosphere. Just like every other country, Sri Lanka is inevitably guilty of carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

Sri Lanka has, however, pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, while moving towards the increase in the contribution of renewable energy sources to 70 per cent of national energy needs by 2030. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said in order to achieve this objective, Sri Lanka welcomes assistance through technology transfers, skills development, investment and finance support.

The question, however, is whether we have sufficient resources to meet this goal and whether the existing laws are strong enough to support achieving such a goal.

**Shift to complete renewable energy generation**

A major step towards achieving carbon neutrality calls for the shift from the use of fossil fuel to renewable energy generation by prioritising the use of solar and wind power for such purpose.

United Nations General Secretary António Guterres said all countries need credible mid-term goals and plans that are aligned with the objective of carbon neutrality and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, we need an urgent transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Sri Lanka currently accounts for 35 per cent of the country's energy demand. Energy expert Dr. Vidura Ralapanawa, while stating that we have sufficient resources to achieve 100 per cent renewable energy by 2040 to 2050, added that there are however several mechanisms that have to be adopted to put such resources into proper use.

He added the issue with establishing solar panels for solar power generation in Sri Lanka is the unavailability of

sufficient land for such purpose, while stating that this could result in the clearing of forests for land. In the event forest lands are cleared for such purpose, it does not sufficiently contribute towards achieving carbon neutrality.

Dr. Ralapanawa added however that an alternative for such issue is the establishment of floating solar power generation facilities in lagoons and reservoirs and that several such water sources are available in Sri Lanka including the Negombo Lagoon, and the Puttalam Lagoon.

He noted that one constantly discussed topic in the recent past is the need for Liquefied Natural Gas, adding however that Sri Lanka should stop focusing on natural gas and instead promote setting up facilities for the generation of renewable energy.

**Carbon neutral transport**

Dr. Ralapanawa, commenting on the use of electric trucks and busses in several countries, said one main method by which carbon emissions could be minimised is by shifting to vehicles that operate in such a manner for public transport, adding that Sri Lanka has already taken a huge step with the innovation of electric tuk tuks.

He added although the initial payments of such vehicles are relatively

#	Lagoon	Surface Area (ha)	District	% Area Covered	Area for Solar (ha)	Solar Capacity (MWp)	Annual Output (GWh)
1	Jaffna Complex	44,100	Jaffna	10%	4,009	6,014	9,526
2	Puttalam	35,770	Puttalam	10%	3,252	4,878	7,726
3	Chundikulam	13,500	Jaffna	10%	1,227	1,841	2,916
4	Batticaloa	12,658	Batticaloa	10%	1,151	1,726	2,734
5	Nanthikadal	7,505	Mullaivivu	10%	682	1,023	1,621
6	Thondamanaru	7,450	Jaffna	10%	677	1,016	1,609
7	Korai Complex	3,844	Ampara	10%	349	524	830
8	Negombo	3,334	Gampaha	10%	303	455	720
9	Mundel	3,150	Puttalam	10%	286	430	680
10	Uppu aru	3,000	Jaffna	10%	273	409	648
11	Kokilai	2,995	Mullaivivu	10%	272	408	647
12	Upper-Panichankerni	2,950	Batticaloa	10%	268	402	637
13	Putuvil-Ureni	2,449	Ampara	10%	223	334	529
14	Thambalagam Bay	2,084	Trincomalee	10%	189	284	450
15	Periya Kalapuwa	1,837	Ampara	10%	167	251	397
16	Nayaru	1,760	Mullaivivu	10%	160	240	380
17	Vidattativu	1,600	Jaffna	10%	145	218	346
18	Panama	1,476	Ampara	10%	134	201	319
19	Valaichenai	1,321	Batticaloa	10%	120	180	285
20	Boigoda	1,214	Colombo	10%	110	166	262
21	Ullakkalie	1,123	Trincomalee	10%	102	153	243
22	Malala-Embilikkala	919	Hambantota	10%	84	125	199
23	Sinnakarachchi	840	Trincomalee	10%	76	115	181
24	Karagan	804	Hambantota	10%	73	110	174
25	Madu ganga	735	Galle	10%	67	100	159
26	Chilaw	721	Puttalam	10%	66	98	156
27	Periyakarachchi	650	Trincomalee	10%	59	89	140
28	Koggala	615	Galle	10%	56	84	133
29	Kahandamodera	604	Hambantota	10%	55	82	130
30	Arugam	583	Ampara	10%	53	80	126
<b>Total</b>		<b>161,591</b>			<b>14,490</b>	<b>22,035</b>	<b>34,904</b>

high, its operation and repair cost are low, and thereby it is ideal for Sri Lanka to shift towards the use of electric vehicles, as their prices are also dropping. He further said there is a novel invention of an electric train engine that also requires batteries, adding that while this is currently not commercial, it could also be used in Sri Lanka over the next ten years.

