

Emergency declared to suppress protests - Bhavani

All Party blessings for incoming CBSL Governor

Adding the missing pieces of the jigsaw

Goals from Ihsan, Sandesh set up Blue Stars win

Ali Sabry resigns 24 hours after appointment

Says willing to give up National List slot

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE



Newly-appointed Minister of Finance Ali Sabry resigned within 24 hours of his appointment, after tabling the report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Sri Lanka's economic situation.

Ali Sabry who served as Minister of Justice said on Sunday (3), that he decided to resign from the portfolio along with the collective decision of Cabinet, following chains of citizens' protests islandwide, demanding the President to resign.

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Tri-Forces to guard key locations

A special security plan has been put in place by Police and the Security Forces to provide security to the Presidential Secretariat, President's residence and Temple Trees.

This follows a request made by Army Commander General Shavendra Silva.

IGP Chandana Wickramaratne informed the Western Province SDIG and DIG in charge of the STF to take appropriate steps and submit a report to him.

Accordingly, the Tri-Forces would be deployed at highly sensitive areas in Colombo. Police barricades will also be put up to ensure security.

Correction

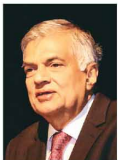
With reference to our front page story 'Namal leaves for Dubai' in the Tuesday 5 April edition of Ceylon Today, we have erroneously said former Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa left for Dubai on 3 April night, quoting sources.

However, it was found that MP Rajapaksa had not left for the said location and in fact was present in Parliament yesterday.

We regret the error and any inconvenience caused to MP Namal Rajapaksa.

Ranil parleys with IMF, World Bank

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE



UNP Leader MP Ranil Wickremesinghe yesterday (5), told Parliament that he personally spoke with top officials at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank with regard to the worsening economic crisis in the country, and possible financial assistance from those institutions.

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Lawyers surround AG's Dept in protest

BY FAADHILA THASSIM

Protesting lawyers yesterday (5), surrounded the Attorney General's Department and questioned the number of cases filed against the Rajapaksa family that have been withdrawn adding that at least 29 such cases have been withdrawn.

They further questioned the basis on which the cases had been withdrawn and whether such cases will be re-filed adding that certain individuals involved in the relevant indictments have fled while certain others are attempting to flee.

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(Pic by Venura Chandramalitha)

BASL appeals to public to act with restraint

EXPRESS DISSENT PEACEFULLY

Be wary of persons who might seek to cause violence, destruction

Violence will only dilute objective and purpose of peaceful dissent

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) noted that some of the recent protests have led to violence with protesters targeting private property of individuals.

BASL added, such criminal conduct can lead to those participating in such protests being charged in Courts and called on the authorities to

take action according to the law, while safeguarding the rights of those who protest peacefully.

"Those engaged in protests must take utmost care to ensure that such protests remain peaceful and be wary of persons who might seek to cause violence and destruction," they noted.

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The Catholic clergy staged a silent protest march yesterday (05) calling for the authorities to resolve the worsening economic crisis in the country (Pic by Dumindu Wanigasekera)

PM responsible for present crisis – Welgama

Samrajana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Kumara Welgama, in an emotional speech in Parliament yesterday (5), blamed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa for the present situation that has arisen in the country.

He also called for the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, pointing out that the present Government is facing the curse of the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks.

He said, he was the first person to come up with the slogan 'Gota Go Home' when Gotabaya Rajapaksa was nominated as the presidential candidate in 2019.

Welgama said he opposed the nomination of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who had no political experience, but no one listened to him at the time.

"PM Mahinda Rajapaksa did not listen to my request because he wanted to appoint a family member as the President," Welgama said.

"It was cornered and isolated for voicing my opposition to Gotabaya Rajapaksa being nominated as the presidential candidate," he said. The Parliamentarian further called on MPs to unite and listen to public demands to resolve the national crisis.

(GW and MD)

42 ruling party MPs to remain independent

Gayashan, Arundika backtrack

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

A total of 42 Parliamentarians representing the ruling alliance informed the Speaker, at the commencement of Parliamentary Sittings that they have decided to function as independent MPs in the House effective yesterday (5). These included political parties including the SLFP, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) and the CWC.

UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and JJB Leader, Anura Kumara Dissanayake pointed out at the beginning of the Sittings that there were no responsible Ministers to respond to oral questions.

"It is a new Cabinet of Ministers in Parliament now. There are certain questions that need to be asked from the relevant ministers and as per the situation we cannot continue like this as the previous Cabinet has resigned," Wickremesinghe pointed out.

Meanwhile, JJB Leader Dissanayake pointed out that it is not clear if the State Ministers are functioning in certain ministries where the Cabinet Minister has resigned.

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INTERPOL should arrest Senadhipathi

– Vijitha Herath

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE



Jathika Jana Balawegaya (JJB) MP Vijitha Herath yesterday (5), requested the Government to inform INTERPOL to arrest Avant-Garde Chairman Nissanka Senadhipathi, who left the country the same morning.

Submitting public petitions in Parliament, Herath said, Senadhipathi had reportedly flown to the United Arab Emirates.

Continued on Page 2

Calling for people-friendly system change Cardinal, Catholic clergy protest

BY DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

Head of Sri Lanka's Catholic Church, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and a number of Catholic clergy comprising priests and nuns joined the masses in protest against the Government, calling for a people-friendly system change.

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Failing to protect MPs' residences Roshan tells Speaker to summon IGP

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

Alleging that the IGP could be a "double agent," MP Roshan Ransinghe yesterday (5), requested Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena to summon IGP Chandana Wickramaratne to...

Continued on Page 2

Namal queries If President resigns, what next?

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

The slogan 'Go Home Gota' that could be heard in on-going protests demanding the President's resignation, could be levelled against anyone in the future and it might create the same situation like in the 1988-1989 era, MP Namal Rajapaksa...



Continued on Page 2

PUCSL calls for prompt appointment of Power Minister

The Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) urged President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to appoint a suitable Cabinet Minister for Power and Energy with immediate effect.

The letter stated that there was a serious crisis in the power and energy sector at present due to the fuel shortage...

Continued on Page 2

Money laundering CASE AGAINST NAMAL ET AL ON 28 APRIL

BY HANSI NANAYAKKARA

Gamini Marapana PC yesterday requested Colombo High Court Judge Navaratne Marasinghe to convene the case against his client, MP Namal Rajapaksa, on 28 April, so that he could convey his decision to Court on going overseas.

Counsel made this request to the HC Judge during the hearing of the case filed against former Sports Minister Rajapaksa and five others on charges of investing Rs 30 million, which had been unlawfully accrued, in a private firm (Gowers Corporate).

Accordingly Judge Marasinghe fixed further hearing for the said date. When trial proceedings kicked off, Marapana informed Court that his client MP Rajapaksa was unable to be present, due to having to attend Parliament sessions.

He then pointed out that as the HC has granted approval to his client to go abroad at any given time having apprised Court, to reconvene the trial on 28 April, for same.

The AG has indicted five accused with having deposited the aforesaid sum in a private firm from 1 October 2013 to 31 August 2014 and for having flouted the Money Laundering Act.

Besides Rajapaksa, the other accused are Gowers Corporate, its Directors Indika Karunajiva, Sujani Bogollagama, Iresha Silva and Nithya Samaranyake.

Sumanthiran urges vote on Emergency

BY GAGANI WEERAKOON AND METHMALIE DISSANAYAKE

Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) MP M.A. Sumanthiran yesterday (5) said Parliament should take a vote on the Emergency Regulations immediately.

There is a notification tabled today on the proclamation of the Emergency. According to the Constitution, this must be placed before Parliament and approved or rejected at the earliest possible

opportunity. We heard Maithripala Sirisena, MP say their party does not approve the proclamation of the Emergency.

I want to ask the Government to place this tomorrow for Parliament to decide whether it will approve or reject, because otherwise they are misusing the powers by allowing it to remain for 14 days and then lapse. And anything within those 14 days would be deemed legal.

That's an abuse of the process. This is abuse of the Public Security

Ordinance and abuse of the Constitution. I am requesting as the Constitution has mandated even now we can suspend Standing Orders and place the proclamation of Emergency for vote in this Parliament," Sumanthiran said.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa issued an Extraordinary Gazette Notification, imposing a State of Emergency in Sri Lanka from 1 April, following a string of protests islandwide, demanding his resignation.

Tourism stakeholders protest in front of SLTDA

BY SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

Stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industries protested yesterday (5), in front of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and the Ministry of Tourism, demanding the removal of SLTDA Chairperson Kimaril Fernando and the appointment of a competent Chairperson to the Tourism Board, as well as the protection of Tourism Act No. 38 and the state of emergency law,

among other demands.

The protesters chanted slogans demanding that the Government protect people's jobs, ensure an uninterrupted supply of gas, fuel, and power, stop bringing to power the same rogues, repeal the 20th Amendment, protect freedom of speech, appoint competent and credible people to make economic decisions, eradicate corruption, provide justice and accountability to the people, and protect the livelihoods of twenty-two million Sri Lankans.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EXPRESS DISSENT...



It was noted that BASL has consistently stood for the rights of people to protest and express dissent peacefully and has on numerous occasions urged the authorities to respect this right while members of the Association have also appeared in Courts to represent those who have been unfairly arrested and detained for merely participating in public protests.

"The BASL reiterates the position taken up in its previous statement that if a peaceful protest becomes violent, that will only dilute the objective and purpose of a peaceful expression of dissent and strengthen the hands of those who seek to suppress legitimate dissent," it added.

Further it said protests have been aggravated by the conduct of the authorities including the declaration of the State of Emergency, the ban on social media and the failure to come up with an acceptable solution to public demands and that the only viable solution to the ongoing protests will be to listen to the voice of the people and meeting their aspirations.

If President resigns...

...warned in Parliament yesterday (5).

Even if the President resigns, this slogan would not stop. It would be levelled against his successor as well. Then it would be used against anyone including public servants. This is exactly what happened in the 1988-1989 era," he said.

Rajapaksa also questioned the next course of action if President Gotabaya Rajapaksa tenders his resignation. "The Governments cannot be

changed by defying principles of democracy. Today you will say "Gota go Home", but if he steps down tomorrow, what is the plan? Who will lead?" he queried.

Speaking further, Rajapaksa who accepted that people are facing a severe crisis, said calming the public should take precedence.

"MPs should work to calm the people. Unfortunately, we can see certain parties trying to take advantage of the situation," he said.

Ali Sabry resigns...

However, he was sworn in as Minister of Finance on Monday (4) morning. Ali Sabry yesterday (5) tabled the IMF report of Sri Lanka in Parliament prior to resigning from the new portfolio.

In his resignation letter to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Ali Sabry said he only accepted the new portfolio as an

interim measure until a 'suitable, full-time and sustainable solution could be found.'

"If the President wishes to appoint someone outside Parliament as Finance Minister, I am willing to step down from the National List and give up my seat in Parliament as well," he said.

Cardinal, Catholic...

Director of the Archdiocese Mass Communication Centre, Fr. Jude Krishantha Fernando, speaking to the media during the protest march yesterday (5), blamed President Gotabaya Rajapaksa for the present crisis. "Although the President said he was not to blame, he should take responsibility for failing to be empathic towards the farming communities who took to the streets during the fertiliser issue. He should also be held responsible for having permitted his ministers to rob the public and the country's resources," he said, accusing the President of having failed to take action against corrupt ministers.

"It is almost three years after the 21 April 2019 Easter Sunday terror attacks. With persons who were imprisoned for having failed to do their duty being acquitted, President Rajapaksa failed to give justice to the victims. Even the demands and appeals of the Catholic clergy and victims have fallen on deaf ears. He created the crisis, and encouraged it," Fr. Fernando said.

The Media Director said by protesting the Cardinal and the clergy called for

the sovereignty of the people, rather than of the politicians. The people who have taken to the streets are calling for a change where even politicians in local governments could be held accountable for corruption and acts of bribery. "It is not a mere rolling of heads, where the President or the Prime Minister are changed that they are calling for, but a complete change in the system where people are empowered," he added.

Media Spokesman for the Colombo Archdiocese, Rev. Dr. Camillus Fernando said the country was feeling the loss of good politicians due to acts of terrorism and politics itself. "The politicians who are in power now are desensitized to the needs of the masses. The country has suffered severe losses. Therefore, instead of merely changing heads, steps should be taken to rally the finest experts to come up with a solution. A majority of those in Parliament do not measure up to the need of the moment. Sri Lanka is not devoid of intellectuals who can make that much-needed change," he added.

42 ruling party...

SLPP MP Anura Priyadarshana Yapa at this juncture rose to his feet and announced he has a different take on the current situation.

Even though the UNP Leader says the Cabinet of Ministers have resigned, we believe that the manner in which it was done was not legally acceptable. If we are unable to understand the crises faced by the people we, as a Parliament, have failed our people. Therefore, a group of us would like to announce that we will be independent MPs from now on," he said.

Accordingly, the following SLPP MPs will remain as independent Members in the House: Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, John Seneviratne, Susil Premajayanthi, Chandima Weerakkodi, Nalin Fernando, Nimal Lanza, Sudarshani Fernando-pulle, Priyankara Jayaratne and Jayantha Herath.

Meanwhile, MP Wimal Weerawansa stated that 16 other parliamentarians representing 10 political parties, including himself would represent Parliament independently in the House.

The others include: Udama Gayamanpala, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Tissa Witharana, Tiran Alles, Ven. Aburaliye Rathana Thera, Gevindu Kumaratunga, Weerasumma Weerasinghe, Asanka Navaratne, Mohamed Musammil, Nimal Piyatissa, Gamini Waleboda, A.L.M. Athullal, Gayashan Nawanananda, Jayantha Samaraweera and Uddika Premaratna.

Former President and SLPP Chairman, Maithripala Sirisena stated that 14 lawmakers of the party have decided to quit the Government and sit independently in the House.

Maithripala Sirisena, Nimal Siripala de Silva, Mahinda Amaraweera, Dayasiri Jayasinghe, Duminda Dissanayake, Lasantha Alagiyawanna, Ranjith Sijamalapatiya, Jagath Pushpakumara, Shan Wijayalal de Silva, Shantha Bandara, Dushmantha Mithrapala, Suren Raghavan, Angajan Ramanathan and Sampath Dassanayake.

In addition, MP S. M. M. Muszhaaraff of All Ceylon Makkal Congress (ACMC) and two parliamentarians of the Ceylon Workers Congress - namely MP Jeevan Thondaman and MP Marudapattin Rameshwaran are also independent in the House.

Even though their names were read out as being independent MPs, Dr. Gayashan Nawanananda and Arundika Fernando informed they have not taken a final decision on functioning as independent MPs.

"If I decide to be independent, I will announce it myself," MP Nawanananda said.

Ranil parleys with...

Making a statement regarding the current economic crisis followed by public unrest, Wickremesinghe said the IMF is ready to assist Sri Lanka to overcome the crisis.

"However, we have to obtain short-term credit facilities that could be secured from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for urgent needs such as medicinal drugs, until the IMF support is worked out. Also, we can request help from friendly nations such as India, China, South Korea, Japan and the European Union for financial assistance. For all of these, we need to prepare a proper mechanism to overcome this situation," he pointed out.

Speaking further, Wickremesinghe said this is a crisis of epic proportions which he had never witnessed in his entire political life. He also said a Relief Budget should be introduced instead of a development Budget.

Lawyers surround...

The lawyers further questioned about the number of cases that could be secured from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for urgent needs such as medicinal drugs, until the IMF support is worked out.

Solicitor General Chethiya Gunasekara requested the Lawyers to produce in writing their concern for the Attorney General to respond to them.

INTERPOL should arrest...

"He stole billions of rupees from the Sri Lankan people. Now, he and his entire family have left the country for Dubai. I request the authorities to provide his information to INTERPOL and arrest him. Those who robbed the people should be stopped from leaving the country, even if it takes to close airports," he said, tabling a petition to take action against those who misuse public funds.

PUCSL calls for...

...to operate power plants that depended on two hydro power stations. The letter stated thus, there is a forced limitation on electricity generation.

"Further the main issue highlighted at the island-wide protests and massive unrest surfacing is the failure of the Government to meet the electricity demand violating the fundamental rights of the seven million consumers and over 21 million people" it stated.

"As advisor to the Government on electricity [as empowered under section 17(c) of the PUCSL Act No. 35 of 2009 as amended], this commission wishes to bring the President's attention that there is a dire need for an active ministerial portfolio in the power and energy sector and hence it is essential that a Minister is appointed with a suitable background, knowledge and capability to assist the respective institutions to resolve the present crisis and to build up the suitability in the power and energy sector," the letter stated.

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Health Emergency Situation declared -GMOA

BY DILANTHI JAYAMANNE



The Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) said that a Health Emergency Situation had been declared to help face the severe drug shortage in the country.

While announcing the decision of its General Committee, Secretary of the GMOA, Dr. Senal Fernando said yesterday (5) that it faulted the Government and its poor financial management as being the primary cause of the situation. The Government is under obligation to ensure the people's right to live and their right to health.

By its poor financial management it has been unable to provide even the optimal health care by providing essential drugs and consumables, he said. The Health Secretary as the financial authority for the Health Ministry should be held responsible for this situation as he failed to obtain the required monetary

allocation for the purpose, he said.

Dr. Fernando said that Branch Unions countrywide have been asked to inform the public through the media of the crisis situation. Also, the branches would stage protests against the Ministry pressuring the Government to ensure financial allocations to deliver an optimal service to the public.

Hospital Level Committees were appointed to formulate methods to deliver the best possible health care at this juncture, he added.

'Suraksha' insurance scheme for students still in place - Edu Ministry

BY THAMEENAH RAZEEM

Additional Secretary to the Education Ministry, Lalitha Egodawila claimed that the 'Suraksha' insurance scheme by the Ministry of Education for students had not been repealed by the Government.

She said that no changes were made to the Suraksha insurance scheme, as trade unions claim.

