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THE CEYLON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BEST CORPORATE CITIZEN SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2021
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Power Outage Deliberate – CEB Chairman

Power Ministry initiates internal probe

Outages during peak hours to continue

By THAMBEENAH RAZEEM

Govt suspends LP gas delivery

Gas companies continue distribution

By THAMBEENAH RAZEEM

In the midst of the LP gas debate, the State Minister of Co-operative Services, Marketing Development, and Consumer Protection decided, on 3 December, to temporarily suspend the delivery of LP gas to consumers.

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Lankan factory manager murdered in Pakistan

PM Kahn to oversee investigations

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan assured that he is overseeing the investigations into the brutal murder of a Sri Lankan factory manager in Silalkot...



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SL's first case of Omicron detected

Returnee from Nigeria tests positive

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

Sri Lanka detected its first case of Omicron Coronavirus variant, just seven days after the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated B.1.1.529 as a variant of concern.

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Power failure in Parliament Govt requests Speaker to call for CID probe

By GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

Chief Government Whip Johnston Fernando requested Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena to call for a CID investigation into the power outage experienced in Parliament on Friday (3), during...

Story Continued on PAGE 2 ▶

CEBEU suspends work-to-rule

By FAADHILA THASSIM

The Ceylon Electricity Board Engineers' Union (CEBEU) on Friday (3), temporarily called off their work-to-rule campaign, which was being conducted until several demands, including the termination of the Yugadanavi Power Plant deal are met.

Story Continued on PAGE 6 ▶

STF arrests eight gold diggers

By INOKA UDAYANGANI - BATTARAMULLA

The STF arrested eight persons found scouring for gold items and weapons buried by the LTE during the conflict. According to STF sources these suspects had been rounded up...

Story Continued on PAGE 2 ▶

President leaves for Abu Dhabi

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa left the country on Friday (3), to attend the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) to be held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The President who arrived at the Passenger Terminal of the Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake to leave the country engaged in cordial discussions with the passengers.

Story Continued on PAGE 2 ▶

Ministries to be funded in four quarters

Informed sources said the Ministry of Finance has decided not to release the full endowment allocated by the Budget to each Ministry.

Subject Minister Basil Rajapaksa informed the Cabinet that the entire amount set aside for each Ministry for development work will now be separated into four quarters.

He explained that the first instalment will be released to all Ministries, but...

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Omicron’s Transmissibility Study Underway – WHO

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated on Friday (3) that countries in the South-East Asia Region should strengthen COVID-19 response measures to limit the spread of the virus and its variants.

Studies are underway to evaluate Omicron’s transmissibility, severity, reinfection risk, immune escape potential, clinical presentation, response to other available countermeasures, etc. Preliminary

evidence suggests higher transmissibility and potential immune escape that could lead to surge in cases. Regardless of change in severity, increase in cases alone may pose overwhelming demand on healthcare systems and may lead to increased morbidity and mortality, WHO says.

“Strengthening surveillance to rapidly detect importation of any new variant and transmission of existing

virus and its variants; implementing calibrated public health and social measures and scaling up vaccination coverage, should continue to be our focus,” Regional Director WHO South-East Asia Region Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh said.

Within a week of announcement of Omicron as a new variant of concern, India on Friday confirmed the variant in two persons detected with COVID-19, the first few cases in WHO South-

East Asia Region. The Regional Director said as part of enhanced surveillance, countries need to ensure they have early warning systems in place composed of multiple indicators such as rapid increase in cases and test positivity rates. It is also important to monitor indicators related to disease severity and pressure on healthcare systems - such as bed occupancy in wards and intensive care units.

Event based surveillance must be enhanced such as rapid spread of outbreaks in healthcare facilities or communities which may be triggered by a variant that spreads more easily from person to person. Or increase in cases among populations expected to have a high level of immunity with prior infections or high vaccination coverage, which may indicate the presence of a variant able to evade the immune response.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lankan factory...

...Pakistan and that all those responsible will be punished with the full severity of the law.

He tweeted on Friday (3), “The horrific vigilante attack on factory in Sialkot & the burning alive of Sri Lankan manager is a day of shame for Pakistan. I am overseeing the investigations and let there be no mistake all those responsible will be punished with full severity of the law. Arrests are in progress.”

A mob in Sialkot tortured Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan man, who was working as a manager at a local factory, to death over blasphemy allegations before burning his body on Friday.

Sri Lanka’s Foreign Ministry issuing a statement said the Sri Lanka High Commission in Islamabad is in the process of verifying the details of the incident from the Pakistan authorities and that Sri Lanka expects that the Pakistan authorities will take required action to investigate and ensure justice.

Special Representative for Religious Affairs and Interfaith

Harmony Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi condemned the lynching on “behalf of all ulemas” and said that it had “defaced Islam”, DAWN reported.

“The elements involved in the incident have tried to damage Islamic laws and teachings,” he said, adding that the culprits will be punished for the “barbarism”.

Offering his condolences to the victim’s family, Ashrafi said that the country’s religious scholars will hold a joint press conference at a later date. “We will also go to the Sri Lankan embassy for condolences.”

He added that so far 50 people have been arrested and officials were working on identifying more culprits using CCTV footage. He said that an FIR of the incident will be registered under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The live video showed the bare bodied Sri Lankan dragged to the public while being beaten and later on set on fire.

DPO Malik said Police were still trying to determine what exactly prompted the mob to kill the Sri

Lankan, whose remains were sent to a hospital for an autopsy according to Pakistan’s Dawn newspaper.

Videos also showed hundreds of men and young boys gathered at the site, with groups of them chanting slogans.

Dawn reported that the mob tortured the man to death before burning his body, while a heavy contingent of Police has been sent to the area to bring the situation under control. No FIR has been registered and no arrests have been made as yet.

Official Tweets of Chief Minister Punjab, Pakistan, Usman Buzdar said he was extremely shocked at the horrific Sialkot incident. “I have instructed IG Police to thoroughly investigate it. No one is allowed to take law in their hands. Rest assured, individuals involved in this inhumane act will not be spared!”

Amnesty International said it was “deeply alarmed by the disturbing lynching and killing of a Sri Lankan factory manager in Sialkot, allegedly due to a blasphemy accusation”.

President leaves...

The first Indian Ocean Conference commenced in 2016 with the objective of discussing issues of common interest and concerns to countries in the Indian Ocean region and other countries using the Indian Ocean.

The Fourth Summit was held in the Maldives in 2019 and the theme was “Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional

Challenges”. The Indian Ocean Conference will be held from 4 to 5 December in Abu Dhabi and the theme of IOC 2021 is ‘Ecology, Economy, and Epidemic’. The inaugural address will be delivered by the President.

Foreign Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris and the Principal Advisor to the President Lalith Weeraratunga are accompanying the President on this visit.

STF arrests...

...following investigations carried out in Mawadichenai area in the Ichchhallampattu Police Division.

The STF stated that following intelligence reports, they had carried out a search operation in the said area, and at the time of the arrest the

suspects had been digging in search of gold and firearms buried by the LTTE.

They said that the suspects ranging from 31 to 56 years are residents of Nawalapitiya, Thambalagamawa, Kopul, Trincomalee, Gopur and Muttur areas.

Ministries to be...

...warned that they will need to archive their targets to be eligible for the second instalment. The Minister further pointed out that Ministries will have to furnish bills and relevant documents for expenses incurred before finances for the second quarter can be released.



How a Hybrid Integration Platform Can Drive Innovation

Originally published on Enterprise Times UK

Migrating to the Cloud

Digital transformation and the transition to the cloud can deliver agility, profitability, new revenue streams, and lead to exponential growth. However, there are several challenges that can stop an enterprise from moving to a complete cloud solution. These include the need to adhere to data laws (where regulations and policies prevent companies from moving all their data into the cloud), the necessity of taking a phased approach to shift existing systems to mitigate any negative impact on the business, and other requirements such as security and performance.

Moreover, the increasing complexity of integrating on-premises systems with cloud offerings—which include software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications, vast amounts of data, and an explosion of APIs—can overwhelm integration architects and developers. In this environment, connecting and standardizing an organization’s data and business processes across its entire application landscape, places a significant strain on traditional technologies, methods, and abilities.

This is where a hybrid integration platform (HIP) can help to accelerate technology changes, drive cloud adoption, and modernize integrations. Let me give you an example - a large multinational sports shoe manufacturer provides “trainer aficionados” mobile access to the brand’s premium training shoe lines via an app, which enables users to set notifications for upcoming releases and track their order status. The brand’s limited-edition shoes generate such demand that they tend to sell out instantly, making it crucial to have digital channels that can scale to bolster surging customer volumes. Also, owing to recent IoT initiatives, for example, information retrieved from sensors in running shoes and smartwatches, integration teams now must deal with a massive increase in data from thousands of endpoints.

“In most cases, the traditional integration toolkit, a set of task-specific integration tools, is unable to address this level of complexity,” according to a “Smarter with Gartner” article. “Organizations need to move toward what Gartner calls a hybrid integration platform or HIP.” Gartner goes on to say that, “the HIP is the ‘home’ for all functionalities that ensure the smooth integration of multiple digital transformation initiatives in an organization.”

What is a Hybrid Integration Platform?

For those less familiar, hybrid integration is the information exchange between multiple applications that are on-premises and in the cloud; a HIP should easily and seamlessly integrate these applications to deliver business functionality. Ideally, it should also provide support for standard and proprietary protocols with minimum configuration.

Forrester describes HIPs as, “Technologies that simplify and reduce the cost of the development, testing, deployment, and maintenance of application and data interfaces.” Now, more than ever, HIPs are key to the success and the survival of an enterprise. Based on a recent study by Research and Markets, spending on hybrid integration platforms is expected to grow to \$33.6 billion in 2022 from \$17.14 billion in 2017, which is a CAGR of 14.4%. By 2022, Gartner expects 65% of large organizations to implement HIPs to power digital transformation efforts.



So, What Are the Benefits?

These platforms reduce development costs and speed up integrating cloud and on-premises systems by providing a simplified development experience with built-in capabilities. They also provide secure communication between cloud and on-premises applications as well as well-designed SaaS application connectors and reusable integration templates for commonly used customer use cases.

Additionally, a HIP delivers the ability to seamlessly integrate on-premises systems with business partner systems, mobile applications, IoT devices, and SaaS applications. This eliminates the need to implement complicated integration scenarios from scratch. Companies can reuse platform-provided functionality to speed integration and reduce maintenance efforts. Other benefits include faster data integrations because it breaks data silos. Managed APIs expose an organization’s data with security and access controls to rapidly build their digital platforms, as well as manage cloud offerings that cater to an organization’s business requirements.



Asanka’s goal is to connect humans and technology by helping organizations implement digital transformation programs that result in customer-driven digital applications. In his current role, Asanka drives efforts to create, refine, and enhance WSO2’s corporate reference architecture and is responsible for spearheading a thought leadership outlook that defines WSO2’s corporate reference methodology for development, customer success, and implementation. Working closely with customers, partners, and analysts, he evangelizes WSO2’s technology vision. Asanka has over 20 years of industry experience, which includes designing and implementing highly scalable distributed systems, SOA and microservice architectures in the financial domain, mobile platforms, and various business integration solutions. He is also a committee of the Apache Software Foundation. Asanka is a regular speaker at numerous global events and many tech meetups in the San Francisco Bay Area.

What Should you Look for When Evaluating the Right HIP?

Choosing the right HIP can be challenging; here are some of the most important aspects to think about:

Application and Data Integration. One of the key aspects of a HIP is the ability to integrate different applications, data formats, and standards to deliver business functionality. IDC expects 49% of the world’s stored data to reside in public cloud environments by 2025. The HIP should provide capabilities such as content-based routing, message transformation, and support for standard and well-known proprietary protocols. Moreover, the platform should be capable of handling data at rest and in transit, in the cloud, and on-premises.

Full API Lifecycle Management. APIs are key to modern integration requirements. An enterprise should select a full lifecycle API management solution that works well with middleware solutions. This will empower an organization to publish, promote, version, and secure APIs, as well as manage their usage. For example, according to Forbes, enterprises with advanced API management processes experience up to 47% better business results as compared to enterprises with basic API management.

Cloud-Native Capabilities. Many organizations are moving to the cloud to lower staffing and infrastructure costs, and to reap the benefits of cloud computing. However, to truly benefit from this, the selected integration platform should be lean and lightweight. Also, many integration solutions need additional support for deployment automation, scaling, containerized applications, and CI/CD workflows.

Managed File Transfer Capabilities. Managed file transfer (MFT) refers to a secure and efficient transfer of data from one system to another. This can be between cloud, on-premises, or cloud and on-premises instances. MFT solutions can take the form of on-premises software as well as SaaS solutions. Having this capability within the HIP eliminates the added cost brought on by integrating a separate tool.

More importantly, an enterprise should select a vendor that is completely aligned with the company’s digital strategy and will support its execution. One key aspect that is often overlooked is the strength of the vendor’s partner network and the quality of its consultants and supporting services. These aspects play a vital role throughout the lifespan of a project, from inception to maintaining the system once it goes live.

The cloud and a host of related technologies, which now underlies much of the internet, have enabled modern enterprises to leverage enhanced computing capabilities and break data silos, which is a key driver for digital transformation. Today, almost every organization is in a hybrid state with multiple back-end systems, repositories, silos, workloads in the cloud, and on-premises operations and the push for higher productivity continues to drive innovation. To fully realize all the competitive advantages that digital transformation can deliver, integration leaders should strategically implement the right HIP to ensure success.

Govt requests...

the Committee Stage Debate on Expenditure Head of Defence Ministry.

Speaking in Parliament, Fernando said that ensuring the security in Parliament is crucial.

“Steps should be taken to ensure the security of the House. The power management in Parliament should not be outsourced. I request the Speaker to take steps regarding this. It would be better if an engineer could be recruited for Parliament to manage the power supply in the House,” he said.

A major electricity breakdown that occurred Islandwide affected Parliament for several minutes before the generators were switched on. However, after few hours the generator also stopped with only the chamber lights and back up battery of the audio system in operation.

SL’s first case...

Director of Operations and Clinical Services at Allergy Immunology and Cell Biology Unit, University of Sri Jayawardenepura (USJP), Dr. Chandima Jeewandara said on Friday (3) that sequencing is being carried out on foreign returnees.

