

From Industrial Agriculture to Natural Farming

PAGE A7

Entire BOI Board Quits



PAGE A10

China pulls out of Northern hybrid power projects
Embassy cites third party's security concerns

By SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

China said the hybrid energy projects to be constructed on three islands in the Northern Province have been suspended. The Chinese Embassy in Sri Lanka tweeted that the suspension came after a third party's security concerns.

Story Continued on PAGE 2



Basil meets Indian National Security Adviser

Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, who is on a two-day official visit to India, met with the National Security Adviser of India, Ajit Kumar Doval, who holds a Cabinet rank, in New Delhi yesterday (2).

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Azath Salley acquitted, seeks compensation

HC issues notice on three MPs over malicious complaints

By HANSI NANAYAKKARA

Colombo High Court Judge Amal Ranaraja yesterday acquitted and discharged former Western Province Governor Azath Salley from a case in which he had been charged with making a controversial statement during a media conference detrimental to religious/ethnic harmony in the country.

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Private bus owners urge fare hike

LPBOA calls for automated ticketing

By NABIYA VAFFOOR

Lanka Private Bus Owners' Association (LPBOA) urged the Government to increase the minimum bus fare up to Rs 20 from 1 January 2022.

Speaking to *Ceylon Today* LPBOA Chairman Gemunu Wijeratne said the association will send the proposal to the Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB) and the National Transport Commission, today (3).

Story Continued on PAGE 2

To prevent elephants from moving out

Trench to be dug around Udawalawe National Park

By THAMEENAH RAZEEM

A trench is to be dug around the Udawalawe National Park to prevent elephants from leaving the forest areas.

Story Continued on PAGE 2

CEYLON TODAY

In Sports

Dhananjaya's unbeaten 153 flattens West Indies



Dhananjaya de Silva's undefeated 153 and his game-breaking partnership of 107 with Lasith Embuldeniya powered Sri Lanka to pole position at close of play on the penultimate day of the second Test versus the West Indies. A16

Accident causing grievous injury to youth

HC Rejects Ranawaka and Asmadala's Objections

Orders trial to commence



By HANSI NANAYAKKARA

Colombo High Court Judge Damith Thotawatta yesterday (2) dismissed the initial objections raised by the first accused, SJB MP Patali Champika Ranawaka and third accused former Welikada Police OIC Sudath Asmadala, in connection with the case where they have been charged with causing grievous injury to youth Sandeep Sampath, submitting fake evidence, fleeing after causing a traffic accident and failing to report the accident which took place at Rajagiriya five years ago, and ordered the trial to commence.

The two defendants argued that the High Court was not empowered by law to hear the case. But, Judge Thotawatta deemed there was no basis for the initial objections raised and ordered that the hearing take place.



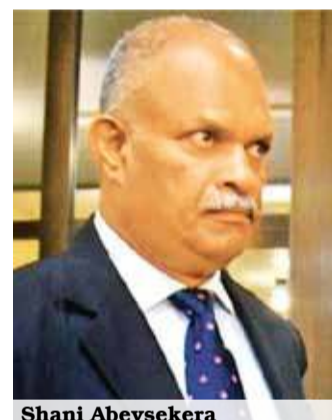
Story Continued on PAGE 9



IP Nishantha



ASP Nevil de Silva



Shani Abeysekera

Attempt to prevent continuation of case
Objections raised by Shani's lawyers rejected

Bail order given by Court of Appeal does not hinder continuation of case - Gampaha Magistrate

Ordered to record statements from three defendants on three different days

Court accepts Colombo Crimes Division's submission that there's enough evidence to continue case

Story Continued on PAGE 2

To prevent malaria resurgence

All blood donors to be screened

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

The Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC) has an agreement with the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) to prevent the collection of blood from donors...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Defective gas cylinders must be recalled - Vijitha

By GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

Jathika Jana Balawegaya (JJB) MP Vijitha Herath, yesterday (2) said in Parliament that authorities should immediately withdraw defective gas cylinders from households and...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Sri Lanka ready to fight Omicron threat - Health Authorities

Sri Lanka has an accurate understanding regarding the spread of the new Omicron variant and health officials assure that laboratory facilities are available to identify the virus through genetic analysis if it enters the country.

These views were expressed at a media briefing organised by the Presidential Media Centre, yesterday (2) under the theme, "The country is ready to eliminate Omicron variant." The media briefing was attended...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Leasing out H' tota Port
Ranil and Tissa lock horns

By GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

A heated argument erupted between UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and SJB MP Tissa Attanayake over the Hambantota Port, yesterday (2) in Parliament.

Story Continued on PAGE 2



Dinesh tells PSC
AG informs PC polls cannot be held under existing laws

By GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

The Attorney General is of the view that Provincial Council Elections cannot be held under existing laws. Leader of the House, Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said at the Parliament Select Committee (PSC) to Identify Appropriate Reforms of the Election Laws and the Electoral System and to Recommend Necessary Amendments.

Story Continued on PAGE 2

Pandora Papers leak
CIABOC yet to decide on summoning Nirupama

By THAMEENAH RAZEEM

The investigating team constituted by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) to look into the infamous Pandora Papers leak, which listed people with...

Story Continued on PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Objections filed...

Gampaha Magistrate Manjula Karunaratne on Wednesday (1) ordered to proceed with the case filed against Former Director of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Shani Abeyssekera and two others on charges, including fabricating of evidence.

The Magistrate further rejected the objections, raised by the lawyers for the suspects, that the case could not be proceeded with adding that the legal basis of such objection is unclear and baseless. Further the suspects were ordered to appear before the Colombo Crimes Division on 10, 11 and 13 December to record statements required to conduct further investigations.

It was also held that although Abeyssekera and former Sub Inspector of the CID Sugath Mendis were enlarged on bail by the Court of Appeal, the said decision made by the Court of Appeal did not in any manner depict that further investigation

into this case should not be conducted.

The Gampaha Magistrate further held that the said suspects were enlarged on strict bail conditions while they had to also surrender their passports and any other travel document to the High Court of Gampaha while not being permitted to travel abroad without obtaining prior permission and that thereby it is evident that such order does not mean that the case could not proceed. Further hearing of the case is due to be held on 2 March 2022. The trio was remanded over the alleged fabrication of evidence in a case filed against ex-DIG Vaas Gunawardene and several others. The Court of Appeal ordered both suspects, Abeyssekera and Mendis, to be released on bail but, they were ordered to be remanded as the written bail order, issued by the Court of Appeal, had still not been received by the Gampaha Chief Magistrate's Court.

Defective gas...

...the market to prevent more explosions. Participating in the Committee Stage debate on Expenditure Head of Ports and Shipping Ministry, Herath noted that appointing committees to analyse the issue alone is not enough to resolve the issue. "Every household in the country, despite social status, is afraid of using gas cylinders these days. It is okay to appoint Presidential Commission to look into the issue. But submitting the report will take two weeks. After that the report is analysed and steps are taken about the issue. This whole process will take at least a month. By that time, many disasters would have happened and that is why an immediate intervention of the authorities is necessary," Herath pointed out.

The JJB MP noted that faulty gas cylinders are still being sold in the market and people are using them in households. These cylinders should be

recalled and people provided with alternatives as an immediate measure, he added.

Speaking further, Herath said a gas company had admitted the composition of Butane and Propane in a certain batch of cylinders was changed in July.

"When we queried about this in the House, the subject minister said that no such change had happened to the composition. But now it is revealed that a change in composition has in fact taken place. According to experts, when the propane percentage is increased, the pressure of a cylinder also increases. There are questions about the quality of equipment like regulators when such a change happens. Finding answers for these questions will take time. Until then, steps should be taken to provide alternatives for affected people as an immediate measure," he said.

Sri Lanka ready...

...by Professor Neelika Malavige, the Head of the Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine – University of Sri Jaywardenepura, Dr. H.S. Munasinghe, Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Dr. Chandima Jeewandara, Director Allergy Immunology and Cell Biology Unit, Faculty of Medical Sciences – University of Sri Jaywardenepura and Dr. Hemantha Herath, Deputy Director General of Health Services. President's Spokesman Kingsley Rathnayake moderated the Press Conference.

"Omicron may spread faster than the other four Coronavirus strains that have existed so far, and a person can be infected even after

recovering from COVID-19," said Professor Malavige. She pointed out that within the next two to three weeks it will be possible to get a clear idea of the behaviour of the Omicron variant, adding that if immunity is high, there is no need to fear mutant variants. The Omicron variant has been found in 24 countries around the world and the global health sectors are paying special attention to it.

Dr. Munasinghe said due to the immense commitment and intervention of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the country has improved its position in the world in terms of controlling the COVID-19 pandemic and added that the support of the people is essential to control the new COVID variant and it is the

responsibility of all to follow proper health recommendations and support these measures.

Dr. Jeewandara stressed the need for those who have not yet been vaccinated to be vaccinated immediately, saying that there is no need to panic over the Omicron variant as the booster dose increases immunity. He also stressed the importance of adherence to public health regulations and the importance of maintaining immunity by following health recommendations rather than fearing the virus.

Dr. Herath said the Government's on-going crackdown of COVID-19 has been successful and that the public should restrict movements during the festive season.

All blood donors...

...who have travelled in countries where malaria is prevalent, for a period of three years. Campaign Director, Dr. Prasad Ranaweera noted.

Dr. Ranaweera, when contacted, said yesterday (2) that the move had been taken in a bid to control the transmission of the parasitic disease following the increase in imported cases of malaria that were being detected. Blood collection of persons who had been infected with malaria had not been carried out for a period of three years before the disease was eliminated with the last case being detected in 2012. Having overcome the mosquito borne disease, the period during which a person could donate blood for transfusion purposes was reduced to three months.

However, preventive measures have been boosted with the comparative increase of imported cases being detected in Sri Lanka. The two Government health bodies have increased the period to three years where blood donations would not be accepted as precautionary measures from persons who

have travelled in countries like India, Afghanistan, African countries. He said that many of Sri Lanka's peace keeping forces too were amongst those who were highly vulnerable to Malaria as they too spent time in some of these countries during peace keeping missions.

In 2019 there were 53 cases of malaria, in 2020 there were 30 imported cases while from January to November 2021 there have been 21, he noted.

Dr. Ranaweera said that in keeping with the AMC's slogan 'One missed case may be the beginning of a 1000,' the Campaign wanted to prevent a possible resurgence of the disease.

Deputy Director of the National Blood Centre (NBC), Dr. Chandani Vithana said that donors given a questionnaire to be filled in which they have to state as to whether they have a history of travel to any of the counties where malaria was still uncontrolled. She said that in strong support on the AMC and its efforts all efforts were made to screen their donors in order to prevent a spread.

CIABOC yet to...

...ill-gotten wealth, has yet to decide whether to summon former Deputy Minister Nirupama Rajapaksa.

Commission Secretary Apsara Caldera said she cannot confirm whether or not Rajapaksa will be summoned because the decision should be made by the investigating team who are still conducting probes.

The Bribery Commission submitted an interim report to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa without recording a statement from Rajapaksa, whose name is on the list. Caldera then stated that the commission was reviewing data collected from banks and state organisations connected to Thirukumar Nadesan, the former deputy minister's husband.

Basil meets...

Doval extended a warm welcome to Rajapaksa and discussed a range of issues pertaining to the mutual strategic interests of the two countries. Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India Milinda Moragoda and Finance Secretary S.R. Attygalle accompanied the minister at this meeting. **(SRM)**

China pulls out...

The Indian Government raised concerns several times over awarding the projects to China as the three islands are in close proximity to India and that is a major issue to them. The hybrid project was won by Sino Soar Hybrid Technology in an open tender. But the Sri Lankan Government had to halt the project due to geopolitical concerns. The project was earmarked to be USD 12 million and India said they would pay that amount outright and the project be handed over to them.

On 18 January 2021, the Cabinet approved a proposal to involve Sino Soar-Etechwin Joint Venture in China to install 'hybrid renewable energy systems' in Nainativu, Delft or Nedunthivu, and Analaitivu, located in the Palk Bay that is around 50km to Tamil Nadu.

Over the geopolitical crisis, the Government said the project was not confirmed to be awarded to China, but the technical evaluation was going on after Sino Soar was selected.

However, the Chinese Embassy tweeted yesterday (2) that the project was suspended due to security concerns of a third party.

Meanwhile, the same Chinese company has inked a contract with the Maldivian Government to build solar power plants on 12 islands, the Chinese Embassy tweeted.

Trench to be...

However, work will commence only after an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is carried out, State Minister for Wildlife Protection, Adoption of Safety Measures Including the Construction of Electrical Fences, Trenches, Reforestation and Forest Resource Development, Wimalaweera Dissanayake confirmed. He said this was another technique to prevent animal movement and to protect them.

When queried as to who was in charge of digging the trench, he said the Ministry will initiate the project out of Ministry funds.

Concerns were raised regarding the digging of the trench because it was being carried out in a sensitive wildlife zone.

In response to this development, Dr. Jagath Gunawardena, Chairman of the National Environment Council, said any development activities within one mile of the

boundary of a national park must be subject to an EIA or an Initial Environmental Examination Report. He said the Director General of Wildlife should take the final decision on the Reports.

"Because there was no public notice or public comment for such a development, it appears that the provisions of Section 9(A) of the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance are being violated by the Ministry in approving the project,"

he said.

He said the Department of Wildlife Conservation, which comes under his purview could not allow third parties to remove gravel or soil from such areas because gravel and soil are minerals and come under the Mines and Minerals Act. Any removal, transport, or sale of gravel and soil should be done in accordance with permits issued by the Geological Survey Mines Bureau (GSMB), he added.

Ranil and Tissa...

Participating in the Committee Stage Debate on Expenditure Heads of the Ports and Shipping Ministry, Attanayake said the Hambantota Port was sold.

Wickremesinghe, who intervened, said the port was not sold, but was given on lease for only 70 years.

Attanayake: "I do not want to argue with Wickremesinghe. He was my former leader. But when an asset is leased for more than 33 years, it is considered sold. Can you tell me if we have ever taken back

an asset which was leased decades back?"

Wickremesinghe: "If we want to take back the port, we can do it even tomorrow. According to the agreement, we will have to pay a fine. That is what is mentioned in the agreement."

Ports Minister Rohitha Abeygunawardena: "What the former PM said about the lease period of Hambantota Port is incorrect. It has been leased for 99 years, not for 70 years. I will send a copy of the agreement to the former PM."

AG informs...

When the PSC met yesterday (2), Gunawardena said necessary legal provisions should be brought for elections to be held. He also stated that the general opinion of the PSC is that the Provincial Council Elections should be held expeditiously.

At the meeting, the SLFP suggested that it would be appropriate to hold Provincial Council elections expeditiously under the former election system limited to this particular election.

State Minister Dayasiri Jayasekara, testifying on behalf of the SLFP, stated that many problems have arisen due to postponing of the Provincial Council elections for a long time. He said the SLFP believes that the polls should be held immediately. Furthermore, Local Government

elections should be held in the first quarter of next year. The number of Local Government representatives should be limited to a maximum of 5,500, he said.

State Minister Mahinda Amaraweera stated at the committee that it is not appropriate to extend the term of Local Government bodies. He pointed out that the public is of the opinion that the number of seats in Local Government bodies should be reduced.

Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva explained that after the announcement of the Local Government Elections, the powers of those institutions should be transferred to a commissioner until the election is held and new members sworn in.

Private bus...

He further emphasised that the Government will be provided one week to respond with their decision in regard to the proposal.

"Currently, the minimum bus fare is Rs 14. As a result of lockdowns and curfews 9,000 buses out of the 20,000 private buses have broken down. The Government has allocated Rs 1,200 millions to the SLTB which has only 4,000 buses to function. With 9,000 buses to repair, even we have need of funds to cover the expenses on repairs," he added.

When *Ceylon Today* inquired about the recent statement of Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila alleging that nearly 25 per cent of the private buses run on kerosene instead of diesel, and bus owners blame the Government for importing low-quality diesel, Wijeratne complained the Government has no proper independent institution to check the quality of any type of fuel.

"It's not us who use low-quality diesel or kerosene. It's this Government which imports

low-quality fuel and criticises us for using it. If so, they should have an Independent institution to check whether the fuel that was brought in to this country is up to international standards," he added.

Wijeratne added that they could save a few thousands if the Government quickly commenced the Transport card system with the automated ticketing machine where they could replace conductors by using the machine.

"There are so many problems when it comes to paying the conductors during the lockdowns and curfews. Meanwhile, they are many cons because some conductors aren't trustworthy enough with money and there are many other problems too," he added.

Wijeratne further noted that if this automated ticketing system and the transportation card was introduced we could easily start operating private buses even during the pandemic without any problems.

Azath Salley acquitted...

Delivering the 15-page verdict, the High Court Judge stated the plaintiffs had failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the defendant had made a statement that would threaten harmony between religious groups or incite violence among different ethnic groups.

Accordingly, Judge Ranaraja acquitted and discharged Salley.

Later, the Judge issued notice on NFF MPs Mohammad Muzammil, Jayananda Wellawala and Nimal Piyatissa, who had lodged the complaint with the Police against Salley, to appear before him on 21 February next year.

Following the delivery of the verdict, President's Counsel Mithri Guneratne, who appeared for Salley, stated that his client had been incarcerated for 270 days on a false complaint.

He urged Judge Ranaraja to issue an order to the plaintiffs to pay some form of compensation to his client Salley due to the loss of reputation, public image and waste of time incurred by him over his false arrest

and imprisonment.

Accordingly, the Court inquired from the Attorney General whether he was opposed to it and Senior State Counsel Wasantha Perera, representing the prosecution, responded in the negative and mentioned that the stance of the plaintiffs on it should be sought.

Hence, the Judge noticed the three aforesaid NFF MPs to be present in Court on the said date next year.

The Attorney General had on 16 March this year instructed the Inspector General of Police to arrest the former Governor as remarks made by him, during a media briefing held on 10 March, had violated provisions contained in the PTA, Penal Code and the ICCPR Act No. 5 of 2007.

Salley was arrested in the evening of 16 March and detained by the CID for five months for questioning following which he was remanded after being produced in Court on 17 August. The AG then filed indictments against the accused Governor in the High Court.

Cautions against ignoring risks

Frontline Workers, Elderly Should Get Booster Shot

By Eunice Ruth

Frontline workers and the elderly population in the country should get the booster shot without delay as they run the risk of contracting the new COVID variant, President of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) Dr. Padma Gunaratne said.

Dr. Gunaratne said "It is our responsibility to protect the elders of the country. In Sri Lanka, 15 per cent of the population are elders. All of them need to get the booster shot, especially those above 60 and having various comorbidities should not delay their vaccination for any reason".

She said vaccination was nothing new to the public in Sri Lanka as they have been given different types of vaccines from birth. Similarly, the COVID-19 vaccination is given to protect and boost the immunity system of a person to fight against the virus. She advised the public not to be misled by false information about the vaccination process.

"According to research, it was revealed that the newly identified Omicron virus spreads very fast compared to the COVID-19 and Delta variants. At present, it has been identified in more than six countries and we are trying our maximum to stop the virus from entering our country. After the detection of the new variant, the Government has taken immediate measures to protect the country by preventing the virus from entering the island. Preventing tourists from countries detected with the new virus from entering Sri Lanka and conducting PCR tests on every person who enters the country is being implemented," Dr. Gunaratne said.