According to Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Ceylon Teachers' Union (CTU), the agreement regarding the insurance scheme has not been

renewed since 31 December last year.

As a result, Stalin claimed that insurance coverage for the country's 4.5 million students had automatically expired due to non-renewal for this year.

The 'Suraksha' insurance scheme was initiated during the 'Yahapalana' government in collaboration with the Education Ministry and the Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation (SLIC) in 2017. It was given to schoolchildren from all walks of life in government, private and international schools and also extends to student priests in Pirivenas.

CRIMINAL ELEMENTS MAKING USE OF PROTESTS - DEFENCE SECY

Desist from causing damage to public property when participating in nonviolent demonstrations, Defence Secretary, General (Retired) Kamal Gunaratne urged the public.

He said due to the turbulent situation in the country, the masses have rallied and are holding series of organised protests in various parts of the country. Although these protests are being organised under the theme 'Peaceful Campaign' seeming to represent the democratic rights of the people, it is observed that two groups are active in this regard.

In a special statement from the Ministry of Defence stated that one group is conducting peaceful protests and they disperse peacefully, while the other group is deliberately engaging in violent protests in an organised manner causing damage to public and private properties and disrupting the day-to-day life of the people on main roads and in public places.

"In a backdrop where the State of Emergency is in place, it can be accepted that peaceful protests are conducted to protect the democratic rights of the people. However, acting under the guise of peaceful protests and placing the security forces that are committed to maintaining peace in an awkward position, while damaging private property, demonstrates that this campaign has now gone beyond the framework of democracy due to its violent nature," he said.

said.

The statement further said that in some areas, protesters were seen riding motorbikes and hurling stones and petrol bombs at homes and shops.

Meanwhile, several other groups have also engaged in organised burglary on 4 April.

"I would like to note that there are instances where the houses of protesters who are away from their homes to participate at protests have also been broken into by thieves. The Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Public Security, Tri-Forces and the Sri Lanka Police, who are at all times committed in protecting the public are constantly monitoring these protests. Although peaceful protests taking place democratically may be accepted, I would like to inform that we will act to ensure that no acts of violence take place. I further emphasise that the Security Forces will act to maintain peace and also will not hesitate to enforce law against those involving in violence. Finally, as the Secretary of Defence, I request the people of this country to carry out peaceful protests if deemed necessary, which is their democratic right, and not to involve in acts of damaging and setting fire to public and private property. I also urge them, not to be deceived by those who incite violence for various motives," the statement concluded.

SJB calls for hartal

BY NABIYA VAFFOOR

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) invites the public to a hartal, tomorrow (7).

Speaking at a Media briefing following SJB parliamentarians meeting on the prevailing chaotic situation in the country, on 4 April, SJB MP Harshana Rajakaruna invited the public to gather in the town of every electorate and the vendors to close their shops and support their hartal, to show their opposition to the Government.

Subsequently, Parliamentarian Rajitha Senarathne said, the SJB has no intention of forming a coalition government with the Rajapaksas.

"The SJB will form a government with the people's blessings. Rajapaksa governance is on its last legs, with the end in sight. The people's wish of 'Go Home Gota' will be supported till the end," he added.

On a separate note, SJB Leader Sajith Premadasa said, certain desperate groups were springing up and the SJB would not be disturbed by them.

IGP orders probe into assaults by Police at Mirihana

BY HANSI NANAYAKKARA

IGP Chandana Wickremaratne yesterday (5), directed the Officer-in-Charge of the Nugegoda Police Division to conduct an immediate investigation into the incident where Police officers on duty at the Mirihana Police Station, on the night of 31 March, allegedly assaulted or failed to prevent the assault on persons.

The IGP issued this order to the OIC of the Nugegoda Police Division in response to a complaint filed by the Sri

Lanka Young Journalists Association (SLYJA) on 2 April.

The SLYJA has filed a complaint with the IGP alleging that within the premises of the Mirihana Police Station, suspects taken into custody were mercilessly assaulted, a peaceful protest demonstration was destabilised by Police and Army officers, orders were given by top Police officers to supervise the assaults without intervening to stop it, a bus was burned without taking action to prevent it, and top Police and STF officers were arrested.

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HRW writes to IMF

Implement tax measures that do not burden poor

Human Rights Watch has written to the International Monetary Fund demanding that Sri Lanka implement progressive tax measures that do not burden the poor.

In their letter to the IMF, they stated that Sri Lanka should protect the human rights of low-income people while also addressing corruption and entrenched obstacles to the rule of law. While inflation reached more than 18 per cent in March, exacerbating economic hardship, the value of the Sri Lankan rupee has rapidly declined, making imported necessities such as medicines, sanitary products, food, and fuel scarce or unaffordable for many people, according to HRW in a letter to the IMF.

HRW proposed several recommendations to the IMF such as Assess the expected direct and indirect impacts of any adjustments on low-income people in Sri Lanka, in line with the social spending strategy adopted by the IMF in 2019, and ensure that these are adequately mitigated, such as by increased investment in well-designed social protection programmes. Include a social spending floor as performance criteria and ensure that it adequately mitigates any impacts of adjustments before they are carried out, and that it enables investment in social protection to adequately protect people's economic rights.

Urges the government to put in place policies to increase women's access to employment by reducing barriers, including by providing state-funded maternity leave and access to affordable menstrual hygiene. Include reforms to restore the independence of institutions, including the Judiciary, Auditor General, Attorney General, and the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption, which are key for economic growth and fighting corruption. Require the Sri Lankan government to restore independent investigations into corruption allegations and prosecute those found responsible. Government should respond to the protests

in accordance with international human rights standards, which prohibit the use of unnecessary or excessive force.

"The protests roiling Sri Lanka are a clear message about many people's economic situation. The IMF and the Sri Lankan government should come to an agreement that supports people's ability to afford life necessities and addresses the problems underlying the current crisis," said Sarah Saadoun, Senior Researcher focusing on poverty and inequality at Human Rights Watch.

(SRM)

NOTICE OF ENROLLMENT

I, JEGATHESWARAN KAJINA of No-56/3, Kaladdy Amman Road, Jaffna do hereby give notice that I shall SIX WEEKS HENCE apply to HIS LORDSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE OTHER HONOURABLE JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA to be admitted and enrolled as an ATTORNEY-AT-LAW OF THE SUPREME COURT.

Jegatheswaran Kajina
Date: -2022.04.06

NOTICE OF ENROLLMENT

I, KANESAN THULASI of East Road, Thettaiivu-02, Batticaloa do hereby give notice that I shall SIX WEEKS HENCE apply to HIS LORDSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE OTHER HONOURABLE JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA to be admitted and enrolled as an ATTORNEY-AT-LAW OF THE SUPREME COURT.

Kanesan Thulasi
Date: -2022.04.06

APPLICATION FOR A LICENSE FROM THE REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES

Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of Section 34(1) (a) of the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, an application had been made to the Registrar of Companies for a license directing that an Association about to be formed under the name and style of "ANUNNAKI GLOBAL ORGANIZATION" be registered with limited liability without the addition of the word "Limited" to its name.

The objects for which the Association is established are:-

- To fight against exploitation, injustice and corruption if found against any individual, class, community in the society, Conducting Human Rights activities.
- To educate the people for adoption of the good norms of a good citizenship and to inculcate into the people's mind, ideals of national unity.
- To work for uplifting the status of women /man in the society. To work against female circumcision and to fight against the victimization of girl/women by anybody in the society on female circumcision or any other related issues.
- To propagate the need for tree plantation / pollution control and environmental awareness.
- To help and generate training programme for self-employment of women and educated unemployed people and to work for adult education.
- To create the means for providing medical assistance to the people suffering from diseases, especially for helpless people.
- To provide help under health & nutrition services for women and children.
- To establish library and reading rooms in needy communities.
- To create Training/Education centres and health centres.
- To publish newspaper, magazine, journals and to reproduce works of arts, literature, science, crafts and other allied works/collections of works of arts for instruction and imparting useful knowledge.
- To provide help/shelter/facilities for old people, children and disabled persons for their welfare.
- To organise forums, seminars, camps etc for spreading good living habits, moral values, Sri Lanka culture, and methods of developing self confidence etc and to create centres throughout the country for the above activities.
- To work for uplifting poor rural/village people for their overall development.
- Provide scholarship/financial help to poor rural/village people for their overall development.
- To provide help to people suffering from Natural calamities such as flood, Earthquakes, Tsunami, accidents etc.
- To provide free legal advice to poor people.
- To create awareness among the people regarding AIDS etc.
- To educate people against taking drugs and Alcohol.
- To arrange land, building and other facilities for running school/college institution/ library etc.
- To raise funds through collection, donation or subscription and other means and invest money or incur expenditure in such manner as shall promote the attainment of aims and objectives of WHERE NGO.
- To undertake any other work or assignment which may be for the general welfare of the people and the country.
- Water protection, management projects and irrigation system development projects.
- International help for who need help from out side sri lanka. Advising to the government, People who need safe and secure their lives.
- Protecting Wild life, Animals and it's habitation places.
- Development of religious places in sri lanka.
- Protecting Indian (Lakdiwa sea) ocean, it's animals and environment.

(The Association does not engage in Primary and Secondary Education)

Any person, Company or corporation objecting to this application may bring such objections before the Registrar of Companies within 21 days from this publication by a letter addressed to Registrar of Companies, "Samagam Madura", No: 400, D.R. Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo-10.

PROMOTORS

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 9(1) of the Companies Act No.7 of 2007 that following company was incorporated.

Name of the Company: WAITANGODA SPICE (PRIVATE) LIMITED
No of Company: P V 125705
Registered Office: No.111, Deniyaya Road, Aluruwa.
Date of Incorporation: 26/10/2021
Secretary on behalf of the above company

Enumeration of Electors 2022 begins

The enumeration of electors for the year 2022 has commenced on 01.02.2022. Enumeration forms are not distributed to every household.

Contact the Grama Niladhari or District Elections Office

if not registered in the year 2021 or if the address of the registration in the year 2021 need to be amended; for registration of persons born on or before 31.01.2004;

and

to register the citizens aged 16 - 18 years (born before 31.01.2006)

for obtaining voting right as soon as attaining the age of 18 by supplementary registers prepared every 4 months

Election Commission
011-2868441 / www.elections.gov.lk

Dematagoda Ruwan, wife remanded

BY HANSI NANAYAKKARA

Colombo Chief Magistrate Nandana Amerasinghe, on Monday (4) remanded drug trafficker Ruwan Chamila, alias Dematagoda Ruwan and his wife Suboda Dayangani, who have been charged with amassing millions of rupees worth of property via illegal activities till 18 April.

The Magistrate also ordered the CID, to submit the two and a half kilos of gold seized from the possession of the second suspect Dayangani, to the National Gem and Jewellery Authority and file a report on it at the next hearing.

The Illegal Property Acquisition and Inspection Unit affiliated to the CID, prosecuted.

DEVELOPMENT WORK JEOPARDISED – RDA DG

BY THAMEENAH RAZEEM

Director General of the Road Development Authority (RDA) Sartha Weerakoon said development activities were jeopardised due to the country's financial crisis.

He said prices of construction material had skyrocketed and agencies that accepted road projects are having difficulty obtaining material such as cement. He also said development activities were not being halted but were

slowing down.

Weerakoon said Sri Lanka was a developing country that was now hard hit by the financial and economic crisis, though there was a delayed impact.

"We are also having major issues due to a lack of construction material. People are forced to work within a budget, and when prices fluctuate from time to time, it becomes difficult for them to buy what they want. They will be forced to buy limited material or slow down the project's progress," he said.

Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa expected to complete these projects within a few months to meet national objectives, but noted that due to monetary constraints, it is not possible to implement the proposals from the villages given the current situation. When asked about the grassroots programme, he said it has also been impacted by price increases, and that the authority is working to bring all of them back on track.

Current economic crisis worse than Eelam war – Ranil

BY NAALIR JAMALDEEN

Former Prime Minister, UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said that Sri Lanka's current economic crisis is worse than the war with the LTTE. "This is the worst time the country had seen since Sri Lanka received independence from British imperialists in 1948".

Wickremesinghe further stated that it is really a bad situation in terms of politics. "This is the first time in the history of Sri Lanka where the people have got down to the streets against the Government. It is basically similar to the Arab Spring and the Dignity Revolution led by the middle class and youth in Ukraine in 2014".

Wickremesinghe made these remarks during an interview with India's News Today TV.

The UNP Leader said the situation in Sri Lanka is a popular uprising of people against the Government and is continuing.

The Tamil National Alliance and UNP were present during the All Party Conference last week and suggested the Government to set up a committee consisting of leaders of political parties representing Parliament and the President to get together and hold discussions to resolve the current economic crisis.

"The TNA and UNP held discussions and our views were firm. We are not interested in holding office or taking up ministerial positions. But we are prepared to help the Government through the committee we proposed earlier," Wickremesinghe said.

"An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report says the economic crisis of this country started after November 2019. I said to just look at the problem and resolve them without looking at the problem or from where it started or who was responsible for it. The main issue the

IMF says is concerning the balance of payment of the debt because our debt is not sustainable. The Treasury and the Central Bank say this is a temporary phenomenon and all these issues can be resolved when the money starts coming from tourism and remittances from Sri Lankan migrant workers abroad. This is the basic issue the Government has to settle.

"There is no confidence today. We have to work up to build confidence. I have been calling for a consortium of India, China, Japan, South Korea and European Commission to help us along this. It is some form of bridging the financial gap. With India's help the money we have received would run out by mid-May. We would go to shortage again by June. The factories and business entities will have to be closed due to the unavailability of foreign exchange," he added.

FCCISL alarmed by new developments

The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) is of the view that the new developments would not help the country solve any of the issues faced by the business community and instead it will further aggravate the degenerating economic environment, causing further loss of business confidence, investor interest, export income and productivity.

In a release, it said FCCISL is greatly concerned about mass unrest and violence last week. "Even though we saw the revival of inbound tourism by end of 2021, the travel advisories (high risk – caution) issued for travellers to Sri Lanka by several countries again indicate a bleak future for us. FCCISL has received a record number of enquiries from its corresponding overseas chambers, especially on issues related to sectors such as energy, food security and logistics," it said.

FCCISL has also received hundreds of complaints from its membership across the country on the acute

shortage of diesel to run their factories both for exports and for local production, transportation of goods is disrupted for hours since the transport fleet of logistics providers are queuing at fuel stations and shortage of containers and high freight cost.

"We also received complaints about the inability to clear containers at the port due to foreign currency constraints at banks and non-availability and high cost of raw materials. In the circumstances as a matter of urgency and significance FCCISL wishes to propose the Government of Sri Lanka to consider proposals," it said.

The proposals are, if the shortage of fuel is expected to continue in the future, it's prudent to draft a more realistic date plan regarding the distribution of fuel (specially diesel) to industries islandwide and inform industrialists through trade chambers and divisional secretariats.

"We request the Government to develop a mechanism to ensure uninterrupted fuel supply to logistics

operators. We request the Government to set up 24-hour hotlines handled by responsible officers at ministries covering major sectors to receive enquiries / complaints. We request the Government to give the first priority to procure products and services wherever possible from SMEs in the country and to pay suppliers on time. We also propose to establish a procurement charter for SMEs at government agencies. Government has to issue a well-structured and realistic recovery plan for the country and to appoint competent professionals to execute for better results. The same plan can be disseminated to the Sri Lankan business community and to world capitals through Sri Lankan missions abroad to instil confidence in international markets," it said.

FCCISL would like to request the Nation to shed differences of opinion and support such a well-structured and realistic recovery plan to rebuild the economy.

Korean Minister visits GA Dept



Minister for Government Policy Coordination of the Republic of Korea, Koo Yun-cheol, who visited Sri Lanka for a three-day official visit from 31 March to 2 April, paid a visit to the Government Analysts' Department on 31 March, accompanied by MP Ali Sabry and Korean Ambassador Santhush Woonjin JEONG.

MP Sabry extended his gratitude towards the government of the Republic of Korea for the constant cooperation in introducing capacity-building programmes and providing grants to enhance the capabilities of the Government Analysts' Department in the analysis of narcotics, to provide timely and reliable reports requested by law enforcement authorities in Sri Lanka. In December 2021, the Government of the Republic of Korea provided grant aid of US\$ 4 million to Sri Lanka to improve the facilities of the Government Analysts' Department and for its capacity development to strengthen the forensic drug analysis capabilities.

The project includes enhancing laboratory equipment in narcotic drug and forensic toxicology lab, provision of training on narcotic drugs and forensic toxicology, and development of a Laboratory Information Management System for the Government Analysts' Department. Korea, which is renowned for having a leading forensic institute in the Asian region with highly advanced technologies in the field of forensic science, is willing to extend further cooperation to the Government Analysts' Department in the areas of technical expertise and training facilities.

Only solution is for Rajapaksa clan to leave – Wijeyadasa

SLPP MP Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakse, PC, said there will be no solution to public anger and hatred against the present Government, unless the Rajapaksa clan withdraws from public life for good.

He stated any other measure will not satiate or pacify the fuming public at this time.

"The people are sick and tired of the sight of the Rajapaksa clan," the MP said when asked for his take on the current political situation here.

"Therefore, any move to retain power in the short or long term will not bode well for the political, economic and social stability of this nation. The sooner they realise this it will be for the good of the citizens of this country, as the Rajapaksa clan has been rejected en masse."

He termed the ongoing political imbroglio in the country as a 'complete breakdown of the Constitution'.

Dr. Rajapakse who currently functions as an independent lawmaker in Parliament having fallen out of favour with the President,

described the latter's invitation to all political parties to serve in ministerial posts in a caretaker government, till the situation is brought under control, as a joke.

"The previous Cabinet having resigned and then appointing a few of them in their same posts till the formation of a permanent Cabinet is an insult and the ultimate slight to the dignity of the public," Rajapakse said.