It was shown that a Sri Lankan returnee from Nigeria had tested positive for the omicron variant. Not being vaccinated she had been subjected to an on-arrival PCR according to the existing travel guidelines. The person had arrived on 24 November 2021 and the sample had reached his lab facility only a few days ago, Dr. Jeewandara said.

“Initial screening was done where we found that there was an S drop which is an S gene target failure and then we proceeded with genetic sequencing. On Friday (3) morning we found that the particular sample belongs to the omicron variant,” he said, observing that Sri Lanka had become another country where the particular variant of concern was detected.

The USJP had submitted a special report to the Health Secretary and the Director General Health Services (DGHS).

“We received samples of overseas returnees from several private and government sector labs for gene sequencing. Compared to 2020 Sri Lankans are immune either by vaccination or infection. With some immunity the possibilities of severe infection are less,” he noted.

Meanwhile, during an urgent media briefing on the same day at the Health Promotion Bureau (HPB), Deputy Director General (DDG) of Disaster Management and Emergency Response, Dr. Hemantha Herath said that the variant had been identified in a 25-year-old woman following surveillance measures taken by the Health Ministry and its affiliated institutions.

“All control and preventive measures are being taken. However, there is no need for undue fear,” he reassured.

Acting Epidemiologist, Dr. Samitha Ginige explaining the current measures which had been taken by his Unit said that after the WHO identified the new variant of concern the measures had been taken to impose travel restrictions on Several African countries where the variant had been first detected. They included Botswana Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland. In addition, surveillance history of those who had arrived from those countries or those with a travel history to the said countries was perused. Currently, their health status verified, they were also being subjected to PCR and laboratory testing. However, no one has been reported from amongst them, he noted.

Samples taken from those who had tested positive after arriving in Sri Lanka were sent to the USJP for gene sequencing. It was as a result of this that the current viral variant carrier was identified.

Dr. Ginige said that the person who had returned from an African country had been in quarantine. Her family and all contacts would be quarantined and samples would be taken from them for testing to determine whether they have been affected by the variant, he noted.

25 April 1931 – 30 November 2021

Legacy of Sirisena Cooray



Premadasa and Sirisena Cooray

If there was a single man who was the driving force behind the Ranasinghe Premadasa Presidency; that was Sirisena Cooray. During his tenure as the Mayor of Colombo from 1979 to 1989, he turned the Colombo Municipal region, a bastion of the United National Party, which stood faithful to the green party for many years, even after President Premadasa's untimely demise and Cooray's withdrawal from politics.



Sirisena Cooray

Cooray was later elected from Colombo to Parliament in the ninth parliamentary election in 1989. He was appointed Minister of Housing and Construction in the Premadasa Cabinet. He was also the driving force behind President Premadasa's Gam

Udawa Programme, where he assured a roof over the head of every Sri Lankan. He was also credited for the construction of the world-class Sugathadasa Stadium, which he is said to have built without any foreign aid.

He also served as the General Secretary of the United National Party, during the tenure of party leader Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Former Minister Cooray passed away while receiving treatment at a private hospital in Colombo on Tuesday, 30 November, following a brief illness, family sources said.

He was 90 years old at the time of his death.



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By **THAMENAH RAZEK**

Imagine being trapped inside your house with a ticking time bomb. This is exactly how many Sri Lankans are feeling at the moment, with dozens of explosions related to domestic LP gas cylinders being reported from many areas around the country.

Sri Lankans have been using LP gas for domestic use for a number of decades, which over the years, has proven to be one of the most cost-effective, efficient, environmentally-friendly, and most importantly, safe methods of cooking.

Apart from random, isolated incidents of explosions, mostly due to leakages resulting from faulty regulators, leaking hoses and electricity issues, there has never been in the history of LP gas use in this country where dozens of explosions were reported within just one month.

Although gas companies and politicians attempted to brush the issue under the carpet, placing the blame on the consumers, the sheer number of incidents has now proven to be absurdly too many to be ignored. Also, a fear has set among the public to keep gas cylinders inside residences, most of who have started seeking alternative methods of cooking.

However, the issue has finally led the Government to appoint several committees to probe the matter and one gas company to temporarily suspend distribution of LP gas cylinders in the market.

On 4 November, three persons were injured as a result of a domestic LP gas cylinder explosion in Weligama, Sri Lanka's southernmost district; little did the locals know that this was the start of a much larger calamity that would befall the island nation. On 16 November, another gas cylinder explosion was reported at a private restaurant in Ratnapura, and on 20 November a popular fast-food outlet in Colombo 7 was completely destroyed by fire also caused by a gas leak. Now, as the number of incidents increase, so do the number of committees formed to investigate the disaster, making minimal difference with full capacity of recommendations.

The incidents have sparked public outcry and anxiety and anyone who considered pursuing national security has now lost "residential security".

What is the chemical makeup of LP Gas?

Consultant (Petroleum) of the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) Cyril Suduwella explained that LP gas is a mixture of Propane and Butane, but may possibly contain other hydrocarbons and compounds. He expressed that Propane and Butane are extremely safe fuels and can be used in increased capacity in any weather condition and in any place.

He noted that in Sri Lanka, it was discovered in the 1970s that LP Gas had a maximum of 30 per cent Propane and 70 per cent Butane with the best compression because the mixture of Propane and Butane in an LP gas cylinder is liquid under compression. Butane can be liquefied by compression because its boiling point is near 0 degrees Celsius, whereas Propane is nearly -42 degrees Celsius.

Observing that a high pressure is required to preserve the gas as a liquid, he claimed the atmosphere inside a gas cylinder is at low pressure. When there is low pressure inside the cylinder, whatever comes out ends in a place where there is also a low pressure including all other accessories, peripheral instruments or anything else connected to the cylinder, but subject to all equipment and other devices operating properly.

If there are any leaks in the pressure system, the whole pressure in the cylinder could be applied to the stove, resulting in a fire. As a result, it is not the fault of the material, but rather the responsibility of the decision-makers to determine what is the safest composition for Sri Lankan consumers.

Mechanism of regulation

"When it comes to LP gas suppliers,

New face of 'domestic terror'

LP Gas Disasters A Wakeup Call For Tougher Product Standards

LP gas importers have a monopoly on employing any Propane and Butane composition they want, because the boiling points of the fundamental gases differ in parts of the world. We predict the creation of an LNG power plant in Sri Lanka, where the boiling point is -162, necessitating high pressure, which might be framed as an inappropriate implementation, and Sri Lanka should instead have a Complex Natural Gas Infrastructure (CNG)," he said.

Speaking further, Suduwella revealed that when the liquid inside the cylinder is low on Propane, you acquire additional propane which has no significant impact, but when it comes to other gadgets, specific conditions must be met. Specifications can occasionally lead to the adoption of ineffective devices. The most significant aspect is the standard, as well as the regulatory process, because this sort of petroleum distribution necessitates the presence of a regulatory arm.

He argued that because the PUCSL is the sole expert in Sri Lanka for petroleum sector regulation, the Government may delegate power to the PUCSL to manage LP gas difficulties if a scenario like this arises.

When questioned why the Government has not done that, he responded that they cannot do it without the right permission because the PUCSL works with the Ministry of Energy on diesel, gasoline, and kerosene. "LP gas is governed by a separate ministry, and if the Government requests that the PUCSL control LP gas cylinders and their composition, the PUCSL will undoubtedly comply. We cannot do anything unless we are invited. There are systems in place, but they are not at the necessary levels. If there is a regulator, importers will be unable to import the entities they desire since the regulatory arm will undoubtedly certify the system and ensure that it is properly maintained," he noted.

What exactly is Mercaptan?

Mercaptan, also known as methanethiol, is a harmless but pungent-smelling gas that has been compared to the stench of rotting cabbages or stinky socks.

Suduwella explained that Mercaptan is often added to natural gas, which is colourless and odourless, to make it easier to detect

and that the gas is an organic substance made of carbon, hydrogen and sulphur that is found naturally in living organisms, including the human body where it is a waste product of normal metabolism. It is one among the compounds that causes the foul odour of bad breath and flatulence.

Within 30 minutes of eating asparagus, people can detect the characteristic odour of mercaptan in their urine, since the vegetable includes chemicals that are swiftly broken down to methanethiol. However, not everyone can detect mercaptan in their urine since some people are immune to the odour due to a genetic defect. Mercaptan has a significant advantage for industrial applications in that it can be detected by most individuals in extremely small levels, less than one part per million. This makes it an excellent addition to odourless gases and it is combustible, just like natural gas.

Recently, the Minister of Energy assumed that the recent fires from LP gas cylinders were caused by manufacturers either reducing the amount of Mercaptan in cylinders or not mixing it at all with the LP gases. Suduwella stated that having Mercaptan on hand is essential while producing LP gases.

SLS Standard

When asked if there is any standard for this, he noted that there are SLS standards for composition and pressure, adding that the standard has to be updated, but the main issue is a lack of a proper regulatory arm.

"We can debate the LP gas composition and other scientific concerns. In Sri Lanka, we should maintain the pressure level of 3:7 regardless of other factors such as weather. Other equipment malfunctioned as a result of the composition change."

But why should the composition be altered?

If corporations are attempting to modify their makeup, it is only for financial reasons. He claims that containing gases for a 5:6 ration is less expensive.

Passing the ball

M.S.S. Fernando, Director of Engineering Standards at the SLSI said that while they are known as the regulatory agency to apply standards in the quality of products in Sri Lanka, they will just present a standard and the relevant authority

will implement it. While they do not control LP gas production, they do have a standard for LP gas compressing, which he could not recall at the time of the interview. He also added that SLSI will not visit locations where LP gas-related accidents have been reported since they lack the authority to do so.

Gunawardena vs. Siddhika

Emails between former Executive Director of the Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA), Thushan Gunawardena, and Director General of the Sri Lanka Standard Institute (SLSI), Dr. Siddhika G. Senaratne, highlighted that the two LP gas importing companies stipulated an 80 per cent Butane and 20 per cent Propane mixture as to what they are bringing, and no Government regulatory body has ever verified whether what they said they will be bringing is the real deal.

In response to Gunawardena's question, Dr. Senaratne expressed that even if Sri Lanka lacks laboratory facilities to determine the LP gas composition, any regulatory body can request an accredited lab report from the exporting country stating the actual LP gas composition for each consignment they bring. So far no regulatory authority in Sri Lanka has taken such action. This is to do conformance testing for the composition of what they bring in with what they claim to be the composition.

However, Gunawardena was convinced that Dr. Senaratne was incorrect in claiming that the CAA had not requested a test result because, contrary to her assumption, it had an internationally qualified lab affirm the composition to be 50:50. He further stated that Dr. Senaratne is incorrect in claiming that CAA can verify for compliance. He questioned how CAA can ensure conformity while SLSI has yet to produce a standard for Propane plus Butane. Section 12.2 of the CAA legislation provides unequivocally that we can check conformity after SLSI publishes the standard.

In his final remarks in an email dated 25 August 2021, he proposed that SLSI provide an uninterrupted supply of gas to the country's consumers while we check the composition for standards.

"Frankly, I am not worried about SLSI or CAA's reputation but more concerned about the government's reputation taking a beating as a result of SLSI taking a slow lukewarm approach being more worried about your own reputation than Government's reputation," he said.

Dr. Siddhika remarked in an email to Gunawardena on 24 August 2021 that if Gunawardena could show SLSI any other country in the globe having a standard with 80 percent Butane and 20 per cent Propane, then they can quickly change the existing standard, which the SLSI expert committee has not been able to do thus far.

"Also, we are talking about gas not liquid. That means we cannot give exact values. Even if SLSI includes a composition in our Standard it has to be a range and certainly not exact values. It is not as easy as you think to stipulate compositions when it comes to Gas. So, again if the expert committee who formulated the LP gas standard did not include the composition because it is not possible, then blaming SLSI for not doing its job on national TV is not the right thing to do. CAA is to partly blame as well even though we as SLSI will not go on national TV blaming CAA because you do not need Standards all the time to bring regulations," he said.

The Police denied that the first death was caused by an LP gas-related accident claiming it was a suicide. In Sri Lanka, we are entering an era where the Government is unaware of who is and is not competent of handling specific difficulties in specific settings.

If the PUCSL is willing to take on the job of overseeing and regulating the LP gas industry, it is unclear why the Government is pursuing SLSI, which is merely a standard for its name and not a duty. How longer is the Government going wait as more dead bodies pile up without making a single move to stop delivering inferior goods to the public?



We can debate the LP gas composition and other scientific concerns. In Sri Lanka, we should maintain the pressure level of 3:7 regardless of other factors such as weather. Other equipment malfunctioned as a result of the composition change



Commercial HC orders winding up of Aristons (Pvt) Ltd

Commercial High Court Judge Priyantha Fernando, on an application made by Ceyquartz MBI (Pvt) Ltd., ordered the winding up of Aristons (Pvt) Ltd.

Ceyquartz MBI (Pvt) Ltd of No.34/1, Dutch House, Castle Street Colombo 8, filed a winding up application, seeking to wind up Aristons (Pvt) Ltd. on the basis that Aristons (Pvt) Ltd. is unable to pay its debts.

On an application made by Ceyquartz MBI (Pvt) Ltd, Court gave an order, on 12 February 2021, to publish the winding up notice in the newspapers and fixed the winding up application for inquiry on 25. 05. 2022.

Upon the notice being published in the newspapers, Aristons (Pvt) Ltd., 10.02.2021, made an application to Court seeking the recalling of the winding up order made by the Court and when the said application came up for oral submissions, Counsel appearing on behalf of the company sought to be wound up, informed Court that, subsequent to making the application to recall the winding up notice, both parties had made several attempts to resolve the dispute amicably, and even exchanged terms of settlement between them, but nothing materialised. Therefore, the company sought to be wound up has now agreed to consent to winding up Aristons (Pvt) Ltd. and withdrew the objections filed on behalf of the company.

Counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner company informed Court that two creditors have given notice in regard to the winding up application, and both creditors have not objected to winding up of Aristons (Pvt) Ltd, and as the company sought to be wound up has now agreed to wind up the company, Court could now make an order to wind up the company.