**Hydroelectric power generation**

Dr. Ralapanawa said due to spills from reservoirs, there is a waste of water that could be used to generate carbon-free electricity, adding that there are constant spills and that this

has to be addressed.

He further said energy experts are pressuring the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) through the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) and other means to get CEB to have a more transparent, scientifically correct methodology for dispatch and hydro storage.

**Law in relation to carbon emission**

Attorney-at-Law Ravindranath Dabare said carbon emission is controlled by several laws directly and by way of laws that have been laid down prohibiting clearing trees, which is vital for carbon emission absorption.

He added there are certain regulations that have been issued in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Act, which prohibits certain types of carbon emissions that are hazardous to the environment, and several others including regulations that establish exhaust emission standards, gasoline emission standards, and even fuel standards.

Dabare said there are also regulations pertaining to exhaust emission standards for imported vehicles, while stating that the issue however is not with the laws, but with the implementation of such laws, while adding that carbon footprint laws not being applied and monitored is a major shortfall. He said the manner in which vehicle emission certificates are provided to supposedly control emissions is not monitored, adding that there are still several vehicles that emit more than the standard amounts permitted. He further said there are also public nuisance laws, adding however that even these laws are very rarely enforced, and that operations with high levels of emissions are also uncontrolled and not monitored, while these shortfalls are also not sufficiently addressed by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA).

He added an additional burden in shifting towards carbon neutrality is the constant forest clearing that is taking place at a rapid pace and although the need to avoid carbon emission is needed to achieve carbon neutrality, this alone is insufficient and should be coupled with conserving forest reserves for the purpose of absorbing such emissions.

Hemantha Withanage, while stating that introducing new laws is also required, added what is more ideal is to strengthen existing laws and putting them into force.

**What needs to be done?**

Dr. Ralapanawa said in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, there has to be a clear national roadmap with targets and an execution plan, adding that there has to also be a proper policy framework.

He further said in Sri Lanka authorities fail to work in cooperation, adding that in order to achieve this target, it is essential for their actions to not be contradictory.

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To strengthen Tamil-speaking community

# TNA Urges Govt to Rethink Strategy

Taking a look at Sumanthiran and Rasamanickam's visit to US and Canada



TNA MP Sumanthiran and MP Shanakiyan in Canada

By **SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN**

On their journey to the US and Canada, the two Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MPs M.A. Sumanthiran and 29-year-old Shanakiyan Rasamanickam were carrying the message to strengthen the Tamil-speaking community, including the Muslims in the North and East for a political settlement. This occurred with the participation of the international community and banned Global Tamil Forum (GTF). It received a raving welcome, despite a bitter reception from a faction of the Tamil Diaspora who are bent on separatism and demanded the two "traitors" should leave Canada without being stooges of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Members of the delegation included the two TNA MPs and members of the GTF and well-wishers. In Washington, the delegation met Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador Donald Lu, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ambassador Kelly Keiderling, Acting Assistant Secretary Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Lisa J. Peterson, Ambassador Michael Kozak of the Office of Global Criminal Justice, and Director for South Asia Security Affairs and Director for Democracy and Human Rights of the National Security Council at the White House.

The delegation also met senior staff members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Assistant Administrator of USAID, Legislators from the United States Congress, and former US Ambassadors to Sri Lanka and Assistant Secretaries for the region.

In New York, the delegation met the US Deputy Permanent Representative for the UN General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives to the UN General Assembly for Norway, and the Irish Republic, along with senior officials from the Office of the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

## Journey to US and Canada

Prior to their departure, Sumanthiran and Shanakiyan met Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in Parliament, implying that they may have informed him about their trip to Canada, a country that had welcomed over 300,000 Sri Lankans during the ethnic clashes and the ensuing 30 years of war.

Also, in February this year, former US Ambassador Alaina B. Teplitz met TNA members and discussed the current situation in the North. This discussion was held at a hotel in Jaffna. TNA Kilinochchi District MP S. Shriratharan, former MP Mavai Senathirajah, and former Chairman of the Northern Provincial Council C.V.K. Sivagnanam were present.

In June, the TNA parliamentarians also met the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, who pledged to support equality and implementation of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

The TNA also met British High Commissioner Sarah Hulton on 18 November and the problems faced by

the Tamils in the North was discussed.

The tour to the United States and Canada included a few key elements, such as merging the North and East, uniting the Tamil-speaking community of the North and East, including Muslims, and urging their support in finding a permanent solution to the national issue through the defunct 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Sumanthiran and Shanakiyan had met top US officials over 10 times. They met Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu. He tweeted, underscoring that human rights and reconciliation are central to US foreign policy on Sri Lanka. He said the US joins Sri Lankan Tamil people in search of lasting peace and full voice in deciding their country's future.