He said no one with an iota of brains in the Legislature will be willing to serve under a President and Prime Minister who had lost the implicit trust and confidence in the public by their crass actions, mismanagement of the economy, while turning a blind eye to rampant corruption, wastage and nepotism.

He stated that the very political future of any MP from the Opposition who may decide to accept the incumbent President's 'ludicrous' invitation, will be decided by the masses at the next election.

"This problem cannot be resolved by merely changing of heads of the Cabinet that

has become rotten to the core," he said.

"The only solution to this issue is to transfer the powers of the Executive to Parliament. Then a call must be made for a secret ballot in Parliament and then select a Prime Minister who has the majority support of MPs in the House and then for him to oversee a suitable interim Cabinet or Government, till such time a General Election could be held. Unless this course of action is undertaken, there will not be any resolution to this Constitutional crisis and it will continue to destabilise the nation from all fronts."

He added that there is a strong possibility of the SLPP losing its Parliamentary majority but explained that any serious impact of the move could only be felt when a vote on an Act is taken.

The President's Counsel lastly warned that failure to resolve the Constitutional crisis swiftly and prompting could further aggravate the day-to-day lives of the people, paving the way for a blood bath which would be unprecedented in its history. (JK)

ABF Superintendent meets SLCG Chief



Australian Border Force (ABF) Superintendent Joanne Prior of the Australian High Commission in India on 31 March met Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG) Director General, Rear Admiral Anura Ekanayake at the SLCG Rear Headquarters, Wellawatta, SLCG said.

Prior was accompanied by the First Secretary Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka, Inspector Brett Zehnder. During the discussion, both parties exchanged details on common challenges in performing duties in maritime domain awareness (MDA), counter human trafficking and smuggling, it said.

Ekanayake thanked the High Commission and ABF for assistance provided to improve SLCG's capacity. Zehnder outlined the coordination between the two organisations, future activities, and the progress of their initiatives to support SLCG.

Prior explained the proposed future collaboration and conduct of training with regional organisations to promote inter-agency coordination and developing capacity and leadership of the future management of the respective organisations. The meeting culminated with an exchange of souvenirs. (PA)

Police Log

BY ALOKA KASTURIARACHCHI

Medagama

A child was killed in a fatal traffic accident in Medagama on 4 April.

The victim was a car collided with a bicycle travelling towards Medagama, injuring the child riding on the pillion.

The child died shortly after being admitted to Bible Hospital. The rider is still receiving treatment.

The deceased was identified as 9-year-old Aiywela, a Medagama resident.

Police say the accident was caused by reckless driving. The driver has been arrested.

Boralesgamuwa

A youth died in a motorcycle accident in Boralesgamuwa on 4 April.

Police stated that the youth had lost control of his motorcycle which veered off the road colliding with a light post.

The critically injured youth was admitted to the Kalubowitota Hospital where he later succumbed.

The victim was identified as a 19-year-old resident of Gangodawila, Nugegoda.

Kahawatta

A motorcyclist was killed in a bus accident in Kahawatta on 4 April.

The motorcycle rear-ended a bus causing severe injuries to the rider who later died on admission to Kahawatta Hospital.

According to Police both vehicles had been travelling from Ratnapura to Kahawatta.

The deceased was identified as a 30-year-old resident of Welladura, Kahawatta.

Weather forecast: Expect adverse weather

BY NAALIR JAMALDEEN

Showers or thundershowers can be expected in most parts of the country in the evening or night today (6), according to the Meteorological Department.

Showers or thundershowers could occur, with heavy rains exceeding 100 millimetres expected in some areas of the Central, Sabaragamuwa, Uva, North Western, and North Central provinces, as well as Galle and Matara districts.

The public should be cautious of the possibility of temporary heavy winds and lightning strikes and take adequate measures to minimise damages.

The sun will be directly over Sri Lanka's latitude from 5 to 15 April due to the Earth's rotation. Accordingly, the sun will be directly overhead Welipenna, Moragala, Weddagala, Dolekanda, Pallebedda, Mirihana and Aungukolapellasa areas at around 12:00 noon.

Meanwhile, a low pressure area is likely to form in the South East Bay of Bengal tomorrow (7). Fishermen and other seafarers in deep seas to the South-East and East of Sri Lanka are advised to be vigilant and attentive to future weather forecasts by the Meteorological Department.

Showers or thundershowers could occur at several places in the deep and shallow seas off the coast from Mannar extending to Batticaloa via Puttalam, Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Pottuvil in the evening or night today.

Wind velocity is expected to be from 20 to 25 kmph around the island from South-Easterly or varying direction. Seas would remain slight. However very rough seas and temporary gusty winds can be expected during the thundershowers.

Wimal rejects portfolios in Interim Govt

BY THAMEENAH RAZEEM

Leader of the National Freedom Front (NFF) Wimal Weerawansa said he does not wish to hold any ministerial portfolios in the Interim Government.

When queried if he is willing to accept ministerial portfolios if the President invites them, he said they have not received any invitation from the President so far.

"If we are invited, we will meet with the 11 constituent parties of the Government to discuss and make a decision," he said.

He was speaking during a meeting on Monday (4) at Communist Party Headquarters of the 11 constituent parties in the Government and the trade unions. Meanwhile, speaking at the same meeting, General Secretary of the Communist Party Dr. G. Weerasinghe said it is imprudent to have elections at this juncture, but that an election should be held within a year.

However, Weerawansa on 4 March said he will not accept any ministerial portfolios from the President.



Need to make structural changes to get out of economic mess

BY P. K. BALACHANDRAN

India and China have given beleaguered Sri Lanka a helping hand with a total of about US\$ 5 billion in emergency help to meet an unprecedented foreign exchange shortage the country is facing. With this help, at the very least, Sri Lankans will be able to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April without shortages of essentials.

However, while the people see a light at the end of the tunnel, it may prove to be illusory if the injection of Indian and Chinese aid and the probable assistance of the IMF are not followed up by a restructuring of the economy and a cleaning up the policy mess which has plagued the country for decades. The aid received or promised is only a palliative and not the cure for Sri Lanka's economic woes.

Earlier this year, India had extended US\$ 1.4 billion support to Sri Lanka through a US\$ 400 million Reserve Bank of India currency swap, deferral of a US\$ 0.5 billion loan and another half a billion as a line of credit to sustain its essential fuel imports. More recently, as part of its "neighbourhood first" policy, India extended US\$ 1 billion credit line for the supply of essential commodities, but this loan is a short term one. China's US\$ 2.5 billion is made up of a US\$ 1 billion loan to settle previous loans and US\$ 1.5 billion as buyer's credit for imports from China.

Disbursing funds

India is disbursing the funds on an urgent basis said its External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Colombo on Wednesday. "We are getting things done in days that would take weeks under normal circumstances. To see that the disbursement of US\$ 1 billion for the import of essential commodities takes place quickly, the Managing Director of the State Bank of India has been summoned to work on the details," Jaishankar told Indian correspondents here. He, however, denied news reports that Sri Lanka had requested a further US\$ 1 billion.

As for the Chinese, they had refused to re-schedule repayment saying that China had no system of re-scheduling. They have instead extended a loan of US\$ 1 billion to repay old loans and US\$ 1.5 billion to finance imports from China.

The repayment is not going to be easy. Economist Deshal de Mel told The Morning that Sri Lanka settled the January 2022 US\$ 500 million International Sovereign Bond (ISB) out of its reserves. "However, there is a further US\$ 6.4 billion worth of liabilities that mature this year along with US\$ 1.7 billion swaps maturing in 2022. These maturities include US\$ 3 billion of liabilities coming due in the first three months of 2022. Usable reserves as at end December 2021 were US\$ 1.6 billion (excluding the China Yuan swap that may not be used to settle US Dollar denominated liabilities). Adding the US\$ 400 million swap from the Reserve Bank of India brings usable reserves for Q1 2022 to around US\$ 2 billion – significantly outweighed by maturities during that period," de Mel said.

"The debt repayments are not limited to 2022 since there are continuing sovereign debt maturities of US\$ 4.5 to US\$ 5 billion each year for the next four years at least. Over and above this Sri Lanka also needs to finance a current account deficit of around US\$ 2.3 billion per year as well. Therefore, temporary solutions to balance short-term cash flows will not be sufficient to address the challenge at hand, and the country needs to undergo some form of external debt restructuring," de Mel warned.

ISB

Though the international Media has been blaming China for the Sri Lankan debt trap, China accounts for only 10 per cent of the foreign debt. Japan accounts for 10.8 per cent. 56 per cent of the debt is due to the International Sovereign Bonds (ISB) issued by the Government.

The ISB is a good source of money but payments have to be made on time in ISB's case. Economist Umesh Moramudali, writing in The Diplomat says that ISBs provide financial autonomy but at the expense of high interest rates and short repayment periods. "The Sri Lankan Government faces no restrictions on

how it spends money lent through sovereign bonds. The Government has freedom to use the money to carry out any project they would like. This financial autonomy, and the reduction of concessionary loans provided to Sri Lanka after its upgrade to middle income status, made ISBs a widely adopted method by successive Sri Lankan Governments to obtain foreign loans. Sri Lanka issued its first ISB in 2007 and, as of the end of 2019, approximately 47 per cent of its total foreign loans are ISBs," Moramudali says. Financial discipline suffered as a result of this.

And to keep up its international credentials Sri Lanka has been honouring its commitments in respect to ISB repayments. But there has been widespread criticism of this practice in the current context when Government has virtually no dollars to import essentials for the masses. Fuel and many food items are in short supply and prices have shot through the roof. Ships wait outside Colombo Port for days to off-load essentials because importers are unable to get the dollars needed. Economists have consistently appealed to the Government to get these repayments rescheduled but to no effect.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had given the pandemic as the main reason for the economic collapse. But a closer examination will reveal that the pandemic was not the cause and the way it was handled was the cause. Frequent, longish and strictly enforced lockdowns brought the economy to a grinding halt for nearly two years. Tourism ceased. Exports dwindled. And the curb on imports affected customs duty collections. Revenue collection, already very low at 8.1 per cent of GDP, was poorer.

Tax concessions

On top of all this, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, gave sweeping tax concessions when he came to power in 2019 fulfilling an electoral promise. In 2019, VAT concessions took out 72 per cent of the entities which were paying VAT, according to Deshal de Mel. And crucially, during the pandemic, the President ordered a 100 per cent switch over to organic farming and banned chemical fertilisers.

With the farmers hit below the belt, agriculture suffered and food shortages were the order of the day. By the time he removed the ban on chemical fertilisers the damage was done. With 70 per cent of the work force in agriculture, the majority of Sri Lankans were suffering.

The Government has entered into a dialogue with the IMF after resisting it for months thinking that IMF's prescriptions on austerity will affect its chances in the coming local and provincial elections. But thanks to the widespread demand of the intelligentsia that Government should implement the IMF's prescriptions it's talking to the IMF now. Government has also realised that following IMF's prescription will help it get funds from other sources and secure higher ratings from the rating agencies.

Government will also have to cut on imprudent expenditure. The permanent bureaucracy of 1.5 million is too big and it's also too inefficient and politicised. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had recruited 100,000 more to Government service as if the existing number was not enough. The country has an armed force of a size not needed now as the war got over in 2009. The new force should be leaner and meaner.

Sri Lanka has been seeking foreign investments but when investments come, the media and paranoid nationalists would raise the red flag. Government is loath to receiving investments from India and the West. China is welcome but China does not invest in industries. It only does infrastructure projects. Local entrepreneurs prefer to be in import and retail trade and not manufacturing. Domestic wealth generation is therefore minimal. There is much too much dependence on tourism and export of garments, tea and unskilled manpower.

Sri Lanka has to pause and think hard on recasting itself and bringing about fundamental changes in thinking and in the economic structure to prevent going from country to country with a begging bowl from time to time.

CARRYING THE TAMIL MESSAGE ACROSS

BY N SATHIYA MOORTHY

Participating in a Tamil TV channel talk-show, TNA spokesperson M A Sumanthiran, MP, sought to rationalise the logic behind their participation in President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's All-Party Conference (APC) on the country's economic crisis. Sumanthiran said their problems with the President and the Government were one thing, the national crisis that they are all facing and suffering together was another. At this hour of national crisis, everyone should stand together with the Government of the day, as one, to find sustainable solutions (that could be taken forward by future generation of political masters and citizens alike).

It is a fascinating simple thought that looks too simplistic for belief in the complex web that the nation's politics has become since Independence. But what Sumanthiran said is also the truth, both for the TNA and more so for the TNA. Through the previous 'Government of National Unity' (GNU), the Tamil National Alliance behaved the exact way as Sumanthiran has explained. Whenever President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe quarrelled, the TNA stood by the latter – and unquestionably.

It became more pronounced through the constitutional crisis that President Sirisena inflicted on the Nation, by sacking Prime Minister Wickremesinghe in December 2018 – which the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional. For most of the second half of the Government's tenure, and more so after the constitutional crisis, the Wickremesinghe regime survived parliamentary majority only with the TNA's 'external support'.

These were all occasions when the TNA could have demanded and obtained many, if not all of their political demands, out of the Wickremesinghe regime. They could have laid the pre-conditions that their four sub-text demands, including freedom for Tamil political prisoners and the return of Tamil lands in the possession of the armed forces, were met before they supported the Wickremesinghe leadership in Parliament. Rather, open commitments that the Government would do so if and when they survived test-votes in Parliament, one after the other.

The logic may or may not appeal to everyone, including those inside the Alliance and the larger Tamil community and polity even more. But it is heartening the TNA logic is rooted in the larger interests of the Sri Lankan nation, whichever party or leader the South may ironically, elect.

Nothing explains the consistent TNA / Tamil position to vote against the Rajapaksa in successive elections, both presidential and parliamentary, since present-day Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, who occupied the same seat, contested the presidential polls in 2005 – and won.

But that has not deterred the combine from now willingly working with the Government. This includes their near-simultaneously meeting with the President and his team on the Tamil question.

Vicious campaign

Yet, there is a vicious campaign already on in the South, though not yet full-throated, for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa commencing political discussions with the TNA, for a negotiated settlement to what used to be dubbed the sole 'national problem'. Revised the efforts are to paint the TNA and their Diaspora partners in the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) as traitors to the national cause. In the eyes of motivated southern Sinhala-Buddhist groups, self-styled 'nationalists' and others, the TNA has graduated from being a mouth-piece of the LTTE post-facto, into replacing the LTTE as a 'separatist force'. According to social media reports, the message is assiduously being carried to the Buddhist prelates. The motive is to not paint the TNA black, but the Rajapaksa and their SLPP Government in the same colour, in a darker shade, that is. But who suffers if despite everything else, the Rajapaksa Government is able to strike an honourable deal with the TNA, on power-devolution and other issues, and is able to 'maintain' the Tamil community just as they began feeling alienated decades ago?

The problem with the Sinhala-Buddhist hard-liners is that in their politico-electoral avatar, they are not necessarily thinking about a political solution to the ethnic issue. Their hidden anxiety in the post-war decade is also about the TNA and the Tamil society backing any new Constitution, first proposed by former Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and now by President Gotabaya.

In the past, the Tamil society may have identified with the Wickremesinghe camp owing to the hopes of a new Constitution, which remained as a promise until the end. It is too early to pronounce a verdict on President Gotabaya's promise. A lot would depend on what he would offer – and what would be acceptable not just the TNA but the larger Tamil constituency that the Alliance would have to re-capture from the comparatively lower levels now. It does not stop there. Before the forex crisis and the economic woes, the Government could have hoped for an outright Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist support for the Rajapaksa, both inside Parliament and outside. Not anymore. Independent of what they may have to say about a possible political solution, this time round, there is a greater danger of the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist camp rejecting an ethnic package, which could include the nation's Muslim community, too, because they oppose the Government's mismanagement of the economy. Yet, the final product would be the same, unless the Government or the Tamil polity, or both, is in

more open than already. Neither is true

One problem with the Sri Lankan polity even in the good old days was that there was not much intra-ethnic interaction on politics as used to be between ethnicities. It was more so in each ethnicity carrying their political message to the other, using the medium of respective polity or otherwise.

Whatever happened happened within Colombo City and the Parliament. There were not many occasions when the Sinhala political leaders toured the Tamil and Muslim areas other than during Elections, to campaign for their parties, which had a substantial base.

As Prime Minister and later President, Sinhala leaders toured the Tamil North and the multi-ethnic East. It stopped there. Worse was the case of Tamil political and social leaders interacting with the populace in the Sinhala areas, that need not always be the South. Even in the Sinhala-majority Provinces adjoining the Tamil and Muslim areas, hence with a 'minority elector constituency', such political interaction was kept to the minimum.

At least in the case of the Muslim community, even when they have had massive grievances against the Sri Lankan Government, their polity has been doing business with at least one section of the Sinhala polity, going down to the grass-roots-level, even if in a limited way.

It was never even that way with the Tamil polity, even when it had friendly sections within the Sinhala society and polity. They stopped with capital Colombo. Going beyond the ideal situation, the Tamils can get their due if and only if the larger Sinhala-Buddhist society accepts them as equals.

The Tamils also need to accept that the Sinhala-Buddhist is a hard-liner, just as the Sinhalese have to accept that every Tamil is not an LTTE sympathiser or supporter.

If their perceptions of seeking equality in political terms tantamount to military, they also have to accept that every left-leaning Sinhala politician or cadre in their midst, seeking an egalitarian society is a JVP renegade – or, someone shaping up on those lines. If one is not true, the other too is not.

Reaching out...

In this background, the Tamil polity and civil society should reach out to the Sinhala society, which when it understands the Tamil angst may begin building up pressure on their own polity to let the nation live in peace with no fear of one ethnicity of the other. It is true of the Muslim polity and civil society. Having got stuck to their moorings and nothing else, none of the three ethnicities – and of course, the Upcountry Tamils too – have been able to appreciate the goodness in the other, both as polity and society. They all need to reach out to one another, and earlier the better.