Having heard the submissions made by both parties, Court made an order to wind up Aristons (Pvt) Ltd, and further made an order for the appointment of the liquidator and directed the Petitioner to file necessary papers for the appointment of the liquidator, and ordered to call this case on 12.01.2022 for the liquidator's report.

President's Counsel Palitha Kumarasinghe with Attorney-at-Law Harith de Mel instructed by DL & F de Saram appeared on behalf of Ceyquartz MBI (Pvt) Ltd.

President's Counsel Kuvera de Zoysa with Attorneys-at-Law Niranjan Arulpragasam and Ameer Mahuroof, instructed by Attorney-at-Law Anoma Gunathileke, appeared on behalf of Aristons (Pvt) Ltd.

Releasing elephants to private owners

SC accepts CEJ's amended petition

By FAADHILA THASSIM

The Supreme Court accepted the amended petition filed by the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ), challenging the Cabinet Decision instructing the Attorney General to release elephants under the care of Government authorities to those who claim to be their private owners, while rejecting objections raised by the AG's Department on behalf of the Government.

The Cabinet decision was taken based on a joint Cabinet memorandum by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and R.M.C.B. Ratnayake, Minister of Wildlife and Forest Conservation, that sought the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers to withdraw all cases in which legal action is being taken at present and to hand over these animals to their present owners according to the conditions of transferring these animals.

The case was taken up before Supreme Court Justices E.A.G.R. Amarasekara, K.K. Wickremasinghe and Janak De Silva.

It was stated that the Cabinet decision itself is not the act which, as has been alleged, would constitute an infringement of the fundamental rights of petitioners, but that it is only when the AG, if he chooses to do so, acts on the impugned Cabinet decision that there may be, as alleged, an infringement of the fundamental rights of the petitioners. "The AG is vested with extensive statutory powers in relation to criminal investigations and prosecutions. Such powers are held in public trust and they must be exercised for the due administration of justice according to the rule of law, which is the basis of our Constitution.

AASL lab should be converted to quarantine facility - CMLSSL

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

The Airport and Aviation Services Limited (AASL) laboratory facility, which was built to conduct PCR tests on passengers arriving or leaving Sri Lanka, was set up to be converted into a quarantine laboratory for the BIA after a lapse of two years, the College of Medical Laboratory Science Sri Lanka (CMLSSL) said.

CMLSSL President, Ravi Kumudesh, said yesterday (2) that there was a large number of plants and genetic material, in addition to carriers of COVID-19 or other viral infections that were questionable and harmful

arriving in the country. There should be a proper screening facility in possession of both these government authorities to screen them.

He added that the laboratory facility which had been set up with assistance from a German-based institution in a bid to conduct PCR testing on travellers arriving in Sri Lanka would be handed over to the country in two years, once able to cover the cost of setting it up. Already, there are such agreements in the country including the Expressways that have been constructed.

Carcinogenic Coconut Oil Back in Market

By THAMEENAH RAZEEM

The All Ceylon Traditional Coconut Oil Manufacturers' Association (ACTCOMA) said the company accused of importing carcinogenic coconut oil has begun distributing coconut oil to the market under its brand name.

Convener, Buddhika de Silva said it is questionable what approval the company has to import coconut oil at a time when cases filed against the company are ongoing, adding that when the

Association lodged complaints in this regard in April, the Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA) found that the relevant firm had been importing coconut oil containing Aflatoxin.

De Silva went on to say that the Coconut Development Authority advised them that they are not in charge of releasing such products to the market, because the CAA is in charge of regulating. He further claimed that a majority of the containers carrying carcinogen-laced

- ACTCOMA

coconut oil were released to the market, with only a few of them being re-exported.

He also said the coconut oil firm has not accepted responsibility thus far, and that no discussions about customer safety have taken place. He said if the CAA allows firms to pursue such ventures, no one will be taken to task.

He emphasised that, despite many requests, there is no evidence that the CAA has taken any action against the company.

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As Omicron threat looms

PCR Testing at Ports of Entry Crucial

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

December is the month of festivities and gaiety. But like last year, the end of 2021 has not been easy on the world and for the paradise isle of Sri Lanka which was assailed by two viral variants of deadly COVID-19. Alpha and Delta variants, leaving over 14,399 dead and boosting the daily case load till it has reached a whopping 565,471 by 3 December. Having controlled the Delta wave by end September 2021 at great cost to even the members of the State Health Services, Sri Lankans have been enjoying a bit of a breather or 'Spring Time,' as this period of relaxation was referred to.

Despite the cannon balls hurled by milk producers, bakeries, vegetable vendors, shops, groceries, supermarkets, the Petroleum Corporation and gas companies, the long-suffering Sri Lankan public have seized the moment. Certain town areas and even the famed Fort and Pettah markets are filled with shoppers.

Lowering the guard

In the midst of the chaos, the Health Ministry – the country's health watchdog, with manoeuvring of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Tourism authorities who have been angling to boost the country's tourism industry from the onset of COVID last year were able to convince the Director General Health Services (DGHS) to introduce further amendments to travellers returning after overseas travel or tourists coming into the country.

Introducing further revisions to travellers arriving from overseas on 30 September, the Health Ministry said that fully vaccinated locals and tourists arriving from overseas would not have to undergo an 'on-arrival PCR testing' if tests carried out prior to boarding the flight were negative. An official for the Health Ministry said that at the time the announcement was made based on discussions between Ministers of Health and Tourism, Keheliya Rambukwella and Prasanna Ranatunga, it was decided that foreign nationals who had not been fully vaccinated would be given



the "opportunity to reach their hotels in a bio-bubble" where an on-arrival PCR would be carried out.

However, Sri Lankan nationals could undergo a PCR either at the airport or at the hotel. They could quarantine in their homes if the on-arrival PCR was negative.

Omicron

And then the World Health Organisation (WHO) flagged the new variant of concern B.1.1.529 on 26 November, now identified as 'Omicron' – the 15th letter of the Greek alphabet and a triple star system in the constellation of Perseus. WHO designated it as a variant of concern, on the advice of its Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution (TAG-VE). "This decision was based on the evidence presented to the TAG-VE that Omicron has several mutations that may have an impact on how it behaves."

Current knowledge about Omicron

WHO says that researchers in South Africa and around the world are conducting studies to better understand many aspects of Omicron and would continue to share their findings as they become available.

"WHO is working with technical partners to understand the potential

impact of this variant on our existing countermeasures, including vaccines. Vaccines remain critical to reducing severe disease and death, including against the dominant circulating variant, Delta. Current vaccines remain effective against severe disease and death," WHO said at the time.

The global health watchdog which has been on its feet since SARS COV-2 rocked the world said at the time that "widely used PCR tests continued to detect infection, including infection with Omicron."

Enter the dragon

The College of Medical Laboratory Science Sri Lanka (CMLSSL) warned that it would be the "end of springtime for Sri Lanka after several months of being subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19" if maximum caution was not taken to prevent the new variant detected from South Africa from entering the country.

They noted that the new variant would be a severe setback to all efforts made by the State health authorities and the Government in controlling the spread of the Delta variant during the recent months. "We have been able to control COVID to some extent because of natural immunity and the immunity provided by the coronavirus vaccine."

According to preliminary research,

it has been found that the new variant was highly infectious, while not even those who have already been infected by the Delta or Alpha variants could escape.

Kumudesh has repeatedly urged the health authorities to recommence on-arrival PCR tests before it was too late. "Stop being intimidated by the hotel and PCR mafia of the private sector, and recommence on-arrival PCR using the testing facilities of the Health Ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority, who can perform the test and issue the report within three hours."

Lab facilities at BIA

Amidst the backstabbing, slanders and connivance of certain sections of the Health Ministry and the Civil Aviation Ministry with business interests and commissions to accept, on arrival PCR lab facilities were set up within Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) and in its immediate environs where locals and tourists arrival could do their tests and obtain the report in three hours. "By the time the tourist gets to his or her hotel, they would get the report as to whether they're positive or negative."

By the time the overseas returnee goes back to his or her home, the local Public Health Inspector (PHI) and the Medical Office of Health (MoH) would have an account of the number of

persons that have returned from abroad in their jurisdiction.

Sri Lanka's first case of Omicron which was made known on Friday (3) was identified following an on arrival PCR test on a local who had travelled to Nigeria by the particular facility. It had been deployed to the Sri Jayewardenepura University (SJU) for sequencing as a precautionary measure owing to the case history.

The lab has been set up as a joint venture between a German-based institution and reference to a lab facility in Dubai. However, it would be handed over to the Government of Sri Lanka at the end of two years when the said institution is able to recover its cost. A spokesman for the facility who requested anonymity said that Sri Lanka ran the risk by depending on the negativity of PCR tests that are carried out 72 hours prior to boarding the flight. There have been incidents where single vaccine passengers who had arrived with negative PCR only to test positive with their on-arrival PCR. "A week earlier we had four foreigners of whom three tested positive. They were fully vaccinated. There were possibilities of infection even after testing negative at a PCR taken 72 hours prior to embarkation while moving around."

He said that the Lab facility aimed at conducting the PCR test on the few passengers that trickled in for on-arrival PCRs with a little inconvenience as possible. A tourist or even a local should not get the impression that they are in a hospital or a similar environment. Currently there were 12 medical laboratory scientists, a lab director, 30 and 15 swabbing personnel and medical laboratory technologists working in it.

"We see ourselves as a border control lab facility and carry out testing on every single sample that is taken, so as to ensure that the people within the country are not at risk".

The lack of accountability for the decisions taken by depending largely on certificate 'fully vaccinated', and being overridden by a few influential business-minded individuals would place so many more lives on the line if the Health Ministry fails to depend on its available resources.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Power Outage...

By THAMEENAH RAZEEM

The major islandwide power outage on Friday (3) was caused "on purpose" by a group of individuals, Chairman of the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) M.C. Ferdinando claimed.

"I cannot claim that this was done as an act of sabotage or treason, but what I can affirm is that the power outage at 11:00 a.m. on Friday was caused on purpose," he said.

It was reported that the power outage occurred as a result of a technical failure at a key transmission line.

When asked why some parts of the country were experiencing outages from time to time, even when the CEB announced that power was restored after several hours, he noted that due to the Norochcholai Power Plant not reaching 900 MW, which is the full capacity, despite the transmission system being restored.

"We will have a significant loss of load until we can repair the station. Everyone will have access to electricity. However, there may be power outages in various places after 6:30 p.m. This is because the load on the electricity system is insufficient. The consumers need 2600 MW per night and the Norochcholai power plant not functioning at full capacity. Therefore, 900 MW would not be provided and as a result, consumers might experience power outages from time to time after 6.30 p.m. This is the normal procedure when we experience something like this."

Secretary to the Ministry of Power Wasantha Perera said the Ministry has initiated an internal investigation into the islandwide power outage, which lasted more than five hours.

She did, however, state that they are still unsure whether this is an act of sabotage.

Meanwhile, the CEB management believes that the power outages are the result of sabotage caused by engineers and the CEB trade unions were chastised for dragging

their feet on the supply restoration effort.

Ministry of Power Spokesman Sulakshana Jayawardena said the islandwide blackout was caused by a problem with the transmission line from Kothmale to Biyagama.

Later in the day, Sri Lanka Railways also announced that its operations from Fort, Colombo, will be impacted by the power outage. The National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWS&DB) also announced that the power outage interrupted water supply in numerous areas in Colombo and its suburbs. CEB General Manager Eng. M.R. Ranatunge stated that power was restored to numerous places in Colombo at around 2.30 p.m. and that power would be restored throughout the island within the day.

However, Chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL), Janaka Ratnayake, said the power outage, which lasted more than five hours, will be thoroughly investigated.

He said that PUCSL officers are following the process and what is going on, and that the commission will publish its view on the matter later. The transmission failure occurred around 7.35 p.m. on 29 November, and the demand for electricity was high at the time, causing Mahaweli power plant to shut down.

This power outage occurred in a backdrop of CEB Engineers' Union initiating a work-to-rule campaign demanding to revise the Yugadhanavi power plant deal with a US firm.

Following the power outage, CEB engineers temporarily called off their work-to-rule campaign.

Sri Lanka experienced a partial power outage on 29 November due to another technical malfunction at a transmission line, and when questioned, Sulakshana Jayawardena stated that the high voltage transmission line from Kothmale to Biyagama had failed, causing power outages in several areas of the island.

Govt suspends...

Secretary to the State Ministry, K.D.S. Ruwanchandra, stated during the meeting on LP Gas composition, conducted on 2 December night, it was found that the two main LP Gas distributors had reduced the Ethyl Mercaptan level in cylinders.

He said the distributors have been warned not to distribute the LP Gas cylinders until the Ethyl Mercaptan volume has been brought up to specification, and the two companies have asked a maximum of two days to complete the process. Mercaptan, also known as methanethiol, is a harmless but pungent-smelling gas that has been compared to the stench of rotting cabbages or stinky socks. Mercaptan is often added to natural gas, which is colourless and odourless, to make it easier to detect. The gas is an organic substance made of carbon, hydrogen, and sulphur that is found naturally in living organisms, including the human

body, where it is a waste product of normal metabolism. It is one among the compounds that causes the foul odour of bad breath and flatulence.

When contacted, the management of Litro Gas Lanka Ltd said that they did not decide to suspend distribution but rather to temporarily suspend the release of LP Gas cylinders to the market until further notice.

According to internal sources, they will continue to sell only LP Gas cylinders that have already been supplied to the market, but will no longer issue new gas stocks to dealers, adding that the distribution was halted owing to factory repairs and LP Gas quality inspections.

The re-issuance of gas cylinders is expected to resume within the next two days, according to the company. "We never declared that distribution had stopped, but we have temporarily halted the release of new cylinders due to a

maintenance operation that occurs every now and then," sources said.

Laugfs Gas PLC, for its part, stated that its LP Gas distribution and sales operations are operating normally. W.K.H. Wegapitiya, chairman of the company, claimed that the Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA) or the State Ministry had not yet alerted the company that gas distribution will be suspended.

However, according to CAA internal sources, notices have already been issued to the two largest LP Gas providers because some of their LP Gas compositions do not match the norms.