In Ottawa, there were two meetings, one with MPs and the other with the Global Affairs Ministry. They were also invited to speak to Sri Lankan Muslims living in Canada.

The journey to the US began after the TNA made numerous attempts to meet the Government to discuss the pending matters, such as the reforms brought to the new Constitution, but those attempts were either postponed or ignored completely. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, instead said what is needed is developing the region. His commitment to discuss the devolution of power, PTA prisoners, and revoking the PTA is bleak to date.

TNA Leader R. Sampanthan, on planning a meeting with the President, said all attempts were futile or with little reception. This has been raised as concerns by Sampanthan, the senior most Tamil politician in the country. He told the diplomatic circle about the Government's lackadaisical move in focusing on the issues of the Tamils of the country. This was a long-standing issue from the time Sri Lanka gained Independence noted Shanakiyan, while addressing a meeting in Toronto last week. He said he does not want his grandchild also to talk about the same issue and that would only prove that, as an MP, Shanakiyan had failed too.

All of this resulted in Sampanthan sending the two orators to the United States and Canada to meet several top US Government officials as well as the very own Tamil Diaspora, which has been a major stumbling block for the Government. The Tamil Diaspora network is one of the most powerful, and their connectivity is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are the quickest in running news pitches about the Sri Lankan Government on YouTube news channels and holding discussions about every move made by the Rajapaksas, the TNA, and all negative incidents that occur in the country. Such channels are popular in Tamil Nadu as well, where they are frequently watched and created.

The Tamil Diaspora has been criticising the Government since the war ended. However, it is the TNA that has been cornered on all occasions. Tamils in the United Kingdom, the United States, France,



TNA meeting top US officials

Australia, and Canada are divided on many issues, and a separatist faction has rejected and dejected the TNA, claiming that they are not the sole representatives of Sri Lankan Tamils. However, there is a sizable Tamil community that supports the TNA's vision and views, including the Canadian Tamil Congress and the Global Tamil Forum, and would like to see the Tamils have devolution of power within a united Sri Lanka. Despite the fact that the TNA's popularity is dwindling, it is Shanakiyan who has unquestionably lifted the spirit of the TNA and has been warmly welcomed by Sri Lanka's Muslim community. As a trilingual politician, he has been expressively explaining the plights of the country's Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims in all three languages, capturing the attention of the Southerners.

The TNA was apt in selecting Shanakiyan over many of the stalwart members of the TNA. Shanakiyan, during the tour, maintained that most of the discussion and thoughts were not of the TNA, and his own. He explained that he does not need to take the permission of the TNA to speak to the Tamil audience, and he will not do that on all occasions.

## US State Department created uproar

The visit to the US State Department and a tweet that named the Sri Lankan Tamils as minority Tamil, irked the Diaspora, who wanted that statement to be withdrawn. Within their network, they reprimanded Sumanthiran for calling the Tamils as 'minority,' when they are the inhabitants of the North and East. To this end, Sumanthiran told the audience in Canada that it was not his views. On 21 November, Sumanthiran said "We are not responsible for what the US State

Department had tweeted and the faction of the Diaspora is looking for points to create an uproar, but they are not worried about it, as they have one message, and that is to fight for justice only and it could be for any community that calls themselves Sri Lankans. The meeting was suspended after some Tamils stormed the venue, but was held the next day.

They also met Sri Lankan Muslims living there. Sumanthiran pointed out that at the Pottuvil to Polikandy protest march, there were Muslims who joined them, when they passed their villages, and said the Muslims should journey with them throughout until a political settlement is found. He said the political settlement would be born out of the blessings from the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims, and Muslims cannot be isolated. He also quipped that on most occasions, the Muslims have not been supportive of the Tamils, in their fight and their aspirations, whereas they have stood with them and their needs for more collaboration and connection with both communities to strengthen the North and East to achieve their goals.

Shanakiyan stressed that in Parliament, he is called a Tiger, while in Canada he was chided for not being a Tiger supporter, and this is the challenge that he and the TNA face in Sri Lanka.

However, their whole visit was about getting the approval of the Tamil Diaspora to unite and strengthen the party and the Tamil people, he said.

Shanakiyan said many of the Tamils want to migrate to Canada and EU countries, whereas his plea was that the Tamil Diaspora come forward to create cities like in Canada in the North and East in Sri Lanka. He also said due to land-grabbing and negative political culture, the Tamil identity is destroyed, and the Tamil areas are captured systematically, and very soon there will be no land left

for Tamils and Muslims, he added.

Although there are many forms of gaining rights for our people, all the activities and projects that they expect will be set up, so that we follow the non-violent path of our traditional party, the TNA, and embody their long-standing aspirations for our people in Sri Lanka. I have faced a lot of opposition and the opposition is the reason for my growth. I'm not going to be bullied anytime soon, Shanakiyan highlighted.