Even the reality of the current situation is that when the Sinhala polity, left, right and centrist, have gone about with their protests for the Government's exit, it's only TNA's M A Sumanthiran, who got together many of the Opposition parties through two sessions and got a common note prepared for being passed on to the Government leadership.

Needless to point out, it did not talk anything close to censuring the Government or demanding the resignation of its leader of that, or the exit of the Government as a whole. It was an economy-centred document, nothing more, nothing less!

The writer is a Policy Analyst & Commentator based in Chennai, India. Email: sathiyam54@nathyamoorthy.com

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a position to convince the Sinhala South that the political solution would do good than bad for the nation, its security and social compact. The idea should be to distance the ethnic issue from the economic crisis in ways that the Sinhala society and through them the polity is able to acknowledge the distinction and act accordingly – whatever the fate of the Government in future Elections. Is the timing, right?

There is a reason. At a time when the TNA could do with some political backing when it enters substantive parts of the dialogue with the Government, the political Opposition in the country has been reiterating its recent demand for the wholesale exit of President Gotabaya and his Government. The Opposition SJB combine's street-protests, so also those by the left-leaning JVP, have demanded precisely that – indicating that they would settle for nothing else than a regime-change, but through the ballot.

Others like estranged former Minister Udaya Gammanpila are citing chapter and verse from the present Constitution, to argue that the President had to order Parliamentary Elections if the House so elected by a simple majority. It is to address perceptions that the President has time till March next, when alone the Constitution, as amended by the Rajapaksa's 20th Amendment empowers the President to take a call.

The idea may only be to unsettle the ruling SLPP parliamentary party. The wanton or not-so-wanton after-effect would include the increasingly decreasing loyalty of the civil service, based on which successive political administrations had either prospered or fallen by the wayside. But the damage to the Tamil Muslim community might be, can be worse, as the 'Sinhala pressure' on the Government to hand out an honourable political settlement to the community, could mount more than already and



Ceylon Newspapers (Pvt) Ltd.

No: 101, Rosmead Place, Colombo 07. Editorial Tel: 0117566522, 0117566526, 0117566521 Fax: 0117566545 Marketing Manager: 0117566550, 0117566551 Circulation Manager: 0117566580, 0117566581 E-mail: editor@ceylontoday.lk

Finance Ministry Sets Record

In a tragicomic turn of events, yesterday, Sri Lanka established a record in its 74 years of Independence, by having a Finance Minister only for a day! This was after Ali Sabry (PC), appointed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the new Finance Minister on Monday, handed over his letter of resignation to the President, yesterday. The previous Finance Minister was President Rajapaksa's younger brother Basil. It was also on Monday, President Rajapaksa's Cabinet, other than his elder brother Mahinda, who functions as Premier, resigned, with Rajapaksa on the day itself reappointing four new Cabinet Ministers, namely Sabry to Finance, Johnston Fernando to Highways, Dineth Gunawardena to Education and emeritus Professor G. L. Peiris to Foreign Affairs. Also on Monday, Central Bank of Sri Lanka Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal, one of two 'golden brains' of the Government, resigned from his post. Cabraal together with the former Secretary to the President Dr. P.B. Jayasundera, an economist, was seen by analysts as responsible for constricting the foreign exchange (FX) market by having an administered exchange rate regime on the table till as late as early last month and an administered low interest rate regime, despite galloping inflation. Jayasundera resigned from his post at the beginning of the year. It was Jayasundera together with Cabraal who introduced a 'tax cut' economy no sooner Rajapaksa was elected to power, despite yawning budget deficits. A mini golden brain of the Government, State Urban Development Minister Dr. Nalaka Godahewa, on the eve of the 16 November 2019 Presidential Poll told the media in Colombo that they have factored in the possibility of losing the GSP+ duty free export facility to the EU and by an extension to the UK as well, Sri Lanka's second and third largest export markets. In the midst of the FX crisis, the mother of all evils, besetting the economy despite GSP+ still in place, wonder whether Godahewa and his Government, or rather what remains of his Government still holds the view that GSP+ may still be discounted and yet steer the economy through! Only a certifiable person, in the midst of an economy underlined by power cuts, shortages of essentials, including cooking gas, medicines, fuel, milk foods among others on the one hand, skyrocketing prices on the other and the unkind cut, having to stand long hours in queues to purchase essentials and to yet return empty handed, will still hold the view that the economy is fine! It's rumoured that Dr. Nandatal Weerasinghe, a retired CBSL Deputy Governor, who got his breaks when Cabraal was Governor in his first dispensation, in 2006 to 8 January 2015 and now living in Australia, has been asked by the Government to step into Cabraal's shoes. Nonetheless, what is first required to set the economy right is to have a stable Government in the context that it doesn't appear to be stable. With SJB, the major Opposition, followed by the JVP/JUB opposed to a coalition Government, it's imperative that a vote of confidence/no confidence be first taken on the Government. Depending on its outcome a new Parliamentary Poll may or may not be held. If however, the Government doesn't command the majority confidence of the House, Parliament may then be dissolved and fresh elections held. And, depending on the outcome of that Poll, the confidence that the Parliament has on the Executive may be tested via an impeachment motion as a next step. If, however, the Government wins the vote of confidence, the other hurdle that has to overcome is to win the confidence of the international community led by the West and Japan, simply to get the required dollars or other freely convertible currency to get out of its shortages, queues and power cut crises. What Sri Lanka urgently requires is right policies to once more win over the West and Japan. The fact that these powers are not coming to Sri Lanka's aid unlike in 1977 after a regime change, show that there is something wrong with Sri Lanka's foreign policy. The early implementation of right policies first, complemented by appointing the right men, will aid Sri Lanka to tide over the present crisis, like it did 45 years ago in 1977.



HANDCUFFED TO HISTORY

BY DR. DEVIKA BRENDON

Sometimes whole countries find ourselves, as Salman Rushdie once expressed it, in 'Midnight's Children', "handcuffed to history". Two events of differing magnitude have occurred in the past several days: an African American megastar, Will Smith, resigned from the institution which confers the Academy Awards, because of his own unmanly conduct at the awards ceremony where he won his first Oscar. Smith is only the fifth African American man to win an Oscar. And in his acceptance speech, through tears of self-pity and remorse, he said his conduct did not express the man he wanted to be, a man who - in his own words - was a 'River to my people'. It sounded like a political speech. And it was - a direct quote from Anthony Quinn's character in 'Lawrence of Arabia'.

While this was going on in Hollywood, Sri Lanka's citizenry were engaged in mass peaceful protest, across boundaries of race, religion, gender, age and even socio-economic class, calling for an end to power cuts and fuel shortages which have robbed some of quality of life, and many of essentials for survival. It may seem as if these two events have nothing in common. But let's look again. These events, shocking and disruptive as they are, have never happened before. They indicate that society as a whole is experiencing a desire and a need for change. In Will Smith's case, he was allowed to remain in the forum and accept his award despite flagrantly breaking the rules of acceptable conduct and protocol. But the public outcry against the 'slap that was heard around the world' has turned the tide against him, and against socially endorsed male violence in general. Will Smith's son had Tweeted, presumably from the Smith family's mega living room, shortly after the event: "And that's How We Do It". This was before his father's public apology, which took place the next day.

For the past 74 years, from the time of Independence to now, in Sri Lanka, such a unified movement as we are now seeing has not occurred in living memory. Successive Governments have strategically played majoritarian politics, and minorities have been excluded, threatened and scapegoated. Women and girls and the issues they face have been relegated to minority status by a series of toxically masculinist regimes, while the areas of economic and fiscal management were supposedly handled by the men in charge. The focus was on economic growth, rather than education, awareness of civics, or peace and reconciliation. An area of Colombo specifically demarcated for the expression of protest was ominously set aside for the purpose, thus ironically reducing the public space in which protest could 'officially' take place. Anyone protesting there would be isolated and visible. Dissent was disincentivised. The military forces were hugely amplified, in numbers and scope of action, to ensure the security of the populace, but individuals dressed in Police uniform have been seen on CCTV cameras via phone video assaulting unarmed citizens, immune to accountability under the expanded 'state of emergency' PTA.



Young protesters chanting slogans on the road next to Galle Face Green (Pic by Venura Chandramalitha)

Hollywood has been examining its own underlying systemic structures and assumptions for some time now, in the wake of the 'Me Too' movement, and holding even it's most successful and awarded actors, directors and producers accountable for their abuses of power

The most striking aspect to me is that the protesters are predominantly young and female, some with toddlers held in their arms. This is not only for optics. Many young mothers cannot afford childcare. But it is also strategic. Military forces would be very unwise to publicly use force such as tear gas and rubber bullets against unarmed young women, with the cameras of the world watching. These young women are bravely stepping up in front at the protests, often against the express cautions and anxieties of their parents and grandparents, and

the subduing dictates of their conservative culture. Hollywood has been examining its own underlying systemic structures and assumptions for some time now, in the wake of the 'Me Too' movement, and holding even it's most successful and awarded actors, directors and producers accountable for their abuses of power. Will Smith and the way his conduct is being dealt with is informed by this growing awareness, even in the face of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the perception that 'woke politics' is giving minorities too much leeway. Smith's wealth, success, amiability, gender and race are not going to operate to modify the decision. In Sri Lanka, the frustration of the younger generation is fuelling the protests for better governance. The young people of this country are articulate, well informed, and technologically literate. They are also sceptical of political rhetoric and contemptuous of nepotism and cronyism, and unlike the respectful generations of the past, who were brought up to be dutiful, passive and obedient, they do not automatically respect those in authority. For them, as for young people all over the world, respect must be earned. In the past, their sense of injustice and oppression has been cynically manipulated, to divide their generation, and many young people in Sri Lanka have disliked and distrusted the diaspora, and rallied against the perceived privilege and elitism of the wealthy. This is the direct result of the systemic inequities and lack of opportunities in their society. In refreshing contrast to this cycle of negativity, the clear focus of the younger emerging leadership is on inclusion and acceptance of diversity. Lacking the financial resources to study overseas, the younger generation clearly feels they must co-operate and do their best to make this country a place in which they can live and work - and rightfully enjoy the fruits of their sustained efforts. And this is how they do it.

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The country was paralysed by the Covid-19 Pandemic and the global economic crisis. Is the global economy going to crash?

POWER CUT EFFECTS

BY DR. TILAK S. FERNANDO

Reeling under its worst economic crisis Sri Lanka's power cuts continue for up to 13 hours a day. The Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) indicated that power disruptions will be according to a zone system. Yet, invariably the power cuts and restoration times vary. It confuses the public as no one can organise anything properly.

Hungry and sweaty children have to use candlelight to attend to their schoolwork in the dark. Housewives cannot keep frozen food in refrigerators as everything thaws due to extended power cuts. Many industries are crippled, while hotels and caterers cannot perform without electricity and gas. Mothers cannot feed young babies without milk powder in shops. So, darkness makes everything worse. In short, living now in Sri Lanka is worse than living in hell.

On 1 April, there was a blow to the construction industry. Cement prices for a 50 kg bag increased from Rs 1,350 to Rs 1,850 plus transport charges. The cost of living has rocketed to such an extent that the average person cannot manage.

In the UK, for example, (during the 1980s) people experienced similar power cuts, which ousted the Labour Government. Still, the London Electricity Board organised a system to warn the public before a power cut by switching it on and off for a minute as a warning. In Sri Lanka the authorities switch the power on and off according to their convenience ignoring the schedule. It is a disgrace why these controllers cannot operate efficiently.

Public Reaction

This kind of erratic scheduling makes the issue even more complex. The public gets confused due to the lackadaisical approach by those in charge of power cuts. Many have had to spend long hours in petrol, gas or kerosene queues. Despite such agony, consumer prices are up daily. The President of the Electricity Board's Union (CEBEU) states that "their proposals to overcome the present crisis got hindered by the Politicians and the Public Utilities Commission (PUCSL)". Also, they predict the current electricity crisis could continue for some time.

Shipping cost's increase

The global cost of living has risen sharply due to inflation. Oil prices slumped at the start of the Pandemic, but the recent demand has made fuel prices hit a seven-year high. The global increase in fuel and gas prices and the surging demand has also resulted in an increase in international shipping costs. For example, sending a 40ft container from Asia to Europe costs \$12,480 or Rs.4,812,392.43/- . This is ten times more than the year before, when it cost only £1,101.

During the pandemic many lost their jobs. The Government was forced to add additional taxes to consumer goods, which was why the cost of living went up. Recently, VAT was increased to 15 per cent, along with indirect taxation on other consumables creating a greater burden on the consumer.

The privileged few

The CEB says that 191 zones are exempt from islandwide power cuts. This includes the Parliament Complex, the President's House and the Madhwa Members of Parliament Housing complex. For economic reasons and humanitarian motives, it is understandable why the CEB decided to supply electricity to 24 hospitals including the Apeksha Hospital and airports at Katunayake, Ratmalana and Mattala, respectively. The public is enraged about the Ministers, MP's and (V) VIP's being exempt from power cuts. Public emotion

The Government needs to refrain from obtaining short-term loans at high-interest rates. It will further compound Sri Lanka's woes and reflect on the foreign debt trap. The country became paralysed by the Covid-19 Pandemic and a global economic crisis. Rather than repeating the same mantra repeatedly, Sri Lanka should re-negotiate and restructure the repayment of our sovereign debt by coming to a moratorium agreement

runs high when MP's get this unique facility while most parts of the country is in darkness. The President does not occupy his official residence, but has chosen to live in Mirihana in his private home. Therefore, it is not fair for the privileged lot to waste electricity and live in comfort at the expense of the public who are undergoing immense suffering. People may question that the Presidential Palace is hardly used daily but occasionally to entertain foreign visitors. Should the staff at the Presidential mansion enjoy such privileges under such circumstances? Such arrangements make the exasperated public go out of control. Do the people know how Ministers can be sensitive to public outcry when they are not affected by darkness even for a minute? It is not justifiable at all, and fits the saying: 'What's good for the goose is good for the gander.' According to the latest information, around forty parliamentarians avoid public functions out of fear of getting beaten by the public. There is no justice when the privileged lot is looked after while the poor and middle classes suffer endlessly. After all, the voters elect VIPs to serve people as 'servants' of the public, but it seems the VIPs in Sri Lanka behave as if they have descended from heaven!

Despite many warnings, the advisers to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa seem to have provided incorrect guidance, which has resulted what the country faces today. What is required is to get rid of the 'Kewattya' type of advisers (as Ven. Mureththettuwe Ananda Thera, the Chancellor of the University of Colombo says). Only then is the President free to act independently according to his aspirations. It is also important to choose efficient, honest parliamentarians, irrespective of party

politics, who display a sense of patriotism for the country during the selection process. If the present situation is allowed to continue the Government is sure to face unwelcome consequences.

Health is wealth!

Taking care of the people's health should be prioritised as the President did when the Covid-19 Pandemic wrapped up the nation. It is equally vital to strengthen the economy, which allows slipping away! According to global financial experts, Sri Lanka is on the brink of bankruptcy because of the lack of dollar reserves.

Foreign debt traps

According to financial experts, Sri Lanka is heading towards bankruptcy. Dollar resources are the oxygen required now for Sri Lanka to breathe. Therefore, inviting foreign investors to Sri Lanka with substantial projects would also help. As everyone knows, 'corrupt and corrugated' officials and ministers will not be suitable to work on the new scheme as people have seen it happen repeatedly. Foreign firms who were willing to set up various projects for export purposes were driven away due to senior officials and ministers' attempt to get fat commissions. Usually, any project is associated with a standard acceptable commission. Still, in Sri Lanka, it is the opposite. The officials claim the bigger half of the project's cost as commissions, so the frustrated foreign firms have to abandon their projects. The major weakness of Sri Lankan Ministers is they expect foreigners to come 'to their feet' as against Indian Ministers who went all out to meet the foreigners in hotels to get the job done. We seem to live on cloud nine all the time. Therefore, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa should handle every such project personally to ensure no corruption.

The Government needs to refrain from obtaining short-term loans at high-interest rates. It will further compound Sri Lanka's woes and reflect on the foreign debt trap. The country became paralysed by the Covid-19 Pandemic and a global economic crisis. Rather than repeating the same mantra repeatedly, Sri Lanka should re-negotiate and restructure the repayment of our sovereign debt by coming to a moratorium agreement. Then only Sri Lanka will be able to bring about the requisite policy changes resulting in sustainable development. We, as a nation, go through hardships when citizens endure immense hardship at present as a result of importation of non-essential goods, which was the leading cause of our foreign reserves depleting. People's agitations are immeasurable, and people have lost complete faith in the current Administration. Therefore, the Government has to rebuild their trust in the future.

Detrimental administrations created the current crisis over the past few decades. The people of this nation are paying for it today due to a severe-economic nature. There are signs of the country heading towards a complete bankruptcy situation. Therefore, as a nation, it is up to every citizen and parliamentarian to forget about political advantages and work diligently to rebuild the country.

At the time of editing this article, the latest news is that the entire Cabinet of Ministers has resigned. In selecting a new Cabinet of Ministers, it would be more prudent to select efficient members out of all political parties rather than adhering to old politics! What is required is to salvage the country from the present chaos. Development of projects at hand should not be immediately crucial, but what matters is peoples' agitations and woes of hunger and being in the dark!

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Russia-Ukraine Peace Initiatives

BY LAKSHMAN I. KEERTHISINGHE

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding - Albert Einstein - German Physicist

Media commenting on the Russia-Ukraine peace initiatives stated that Ukrainian negotiators said they had proposed a status under which their country would not join alliances or host bases of foreign troops but would have its security guaranteed in terms similar to Article 5, the collective defence clause of NATO. The Russian Defence Ministry has decided to significantly reduce military activities in the Kyiv and Chernigv directions. Three humanitarian corridors were agreed on Tuesday to evacuate civilians, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said in a video statement.