State Minister Lasantha Alagiyawana too, also said that the two LPG suppliers have been told to suspend distribution till the ethyl mercaptan odorant level is raised to 14, and that both distributors have been informed in writing to temporarily suspend domestic LP Gas delivery.

CEBEU suspends...

President of CEBEU, Saumya Kumarawadu said the suspension of the said campaign was consequent to a favourable response from the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on the demands of the Union and that following further discussions with political bigwigs, including the President and the Secretary to President this week, a decision would be taken to totally call off the campaign or not.

Furthermore, he said that the non-cooperation movement conducted against the Chairman

and the General Manager of the CEB from 22 November will continue to be in force.

While the CEBEU carried out a 'level -1' work-to-rule campaign from 25 November, it was extended to the 'level -2', in which the Engineers did not attend emergency situations and breakdowns following normal work hours from 1 December.

The demands of the CEBEU are to not proceed with the Yugadhanavi power plant deal, not to discontinue with the ongoing transparent tender procedure by

CEB for LNG deployment, to stop attempts of unbundling CEB, to cease proposed amendments to the Board Act No. 17 of 1969, to prevent politicisation of the post of General Manager of CEB and to stop abrupt and arbitrary transfers of the Senior Management. Commenting on the islandwide power outage on 3 Friday, Kumarawadu stated that the reason for the same was a technical fault of the Kothmale to Biyagama transmission line and therefore not in any way an act of sabotage.

LP gas cylinder mishaps

Improper Handling, Faulty Equipment Liable

Laugfs Gas follows its specifications related to LP gas and metal cylinders, and rechecks them against given standards and specifications to ensure the safety of their valued customers, Laugfs Gas says.

The company issuing a media release said: "In the recent past, there have been a few fire incidents reported regarding LP gas leakages across social and other media, and some misleading information has been spread that these leaks are caused by the composition of the LP gas filled in cylinders. Certain incidents reported in domestic households and hotels have been highlighted by both traditional and social media. But incidents regarding gas leakages have been reported for decades since the date consumers started using LP gas in Sri Lanka, and many of them are due to incorrect LP gas usage and inferior equipment usage. It's a rare occurrence that incidents reported are caused by leaks from the cylinder valve or canister.

We can assure you that the recently reported incidents did not occur due to the composition of the LP gas in the cylinders. Companies that import LP gas to the country assure that all imported LP gas and cylinders are aligned and adhered to the standards imposed by the Sri Lanka Standard Institute SLS 712-1998 for LP Gas and SLS 1178-2013 for LP gas cylinders. In addition to that, Laugfs Gas follows its specifications related to LP Gas and metal cylinders and rechecks them against the given standards and specifications to ensure the safety of our valued customers.

As mentioned in media, companies cannot yield additional profits or gains by increasing the Propane composition of the LP gas mix. Propane is an expensive gas compared to Butane. Last year, Propane and Butane prices were equal for only two months, but in the past, Propane prices were much higher than Butane. Certain social media reported that cylinders and valves are not capable of handling the high pressure inside the cylinder created by the additional Propane. But the cylinders and valves are built to store LP gas at high pressure.

- When the propane composition remains at 30-40 per cent, the pressure inside the cylinder is around 5 - 6 bars.

- When the propane composition remains at 45-50 per cent, the pressure inside the cylinder is around 6 - 7.5 bars.

- When the propane composition remains at 100 per cent, the pressure inside the cylinder remains between 12-14 bars.

But the LP gas metal cylinders and valves are built to hold 30 bars of inside pressure with quality material. Also, the additional safety valve connected to the main cylinder valve releases the inside pressure of the cylinder at the level of 26 bars.

Most of the accidents reported in the recent past were mainly due to the

customer's incorrect LP gas handling and substandard equipment usage. To avoid gas leaks and accidents, customers can take precautionary actions such as,

- Using standard equipment with LP gas, continue to be vigilant to check the condition of the equipment and maintain it at an optimum level.
- Removing hazardous electrical



- items from close proximity of the LP gas cylinder and the system.
- Keep the cylinder in a well-ventilated area and keep the

environment surrounding the cylinder free to relocate the cylinder in an emergency.

- When identifying an LP gas leak, remove or do not allow any ignition sources to be activated or deactivated.

Laugfs Gas is a local investment that was driven by uncompromising values of ensuring customer safety by providing a quality product. Laugfs

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Gas will never compromise customers' safety for any financial gain, and all operations and product sourcing are only done by adhering to local and international standards and specifications.

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THE CEYLON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BEST CORPORATE CITIZEN SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2021

Message from Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri

Chairman – Panel of Evaluators and Judges

COVID-19 pandemic and related impacts caused Sri Lanka's economy to contract 3.6 per cent in 2020. Despite the challenges, our corporates adopted a multitude of resilient approaches to bounce back while ensuring the staff benefits. The evaluation panel recognises the commitment of the CEOs and senior staff to "sustainability" that goes beyond the 'business-as-usual', especially in the pandemic context, among other global and local challenges. The Best Corporate Citizens Sustainability (BCCS) Award recognises the corporates' efforts to create economic value, healthy ecosystems, and support communities.

COVID-19 changed the global outlook towards meeting climate challenges. The global developments now combine Paris Agreement related mitigation and adaptation initiatives with post-2020



Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri



Mr. Mark Peters



Mr. Robert Juhkam



Ms. Chiyo Kanda



Ms. Simrin Singh

that also cover marketing, labour relations, financing etc. More support is required for the SME sector in the form of sustainable financing, technology, and practices to enhance the required level of access to resources as they are an integral part of greening supply chains.

On behalf of the "Evaluators" and "Judges", let me take this opportunity to recognise the corporates' untiring efforts to maintain the quality of submissions. The BCCS process was grown year-to-year with your commitment. We value the participation and wish to extend our congratulations to the winners of both forms of BCCS Awards. Our gratitude is extended to the Ceylon Chamber BCCS Secretariat for working with us diligently during the entire BCCS process.

biodiversity targets indicating the value of conserving ecosystems and ecosystem services. The new normal and building back better require corporates to adopt renewable energy, minimise pollution of air, water, soil, and ocean resources while adopting

circularity, life-cycle analysis, greening supply chains, cleaner production, sustainable consumption, and production, develop sustainable financing including blended finances, among others. It is encouraging to note that several

corporates are already capitalising on the new demands and adopting Science based Targets (SBTs) and "greening" approaches. This further highlights the importance of the composition of the Board members to support the ESG agenda under the "green challenge"



SLT-MOBITEL Triumphs with Triple Wins at 'Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021' Awarded for Demonstrated Resilience During COVID-19

SLT-MOBITEL as the National ICT Solutions Provider is committed to conducting its business in a way that supports the needs of all stakeholders – including employees, customers, and all communities; with the firm belief that acting as a responsible and sustainable business is fundamental to the creation and protection of long-term value.

The company's approach to making a difference, now and in the future was recognised with triple wins at the 18th Annual 'Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021' held recently.

The Awards organised by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the country's premier business chamber, ranked SLT-MOBITEL among the Top Ten Corporate Citizens of 2021 and recognised it as the 'Sustainability Champion' for its category, a true testament to its commitment to actively integrate sustainability principles into the business culture.

Being awarded at the Annual 'Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021' demonstrates SLT-MOBITEL's continued efforts to fulfil its corporate social responsibility in the areas of Economy, Governance, Environment and Society.

SLT-MOBITEL was also adjudged second runner-up for 'Demonstrated Resilient Practices for COVID-19 Context Award' that was presented this year to companies, for showcasing emergency preparedness, resilience and stakeholder management in successfully meeting unforeseen challenges as a part of its corporate sustainability strategy.

This accolade recognises SLT-MOBITEL's ability to uphold best practices in corporate governance and exemplify leadership, innovation and resilience embracing sustainability as a practice, despite a very challenging year for the nation due to the pandemic.

SLT-MOBITEL's commitment towards a sustainable business is as much strategic, as it is empathetic. Placing sustainability at the heart of



From L-R: Vish Govindasamy, Chairman, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Anuruddha Suriarachchi, General Manger, SLT, Prabhath Dahanayake, Chief Marketing Officer, SLT, H. E. Trine Jørnli Eskedal, Ambassador of Norway to Sri Lanka and Duminda Hulangamuwa, Vice Chairman Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, at the 'Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2021' ceremony



Donating a PCR machine to the KDU hospital

everything it does, SLT-MOBITEL perseveres in implementing next generation technologies, sustainable innovations and best practices ensuring it carries forth its nation building commitment, striving towards SLT Vision 2022 with the aim of becoming bigger and better together.

Over the years the company has decisively strengthened its track record as a responsible entity and remains steadfast in making a meaningful difference in sustainability commitments across environmental, social and corporate undertakings.

As a corporate citizen committed to responsible business, SLT-MOBITEL is acutely aware of the need for sustainability as a way of doing business and working towards the future in a holistic manner. To maintain robust environmental, social and governance practices, the company has been streamlining all aspects of business to be more receptive towards maximum utilization of resources, enacting attitudinal and behavioural changes to embrace sustainability as a natural habit and embedding its built environment with

sustainable features that deliver immediate and ongoing reinforcement to maintaining the triple bottom-line.

Raising the bar in sustainable business practices and benefits, SLT-MOBITEL as the only provider of fibre-to-the-home connectivity in Sri Lanka has begun replacing traditional copper cables with modern fibre optic cables for high-speed internet across the country. As importantly, SLT-MOBITEL completely repurposes the copper cables for traditional operations, reusing resources that would otherwise have been discarded

as waste.

Winning the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards are also a validation of SLT-MOBITEL's great teams in adopting to new ways of working, showcasing agility and determination to continue to deploy the right infrastructure and achieve national digital goals. Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the pandemic, SLT-MOBITEL successfully fulfilled its commitments to customers serving them in multiple ways, securing lives and livelihoods. Investments exceeding Rs. 350 million has been utilised to facilitate essential services, support the Government in its endeavours, uplift frontline healthcare workers and connect the nation.

Intent on keeping children in school, SLT-MOBITEL facilitated low-cost data for education, and continues to provide innovate distance learning opportunities while businesses receive optimal support to continue operations with seamless work from home connectivity.

As an environmentally conscious entity, the company initiated the 'SLT-MOBITEL Green Premier League' (GPL) parallel to the Sri Lankan Premier League 2020 where the company planted trees at the Rajawaka forest reserve in Kalthota, Balangoda equivalent to the winning score of each team in every match. The drive successfully added 4,000 plants to the forest reserve while a sustainable maintenance programme for the trees was organised in collaboration with the Forest Department in accordance with UN Sustainable Developments Goals.

Clinching the triple awards illustrates SLT-MOBITEL's outstanding ability to drive corporate governance, best practices and to accelerate business transformation. Building on its strengths the company has significant plans for the year ahead and is inspired to make a positive change, redefining value and creating a vibrant future which benefits everybody.



Planting a tree sapling during the Green Premiere League



The Suvaviru Upahara programme inauguration ceremony



Handing over a renovated bus library

THE CEYLON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BEST CORPORATE CITIZEN SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2021

Recognising Importance of Corporate Sustainability



Best Sustainability Projects Awards

Sustainability is both the business challenge and the business



opportunity of the 21st century. Innovative, fast-growing and resilient businesses will be those that adapt efficiently to and capitalise effectively on this new operating environment. This environment acknowledges that making sustained, continuous profit has to go hand in hand with preserving the planet and serving people.

A company can do this by adopting

environmentally and socially sustainable good practices that go beyond the ad hoc to something more systemic in its approach i.e. transparently and well-embedded across a company from top to bottom. This requires integration into a company's capacities, strategy, systems and operations rather than being a separate strategic initiative.

The dividends of doing so are potentially significant in terms of reduced costs and risks to the operation/business continuity increasing revenues and profit, productivity and brand value.

(Information courtesy Ceylon Chamber of Commerce website)

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce holds 'Best Corporate Citizen-Sustainability Award' each year, to value and recognise the importance of Corporate Sustainability in Sri Lanka and to encourage businesses to adopt best practices to create goods and services, using resilient, circular, and futuristic approaches. In doing so, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce ensures efficient use of resources, minimise pollution, safe and healthy environment for workers, consumers and communities while enhancing the well-being of all, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has considered the COVID-19 pandemic that affected corporates and the sustainability in 2020 and adopted an improved evaluation criterion in this year's Awards. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce continues to highlight the need to mainstream business emergency preparedness, resilience, and stakeholder management in the core business to meet unforeseen challenges. Many awards were lined up to recognise best performers in corporate sustainability in Sri Lanka along with the vision and commitment CEOs/Senior Management towards continued corporate sustainability.

The Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award assesses the interactions of a corporate entity, private or public, listed or unlisted, with its Stakeholders, Environment, Employees, Customers, Suppliers, Community, Government and Shareholders.

Corporate Environmental Commitment -- Demonstrated corporate commitment in mainstreaming environment management through policy, investments, training education and technology innovations within the organization and influencing clients to improve their environment management. Recognition and incorporation of eco-system contributions in business policy and actions.

Environmental Integration -- Efforts to minimise environmental footprint in business processes through compliance, standards, resource use efficiency, use of renewable sources and efforts to reduce pollution loads to air, water, soil etc., including greening the supply chains.

Environment Beyond The Business -- May include Eco-friendly projects carried out by the organisation during the last three years with demonstrated qualitative and quantitative impacts that are not directly related to normal business operations.

Employment Relations -- Strategies that were adopted during the year to strengthen Employee relations; to provide opportunities for training, career advancement and equal opportunities in employment; to ensure employment benefits, social security and occupational safety and health (OSH) and enhanced workplace wellbeing.

Customer Relations -- Policies and measures to improve the products / services provided to customers; the extent / effectiveness in responsible marketing by providing relevant information and obtaining feedback; minimising the negative impacts applicable in increasing the distribution/sale of the products/services; long term initiatives to enhance customer satisfaction and overall compliance with customer issues and challenges.

Community Relations -- Mechanisms to identify requirements of the community that it interacts with, including partnerships and suppliers and response to the needs of communities. Company's overall strategy for identifying and implementing special projects. In this context any preparatory work/ planning for Covid-19 related community affected projects to be implemented during the forthcoming year can also be taken into consideration.