Shanakiyan stood his ground that in the Eastern Province, major changes are being brought by the Government to spite the Tamils living there, and very soon politically they will not have a say.

The two parliamentarians also visited the Canadian Parliament. "We discussed matters concerning human rights, the need for a political solution, and how we can uplift the current economy. It was on an invitation of a Canadian Member of Parliament. We discussed the issues we face in the North and East, such as illegal land-grabbing and resource exploitation, the associated political crisis and human rights abuses, and put forward a number of proposals for future development projects that could benefit our people, and our solemn demands that the Government of Sri Lanka exert appropriate pressure on the Government of Canada to reach solutions for our people as soon as possible," they said.

The TNA MPs have told several local Media that their tour "sounded positive" and it is now left for the Sri Lankan Government also to rethink a strategy to make up things for the betterment of Sri Lanka. The TNA duo said within a country there are different communities, and their traditions and religions should be respected, before considering 'One Country, One Law' and that would bring ethnic harmony.

## TNA calls for a more engaged US role

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) delegation had many engagements in the US between 15-22 November, articulating Tamil people's concerns to key US Government policymakers and Members of the US Congress.

The TNA delegation expressed its deep appreciation to the US leadership at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in promoting accountability, reconciliation, and human rights in Sri Lanka. While calling for continued leadership of the United States Government (USG) at the UNHRC and in light of Sri Lanka's failure to make satisfactory progress on implementing UNHRC Resolution 46/1, USG was encouraged to consider a multifaceted approach in addressing the many challenges in Sri Lanka.

The particular focus of the current

engagement was to call for a proactive US role in promoting a holistic approach to reconciliation, which would include addressing the root cause of conflict and human rights violations, the denial of political rights to the Tamil people. The delegation emphasised that addressing the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, dignity, and meaningful power devolution is critical in guaranteeing non-recurrence.

The present conditions in Sri Lanka and the serious economic difficulties faced by the people, and the vulnerability of the country for external manipulations - were also highlighted to the US.

The challenges faced by the Tamil community on a daily basis to protect their land and preserve their identity

in the Tamil majority Northern and Eastern Provinces against rampant militarisation and State-sponsored initiatives aimed at altering regional demography was discussed. Details of some of the recent land appropriation measures by the Government of Sri Lanka were presented and the urgency to counter such measures with international assistance was sought.

The opportunities and challenges for changing the present conditions in Sri Lanka was highlighted and the transformative role that the USG could play, in alignment with India at this critical juncture was underscored. Preventing further deterioration of the governance and economic ills of the country and fostering equality and reconciliation among all its communities was emphasised and called for.

## Cummins tasked with healing Australia after time of Paine

Fast bowler Pat Cummins was confirmed as Australia's 47th Test captain on Friday, tasked with galvanising the team at short order before the Ashes amid the fall-out from Tim Paine's resignation and decision to take a break from cricket. Cummins will be supported by new vice-captain Steve Smith.

As former skipper Paine's vice-captain, Cummins was considered a shoo-in to replace the wicketkeeper, who on Friday stepped away from all cricket to take a 'mental health break' after damaging revelations of a 'sexting scandal'. However, the appointment is still remarkable given that Australia has almost always favoured batsmen as captains.

Cummins becomes only the second fast bowler to captain the side after Ray Lindwall, who led for one Test against India in the mid-1950s.

"There's a couple of more unknowns about having a bowling captain and that's why I think from the outset I was absolutely determined if I was captain to have someone like Steve as vice-captain next to me," Cummins told reporters from the team's Gold Coast base.

Popular, telegenic and amiable in public, Cummins becomes captain a decade after his sensational Test debut as an 18-year-old, when he took a seven-

wicket match haul at the Wanderers to help beat South Africa. He had to wait nearly six years for his next Test due to injuries but now tops the world's Test bowling rankings.

The appointment of Cummins was hailed by former players and pundits, but Smith's promotion, coming three years after 'Sandpaper-gate', did not sit well with some. Former spinner Shane Warne was completely opposed to Smith's promotion, saying it would invite ridicule.

"We need to go into the Ashes now with a clean slate, not open up old wounds," Warne wrote in a column for News Corp.

One of the duo's first tasks will be to help selectors pick a wicketkeeper before the Ashes opener in Brisbane on 8 Dec. The uncapped duo of Alex Carey and Josh Inglis, along with Matthew Wade, have been touted as potential replacements for Paine.

While taking the captaincy quicker than planned, Cummins has served something of an apprenticeship as New South Wales skipper in the domestic one-day competition.

(Reuters)



# Scoring 10,000 runs is my main target says Dimuth

Sri Lanka Test skipper Dimuth Karunaratne has set himself the target of scoring 10,000 Test runs and playing 100 Test matches, goals which are within touching distance if he continues his good form. He said this after scoring 147 and 83 in Sri Lanka's 187-run victory over West Indies in Galle.