She said, "In addition, the public must be educated about the virus and the risks involved by not following health guidelines.

Even though we saw a drop in the number of positive cases, the virus spread is not over in the country. The risk of virus transmission in the community is high at the moment. She

- SLMA President



advised the public to act responsibly to protect themselves and the economy during the oncoming festive season."

Meanwhile, the vice president of SLMA, Dr. Manilka Sumanatillake said, "We were not aware of the COVID-19 virus even when the second wave hit and we failed to protect the lives of people. However, at present, we are aware of the virus and we

know the precautionary measures that should be taken to prevent the new variant from entering the country".

"The elderly population and those with comorbidities are the high-risk category and they need to maintain their immunity well. Accordingly, the booster shot will increase the immunity of an individual and it will prevent a person from contracting the virus," said Dr. Sumanatillake.

"We have seen how the Delta variant has affected the elderly in the country and we do not want to see deaths due to the new variant," he said.

Meanwhile, fielding a question regarding the risk involved in public transport, Dr. Gunaratne said, "As a country, we have failed to provide safe public transport to the public. However, we are still trying to reduce the risks by coordinating with the authorities, and soon we expect to execute a safe system for passengers".



New Japanese Ambassador meets Speaker

Mizukoshi Hideaki, the newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka paid a courtesy call on Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena on Wednesday (1) at Parliament premises.

Katsuki Kotaro; Deputy Head of Mission, Ozaki Takeshi; First Secretary/Head of Political Section and Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake were also present at this meeting.

Harsha blows whistle on Litro's gas blend



By NABIYA VAFFOOR

Opposition MP Dr. Harsha de Silva published a document yesterday (2) claiming that Litro Gas Lanka has changed the composition of gas of domestic LP gas

cylinders. Sharing the document on his official Twitter account, the MP said, "This is clear evidence that Litro Gas Lanka changed the Propane composition from 20:80 to 50:50 when they arrogantly changed weight from 12.5kg to 9.2kg of an 18 litre cylinder." He further inquired what happened to the stock of 50:50 compositions LPG once the 18 litre unit was withdrawn.

Appointment of six Ministry Secys approved

Appointment of six Secretaries to State Ministries were approved by the Committee on High Posts, Secretary-General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake said.

The Committee on High Posts chaired by Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena approved the appointment of Prof. Gamini Gunawardena as the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the Republic of South Africa.

M.N.B. Hapuhinna Secretary to the State Ministry of Samurdhi, Household Economy, Micro Finance, Self-Employment and Business Development, D.D. Matharaarachchi, Secretary to the State Ministry of Warehouse Facilities, Container Yards, Port Supply Facilities and Boats and Shipping Industry Development, J.M. Thilakarathna, Secretary, State Ministry of Company Estate Reforms, Tea and Rubber Estates Related Crops Cultivation and Factories Modernisation and Tea and Rubber Export Promotion have also received approval for their appointments.

Appointments of S.T. Kodikara as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Community Police Service, S.H. Harischandra as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Dhamma Schools and Bhikkhu Education, K.H.D.K. Samarakoon as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Solar Power, Wind and Hydro Power Generation Projects Development were also approved by the Committee.

Ministers Dinesh Gunawardena, Douglas Devananda, Keheliya Rambukwella, State Minister Dr. Sudarshini Fernandopulle and MP John Seneviratne were also present at the meeting.

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LOST SHARE CERTIFICATES

The following Certificates are reported not received, misplaced or destroyed:

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Mr Janaka Ramohan	8613	250 (Voting)
Goonewardene	39796	75 (voting)
	47582	82(Voting)

NOTICE is hereby given that if within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice, no claims or representations are made to the Company, the Directors will proceed to issue Duplicate Share Certificates to the above shareholders, the originals of which will be deemed to have been cancelled and not valid.
By Order of the Board
(Mrs) N N Najumudeen
COMPANY SECRETARY

Application for A License Under Section 34 Of the Companies Act No 07 of 2007 From The Registrar of Companies

In Pursuance of section 34 of the Companies Act No 07 of 2007 an application had been made to the registrar of companies for a license that an Association be formed under the name and style of **SKILL ESSENTIAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT** to be registered with limited liability without the addition of the word LIMITED at the end of its name.

The objects for the Association are as follows:

- Overall Vision to be the most dynamic and innovative vocational training provider in Sri Lanka, catering to the local & global employment market.
- Study and analyses the vocational education sector in Sri Lanka in order to give necessary support to the sector by organizing educational programs.
- Facilitation the fulfilment of the global skilled employment demand by developing competencies in individuals through modern methods and technologies in vocational training and education to be compatible with employability trends in the world of work.
- Make linkages and collaborations with national and international business and education entities in order to gain necessary support to uplift vocational education sector in Sri Lanka.
- Provide career guidance to school leavers and youth.
- Encourage and assist school dropouts by facilitating scholarships, vocational training and counselling programs to pursue further education.
- Formulation and providing vocational training programs to marginalize communities efficiently and effectively to build up their competency to meet work demands and to uplift their living standards.
- Empowering students by designing more accredited, high-quality vocational programs that will train youth to meet global work demands.
- Introducing courses to develop English proficiency and IT literacy of students those who follow vocational education courses.
- Aid students in developing soft skills like leadership, team work, self-confidence and employability through training events.
- Empowering women by equipping them with knowledge and skills through literacy and vocational training programs that enables self-awareness, self-reliance and economic freedom which ultimately direct to gender equality.
- Create, maintain and reserve information databases related to students in vocational education sector.
- The association do not engage in Primary and Secondary education.

The other provisions of the Association are set out in extensor in the Article of Association, a copy of which may be inspected at **260/3 A, Maithree mawatha, Arrawwalla road, Pannipitiya**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that any person, company or corporation objecting to this application, may lodge such objections within three weeks from the date of this advertisement by a letter to the Registrar of companies, Samagam Madura, No 400, D. R Wijewardane Mawatha, Colombo 10.

Secretaries: BIZAD (PVT) LTD SEC/ (2)2016/390

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

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இலங்கை மத்திய வங்கி
CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) has received information that some Sri Lankans residing abroad send remittances to their dependents in Sri Lanka, knowingly or unknowingly, through various racketeers.

CBSL is aware that there have been instances where certain brokers collect foreign currency from Sri Lankan employees in other countries and credit the accounts of their dependents in Sri Lankan rupees by way of cash or transfers through the financial system. The public may not be aware that they are committing offences punishable in terms of law for the violation of the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Further, available information indicate that these transactions could be linked to drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

Hence, the CBSL hereby informs all Sri Lankans residing abroad and their dependents not to be victims of such illegal activities, knowingly or unknowingly.

The CBSL emphasizes the need for all concerned parties not to become victims of illegal operators and to ensure that they remit their foreign remittances to Sri Lanka only through banks and through financial institutions which are supervised by the CBSL or other international banks and financial institutions.

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Petroleum, lubricants

PUCSL Introduces New System to Handle Grievances

By THAMEENAH RAZEEM

The Public Utility Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) has set up a mechanism to handle complaints and settle disputes in the petroleum and lubricants industry.

The PUCSL and the Ministry of Petroleum jointly introduced a statement of consumer rights and obligations, as well as a system to handle complaints and resolve disputes.

Minister of Energy, Udaya Gammanpila said the public has raised concerns about substandard petrol, kerosene, and diesel for the past few months because they were unsure of who to complain to and who is in charge of overseeing the quality of these products.

He said because PUCSL is known as an independent regulatory body, passing over the task of quality control to the

PUCSL will create a win-win situation for both the public and the petroleum service provider.

Director General of PUCSL, Damitha Kumarasinghe added that the submission and settlement of complaints regarding petroleum and lubricants will be processed in two stages. "The initial stage would be to settle complaints through service provider intervention. However, if there is a disagreement, the second

stage would be to find a solution through mediation by the service provider and perhaps the appointed regulator," he said.

As a result, the PUCSL and the Ministry of Energy on Wednesday (1) made public the two statements detailing the dispute resolution method, as well as the paperwork that the consumer and the petroleum service provider would need to fill out.

Paddy Marketing Board gets new Chair

By SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

Minister of Agriculture Mahindananda Aluthgamage appointed senior administrative officer Neil de Alwis as Chairman of the Paddy Marketing Board, following Dr. J.D. Mannapperuma stepping down from the post in September 2021, saying he was "inconvenienced" with the way the Board has been functioning lately, with no policy in paddy and rice pricing.

De Alwis has served as a Divisional Secretary, Government Agent, and Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration, and has also served as an advisor to Minister of Agriculture Mahindananda Aluthgamage in the past.

To implement livelihood development projects

Authorities surveying lands in North

- Thiyagarajah

By NAALIR JAMALDEEN

Northern Province Governor, Jeevan Thiyagarajah, yesterday (2) said the relevant authorities have been surveying lands in the Province within the legal framework to implement infrastructure as well as livelihood development projects.

The Governor added that through such moves, it is intended to achieve sustainable development in all aspects in the Province, while raising the economic and living standards of people.

He said, however, Government officials have faced interference from people's representatives.

"If they have concern in surveying the lands, I am always ready to hold discussions with them. While there are many ways to solve an issue, obstructing the officials from doing their duty is totally unacceptable," according to the Governor.

If such practices continue, I will not hesitate to take legal action against them for the greater good of the people, Thiyagarajah added.



Dead fishing cat found

TEXT AND PHOTO BY S. SATHEES (HATTON)

A dead six-year-old fishing cat was found in Pilingaponi tea estate in Puliwatta, Norwood, Hatton yesterday (2).

Norwood Police went to the scene and informed Nallathanni Wildlife

Office after plantation workers reported about the dead wild animal.

Preliminary inquiries by wildlife officials determine that the fishing cat might have sustained injuries after a fight with another fishing cat. The body of the fishing cat has been sent for autopsy.



Japan to invest in Mannar Wind Power Project

Team meets President Rajapaksa

By SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

Japan has begun exploring possibilities of investing US\$ 375 million in the wind power project, textiles, and electric vehicle industry in Sri Lanka.

It was Ambassador Sanjiv Gunasekara with the Sri Lankan Embassy in Japan who has been coordinating Marubeni Corporation's activities in Sri Lanka with the relevant authorities.

Japan's Marubeni Corporation's Executive Management Team for Asia visited Sri Lanka to negotiate an investment opportunity for the 200 MW Mannar Wind Power Project. During the visit, the team

met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Minister of Finance.

The Marubeni Corporation, with revenues of US\$ 67 billion, and a history spanning 160 years, specialises in renewable energy, textiles and agriculture related businesses. The Marubeni Corporation is exploring other possibilities of investing in floating solar and has been requested to set up a comprehensive textile manufacturing facility. They have also been requested to explore the possibility of introducing three-wheeler electric vehicles as well as setting up an electric vehicle charging network in Sri Lanka, and if this materialises it will exceed an investment of US\$ 1 billion.

Probing gas cylinder explosions

Wijesiri slams appointing select committee

By NABIYA VAFFOOR

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Chaminda Wijesiri criticised the Government for appointing parliamentary select committees to probe the LP gas cylinder explosions on Wednesday (1), although his Party Leader Sajith Premadasa suggested a the appointment of a parliamentary select committee to probe last week's incidents.

Wijesiri criticised the committee during a Media briefing at SJB headquarters

claiming the committee discusses nothing but the number of accidents.

"The Government is aware of the adequate measures that should have been taken to stop the explosions. But even now they are neglecting that by deceiving the public just by appointing various committees," he added.

Premadasa called for the appointment of a parliamentary select committee to investigate reports of gas cylinder explosions even during 30 November parliamentary sessions.

2,968 acres in Kilinochchi for agriculture and cattle grazing

By NAALIR JAMALDEEN

Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda yesterday (2) said that 2,968 acres of land in the Kilinochchi District will be released for agriculture and cattle grazing. He said 2,118 acres could be used for agriculture while the remaining 850 acres could be used to graze cattle.

He said President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has directed officials to instruct farmers in the District to undertake agriculture activities in suitable lands in the Kilinochchi District.

Devananda said that following his initiatives, the President has granted permission to make use of a large stretch of cultivable lands for agriculture and cattle grazing where cultivation had been earlier carried out.

Several thousands of agricultural lands had been abandoned during the war period. Later after the cessation of hostilities, the Department of Wildlife declared a considerable

stretch of agricultural and grazing land as protected area, he said.

Due to these measures the livelihood and economic standards of thousands of families who had been utilising these lands for agriculture and cattle grazing had been severely impacted and they suffered many hardships with no alternative means for livelihood, he said.

The Minister said he discussed this issue with the President, Ministers and officials. President Rajapaksa has directed officials to hand over this stretch of land for agriculture and to graze cattle.

Minister Devananda added that 1,299 acres in the Karachchi Divisional Secretariat (DS) Division, 280 acres in the Kandavalai DS Division, 453 acres in the Pachchilaipalli DS Division and 87 acres in the Poonakary DS Division can be vested to farmers for agriculture and cattle grazing cattle.

EU Aid to SLN

Deputy Head of the European Union Mission in Sri Lanka Thorsten Bargfrede and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) representatives handed over four portable Backscatter X-ray machines to Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) Commander, Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne at SLN Headquarters on Tuesday

(30 November). These handheld instruments enable users to 'quickly' and 'effectively' find concealed narcotics and other contraband.

SLN Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Y.N. Jayarathne and Director General Operations, Rear Admiral Prasanna Mahavithana were present at this occasion.

(PA)



Labour Laws should be amended to meet present day demands - Nimal Siripala

By UPATISSA PERERA

Minister of Labour, Nimal Siripala de Silva said existing Labour Laws should be changed in keeping with modern day demands of the business world as well as to benefit employees.

He said antiquated Labour Laws should be amended immediately to meet the demands of present day society.

The Minister said Labour Laws should be overhauled taking into consideration the plight of life insurance representatives as well as the entire labour force throughout the country.

De Silva added that it was the responsibility of the Government to ensure that an insurance scheme is provided to those in the evening of their lives.



To attend 'Democracy for the Next Generation' conference

Thondaman visits India

By T. CHANDRU (NUWARA ELIYA CORRESPONDANT)

General Secretary of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and State Minister of Estate Housing and Community Infrastructure,

Jeevan Thondaman, is on an official visit to South India, to attend the 'Democracy for the Next Generation' conference for leaders below 35 from 75 democracies. Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs of India Harsh

Vardhan and Minister of State for External Affairs, Meenakshi Lekhi also met Minister Thondaman during the tour and discussed politics, economics, development and livelihood of estate people.

Bilateral relations between India and Estate Tamils living in Sri Lanka were also discussed in detail, as well as developments in the Hill Country.

Parliamentarian Kavinda Jayawardena and Regan Wickremasinghe accompanied Thondaman on the tour to South India.

One Country One Law

By Dr. Tilak S. Fernando

Last week the writer approached a local studio to get some photographs to get his passport renewed. During the conversation with the photographer, he advised the writer about the legal requirements of the Immigration office, which require both ears to be visible in the photograph to renew his passport. He also informed the writer that Muslim women, need not bother about exposing their ears in the photograph because Muslim women are allowed to wear the Hijab covering their head and chest, including their ears.

The friendly conversation suddenly touched on a serious note. The disgruntled photographer advised the writer about a mixture of laws in Sri Lanka, and how it applies to each section of the community. He said because of the Election promises, the Government is getting into an awkward situation due to failure of adhering to such promises. He observed that the legal framework of Sri Lanka is complex and a mixture of laws ranging from Roman, English, Dutch, South Indian, and Old Ceylon Law.

Momentarily the writer became thoroughly confused with such a lot of laws in Sri Lanka. To get it clarified, the writer communicated with his friend in London, Douglas Wickramaratne, who is well versed in Sri Lankan politics. Douglas Wickramaratne dealt with a lot of problems when Sri Lanka experienced a gruelling time with a separatist war for thirty years against the LTTE. Douglas acted on behalf of the Sri Lanka High Commission in London to counter all adverse exposures by the LTTE. Such false propaganda spread internationally instantaneously. The Sri Lanka Mission had to obtain permission from the Foreign Ministry before commenting on any sudden situation, such as a bomb explosion. When a response reached the Sri Lanka High Commission from the Foreign Ministry in Colombo, the stable door was closed, and the horse had already bolted. Douglas Wickramaratne was a patriot and represented the Sinhala Association in the U.K. He bravely faced the LTTE supporters on all T.V. and radio debates.

Douglas Wickramaratne replied, attaching an email in Sinhala. The following is a translation done by the writer, to the best of his ability. "The President of Sri Lanka



When taking passport photos in Sri Lanka there is no exception to the rule, Muslim women have to follow the law and bare their head and ears

appointed a commission to investigate and report on the concept of One Nation and One Country. The Professor believes it is essential to appoint Venerable Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara thera as Chairman of the Presidential Commission. He cannot remember whether he has had any conversation with the thera, but he has heard about his speeches. However, the Professor may not agree with the Venerable's ideology altogether and disagrees with the Venerable's associations with some personnel. However, "The Professor

believes that a Buddhist monk is the best solution for the Presidential Commission. In this respect Ven. Gnanasara thera is the most suitable official" he states.

Some people may object to the monk's appointment as Chairman of the Presidential Commission on a delicate topic stating that "the monk was penalised by Court". The Professor cannot recollect the incident properly, and thinks it was due to the monk's appalling behaviour inside the Courthouse. The Professor too has some experience in dealing with

Courts in Sri Lanka, from the Labour Courts up to the Magistrate's Courts. He is not aware how the Sri Lankan Courts operate. However, the Professor believes that everyone must pay respect inside Courts. The Sri Lankan Courts follow vital decisions made in accordance with the Constitution that affects the Nation. To negate the Courts' decisions is highly thorny.

The professor Nalin de Silva believes, 'if his memory serves right, venerable Gnanasara thera expressed certain statements to Ekneligoda's wife inside the courts complex that was not acceptable to the Court.' It should be questioned from Ekneligoda's wife whether she became popular only after the disappearance of Ekneligoda? The Professor admits that he cannot comment on the number of issues made by Sri Lankan Courts. He will not expand on that issue further because he too will likely become a victim by criticising Court procedures!

Sri Lanka follows a mixture of British, Roman, and Dutch laws, Professor states. That is not favourable to Sri Lanka. It is also not to say the existing laws are partisan. It comes to his memory also about the ancient Ekneligoda Nilame, who fought against the Sinhala Motion (Panatha). The Professor can remember only one other Committee member, named Sumeda Weerawardene. Although he was not a lawyer, he was knowledgeable about the legal profession. "Romans did not invent Roman law, he states. Even before the Dutch conquered our land, Ceylon had a profession called Sirith Lena. Currently, it is equivalent to the legal profession. The basis of any law is dependent on the culture and tradition of a nation," declares the Professor.

The Dutch

The Dutch when in Ceylon amended many laws, in addition to the Roman and Dutch law. They introduced tobacco to Ceylon and brought the Tamil Vellala community to cultivate tobacco. After the harvest, the Vellala community returned to their homeland in India. The Dutch did not prevent them from returning. At that time, there existed a Muslim (Thesawalimi) law in Jaffna. The Muslim Thesawalimi law incorporates Kovils too. The Vellas established the Thesawalimi law. Subsequently, the British

introduced the Thesawalimi law again and incorporated Roman and Dutch law into British law. In addition, there exists a separate Muslim law in the country. There is also a law called the Upcountry (Kandy - Udara) law. The British called the Upcountry (Udarata) law as the Sinhala law. During that time, the Kings ruled the hill country. The British, naming it as the upcountry law, made a muddle out of it. Nevertheless, we need to bear in mind the Sinhala law includes various sections from the Nanayakkara kings.