Governance -- Frameworks, structures, and processes of an entity to facilitate conformance to requirements, equity among stakeholders, ethical behaviour and optimum performance.

Financial Performance -- The performance and position of the entity measured in financial terms.

Economic Contribution -- The extent to which the entity contributes to the economy through investments, employment, value creation and facilitation of regional development.

THE WINNING CONNECTION BETWEEN TODAY, AND A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW!



Once again, SLT-MOBITEL has been recognised for its commitment to CSR and Sustainability, by being named among the **Top Ten Corporate Citizens of 2021**. The hat-trick of awards was bestowed at the 18th 'Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards 2021' ceremony, organised by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

In striving to fulfil its corporate social responsibilities towards the economy, environment, governance, and society, SLT-MOBITEL clearly connects the dots between today and a better tomorrow!

CEYLON TODAY

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People Denied a Basic Human Right

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is fiddling while the voter is suffering for the lack of a basic human right – electricity and safe cooking gas (LPG) due to no fault of theirs – but because of sins of commission and omission committed by the State.

One gas company suspended gas supplies on Friday (3) due to explosions related to LPG leakages reported since 4 November, which thus far has killed one, injured at least four and have caused damages to several houses and properties including restaurants and hotels.

And now an externally politicised 'work-to-rule' campaign led by CEB engineers because of GoSL's award of an LNG contract to a NASDAQ-listed US-based multinational energy contractor, which has a higher credit rating than Sri Lanka, has disrupted electricity supply, inconveniencing millions of consumers islandwide.

The LPG fiasco is GoSL's own making caused by allowing a gas company to change the LPG composition for no rhyme or reason thereby placing life, limb and property at risk and the trade union action at CEB, the start of it which may be traced back to certain key agents of the present Government itself who had more in common with unionists than with the management of institutions, by encouraging strikes when in power.

If there is a change in composition in the LPG mix that may lead to fatal injuries and the reason for the gas industry's current state of affairs, the solution is to revert to the former mix and ensure a steady supply of cooking gas to the consumer without any disruptions and not by a carte blanche suspension of LPG supply.

It's not rocket science to know that the former LPG mix which dominated the country's 149-year old LPG history to date was not the culprit for Sri Lanka's reported LPG accidents prior to 4 November.

LPG is known as a clean and safe energy where 'safety' is ensured, starting with it being made available with the proper mix suitable for Sri Lanka such as that which prevailed prior to the reportage of the current wave of LPG accidents beginning from more than a month ago on 4 November.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa speaking at his inauguration from Ruwanwelisaya, Anuradhapura, on 18 November 2019, to quote excerpts said, "The Buddhist philosophy is infused into my thoughts and conduct. Buddhist philosophy calls for a righteous rule that respects law and order, justice and fair-play."

"I pledge to build a truly committed, efficient and professional public service that will respect the supremacy of the law, protect social justice and be free of fraud and corruption."

But where is the promised 'righteous rule that respects law and order, justice and fair-play,' when the consumer is deprived of a basic right such as the availability of LPG for his cooking, an industry which has a 149-year history in Sri Lanka, disrupted due to no fault of the consumer?

And why are those responsible for the life threatening LPG mix not only, not being charged, but allowed to continue as usual? Where are the recalling and the replacements with the right LPG mix for the consumer who has already bought cylinders with that life threatening LPG mix? Where is the compensation to the victims who have already suffered due to this wrong mix?

And on top of these woes, the consumer is now being threatened, if not already being made a victim, due to blackouts led by CEB engineers' externally politicised 'work to rule' campaign in protest over a multinational American company's planned LNG investments in Sri Lanka.

The present regime, though not necessarily Rajapaksa per se, has a history of pandering to strikers, with or without the support of external forces.

A classic case was when the President's elder brother current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was the Labour Minister after the August 1994 Parliamentary Poll, he encouraged strikers at two multinational companies which have set up shop here, namely Prima, a Singapore-based company and Ansell Lanka, an Australian-based company to continue with their disruptive work.

Meanwhile, affecting the country's uninterrupted electricity supply has to be looked at in the context, that due to leaking LPG, in cylinders, coupled with GoSL's suspension of its supply with no safe substitutes offered as a solution, several consumers invested their hard earned money on electrical appliances such as heaters and cookers as substitutes to aid in their cooking and thus ensure that their families are provided with safe, clean and affordable food.

But now they are left 'high and dry' due to disruptions in electricity supply because of 'work-to-rule' CEB employees.

To recapitulate, the President at his 'Ruwanwelisaya' address also said, "Voters have given me a mandate to implement my manifesto titled 'Vistas of Prosperity' which is a people's programme envisioned by the people for the people."

A programme 'by the people and for the people' does not mean a programme depriving the masses of a basic human right, electricity and gas, which doesn't lead to prosperity, but rather to the bullock cart age of poverty and misery.

Media cannot protect Govt!
- Premier



SLFP Tells President to Guard Loose Cannons Before Losing Simple Majority

If any action is not taken on SLFP MPs who are loose cannons and are overconfident about the two-third majority, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is deemed to end up with a Government without even a simple majority, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party warned, recently.

Senior Vice President of the SLFP and Minister of Environment Mahinda Amaraweera said if the SLFP along with the constituent parties who are disgruntled within the SLFP, were to opt out of the current Government, the latter stands to lose even a simple majority in the present Parliament.

Amaraweera pointed out that the total number of MPs who could leave this Government could even be over 50.

"We urge the President to be wary of certain SLFP MPs who have been demanding the SLFP to leave the present regime, as that could well be a sinister plot hatched within the Government to politically destabilise the President," he said.

The Minister mentioned that the very people who have been urging the SLFP to leave the SLFP Government had done likewise to smaller parties led by Ministers Wimal Weerawansa, Udaya Gammanpila and Vasudeva Nanayakkara as well.

But, he insisted that the SLFP has no intention of severing links with the Government and then to back any Opposition Party to assume power.

Speaker disappointed

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena on Tuesday (30) expressed his disappointment over front row members – majority of whom are ministers – in the Chamber not attending Parliamentary sittings.

The Speaker who addressed Chief Government Whip Johnston Fernando told the latter to inform the ministers not to avoid attending the sittings.

The Speaker: "I am highly disappointed to see empty seats in the front benches. None of the ministers who are sitting beside the Chief Government Whip are present. I request the Chief Government Whip to advise them to attend the sittings frequently as it is a collective responsibility of the House."

Furthermore, the Speaker said that all the ministers never miss sittings where the President participates.

"It seems that we might have to request the President to attend every sitting at this scale, to have ministers in the Chamber," he stressed.

Sri Lanka to export cannabis

State Minister of Promotion of Indigenous Medicine, Development of Rural and Ayurvedic Hospitals Sisira Jayakody said that necessary Bills will be tabled in Parliament within the next 90-day period aimed at exporting of medicinal cannabis.

He stated that medicinal cannabis has been proved to be a cure for diseases such as cancer and nerve related ailments as well as mental illnesses.

Jayakody added that within the next



three months the Government will look to submit the relevant laws and Bills to Parliament ahead of their ratification.

"Sold or leased?" – Ranil and Tissa lock horns

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

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."

Parliament in darkness

A major electricity breakdown occurred during the island on Tuesday (30) with Parliament also being affected. Parliament was also without electricity for a few minutes during the Budget debate before the generators were switched on. However, after few hours the generator also stopped with only the Chamber lights and back up battery of the audio system working.

Meanwhile, SJB MP Thushara Indunil Amarasena and SLPP MP Lalith Ellawala were stuck the Parliament lift for about 15 minutes, during the power cut.

Vijitha fires salvo at GMOA

Jathika Jana Balawegaya (JJB) MP Vijitha Herath on Tuesday (30) blamed the Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA) for pressuring the Health Ministry not to appoint medical administrator grade doctors to hospitals, in order to carry out its own agenda in the Health Ministry and State hospitals.

Participating in the Committee Stage Debate on the Expenditure Head of the Health Ministry, Herath said that there is an administrative crisis in the country's health service.

"The success of any institute depends on its administration. There is an administration crisis in State hospitals. Main reason for this is not appointing chief administrative officers to hospitals. A mechanism was introduced years ago to recruit medical administrator grade doctors. To provide education and training to a medical officer to become a medical administrator grade doctor, the Government spends about Rs 20 million. However, they are not

recruited to hospitals. They have been neglected by the Health Ministry. Medical administrator grade doctors went to Court and the Health Ministry Secretary agreed to recruit them within three weeks. Although the Gazette Notification was issued, no recruitment was done. When the Gazette was discussed at Cabinet meetings, both the former and current Health Minister tried to cancel the Gazette," he claimed.

The reason behind this is the influence of the GMOA. They pressure ministers not to recruit medical administrator grade doctors. Several GMOA members try to make the Health Ministry to dance to their tunes. They want to carry out their agendas in the Ministry and hospitals, Herath alleged and added, "That is why Muruththettuwe Ananada Thera said that a GMOA member requested him to influence the authorities to appoint the latter as the Health Ministry Secretary. Therefore, the situation is very clear. Ministers believe that medical administrator grade doctors should be appointed. But they are scared of the GMOA. That is why the administration of hospitals is in a sorry state. The GMOA wants to control the Health Ministry and the doctors. That is why they pressure the ministers not to appoint medical administrator grade doctors."

While Herath was speaking, SLPP MP Dr. Upul Galappaththi disturbed him, raising a Point of Order. However, Deputy Speaker Ranjith Siyambalapatiya, who was presiding at the sitting at the moment, turned down the request as it was not a Point of Order. A few minutes later, Galappaththi was given the microphone.

Galappaththi: "Wives of former JVP MPs Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa and Nihal Galappaththi are also GMOA members. What are they doing there if the GMOA is that bad?"

Herath: "One can only expect a dumb question from a dumb person."

Although Galappaththi continued protesting, his microphone was taken away. Herath continued his speech alleging that a very few members of the GMOA are trying to sabotage the hospital administration.

"I did not say that all the members of the GMOA are responsible for this issue. It is only a handful of people who are behind this. The membership does not have anything to do with this issue. Even the administrative grade medical doctors are the members of the GMOA. Galappaththi is trying to act like a baby."

He continued, "Sabotage of the hospital administration might not be a problem to the dumb. But it is a huge problem to other sensible humans."

Sexual favours, demeaning labour

Microfinancing Companies Exploiting Indebted Women Alarms UN Special Rapporteur

By SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

Tomoya Obokata, the visiting UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, said he is alarmed about the micro-financing system in Sri Lanka, where many desperate women resort to sex work or demanding forms of labour, such as domestic work, which is rife with exploitation and abuse, to repay debts.

Obokata emphasised that it appears that many micro-financing companies are linked to sub-recruitment agents who facilitate migration for employment abroad, including countries in the Middle East and that these agents offer them incentive payments that are used to repay the loans on the condition that the women concerned migrate abroad to work.

"I am deeply concerned by the fact that the Government has to date not taken any effective and timely action in regulating and monitoring these exploitative micro-financing companies, with the result that they continue to operate unabatedly," he said.

He also raised concerns about links between labour exploitation and discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, caste, class and other grounds in the country.

"Microfinancing is another acute problem affecting particular women from rural areas, many single-headed households. Many of them lack income-generating opportunities and decide to rely on loans to support their family and/or businesses as they are not able to obtain a loan from registered banks. Micro-financing companies are said to target them as easy prey. Their interest rates are very high, charging 20 - 30 per cent per week or even higher depending on the companies. I was also informed by several interlocutors that contracts by various companies are written in languages which the women do not understand (e.g. English), so they sign them without the full understanding of implications and consequences."

Modern-day slavery

Due to the high interest rates of the loans, many women fall into debt bondage. This has led to suicides of reportedly over 200 women in the past years. So-called manpower recruitment agencies are often connected to micro-financing companies and they sometimes bring indebted women to work in the Free Trade Zone and elsewhere. It has also emerged that micro-financing agents who collect the money on a weekly basis, regularly ask for sexual favours in return for relaxing repayments, which is a clear exploitation of their vulnerability, he said.

In relation to other legislative proposals, the Government is considering laws to regulate the conduct of micro-financing companies which target vulnerable populations like



In relation to other legislative proposals, the Government is considering laws to regulate the conduct of micro-financing companies which target vulnerable populations like women and sub-recruitment agents who engage in unethical and illegal behaviours to facilitate migration of Sri Lankan workers abroad he added

women and sub-recruitment agents who engage in unethical and illegal behaviours to facilitate migration of Sri Lankan workers abroad he added.

He also stressed that he was made aware that members of the security establishment may be connected with micro-financing companies and therefore, complaints filed to the Police do not proceed, which hinders women's access to justice and remedies.

Other entities such as the National Human Rights Commission are not sufficiently proactive in investigating the human rights abuses related to the

operations of the microfinance companies. The Government has informed me that a legislative amendment is being introduced to put a system in place to regulate microfinancing companies, and I urge them to do so without further delay. "I was also informed that the Government has introduced mobile units of the Labour Inspectorate to various parts of the country including rural areas to raise awareness about available services and to provide assistance."

Concerns voiced

Sri Lanka has a robust legal framework to tackle contemporary forms of slavery and been making progress in other areas, such as increasing minimum age of employment from 14 to 16 and the establishment of a child labour free zone. However, Sri Lanka must become more inclusive and embrace all sectors of society if it is to overcome major issues such as caste-based discrimination and labour exploitation which in some cases may amount to forced labour and servitude, the UN expert said.

"A society needs to be inclusive to thrive and access to quality education, training and decent work is essential to end contemporary forms of slavery for all. The Government must listen to the people, including the most marginalised ones and the silence on sensitive issues such as caste-based discrimination must be broken in order to trigger positive change."

During his visit, Obokata met officials from the Government, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, civil society organisations, trade unions and the UN, as well as human rights defenders, academics, migrant workers and victims of labour exploitation. Obokata also visited two textile factories in the Free Trade Zone in Katunayake, and made trips to Kandy and several tea estates.

"I witnessed first-hand that Malayaha Tamils are disproportionately affected by marginalisation,

discrimination, exploitative working conditions and appalling living conditions," the expert said.

Obokata received reports about instances of child labour in domestic work and in other areas of the informal economy and the services industry. He also voiced concern over persistent gender inequality and discrimination affecting women. He also said low wages are not keeping up with the rising cost of living in Sri Lanka.