"Scoring 10,000 runs is my main target. I don't know if I'll be able to achieve that, but that's what I've got in mind. If I can continue this form, I'll be able to get close to 10,000 runs. I like to improve as much as I can, and whenever I finish a match, I'll go and check where I am on the Sri Lanka run charts to figure out how many I need to score to pass someone," said Karunaratne.

Karunaratne is within touching distance of three of Sri Lanka's best ever batters - Thilan Samaraweera (5,462 runs), Tillakaratne Dilshan (5,492) and Marvan Atapattu (5,502). Although he is already 33, what is encouraging about his record is that since 2018, he averages 47.97, when he had averaged 37.08 before that.

"If I score another 100-150 more runs, I think I can surpass a few more players," Karunaratne said. "I'd also like to play 100

Tests." His outstanding run tally in this match had come despite a long layoff from top-flight cricket - Sri Lanka having played their previous Test in early May (Karunaratne is no longer picked for ODIs). And although there was a domestic 50-over competition scheduled for October and November, many of those matches were washed out by the north-east monsoon, and in the games Karunaratne did play, he made only 17, 7 and 18.

"I was quite worried before the Test because I hadn't been able to train. I started training in October, and we were mainly doing fitness work. There weren't a lot of skill sessions - only about five or six because of the rain. The weather didn't give us a chance to play many domestic matches either, and even in the games I did play, I didn't make a lot of runs. From the day I came here to Galle I worked really

hard, but there was definitely a doubt as to whether I can score runs.

"With my calibre, I think if I get a start I can convert it into a big score. There was a nervous start in the first innings, but eventually I came into rhythm and that carried through into the second innings. I still think I haven't reached my peak form though."

Having now hit six consecutive 50-plus scores in Tests, Karunaratne is one shy of equalling the world record for such a streak. He has also struck four centuries since January.

"I think it's a lot to do with experience," he said of his consistency. "When it comes to conditions, I know now when there's going to be a lot of turn, or when there will be a little less. I'm sharing that information with the youngsters as well."

"And knowing that I had scored a lot of runs earlier in the year, there was less of a fear of failure also."



## RCGC 100th Club Championship 2021 Blue ribbon event tees off on Saturday

By SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Royal Colombo Golf Club (RCGC) celebrated its 100th Club Championship, with Yannik Kumara (Men's) and Kayla Perera (Women's) defending their titles. The Championship commenced on Saturday (27) and will continue on 28 November and 2, 3, 4 and 5 December.

More than 150 golfers will be seen in action, and the tournament will be conducted under strict health guidelines.

The late PIN Fernando won this championship a record 19 times, followed by Rusi Captain, who comes a close second with 14 wins.

In the Ladies segment, Anouk Chitty has won this

championship a record 8 times. The youngest to win this event was Amrith de Soyza at the tender age of 14 years and 6 months in 2001.

The 100th Club Championship promises some exciting golf with defending champion and young golfing sensation Yannik Kumara out to retain his title.

The youngest golfer in the event will be 13-year-old, Reshan Algama, who could prove to be a major threat to the seasoned campaigners in this segment.

In the women's segment, Kayla Perera will go flat out to defend her title.

Both defending champions will need to overcome some tough competition in order to retain their titles.

## Rugby Legend Gamini Fernando called to Eternal Rest

Ceylon Today notes the passing of a Rugby Legend with sadness. The last rites of Gamini Fernando were held at a private funeral yesterday, respecting his wishes. Fernando was a player, coach, administrator and referee. Known affectionately as Gamma Rugby, Havelocks and his family will miss the Adonis face of Gamini Fernando. Born in Kandy, he was a proud product of Trinity College and excelled in Rugby and played cricket. He played under Ken de



Joedt and Denzil Kobbekaduwa. On leaving school, he played for Havelocks, which team he captained in 1967. However, he hung up his boots prematurely in 1969. He was President of the Sri Lanka Rugby Union and the Sri Lanka Society of Rugby Football Referees and Havelocks Sports Club. He was also the National Coach and also coached Havelocks and Police. In addition, he was a Life Member of Sri Lanka Rugby and Havelocks Sports Club, of which he was also a Patron.

## Rugby Scrapbook

# Lack of understanding by Sri Lanka at Asian Sevens

By: VIMAL PERERA

After many years, reviewing the fall below 4th place in Asia requires an analytical mindset than talking about our times. We returned in 2021 to rugby restricted by COVID in 2020. One domestic and an Asia Sevens; it is time to plan and plot the path we want to go. It is essential to look at the game compared to modern sevens rugby and not what it was 'when we played', or what it would have been if the Kandy players played, or said that we lacked experience. What does experience mean, and is it different to seniority? Are we talking of people who have seniority, having played the same rugby over the years and inferring it as experience? So, is playing two sevens at most in a year experience?