The Professor believes eminent scientists in the West believe in the explosion theory, but it is only a belief. Any law depends on the country's culture and tradition, but Sri Lanka goes by British law, Roman and Dutch law. "There is no such law in existence without a national, religious, and cultural basis. The world does not have any adverse laws—British science wraps around Greek Christian philosophy, which is a blatant lie."

"One country one law" means not to execute a mixture of English, Roman and Dutch law on everything and everywhere. In England, there is no law about the Chinese population. English culture encases British law. In Sri Lanka, what is required is a law commensurate with different cultures. Insincere socialists will cry out, saying an individual law applies to various sets of people. The Professor challenges anyone to go to France and try to implement the Muslim law.

At this juncture, there is an important feature we need to remind ourselves about. The Agreement entered in 1815 promised the British and Dutch to rule the country according to the Sinhala Law. Though it was agreed with the Christian rulers everyone failed to adhere to this agreement. Though Sri Lanka achieved its Independence seventy-three years ago, no one has yet concentrated on the 1815 Agreement. One cannot expect this from either the Senanayake's, J.R. Jayawardene, Ranasinghe Premadasa or Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The President appointed a knowledgeable Buddhist monk as Chairman of the Presidential Committee to investigate and report to him on all aspects that affect the society in implementing the concept of 'One Law, One Country'.

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Fertiliser Fix

By Priyan R Naik

When the ship 'Hippo Spirit' departed from China in September 2021 carrying 20,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser for Colombo as the first of several consignments totalling 99,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser nobody would have imagined something with the shipment would go so horribly wrong leading to a diplomatic tussle, a blacklisting of a bank and a group of unhappy farmers. Later in October 2021, the 'Hippo Spirit' moved away from Colombo harbour and reportedly sailed to Hambantota port. Meanwhile Sri Lanka obtained Nano Nitrogen fertiliser from the Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), which was flown in by two Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft.

In this column, I have no intention of going into the merits or otherwise of these incidents but will instead share my co-brother's experience with organic farming by avoiding chemical inputs that reduce soil biodiversity, avoid land degradation and curb chemical pollution. Compared to conventional farming, a lower cost of production and a higher price premium on farm products accompanied with health and environmental benefits on the face of it should actually be encouraging farmers to switch over to organic.

Organic farming uses fewer pesticides, reduces soil erosion, decreases nitrate leaching into both groundwater and surface water, aiding in recycling animal waste, but mineralisation is a problem. Unlike chemical Fertilisers that are already mineralised, nutrients are unmineralised and cannot be absorbed by the plants. Microbes are needed to break down organic matter and transform nutrients into a mineralised state. Yet when microbes are added to the soil, pest and weed control is now required. Both compost and manure do add beneficial

microbes along with organic matter to the soil but it is difficult to completely replace synthetic fertiliser. Only a tiny amount of nutrients ends up as food eaten by cattle and an even tinier part will go into their dung. How can using cow dung for soil rejuvenation replace the nutrients sucked out by growing crops?

Self-sufficient in food production today, nobody remembers India in the 1960s, when the situation was pretty bad with the risk of famine conditions in the background. Undeniably, India's Green Revolution increased food production, alleviated extreme poverty and malnourishment helping feed millions of undernourished people lacking sufficient food to meet daily nutritional requirements. An increase in consumption of chemical fertilisers was the mainstay of the green revolution. One frequently used fertiliser was the NPK fertiliser because of its ingredients: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Many farmers in India, like my co-brother, in his agricultural estate in South India, swear by the recommended level of NPK fertiliser and ensure their soil is rich with nutrients by trying to keep as close to the recommended benchmark as possible.

During and post the Green Revolution, it was chemical fertilisers that ensured food sufficiency and catered to the burgeoning population growth. Green Revolution crops became high yielding because they suck the maximum possible nutrients from the soil. This naturally depletes the soil and in the traditional low yielding pre Green Revolution era, farmers were required to keep the farm fallow regularly and recover some fertility. This lowered the grain production per acre requiring chemical Fertilisers to replenish soil nutrients. If the Green Revolution had not come to the rescue, foreign food aid and mass starvation would have been inevitable.

Conventional farming everywhere is



The advantages of organic farming are environmental awareness, concerns with individual health and the absence of pesticide residue

going through a very tough phase, gradually becoming unviable. Farmers are getting into a vicious cycle of debt due to high production costs, high interest rates for credit, volatile market prices of crops, rising costs of fossil fuel based inputs, and the cost of private seeds. A new method, the Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF - ZB means not requiring any purchased inputs, while NF refers to organic farming using nature and without chemicals) is spreading fast to various states in India with wide success rates in the state of Karnataka where it first evolved when Subhash Palekar, a strong advocate of organic farming implemented ZBNF practices with the state farmers association, the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha. Farming the ZBNF way, promises to end a reliance on loans, to cut production costs drastically and end the debt cycle for desperate farmers, resulting in reducing cultivation cost, enhancing yields, increasing incomes and reducing risks.

But there are voices of criticism against the ZBNF method as well.

India's experts from The Natural Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the country's top body of farm scientists, calls ZBNF an 'unproven' technology that will not bring tangible gain to either farmers or consumers. Even Sri Lanka's master tea maker Herman Gunaratne, one of 46 experts picked by President Rajapaksa to guide the organic revolution, fears that by going completely organic, the tea industry will lose 50 per cent of the crop, without getting a 50 per cent higher price.

Nevertheless today's urban elite, concerned with their health and bothered about the environment do look out for new gastronomic experiences. This group is willing to pay higher prices for natural products if an improved product taste and nutritional value is guaranteed. Through natural farming they expect to benefit from food diversity, healthy products free of industrial pesticides, insecticides, fertilisers, chemical medications, hormones and growth-booster that harm both humans and the soil. On the flip side, unfortunately, production volumes

decrease, farming labour increases, frequent pest and weed control is now required and shelf life is shortened as natural organic food spoils faster in the absence of preservatives.

This is pushing organic farming to becoming a niche segment today. The rich are willing to pay fancy prices for organic products but the masses will continue to require food at lower prices, in turn needing chemical inputs for high yields. This will be the challenge for the future of organic agriculture, increasing yields, and reducing prices while meeting the challenges of an increasing world population. Fortunately there are several advantages addressed by organic farming, including environmental awareness, concerns with individual health and the absence of pesticide residue. In fact certain crops like legumes, peanuts and soybeans are able to fix their own nitrogen in the soil and are being grown organically free of chemicals.

A way forward is to withdraw the existing opposition to genetically modified organisms (GMO) crops. Via genetic engineering in the laboratory, crops are grown to be more nutritious, colourful, tastier, insect, and drought resistant, with a longer shelf life, engineered to fix their own nitrogen in the soil, like legumes can do in a natural state. However, if opposition to genetically modified crops continues, technology will have to evolve to break out of a small niche, not depress yields and not raise prices. My co-brother and other farmers in Sri Lanka and India know this very well. It's consumers like us who need to grasp the reality.

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Revitalising MSMEs, Key

Studies instituted by multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank (WB) recently have identified that of all those employed in Sri Lanka, 70 per cent of them were employed in the informal sector.

This, taken together by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) Report released yesterday titled 'Asia Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Monitor 2021,' which said that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) comprise 99 per cent of all enterprises and employ 75 per cent of Sri Lanka's labour force, emphasised the importance of 'access to finance' as a matter of priority to revitalise the MSME Sector.

Such assistance is urgent, considering the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused massive job losses and revenue contraction to the MSME Sector, the ADB Report said.

The ADB Report also said that though the MSME Sector comprises 99 per cent of all businesses in Sri Lanka, employing 75 per cent of the island's total labour force, yet the MSME Sector held only 11 per cent of total bank credit equivalent to five per cent of GDP last year.

The ADB report therefore recommended the promotion of digital finance, which it said was of low cost to the consumer.

Promoting digital finance, whilst simultaneously ensuring consumer protection and financial sector stability however requires investments. Nonetheless, the Government, in its Rs 2.51 trillion '2022 Budget' plans to allocate only Rs 1.25 billion to the 'Digital Technology and Enterprise Development' State Ministry, equivalent to a mere a 0.05 per cent of 'Budget 2022.'

While 'Digital Technology' is not fit enough to earn Cabinet rank, Cabinet ranked Highways Ministry however is earmarked to be allocated a massive Rs 250.19 billion, equivalent to 9.99 per cent of 'Budget 2022,' while being more than 200 times the spend allocated to the Digital Technology State Ministry.

Where are the Government's priorities? Meanwhile, the ADB's yesterday report, emphasising that 'finance' is pivotal to MSME growth, further said, "As MSMEs in Sri Lanka are a key driver of the economy, but consequent to their devastation by the COVID-19 pandemic, revitalising operations and their growth is key to building a more resilient economic recovery."

For instance, a Census and Statistics Department conducted MSME survey to assess the initial impact of COVID-19 which drew 17,469 responses from MSMEs, found MSMEs had sharp drops in revenue and employment during the lockdown – comprising a revenue decrease of 40.9 per cent from March 2019 to March 2020, 74.2 per cent for April, year-on-year (YoY) and 55.2 per cent for May, the ADB said.

Meanwhile, the decrease in employment in the MSME Sector was 38.5 per cent in March, YoY, 82 per cent in April, and 66.7 per cent in May, the ADB said. In April 2020, the lockdown cut mining and quarrying revenues by 90.7 per cent, construction by 89.4 per cent and services by 87.9 per cent. Employment in these sectors fell by 91.3 per cent, 85.4 per cent and 85.9 per cent, respectively, the Report said.

Limited business operations or temporary closures lost many MSMEs most of their revenue. Supply chain disruptions also increased costs of keeping businesses operating. Many were forced to temporary cut staffing to save funds to survive the pandemic,' the ADB said.

However, as MSME access to bank credit remains limited, it remains a serious barrier to MSME growth, the ADB Study said.

And, as the pandemic continues to remain a risk that could impede economic recovery and MSME development, the Government will need to strengthen its current phased recovery approach and differentiate policies by firm size and sector to meet the demand of groups devastated by the pandemic, the ADB advised.

State assistance should pay more attention to developing entrepreneurship and creating access to growth capital for viable MSMEs. It needs to find the optimal approach that mobilises domestic resources, while at the same time reducing the budgetary burden during the recovery, the ADB further said. It must also do so without impeding national revenue growth or increasing budget deficits, the Study emphasised.

"The pandemic showed that public finance is critical to support MSMEs vulnerable to unexpected shocks. But limited access to it remains a huge challenge. Information asymmetry between lenders and borrowers is the prime reason," the ADB Report further said. Therefore, public finance and credit enhancement can help narrow the MSME financing gap, it said.

Meanwhile, a national economic development programme, 'Vision 2025' cites MSME development as part of its growth framework. It stresses the need for MSMEs to formalise, digitalise, and adopt new technologies.

Digitalising MSME business is another policy priority in this regard, particularly those in the informal sector, it said. Digital financial services offer low-cost financing to traditionally un-served or underserved segments. It is a critical tool to promote inclusive growth nationally. Demand for digital financial services has increased sharply since the outbreak of COVID-19, the ADB said.

A micro enterprise is a firm with fewer than 10 employees and annual turnover of less than Rs 15 million, the ADB said. A small enterprise is a firm with 11-50 employees and annual turnover of between Rs 16 million-Rs 250 million. A medium-sized enterprise is a firm with 51-200 for services employees and 51-300 for manufacturing, with annual turnover of between Rs 251 million-Rs 750 million, the ADB said.

Reason for gas leaks is using low quality components!

- Gas companies



Why Has Chile Embraced the Extremes?

By ANDRÉS VELASCO

When candidates from the far right and the far left advance to the second round of a presidential election, one is tempted to quote William Butler Yeats's famous line, "things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." But to understand Chile's current presidential contest, Vladimir Lenin, who called left-wing communism "an infantile disorder," is a better guide.

After the massive protests of late 2019, and the election six months ago of a convention full of unconventional delegates to write a new Constitution, many thought Chile had shifted left. But José Antonio Kast, who won the first round of the presidential election on 21 November, is a hard rightist who downplays the torture and murders committed during General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, promises to take a hard line against criminals and drug dealers, and wages a Trumpian cultural war against feminists and LGBTQ+ communities.

What happened? The short answer is that many Chileans are frightened, and others are angry. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic squeeze contributed to such sentiments. But so did the antics of the left.

The left's mistakes began two years ago, when leaders of progressive parties accepted the protesters' claim that the unrest stemmed not from a 30-peso (\$0.04) increase in subway fares, but from dissatisfaction with the previous 30 years – 24 of them under centre-left Governments. That came as news to many middle-class families whose incomes had tripled over those decades, enabling them to afford a car, buy a house with a 30-year mortgage (unheard of elsewhere in Latin America), and send their children to university. Yes, too many Chileans are overindebted, have spotty access to health care, and face the prospect of a wretched pension. But the huge rise in living standards is undeniable.

Denying it, as much of the centre left did, turned out to be not only historically inaccurate but politically suicidal. One cannot claim to have caused people's problems and then offer to fix them. Voters understandably balked, and Senator Yasna Provoste, the centre-left presidential candidate, won just 11.6% in the first round.

Provoste, a woman of indigenous ancestry raised in a small town, was a candidate of great potential at a time of rising anti-establishment sentiment. Her fifth-place finish – behind, among others, a demagogue who, facing many lawsuits back home, campaigned by Zoom from the United States – attests to the centre left's colossal political failure.

Frente Amplio

In addition, both the centre-left and the Frente Amplio – the far-left coalition backing Gabriel Boric, Kast's second-round opponent on 19 December – paid a steep electoral price for failing to take a clear stance against political violence. Leftist leaders' public condemnation of the violence that took place starting in late 2019 (including the firebombing of dozens of subway stations in Santiago) was mealy-mouthed at best. Instead of voicing support for middle-class citizens who could not get to work because there was no public transport, or whose shops had been burned down, they proposed an amnesty – backed by both Boric and Provoste – for everyone



Since the events of October 2019, Chile's radical left has oozed arrogance, labelling anyone who disagreed with them hopelessly naive, a stooge of shady business interests, or both. But reality, as ever, caught the ideologues by surprise

charged with violent acts during the street demonstrations.

The consequences of this misguided approach became clear in the Araucanía region of southern Chile – the country's poorest, and home to the Mapuche people. The presidential campaign there should have been about the grievances of indigenous groups, who have faced centuries of mistreatment and discrimination. Instead, it focused on the attacks on forestry companies' trucks and facilities by small groups of violent militants. A growing sense of insecurity delivered the region to Kast, who outpolled Boric there by almost three to one.

Voters also demanded greater economic security – and, here again, the left failed to deliver. Boric's confusing pension plan, which some saw as a threat to nationalise the \$ 170 billion that Chileans still hold in private retirement accounts, probably lost him votes. So did the claim by one of his lieutenants that their planned economic changes would "add instability to the country." The centre-left did little better: although Provoste recruited a top-notch team of economic advisers, voters were not persuaded that hers would be a safe pair of hands for managing the economy.

Since the events of October 2019, Chile's radical left has oozed arrogance, labelling anyone who disagreed with them hopelessly

naive, a stooge of shady business interests, or both. But reality, as ever, caught the ideologues by surprise. Chileans wanted evolution, but the far left thought they wanted revolution. The centre left did not know what to think. Lacking all conviction, it resorted to aping the radical gestures of the Frente Amplio.

Now that he is in the second round, it is reinvention time for Boric. He has discovered the virtues of economic growth and, just in case voters are sceptical, has surrounded himself with the type of PhD-wielding economists he used to dismiss as heartless technocrats. He has also walked back his support for the Amnesty Bill, claiming that he never meant to pardon violent criminals. And he was quick to distance himself from a statement by his Communist allies congratulating Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on the latter's recent travesty of an election victory.

It is difficult to know whether this will be enough to guarantee Boric the lead. Kast's anti-feminist, anti-gay, and anti-trans rhetoric is as toxic as Trump's, and his law-and-order talk is almost as crude as that of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. But he manages to deliver his most offensive lines with a beatific smile and the reassuring tone of a well-meaning (if somewhat creepy) uncle. That will help him at the ballot box.

What will not help Kast is his prison visit with Miguel Krasnoff – a Pinochet henchman sentenced to serve 650 years for crimes against humanity – after which Kast declared he "does not believe all the things that are said" about Krasnoff. If Pinochet were alive, Kast added, "he would vote for me." Should Boric prevail in the second round, it will be because large numbers of mainstream voters find Kast's extremism impossible to swallow.

But, as the US, Brazil, India, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and other countries have learned the hard way, re-corking the genie of right-wing populism is very difficult. It helps to have a modern reformist alternative. After its recent failures, the rebuilding of Chile's centre left cannot begin a moment too soon.

Andrés Velasco, a former presidential candidate and Finance Minister of Chile, is Dean of the School of Public Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of numerous books and papers on international economics and development, and has served on the faculty at Harvard, Columbia, and New York Universities.

(Courtesy-www.project-syndicate.org)

Notes to the People

From Industrial Agriculture to Natural Farming

By SUMANASIRI LIYANAGE

Without questioning the honesty of the Government's initiative to move away from the system of industrial agriculture in spite of the presence of some contrary evidence it is not difficult to reach a conclusion that the Government's effort has ended with abject failure. Although many had anticipated the Finance Minister, Basil Rajapaksa, in his maiden Budget would have reversed the import ban on chemical agricultural inputs in the face of growing protest by the farmers and small scale tea estate owners, such a policy reversal had to wait until the committee stage of the Budget debate. The Government has taken a 360 degree turn once again going back to the chemical agriculture input solution. No emphasis was placed on the following quote from the Budget Speech: "Therefore, I propose to draft a Green Agricultural Development Act that protects the traditional knowledge of our farmers, safeguards their right to own lands and right to the distribution of water and ensures the participation of farmers in the decision-making process." The private sector appears to be allowed to import chemical inputs and to sell them to the farmers following their own price formula. In the current context in which the world market prices of urea has reached an alarming level, the question arises if the farmers can afford to buy them at market prices in the absence of a fertiliser subsidy. Hence, one may wonder that all the zigzags and reversals that the Ministry of Agriculture had performed in the last six months are oriented towards the abolition of the fertiliser subsidy that have been in operation since the early 1960s in varying ways by almost all the Governments.

The policy shift if it leads to a systemic shift from industrial agriculture to natural farming would definitely change the agrarian landscape of the island. However, there has been no consensus among the scientific community with regard to the impact of such a transition. The debate between the soil and agriculture scientists on the one hand and the medical practitioners on the other around the impact of the use of chemical inputs goes on with no sign of consensus. Like in India, the majority of agricultural and soil scientists in Sri Lanka, especially those who are attached to the Sri Lankan university system, seem to reject the idea that agriculture without chemical inputs is possible. This is understandable since these specialists acquire their training and knowledge from the universities and



Can farmers afford organic fertilisers in the absence of a subsidy? The cost includes health care originating from chemical use

research institutions that are designed to cater for the needs of multinational chemical companies. This is evident in that case of India where while the Central and some State Governments have taken measures to encourage natural farming methods, national institutions of agricultural scientists had vehemently opposed such a policy shift.