Obokata received reports about the recurrent employment of retired military officials in private businesses

such as tea plantations and garment factories. He was informed of regular harassment and intimidation of civil society representatives, human rights defenders and members of trade unions and a shrinking civic space, including through the application of COVID-related restrictions to freedom of assembly.

Sex workers of all gender identities and sexual orientations face discrimination, stigma and a particular risk of being sexually exploited and abused, including by law enforcement officials.

Sex workers of all gender identities and sexual orientations face discrimination, stigma and a particular risk of being sexually exploited and abused, including by law enforcement officials

Another sector which is highly gendered is domestic work he added. The vast majority of workers are women and girls and this is the least regulated industry as normal requirements, such as access to sick/annual leave, minimum wage, and other entitlements do not seem to apply. "I have been informed by a number of interlocutors of the harsh-working conditions with five increased workload without sufficient pay or rest. Subsistence is not always given, and instances of physical, verbal or even sexual abuse have been reported." (amiesulo@gmail.com)

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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Forest Reserve Used As Dumping Grounds

Garbage Dumping and its Telling Impact on Environment and Habitat

By **FAADHILA THASSIM**

The common and horrid dilemma of clearing of forests in Sri Lanka for several, different unacceptable reasons has not only left us with a dwindling forest cover but has also drastically affected the food chain of animals living in it.

The source of food for animals living within a forest reserve is what lay within it and when the same is being cleared for economical factors, grossly ignoring the destruction of the source of food for animals, they naturally tend to resort to eating anything that is available within their reach.

Sadly, these animals today have been pushed to eating solid waste that is being dumped without proper management of areas adjacent to forests while making it easily accessible to wild animals and to add salt to injury, forest reserves are also cleared to dump waste.

In a scenario of a pitiful incident where wild elephants in Oluvil were seen consuming garbage that was dumped by encroaching their habitat, received International coverage, raising concerns on the adverse impact on the health resulting from consuming waste which also includes polythene and plastic, environmentalists have been vociferous on the clearing of a forest reserve in the Trincomalee District with plans to convert it into a garbage dump.

Over 10 acres in the Kantale Forest Reserve has so far been cleared to dump solid waste and a German Company has entered into an Agreement with the local authority to use the dumped garbage in the said land, to carry out a waste-to-energy project. Environmentalists have expressed their disapproval and dissension against such dumping citing the reduction of the forest cover, the clearing of a forest reserve to dump waste and the harmful effects to wildlife including elephants whose habitat has been ransacked over the years, let alone feeding on such garbage.

Agreement to carry out a waste-to-energy project

Secretary to the Trincomalee Urban Council, T. Jeyavishdnu speaking to *Ceylon Today* said an Agreement was signed between the Local authority and a German private Company in 2016 for a five year waste-to-energy project.

He added thereby the garbage

collection from Trincomalee would be dumped in the demarcated area as waste required for such a project and that it would not undergo the usual garbage sorting process. He also remarked that a proportion of the income generated from the said project would be channelled to the relevant Local Government Institutions.

Jeyavishdnu said, however a mutual agreement has not been reached between the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) and the German Company on the price of the units of the power so generated. Owing to this even though the project has not got off the ground the waste continues to be dumped in the reserve leaving a telling effect to its environs.

He further stated that the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) had made several inspections to the area in question and although they had made repeated requests to allocate a separate land to dump waste instead of the forest reserve and to transform such garbage into compost the authorities concerned had not heeded their requests.

Social Specialist at Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development, Nimal Premathilaka, said the private Company has taken total ownership of the land adding that the Company had also obtained a mobilisation advance at a low interest rate on the understanding that it would carry out the waste-to-energy project but it appears that the advance so obtained has not in any manner been used for the said purpose.

He said, in order to carry out a waste-to-energy project, the Company is required to enter into a Power Purchase Agreement and the fact that the German Company had not signed such an agreement would make them ineligible for a further loan for the said purpose.

"The project has been held up for several reasons, yet the advice of technical experts to provide a viable solution has not been considered," he remarked.

When *Ceylon Today* contacted the local representative of the German Company, they said although the main purpose of entering into an Agreement was to carry out a waste-to-energy project, the CEB did not agree to the unit cost of power generation and thereby they were unable to start the project as planned.

When queried as to whether they would discontinue dumping garbage in the designated area as the work



on the proposed project is yet to commence, taking into consideration the impact on both wildlife and the environment or in the alternative whether there was a possibility of moving the garbage to a suitable location, they responded that the Company is hopeful that it could come to terms with CEB as per the Agreement that provides for 400 tonnes of garbage each day and that land specified for waste dump is the land in question.

Elaborating further he said that although they had applied to obtain a licence from the CEA to carry out the project work, they have still not been granted the same thereby causing further delays.

The impact of dumping garbage in forest reserves and land adjacent to the health and well-being of wildlife

Senior adviser to the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) and the Chair of Friends of Earth International, Hemantha Withanage, said it is not only elephants that consume garbage but also other wildlife species too, that roam on the lookout for food within their habitat.

He said they tend to feed on garbage dumped in forests and in adjacent lands adding that Elephants most customarily look for remnants of fruits and vegetables while stating, however, due to their inability to separate them from polythene and plastic waste, they habitually consume these hazardous materials.

He noted, there are no statistics on the number of Elephants that have succumbed by such consumption and contributed to its premature death.

Other consequences of clearing of

forests for waste dumping on wild elephants

Convener of Biodiversity Conservation and Research Circle (BCRC), Supun Lahiru Prakash said one direct consequence of clearing of forests for waste dumping is the increase in the Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) adding that this will undermine the efforts to minimise deaths.

He noted that Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) are listed as 'Endangered' and HEC poses a serious challenge to their conservation adding that Sri Lanka had the highest number in elephant deaths and second highest in human deaths annually resulting from HEC and the mortality of males was higher in both cases.

Is dumping waste in a reserved forest permitted by law?

Section 7 of the Forest Conservation Ordinance sets out acts prohibited within a forest reserve and according to Section 7 (1) (d), it is an offence to pollute the forest environment by dumping and disposing garbage in the forest.

Accordingly, those involved in such offences shall be held guilty and be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine not less than Rs 10,000 and not exceeding Rs 100,000 or both.

In addition, the Court may award compensation for any damage caused to the forest reserve and such compensation shall be equivalent to the actual value of the damage caused to the Forest Reserve and shall be charged and recovered in the form of a Fine imposed by the Court.

Attorney-at-Law Ravindranath Dabare stated that while it is an

offence to dump waste within a forest reserve, dumping of waste in an ordinary land that is not declared as a forest also requires a licence from the Central Environmental Authority (CEA).

The persistent issue of Solid Waste Management in Sri Lanka

CEA stated that solid waste, especially Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), is a growing problem in urban areas, aggravating by the day, due to the lack of an efficient and effective solid waste management system in the country.

At present, in many instances, solid waste are collected in an unsorted and jumbled state and dumped in environmentally-sensitive places such as waysides, marshy lands, low lying areas, public places, forests, wild life sanctuaries and water courses. CEA complained that it causes disastrous environmental consequences such as ground and surface water pollution and air pollution.

Further, the 'open dumps' of solid waste are ideal places for breeding of mosquitoes and leads to vector-borne diseases such as Malaria and Dengue. Haphazard throwaway and dumping of solid waste reduce aesthetic value and scenic beauty of the environment thereby creating negative visible impact and affecting tourism, adversely.

Efforts of the authorities to put an end to the clearing of forests for waste dumping

The Ministry of Environment pledged to put an end to disposing garbage in forest reserves by the end of 2021 while instructing officials to take stern legal action against those involved in such acts taking into account its telling impact on the environment and wildlife.

According to the Ministry of Environment, over 50 such areas where waste has been disposed of, have been identified and the authorities have since managed to reduce the numbers to nine.

Thereby vital issues including that of clearing of forest reserves for garbage dumping and the lack of solid waste management has to be strongly addressed in order to negate the effects of garbage dumping on the environment that in turn results in wild animals feeding on garbage leading to fatalities.

Past Governors and a CM had been Frustrated

– Governor Jeevan Thiagarajah



By **SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN**

The newly appointed Northern Province Governor, Jeevan Thiagarajah, who completed his first month in office, was the former Executive Director of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies and had also held executive positions in several humanitarian and human rights organisations. In December 2020, he was appointed as the member of the Election Commission of Sri Lanka, but he stepped down in October 2021, in order to take up the Governorship of the Northern Province to serve the people of the North. He says that there is an initial list of 53 plus active action plans to work on.

Excerpts of the Interview:

You have been appointed Governor of Sri Lanka's Northern Province to serve the predominantly Tamil-speaking people. You now hold a governmental position after serving as the director of the CHA, a non-governmental organisation. How do you see yourself as the Governor of the Northern Province, which will be scrutinised by the local and international communities on human rights issues following the end of the war?

A: As a secular technocrat, open to communication by all, irrespective of political affiliations, responsible for Treasury finances and harmonised, optimised, corruption-free usage, the mentor senior manager for the public service in the NPC (i.e., 36k+10k central cadre), friend and carer of the citizens, driving 'growth and development' whilst protecting the environment at all times and open to criticism, I am ultimately responsible for failures, if any, in the Province.

What are the Government's objectives that are expected to be achieved in the Northern Province in the next two years?

- Uplifting the poor.
- Sufficiency in water and food.
- Hyper efficient NP Governance.
- A second home for those from overseas.
- An investment zone for education, an exports industry, value added products and specific international service sectors.
- Affordable homes, safe drinking water, SLS 745 sanitation.
- NVQ 2 certified citizens with pre-existing skills.
- Exemplary public servants in top

management.

- A Province where four faiths radiate.
- Where the policies of the GoSL Unity Cluster is found real time on the ground.
- A Province where citizens are free to realise their full potential.
- A province with song, dance, theatre, art, drama.
- Where all animals are safe and secure.
- Where memories of demons of the past are much less.

What are your thoughts on Sri Lanka's Tamil political culture, particularly the TNA in the North? Are they diverse in their focus and attitudes on the right track?

A: Governor should not comment on individual parties or politicians. He can though critique those who are paid proxies, agent provocateurs, rabble-rousers, those corrupt and / or managers of localised violence or those who persecute opponents and their agents.

What are the initiatives you have planned for the North that could be carried out during your Governorship?

A: There is an initial list of 53 plus.

Is it necessary for Tamil youth, men and women, to become more involved in the cause of peace without becoming politically involved? Many people claim that they have learned to oppose Government initiatives at every turn. Are you having any difficulties in implementing projects or events?

A: They should become people who have found 'peace'. People oppose, revile, hate NP Governance because we are like 'maharajas' who are fundamentally self-serving and corrupt, ruling over citizens who we think are second class, untouchables. Governors of the past and a Chief Minister had been frustrated. I am sure such fun and games are planned and on - going on the incumbent. All of us off course live to learn and unlearn!

There is currently no Chief Minister in the North. Do you consider that to be a deficiency? Tamil politicians see it as a way to get rid of the LG elections.

They should become people who have found 'peace'. People oppose, revile, hate NP Governance because we are like 'maharajas' who are fundamentally self-serving and corrupt, ruling over citizens who we think are second class, untouchables.

Governors of the past and a Chief Minister had been frustrated. I am sure such fun and games are planned and on - going on the incumbent. All of us off course live to learn and unlearn!

Is that right?

A: No. Local views hold water. They are heard and counted!

The Northern Province was the birthplace of the 'one law, one country' concept. Is your governorship involved?

A: We are in one country with one Constitution and scores of laws. The Governor is duty-bound to follow the Constitution and the laws that flow from it.

Many people believe that the Government has won the war but not the hearts of Sri Lanka's Tamil people. If it is yes or no, what is your response?

A: Yes, there is more to be done yet. Let us assume we are in a 300 metre relay race. We are in the second baton change. One more baton change coming up once we turn the corner for the last 100 metres! We are still in first 25 metres of the second leg.

When people wanted to remember their dead in November, which is a basic human right, they were harassed and suppressed by the Police. Even the chair of the University Grants

Commission claims that the Mullivaikkal memorial has "threatened North-South unity." We didn't see your reactions to this. What do you have to say?

A: Private grief has not been outlawed and cannot be practically either. Private grief linked to outlawed entities crosses the law.

President Gotabaya stated that the issue of enforced disappearances and families searching for their loved ones will be discussed. There is compelling evidence that many were kidnapped in front of their families. How do you think this case will be resolved? Is there going to be any action taken in this regard? Are you going to meet with those who have been affected by the disappearances?

A: Yes. The OMP, the Office of Reparation and Reconciliation are tasked with mandates to address these issues/concerns. The Northern Provincial Council is supporting them.

Also, last week, the Navy and the Military were seen on social media attempting to seize plots of land that were thought to be owned by private individuals. A journalist also claimed to have been assaulted with barbed wire wrapped around a pole. The military denied it. Is the land taken over by the Navy, State property? What can you say about these occurrences?

A: Land, Title, Alienation, handing back or acquisition have legal procedures. It has to be fulfilled to the letter. The protests, though illegal were a blessing. It helped the Governor find many a gap which will be addressed.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) strongly condemned the attack on a Tamil journalist at Mullaitivu. How do you see the Tamil Media operating in the Northern Peninsula? Are they lively and balanced journalists who advocate for peace and reconciliation?

A: The media must be free. Responsible, not be libellous, treasonous nor be triggers to illegality.

They must be ethical. The media is vibrant here.

Another source of concern is that women are underrepresented in politics and in positions of power, even in the North. Have any steps been taken to improve women's representation?

A: Yes they are. Good point. We will ensure they are heard at critical junctures of decision-making.

The fishermen's issue appears to be unresolved in Tamil politics. How do you see this issue being resolved under this Government and under you as Governor? Are there any steps that have been taken under your supervision?

A: I wrote to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. K. Karunanidhi. I seek to meet him and discuss the issue. It would perhaps result in reciprocal developments. I went out to sea and saw for myself the unacceptable sight of swarms of illegally present craft engaged in fishing, using illegal methods.

The ex-LTTE combatants are in a precarious situation, with no income, no housing, and no prospects for the future. Have any efforts been made to improve their standard of living?