Russian negotiator Vladimir Medinsky has hailed meaningful progress with Ukrainian representatives at peace talks in the Turkish city of Istanbul, over a month after Russia started military action in its neighbouring country. The discussions focused on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine's regions as well as Russia's demand that Ukraine become a neutral state, among other issues. Russia has said that due to the progress made in the talks, it will reduce its military activity in northern Ukraine, including near the city of Kyiv. After the face-to-face meeting in Turkey, Russian Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin said talks on "the neutrality and non-nuclear status of Ukraine have moved into a practical field." Fomin says Moscow has decided to "radically, by several times, reduce the military activity in the areas of Kyiv and Chernigiv."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky during a meeting in Kyiv with the leaders of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia said that Ukraine and Russia have made significant progress on a tentative peace plan including a ceasefire and Russian withdrawal if Kyiv declares neutrality and accepts limits on its armed forces. The 15-point draft peace plan considered that it would involve Kyiv renouncing its ambitions to join Nato and promising not to host foreign military bases or weaponry in exchange for protection from allies such as the US, UK and Turkey. However, the nature of western guarantees for Ukrainian security – and their acceptability to Moscow – could prove to be a big obstacle to any deal, as could the status of the country's territories seized by Russia and its proxies in 2014. Although Moscow and Kyiv both said they had made progress on the terms of a deal, Ukrainian officials are skeptical Russia's President Vladimir Putin is fully committed to peace and worry that Moscow could be buying time to regroup its forces and resume its offensive. "There's a likelihood this is tricky and a illusion. They lie about everything – Crimea, the build-up of troops on the border, and the 'hysteria' over the invasion," said a Ukrainian source briefed on the talks. Putin showed no sign of compromise vowing Moscow would achieve all of its war aims in Ukraine.

"We will never allow Ukraine to become a stronghold of aggressive actions against our country," he said. Mykhailo Podolyak, a senior adviser to Zelensky, told the Financial Times that any deal would involve "the troops of the Russian Federation in any case leaving the territory of Ukraine" captured since the invasion began on February 24 – namely southern regions along the Azov and Black seas, as well as territory to the east and north of Kyiv. Ukraine would maintain its armed forces but would be obliged to stay outside military alliances such as Nato and refrain from hosting foreign military bases on its territory. Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov told reporters that neutrality for Ukraine based on the status of Austria or Sweden was a possibility. "This option is really being discussed now, and is one that can be considered neutral," said Peskov. Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said that "absolutely specific wordings" were "close to being agreed" in the negotiations.

Ned Price, the US state department spokesperson, told reporters that Washington welcomed the expressions of hope and optimism about the diplomatic talks between Russia and Ukraine. But he said the US wanted to see "de-escalation" from Russia and there was no "tangible indication" that Putin was "changing course".

Despite the progress in peace talks, Ukraine's cities came under heavy shelling for a third consecutive night while Kyiv said it was launching a counter-offensive against Russian invaders. Local officials in the besieged city of Mariupol said Russian troops bombed and destroyed a theatre, where hundreds of people had taken shelter.

Though Ukraine's constitution commits it to seek membership of Nato, Zelensky and his aides have increasingly played down the country's chances of joining the transatlantic military alliance, a prospect that Russia sees as a provocation.

In conclusion, Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has arrived in Ukraine to provide urgent technical assistance to ensure the security of nuclear facilities. The world waits in the hope that peace would be achieved soon.

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Early days regarding any breakthrough but there might be a potential deal between Russia and the Ukraine

INDIA IS CRITICAL TO SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC REVIVAL – MORAGODA



BY ANIRBAN BHAUMIK

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India Milinda Moragoda had wanted to build a 'special relationship' between the two countries through a three-phase plan he had drawn up late last year. Then came Sri Lanka's economic crisis. He tells Deccan Herald's Anirban Bhaumik that with the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Colombo, the first phase of the plan – the confidence-building phase – had ended and the second phase – building a strategic relationship – had begun.

How did Sri Lanka fall into this economic crisis?

A. Sri Lanka has always lived beyond its means, spending way more than what we have been earning. Nearly 80 per cent of our revenue is spent on salaries and pensions to people. We are a nation of 22 million people. We have 1.5 million people employed by the Government. Another half a million get a government pension. Our interest obligations on government debt amount to 70 per cent of our revenues. This did not happen overnight. It's a legacy that has its roots in the early years after Independence in 1948. We also had a 30-year-long conflict. Our revenue is one of the lowest in the world – eight per cent of our GDP. We also have many loss-making State-owned companies. The fundamental problem lies in our budget, this has never been resolved in the past 25-30 years. When Covid-19 struck, all these came to the fore. As Warren Buffet once said, "When the tide goes down, you can see who is swimming naked". We have to restructure our economy. It is a difficult and painful process. In fact, we can learn from the reforms in India, like reforms in the SOEs (State-owned Enterprises), reforms in agriculture and electricity sectors and public-private partnership initiatives. India's model of using Aardhaar to better target welfare schemes is also interesting for us. We will have to first stabilise the situation and then go for long-term structural reforms.

What help do you expect from India?

A. India has been a key factor in our stabilisation process, with its four-pronged approach to extending assistance. First, it has extended a Line of Credit of USD 1 billion to allow us to procure essential supplies like food and medicines. Second, it has given a USD 500 million credit line to buy petroleum. Third, it helped us respond to the balance of payment crisis by extending a USD 400 million currency swap and by deferring the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) settlement of USD 515 million. Fourth, India agreed to increase investment in Sri Lanka, be it in ports, energy, electricity, tourism or IT. India is a critical part of the process of economic revival of Sri Lanka. India's support will remain very important for us.

Is Sri Lanka also talking to China, the US and the IMF?

A. We are in talks with the IMF, and India is playing a key role in bridging the gap till we qualify to enter into an IMF programme. We are holding talks with all

our sovereign lenders to deal with our debt crisis. We have to restructure our sovereign debts. But India is the key to all our efforts to get out of the crisis because it stepped up right in the beginning to extend support to Sri Lanka. The US had come up with the Brady Plan and issued Brady Bonds to help when several South American nations had found themselves in debt crises in the 1980s. I think India could play a similar role in this region because it has the economic strength to do this. What India is doing now to help Sri Lanka could be a precursor to it playing such a role.

There was a perception in New Delhi that Colombo was moving close to China, overlooking the security interests of India.

A. Perception is important but, at the same time, building trust and confidence between the countries and their leadership is also important. And I think that is what we are achieving now. The first rule that we set is "No Surprises". In other words, we have an open relationship. If India is worried about something, it can come forward and tell us about it. We do the same when we have an issue. We call it "as we see it". That is what we have achieved in the past six to eight months.

Has Sri Lanka walked into China's debt-trap?

A. I think this is an exaggeration. Our official debt to China is only about 10 per cent of our total debt. It's not small, but it's not what has caused our problems. We have borrowed heavily in foreign exchange. We have borrowed USD 12-15 billion on commercial terms. We cannot really blame somebody outside for our crisis.

What, from your viewpoint, was the significance of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's recent visit to Sri Lanka?

A. It was a milestone event. In a way, it closed the 'transactional phase' or



India has been a key factor in our stabilisation process, with its four-pronged approach to extending assistance. First, it has extended a Line of Credit of USD 1 billion to allow us to procure essential supplies like food and medicines. Second, it has given a USD 500 million credit line to buy petroleum. Third, it helped us respond to the balance of payment crisis by extending a USD 400 million currency swap and by deferring the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) settlement of USD 515 million. Fourth, India agreed to increase investment in Sri Lanka, be it in ports, energy, electricity, tourism or IT

'confidence-building phase' referred to in the 'Integrated Country Strategy', which we at the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi had put forward. I think we are achieving a level of confidence. We are now beginning a new phase – the second phase when we need to work on building a strategic relationship. There was significant progress in our defence cooperation during the visit – an MoU for India to help Sri Lanka set up a Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre; India giving us Dornier aircraft for maritime surveillance, as well as a floating dock. India also made a grant of USD 15 million for the promotion of our Buddhist ties and built a beautiful cultural centre in Jaffna. An agreement was signed for India to build hybrid power projects in Sri Lanka's northern region, close on the heels of another for India's NTPC to build a solar power project at Sampur.

(Deccan Herald)

For the struggle to turn pro-people

BY THARINDU DANANJAYA WEERASINGHE

Today, we experience an endless number of queues and protests all over the country. On the one side, there are queues including fuel queues, milk powder queues and gas queues and the whole country has turned into a black market. The country's economy is out of government control. It seems that, not only the economy but also the country is controlled by black marketeers. On the other side, there are endless growing mass protests and struggles. Today, people have to put in a lot of effort even to meet some of their basic needs. The resulting pressure explodes in the form of protests and this is inevitable and out of any form of control now.

Mass protests

By now, the country is engulfed in mass protests organised by various political parties, civil society organisations and trade unions. Similarly, without any organised leadership, the protests and struggles organised by the people themselves are endless. In today's era of citizen journalism, it is easy for people to join such struggles through social media. It is difficult to control protests organised by the people. In a protest organised by a political party or a civil society organisation with specific leadership and responsibility, government can negotiate with the leadership of the relevant organisation in suppressing it as well as in determining solutions to the problems raised therein. But, there is no such leadership to negotiate in a protest organised by the people themselves. Suppression in such a case is only a short-term failure measure. The Government must respond openly to the demands of the people. Instead of holding media to be blaming each other to cover up mistakes, the Government must admit the mistakes they have committed and formulate action plans to correct them. The Government should come up with a specific short-term plan, and an analytical long-term plan to address the relevant crises.

Why did we fall into such a socio-economic crisis? There is no simple answer to this question. Politicians have killed the country's justice system and the rule of law to a great extent. This is the fate of any country where the rule of law has deteriorated and justice has died. Also, promoting only high consumption without production is another reason behind the creation of such crises. We are now experiencing the consequences of moving away from a production-oriented national economic plan and promoting only consumption and demand.

Money spent on political tamashas

Many rulers and governments came to power to borrow money from abroad to develop Sri Lanka. Most of the foreign loans taken by governments in the past were also spent on political tamashas. Only a small amount was invested in sustainable projects that could earn enough foreign exchange to repay the loans obtained. Instead of building income-generating assets, they have resorted to narrow political agendas and taken on liabilities with huge maintenance costs. As a result, Sri Lanka is currently suffering from an unbearably heavy debt burden. Sri Lanka is in a situation where it has to take loans to repay the foreign loans. Sri Lanka is currently stuck in a huge debt trap. The most recent example used by international economic analysts to describe what a debt trap is the current economic situation in Sri Lanka.

The media recently reported that a ceremony was being held at a cost of hundreds of thousands of rupees to build a temporary bridge and open it, even as the country's economy is in its final stages. The money spent on the opening ceremony could even replace a temporary bridge with a permanent one. The Maldives also cancelled international flights between Ratmalana and the Maldives the day after they were launched. This is due to no passengers within two days of launching the service. However, the service had cost over Rs 70 million for the inauguration ceremony alone. Many of these wasteful experiments, carried out without a sustainable plan, exchanged the economy into dire straits.

On the other hand, theft and fraud is rampant in the country. Even as the economy collapsed from the Covid-19 epidemic, massive thefts were heard and seen, with the blessings of the political authority. The ultimate pressure of all that was on the people. It is natural for people to take to the streets under such pressure and

struggle in the face of such pressure, which is unavoidable. But it is important to clearly identify what the real struggle is for and where the real struggle really lies.

If the struggle is just another promotional campaign or is narrow political agenda, it will not benefit anyone. For the struggle to be pro-people, the basis of it must be the love and authenticity. Such struggles cannot be done on the roads. Not even in front of the Lipton Circus or the Galle Face green. The real struggle lies in the practicalities of life. If we do not portray the struggle by action, we will be just picking up a board and chanting slogans on the roads!

Change must come from the top

To change the country, we all must change including you and me. Many people think that everyone should change except themselves. He must first change himself. Personal attitudes must change. Many people who want to change the country, who want to change this system, think they do not really need to change first. Some people have inflated egos and so they can't accept the need to change. This could be well understood from the egoistic statements made by many politicians and officials to the media.

Further, the clergy, especially the Maha Sangha, must be impartial. The clergy must genuinely change, so that they can show by action that religion should serve the spirituality of the people, not the government. Similarly, 'voice out thesers' and 'YouTube video heroes' who deceive the people with their greed for various privileges from politicians should now express their views wisely and impartially. All professionals should contribute according to their professional roles and responsibilities, as the lawyers demonstrated last week ensuring the justice of the country. Also, the attitude of 'State first not the government' should be taken forward.

For any kind of change to be successful, at ground, institutional or national level, it must come from the top. It is meaningless if the political authority expects only the public to change.

What have you seen in the media over the past few weeks? We have seen that even in the midst of such a severe fuel crisis in the country, hundreds of people were brought in buses to political meetings to show numbers present at these meetings. We have seen politicians wasting fuel and travel when traffic is at its peak. We see politicians having fun abroad while people are standing in queues for basic essentials and how the rulers have ridiculed the pressure at ground level.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian independence struggle, was a charismatic leader who changed the existing system from the top downwards. Gandhi told the people to use the 'Charaka' while he was using a cadaver shawl woven from the 'Charaka'. India, which is typically on social fire, practised non-violence truly when the Gandhi was the root of non-violence. He asked the people to go to jail and he himself went to jail against the rulers following the philosophy of non-violence. Gandhi erased the dividing borders between rulers and the people. Gandhi's transformation from the top downwards was successful, and as a result, India won independence. When asked Gandhi what message he was giving to the world, he replied, "My life is the message I give to the world".

Hence, role models and ideal situations for people to follow should be demonstrated at the top itself. Otherwise, the public will set such ideal situations from the bottom upwards. People say 'NO' to all 225 parliamentarians' and curse them because they are not role models today. The people of this country may be in a struggle to find and shape such ideal characters. Indeed, anyone who examines the struggles of the people well in the history of the world can clearly understand that fact.

It is not enough for politicians, clergy and many others to give interviews to newspapers or speak to the media and promote them on social media. We must do our part towards the change we all expect, including myself. I am a lecturer writing this article. I sincerely strive to do my part for the future that we must create together. I will do my part for a better world that is desired through the students we teach.

Let's not just show our voices, but demonstrate the struggle by living it. We will do our part.

(Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, University of Kelaniya)

KNOW YOUR LAW

What are the rights of a person deprived of liberty?

An arrest is illegal if the suspect is not informed of the nature of the charges upon which he is being arrested, even if the Police Officer would be otherwise justified in arresting him without a warrant. (Muttusamy v Kannanagara (1951) 52 N.L.R. 324.)

No person shall be held in secret detention (International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018, S. 15(1))

Subject to the conditions established by any written law, any person deprived of liberty shall have the right to communicate with and be visited by his/her relatives, Attorney-at-Law or any other person of his/her choice. (S. 15(2).)

What do I do if someone I know is arrested/ detained?

The name of the arresting officer and details as to where the person who is being arrested or detained should be obtained in addition to the number of the vehicle they are travelling in.

A lawyer should be contacted for help (Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Anti Torture Programme hotline 0777144004)

Contact the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka on 1996 to register a complaint.

What information do relatives, representatives and Attorneys-at-Law of a person deprived of liberty have the right to access?

The person or authority that ordered the deprivation of liberty, the date, time and place where the person was deprived of liberty and admitted to the place of deprivation of liberty, the authority responsible for supervising the deprivation of liberty, the whereabouts of the person deprived of liberty, including, in the event of a transfer to another place of deprivation of liberty, the destination and the authority responsible for the transfer, the date, time and place of release, information relating to the state of health of the person deprived of liberty, in case of a death, the circumstances and cause of death and destination of the remains, in the event of death during the deprivation of liberty.

Any relative of a person deprived of liberty, the representative of a person deprived of liberty or an Attorney-at-Law of a person deprived of liberty as well as persons participating in the investigation, shall be protected from any ill-treatment, intimidation or sanction as a result of the search for information concerning a person deprived of liberty. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018 (S. 16(2)).

Does a person arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act have a right to contact their family?

Yes, the rights in the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance Act, No. 5 of 2018 will apply to such people. Additionally, in terms of the recent amendment passed by Parliament (S.10A (2) of PTA), A person remanded or detained under the PTA shall have the right to communicate with his relatives, as provided for in written law.

Does a person arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act have a right to access a lawyer?

Yes, in terms of the recent amendment passed by Parliament (S.10A (1) of PTA) an Attorney-at-Law representing a person remanded or detained under the PTA shall have the right:

To access to such person and to make representations on behalf of such person,

These rights will only be subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulations made under the PTA or as provided for in other written law.

Source: Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA).

Landmark Cases

Amaratunga vs Sirimal and others (Jana Ghosha Case)

The Supreme Court on 9 February 1993, in the case of Amaratunga vs Sirimal and others, looked into possible violation of Article 14 (1) (a) of the Constitution, Right of freedom of speech and issues of expression of criticism of the Government.

In this case, it was observed that stifling the peaceful expression of legitimate dissent today can only result, inexorably, in the catastrophic explosion of violence some other day.

Several political parties decided to show their disapproval of the policies and actions of the Government on a range of issues including the unbearable increase in the cost of living, the wastefulness of public enterprises and the consequent retrenchment, massive expenditure on political extravaganzas, corruption, the suppression of discussion on certain matters of public interest, escalating abductions and killings, and the North East War.

It was decided to harmonise their protests, nationwide, by means of a 15 minute 'Jana Ghosha' on 1.7.92. Wide publicity was given, and prospective participants were asked to orchestrate their efforts in a noisy cacophony of protest the ringing of temple and church bells, the tooting of motor vehicle horns, the beating of drums, the banging of saucers, and the like so that there might resound, throughout the nation, a deafening din of disapproval.

The petitioner voiced his protest by beating a drum. When he did not heed the Police order to stop beating the drum, he was assaulted and his drum broken with a rice pounder. The crowd of protesters shouted slogans against the Government and formed a cordon across the road. Tear gas and a baton charge were used to disperse the crowd.

It was held that the Police did not have reason to apprehend a breach of the peace and that the action by the Police was simply because anti-government slogans were being shouted and that the petitioner's fundamental right of speech and expression was violated.