I am not a natural scientist so that I opt not to enter into this debate notwithstanding the fact the discussion would not produce a complete picture if it does not refer to the possible long-term reactions of chemical inputs in soil and agricultural products. The social scientists have much to offer on this debate since what matters most are the farmers.

Industrial agriculture balance sheet

The practices in Sri Lankan agriculture adopted after the Green Revolution are key elements of the system of industrial agriculture a presence of certain traditional practices notwithstanding. The system is based on the use of imported or commodified seeds, chemical fertiliser, pesticides and weedicides, the principle of monocrop, separation of crop from livestock and fisheries and the heavy

Fertiliser, feed, equipment, and chemicals are purchased at prices fixed abroad, and there is no telling what the actual cost per pound will be when these imported products are used. It is completely up to the merchants. And with selling prices also fixed, the farmer's income is at the mercy of forces beyond his control

use of labour-subsuming machinery. As a result, the yield has increased so is the total agricultural output, especially in paddy. That has been the positive aspect often cited in the debate. Nonetheless, this balance sheet is not a neutral and objective observation. Nor is it a complete one. Drawing from his own experience on the left bank of the Walawe, Mahinda Siriwardene, a farmer who is one of the key leaders of the Walsapugala farmers protest, has shown that the net income of an average farmer who engages in paddy cultivation is Rs 675 per day. Of course, there may be spatial variations. Athula Disanayake of Eppawala has given figures relating to the cost of production in paddy farming and has revealed that the cultivation of one hectare of paddy in the North Central Province under the present condition may cost Rs 300,000. If the average yield is between Rs 5,000 – 6,000 kilograms of rice, the cost of production of paddy would be Rs 60 a kilogram. It is important to note that some of the reproduction cost of farmer households is not included in this figure.

So, one may also ask if there is any use of continuing with industrial agriculture practices? We may ask the Opposition Parties: is the non-availability of chemical inputs the problem that farmers face or is there some other unfathomable involvement

here? My conclusion is the problem that is at the centre of the agricultural crisis is this very mode of agriculture, namely, industrial agriculture. So, steps should be taken, through a system of mass education, to come out of this system that was introduced in the 1960s.

A different system of agriculture

Two agricultural practitioners cum agro-scientists from Japan and India have shown with empirical evidence that there is a different system of agriculture. The increasing world prices of urea have shown that agriculture would be a totally unprofitable and a costly business to our farmers as it was to Japanese farmers. Fukuoka writes: "When the concept of commercial agriculture first appeared, I opposed it. Commercial agriculture in Japan is not profitable for the farmer. Among merchants the rule is that if an article which originally costs a certain amount is further processed, an extra cost is added when the article is sold. But in Japanese agriculture it is not so straightforward. Fertiliser, feed, equipment, and chemicals are purchased at prices fixed abroad, and there is no telling what the actual cost per pound will be when these imported products are used. It is completely up to the merchants. And with selling prices also fixed, the farmer's income is at the mercy of forces beyond his control." The Government put the farmers once again in the same situation where the monopoly in importing agricultural inputs is given to a private company. The solution to which is not to statize the import but to go for natural farming. Natural farming is less costly and no significant difference in yield. Of course, there may be a slight and insignificant reduction of yield in the first two *kannas* but in the long run it would be more profitable for the farming community and to the environ in which they live.

The response of the Opposition led by Samagi Jana Balavegaya, and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna to the decision to stop the import of chemical aagri-inputs and the policy reversal of the Government has demonstrated that politicians do not have a vision how the agriculture problem can be resolved. The problem lies with the extant agricultural mode of production and transforming it into a new mode of production is in the hands of the peasant community itself. No saviours coming from Colombo will resolve their problems.

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Organic farming drive suspended

By LAKSHMAN I. KEERTHISINGHE

"Good Governance with good intentions is the hallmark of our Government. Implementation with integrity is our core passion"

– Narendra Modi

Sri Lanka has backed down from its ambitious plans to become the world's first completely organic farming Nation, reversing a ban on the import of chemical fertiliser. Earlier in May, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa imposed a total ban on agrochemicals, saying he wanted to make farming 100 per cent organic. Plantations Minister Ramesh Pathirana said the change was to help growers of Ceylon Tea, exports of which are \$1.3B annually. "Considering the fact that there has been a quality drop in tea that was produced in factories, the Government has taken the decision to import sulphate of ammonia," Minister Pathirana told reporters in Colombo. He said the import of chemical fertiliser would continue until the island was able to produce enough organic fertiliser for local agricultural needs. The Government policy had sparked anger among tea plantation owners and other farmers who warned that a lack of organic fertiliser and lower yields would lead to shortages. This risked compounding problems for the Government already facing an unprecedented shortage of foreign exchange to import fuel, food and medicines. Last week, the Government breached its own ban by importing



Chemical fertiliser produces cost-effective commercial crops but the damage caused by it is often long-term and cumulative

30,000 tonnes of potassium chloride from Lithuania, but called it 'organic fertiliser.' "We are not a stubborn Government," Government Spokesman Dullas Alahapperuma told reporters. "We are sensitive to the needs of the people."

This is indeed a wise decision made by the democratic policies of our leaders and should be greatly appreciated in the best interests of our motherland presently facing an economic debacle, which has been remedied to some extent by the recent

Budget proposals which would permit a breathing space for Sri Lankan economy to revive.

Although organic farming is extremely beneficial compared to utilising harmful chemicals in agriculture steps have to be taken to methodically transform into organic farming without harming the present ailing economy of Sri Lanka. As agriculture experts state the soil is the biological filter that detoxifies the soil removing a large proportion of the poisons that have been added to the

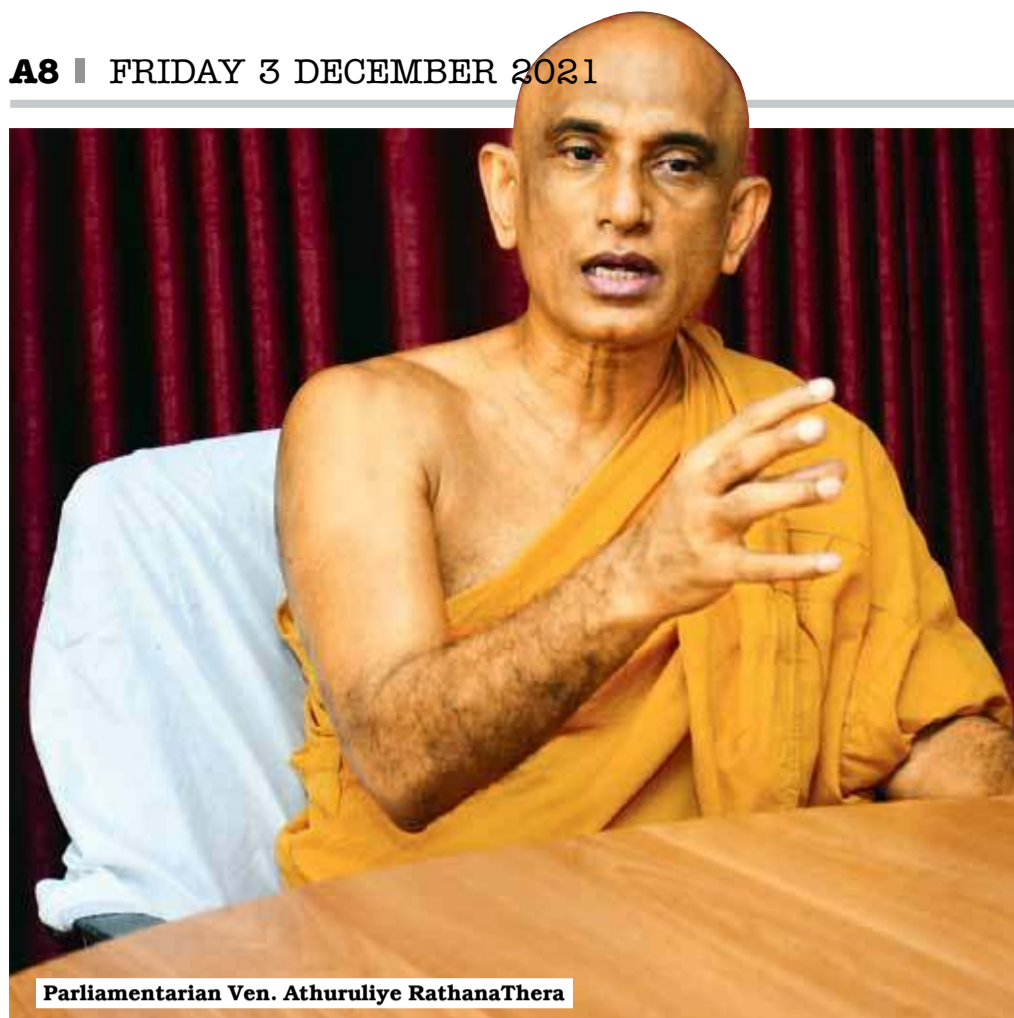
soil by people who throw such toxins in to the soil which protects the surface of our planet almost like a 'living skin'. Movement of living organisms within the soil is slow; the faster organisms like the worms are the giants of this world, tunneling through at a fairly rapid rate measured in centimetres per minute. More common are the fungi, which move by growing through the soil at rates measured in centimetres per month, or the bacteria which have rates measured in centimetres per year. The estimates of the mass of living organisms in a fertile living soil are estimated at about 10,000 to 14,000 Kg per hectare. This is the key to agriculture that supported mankind for over millennia. A good soil with a mass of living microorganisms amounting to over 8,000 tons per hectare, represents an energetic input equivalent to about that supplied by twenty horses or twenty horsepower of energy, applied 24 hours a day. It is this energy spent on natural soil chemical transformations that supply the energy to maintain a healthy soil ecosystem. In traditional farming systems, the addition of compost, green manure, cultured microorganisms etc., was used to enhance the natural fertility of a field. When high energy industrial chemicals are applied onto the soil, many species of biota are lost and its biomass gradually decreases. The huge mass and diversity of soil microorganisms is gradually reduced until finally, the natural productivity of the soil is lost

through attrition and it cannot produce without a further input of industrial chemicals. The living soil has been lost and the farm has become addicted to the additional energy of industrial chemical in order to produce a crop.

The European Parliament, concerned about food safety and human health commissioned experts from several countries to review the possible health advantages of organic food and organic farming. Three long-term birth cohort studies in the U.S. suggest that pesticides are harming children's brains. In these studies, researchers found that women's exposure to pesticides during pregnancy, measured through urine samples, was associated with negative impacts on their children's IQ and neurobehavioural development. Even in Sri Lanka some such adverse effects were suspected.

In conclusion, the President's decision to listen to the complaints of the affected farming community and the adverse effects on a major export item of Sri Lanka 'Ceylon Tea' has been the turning point in this decision in the welfare of the nation. After an in depth study and increasing the stocks of sufficient organic fertiliser manufactured in Sri Lanka turning to organic farming in stages would be the most suitable strategy in this endeavour.

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Parliamentarian Ven. Athuruliye RathanaThera

Conventional Budget with no Future Prospects

By **THAMEENAH RAZEEM**

Parliamentarian Ven. Athuruliye Rathana Thera, said the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 has no vision and no objectives that correspond with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's Election manifesto, and also it is a very conventional Budget that each and every Government has produced without hurting the public.

He stated that, while the Budget appears to be a people-centric Budget, it does not meet the country's future plans, such as promoting renewable energy by 2030 or how to reduce the debts that have been indicated, and people are confused about how Sri Lanka will meet its goal of renewable energy by 2030, if it has not given a small hint on that.

"The Budget should talk about how they are trying to promote renewable energy by 2030, what they are trying to prepare with the Yugadanavi Agreement with an American Company, and also how they are going to reduce the country's debt with this Budget proposal," he said.

Following are excerpts of the interview:

Do you believe the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 delivers what people expected?

The Budget is not so horrible that I should object to it. However, the Budget has provided no remedy to the current issues. The single and major fault I find in the Budget is a lack of vision to overcome the situation we are facing, as well as a lack of a proper plan, and this is a pretty traditional Budget. However, we are facing a situation that no one has ever experienced before, raising the question of whether Budget 2022 is sufficient to address the crisis.

What do you mean by 'No vision in Budget 2022'?

We expected the Budget to outline a strategy for overcoming the large-scale problem we are currently facing, as well as what should be done in the coming year. The Budget provides no solution to this problem. After all, there is no obvious method to solve the challenges.

If you were given the opportunity to submit Budget proposals for 2022, what would you include?

We have submitted proposals in a variety of situations. We are willing to share our thoughts with them at any time, but we do not believe the Government is in a position to listen to us.

Why do you believe the Government is unwilling to listen to your proposals?

At this time, I do not believe the Government is open enough to welcome other people's views or desires. There is no longer an appropriate person to contact when we need something done or have a request. Because when we need to make a proposal, we cannot go directly to the President, and as you can see, at least four to five people are in charge of one subject.

The President took office promising to develop a people-centred economy in the country; why aren't they seeking professional guidance on how to do so?

One of the main reasons for the issue erupting in this manner is the Government's sluggishness in requiring others to offer their views to the table. Despite the fact that there are many representatives and experts available to provide proposals and ideas to meet the goal of overcoming this crisis, the Government did not take the necessary steps to bring everyone together in one place to discuss the crisis economically and socially.



The Budget appears to be a people-centric Budget, it does not meet the country's future plans, such as promoting renewable energy by 2030 or how to reduce the debts that have been indicated, and people are confused about how Sri Lanka will meet its goal of renewable energy by 2030

What is your objection to the US company's participation in the Yugadanavi Power Plant?

We should start by emphasizing that upgrading diesel-powered power plants to LPG-powered power plants is a fantastic idea. However, no foreign business is required for this.

Do you believe there is a significant demand for additional LNG power plants to be built in Sri Lanka?

No, we do not need to build additional LNG power plants at any cost; instead, we should combine our demands; similarly, at peak hours, such as afternoons, we can use solar electricity directly and then store it, which saves money. Importing gas, according to this, is unjust.

How did Yugadanavi's contract with New Fortress come to light in order to overcome the Forex crisis? Do you believe it will help in that regard?

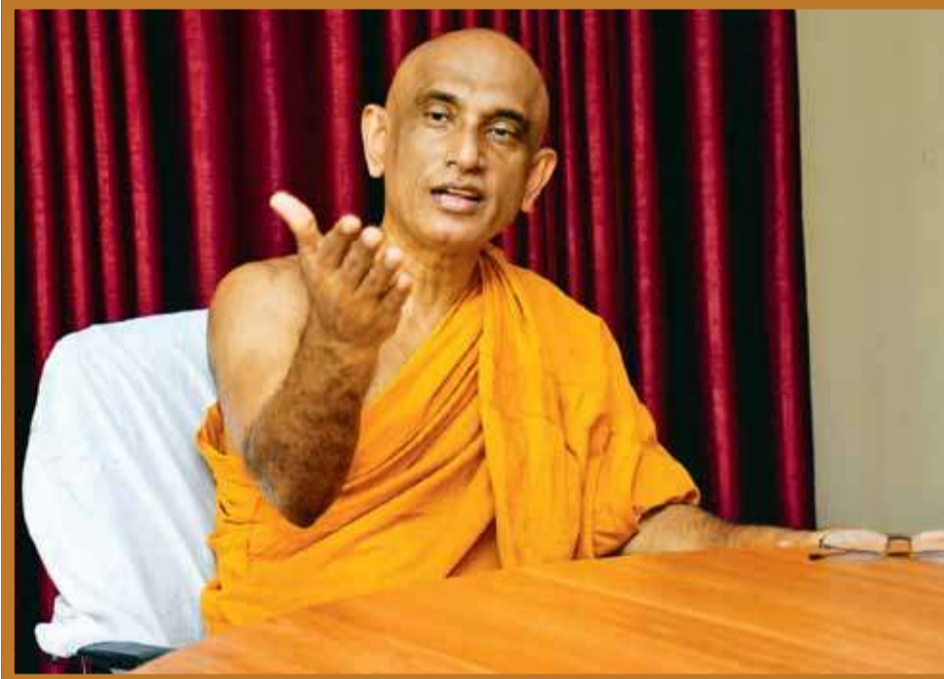
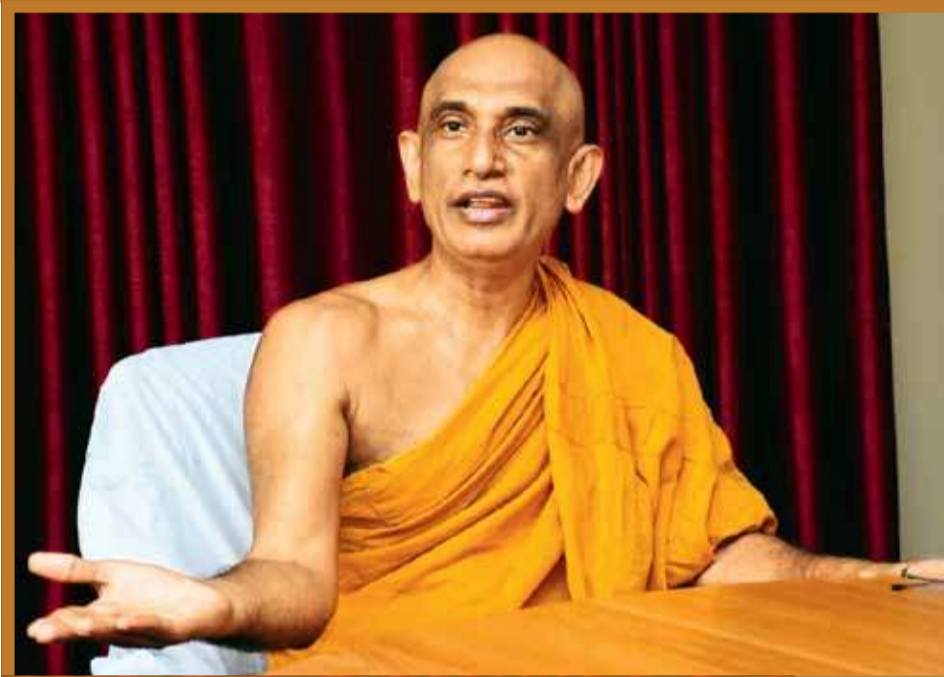
We are importing gas, which requires us to invest more dollars in importing, exacerbating the issue. How can this be a solution to the currency crisis? Why do we import gas through a foreigner and pay our money to another country when we have conventional power plants?

Is not this in line with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's pledge to generate 70 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030?

Why, if we are moving toward renewable energy, do we need to invest significant sums of money on importing gas and signing large-scale projects? If our main goal is to achieve 70 per cent renewable energy by 2030, we should prioritise solar and wind power. Wind and solar power could be used in a really good combo. There is no estimate for this, and we were hoping for such recommendations in the Budget, which was just a pipe dream. If the Government is serious about renewable energy by 2030, it should state in the Budget that it will import vehicles that run on battery power. The battery will be charged by solar electricity, which means the energy will be ours, allowing us to save US dollars. We should have a discussion about the energy parameters within the context of the contentious gas tale.

Did the Finance Ministry rush into the agreement with New Fortress Energy?