A: Once again it's a good reminder. Yes they must be in a protective cocoon until they are firmly on their feet and others in vulnerable situations would also be attended to.

According to Muslims, those who fled from the Tamil Tigers have yet to be resettled. Is there any news on that front?

A: They must, they can return.

You would have gathered information about people's problems in the North by now. What are the most important issues they've confided in you?

A: They want an administration which can find solutions, be responsive and one which ceases to foist problems on the Military and Police. They also want an end to inefficiency in public service, discriminatory practices, ugly, delayed or failure to take decisions, corruption and illegal acts by interested groups, and totally illegal acts by the administration.



NCDs Continue to be the Leading Killer

By **DILANTHI JAYAMANNE**

It was a time when the Kings and their subjects in the isle of Serendib achieved great feats in construction of the many dagobas, temples, tanks and the grand palaces as seen in ancient citadels of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya and Kandy. The country continues to thrive on showing off its ancient history to the many visiting tourists who arrive even in the midst of these troubled times of the COVID pandemic.

No word can be written with regard to disease without touching on the deadly communicable diseases which have claimed over 14,072 lives till date, and continue to top up its numbers, reaching a colossal 554,459 by 18 November 2021.

Forgotten identity

Has this nation forgotten or let go of its proud history or relegated it to the Grade 10 and 11 text books, where the students are expected to memorise the names of Sri Lankan Kings, their achievements, and their words of wisdom. "Do not let a single drop of water that falls to the earth go waste," are words that have to be reminded to the people by a non-profit organisation. Oh how the tables have turned on the Pearl of the Indian Ocean which was once – during the time of the Kings referred to as the East Asian or Oriental Granary!

Present scenario

What about the gigantic, baffling architectural challenges that were constructed in the country's past and what have the country's leaders of present times constructed with aid received from foreign governments? In a nutshell, its leaders have been instrumental in plundering the sea, another major tourist attraction of the isle of Lanka, to extend the land area adequate for China to build on it. Not to forget the many road networks that have been constructed during the past ten years or so, which help travellers to reach even those ancient cities in record time, a theatre and a monumental edifice constructed also on a loan from China is probably a self-claimed tourist attraction.

Treatment facilities

Besides these loan-fed construction projects, the leaders of our time also have been responsible for constructing more and more treatment facilities for a greater plague than the current COVID pandemic. Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have been gradually, but steadfastly being rearing their ugly heads, so much so that it has come to pass that every Health Minister, has proudly claimed that a majority of hospital deaths were due to NCDs.

In a book co-authored by former Health

Minister, Dr. Rajitha Senarathne and Prof. Shanthi Mendis on the Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases, it is noted that in 2015 alone 1,136,000 deaths had been due to NCDs. "Ischemic heart disease, diabetes, cerebrovascular disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and chronic kidney disease are among the top 10 causes of death in Sri Lanka."

According to statistics issued in 2017, the Oncology Unit of NHSL Kandy had 5,969 Direct Admissions made to its male ward and another 10,430 admissions to its female ward. That year, the male ward had 203 deaths and the female ward had 228 deaths due to cancer

Hence, the construction of the National Hospital of Nephrology in Polonnaruwa consisting of 200 beds, 100 haemodialysis beds, boasting five state-of-the-art operating theatres, and two Intensive Care Units. Currently, the country's Ministry of Health is in the process of constructing the second largest cancer treatment facility only second to 'Apeksha' Hospital Maharagama in the District of Kandy. The 12-story building will have a bed capacity of 600. The Linear Accelerator treatment facility had been commissioned in stage one of the Hospital's construction process. According to the Deputy Director General of NHSL, Kandy, Dr. A. Jayasekera, the hospital caters to 2/3 of the cancer patients in the country. It hosts patients not only from the Central, but also North Central, Trincomalee in the East, Kegalle and Mawanella in Sabaragamuwa, and Northern Province.

Cancer statistics

According to statistics issued in 2017, the Oncology Unit of NHSL Kandy had 5,969 Direct Admissions made to its male ward and another 10,430 admissions to its female ward. That year, the male ward had

The Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA), not so long ago, requested the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit (EOHU) of the Health Ministry to make known its recommendations on the health effects in using the Liquid Fertiliser and other agrochemicals. Mainly focusing on the stock of Nano nitrogen which had been imported to be distributed to farmers

203 deaths and the female ward had 228 deaths due to cancer.

Statistics retrieved on New Patients Registration to Cancer Treatment Centres show that in 2020 the 'Apeksha' Maharagama has had 11,864, NHSL Kandy another 3,889, while Base Hospital, Thellipalai has had 2,595 new patients registered.

In 2020, a total of 35,863 new patients have been registered, while in 2019 the new registrations totalled 35,107.

Chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology

Better known now as Chronic Interstitial Nephritis in Agricultural Communities (CINAC) has been prevalent for the past 30 years, with several studies being conducted into the mysterious disease which suddenly reared its head among farming communities. According to statistics given by the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health (IJOEH), the Prevalence of CKDu in some Districts of Sri Lanka was between 15.1 to 22.9 per cent.

Most affected by this deadly disease is the North Central Province. In 2017, Anuradhapura District alone had 288.0 cases per 100,000 of its population, while Medawachchiya and Padaviya had 558.6

and 500 per 100,000 of their population respectively. In 2017, Polonnaruwa District had 414 cases per 100,000 of its population.

Although this article alone may be inadequate to enumerate the deadliness of this disease, which is an NCD, and has been responsible for claiming the lives of a large number of the population in this part of the island built from ancient history on an agricultural way of life, it also does not inadvertently attempt to shove the concept of organic fertiliser down the throats of those communities knowing that some things take time.

Chemical fertiliser and agrochemicals

The question however arises as to whether each government that assumes power is prepared to beg, borrow, or steal in order to build more treatment facilities for one of the many NCDs that assail the Nation.

The Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA), not so long ago, requested the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit (EOHU) of the Health Ministry to make known its recommendations on the health effects in using the Liquid Fertiliser and other agrochemicals. Mainly focusing on the stock of Nano nitrogen which had been imported to be distributed to farmers.

The Union at the time said with its many proposals based on the effects of NCDs burden in the country it was only fair that the EOHU declared recommendations on many of these issues surrounding the said nano nitrogen and chemical fertiliser. The Union called at the time for the Unit to voice its recommendations on the effects to human health and environment in using the liquid fertiliser.

Although major fertiliser manufacturers may argue that the root cause of diseases such as cancer, diabetes and chronic kidney disease were not the large quantities of fertiliser, pesticides, herbicides that are used in cultivation, but results of bad food habits and unhealthy lifestyles as has been harped on by many health experts time and time again.

However, the fact remains that nestled in a corner are these deadly poisons which add heavy metals that get added to the earth, the food and pollute the waterways. These may be just statistics and figures to the many experts who even after a lapse of 30 long years have been unable to come to count down to the very last person who suffers from CINAC.

With an entire Unit set up in the Health Ministry for NCD, no one seems to be able to give the latest figures of any of the said diseases which assail a large number of the young and elderly population and the

Currently, the country's Ministry of Health is in the process of constructing the second largest cancer treatment facility only second to 'Apeksha' Hospital Maharagama in the District of Kandy. The 12-story building will have a bed capacity of 600. The Linear Accelerator treatment facility had been commissioned in stage one of the Hospital's construction process

breadwinners of the families that suffer along with them.

As so aptly pointed out by the GMOA, the EOHU too chooses to maintain silence in this regard and merely relegate this colossal issue to some forgotten research that has been randomly conducted.

Policies and hospitals

With the country's leadership inadvertently threatening to collar the farmers into using organic fertiliser and the lack of data to assess the proportion of NCDs, Sri Lanka's Health Ministers would most definitely find it tough to come up with policies and merely settle for the hand-me-downs of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank, not to mention China, which seems to hold sway in the country. With not even an Act or regulation like the Quarantine and Prevention of Diseases Ordinance to safeguard this Nation against the ever-increasing NCD threat, let us hope that whichever government comes to power next, that its Health Minister would be able to convince China or some other country to loan Sri Lanka more money to build the next 'largest treatment facility' for yet another NCD.

IPG incurs loss of USD 2.4 Million from LPL 2020

SLC agree to waive off central pool revenue from IPG
IPG offered exclusive territorial digital rights of LPL for 4 years
IPG request rights for another 5 years from SLC

By ANJANA KALUARACHCHI

Rights holder of Lanka Premier League (LPL), Dubai based Innovative Production Group FZE (IPG), had incurred a loss of approximately USD 2.4 Million by hosting the inaugural edition of the LPL, and hence, made several requests from SLC to cover the losses.

In a letter dated 29 September to SLC, Anil Mohan Sankhdhar, who is founder/CEO of IPG, had revealed that they incurred the loss in the inaugural edition, which was held amid COVID-19 pandemic in a bio secure bubble behind closed doors, which deprived them from gate collection, while also having to spend more than they anticipated to stage the league.

They have therefore requested the rights of LPL for another five years when their current contract ends with the 2024 LPL. Mohan said he is yet to get a reply from SLC during a press conference regarding LPL held on Thursday.

"The reason for my humble request to permit IPG to have the matching rights for the next 5 years is the loss incurred by IPG in the first edition could take at least up to the 4th year to recover, and it is in the 5th year that we hope to breakeven or start turning the corner on the bottom line. Hence, the opportunity to have the matching rights would help IPG to be financially viable with its investment in the LPL at the end of the next five years, and therefore we request your kind consideration in that regard," Mohan concluded the letter.

Meanwhile, SLC Board Meeting minutes of last July reveal that IPG had received other benefits too from SLC, which was not a part of the initial contract which they signed for a period of five years to pay 1.9 million USD for



the first two years and 1.9 million with 11% yearly increment for the next three years. These benefits were granted by SLC following IPG's request citing that they were deprived from ticket sales revenue due to the pandemic.

SLC had agreed to waive off their percentage from the central pool revenue, which comes to a total of USD 154,296.80, which consist of 10% from broadcasting rights fee, 10% of ground right fee and 20% of Digital rights income. Also, SLC Executive Committee at the same meeting decided to inform Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa about the matter to avoid any audit queries which may arise due to the decision.

IPG has also requested SLC to waive off central pool revenue for 2021 too to cover any losses

which may occur due to possibility of deprived gate income, where the medical committee has now allowed 50% of the public to attend LPL matches subject to them being fully vaccinated.

IPG was also granted 100% exclusive territorial digital rights for LPL for four years from 2021 subject to conditions, such as IPG shall pay USD 35,000 to SLC annually if digital rights income is less than USD 100,000 and 35% of digital rights income if the income exceeds USD 100,000.

SLC will also reserve the right to market and host via its official website and other digital platforms owned by SLC in respect of each LPL match after holdback of 3 hours from the start of the relevant match.

Apart from that, SLC spent a total of Rs 19,557,100 as PCR expenses for LPL 2020 for franchise teams, which had been revised to Rs 15,000,000 after discussion with Chairman of Nawaloka Hospital and CEO SLC. SLC recommended that IPG bear 50% of the cost which IPG had agreed upon.

Meanwhile, SLC had also recovered a total of USD 57,000 (anti-corruption fee for 2020 edition), but from 2021 onwards SLC will fully bear the anti-corruption fee as part of their ground handling expenses.

LPL second edition will start on Sunday (5th) with the opening ceremony to be held at 3.00 p.m. followed by the first game between Galle Gladiators and Jaffna Kings at 7.00 p.m.

LPL Kandy franchise get new owners

The Lanka Premier League (LPL) Kandy franchise has new owners, as Vernost Marketing Technology Solutions CEO Pankaj Tripathi and Safepay Founder and CEO Ravi Gupta have stepped forward to co-own the franchise in the upcoming second season of the premier T20 tournament of the country to be held from 5 to 23 December. The Kandy franchise was named Kandy Tuskers in last year's LPL and has been renamed as Kandy Warriors for the new season.



Pankaj Tripathi - CEO, Vernost Marketing Technology Solutions

Expressing his views, Pankaj Tripathi stated, "We are ecstatic to be a part of the Lanka Premier League as the co-owner of the Kandy Warriors. The LPL has caught the imagination of cricket fans from around the world and we wanted to be a part of the amazing competition in the upcoming seasons. We are eagerly looking forward to engaging with the fans and having a cracker of a season."

Welcoming the new owners, Anil Mohan, Founder and CEO of Dubai-based production giant IPG, the official promoter of LPL, said, "It's a huge honour and privilege for me to welcome the new owners of the Kandy franchise. I am certain that their passion for the game will bolster the Kandy franchise and also attract more fans to the Lanka Premier League in the upcoming seasons."

The inaugural edition of the LPL was held in 2020 and was played in a bio-secure bubble at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium in Hambantota from 26 November till 16 December 2020. It reached a cumulative audience of 557 million people through TV, digital-social space, and traditional media outlets. This year there will be five teams participating in LPL.

Vernost Marketing Technology Solutions consults and helps customers build, manage, develop and support complex and new generation business applications for End-Customer and Trade. With a proven expertise in designing, developing, and managing solutions in the domains of Customer Engagements, Digital Payment, Online marketplace, Travel Commerce and Digital Distribution, the company has been one of the earliest adopters and has an established practice on AI, Blockchain, Commerce, Analytics and Cloud.

LPL to open ticket sales up to 50 percent capacity

The organizers of Lanka Premier League (LPL) and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) upon recommendation of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health, have decided to open ticket sales for up to 50 percent of stadium capacity for the second season of the tournament, which will be held from 5 to 23 December. The league matches will be hosted at the R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, while the knockouts will be held at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Stadium, Hambantota.

Along with Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health and SLC, IPG will implement a robust plan to ensure that all measures are followed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All fans in the stands will need to wear a mask and maintain social distancing at all times during the matches.

Heshan Perera, Head of Marketing (Daraz) said: "We are very excited to take our partnership with the Lanka Premier League to another level, by enabling ticket sales for the LPL series on Daraz. While live streaming the matches as the Digital partner for the tournament, we are also delighted that we can provide the opportunity to cricket fans to purchase their tickets to watch the matches in person. Daraz always puts customer

experience and convenience to the forefront, and with this we have taken another step towards fulfilling it."