Justice Fernando stated:

"The right to support or to criticise Governments and political parties, policies and programmes is fundamental to the democratic way of life, and the freedom of speech and expression is one which cannot be denied without violating those fundamental principles of liberty and justice which lie at the base of all civil and political institutions."

It was also held that criticism of the Government, and of political parties and policies, is per se, a permissible exercise of the freedom of speech and expression under Article 14 (1)(a).

Further, it was held that the S.I did not, objectively, have "reason to apprehend any breach of the peace", and did not, subjectively, think that a breach of the peace was likely, at the time the Police party decided to stop the protest, or at any time thereafter (When the Police used tear gas and when they baton charged) and acted simply because anti-Government slogans were being shouted.

Therefore it was held that the fundamental right of the petitioner under Article 14 (1)(a) has been violated. "The right to support or to criticise Governments and political parties, policies and programmes, is fundamental to the democratic way of life, and the freedom of speech and expression is one which cannot be denied without violating those fundamental principles of liberty and justice which lie at the base of all civil and political institutions," it was stated.

EMERGENCY DECLARED TO SUPPRESS PROTESTS – BHAVANI FONSEKA

BY FAADHILA THASSIM

A state of emergency seems to have been declared only to suppress holding protests, which is not grounds for such declaration as provided under the Public Security Ordinance and the Constitution, Attorney-at-Law Bhavani Fonseka said.

She added that while the President is vested with the power to declare a state of emergency, the question as to why such power was exercised at this crucial juncture, where there is a persisting crisis is of grave concern.

Fonseka said instead of continuing to resort to a state of emergency, the issues raised by the public should be taken up in the Parliament, adding that if this decision was made to suppress protesters, even such move has proved to be futile, as the public continue to protest.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) also previously



called on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to revoke the state of emergency as consequent to such move, the President is empowered to make Emergency Regulations which can override, amend or suspend the provision of any law, except the provisions of the Constitution.

"The BASL is of the view that a

declaration of a state of emergency is not the answer to the present situation in the country, including the spate of public protests which have occurred. These protests reflect the desperate situation of the people who are seeking to secure for themselves and their families some of the most basic essentials

in life," they said. BASL further said over the past several months the country has been heading towards a grave economic crisis and early warnings given by professionals and experts in the field both local and international have gone unheeded.

(Pic by Amitha Thennakoon)

LAW CHECK
Compiled by Faadhila Thassim

Is corroboration an essential condition in rape cases?

The myth that women falsely implicate men on charges of rape has led to the applicability of special Rules of Evidence in a Rape Trial. For any other crime than rape the victim's testimony alone is sufficient for a 'conviction', but in a rape trial the victim's testimony must be corroborated by other evidence. The Courts have unfortunately deemed that the word of the victim against that of the accused is not considered sufficient evidence for conviction, it has to be corroborated. Why?

In rape cases, greater emphasis is placed on the evidence which would corroborate the possibility of rape, a requirement which is lacking in case of other offences. The corroboration rule requires that the testimony of the victim should be corroborated. Why? The major reason behind these rules seems to be an excessive fear of mendacious females where stringent corroboration requirements are strictly enforced, it becomes near to impossible to convict a rapist.

Sri Lanka having acceded/ ratified the governments' declarations as regards the protection of women's rights and treating women differently still persists with the corroboration rule in rape and sexual offences cases.

It is often said, re-echoing the words of Matthew Hale that, "Rape is an accusation easily to be made and hard to be defended." For over two centuries, Hale's observations have been cited with widespread approval, but without any empirical support. These observations made by Hale have influenced Common Law, unfortunately, so much that the victim's evidence alone is not considered sufficient to pronounce a conviction.

We look for some additional confirmatory evidence, which implicates the accused person and tends to confirm his guilt. Corroboration requirement, which is based on the premise, illogically that the evidence of the women is not credible as women are prone to making false accusations.

It appears that the whole issue of corroboration is focused on two main issues- innocence of the accused (in a male-dominated society) and the image of women as a temptress and a shameless liar (male dominated society). It appears as women are perceived as habitual liars, if they are not then need not be independent corroboration. It is not 'medical corroboration' - one is concerned with.

The world has moved forward, women have been given equal or same rights, the United Nations Declaration and Covenants, and or Constitutional institutions of very many countries, where, it has laid down that women should not be discriminated. Why should then there be corroboration? Which requirement is lacking in case of other offences? Inequality of the Sexes or Gender? Is a woman a habitual liar?



The rule of corroboration is not a statutory need, it is the case of women and men to be treated equally, as the Constitution lays down "All parties are equal, this includes both men and women."

In view of the acceptance by the world bodies of the right to treat women as equal, the right of corroboration required in rape cases has to be revisited. What is the necessity for the requirement of independent third party corroboration, why should third-party corroboration be required, when there is the testimony of the victim and the medical evidence before Court?

The Evidence Ordinance, nowhere requires that her evidence has to be corroborated in material particulars. Is she not a competent witness under the provisions of the Evidence Ordinance - the Supreme Court of India had stressed, "That her evidence must receive the same weight as is attached to an injured in case of physical violence and same degree of care and caution is required as in a case of an injured person and no more?"

It has often been asked, what was the necessity to accede to ratify all those conventions, declarations of the UN, in respect of women. It appears that the current Human Rights structure and indeed, on very understanding of what we mean by Human Rights is basically flawed and distorted because of the gendered nature of both system and instrument. As a result, international human rights law and law-making institutions continue to reflect the experiences of men and largely to exclude those of women, rendering suspect the clause of objectivity and universality of Human Rights Law.

It appears that, until the gendered torture of the Human Rights system itself is recognised and transformed, no real progress for women can be achieved - Charles Worth - Human Rights as Men's Rights - International Feminist Perspective.

The rape victim is a competent witness under the Evidence Ordinance. Corroborative evidence is not an imperative component of judicial credence in rape cases. Maybe the time is opportune to emphasise that 'Holding that corroboration is sine qua non in rape/ grave sexual matters is a thing of the past.'

Source: Rohan Sahabandu, President's Counsel, Chairman, Legal Aid Commission.

Lawyers in anti-govt protest



An anti-government protest was staged by a group of lawyers opposite the Alutkade Magistrate's Court against the raging crisis yesterday (5), and they later proceeded to the Attorney General's Department.

(Pic by Saumya Wijesinghe)

Safeguard public against unfulfilled presidential pledges

– Handunetti

BY FAADHILA THASSIM



There has to be a mechanism by which the pledge made by a Presidential Candidate by way of a Manifesto would be included in the Constitution, former Parliamentarian Sunil Handunetti said.

He added it has to be included in the Constitution as a Fundamental Right and when such presidential candidate comes to power, and fails to fulfill the promises made, the public should be able to challenge such failure before a Court.

While observing that making such amendment to the Constitution was not a simple task, he said, Civil societies should bring about a discussion in this regard to safeguard the public against unfulfilled presidential pledges.

He made this statement at a Media briefing held to discuss the misuse of public property while also noting that politicians should not be entitled to any additional benefit.

05.04.2022

DAILY SHARE PRICES

SECURITY	VOLUME PREVIOUS CLOSE	V.W.A.	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	V.W.A. TODAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE (RS)	SECURITY	VOLUME PREVIOUS CLOSE	V.W.A.	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	V.W.A. TODAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE (RS)	SECURITY	VOLUME PREVIOUS CLOSE	V.W.A.	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	V.W.A. TODAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE (RS)
MAIN BOARD																							
A SFEH/INT.HOLD.	10,710	32.10	35.00	38.50	35.00	35.50	3.40	LANKA REALTY	190,983	12.20	12.20	12.20	12.60	15.10	2.90	AGSTAR PLC	690,817	6.00	6.10	7.00	6.00	6.80	0.80
ABANS	10,710	152.50	157.00	167.00	152.50	163.50	11.00	LANKA TILES	137,744	48.50	50.00	52.00	46.00	50.00	4.20	ALUMEX PLC	683,730	7.30	7.50	8.30	7.20	9.00	0.80
ACCENT ENG SL	1,481,964	15.40	16.40	16.40	16.40	17.50	1.50	LANKA WALTILE	80,974	59.50	61.10	64.00	60.10	62.40	2.90	AMANA LTD	595	27.10	21.00	21.00	21.00	21.00	(6.10)
ACI PLASTICS	14,817	56.10	60.00	62.50	57.00	59.10	3.00	LANKEM DEV.	413,249	3.90	4.40	4.40	3.80	4.00	0.20	AMANA TAKAFUL	360	10.00	9.00	10.00	9.90	10.00	0.10
ADM	3,890	374.00	374.00	374.00	325.25	364.75	(2.25)	LAUGHS GAS	1,900	19.10	20.00	20.30	20.30	20.60	0.60	AMARCON HOLDINGS	10,142	37.10	39.40	31.20	37.60	37.60	0.50
AGALAWATTE	186,017	29.70	30.00	35.10	29.00	34.80	5.10	LAUGHS GAS	3,699	10.00	11.50	12.00	11.30	11.30	1.30	AMF CO LTD	6,802	9.30	9.90	9.90	9.20	9.40	0.10
ANOT PROPERTIES	3	32.20	35.00	35.00	35.00	32.20	0.00	LAXAPANA	3,501	14.20	15.10	15.10	15.00	15.00	0.80	ARPIO INSURANCE	1,841	16.50	16.50	19.40	16.50	16.60	0.10
AITKEN SPENCE	2,484	75.00	75.00	81.00	75.00	75.00	(0.70)	LB FINANCE	21,920	54.90	61.70	55.10	60.20	53.30	5.30	ASIA SVKANA	67,189	2.10	2.40	2.40	2.20	2.30	0.20
ALLIANCE	5,131	56.30	60.00	62.50	60.00	60.90	4.00	LEE HEDGES	3,000	70.00	74.00	74.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	BANSEI RESORTS	1,325	9.90	9.70	10.90	9.70	10.70	0.80
AMANA BANK	372,584	2.30	2.50	2.80	2.40	2.70	0.40	LION BREWERY	3	525.00	490.00	525.00	490.00	525.00	0.00	BARUWALA RESORTS	58,090	0.90	0.90	1.00	0.90	0.90	-
ASIA ASSET	471	6.80	6.90	7.00	6.80	6.90	0.30	LMP	28,259	123.75	129.50	130.00	118.00	119.75	(4.00)	BOGALA GRAPHITE	5,282	40.00	44.80	54.50	44.80	50.00	9.70
ASIA CAPITAL	36,621	5.90	6.50	6.50	4.60	5.00	(0.90)	MALWATTE	1,800	25.00	20.00	20.00	22.80	22.80	(2.20)	BROWNS HOLDINGS	12,885,541	6.50	6.70	7.70	6.70	7.40	0.90
ASIRI	1,336	36.00	35.00	37.00	35.00	36.50	(0.30)	MALWATTE	22,290	14.90	15.90	16.00	15.90	16.00	1.10	BTCL	2,797	18.10	19.80	19.10	19.10	19.40	0.30
ASIRI SURG	7,059	14.30	14.50	15.00	14.50	15.00	0.10	MELSTADOP	1,125,141	40.30	40.30	41.90	40.00	41.50	1.20	BROWNS INVSTMENTS	12,885,541	129.00	129.00	129.00	117.50	124.75	7.00
BAIRAHIA FARMS	7,911	154.25	172.50	172.50	155.00	166.50	12.25	MERC. SHIPPING	252,872	4.90	5.50	5.50	4.90	5.00	0.10	CT LANKA	201	20.40	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	4.60
BALAHODDA	156	19.50	21.00	21.00	19.50	21.00	1.50	MULLERS	28,259	123.75	129.50	130.00	118.00	119.75	(4.00)	C.W.MACKIE	210	59.00	53.50	54.50	52.00	54.00	3.10
BALUHODDA	321.5	350.00	357.50	370.00	350.00	370.00	6.25	NAMUNUKULA	2,978	329.50	345.00	400.00	344.75	397.75	68.25	CALLT	13,147	9.50	9.60	10.50	9.60	10.10	0.60
C M HOLDINGS	3	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	-	NAT DEV BANK	15,474	50.40	52.00	52.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	CEYLON BEVERAGE	1,407	3.20	3.30	3.50	3.30	3.30	0.10
C HOLDINGS	20,004	151.50	145.00	155.00	145.00	155.00	3.50	NATIONS TRUST	10,460	42.50	44.90	44.90	42.00	43.00	0.50	CEYLON TEA BKKS	1,207	59.80	63.30	65.00	63.90	64.90	5.10
CARGILLS	286	169.75	170.00	179.75	170.00	173.50	3.75	NAWALOKA	234,739	6.00	6.10	7.00	6.00	6.90	0.90	CITRUS HIRAKUDWA	1,407	3.20	3.30	3.50	3.30	3.30	0.10
COB	281	77.20	280.00	280.00	280.00	280.00	2.75	PANASIAN POWER	57,243	4.00	3.90	4.00	3.80	4.00	0.20	CITRUS WASKADUWA	149,086	1.90	1.80	2.30	1.80	2.00	0.10
COB	281	77.20	280.00	280.00	280.00	280.00	2.75	PANASIAN POWER	57,243	4.00	3.90	4.00	3.80	4.00	0.20	COMMERCIAL DEV	214	100.00	107.50	96.30	106.50	106.50	6.50
CENTRAL FINANCE	5,015	67.70	74.00	74.00	71.00	72.20	4.50	PEOPLES INS	50,067	30.20	30.00	33.00	29.60	31.90	1.70	COMINSURANCE	778,028	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.00
CENTRAL IND.	63,700	85.00	87.00	95.00	80.00	85.80	0.80	PEOPLES LEASING	27,602	11.10	12.00	12.50	11.10	11.90	0.80	DILMAH CEYLON	13	998.00	974.75	975.00	973.00	998.00	-
CELENO INS	292	1156.25	1,130.00	1,210.00	1,190.00	1,190.00	34.25	PHITICARE PLY	10,078	28.90	28.50	30.50	28.50	30.00	1.10	E-CHANNELLING	38,642	7.00	7.00	7.20	6.50	7.00	0.50
CEYLON GUARDIAN	102	70.80	82.00	82.00	71.00	81.90	11.10	REGINIS	1,484,503	30.00	26.00	26.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	F.P. PROTECT	11	532.50	585.00	585.00	585.00	585.00	0.00
CEYLON INV.	7	34.90	36.00	36.00	34.90	-	-	RENUKA AGRI	1,616,819	3.40	3.80	4.00	3.50	3.60	0.20	FT TREASURES	54	26.60	23.00	31.80	23.00	26.60	-
CEYLON TOBACCO	40,829	564.25	619.50	667.75	600.00	647.25	83.00	RENUKA FOODS	909	12.50	14.20	14.20	14.00	15.00	1.50	FIRST CAPITAL	41	532.50	585.00	585.00	585.00	585.00	0.00
CEMANEX	1,250	74.80	69.00	68.00	69.00	60.00	(14.80)	RENUKA FOODS	1,602	11.00	11.80	12.00	11.80	12.00	0.20	GENSLER	10,400	13.20	13.20	13.20	12.50	12.50	(100)
CHEVRON	97,060	83.50	83.00	88.00	83.40	84.50	1.00	RENUKA HOLDINGS	7,594	10.10	9.60	11.20	9.60	11.10	1.00	HATTON	2,003	8.50	8.00	10.20	8.00	8.00	(0.50)
CIC	40,943	39.00	41.00	41.00	37.00	37.40	(1.60)	RENUKA HOLDINGS	10,000	11.30	11.40	11.40	11.40	11.40	0.10	HB FINANCE	8,000	5.90	6.50	7.00	6.40	6.80	0.90
CIT	321,212	24.70	26.00	26.00	24.70	26.00	1.30	RESUS ENERGY	5,677	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.10	0.00	HERNIMSY SYMPHONY	4,919	9.80	9.80	15.80	9.80	9.80	0.40
CITRUS LEISURE	15,300	3.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	5.70	0.40	RICHARD PIERIS	95,658	11.80	13.00	14.50	12.00	13.80	2.00	HVA FOODS	870	4.10	4.40	4.10	4.00	4.00	(0.10)
COLD STORES	24,833	39.90	35.90	41.70	35.00	38.00	2.10	ROYAL CERAMIC	630,545	33.60	35.10	44.90	35.10	39.80	6.20	JANASHAKTHI INC	1,016	20.20	24.40	24.40	24.20	24.20	0.40
COLOMBO LAND	7,393	14.20	14.20	14.20	14.20	14.20	0.00	S M F LEASING	5,557,443	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.00	JANASHAKTHI INC	1,016	20.20	24.40	24.40	24.20	24.20	0.40
COMMERCIAL BANK	33,400	57.00	57.00	62.50	55.00	60.00	3.00	S M B LEASING	3,304,355	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.00	JOHN KELLS	121	62.00	64.50	71.00	64.50	70.20	8.20
DAKSHINAYA PORCEL	56,565	8.90	8.90	8.90	8.90	8.90	0.00	SAMPATH	255,384	39.30	40.90	44.90	40.70	42.90	3.60	KAHAWATTE	1,451	21.60	22.50	22.50	19.60	20.00	(1.00)
DFCC BANK PLC	2,968	29.50	29.50	29.50	29.50	29.50	0.00	SANSON INTERNAT	130	184.75	148.00	180.00	148.50	155.75	(29.00)	KEELLS FOOD	407	166.25	151.00	170.75	151.00	167.00	1.25
DIALOG	1,897,820	9.30	9.70	10.00	9.70	9.80	0.50	SARAWA DEV BANK	15,751	27.20	29.10	31.00	29.10	29.10	0.00	KEELLS HOTELS	247,728	11.20	11.50	11.50	11.00	11.30	(0.20)
DIPREP PRODUCTS	5,334	449.50	450.00	545.50	445.25	499.50	50.00	SEYLAN BANK	2,239	32.00	35.50	35.50	34.50	34.50	2.50	LANKA CERAMIC	117	122.00	138.00	138.00	122.00	122.00	0.00
DORRANS	10,710	24.70	26.00	26.00	24.70	26.00	1.30	SEYLAN BANK	2,239	32.00	35.50	35.50	34.50	34.50	2.50	LANKEM CEYLON	1,077	28.00	29.00	33.80	27.50	27.60	(0.40)
DURDANS	24	103.25	105.00	105.00	103.25	105.00	1.75	SEYLAN BANK	2,239	32.00	35.50	35.50	34.50	34.50	2.50	LAUGHS POWER	3,000	7.70	8.00	8.00	7.90	8.00	0.30
E B C REASY	1,369	16.20	16.20	19.40	16.20	18.10	1.90	SEYLAN DEVTS	255,384	39.30	40.90	44.90	40.70	42.90	3.60	LOB FINANCE PLC	261,446	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	0.10
EAST WEST	225,243	7.10	7.00	7.10	7.00	7.00	(0.10)	SHAW WALLACE	59,888	6.40	7.50	7.70	7.50	7.50	0.10	LIGHTHOUSE HOTEL	840	25.60	26.90	27.50	22.40	26.30	0.70
EASTERN MERCHANT	317,091	30.80	32.10	33.40	31.00	32.80	2.00	SIERRA CABL	219,197	5.80	5.80	7.00	5.80	6.70	0.90								

EXCHANGE RATES

05.04.2022

Currency	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
Australian Dollar	220.3049	230.7434
Canadian Dollar	234.6768	244.8789
Chinese Yuan (Renminbi)	45.9683	48.0912
Euro	324.7265	335.9982
Japanese Yen	2.3952	2.4966
Singapore Dollar	216.8909	225.0997
Sterling Pound	385.3090	399.7057
Swiss Franc	316.7992	329.8247
US Dollar	293.2305	303.4964

Country	Currency	Indicative Rate
Bahrain	Bahrain Dinar	816.3409
Kuwait	Kuwait Dinar	1,011.2998
Oman	Oman Rial	799.4418
Qatar	Qatar Riyal	84.1770
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabian Riyal	82.0465
UAE	UAE Dirham	83.7966

Source: CBSL

‘Spot’ falls to Rs 325/335

BY PANEETHA AMERESEKERE

The market exchange rate (MER) continued to weaken amidst the deteriorating political and economic situation in the country, falling this time to Rs five (1.56-1.52 per cent), consequent to which the benchmark ‘spot’ closed yesterday at Rs 325/335 to the US dollar in two-way quotes, market sources told ‘Finance Today’.