The transaction itself raises questions from all sides. Three Cabinet Ministers have stated that they know



nothing about the transaction, which is so dubious at this stage. There were recommendations made to the cabinet about the deal, and it was revealed that the Cabinet of Ministers had not discussed it.

According to the Cabinet Paper, the Sri Lankan Government will have the monopoly on gas imports after five years.

According to the Cabinet Paper, the gas monopoly is with a US Company and will be changed in five years. But, in reality, we will not be able to do so since by that time, the US firm will have completely taken over the land by repairing their pipelines. This means they are unlikely to hand over the gas monopoly to the Government. That means we can create a situation in which individuals are forced to buy gas from only one firm.

The President's pledge is linked to the global challenge of combating climate change. As a Sri Lankan who works tirelessly to promote a green economy, do you believe we are doing enough to combat climate change?

According to the United Nations Climate Change Resolution, 35 per cent of pollution is caused by oil and coal, while the remaining 30 per cent is caused by bad agriculture, especially large-scale maize cultivation. The Government's proposal for this should have been included as the major Budget line in the 2022 Budget.

Is it acceptable to develop roads, motorways, and playgrounds in a country where poverty is unbearable?

If we look at the surroundings of Colombo, we can observe that there are numerous concretes in the metropolitan regions. Based on our technical knowledge, rather than constructing a motorway, we could have improved public transportation and traffic safety. The Governments in power in 2010, as well as in 2020, had no concept of poverty. The Government has borrowed money to construct a concrete jungle across the country. The

next step is that loans be supplied to Sri Lanka to elevate highways, and it is far easier to broaden road lines than to build a highway.

So, you are suggesting that building a highway is not important in a country with skyrocketing debts and a massive poverty line?

Yes, because the railway tracks that were laid during Sri Lanka's time as a British colony are still in good working order. People no longer require highways or other large-scale development projects. The people, as stated by the President, require long-term growth. The Government should have improved public transportation facilities and expanded railway and road lines. This will actually work to reduce traffic congestion as well as carbon emissions, making it an excellent start toward our 2030 renewable energy goal.

Do you believe that the Government's and President's decision to ban organic fertiliser failed at some point?

We spend about USD \$500M per year on fertiliser imports. If we can produce fertiliser in Sri Lanka, we can save money. However, I pioneered the marketing of organic fertiliser for almost 20 years, and I feel that it should not be rushed. The usage of organic fertiliser has the potential to launch a revolution. This cannot be completed in one fell swoop. Despite the Ministers protests, the cabinet paper was made public right away.

The President, recently, criticised the authorities in charge of promoting organic fertiliser for failing to engage farmers and advise them on organic fertiliser. Do you believe there is an issue at ministerial level?

It is evident that the ministers are making contradictory remarks. They each condemn themselves while sitting on the same side of the room. Another issue is that the ministerial roles and authorities are separated. Using

Agriculture as an example, the ministry is divided into four sections. This has hampered ministers, as they are unable to make decisions as a Government. It is sometimes suspicious that this has occurred for someone is benefit.

Are you indicating the ministers do not know what they are doing?

Yes, the ministers in charge are unaware of the situation. The Health Minister is clueless about health, and the others are as well. There is no scientific process for allocating ministerial responsibilities. Ministers can only function at the executive level if they are knowledgeable on the subject at hand. This is beyond the President's comprehension.

As the first member of the organic fertiliser industry, what should have been done in this regard other than imposing a blanket ban in the first place?

What we had to do was choose a plot of land and conduct a trial with organic fertiliser. The trial should be undertaken on semi-farmers in Gampaha, Kalutara, and Matara, so that if the trial fails, there would be no widespread fear. So, if the experiment is a success, the process should be repeated. We should have done this this year so that we could demonstrate the farmers that the organic fertiliser trial was a success, and the farmers would believe us.

Did not you campaign for this under the Yahapalanaya Regime?

We had a scientific system last year, and if it had functioned at the time, we would not have had to deal with these challenges. We never stated that we would be 100 per cent committed to organic fertiliser. We announced that we will grant funding to farmers, and they will be able to choose between organic and chemical farming.

Do you mean to claim that utilising chemical fertiliser is not a problem?

Yes, our problem is not with chemical fertilisers in general. We face difficulties with herbicides and pesticides. To solve the problem, we must engage in systematic transplantation. This will necessitate the use of two machines. The first type is a paddy transplanter, while the second is a manual transplanter. We will not have a pesticide or herbicide problem. So, if this is done correctly, officials will not be able to claim that organic fertiliser or other problems have arisen. Because 90 per cent of Government officials believe that organic fertiliser implementation is impossible.

Did not the Government take steps to compensate farmers or encourage them to use organic fertiliser?

When I visited the villages, I saw that the majority of the farmers had not received the Rs.12,500 compensation, nor had they begun creating organic fertiliser or cultivating. None of the decisions are known to the Agricultural Research and Production Assistants. The entire project is being implemented in a haphazard manner.

According to remarks and rumours, you pioneered the President's choice and advised him on it. Is this correct?

No, but it is true that I desired organic fertiliser to be promoted, but I never instructed the President to do it in this manner. President stated to me that he intends to do such things. If I had suggested the ban on organic fertiliser, I should have been given a responsible post in the Government dealing with organic fertiliser, which I did not obtain. Despite the many obstacles, I worked with farmers to fulfill the President's vows, but I cannot do it alone.

Pix by Udesh Ranasinha

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HC Rejects Ranawaka...

The case was taken up to facilitate the response from the prosecution to the objections raised by both Ranawaka and Asmadala. The prosecution was represented by DSG Dileepa Peiris.

DSG – The grounds on which this case has been filed are clear. One party is the aggrieved, who had sustained an injury in the accident. The other party was the one in a luxury jeep. Hence, this is a case concerning a civilian and a State official. The first accused is a party leader and he was also a Cabinet Minister of the previous Government at the time of the incident. The second accused had been employed by the first accused and had worked for him over a period of time. He had also officially worked at the Ministry headed by the first accused. The third accused is a Police Officer who had been in charge of the area where the incident had taken place. Hence, it can be seen that on one side there is a civilian and on the other there are a group of State officers. Even the vehicle involved in the accident belonged to the Government and it was attached to the Ministry of Power and Energy. Hence, it has to be inquired whether any justice has been meted out to this civilian, who is the victim, by this group of State officers, related to this incident today. Also, it can be seen that the victim, who is presently wheelchair-bound, has been brought to this Court by his father. The medical reports of the injured youth have been put on one side. They have been going from place to place to seek justice for their son for over five years and 10 months. Therefore, the question has to be asked as to the validity of our judicial system if any justice cannot be granted to this youth. Let us look at this incident. There are several ways when an accident can take place. Among the reasons would be negligence, recklessness, being inebriated etc. It is clear that the actions of the accused indicate that they had been motivated towards committing an act of crime and they have also been guilty of negligence. The lawyers for the defence have already raised objections with regard to charges filed against their respective clients. The charges relate to how the accused had used their political clout, social status and their official power to conspire to commit the offence. Also, these charges relate to three conspiracies. It is also the third accused who had been behind these conspiracies and he was the OIC of the Welikada Police at the time of the incident. He had been the person who had been instrumental in it. That is why I insist that this is not a mere traffic accident. It is the third accused Sudath Asmadala who had been the prime mover behind this plot. Having used his official authority the jeep bearing number WP KT 7545 belonging to the said Ministry was on its way to Borella around midnight. After having arrived, the vehicle then suddenly turns to the right near the President's College and towards the area where the Election Secretariat is situated. At the first instance there were a few motorcyclists who were going in front of the jeep. At that moment the jeep is turned to the main road and at that very moment the motorcycle ridden by the aggrieved party comes into contact with the jeep. One of the riders of the motorcycle is swept away due to the impact of the crash while the other youth falls to the ground, then and there, having come into contact with the rear glass of the jeep. What does the driver of the jeep do? He opens his window and then continues to look on for a few seconds, but the occupants of the jeep should have considered the plight of the motorcyclists on humane grounds."

DSG – The driver is looking out of the window of the vehicle. After that he continues to drive the jeep at speed. A few motorcyclists then tend to pursue the jeep. Later, they manage to get hold of the driver. At that moment the driver says that he is a Minister. He then shows his National Identity Card. He then tells one of them to quickly get onto the jeep and he continues to flee from that spot. Afterwards, the second accused heads to the Police Station and surrenders. Then, charges against him are filed before the Magistrate's Court for failing to prevent a traffic accident, reckless driving, negligence and failing to act on those injured etc. However, the main player in the case happens to be the third accused. Having used his OIC powers in a case that had come before him, he had replaced the wrongdoer with another person and he had proceeded to twist the entire incident. Hence, isn't this an offence? Therefore, detailed charges have been filed against the third

accused. As per the provision contained in Section 290 of the Penal Code, the third accused had utilised his official authority to compile fake evidence in a case being heard before a Court. The third accused, having fully known that the first accused had committed an offence, taking action to conceal that offence and provide cover to the first accused, so that charges cannot be filed against him. The third accused had also intentionally strived to disappear or conceal the evidence. Although charges had been filed before the Magistrate's Court no charges had been directed at causing irregularities to a State-owned vehicle. The valid driver is then concealed by the Police Department. The next charge is connected to provisions contained in Section 200 of the Penal Code. That pertains to submitting information regarding a person who cannot be trusted and doing so having been aware of it and submitting such details via a false B Report to Court. None of these details that are submitted are uncertain facts. All of these measures had been taken to prevent the law taking its due course. Hence, the accused have been indicted before the High Court, to rectify these matters. The second accused has to be charged with taking action to victimise the same person twice in this incident. This person is the one who had posed off as the driver of the jeep involved in the crash. This person is asking to consider the statement that he had given based on the Code of Criminal Procedure to the Magistrate's Court. He could then also claim that he too is an aggrieved party. He does not say that there is no legal base to it. He also does not agree with the objections. Truly speaking, the first and third accused have no legal authority to make such claims in Court. He is the person who had strived to conceal this case. He is now attempting to get out of the case via the second accused. But, the second accused does not make any comment. He has not stated that the charges filed are erroneous. He is only asking to consider the statement that he had given to the Magistrate's Court as per provisions contained in Section 127 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. He has a valid point and we will consider it."

DSG – If there is any validity to the claims made by the accused and if it is so revealed, then we, as the prosecution, are ready to give ear to it accordingly and consider it in keeping with the norms of the law. However, if action is taken to conceal the truth with acts of conspiracy, then we are not prepared to put up with it. When no request had been made concerning the second accused and when evidence was there in the case, baseless submissions had been produced before this Court. What has really taken place here is the legal process had been misused. A few State officials had clearly and openly misused the law. There are only two parties to an accident. One is the aggrieved party and the other is the party responsible for the accident. Just because a case had been filed connected to an accident does the Government have the right to remain silent concerning the acts of intimidation that had taken place there. We

can prove to this Court that this incident had taken place via three acts of conspiracies. The case also indicates the misuse of the investigation of this incident. This has no bearing on the first case filed. The first and second accused, have not been revealed to be those who had not been singled out throughout the inquiry process. They had gone into hiding. These charges are related to them. They had been helped in their cause by the second accused. This case had not been filed to enable the second accused to surrender to the Police and to find him solely accountable for this offence. It concerns other details. This case concerns another different issue. Hence, the objections raised by these defendants become null and void voluntarily. This case had been filed regarding a case of cheating. Therefore, these objections are immaterial to it. Even the motor traffic case that has been filed had been filed in a subtle manner to achieve vested interests. This case concerns a few incidents that had taken place after the accident had occurred. The prosecution does not intend to unnecessarily drag this case based on flimsy matters. Even after five years had lapsed from the day of this accident, still the judicial process related to it had got delayed. An accused comes to the Court and the indictments had been handed over to him. Afterwards, they get bail. After receiving bail they activate the bail. When summons are received by the witnesses measures are taken to file legal objections. Now a case cannot be filed because initial objections are submitted even before the case is taken up. This incident had taken place at the Police Station under the supervision of an OIC. All of that had been spearheaded by the first accused. He receives backing for that from the second accused. Hence we urge this Court to throw out the objections filed on behalf of the first and second accused and issue an order for the submissions to be produced by the prosecution.

Taking the submissions of both parties into consideration, Judge Thotawatta maintained that there was no legal foundation to the objections raised by the defendants that the cases filed before the Magistrate's Court and the High Court concerns the same incident.

Hence he stated that he was ordering for the dismissal of the initial objections raised in this regard by the defence and ordered to commence trial proceedings.

Then fifth witness Dayananda Gunawardene, father of injured youth, Sandeep Sampath testified.

DSG – Are you aware as to which case you are testifying today?

Witness – Yes, I came today to testify regarding a traffic accident that had taken place in 2016.

DSG – At the time of the accident how old was your son and what was he doing?

Witness – My son was then 23-years and at the time was following an NIBM course as a software engineer.

DSG – You mentioned that you had come to this Court today to testify regarding an accident that had occurred on 28 February five years ago. What happened afterwards?

Witness – Sandeep is my only child. We do not have any other children. On the day of the accident, my son had gone with a few of friends to see a show. The motorcycle belonged to another friend and when on his way to hand it over, this accident had taken place. The moment I was notified of the accident I rushed to the hospital to see him. At the time of my arrival, I saw my son being rushed in a trolley to the ICU. I saw my son writhing in extreme pain. He then remained at the National Hospital for around 30-days. Later he was transferred to the Ragama Rehabilitation Hospital for exercises. He could not even take meals. His stomach had been pierced and an instrument inserted. He was then treated at Ragama for over four-and-a-half months. After that me and my spouse rented a small room in that area and resided there to look into the wellbeing of our son. It was I who remained at my son's bedside and looked after him. Doctors advised us to look after him with utmost care and not to allow him to fall. Both his arms were to be operated at the National Hospital. The right arm has been operated and a plate has been inserted. However, they are yet to operate the left arm. That operation has not been done as he still cannot walk properly. He has also lost two front teeth in the accident. One eye is also not functioning properly. Hence I have no words to explain the sorry sight of my son to this Court.

DSG – How long did your son remain in hospital?

Witness – He spent around one month at the National Hospital. After that he was transferred to the Ragama Hospital and he stayed there for another four-and-a-half months and then sent to the National Hospital ahead of releasing him.

DSG – What happened afterwards?

Witness – We then brought our son home and got him to exercise him as advised by doctors.

DSG – After 28 February, 2016 what was the first day he was brought home?

Witness – He was brought home only after four- and- a- half months.

DSG – How long after the accident are you testifying?

Witness – I am testifying precisely five years and eight months, since the accident.

DSG – Currently what is the condition of your son?

Witness – My son cannot still walk. If he has to go on long distance travel then he has to do so by hiring a vehicle. Even today we rented a vehicle and came. We went to purchase medicine for our son last Saturday. We incur an expense of Rs. 18,900 for his medicine for a 90-day period.

DSG – Did you visit the Police Station following the incident?

Witness – After the incident on two or three days I visited the Welikada Police Station at around 9.30 am. The officer who was in the process of recording our complaint was told that an accident of this nature had taken place. But, we never had the chance to record the complaint. When we wanted to meet the OIC they told us that the OIC is available only in the afternoon. However, we did not wait till the OIC came as we had to go to hospital to look into our son.

DSG – Were you aware that the Welikada Police were conducting a probe into the accident?

Witness – No I was not aware.

DSG – Did any Police Officers record any statements from you, related to your son's incident?

Witness – No none at all. After the change of Government, I wrote to both the President and the Prime Minister, highlighting the injustice caused to my son. Following this Police came and sought details from me.

DSG – Did any Police Officers arrive to record any statements from you?

Witness – When my son was in hospital, they came regularly and it was a nuisance. At one time a group of officers claiming to be from the Padukka Police and in civvies came to the hospital. When he was at the Ragama Hospital they recorded statements from my son who was then seriously ill and his fingerprints were also taken. My son struggled even to sign the document where the statements were recorded.

DSG – When Police Officers

continued to arrive regularly didn't you ask them why they were doing so?

Witness – I asked them. One day my son was taken in an ambulance to the Ragama Hospital. When we were about to get down from the ambulance two Police Officers who were there stated that they need to record a statement from my son. Then I told them to consider the state my son was in and if possible to obtain it.

DSG – Were you aware that a legal case had been filed regarding your son's incident?

Witness – This Court informed us of it. We only came to realise that a previous case had been pending in Court via the local press. I went for around two days to witness that case.

DSG – How did you come to know about your son's accident from your son's friends who had witnessed the accident?

Witness – Two of my son's friends had pursued the jeep that had caused the accident. After that they had got hold of the person in the jeep and when they had attempted to assault him with their helmets he identified himself as Patali Ranawaka.

DSG – To whom did you inform this incident?

Witness – Since the change of regime I decided to inform this incident through letters to both the President and the Prime Minister. I urged them to mete out justice to my son.

DSG – Before the change of regimes didn't you bring this incident to the notice of any other State officer?

Witness – Yes, I visited the house of then Minister Patali Ranawaka and implored with him to help my son on nearly three occasions. I also urged him to help me to treat my son. As I didn't receive any support and following the change of Government I sought the intervention of the current President and Prime Minister.

DSG – Did you visit the first accused?

Witness – Yes, I visited him at least thrice. I visited his Wijerama Place residence. I was accompanied by a person known as Danushka Ramanayake. I was given a cup of tea. The first time when I went to the Minister I urged him to at least send my son overseas and cure him. The Minister then said local doctors are there to treat him. I then went a third time and then pleaded him to help me to at least enable my son to walk again. But, the Minister did not respond to my pleas. He only uttered that he will take care of it later. At the time I was not aware that there were legal cases filed against the Minister. He then brought a large stock of files and showed me the number of cases filed against him. I only made a humane request to the Minister as a people's representative to help me to cure my son.

DSG – Were there any outsiders who visited your son?

Witness – At the initial stages around five MPs visited my son such as Wimal Weerawansa, Bandula Gunawardene and Dullas Alahapperuma to name a few. Afterwards they had spoken to my spouse. My spouse had vehemently opposed the politicisation of the incident and had told them that what was needed was to save our son.

DSG – Were you in need of some financial assistance to help cure your son?

Witness – Yes, I at one time met former President Maithripala Sirisena. He then invited me and inquired about my son's condition. I then told him that both his arms have to be operated. The very next day Rs 1 million was given to me via the Presidential Secretariat. He was the only person who has helped us to date.

DSG – You mentioned that after the change of regime that you had written to the current President and Prime Minister. But, are you aware that the ongoing probe had begun only after that.

Witness – I handed over the letters to the Nelum Mawatha head office of the SLPP. Within a fortnight of handover, Police Officers came to my house to record statements.

DSG – Are you also aware that since the change of regimes and after commencing a probe into the incident the suspects behind the accident had been arrested?

Witness – Yes, I am aware of it.

Accordingly the recording of witness testimony of the prosecution concluded and cross examination of the witness by the defence was fixed to be taken up on 11 January next year.

The second accused in the trial was identified as Dilum Thusitha Kumara who had masqueraded as the driver of the jeep involved in the accident with the three accused being indicted on 16 counts before the High Court.



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Entire BOI Board Quits

By MARIO ANDREE

Board of Investment (BOI) Chairman Sanjaya Mohottala, Director General Pasan Wanigasekara and the four directors have resigned from their posts.

According to information received by *Ceylon FT*, Directors, Dr. Harsha Cabraal, Harsha Subasinghe and Sanjay Kulatunga have resigned citing inability to work with the current management.