The reality is to ask what type of rugby we played to deserve to be among the best in Asian Rugby. We took to Dubai the experience of the one domestic sevens, a variant of fifteen a side rugby with semi drifts to a sevens game. That, together with conceding penalties, losing possession, and no ball retention, was taken to Asia Rugby.

A repetition of the mistakes we made in the domestic is not good enough for the international scene. So, if we prefer to brag about the club or school, and a happy ending is what we are looking for, then forget the international

stage and play the way we like to play.

The 'Warrior's Cup' sevens was good to start but not adequate, as the mistakes and sins of the local circuit were taken to the Asian circuit. How often were the Sri Lankan players penalized for not being on their feet and not releasing the ball at the breakdown? How many times can you afford to get punished in sevens and expect to win a game? Once they were repeatedly penalized, the players stood near the breakdown, afraid to join and then driven off as the other side advanced. Seniority does not teach that, but the experience of more sevens and review will. The continuation of the way player is coached to play and not been penalized in the local tournament?

In sevens rugby, possession is essential, and you need the keep the ball longer than the opposition would. The three sources of possession are: scrum, lineout and restarts. How did Sri Lanka perform in these areas?

Sri Lanka, at most times, were not steady in their scrum and failed to unsettle the oppositions ball. As a result, we lost not only the opposition scrum but ours too. The times we won, we were unable to continue and go forward. Sevens may have three to six scrums a game. If you concede three and get three and lose a majority, you will not move forward on even distribution.



In sevens, you may not have a line out a specialist as there may be around three in a game. So, you need to keep it simple and focus on the lift and throw. We performed pretty well in this area and proved you need players who can win a line out through the practice of good throws and timing the jump. There are only two players of the opposition at ten meters within which your players can shift and be in a position to win the ball. Not many teams competed for the line out, and a two-person lift and throw to the front was good to win the ball. However, a one-person lift in defence can create pressure, an area where Sri Lanka can contest for more possession.

We did get fairly good ball, but what happened after that to retain possession and continuity was undoing the won ball.

A primary source of possession is the restart. We failed to get possession from their kick as that contest seemed alien, or when we got our hands, it was a knock on - a tap to the opposition hands. The opposition often beat us to the ball with a short high kick, while we never had much pressure exerted when it was our turn to kick.

For our kick, a good kicker is crucial, as is the timing and skill of the restart, and the practice of kicking deep in the domestic did not help.

Recycling the ball taken in

contact and secondary possession is essential. This requires the ball carrier and support player to be strong and do the core skill correctly to retain possession or steal the opposition ball. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka went into unnecessary contact, like in a fifteen-a-side game, and that was what we played in the domestic tournament.

A pundit said on social media that kicking was because players were not fit. My simple mind is asking me if you are not fit, why kick and chase faster to get there? Often the ball was kicked and gave possession away. The opposition then advanced and scored. Review the Philippines match, which was won after a scare, and check on scores again. More important is how the Philippines got close to beating us, capitalizing on mistakes, including the counter-attack and scoring by collecting the kick ahead.

As fatigue or pressure sets in when in contact or the ball on the deck becomes available, at most times players got tired, but it is not the same as not being physically fit. If we were not, how did Lanka run well over fifty meters at most times to score? If we did not, we did not have ball retention or a support player on hand.

Once the ball is in hand, you need to concentrate on the catch and pass and ball retention in open play and the breakdown. Retention of the ball is essential, and you don't

kick unless it is 100% that we will regather it or score from the kick. In reality, they kicked the ball many times, and the opposition moved to better attack territory.

Our defence was a question as most teams played the width unlike in the domestic game, and we extended the same practice and left gaps.

The tackle without relying on a teammate to assist is essential, and the ability to be back on the feet and prevent the ball carrier from getting on his feet and running away was absent. It is not about whether you tackle below the knees, but how you execute to win back possession or not let the ball carrier run away.

Working off-ball is not running around like a headless chicken; it means knowing where you should be as a support player to the ball carrier or working back for width and depth.

The difference between fifteen and 'Sevens' is time, space and speed. Translated, it means quick ball at the breakdown, creating space and speed of attack. In the concluded Asian Sevens, did the SL team show that difference or play the way we played locally and fail to reap the benefit of getting close to scoring? The player behaviour around the breakdown and the set pieces becomes important in Sevens. More often, the players slowed down the game by holding on or going over to slow down and got penalized.



Artillery Regiment pose after winning the Championship

57th Army Athletics Championship 2021

# Artillery Regiment regains title

Amasha breaks Susanthika's 27-year-old record

Himasha, Nilani best athletes

By ANJANA KALUARACHCHI

Former Champions, Sri Lanka Artillery (SLA) Regiment finally received their due reward after playing bridesmaid to Electronic and Mechanical Engineering (SLEME) Regiment for years, when they emerged champions of the 57th Army Athletics Championship concluded at Sugathadasa Stadium yesterday under the patronage of Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva.