Year-on-year (YoY) to yesterday the MER has fallen by Rs 124.50-133.50 (62.09-66.50 per cent) to the dollar in two-way quotes, thereby causing cost-push inflationary pressure as Sri Lanka is an import dependent economy.

A year ago the MER which was one week’s forwards had closed stronger at Rs 200.50/201.50 to the dollar in two-way quotes. The market then was dealing in one week’s forwards to find the market value of the dollar due to overvalued and inflated administered rates imposed on the shorter tenures led by a desire to keep GoSL’s foreign debt in rupee terms low by the CBSL. CBSL is the steward of GoSL debt and the country’s foreign reserves. ‘Spot’ trades are settled after two market days from the date of transaction.

Bourse Records 2nd Lowest Turnover

The Bourse recorded its second lowest turnover for the calendar year to date yesterday, a sum of Rs 1.14 billion, underlined by the lack of confidence investors have on the market. The lowest Rs 1.11 billion was registered on 21 March. However, indices made pyrrhic gains, amidst Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) postponing the release of its policy statement, originally due yesterday, due to the resignation of CBSL Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal on Monday.

Consequently, the ASI and the S&P SL 20 gained by 5.99 per cent (493.53 points) and 6.96 per cent (187.44 points) to 8,738.08 and 2,872.26 points on a 0.184 million share volume. However, the Bourse experienced a pyrrhic net foreign inflow for the second consecutive market day to yesterday, with yesterday’s figure being Rs 35.60 million, though in the calendar year to date it has suffered a net foreign outflow of Rs 1.87 billion.

Hemantha Gunetilleke to head Nations Trust Bank

Nations Trust Bank PLC announced the appointment of Hemantha Gunetilleke to the position of Director/Chief Executive Officer, with effect from 4 April 2022. Hemantha, who was Deputy Chief Executive Officer since April 2020, succeeds Priyantha Talwatte at the helm of the bank.



Hemantha Gunetilleke

Hemantha Gunetilleke is a career banker with extensive international banking experience and a proven track record in corporate banking, credit, balance sheet management and international trade finance. Hemantha joined Nations Trust Bank in 2016 and served as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer during the last two years, while being responsible for the bank’s consumer banking and commercial banking business. Prior to joining the bank, he held several senior roles at HSBG in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Hong Kong as well as at Standard Chartered Bank Colombo. An alumnus of Royal College, Hemantha graduated from Warwick Business School, UK in 1996 with a BSc in Management Science and holds a BSc in Financial Services from the University of Manchester, UK. He is also an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers (ACIB), UK.

Nations Trust Bank PLC is among the top 15 business establishments in Sri Lanka as ranked by Business Today. Stemming from its vision of ‘helping people and businesses by providing financial services and information to achieve their goals and aspirations in a sustainable way’, the Bank serves a diverse range of customers across consumer, commercial and corporate segments, with an enviable portfolio of banking and financial products and services. Strongly focused on digital empowerment through cutting-edge digital banking technologies, the Bank is a pioneer in many innovative customer-centric banking solutions such as extended banking hours, 365-day banking and FriM1 – Sri Lanka’s first digital banking experience. Delivering premium value, service and connecting its cardmembers to rewarding experiences and opportunities; Nations Trust Bank PLC is also the issuer and sole acquirer of American Express Cards in Sri Lanka. The Bank operates 96 branches across the country and has an ATM network covering 127 locations and 48 cash deposit and withdrawal machines, plus more than 3,700 ATMs on the Lanka Pay Network.

FINANCE TODAY

Outsider to be appointed Finance Minister ALL PARTY BLESSINGS FOR INCOMING CBSL GOVERNOR



Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe Mahinda Siriwardena

BY ISHARA GAMAGE

Former Senior Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe, is due to assume duties as the 7th Governor of the CBSL on 8 April 2022, a government spokesman told ‘Finance Today’.

According to reports, although other names were in the hat, the new Governor of the CBSL has received full blessings of both the Government and the Opposition.

“He has now received the full blessings of all parties and groups represented in Parliament”, the spokesman said that no matter what political party or group is in power in the country, he will be able to carry out his duties without any political influence.

When ‘Finance Today’ inquired about this from Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe who is currently in Australia, stated that he will arrive in the island on the 7th to assume duties as the Governor of the CBSL at the request of the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

“My primary intention is to continue discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)”, He said action would be taken to appoint advisers for the foreign debt restructuring as a matter of priority. Accordingly, he says he will make every effort to build the confidence of local and foreign investors, in this critical stage.

Accordingly, it has been decided to appoint CBSL Deputy Governor, Mahinda Siriwardena, as the new Secretary to the Ministry of Finance. Finance Secretary S.R Attygalle resigned from his post yesterday.

Ali Sabry, who was appointed, decided to resign from his post yesterday after announcing his willingness to resign from the National List.

Accordingly, the Government is considering appointing a professional from the National List as the Minister of Finance. Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe and Mahinda Siriwardena were both Ex- alternate Executive Directors of the IMF and have extensive knowledge and experience in its operations. Dr. Weerasinghe has a Ph.D. and Master’s Degree in Economics from the Australian National University and a B.Sc. Degree from the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka.

BY RAJESH SEETHARAM

Free Trade Zone Manufacturers’ Association (FTZMA) expresses disappointment on the way the Government is handling the economic crises and warns of disruptions in zone activities in the case of continuation of economic crises, as it could lead to employee unrest.

Speaking to ‘Ceylon Today’, FTZMA Secretary Dharmika Fernando said with the inflation (NCPi) at 17.5 per cent and food inflation at around 30 per cent, employees at FTZMA are finding hard to make ends meet. “We have requested FTZMA members to give allowances of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 to employees to overcome the rising cost of living,” stated Fernando.

Fernando notes that Sri Lanka

Meanwhile, the IMF said on Tuesday that it is monitoring political and economic developments in Sri Lanka “very closely” as amid unrest in the island nation grows amid its worst economic crisis in decades.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Monday dissolved the Cabinet and appointed a new Finance Minister, while also seeking a new Central Bank Governor.

“IMF staff is looking forward to programme discussions with the authorities, including during the visit of the newly appointed Finance Minister to Washington later this month”, IMF Sri Lanka mission chief Masahiro Nozaki told Reuters in an emailed statement.

However, economic and financial analysts say first and foremost, political stability is needed in the country. The IMF does not implement any BoP assistance program during periods of political instability and elections of its member nations.

Critics say the risk of negotiations with the IMF collapsing with the country going bankrupt if political instability persists was high.

Accordingly, they call for the immediate establishment of political stability in the country and the expeditious appointment of financial and legal advisers to restructure the foreign debt. Neither, however, is likely to occur in the absence of a Minister of Finance duly appointed and empowered.

Given these stressed circumstances and normally extended duration for IMF negotiations to bear fruit, the \$ 1 billion international sovereign bond (ISS) maturing late July 2022 looks unlikely to be settled thus incurring the very first default by Sri Lanka. In this context it should be noted that some \$ 300 million has been invested by Bank of Ceylon and other leading local financial institutions in the maturing ISB. Such an outcome i.e., a default of an ISB, a dire event likened by some to a situation worse than war, may be ameliorated and managed if negotiations with the IMF are continuing on the basis of a debt restructuring plan attracting the confidence of bondholders. It is also noteworthy that a debt restructuring plan is likely to include all existing debts including swaps thus placing doubts on the utilisation of any unused portions.

IMF programme in SL should protect human rights – HRW Ensure social safety nets, rule of law

Any future International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme in Sri Lanka should protect the human rights of low-income people, and address corruption and entrenched obstacles to the rule of law, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a letter to the IMF.

The economic crisis in the country has caused acute shortages of essential goods including medicines, a crippling lack of fuel and electricity, spiralling inflation, and desperate hardship for millions of people.

On 31 March 2022, the IMF confirmed it will soon begin talks with Sri Lanka about a potential loan programme. Major economic problems in the country have led in recent weeks to growing protests in Colombo, the capital, and across the country, highlighting the critical need for IMF support. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared a state of emergency on 1 April, then imposed a 36-hour curfew and blocked social media in an attempt to curb protests, in which scores have been arrested. The Government should respond to the protests in accordance with international human rights standards, which prohibit the use of unnecessary or excessive force.

“The protests rolling Sri Lanka are a clear message about many people’s economic situation,” said Sarah Saadoun, senior researcher focusing on poverty and inequality at Human Rights Watch. “The IMF and the Sri Lankan Government should come to an agreement that supports people’s ability to afford necessities and addresses the problems underlying the current crisis.”

In February, the IMF issued an Article IV report, which includes policy advice on how the Sri Lankan Government should address the current crisis. The report laid out a plan for significant fiscal consolidation, achieved in part by increasing income and value-added tax rates, removing energy subsidies, and “rationalising” the public wage bill. It recognised that these adjustments would have adverse impacts on low-income people and said the Government should mitigate the impact by strengthening social safety nets “by increasing spending [and] widening coverage.”

The IMF and the Government should give priority to ensuring adequate investment in social protection programmes before making any adjustments that would raise the cost of living, Human Rights Watch said. The World Bank estimates that 11.7 per cent of people in Sri Lanka earn less than US\$ 3.20 per day, the international poverty line, up from 9.2 per cent in 2019. The World Bank also assessed that “less than half of the poor were

beneficiaries of Samurdhi, ‘Sri Lanka’s social safety net programme’, and benefit amounts remain largely inadequate.”

While inflation reached over 18 per cent in March, severely exacerbating economic hardship, the value of the Sri Lankan rupee has rapidly declined, making imported necessities, including medicines, sanitary products, food, and fuel, scarce or unaffordable for many people.

Recent government decisions raise concerns about whether adequate funds will be allocated for social investment. In the 2022 Budget, the Defence Ministry received the highest allocation at 373.1 billion rupees (then US\$ 1.86 billion), an increase from the previous year, amounting to 14.89 per cent of total expenditure. The Health Ministry was allocated less than half that, 158 billion rupees (then US\$ 790 million), a decrease from the previous year despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Some parts of the defence budget are excluded from civilian oversight, including intelligence services that have been implicated in serious abuses. These include surveillance and arbitrary arrests of families of rights victims and civil society activists.

In recent years, the IMF has given increasing importance to combating corruption, recognising that “entrenched corruption undermines sustainable and inclusive economic growth.” It is especially urgent for the IMF to include reforms to address corruption in Sri Lanka. The Rajapaksa Administration, which took office in 2019, has repeatedly acted to block financial transparency and accountability by weakening independent institutions and by intervening to prevent investigations and prosecutions in high-profile cases.

The 20th Amendment to the Constitution, adopted in 2020, undermined the independence of the Judiciary, as well as key institutions including the National Audit Office and the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption. Numerous prominent corruption cases have been withdrawn by the Commission or the Attorney General, or dismissed by the Courts.

The Rajapaksa Administration has aggressively sought to suppress civil society with intense surveillance of activists and non-governmental organisations, reducing the public’s ability to hold the Government to account.

“Sri Lanka needs economic help, but to be effective the IMF programme needs to be robustly negotiated and properly carried out,” Saadoun said. “Reforms should ease people’s economic hardship, not exacerbate it.”

To prevent worker unrest FTZMA calls for urgent Govt action for economic crises

received export revenue of around USD 6.5 billion from FTZMA last year, and that the numbers would remain same or higher due to high global demand. However, he expressed concerns over the inflation and chances of employee unrest which could lead to production disruption.

He further claimed that despite the initial promises by CEB that BOI zones would be exempted from power cuts, operational activities in most of the zones were disrupted by

power cuts. “Except for Katunayake and Biyagama, all other zones were experiencing regular power cuts. Last week Katunayake and Biyagama too experienced power cuts. As we have raised the concerns with BOI management, we hope the zones would be exempted from power cuts in coming days.”

Speaking on imports of raw materials, Fernando said, “BOI companies have been given priority, so we didn’t face a major issue due to foreign exchange shortage.

However there were delays from banks in honouring letter of credits due to dollar shortage.”

Fernando opined that the Government should listen to local and foreign economic experts to get out of the current economic crisis and to prevent the country from getting into further difficulties.

Fernando noted that in addition to local issues, Sri Lankan exporters also face issues due to global container shortages, congestion in US ports and high freight costs.



Commercial Bank Chairman Prof. A.K.W. Jayawardane (centre) and Chief Operating Officer Sanath Manatunge (2nd from right) receive the Gold award as the 'Best Common ATM Enabler of the Year' in the presence of (from left) BPC Banking Technology Country Manager Subash Chandra Bowsa, Central Bank Assistant Governor R.A.A. Jayalath and LankaClear General Manager/CEO Channa De Silva at the LankaPay Technovation Awards ceremony

LankaPay Technovation Awards ComBank wins Gold as Best ATM Enabler

The Commercial Bank of Ceylon won the Gold award as the 'Best Common ATM Enabler of the Year' at the 2022 LankaPay Technovation Awards that recognise frontrunners of payment technology innovation in the country.

The Gold award was presented to Commercial Bank in recognition of the Bank's achievement of being the ATM acquirer with the highest of growth volume per ATM compared to the previous year, facilitating the highest ATM transactions as the card issuer and recording the least scheduled and unscheduled bin downtime. The Bank's entire ATM network is equipped to accept LankaPay cards and is connected to the common ATM switch (CAS).

The Bank also won three Silver Awards for 'Best Bank for Retail Payments', 'Most Innovative Bank of the Year' and 'Best Acquirer on LankaPay Online Payment Platform' as well as the Merit Award for 'Overall Excellence in Interbank Digital Payments' at the fourth edition of this event.

The Commercial Bank of Ceylon was the first bank in the country to enable its entire automated teller machine (ATM) network to acquire and process ATM transactions through the EMV (Europay, Mastercard and Visa) integrated circuit, and the first to activate its entire EMV chip card base (Debit and Credit cards) to perform secured EMV transactions through the LankaPay ATM network, making it possible for the Bank's own cardholders to securely perform transactions using other bank ATMs connected to the LankaPay network. Commercial Bank is also one of the first banks in Sri Lanka to have its point-of-sale (POS) network accept LankaPay-JCB (Japan Credit Bureau) co-branded cards issued under the national card scheme programme.

Organised by LankaClear (Pvt) Ltd., the operator of LankaPay national payment network, the LankaPay Technovation Awards are Sri Lanka's pioneering and only payment technology innovation awards. The initial shortlisting of institutions eligible for awards was carried out based on the performance of individual banks, non-banking financial institutions and Fin Tech service providers, against set criteria.

LankaClear is owned by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) and all Licensed Commercial Banks operating in the country. The company offers multiple solutions not only for the banking sector, but also across all industries that are ready and willing to adopt or integrate the latest digital technology driving Sri Lanka toward an efficient, green, and paperless Nation.

SLIC introduces insurance policy for Three Sinha roller doors

Three Sinha Industries (Pvt) Ltd partnering with the Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation (SLIC) launched an insurance coverage for roller doors. The agreement between the two organisations was signed recently by Manjula Ariyakumara, MD of Three Sinha Industries (Pvt) Ltd and Priyantha Perera, Chief Officer (General Insurance) of Sri Lanka Insurance. This insurance policy provides cover in the event of damage to roller doors purchased from the company.