Reasons for BOI Chairman Sanjaya Mohottala, Director General Pasan Wanigasekara and Director Jayamin Pelpola resignations are uncertain.

Last month, *Ceylon FT* reported that for the first time in its 43-year history, All Executive Directors, Directors and Unions at the BOI had unanimously decided to unite against actions taken by the Chairman Sanjaya Mohottala and Director General Pasan Wanigasekara.

Some of the allegations levelled by them, against the heads of BOI, were misuse of funds, attempts to privatise BOI zones, destabilising revenue generating departments, misleading Cabinet members, attempting to recruit friends and family on higher salaries and outsourcing BOI operations.

These allegations were denied by Chairman Sanjaya Mohottala.

Issuing a statement in response to the recent resignations, the BOI said: "Prominent members of the Board of Directors of the Board of Investment have stepped down from their positions.

The Chairman, members of the Board of Directors and Director General assumed office with the singular intent of supporting the President's vision to double Sri Lanka's GDP in this decade. In line with this, the Board of Investment's role in transforming the country into a preferred investment destination by creating a compelling investment climate arose through the conceptualisation and execution of strategic and proactive investment promotions.

To achieve this strategic agenda, the Cabinet and the leadership team of the Board of Investment recognised that many transformations were required internally to enable the Board of Investment to compete against over 1,000 international promotion agencies active globally. They also recognised that this task could not be achieved in silos and that collaborative efforts, through a public-private partnership model was essential. This included the infusion of specialist skills through the

acquisition of new talent for selected positions and also the obtaining of specialist professional services to attract and create new investment portfolios to stimulate the country's trajectory towards a knowledge driven economy.

Unfortunately, the efforts of the leadership to achieve this urgently required transformation, was strongly and continuously resisted by isolated factions both within and outside the organisation, who have put their self-interest over the public. Such factions either failed or refused to comprehend the competitive realities of the international promotion landscape, in which Sri Lanka needs to compete much more effectively, if it is to attract FDI at the scale the country needs.

It is also a matter of regret that the progressive agenda of the leadership has come into question in public fora, also implying mismanagement based on events that occurred during 2017 and 2019, a period prior to the time of the current leadership. The many distortions and misconceptions publicised about the Board of Investment as a result of this confusion, has affected the reputation of the Board of Investment internationally, as well as the reputations of its key personnel."

Shares crash

By MARIO ANDREE

The Colombo Stock Exchange extended losses for the second consecutive day on Thursday (2) as the benchmark index slipped on a relatively higher turnover with continued foreign exits from the Bourse.

The benchmark All Share Price Index (ASPI), which started the day at 11,409.88 points, lost 157.58 points (1.38 per cent) to close at 11,252.30 points.

Commercial Leasing and Finance, LOLC Development Finance, LOLC Finance, LOLC Holdings and Expolanka Holdings dragged the ASPI down, despite attempts by Browns Investment, Vallibel One, Commercial Credit and Finance, Hemas Holdings and Lanka Hospital Corporation's attempts to pull it up.

However, the S&P SL20 index, which represents the top 20 companies, listed, which started the day at 3,905.65 points, gained 10.68 points (0.27 per cent) to close at 3,916.33 points.

The day's turnover reached Rs 6.48 billion, lower than Rs 11 billion recorded the previous market day.

More than 252.37 million shares changed hands during 49,483 trades that took place.

Shares of 255 companies were traded during the day, of which 107 emerged as losers ahead of 85 winners.

Foreigners were net buyers during the day. The net foreign inflow on Thursday stood at Rs 151 million as foreigners purchased shares worth Rs 175 million as against sales worth Rs 24 million.

Top ten losers during the day were: Commercial Leasing and Finance, DIMO, CM Holdings, Harischandra Flour Mills, Humas Falls Hotels, Lankem Ceylon, Resus Energy, Keleni alley Plantations, ODEL and Eden Hotel Lanka.

The top ten gainers were: e-channeling, Commercial Credit, Lanka Hospitals, Associated Motor Finance, Nawaloka Hospitals, Serendib Engineering Group, Singer Finance, Lighthouse Hotel, Beruwela Resorts and Softlogic Life.

Basil Rajapaksa to inaugurate Sri Lanka Economic Summit 2021

The upcoming Sri Lanka Economic Summit 2021 will be inaugurated by Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, Chief Guest, on 6 December, under the theme 'Springboard for revival: Opportunity to reset'.

Governor of the Central Bank, Ajith Nivard Cabraal will deliver the keynote address at the inauguration of the Summit, which will bring together leading national and international thought leaders, economists and industry experts on one platform, as they lead discussions on charting a sustainable course for economic recovery and development.

The two-day summit will feature seven curated sessions offering unique insights and perspectives on several topics of contemporary economic



significance, including setting the macro foundation for growth, the case for public-private sector collaboration in advancing economic development, Sri Lanka's potential as a technology hub, opportunities to enhance export revenue and how Sri Lanka can reposition itself for the new normal in travel.

Inflationary MP up Rs 2.02B

By PANEETHA AMERESKERE

Government of Sri Lanka's (GoSL's) face value money printing (FVMP) debt increased by Rs 5,055 million (0.28 per cent) to Rs 1,801,079.88 million (Rs 1.8011 trillion) yesterday due to a lack of revenue.

Of this increase, Rs 2,020 million was demand pull inflationary causing. GoSL's FVMP debt has been over Rs one trillion for a record consecutive 91 market days to yesterday.

GoSL's at least theoretical MP borrowing costs fell for the fifth consecutive market day to yesterday, this time by 0.91 per cent (Rs 416.25 million) to Rs 45,488.99 million, driven by uncertainty, resulting in the market investing in riskless, low returns Treasury (T) Bills and T Bonds, rather than lend to the lucrative private sector, the engine of growth.

Money market was short for the 59th consecutive market day to yesterday, thereby causing

persistent rate pressure, though market shortfall fell by 0.70 per cent (Rs 2,020 million) to Rs 288,311 million.

Money market liquidity during yesterday's trading decreased by Rs 3,035 million (US\$ 15.02 million), vis-à-vis, at the discounted, albeit 'spot' price of Rs 202.05 to the US dollar as at Tuesday due to the possible settlement/s from part foreign reserves sales for the dual purpose to aid the market to import so called essential items and also to meet net foreign outflows from the bourse.

The interbank foreign exchange (FX) market was 'dead' for the 146th consecutive market day to yesterday with no outright transactions taking place, coupled with all trades in the FX market, including bank-client trades too, since midnight 6 September, mandated to be executed under a controlled exchange rate (ER) regime of between Rs 202-203 to the dollar, aiding in the spawning of a black market.

SL should harmonise standards and prevent trade barriers - Baur & Co CEO

By RAJIESEH SEETHARAM

The standard requirements for most Sri Lankan products were different from most countries in the rest of the world, which is creating trade barriers, so said Baur & Co CEO, Rolf Blaser.

Speaking to *Ceylon FT*, he said "We couldn't import Johnson Baby Shampoo to Sri Lanka because the Standard requirement in Sri Lanka is different. The same product is available in 190 countries. Sri Lanka is the only country, where the

standard is not met.

Due to the different standard requirements, we are unable to import several products. Also, it is not practical or economical to manufacture locally and export as the standard requirement in other countries is different."

This scenario could somewhat benefit a local manufacturer, however it increases costs and it is a loss for the consumer as he has to pay higher prices with few options to choose from, Blaser said.

"We could not import the world's

best quality Swiss brand 'Trisa' tooth brush into Sri Lanka. In the Trisa tooth brush, the bristle is very thin, which can easily go in between the teeth, but in Sri Lanka there is a minimum thickness standard for bristles in tooth brushes. So we had to stop importing it. Sri Lanka does not have the best quality tooth brush in the world. Meanwhile, thick bristles in tooth brushes in other countries are considered sub standard.

There is no point for Sri Lanka in having a different standard for tooth brushes, when most other countries

such as India, EU, USA have similar standards", he said.

He added, "At times some products had to be marketed as different products in Sri Lanka. We wanted to import and market one of the best quality jams in Sri Lanka, which is generally available globally in Five Star hotels. In Sri Lanka, there is a standard, which states that there should be at least 72 milligrams of sugar per kilo. The jam we intended to import had less sugar which is healthy, but does not meet the required Sri Lankan standards. So we

had to change the name of the product from Jam to bread spreader, now the product is available under the brand name 'Hero'."

Blaser recommended that Sri Lanka should harmonise standards in line with the rest of the world, which would make administration easier, products cheaper, increase trade and give better quality products to the consumer with multiple options.

"Harmonising standards would cut costs as we don't need to do extra research, as we can go ahead with globally available data," he added.

Aitken Spence wins most awards at Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021



Aitken Spence PLC was on a winning streak yet again at the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021. Winning the highest number of Awards, the company demonstrated their leadership, continuous commitment and drive to pioneer the corporate sustainability movement in Sri Lanka. The company was also the recipient of the highest number of certificate awards for 'Consistent Commitment and Continuous Improvement' which goes to show the robust sustainability

strategy and unparalleled commitment to sustainability from its teams across the diversified Group even during extremely challenging times, a spokesman said.

This year was more significant as there were two additional wins for the 'Best Sustainability Project Awards' won by Western Power Company (Pvt) Ltd. - Sri Lanka's First Waste to Energy Power Plant Project and Elpitiya Plantations PLC - Go Green and Beyond Project.

Organised by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, this annual event recognises best practices of organisations that have successfully achieved a sustainable balance between social, environmental and economic performance.

Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake - Deputy Chairman and Managing Director of Aitken Spence PLC said, "We are honoured to win these many Awards amidst another extremely turbulent year. Our hardworking and

committed teams across the Group are driven by a sustainability mindset and it is one of the main reasons behind our multiple wins, not just this year but for more than a decade. This further validates the approach we have adopted across the leadership of Aitken Spence and is a reflection on our sustainability ethos".

"Aitken Spence is one of the very few organisations in Sri Lanka that are truly international with a presence in eight countries with diverse socio-

economic and environmental priorities to manage. Because of this, developing a strategy that encompasses the priorities of all our operations is more complex. Our performance at these awards shows that we have succeeded in developing a strategy that is replicable across multiple industries and geographies. I wholeheartedly thank the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and all our stakeholders that have been on this long journey with us," he said.

Coronavirus Pandemic Could Cost Global Tourism \$2 T This Year

The coronavirus pandemic will likely cost the global tourism sector US \$2 trillion in lost revenue in 2021, the UN's tourism body said on Monday (29 November), calling the sector's recovery "fragile" and "slow."

According to the latest forecast by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the same amount was lost in 2020, making it one of the sectors hit hardest by the health crisis.

Despite recent improvements, the report warned that demand for travel could be further affected by "uneven vaccination rates around the world and new COVID-19 strains which had prompted new travel restrictions in some countries."

In the past few days, the emergence of the Omicron variant has led dozens of countries to reinstate restrictions on arrivals, or to delay relaxation in COVID-19 travel and testing rules, leading to wide uncertainty for holiday season travellers worldwide.

Spikes in oil prices and the disruption of global supply chains have also had an effect. According to the latest UNWTO data, international tourist arrivals are expected to remain 70-75 per cent below 2019 levels in 2021, a similar decline as in 2020.

'We cannot let our guard down'

Although a 58 per cent increase in tourist arrivals was registered in



July-September of this year compared to the same period in 2020, this remained 64 per cent below 2019 levels, the UN body found.

In August and September, arrivals were at 63 per cent lower than 2019, which is the highest monthly result since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Between January and

September 2021, worldwide international tourist arrivals stood at 20 per cent lower, compared to 2020, a clear improvement from the 54 per cent drop, over the first six months of the year.

"Data for the third quarter of 2021 is encouraging," UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said. "However, arrivals are still 76 per

cent below pre-pandemic levels and results across the different global regions remain uneven."

In light of the rising cases and the emergence of new variants, he added that "we cannot let our guard down and need to continue our efforts to ensure equal access to vaccinations, coordinate travel procedures, make use of digital vaccination certificates to facilitate

mobility, and continue to support the sector."

Uneven recovery

Despite the improvement, seen in the third quarter of the year, the pace of recovery remains slow and uneven across world regions.

In some sub-regions, such as Southern and Mediterranean Europe, the Caribbean, North and Central America, arrivals actually rose above 2020 levels in the first nine months of 2021.

However, arrivals in Asia and the Pacific were down by as much as 95 per cent when compared with 2019, as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel.

Africa and the Middle East recorded 74 per cent and 81 per cent drops respectively in the third quarter compared to 2019. Among the larger destinations, Croatia, Mexico and Turkey showed the strongest recovery in the period of July to September.

Caribbean rebound

The Caribbean had the highest results of any of the subregions defined by the UNWTO, with arrivals up 55 per cent compared to 2020.

International tourist arrivals "rebounded" during the summer season in the Northern Hemisphere thanks to increased travel confidence, rapid vaccination and the easing of entry restrictions in many nations.

In Europe, the EU Digital Covid Certificate has helped facilitate free movement within the European Union, the report added.



S. Korea set to build largest tourism resort in Northeast Asia

A project to create the biggest tourist resort in Northeast Asia has taken a step forward after its developers secured USD 1.5 billion in funding.

The Inspire Integrated Resort is to be built in the Incheon Free Economic Zone near the city's international airport. The first phase will include a five-star hotel with more than 1,000 rooms, a 15,000-capacity concert hall, an indoor waterpark, shopping mall and casino.

The financing success was announced today by the Free Economic Zone. If all goes to plan, Inspire will open in 2023, when it is hoped the COVID-19 pandemic will have subsided and international travel resumed.

The project is being developed by a consortium made up of Connecticut-based Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority (MGTA), Korean industrial company KCC and UK investor Miura Holdings, in cooperation with Incheon International Airport.

Mohegan agreed the project with the Incheon International Airport Corporation back in June 2015. It said at the time that the resort would "create an epicentre for Korea's growing entertainment, tourism and hospitality industry".

Incheon airport commented that the resort would cement its position as not only "the best airport in the world but also as a top leisure destination in Asia".

It said: "We look forward to benefiting from MTGA's expertise and collaborating with our existing partners and 40,000 employees to execute on this vision and deliver exceptional experiences for our guests."

Incheon plans to develop three resort complexes in the economic zone - Inspire, Paradise City and RFKR.

Paradise City opened in April 2017, but the development of the remaining projects has been delayed by the pandemic. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism agreed in March to extend the projects' deadlines and ease funding conditions.

Park Nam-chun, the mayor of Incheon City, commented: "I'm glad that the project has secured funds despite concerns amid COVID-19. We will continue to work hard to make Incheon one of the popular tourist cities by connecting our tourism infrastructure with the resort complexes."

(GCR)

Omicron could worsen situation for tourism

The return of stricter covid restrictions to fight the latest variant, Omicron, has already left some travelers stranded. For many tourism businesses, it is also threatening hopes of an upcoming holiday boost this year — especially after last year's shutdowns emptied out popular destinations from the Colosseum in Rome to the resort island of Bali.

"There was a kind of sunrise on the horizon" earlier this year, said Tobias Warnecke, the German hotel association's economic adviser. Now, thanks to infections and rule changes roaring back, and fears over Omicron, "we have a lot of cancellations, and we're on our way down."

With scientists rushing to better understand the variant and its high number of mutations, governments including in the United States have started tightening masking, quarantine and travel rules. Many have closed their borders to the southern region of Africa where scientists first detected the variant, though it has since popped up in more than a dozen countries, from Canada to Japan.

The timing also has the aviation industry worried. The president of Emirates airline has noted that a hit to the peak travel season in December could cause "significant traumas in the business," which had been seeing a recovery.

The pandemic was already projected to cost the world's

tourism sector a loss of \$1.6 trillion in 2021, the UN tourism body said, an estimate it made shortly before the discovery of the Omicron variant, which the World Health Organization warns poses a "very high" global risk.

Revenue from global tourism and arrivals rebounded this year to some extent from 2020, while remaining below 2019 levels before the pandemic battered the sector, the United Nations World Tourism Organization said in a report published this week. Last year, the direct economic loss in tourism was about \$2.0 trillion.

"Uneven vaccination rates around the world and new Covid-19 strains could impact the already slow and fragile recovery," the UN body also warned.

Weeks before the spread of Omicron, a wave of coronavirus infections had already prompted closures and curfews in much of Europe. Warnecke, from the German hotel association, described the new variant as "another bad news," although he added it was too early to predict its full impact on hotels before it is clear how it interacts with existing vaccines.

For Golden Tours, a London tour operator that takes visitors to the Warner Bros. Studio Tour — where fans can see the sets from the Harry Potter films — trips are still going ahead but cancellations have started streaming in, according to office supervisor Frank Jacobs.

Britain's high vaccination rates and the lifting of restrictions — including a mask mandate that has just come back — led to a rise in bookings since the summer and an expectation of booming business for the Christmas holidays, he added. "We had December completely booked up," he said. "But now since last week, everything is changing."

Berlin also saw "massive cancellations" in the last two weeks, according to Thomas Lengfelder, head of the city's hotel and restaurant association. Employees were "once again very unsettled" about the possibility of a new lockdown cutting back work, he said, and called for the ramping up of vaccinations.

Still, some businesses remain optimistic about their Christmas prospects. For Le Meurice hotel in Paris, as well as others the Dorchester Collection oversees in Rome, London and Los Angeles, Omicron has yet to hit holiday bookings beyond a "slight" uptick in cancellations. "So far, despite news of the new variant, the end of this year is still looking positive for us," the hotel operator said in an email. "2021 has definitely been a better year than 2020 and should remain so."

(Washington Post)



Venture Engine Advances to Workshop Phase

Sri Lanka's pioneering startup acceleration programme, Venture Engine kicked off its workshop phase. Over the next few weeks, participants will focus on upgrading their business acumen and other skills and be better prepared to engage with potential investors and mentors.

Now filtered down to the most fundable startups, following a series of two-minute pitches held on 16 November 2021, Venture Engine's participants are currently taking part in a number of workshops where they will be challenged via interactive and group

Most fundable startups filtered down from large pool of entries

learning opportunities, and individualised mentoring. This will culminate in two more rounds of filtering, planned for December 2021 and January 2022, during which the pool of participants will be brought down further until the programme's finalists will be selected. They will then move to this edition's Finale, which has already been slated for 27 January 2022.

According to Kishan Nadarajah,

Principal at BOV Capital, who took part in first round of filtering: "We are pleased to have once again seen a very positive response to Venture Engine in 2021, especially considering Sri Lanka has only recently emerged from a lockdown that lasted several weeks. The number and quality of the submissions received in 2021 has been encouraging, including representation from high growth potential sectors like FinTech, EduTech, Logistics and Sustainability."

"By filtering this year's large number of submissions to the most promising and fundable startups, we feel we can better prepare them to meet the expectations of the VCs, Angels and other HNIs (High Net-worth Individuals) attending our Finale showcase next month. And our ultimate hope is that those taking part in the Venture Engine programme will one day pass on their skills and aid Sri Lanka's startup ecosystem in

continuing to grow, and shine, globally," added Nadarajah.

This phase of Venture Engine 2021 comprises the following workshops: 'What investors look for in a pitch/deck', by BOV Capital; 'Branding you and your business', by AOD; 'Financial due diligence', from KPMG; 'Finance planning and governance', by PwC; 'Funding cycle and valuation', from Aavishkaar Capital; 'Go to market and the value proposition', by SL@100; and 'Shareholder agreements and legal governance', from Nithya Partners.