Commenting on the development, Diptendu Sawan, Country Head, BookMyShow (Sri Lanka) said: "BookMyShow is honoured to be partnering with the Lanka Premier League 2021 as the official ticketing partner. This collaboration will allow us to share our joint passion for cricket with the local cricket fans throughout Sri Lanka and celebrate our shared commitment to sporting excellence. It is a great honour to have the support of our long-time partner Sri Lanka Cricket helping us bring this phenomenal series to our audiences."

Anil Mohan, Founder and CEO of Dubai-based production giant IPG, the official promoter of LPL commented: "No tournament is complete without its fans, and therefore, we are delighted to announce that we will allow fans in the stands up to 50 percent capacity in the stadium for the second season of the Lanka Premier League. The health of the fans and all the personnel involved in LPL is our highest priority, and therefore, we will ensure that all the COVID-19 measures are followed during all the games."

Sanju's retention was no-brainer - Sanga

He is Rajasthan Royals' long-term leader

Swashbuckling keeper-batter Sanju Samson is Rajasthan Royals' 'long-term leader', the IPL franchise's Director of Cricket, Kumar Sangakkara, said on Thursday while terming his retention a 'no-brainer'.

Ahead of the IPL 2022 auction, the franchise retained two Indians and one overseas player in the form of their influential skipper Samson, uncapped young batter Yashasvi Jaiswal and star Englishman Jos Buttler.

"He is going to be the long-term leader of this unit of Rajasthan Royals. He is an exceptional player and he has shown time and time again what a wonderful asset he has been for RR."

Having appointed Samson as their captain before the 2021 season, the Royals have chosen the batter as the first retained player for Rs 14 crore. Their second retained player at a cost of Rs 10 crore is the ODI World Cup-winning Buttler, considered by many as one of the best T20I batters in the world currently.

The 19-year-old Jaiswal has become the second-youngest player ever to be retained across all IPL teams before the mega auction. His skipper Samson remains the youngest at 19 years and 2 months.

"We have retained Yashasvi Jaiswal,



the young Indian opener, an absolute star in the making, he had a very very good season pre-retention, extremely talented. He is a very very quick learner, he is a hard worker and he will be our uncapped retention," Sangakkara said.

"In terms of the sole international retention we have gone with Jos Buttler. Again, phenomenal player. Everyone in the world knows what he can do, whether at the top of the order or middle order or wherever he plays. He is an exceptional match winner." The Lankan legend explained why they let go of Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes,

which surprised many. "It was quite a tough choice for all of us to sit down and run through the names, the options, the auction nitty gritty in terms of managing our retention and our purse, what the best options and permutations were."

Once all of these dynamics come into play, it's very difficult to go into an auction with too many questions in our minds. "I know the players themselves understand our reasoning, even though they may be disappointed. I am sure they are as we are as a franchise."

(The Indian Express)

SLT-MOBITEL powers 'Speed-Up Katukurunda 2021'

As the pioneer in offering superior speed and reliable connectivity to Sri Lankans, SLT-MOBITEL, the National ICT solutions provider, has come forth to power one of the most awaited automotive events in Sri Lanka's motorsports calendar, 'SLT-MOBITEL Speed-Up Katukurunda 2021' as the title partner. The event is set to take place on 4 and 5 December at the Sri Lanka Air Force Katukurunda Circuit.

Organised by Sri Lanka Automobile Sports (SLAS), together with the support of all ten member clubs, this is the first time that the

governing body for motor racing in Sri Lanka is organising an event at Katukurunda. In addition, due to the prevailing COVID situation, the event will be live streamed via SLT-MOBITEL official YouTube, Facebook channels and will go live on PEO TV.

SLT-MOBITEL has been a tremendous supporter of the racing community, and as partners of the 'SLT-MOBITEL Speed-Up Katukurunda 2021' reflects the group's commitment in nurturing young talent by providing opportunities to the newer generation to unlock their fullest potential.



(L to R) SLAS Secretary Shehan de Thisera, Secretary of the Meet Jaliya Jayasekara, SLAS President Ashhar Hameem, Deputy Chief Marketing Officer, SLT Rohana Ellawala, Competitor Relation Officer Kalim Iqbal, Chief Media & TV Coordinator Eranda Wakista

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

Pannala National School 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). Pannala NS beat D.S. Senanayake National School Ampara by 5 wickets in the quarter-final played at Royal College ground Polonnaruwa yesterday.

D.S.Senanayake NS: 106 (36.3) (R.M.H. Madhura 26, D.M.D. Nuwantha 17, K.V.G.N. Pansilu 17,

Themiya Kumarasinghe 3/14, M.M.A.D. Munasinghe 3/18, Pubudu Geethanjana 2/30)
Pannala NS: 109/5 (28.1) (W.A.P. Keshan 34, Themiya Kumarasinghe 22, Pubudu Geethanjana 19, E.K. Himasha 2/46)

SEMI-FINAL LINE UP

Maris Stella Thimbrigaskatuwa will meet Hindu College Matale and Pannala NS will meet Sri Sumangala MV Kelaniya in the semi-finals next week.

(IR)

West Indies tour of Sri Lanka

Spin Magic From Embuldeniya, Mendis Guide Sri Lanka to Series win



The Sri Lankan spinners claimed five wickets each to set up a big 164-run win over West Indies, taking the series 2-0.

West Indies batters had no answers to the brilliant spin bowling from Lasith Embuldeniya (5/35) and Ramesh Mendis (5/66), who wreaked havoc on the final day of the second Test in Galle.

Mendis took seven wickets in the first Test and followed that up with sensational match figures of 11/136 in this Test. He was adjudged Player of the Series, while Dhananjaya de Silva was named Player of the Match.

Sri Lanka started the day on 328/8 with de Silva on 153* and Embuldeniya keeping him company on 25*. Embuldeniya hit a couple of boundaries before he was cleaned up for 39 by Jason Holder in the third over of the day.

That dismissal called for a declaration from the Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne, setting West Indies a target of 297. The de Silva-Embuldeniya partnership of 124 is the highest for the ninth wicket by a Sri Lanka pair in Tests.

In their chase, West Indies got off to a shaky start, as Mendis struck early, dismissing Kraigg Brathwaite lbw for 6. Jermaine Blackwood was joined by Nkrumah Bonner, the No.3 batter, and together they steadied the proceedings.

Sri Lanka went with an all-spin attack in the morning session. On the stroke of lunch, West Indies lost Blackwood for 36. Embuldeniya induced an

edge, caught at first slip by de Silva, when the West Indies opener tried to drive an outside-off delivery, and that ended the 50-run second-wicket association. The visitors went to lunch at 65/2, needing 232 more runs.

In the second session, Shai Hope shared a 27-run stand with Bonner, but his wicket sparked a collapse. Mendis had him caught for 16 and on the next ball, he struck again to send Roston Chase back for a golden duck. He finished the same over with another wicket, with Kyle Mayers becoming his fourth victim. The tossed up outside off deliveries did the job for the spinner, with the last two batters falling prey.

Embuldeniya joined the party shortly after, snaring Jason Holder's wicket, who fell for 3. In his next over, he removed West Indies last hope - set batter Bonner - for 44. The spinner spun his web, trapping the West Indies batter nicely with an inside edge that pegged back his off-stump.

Kemar Roach hit three boundaries, but it was too late with wickets falling at regular intervals. No other batter provided resistance as the rest of the line-up crumbled.

In no time, the spin duo of Mendis and Embuldeniya wrapped up the West Indies innings, setting up a sensational win.

With two wins in two games, Sri Lanka sit on top of the ICC World Test Championship table.



Ramesh Mendis



Lasith Embuldeniya

SCORE

Sri Lanka 1st innings 204 all out	
Sri Lanka 2nd innings	
D. Karunaratne Run Out K. Mayers	06
P. Nissanka lbw R. Chase	66
O. Fernando Run Out J. Blackwood	14
C. Asalanka c N. Bonner b V. Permaul	19
D. de Silva Not Out	155
D. Chandimal c&b R. Chase	02
R. Mendis c K. Roach b K. Brathwaite	25
S. Lakmal lbw V. Permaul	07
A. Mathews c J. Blackwood b V. Permaul	01
L. Embuldeniya b J. Holder	39
Extras: (4b 4lb 2nb Open 1w)	11
Total: (121.4 overs) 9 wickets 345 decl	
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, 9-345 Embuldeniya	
Bowling: Veerasammy Permaul 40-4-106-3, Roston Chase 27-2-82-2, Jason Holder 9.4-1-26-1	

SCORE

West Indies 1st innings 253 all out	
West Indies 2nd innings	
K. Brathwaite lbw R. Mendis	06
J. Blackwood c D. de Silva b L. Embuldeniya	36
N. Bonner b L. Embuldeniya	44
S. Hope c S. Lakmal b R. Mendis	16
R. Chase c O. Fernando b R. Mendis	00
K. Mayers c D. de Silva b R. Mendis	00
J. Holder c D. de Silva b L. Embuldeniya	03
J. Da Silva Not Out	04
K. Roach lbw L. Embuldeniya	13
V. Permaul lbw R. Mendis	01
J. Warrican c D. de Silva b L. Embuldeniya	03
Extras: (4b 2lb 0nb Open 0w)	06
Total: (56.1 overs) 132 all out	
Fall of Wickets: 1-15 Brathwaite, 2-65 Blackwood, 3-92 Hope, 4-92 Chase, 5-92 Mayers, 6-103 Holder, 7-108 Bonner, 8-128 Roach, 9-129 Permaul, 10-132 Warrican	
Bowling: Lasith Embuldeniya 20.1-6-35-5, Ramesh Mendis 25-6-66-5	

Departing Arthur heaps praise on Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka had the perfect parting gift for their outgoing head coach Mickey Arthur. The hosts sealed the series 2-0 with a 164-run victory over West Indies in the second Test in Galle and it wasn't just the nature of the victory that impressed, it was also the young players who stood out in the effort, on whom Arthur has spent the better part of his last two years coaching and nurturing.

"I'm going to get really emotional tonight, when we eventually say farewell, because the characters who are in that dressing room are remarkable. They're really a wonderful bunch of players and people," Arthur said.

Arthur had special words of praise for Ramesh Mendis, who was awarded Player of the Series for his 18 wickets across the two games. The spinner picked his scalps at an average of only 15.28 and finished with five more wickets than the second-placed Lasith "Brian Lara" Embuldeniya.

"One thing Mendis does is he spins the ball really big. We've just had to work on him being really consistent



with his lines and with his lengths. (It's) the attacking lines that he's worked on. I was just sitting next to Grant Flower (batting coach) out there and we were watching the guys out in the field. And I was saying, which guys have really made an impression on you? For both of us it was Ramesh Mendis," Arthur said.

"He's been touring with us almost since I started two years ago. He didn't play many games at the start, but every tour he's the guy that's training the hardest. He wanted more and

more throwdowns. He always wanted to bowl. He's worked hard at his fielding. And I just think he's getting his just rewards now. I couldn't be happier for him. He's an attacking cricketer and he's going to be an asset for Sri Lanka."

Arthur also noted Dhananjaya de Silva's 155 not out in the third innings which helped Sri Lanka zoom to 345/9 and declare with a massive lead. On a Galle pitch assisting turn and bounce, the lead proved decisive.

"Dhananjaya de Silva's innings was simply outstanding. On a pitch like this [in Galle], the ease with which he played was incredible. It just shows how talented he is. That for me was the defining moment. I knew that once we got a lead of 250, our spinners would do the job for us. So that innings of Dhananjaya de Silva's was paramount. He couldn't have played it without Lasith 'Brian Lara' Embuldeniya at the other end."

Arthur will now join Derbyshire county as their head of cricket, leaving behind a strong core of young players to take Sri Lanka forward. **(Cricbuzz)**

106th Colombo Championship Tennis Tournament 2021 Vichintaya clinches U-16 Boys' title

Vichintaya Nilaweera of Stafford International School defeated Venuka Kithnula in a thrilling three setter (0/4, 5/3, 10/08) to clinch the Under-16 Boys' title at the 106th Colombo

Championship Tennis Tournament 2021 yesterday.

Meanwhile, in the Under-14 Boys' final Methwan Wijemanne of Royal College outplayed Danushka Dias 5/3,

4/2, while in the Girls U-12 final Githmi Fernando of Ave Maria Convent Negombo edged Gehansa Methnadi 1/4, 4/1, 10/08.

Asian Youth Para Games Janani Wickramasinghe bags Bronze

Janani Wickramasinghe of Suraduta Balika Vidyalaya, Kuliyaipitiya won the Bronze medal at the Asian Youth Para Games in Bahrain yesterday. She competed in the Women's T-47 200m and clocked 29.36 seconds.

Although she is an under-17 athlete, she competed in the under-20 age group.



The Gold and Silver medals were won by athletes from Japan and Thailand.

SL - England Youth ODI series Sri Lanka U19 level series

Sri Lanka U-19 beat England U-19 by 148 runs in the 2nd Youth ODI at SSC on Friday (3) to level the 5-match series 1-1

Sri Lanka won the toss and electing to bat scored 251 runs for 4 wickets in their 50 overs. Left hand No.4 batter Pawan Pathiraja scored a valuable 113 runs in 129 balls with 13 boundaries. Joined by another Trinittian Ranuda Somarathne, the pair added 105 runs for the 4th wicket. Ranuda remained unbeaten on 58 runs made in 79 balls with 2 boundaries and a six. Skipper Dunith Wellalage scored an unbeaten 38 runs in 22 balls with 3 boundaries and 2 sixes. Rehan Ahamed and

Josh Boyden claimed 2 wickets each. England were bowled out for 103 runs in 31.4 overs. James Rew top scored with 50 runs. Left arm leg spinner Wanuja Sahan claimed 5 wickets for 21 runs. Yasiru Rodrigo and Matheesha Pathirana claimed 2 wickets each.

The third game is on Sunday (5) at SSC.

Sri Lanka: 251/4 (50) Pawan Pathiraja 113, Ranuda Somarathne 58 n.o., Dunith Wellalage 38 n.o., Rehan Ahamed 2/41, Josh Boyden 2/42

England: 103 (31.4) (James Rew 50, Wanuja Sahan 5/21, Yasiru Rodrigo 2/18, Matheesha Pathirana 2/20)