Nilani Rathnayaka who won the 3000m steeplechase was adjudged most outstanding female athlete, while 100m sprinter Himasha Eashan was adjudged best male athlete. Sachini Perera who set a new Sri Lanka record in the pole vault received a special award and financial aid.

The five-day competition saw one Sri Lanka record, three Army records and 14 Meet records tumbling, but the heavy schedule also took a toll on athletes with several of them finding it hard to cope, while top quarter miler Aruna Darshana was stretchered off after an injury after running several rounds of relays, 200m and 400m within a short span of time.

On the final day, Amasha de Silva broke Susanthika Jayasinghe's 27-year-old Army meet record clocking 11.67

seconds to win the 100m finals. In the morning Pabasara Nilu ran a new personal best clocking 46.36 seconds to win the men's 400m title, while 800m gold medalist Harsha Karunarathne finished second.

Roshan Ranathunga who won the high jump earlier, returned to his pet event the 110m hurdles, where he set a new meet record of 13.91 seconds to win the event, while Samith Fernando won the Shot Put with a new meet record of 16.60m.

Sarangsi Silva won her pet event, the Long Jump, with a new meet record of 6.14m, while Nadeesha Ramanayaka had light work winning the 400m in a time of 54.54 seconds.

**Results:**

**Men**

**10,000m:** 1. R.M.S. Pushpakumara (SLA) 31:12.28 sec, 2. K. Shanmugeswaren (SLA) 31:12.49 sec, 3. M.U. Kumara (SLAC) 31:18.40 sec

**110m Hurdles:** 1. Roshan Ranathunga (SLAGSC) 13.91 sec, 2. W.S. Randiva (SLAGSC) 14.61 sec, 3. D.D. Ariyaratne (SLASC) 14.82 sec

**400m:** 1. Pabasara Nilu (SLA) 46.36 sec, 2. Harsha Karunarathne (SLASC) 46.83 sec, 3. P.I. Lakshan (SLEME) 47.11 sec



Sachini Perera

**Shot Put:** 1. S.M. Fernando (SLA) 16.6m, 2. R.S. Jayawardana (SLEME) 15.78m, 3. D. Delwita (SLEME) 14.02m

**4x100m:** 1. SLEME 40.18 sec, 2. SLA 40.26 sec, 3. GW 40.68 sec

**4x400m:** 1. SLEME 3:10.46 sec, 2. GW 3:10.65 sec, 3. SLA 3:10.92 sec

**Women**

**1500m:** 1. Nilani Rathnayaka (SLAWC(A)) 4:25.20 sec, 2. K.S.

Lakshani (SLAGSC(W)) 4:38.93 sec, 3. A.S. Kumari (SLSC(W)) 5:02.52 sec

**Long Jump:** 1. Sarangsi Silva (SLAWC(A)) 6.14m, 2. Lakshika Sugandhi (SLAWC(A)) 5.75m, 3. R.H. Kavindya (SLAGSC(W)) 5.69m

**Discus Throw:** 1. A.M. Dilrukshi (SLAWC(A)) 37.12m, 2. N.I. de Silva (SLSC(W)) 30.09m, 3. E.P. Nilmini (SLAWC(B)) 25.47m

**400m:** 1. Nadeesha Ramanayaka (SLAWC(A)) 54.54 sec, 2. Kaushalya

Madushani (SLAWC(A)) 55.14 sec, 3. S.K. Jayasinghe (SLAWC(A)) 58.47 sec

**100m:** 1. Amasha de Silva (SLSC(W)) 11.67 sec, 2. Medhani Jayamanna (SLAGSC(W)) 12.06 sec, 3. Safiya Yamic (SLSC(W)) 12.26M sec

**4x100m:** 1. SLAWC(A) 47.33 sec, 2. SLSC(W) 47.88 sec, 3. SLAGSC(W) 51.07 sec

Pix by Laksiri Rukman and Kelum Chamara



Best Male athlete Himasha Eashan



Best Female athlete Nilani Rathnayaka



Amasha de Silva

## Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three Tier 'B' Cricket Tournament

### All-rounder Rishivarhan guides Hindu Matale to QF

Hindu College Matale, Maris Stella College Thimbrigaskatuwa, Sri Sumangala College Kelaniya and Pannala National School advanced to the quarter-final of the Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three Tier 'B' Cricket tournament conducted by Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Association (SLSCA).

Hindu College beat Sri Sumangala College Hikkaduwa by 5 wickets in Matale, Maris Stella beat President's College Mahara by 9 wickets at Basilica ground Ragama, Sri Sumangala Kelaniya beat Sri Rahula NS Alawwa by 14 runs in Kirindiwela and Pannala National School beat All Saints College, Galle by 7 wickets in Pannala in the pre-quarter-finals.