Daraz commits to coosting e-commerce innovation, growth in SL



Daraz Group CEO, Bjarke Mikkelsen visited Sri Lanka on 25-26 November. During his visit he met with key government leaders and officials including, Namal Rajapaksa, Minister of Youth and Sports and State Minister of Digital Technology and Enterprise Development, Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Regional Cooperation, Ajith Nivard Cabraal, Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Oshada Senanayake, Chairman of the Information and Communication Technology Agency and Director General of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka.

During these meetings, Mikkelsen expressed Daraz's commitment to boosting e-commerce innovation and growth in Sri Lanka, and discussed key initiatives that Daraz will take forward with the Government of Sri Lanka and relevant agencies to increase e-commerce-related jobs in Sri Lanka

and raise the standards of education related to online marketplaces and buying and selling online.

"Daraz has seen tremendous growth in Sri Lanka over the last couple of years, but e-commerce is still only a fraction of the retail market. Seller and consumer education are going to be a key focus of our work and we are happy to work closely together with the Government on a number of initiatives. With a strong public-private partnership we are confident that e-commerce will become a vital industry that not only creates jobs but provides many other opportunities for communities across the island," Mikkelsen said.

Daraz Sri Lanka aims to have at least 100,000 active and educated small and medium enterprises selling on its platform, which in turn could lead to at least 300,000-400,000 new jobs in Sri Lanka.

Sarvodaya-Fusion partners Google to launch 'Be Internet Awesome'

The Programme will help kids be safe, confident explorers of the online world and provide parents and teachers with tools to guide children

Sarvodaya-Fusion, the ICT for Development arm of Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, is working with Google to bring the 'Be Internet Awesome' programme to Sri Lanka. Be Internet Awesome is Google's free programme designed to teach kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety in a fun and engaging format so they can explore the online world with confidence. It also includes resources for educators and families.

The programme is set to be carried out nationally, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA).

Maithree Malwattagoda, General Manager of Sarvodaya-Fusion said, "With learning moving online during the pandemic, the need for children, parents and teachers to have a better understanding of safe and ways to use the internet is greater than ever. This is why we are thrilled to be able to introduce this global programme to Sri Lankan children, with this collaboration with Google."

'Be Internet Awesome' is an activity-based programme with five-lessons on being Internet Smart, Internet Alert, Internet Strong, Internet Kind and Internet Brave. The programme will be conducted online and offline due to the uncertainties currently faced by the nation. A web game called 'Interland' has also been developed to test the children's knowledge on the lessons



provided in the programme.

Nick Bauer, Government Affairs and Public Policy Manager for Google, said, "At Google, we believe that technology can be a force for good - unlocking creativity, fostering expression, and imparting skills that help children and young people build their futures. But at the same time, we recognize that technology can also create risks. We are happy to partner with organisations like Sarvodaya-Fusion to help protect children while also enabling them to play, express themselves and learn online. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Ministry of Education and ICTA for their collaboration."

Sarvodaya-Fusion has been educating children and youth on ethical and effective use of digital devices and tools since 2015 through multiple initiatives. Once such initiative is 'IT yahamaga',

which was designed to disseminate knowledge to different communities around the country, while constantly revising content to keep up with rapidly changing technology. The initiative paved the way for Sarvodaya-Fusion to introduce these communities' ways to overcome the ever increasing social and economic challenges faced.

Now, with the introduction of 'Be Internet Awesome', Sarvodaya-Fusion can aim at one of its most important segments, the 7-to-14-year age group who has been introduced to the online world due to the pandemic. The need to educate these children on safe, ethical use of the online world is of paramount importance, and this collaboration and programme is dedicated to pass on that knowledge based on real world scenarios in a very child friendly manner.



Aitken Spence Travels welcomes travellers from Kazakhstan

Aitken Spence Travels, the leading destination management company (DMC) in Sri Lanka working in partnership with TUI Kazakhstan, welcomed its first flight for the winter season from Kazakhstan on Wednesday (1). Air Astana the flag carrier of Kazakhstan, will be operating three flights per week every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and has a capacity of 160 passengers. The flights will continue until April 2022. All travellers booked through Aitken Spence Travels are fully vaccinated travellers, travelling for the purpose of leisure holidays.

Accommodation has been booked mainly in four to five star hotels, with several selected luxury hotel properties also being purchased. Aitken Spence Travels has secured bookings for over 30 properties so far, and the number is likely to increase to 50 by the peak of the season. The clients have booked excursions to the cultural triangle, Pinnawala elephant orphanage, Yala and Whale watching.

Commenting on this flight operation from Kazakhstan Nalin Jayasundera, Managing Director of Aitken Spence

Travels said, "On the 17th of November in Almaty, Kazakhstan a workshop was held which was followed by a grand launch ceremony promoting Destination Sri Lanka. The event was patronised by over 250 travel agents and dignitaries in the tourism industry who were privy to the Destination Sri Lanka presentation. We are currently in discussion with the authorities to increase the number of flights per week by the end of December enabling more tourists to visit Sri Lanka".

"Our long-standing relationship with TUI, the largest integrated tourism management company in the world has provided a plethora of opportunities for the tourism industry in Sri Lanka by positioning Sri Lanka as a destination in their network," further commented Jayasundera.

Once again, tour operators and DMCs have aided the tourism industry's recovery by intervening to secure flights to Sri Lanka. Working relentlessly to present a favourable image of Destination Sri Lanka in the eyes of travel agents and potential markets interested in visiting Sri Lanka.

SLT-MOBITEL powered SLIoT Challenge 2020, IESL RoboGames 2020

SLT-MOBITEL, the National ICT, Telecommunications and Mobile Services Provider was the proud sponsor of SLIoT Challenge 2020 and IESL RoboGames 2020, championing innovation in Internet of Things (IoT) and robotics to reward and further develop a pipeline of tech talent and critical skills among Sri Lanka's youth. The winners of the competitions were honoured at a special ceremony held recently.

SLIoT Challenge 2020 and IESL RoboGames 2020 was a collaborative effort between SLT-MOBITEL, the Department of Computer Science and Engineering of the University of Moratuwa and the IT and Computer Engineering Sectional Committee of Institution of Engineers of Sri Lanka (IESL). Recognising the value of promoting digital inclusion among youth and to develop new generation technology concepts, SLT-MOBITEL sponsored the event for the fourth consecutive year. Both competitions encourage technological innovation among youth which in turn provides avenues for SLT-MOBITEL to capitalize on its futuristic thinking towards a connected future.

The SLIoT Challenge 2020 theme centred around the current pandemic 'Overcoming COVID-19 with IoT' and over 77 submissions were received. SLT-MOBITEL comprehends that IoT is being widely embraced with the number of connected devices growing rapidly. SLT-MOBITEL recognises that driving an IoT competition for Sri Lankan youth allows students to unleash their potential in the IoT domain and acts as a gateway to



support the country's evolution towards digital transformation.

Preceding the competition, to provide knowledge, education and create awareness on IoT and related technology, a series of technical and business workshops, including a session on narrowband IoT (NB-IoT) were held for the participants.

In first place, winning the SLIoT Challenge 2020 edition from the Undergraduate category, was Team Eureka Innovations. Second and third place rankings were awarded to Teams Kaspers and Wewingo respectively. In the Open category - Team ANANKE won first place, with Teams Enet and Proactive Ants ranked second and third.

Significantly, the IESL RoboGames 2020 was the first virtual robot competition to be held in Sri Lanka. The competitors were tasked with building simulated

robots on a 3D maze-like arena developed on the opensource Webots Robot Simulator cyberbotics.com platform. A total of 23 school teams and 48 university teams registered in the IESL RoboGames 2020 competition, of which four school teams and eight university teams went through to the final competition.

In the IESL RoboGames University category, three teams from the University of Moratuwa battled for the championship. The winning team was Team Circuit Breakers while Robo Sapiens was placed First Runner-up and Pitch Black ranked 2nd Runner-up. In the School Category the Champions were Team Trix from Maliyadeva College, First Runner-up was Robo Sapiens from Royal Institute and Second Runner-up was TRC Team 1 from Taxila Central College.

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PRIYANGWADA PERERA
CEYLON TODAY FEATURES

Ever Had a Penpal?

When was the last time you received a letter, a personal letter? Discard all the bills you get in the post and recall when was the last time you got a handwritten letter or a card via snail mail?

Even though there is no specific 'day' in Sri Lanka that we celebrate having and being a penpal, like in the US, it is interesting to know the history of penpals.

It was in 1860 that Modern Postal Services were introduced and people started receiving letters through modern post. By 1931, the term 'penpal' was included in the Oxford English Dictionary. There started all kinds of penpals and before the world wide web, or the internet friendship was on a very different scale.

In a world where the internet was not a reality, for a 14-year-old me, getting a penpal from Germany, one from America and by the time I turned 15 years old getting another two from Finland, was like having the entire world at my doorstep. In fact, we first found our foreign penpals via International Youth Service (IYS). Everything was done on snail mail.

How we'd go about it, is by choosing four countries, indicating the preferred age and gender of our possible penpal. The forms were filled in school since it was cheaper to send a full coupon of 12 people. Plus, it would also mean one extra penpal free of charge. We could request a penpal by paying them one US\$1.

With our language abilities, interests and hobbies, they matched the requirements of the youngsters who were interested in finding foreign friends. Anyone between the ages 10-20 could request a penpal. Each person would get the address of a penpal and we had to write the first letter. If we were lucky, we also had the chance of receiving a letter from a 'surprise pen pal'. As teenagers, when my best friend found a great girl from Germany, one fine day she sent us the addresses of five of her best friends. But IYS got us going. Soon, everyone was filling the coupons and getting a penpal. From Grades 9 to 11, there never was a day in my class where a classmate did not receive a letter.

The joy of seeing classmates with a dainty, colourful letter with radiant envelopes and all kinds of stamps was shared joy. Letters were sent round the class and all of us read. They always had photographs of beautiful, exotic places, their friends and family and of course, their pets.

I remember how a Brazilian



Anne Lamberg-Finland



Anne Lamberg-Finland

boy never wrote back and a boy from Czech Republic never sent more than one letter and so did the British girl I was in touch with. But the other four continued. To this day, I stay in touch with all four. Now the communication has moved to social media of course, however, the letters, gifts, posters and everything that came from overseas are still kept like treasures. Today, we get agitated and impatient when the internet is slow, calls are not

picked up or missed calls are not attended to, I think of our old life. How did we have the patience to wait for over a month to hear from someone? There was so much anticipation and ecstasy when the letter finally did arrive. There was no joy like receiving letters.



Lena Jurgens-USA



Heli Vartiainen-Finland



IYS Coupon



Doggies from German and Finland

The joy of collecting the letter ourselves would often be missed because we would be at school. So, holidays were even more important where we could actually collect the letter ourselves from the postman.

People keep glorifying yesteryears and it all gets tagged as nostalgia. However, if you are wise enough to have an impartial view you would know it is neither that simple or cheap. To have someone from a different country, who takes the trouble to sit down and handwrite pages and pages of letters is beautiful enough.

On top of it, we made sure to find beautiful writing pads and if there weren't any then came all the cutting, pasting, drawing and colouring-which produced customised writing sheets and envelopes. Looking back, you realise how much love, how much time and effort we put into each one of those letters while our parents bought us unique Sri Lankan gifts like handmade jewellery to send our penpals and bore all the postal charges before going to the post office to do the needful. It's a situation quite different from nowadays where it was not about just befriending someone and chatting online when you have time to kill -there was commitment and both parties were happy to work hard for it. It was a win-win situation.

It is sad to find out that International Youth Service is no more. Their heartbreaking announcement read that IYS has been in operation since 1952, and they have arranged pen friends from over 100 countries for school children for over 56 years. But "The internet has led to a situation where sending ordinary letters is old-fashioned. Letter writing, once very popular, is now a hobby of a few." I look at my photographs, picture postcards, bracelets, key tags, posters, letters, even the empty chocolate boxes from two decades ago and feel glad my childhood was different. Now it is just a matter of meeting them somehow. Perhaps, once the pandemic is over.



Shining Star!

Lil Nas X arrives in silver style for his performance at the iHeart Radio Jingle Ball



Mother-Son Duo

Terri and Robert Irwin poses with a snake in Australia



Game Night

Pete Davidson watches a basketball game at the Barclays centre



Paris Nights

Zendaya rocks a black gown at the Ballon d'Or awards ceremony in France



RedBull Gives 'Wiiings' to Local Drifting Scene

Redbull gave local drifting enthusiasts an unforgettable experience with Sri Lanka's first Red Bull Car Park Drift Clinic. Held on 27 November, the event was a first for Sri Lanka with over 35 drivers participating and a master class in drifting conducted by Lebanese champion driver Abdo Feghali.

Despite the challenge of hosting the event for the first time in Sri Lanka in addition to health guidelines and challenges of hosting a public event amidst the backdrop of the pandemic the response was inspiring and a true testament to the popularity of drifting in Sri Lanka and to Red Bull's commitment towards giving 'wiiings' to local drivers. The event was a reflection of Sri Lanka's potential to one day become a host country to the World Championship final in the future.

The Red Bull Car Park Drift was an anticipated event on the Red Bull events calendar. The sport attracted lot of interest not only among racing enthusiasts and drivers but also among spectators. As a first for Sri Lanka the event was doubly special as they even offered Sri Lankan drifters an opportunity to put their skill to test and learn from the champion drifter Abdo Feghali. Abdo Feghali came into the spotlight as a drifting legend when he became the rally champion at the inaugural Red Bull Car Park Drift event held in Lebanon in 2008. Feghali began his career in racing in 1998, going on to become a triple national champion Lebanon hosted the first ever Red



Bull Car Park Drift event in 2008 making it possible for all underground drifters to put their skills to test, and placed the spotlight on rally champion Abdo Feghali, making him a drifting legend. He broke the Guinness World Record for the longest drift in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in 2012 and won the overall Lebanese Rally Championship the following year. Feghali came in second at the Rally of Lebanon in 2000, 2004, 2006 and 2012 and was ranked third in 2002, 2003

and 2011. He has also been the Middle East's Hill Climb champion from 2007 to 2010 and the Lebanese Hill Climb Champion from 2006 and 2012.

Abdo Feghali is a Lebanese rally driver and triple national champion who began his career in 1998. His passion for drifting pushed him to develop his talent and become a drifting veteran. In 2013 Feghali won the overall Lebanese Rally Championship. In 2012, he broke the Guinness World Record for the



longest drift in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. In 2000, 2004, 2006 and 2012 Feghali came in second at the Rally of Lebanon whereas he ranked third in 2002, 2003 and 2011. Feghali was also crowned the Middle East's Hill Climb champion from 2007 to 2010 and the Lebanese Hill Climb Champion between 2006 and 2012.

The drifting circuit itself has various types of drifting challenges. The judging criteria covers car design,

sound and smoke levels in addition to the driver's overall drifting skills and skill through obstacle courses and other competitive challenges.

Local drifters and racing enthusiasts have more to look forward to next year as Red Bull Sri Lanka is planning to host Red Bull Car Park Drift qualifiers in 2022. The recently concluded clinic session was just a teaser of the main even to come but left spectators and racers revved up and ready for more.

RAC: Helping to Overcome Difficulties

In the context of a global pandemic, International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated today (3) under the theme 'Fighting for rights in the post-COVID era.' This year's theme has been selected specially to look in to the challenges, barriers and opportunities for people who live with disabilities during the time of the pandemic.

The Ratmalana Audiology Centre or fondly known as the RAC by its clients and the people in the area was set up 15 years ago to be the Centre of Excellence in Hearing and Speech therapy for the benefit of people with hearing, speech and educational difficulties. The RAC had been providing free hearing screening of newborn babies born in government hospitals. The objective of doing so is to detect early any hearing impairments faced by them and to intervene early for better results and impact. Thereby reducing the negative impact from undetected or late detected congenital



hearing loss which could lead to significant language and academic delay in children. Further the RAC provides free hearing testing, speech therapy and special education services to all students at the Ceylon school for the Deaf and Blind Ratmalana. The centre specialises in helping manage hearing impairments in children

and adults through amplification (hearing aids). Speech and language therapy services at RAC help children and adults with communication disabilities to overcome them and have shown promising results over the years. The Speech and Language Therapy services have been beneficial for people with communication difficulties such

as; intellectual disability, persons with autism spectrum disorders, hearing impairment, stammering, various voice disorders, cerebral palsy, people with language or speech difficulties after a stroke, and so on.

Special education services at Ratmalana Audiology Centre have helped many children who struggled to enter mainstream school setups or who struggled to keep up with the mainstream school settings, to manage easily and perform better in the school.

RAC is well equipped with state-of-the-art testing laboratories and equipment and an experienced professional team of clinicians.

For information and appointments regarding Hearing, Speech and Special Education contact the centre on 0773945945 or for free online pre-screening log on to www.giftofsound.lk.

Early detection of hearing and speech impairments can change lives.

New President Elected to Colombo YMBA

The 123rd Annual General Meeting of the Colombo YMBA was held on 27 November at the Main Hall of the Association in Borella. This was a physical and virtual meeting, conducted in compliance with the COVID-19 health guidelines. At the beginning of the meeting, two minutes silence was observed to remember the deceased members. The ceremonial inauguration was started by the lighting of traditional oil lamp. The following Office Bearers for the period (2021/2022) were unanimously elected. Mahendra Jayasekera (President), Kusumabandu Samarawickrama (Vice President), Nalin J. Abeysekere (Vice President), Daya Weerasekera (Vice President), Sunil S. Sirisena (Vice President), D. Gamini Wimalasuriya (Vice President), Maddumage Ariyaratne (Honorary General Secretary) and Prasantha Abeykoon (Honorary Treasurer).

Liverpool Win Derby As Top Trio Break Clear in Title Race

Liverpool won the Merseyside derby with a 4-1 victory at Everton on Wednesday, while Premier League leaders Chelsea fought for a 2-1 win at Watford and Manchester City enjoyed a 2-1 victory at Aston Villa.

With fourth-placed West Ham held to a 1-1 draw at Brighton, they are now seven points behind third-placed Liverpool who, along with Chelsea and Manchester City, look set for a three-horse race for the title.

After 14 games, Chelsea lead on 33 points with City a point behind and Liverpool on 31.

Juergen Klopp's side got four goals at the home of their neighbours for the first time since 1982, with Mohamed Salah scoring twice to maintain his electric form.

Jordan Henderson put Liverpool in front with a magnificent curling shot in the ninth minute before setting up Salah for the second.

It was one-way traffic and Everton, led by former Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez, looked at real risk of an embarrassing scoreline.

Demarai Gray pulled back a goal before the interval to give a restless home crowd some hope before a mistake by Seamus Coleman allowed Salah in on goal to make it 3-1 and then Diogo Jota produced a brilliant turn before blasting past Jordan Pickford to complete the rout.

"I liked what I saw and it was by far the best performance we've done at Goodison," said Klopp.

"We made a big step in our development that we can take these kinds of games, even though they are really important for the opponent. We can put emotions to the side. It was for sure a nine-out-of-10 performance from each of the boys," added the German.



Liverpool's Jordan Henderson in action

Ziyech hits winner for Chelsea

After recent draws against Burnley and Manchester United, Chelsea could ill afford to drop points at Watford, but Manager Thomas Tuchel conceded they were fortunate to collect all three from Vicarage Road. The visitors took the lead when

Mason Mount coolly converted after a well-worked move in the 29th minute.

Watford deservedly levelled before the break through Nigerian Emmanuel Dennis only for substitute Hakim Ziyech to strike the winner 12 minutes later with the outstanding Mount the creator.

"We need a lot of points if we want to stay in the title race. We felt like we lost two points against Burnley and Manchester United. We stole minimum two, maybe three back today," said Tuchel.

"Overall we can do much better. There are some reasons - we have

injured players and some key players due to overload were not on the pitch. I don't want to be too critical. Watford deserved more," he added.

Outstanding first-half goals from Ruben Dias and Bernardo Silva set Manchester City on their way to victory at Steven Gerrard's Aston Villa. Portugal centre-half Dias blasted home from more than 20 metres after Raheem Sterling's cutback flashed across the penalty area. Silva doubled their advantage with a breathtaking effort in the 43rd, volleying superbly past Martinez from 15 metres after City broke away from their own penalty area with Riyad Mahrez releasing Gabriel Jesus on the right flank. Ollie Watkins got Villa back into the game but City collected their fourth league win in a row. "We came here against an incredible team with quality and top players and the way we played in the first half and even the second was magnificent," said City Manager Pep Guardiola.

"We conceded in the first minute of the second and it's so difficult but we played with huge personality, a really good game," he said.

An 89th-minute overhead kick from Neal Maupay frustrated West Ham at Brighton after the Londoners had taken an early lead through Czech midfielder Tomas Soucek's header.

Leicester City had to come from behind twice to get a 2-2 draw at Southampton with James Maddison's 49th-minute strike earning Brendan Rodgers's side a point that leaves the Foxes in eighth place.

Sixth placed Wolverhampton Wanderers were frustrated in a 0-0 draw at home to 18th-placed Burnley who have drawn five of their last seven games.

(Reuters)

ICC Test Rankings

Karunaratne, Latham move up; Afridi breaks into top-5

Sri Lanka Test captain Dimuth Karunaratne has returned to the top 10 in the latest released Test Player Rankings by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday.

Karunaratne who is currently the seventh in the Test batting ranking, was named 'Player of the Match' in the opening Test against West Indies in Galle, thanks to his scintillating batting. The Lankan skipper had scores of 147 and 83 in the match, which helped him jump four places to seventh, just one below his career-best sixth spot accomplished in August 2019.

Apart from Karunaratne, New Zealand opener Tom Latham has also joined the top-10 batters rankings after hitting half-centuries in both innings (95 and 52) of the

recently concluded first Test to save a crucial draw for the Blackcaps against India in Kanpur.

Australian star Steve Smith has gained one place to acquire the second position by replacing Kane Williamson in the batters rankings headed by England Test captain Joe Root. Indian stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have retained their fifth and sixth slots, respectively.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has slipped one spot to reach the eighth place, while Aussie opening batter David Warner has lost two positions to tenth.

Among the bowlers, Pakistan speedster Shaheen Afridi has gained three spots to reach his career-best fifth position.

Afridi was a star with the ball in the recently concluded first Test against Bangladesh. The left-arm pacer picked up seven wickets in the match that the visiting side won by eight wickets.

Similarly, New Zealand all-rounder Kyle Jamieson has entered the top-10 after taking a three-wicket haul against India in the Kanpur Test. Jamieson jumped six places to acquire the ninth spot in the bowlers' rankings headed by Pat Cummins.

Indian star Ravichandran Ashwin, who took six wickets in the Kanpur Test to go past Harbhajan Singh to become India's 3rd highest wicket-taker in red-ball format, retained his second spot.



Unbeaten Vidyaloka College Galle will meet Jaffna Central College in the final of the Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three Tier 'A' Cricket tournament conducted by Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Association (SLSCA) with sponsorship of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) at Nalanda College ground on Saturday (4).

Pasindu Lakshman leads Vidyaloka, while B. Inthujan leads Jaffna CC.

56 teams participated in the first round and were divided into 10 groups. Both teams advanced to the final round as group champions of their respective groups.

Vidyaloka was group champion of Group 'J' in the first round. They beat Debarawewa National School and Wanduramba Central College in the first round, Badulla Central College in the pre-quarter-final round, while the match against Ibbagamuwa Central College ended in no result. Vidyaloka advanced to the semi-finals according to net run rate, and beat Methodist High School Moratuwa in the semi-final.

Jaffna CC was group champion of Group 'F' in the first round. They beat Skandavarodaya MV Chunnakam, Hindu College Kokuvil, Hindu College Jaffna and St. Patrick's College Jaffna in the first round. In the pre-quarter-final they beat Royal College Polonnaruwa and St. Joseph's College Wattala in the

Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three Tier 'A' Cricket Tournament

Vidyaloka meet Jaffna CC in final on Saturday

quarter final. They beat Rajasinghe Central College Hanwella in the semi-final.

Squads:

Jaffna Central College: B. Inthujan (captain), V. Viyaskanth, S. Abiyuth, B. Kavitharshan, G. Janujan, T. Kavejean, S. Sarangan, J. Vithusan, A. Kajan, R. Newton, T. Gowtham, M. Sansayan, N. Ajay, S. Anusanth, S. Similtan, D. Poulparamathayalan, U. Tharmikan, T. Abilash, S. Sayanthan, S. Mohammed, F.R. Seltan (Coach), S. Tharshan (Master-in-charge)

Vidyaloka College Galle: Pasindu Lakshman (Captain), Senith Praveen, Dilshan Kavinda, Dilan Rashinda, Dulara Nimsara, Sonal Ransara, Gihana Asanka, Chamith Shiran, Umesh Kavinda, Chamath Nirmal, Sasindu Lakshman, Hasanka Jayanath, Yasith Deshan, Umanga Imanjana, Dasun Chamod, Rashmika Prabath, Harsha Manohara, Hansaka Randeepa, Prageeth Bimsara, Thusitha Kariyawasam (Coach), L.R. Manatunge (Master-in-charge)



Vidyaloka College Galle



(IR) Jaffna Central College



Dilroy Fernando

Dilroy Fernando honoured for outstanding contribution to Asia rugby

Dilroy Fernando, former International Referee, present Secretary of the Advisory Committee for the Development of Rugby (appointed by the Minister of Sports), Chairman,

Referee Training & Development of the SLSRFR and current World Rugby trainer, received a special award in recognition of his outstanding contribution as a referee and for his

services towards the development of match officials in Asia. The presentation was made in Dubai during the Asia Rugby Awards night held on 1 December 2021.

Dhananjaya's unbeaten 153 flattens West Indies

Dhananjaya de Silva's undefeated 153 and his game-breaking partnership of 107 with Lasith Embuldeniya powered Sri Lanka to pole position at close of play on the penultimate day of the second Test versus the West Indies. The hosts were 328/8, ahead by 279 at stumps.

Meanwhile, the West Indies can only ponder upon a day of missed opportunities. At the start of the evening session, Sri Lanka were in front by 189 with only two wickets in hand. Unfortunately for the visitors, Dhananjaya put paid to West Indies' hopes of wrapping up the innings quickly and then for them to pursue the target. The middle order batter completed his hundred with a double off Veerasammy Permaul. He then opted to shift gears by cracking the punch and clubbing Roston Chase into the stands.

To make matters worse for the West Indies, Permaul missed a skier off his own bowling. In fact, in the morning session, de Silva had got another reprieve when Joshua Da Silva grassed a chance behind the stumps. Da Silva also missed a stumping opportunity to give Lasith Embuldeniya a reprieve. Kraigg Brathwaite, the skipper, was the unlucky bowler on that occasion.

In desperation, Kraigg Brathwaite even brought Nkrumah Bonner into the attack, but couldn't find that elusive breakthrough. By then, Dhananjaya was clearly in his zone and he soon completed his 150 by cracking one through the covers. Embuldeniya rubbed more salt into West Indies' wounds by lofting Chase for a six to bring up the 100-run stand.

The salient feature of Dhananjaya's knock was he rarely allowed the bowlers to settle into a rhythm. The middle order batter, who replaced Charith Asalanka at the crease in the morning session, showcased nimble footwork versus the spinners as he used the depth of the crease to play the cut. He also put on a fine exhibition of wristwork to collect useful runs.

Dhananjaya and his batting partner Pathum Nissanka (66) looked set to take the side to the

Sri Lanka 1st innings 204 all out Sri Lanka 2nd innings

D. Karunaratne Run Out K. Mayers	06
P. Nissanka lbw Roston Chase	66
O. Fernando Run Out J. Blackwood	14
C. Asalanka c N. Bonner b V. Permaul	19
D. de Silva Not Out	153
D. Chandimal c&b Roston Chase	02
R. Mendis c Kemar Roach b Kraigg Brathwaite	25
S. Lakmal lbw Veerasammy Permaul	07
A. Mathews c J. Blackwood b V. Permaul	01
Lasith Embuldeniya Not Out	25
Extras (4b 4lb 1nb Open 1w) 10	
Total (119.0 overs) 328-8	
Fall of Wickets : 1-7 Karunaratne, 2-39 Fernando, 3-73 Asalanka, 4-151 Nissanka, 5-157 Chandimal, 6-208 Wanigamuni, 7-219 Lakmal, 8-221 Mathews	
Bowling: Veerasammy Permaul 39-4-100-3, Roston Chase 27-2-82-2	

West Indies 1st Innings

K. Brathwaite b Embuldeniya	72
J. Blackwood lbw b Jayawickrama	44
N. Bonner lbw b Mendis	35
S. Hope lbw b Mendis	22
R. Chase c Asalanka b Mendis	10
K. Mayers not out	36
J. Holder lbw b Mendis	04
J. Da Silva b Mendis	00
K. Roach c de Silva b Jayawickrama	08
V. Permaul b Embuldeniya	15
J. Warrican c sub (C. Karunaratne) b Mendis	01
Extras (nb 6) 06	
Total (all out in 104 overs) 253	
Fall of Wickets : 1-62 Blackwood, 2-137 Bonner, 3-166 Brathwaite, 4-180 Chase, 5-191 Hope, 6-197 Holder, 7-197 Da Silva, 8-208 Roach, 9-246 Permaul, 10-253 Warrican	
Bowling: Suranga Lakmal 9-3-22-0, Lasith Embuldeniya 35-13-94-2, Ramesh Mendis 34.2-8-70-6, Praveen Jayawickrama 25-4-59-2, Dhananjaya de Silva 1-0-8-0	

lunch break, but against the run of play, the latter played back to a skidder from Roston Chase and was trapped in front. After the break, Dinesh Chandimal fell to a soft dismissal.



Dhananjaya de Silva

However, that didn't deter Dhananjaya from going for his shots as he employed the sweep while facing Jomel Warrican. He also added a useful stand of 51 with Ramesh Mendis before Brathwaite removed the all-rounder. Permaul then bagged the wickets of Suranga Lakmal and the injured Mathews in quick succession. Just that they couldn't pick another wicket for the rest of the day.

With the track offering enough assistance for the spinners, Sri Lanka now would fancy their chances of taking the series 2-0 on the final day.

Lanka Premier League 2021 Anil Mohan reveals reason behind Dambulla Viiking termination

Says their owner's name came up in Money Laundering case

By **MUSTAQA SYDEEN**

Anil Mohan, Founder and CEO, Innovative Production Group (Rights Holder of the LPL), says the reason behind Dambulla Viiking termination from this year's Lanka Premier League (LPL), is because their owner's name appeared in a money laundering case. He disclosed this during a media briefing that took place in Colombo yesterday.

"Telugu Warriors (the former owner of Dambulla Viiking franchise during the inaugural Lanka Premier League (LPL) 2020 season), there was a problem with the owner, where his name appeared in Indian newspapers and he was arrested. So, due to that, we've taken the decision that they should not be involved in this year's LPL. We don't want to spoil the LPL name, so this is the reason we didn't go with them this year. We had some issues from the Anti-Corruption Unit of ICC also, and that's the reason we didn't go with them."

The second edition of the Lanka Premier League 2021, Sri Lanka's topmost domestic T20 tournament with an international flavour, will kick-off on 5 December at the R. Premadasa International cricket stadium, Colombo, with a spectacular opening ceremony.

Following the opening ceremony, the inaugural game of this year's edition will be played between the Jaffna Kings and Galle Gladiators, who were the champions and runner-



Anil Mohan addressing the media briefing (Pic by Venura Chandramalitha)

up, respectively during last year's competition.

The tournament will feature top notch Sri Lankan and International stars, and also provide opportunities for the young and emerging stars of Sri Lanka.

Reportedly two African players have informed SLC that they will not participate in this year's LPL due to flights being cancelled or downscaled across the continent amid new restrictions and uncertainty over the spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. However, the players currently playing in the T10 League in Abu Dhabi will be available to take part.

Colombo Stars, Jaffna Kings, Galle Gladiators, Kandy Warriors and Dambulla Giants will be competing for the LPL title 2021.

The first Leg of the tournament will be played at the RPICS, Colombo, whilst the tournament will move to MRICS, Hambanthota, for the knock-out stage, where the eliminator, qualifier 1 and 2, and the finals will be played.

The Day games will be starting at 3.00 p.m. and the night games at 7.30 p.m. The tournament will be shown live across the globe.

Abu Dhabi T10 League Tom Kohler-Cadmore misses record century

Wanindu Hasaranga spins out Bangla Tigers

Deccan Gladiators' Tom Kohler-Cadmore notched up the highest score of the Abu Dhabi T10 by scoring 96 in just 39 balls that helped his team defeat Bangla Tigers by 62 runs on Wednesday (1 December). The Bangla Tigers' chase never took off courtesy Wanindu Hasaranga, who continued his dream run with the ball and picked up a five-wicket haul to skittle Du Plessis' men for 79. Gladiators' seventh win meant that they leaped to the top of the points table with 14 points.

Bangla Tigers, who have relied heavily on their top order in the tournament, made a disastrous start to their chase of 140. Hazratullah Zazai, who had dropped Kohler-Cadmore's catch earlier in the evening, got out on the second delivery he faced. Will Jacks followed him back to the pavilion after finding his stumps rattled by Sultan Ahmed.

Hasaranga got hit for a six by Karim Janat on the second ball of his spell, but came back strongly by removing Janat and Johnson Charles in successive deliveries to reduce the Tigers to 26/4. Faf du Plessis and Isuru Udana tried to put the innings back on track with a few big hits, but the task in front of them was too massive. Hasaranga shot out the lower middle order in the next over to complete his fifer.

Earlier, the Deccan Gladiators stuck to their template of attacking from ball one. By promoting Andre Russell up the order, they sent in their most explosive batsman to open the game with Tom Kohler-Cadmore.

However, the West Indian was overshadowed by Kohler-Cadmore's assault on the troika of left-arm seamers of Bangla Tigers that allowed the Gladiators to race to 45 in the first three overs. The



Wanindu Hasaranga

assault continued when captain Du Plessis pressed another left-hander into action as Isuru Udana leaked 15 runs in his first over. Kohler-Cadmore brought up his half-century in the same over in just 18 balls.

The ever-reliable Benny Howell brought some sanity to the proceedings by bowling a 5 run over, but the runs leaked from the other end. By lofting Udana over long-off for a boundary, Kohler-Cadmore took his team's total past 100 while entering the 80s himself.

With Kohler-Cadmore on 96 at the beginning of the final over, Russell gave him the strike on the second ball of the over to complete his ton. But the Englishman couldn't send Luke Wood's low full-toss beyond the flying Jack Wills at mid-off who hung on to a stunner. With three balls left in the innings, Odean Smith threw his bat at everything and managed to connect two deliveries for two sixes to take the Gladiators to 140.

Brief scores:

Deccan Gladiators: 140/1 (Tom Kohler-Cadmore 96, Andre Russell 26 not out, Whiteley 26, Luke Wood 1-36)
Bangla Tigers: 78/9 (Isuru Udana 33, Faf du Plessis 15; Wanindu Hasaranga 5/8)

106th Colombo Championship Tennis Tournament 2021 Vichintaya and Venuka set up final clash in U-16 Boys' category



Vichintaya Nilaweera

Vichintaya Nilaweera of Stafford International School and Venuka Kithnula of S. Thomas College Mt Lavinia, booked their slots in the final of the U-16 boys' category when they defeated Zahid Zihar (4/2, 4/2) and Thilina Dissanayake (4/2, 4/0) at the 106th Colombo Championship



Venuka Kithnula

Tennis Tournament 2021 yesterday.

Meanwhile, in the under-12 girls' semi-final Githmi Fernando of Ave Maria Convent Negombo defeated Akeesha Silva in a thrilling three setter (5/3, 2/4, 10/01), and will now face Gehansa Methnadi of Museaus College in the final.

Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three Tier 'B' Cricket Tournament Hindu Matale advance to the semi-finals

Hindu College Matale advanced to the semi-final of the Under-19 Inter Schools Division Three tier 'B' Cricket tournament conducted by Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Association (SLSCA) with sponsorship of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Hindu College beat St. Michael's College Batticaloa by 5 wickets according to the Parabola

method in the quarter-final played at Royal College ground Polonnaruwa yesterday.

Scores:

St. Michael's: 156 (48.1) (S. Susikaran 38, A. Yathushan 26, M. Mathisa 25, J. Abilashan 25, G. Sujeewan 3/20, J. Nimeshan 3/22, K. Sangeeth 2/33)

Hindu College: 113/5 (25) (B. Abishek 41 n.o., S. Sanoj 20, V. Sathurjanan 3/14)

QUARTER FINAL

D.S. Senanayake National School Ampara will meet Pannala National School at Royal College ground Polonnaruwa today.

(IR)

100th RCGC Championship Reshan and Rajeeve advance to quarter-final

By **SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

13-year-old Reshan Algama (the youngest in the event), and Rajeeve Rajapakse played top-class golf to beat Nirekh Tejwani and Kushal Johnpillai respectively at the pre-quarter-final encounters of the 100th RCGC Championship yesterday.

Meanwhile, defending champion Yannik Kumara won his game against Gihan Siribaddana 5/4, and will face Chanaka Perera at 1.10 p.m. in the first quarter-final today (3) followed by the other three games.

In the Ladies Bronze Cup, Frank de Mel, Dinoo de Mel, Ruani Desinghe and V. Fowler Watt qualified for the semi-finals, which takes place today.

Results

Yannik Kumara beat Gihan Siribaddana 5/4
Chanaka Perera beat Levon Niyarepola 2/1
Husni Uwise beat Mahela Jayawardena 1 up
Rajeeve Rajapakse beat Kushal Johnpillai 2/1
Chandana Gunasekera w/o from Sachin de Silva
Sudath Kumara beat Ravindra S. Wijegunaratne 4/2
Reshan Algama beat Nirekh Tejwani 2/1
Rusi Captain beat Manjula Chandrasoma 7/6

Men's Quarter-final line-up

Yannik Kumara Vs Chanaka Perera
Husni Uwise Vs Rajeeve Rajapakse
Chandana Gunasekera Vs Sudath Kumara
Reshan Algama Vs Rusi Captain

Ladies Silver - Quarter-final

Niloo Jayathilake Vs Anouk Chitty
Arika Wickremasinghe Vs Kaya Daluwatte