**In Ragama (Maris Stella won by 9 wickets)**

**Presidents Mahara:** 99 (30.2) (Nawodya Kumara 41, Eshan Fernando 3/8, Savindu Perera 3/20)

**Maris Stella:** 104/1 (15.3) (Dinuka Silva 48 n.o., Kanishka Gamage 35 n.o.)

**In Matale (Hindu College won by 5 wickets)**

**Sri Sumangala:** 160 (39.5) (Rasanga Thejan 65, G. Sujeevan 5/54, N. Rishivarhan 2/9, J. Nimeshan 2/32)

**Hindu Matale:** 163/5 (39.4) (N. Rishivarhan 34 n.o., K. Kumeshan 33, K. Dhulirishan 31, Himal Hansaka 2/30)

**In Kirindiwela (Sri Sumangala Kelaniya won by 14 runs)**

**Sri Sumangala:** 96 (34) (Nuwan Nandika 24, Vinura Kalhara 3/17, S. Kumara 3/30)

**Sri Rahula NS:** 82 (24) (Kavindu Madushan 4/17, Mohammad Farshad 2/11, Tashika Shenel 2/11)

**In Pannala (Pannala NS won by 7 wickets)**

**All Saints College, Galle:** 51 (35) (Pasindu Themia 3/08, Ashen Munasinghe 2/10, Pubudu Githanjana 2/13)

**Pannala NS:** 55/3 (10)

(IR)

## Super League Football tourney to resume from 29 November

The much awaited second phase of the Super League is scheduled to resume from 29 November with Up country Lions facing Defenders FC at Sugathadasa Stadium.

This fixture was originally slated to kick off on 2 May, but after few COVID-19 positive cases were detected from the Defenders FC camp, the Organizing Committee were forced to postpone this fixture to a future date.

After a two-month international break, FSL re-scheduled the match for a later date but the encounter was once again postponed considering the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the country at that time.

Both teams have already played two games

each, with Upcountry Lions placed 5th on the points table with 1 win and 1 draw, while Defenders FC are still struggling to find their first win with 2 draws and are ranked 6th.

Sea Hawks are leading the points table with three wins, while Red Star FC are second with two wins out of three matches.

The Super League will play host to a single leg-based format, where the competition will be limited to 45 games, with 9 games per club. The team at the top of the table at the end of the 45 games will be crowned Champions of Sri Lanka's first ever Professional Football Tournament, the Super League.

(MS)



India's Shreyas Iyer smashed a century on his Test debut, but Tim Southee's lion-hearted bowling and New Zealand's top order left the opening Test between the teams evenly poised on Friday.

Southee claimed 5-69, on a track that had prompted both sides to pack three spinners into their respective teams, to bowl out India for 345.

Openers Will Young and Tom Latham then mounted a strong reply for New Zealand who finished day two on 129 for no

loss, 216 behind, at Kanpur's Green Park Stadium. Young was batting on 75, with Latham on 50 at the other end when bad light stopped play. Young hit 12 boundaries in his assured knock, while Latham's stay was more eventful.

The 29-year-old was given out lbw twice early in his knock but survived, as replays confirmed edges before the ball hit his pad on both occasions. He was adjudged caught behind in the final overs too, but once again Latham successfully reviewed the

## Iyer hits ton on debut, New Zealand mount strong reply

decision to prolong his stay. India had resumed on 258-4 and all eyes were on Iyer as the 26-year-old, only making his debut with several frontline batsmen rested, approached his hundred.

He showed no nerves and hit Kyle Jamieson (3-91) for back-to-back boundaries and then took two off him to bring up his century, the Mumbai batsman kissing his helmet and raising his arms while the sparse crowd in the stadium cheered.

Southee, who had dismissed Ravindra Jadeja for his overnight score of 50, wrecked India's middle and lower order. His victims included Iyer, who made 105 before playing a lazy drive that was pounced by Will Young at cover. It was a tame end to an otherwise stellar knock studded with two sixes and 13 boundaries.

Southee, who bowled 11 overs on

the trot in the morning session, went on to complete his 13th five-wicket haul in Test cricket. It was a terrific bowling display by the 32-year-old, who missed part of Thursday's play with a groin strain, but returned to torment the Indians after taking pain-killers.

"Having played a bit of cricket, you tend to sort of be able to play through a little bit of pain. I think the best painkiller is wickets."

Spinner Ajaz Patel removed the last two Indian batsmen as New Zealand conceded 87 runs on Friday to claim the last six wickets. **India:** 345 (Iyer 105, Gill 52, Jadeja 50, Southee 5-69, Jamieson 3-91)

**New Zealand:** 129 for 0 (Young 75\*, Latham 50\*)

(Reuters)