Customers who purchase Three Sinha roller doors can avail of this insurance coverage along with a number of benefits by paying a nominal fee annually. Accordingly, damages caused by accidents, wind, floods and fires to the roller doors will be compensated in accordance



Manjula Ariyakumara, MD Three Sinha Industries (Pvt) Ltd and Priyantha Perera, Chief Officer (General Insurance) of Sri Lanka Insurance

with the terms of the agreement. "We always strive to provide the best service possible to customers. Therefore, this policy is to minimise possible risks to consumers," Ariyakumara said. Perera said the policy will undoubtedly be a unique experience to them.

To improve inclusive growth outcomes in tourism, hospitality

SL, AUSTRALIA INK COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Sri Lanka and Australia signed a cooperation agreement to continue to improve inclusive growth outcomes in the tourism and hospitality industries through innovative skills development and system strengthening. The signing of the agreement coincides with the 75th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Australia. Secretary, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation, Deepa Liyanage and Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, David Holly signed the agreement on behalf of the two countries.

The agreement builds on previous cooperation and expands support for the implementation of the Decade of Skills Development 2020-2030. It promotes better skills and better jobs.

The Skills for Inclusive Growth Programme (S4IG) is a bilateral initiative of the Australian aid programme developed in partnership with the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research, and Innovation. The programme supports the development of quality skills needed to support sustainable and



(Left to right) - Secretary, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation, Deepa Liyanage and Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, David Holly

inclusive growth across Sri Lanka's tourism and hospitality sectors. Minister for State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation Dr. Seetha Arambepola said in addition to an expanded geographic reach of the programme and an increased inclusion and gender equality focus, the

programme will contribute towards the development and implementation of policy in collaboration with government, industry, and training providers. Australian High Commissioner David Holly said inclusive vocational education in the hospitality sector is a priority in Sri Lanka, and Australia is pleased to continue this bilateral partnership in support of this critical area of economic growth.

The objectives of S4IG are: Strengthen the enabling environment, specifically national and sub-national governance related to the policy, planning and coordination across skills development to implement new models that address local skills constraints ensuring training delivers what employers and government requires. Support demand for inclusive skills development through improved employment outcomes and MSME business revenues. Support the strengthening of the supply and relevance of skills.

This enables the implementation of flexibly delivered, inclusive skills training relevant to both individual employment outcomes and enterprise growth.



Reviving, Empowering Sri Lankan Businesses BOC Business Revival Unit expands operations to all provinces

Encouraged with the growing demand, the Bank of Ceylon's (BOC's) Business Revival and Rehabilitation (BRU) department expanded its operations to all provinces in the country furthering its assistance to local business organisations to come back to life from the pandemic's downturn. Opening ceremonies of regional BRU Units took place recently in respective province offices situated in Nuwagoda, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee with the patronage of the bank's additional general manager Rusel Fonseka, the Bank's DGM Recovery Provinces and Business Revival and Rehabilitation Unit (BRRU) M.R.N. Rohana Kumara and fellow members of corporate management. AGM BRRU U. Krishnakumar, respective Provincial Assistant General Managers and other officials also participated for these occasions.

With the guidance of the bank's Chairman Kanchana Ratwatte, the board of directors and the General Manager K.E.D. Sumanasinghe, Deputy General Manager Recovery Provinces and BRRU M.R.N. Rohana Kumara mapped the novel concept of 'business revival' to uplift small and medium enterprises/corporate

customers who had defaulted on facilities due to genuine operational issues. Followed by some very successful pilot projects the BRRU was established in later part of the year 2020. The new establishment has come a long way since then, facilitating and re-establishing entrepreneurial strength in the country and it has now expanded to over 14 regional units across the country.

In the face of the Covid pandemic mercilessly inhibiting economies around the world, many Sri Lankan businesses too were devastated with their operations being halted, supply chain and distribution channels crippled and customer demand turned down. The effect went trickling down to unemployment and loss of decent incomes in many households. Driven with the responsibility, BOC improvised their existing strategies to be more adoptive to the new situation.

BOC's objective was to infuse synergy to these businesses to revive and sustain its operations and profitability in the longer-run even under challenging situations. The bank promises to strive towards the betterment of the country in the truest sense of being 'banker's to the nation'.



HDFC Bank CEO/GM Palitha Gamage receives the award at the National Business Excellence Awards 2021

HDFC Bank wins prestigious award for business excellence

HDFC Bank won the Merit Award (Banking Sector) at the National Business Excellence Awards 2021. This prestigious event was organised by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka. It is held annually to recognise business enterprises that have demonstrated excellence under various criteria.

The evaluation criteria for the awards were excellence in the following areas: strategy and leadership, corporate governance and strategy, capacity building, corporate management, local and global market reach, corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability, and business and financial results.

Chairperson of HDFC Bank, Wasanthi Manchanayake thanked the staff, customers and other stakeholders for helping them win this award. She said the bank will continue to earn such accolades due to its vibrant corporate culture. She added that a positive attitude permeates all levels of the organisation, which has effective processes covering everything from administration to IT and customer service.

General Manager/CEO of HDFC Bank, Palitha Gamage said their success is due to a visionary strategy, a strong leadership based on their State-Private partnership and a dynamic workforce. He noted that these factors enabled the bank to achieve an impressive financial performance in 2021 despite the Covid-19 pandemic and stiff competition from larger banks.

HDFC Bank's core business is providing home loans for low and middle income people in Sri Lanka. In addition to housing finance, the bank is involved in leasing, deposits, business loans, education loans and pawning. It caters to a range of people with different financial requirements, including professionals, State sector employees, pensioners and SME entrepreneurs.

At present, HDFC Bank offers a diverse array of loan and savings products. These are delivered through its extensive branch network throughout the country. The bank has greatly benefited from its State-Private ownership structure. The Government holds the controlling stake of 51 per cent while private companies and individuals have a 49 per cent share. This composition offers the strength, stability and security of the State coupled with private sector innovation and efficiency. It has also facilitated technological progress. The bank offers digital banking solutions like online payment and e-banking services. The core banking system implemented a few years ago has facilitated the introduction of various products. This system has supported the bank's growth strategy, enhancing its efficiency and ability to provide convenience to customers.

Among the most popular services provided by HDFC Bank is palmto banking. It is presently used by thousands of customers. Many small-time business people and the self-employed have benefited from the ease, convenience and security it offers. In accordance with its mandate, the bank will continue to focus on providing housing-related financial support to middle and lower-income Sri Lankans. This will facilitate social progress and promote economic development across the country.

Visa launches exclusive offers platform for cardholders in SL

Visa announced that it has introduced a new platform showcasing exclusive Visa offers made available in Sri Lanka for its cardholders. As the festive season commences to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, it usually means consumers look for better value for money and special offers on their cards, hence, this new platform comes as an incentive for shoppers.

Special offers for Visa debit and credit card holders are made available on an exclusive platform called Visa SL Offers. These offers are valid for both consumer (retail) as well as commercial



(business) Visa cardholders. Moreover, there are a variety of discounts available throughout the year, on both domestic and international merchants, that such Visa card holders can use online or in-store. Commenting on the launch of the offers platform, Avanthi Colombage, Country Manager, Sri Lanka and Maldives, Visa says, "April marks a special time when

the people of Sri Lanka celebrate Avurudu and during the season, consumers look for the best shopping offers available. We are delighted to meet this need by launching an exclusive platform of offers for our consumers, so when you pay with your Visa cards, you save while you spend. The platform is easy to navigate, allowing Visa cardholders to search, select and redeem offers across an array of merchants. We hope to make this Avurudu season more enjoyable for our cardholders through savings and discounts offered through this platform." Consumers can browse

through offers across sectors such as retail, wellness, hotels, travel, telcos, utilities, healthcare, insurance, etc. and avail discounts online as well as at offline stores of their choice. In a recent study, Visa found that 47% of consumers believe going cashless is a key benefit for an easier online shopping experience. These offers promise special incentives and value-for-money propositions exclusively for Visa cardholders and have been especially sourced to ensure great benefits during the festive season and beyond, confirms Colombage.

CONNECT TODAY



Evan Eichler

BY INDUWARA ATHAPATTU

The Human Genome project (HGP) is an international scientific research with the aim of determining the base pairs that create the human DNA. Further it focuses on identifying, mapping and sequencing all the genes of the human genome from both a physical and scientific perspective. The idea of mapping the human genome was first spoken to the world by the US Government in 1984. However the project was officially initiated in 1990 with the funding of many countries, making it the world's largest collaborative biological project and indeed the costs have been very high since.

Thanks to the immense contribution of the scientists, the project was formally declared to be "essentially completed" in 2003, having mapped only 92 per cent of the genome. Despite it not being 100 per cent complete, the project was a big leap in the history of genetic research. Even without the missing 8 per cent, it aided largely in many fields including medicine.

Completing the puzzle

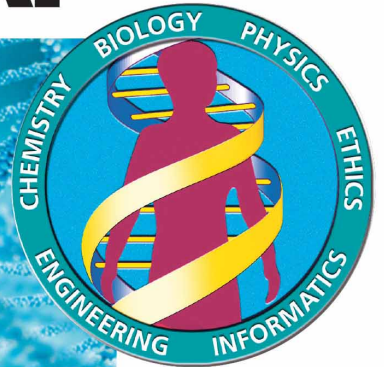
Though the HGP project announced the completion in 2003, scientists did not give-up the efforts to decipher the remaining 8 per cent of the genome until they succeeded the mission in 2022. Indeed, the remaining 8 per cent has been the hardest part to be meshed with the rest of the sequence with the existing technology since it contained highly repetitive DNAs. So the team of scientists from Telomere-to-Telomere (T2T) Consortium had to use newer and smarter sequencing technology lead by PacBio which can read up to 100 000 pairs of letters at a time and detect repetitions with virtually no errors instead of the previous technology which could read only up to 5 000 pairs of letters.

Michael Schatz, who participated in the research and is a professor of computer science and biology at Johns Hopkins University, compares the completion of the final pieces of the genome to adding the continent of Africa to a globe that lacked it, emphasising its significance to the whole sequence.

Now having mapped the complete genome, scientists would be able to better analyse the human evolution, adaptation and diseases.

Why so important?

Exemplifying the significance of this achievement, Evan Eichler, a Howard



ADDING THE MISSING PIECES OF THE JIGSAW

Hughes Medical Institute investigator at the University of Washington and the research leader states that the newly discovered parts of the genome contain immune response genes which allow humans to adapt and survive infections, plagues and viruses. Further he highlights its importance in terms of predicting drug responses. Moreover, there are genes responsible for making human brains larger than those of other primates. Thus this new revelation could possibly unveil more and more chapters which have not

been discovered in the history of the human evolution yet.

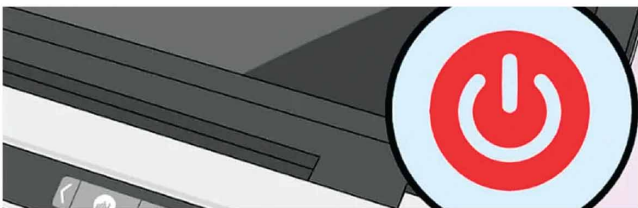
The scientists believe that this discovery could make a sea change in the field of medicine too. As the cost of mapping the human genome has decreased down to US\$1 000 over the years, they predict that it would be affordable to use in medical treatments just like a blood report in near future. Also, when someone has their genome sequenced, the doctors will be able to predict the possible diseases and start the treatments way ahead and treat

the cancers and drug reactions better.

Scientific Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, Charles Rotimi also mentions that this new discovery will allow individualised medicine for all humanity which would save millions and billions of human lives.

So, while this achievement marks the closing-ceremony of a much toiled project which also is one of the biggest leaps of the century, everyone who took part in the project should be appreciated for their massive labour and honest dedication.

This new revelation could possibly unveil more and more chapters which have not been discovered in the history of the human evolution yet



How often should you turn off your PC?

Should you turn your computer off at night, or is it fine to just slap down the laptop screen once you're done? Like all of life's great questions, there is no simple one-size-fits-all answer, but there are good things to know to inform your choice.

It's often assumed that it's best practice to shut down when the day is done, as if the computer needs a good night's rest just like the rest of us. However, it's not always necessary to turn off your computer after each use.

Left unattended, most computers will go into 'sleep mode' after a certain amount of time. Most laptops will also go into sleep mode if you close the screen, although this can be changed in your settings.

This is effectively a low-power mode that uses relatively little energy, keeping all of your files, programs, and data still gently running in the background but left on temporary pause. This means it's quicker for you to get back to work when you hit the keyboard or

wiggle the mouse. It's also good if you want to run updates, scan for viruses, or do other activities while you're not using your computer. However, this does come with some drawbacks. It's not wise to leave your computer on sleep mode if you're connected to an unsecured network in public, as it could be more vulnerable to cyber attacks. Leaving a computer in sleep mode will also use up some electricity – something to consider if you're keeping a close eye on bills. Speaking of electricity, you may also want to invest in a surge protector, which will protect the computer from power spikes that could damage its components.

Completely turning off your computer occasionally is also worthwhile as it clears the RAM, which will help it operate more smoothly.

Another factor to consider is how often you will be turning it on. Switching on a computer takes a fair amount of energy and (some argue) this surge can put a strain on the system, potentially decreasing

the lifespan of the computer. This is why some experts recommend that frequently used computers should only be powered on and off once per day at most, and a full shutdown should only be put into action when the computer will not be used for an extended period of time.

"It depends on how often you use it," said Geek Squad agent, Steven Leslie speaking to *Digital Trends*. "If you use your computer multiple times per day, it's best to leave it on. If you use it for a short time – say an hour or two – just once a day, or even less, then turn it off."

"Leaving a computer on all the time is less stressful than turning it off and on several times a day – but it is constant stress," added Leslie.

Altogether, the question boils down to how you personally use your computer. As a general rule, leaving your computer on for days at a time won't bring it any harm if you're regularly using your laptop, but it's worth giving it a weekly full shutdown and taking some precautions.

(ifscience)

Digital journals for digital era

Journaling might be the most underrated activity that can boost your productivity and well-being in just a few minutes a day. Just jot your thoughts down or record what happened during the day for a simple way to manage stress, enhance creativity, increase happiness, improve health, and increase work performance. While some may withstand the idea of digital journaling which resulted through the development of technology, it's quite obvious that journaling itself is a relief, and doesn't require a definite and rigorous way of going ahead with it. If you opt to a digital journal and are a beginner, we have listed some of the best journaling apps you can get started with.

The best journaling apps

- Day One for Mac and iOS users
- Diarium for Windows users
- Penzu for secure journaling
- Momento for social media power users
- Grid Diary for templated journaling
- Five Minute Journal for beginners
- Dabble Me for journaling over email
- Daylio for non-writers

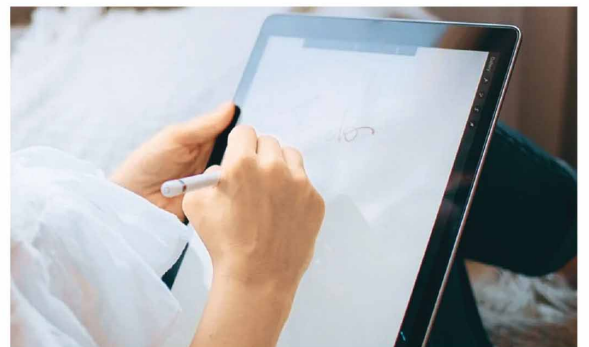
If you don't want a completely new app, you can

always use your current note-taking app as your journal.

What makes a great journal app?

- Easy entry: If it takes more than a couple of clicks or taps to add a journal entry, chances are you're not going to do it.
- Pleasant interface: A minimalist, uncluttered interface helps you focus on your thoughts and makes journaling a pleasant experience.
- Reminders: Perhaps the biggest challenge to journaling is remembering to do it. Automatic reminders help you keep up the habit.
- Exporting: Just in case the app stops being developed or you want to move to a different journaling platform, you'll want to be able to export your entries in a format other programs can read, such as PDF or RTF.
- Syncing: Syncing will make sure your journal's up to date no matter what device you're using.
- Other features that might be important to you include password protection, Markdown support, the ability to add more than one photo, location and weather tags, and journaling prompts. Good luck with digital journaling!

(zapier)



PUZZLES

DAILY SUDOKU 1922

5		7						1
							9	
	9	1	7	5			6	
	6							2
9	7							
		5					8	
6					7			
				1	8	4		9
	3	4			5			

YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU 1921

6	1	4	7	8	2	9	3	5
2	7	3	5	9	4	6	1	8
8	5	9	6	3	1	7	2	4
7	3	8	2	1	5	4	9	6
5	9	6	4	7	3	1	8	2
4	2	1	8	6	9	5	7	3
9	6	2	1	5	8	3	4	7
1	4	5	3	2	7	8	6	9
3	8	7	9	4	6	2	5	1

ASCENTIC CELEBRATES 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS



Founded by Swedish duo Anna Kalm and Patrik Alm, fuelled by a passion to help Swedish businesses find the IT competence they need through the dynamic talent pool in Sri Lanka, the Sre-Lankan software development company Ascenic celebrates five years of astounding growth and success.

Ascenic believes that Sri Lanka is undoubtedly among the top destinations to find a diverse pool of talent in IT. Since its humble beginnings the company has scaled up to a crew of almost 100 ambitious, creative, and fun-loving Ascenders and is today recognised as one of the best workplaces in Sri Lanka. From the start of the business, Ascenic has had an ambition to create an amazing workplace experience for its crew, in a strive to enable talented individuals to thrive and make the most out of their potential. The company was ranked 43 in the Best Workplaces in Asia 2021 under the small and medium-sized company category, in addition to being featured among the Best Workplaces in Sri Lanka, Best Small and Medium IT/ITES Workplaces, and Best Workplaces in Sri Lanka for Millennials.

Ascenic is also expanding its reach across its main customer market Sweden. The organisation is today located in two of the larger regions of Sweden and expanding the presence both with Swedish and Sri Lankan team members. The main source of business is building high-performing software development teams for small and mid-sized product companies with strong growth potential, but the first steps have also been taken towards starting up a new unit focusing on commercialising in-house built products.

The technical stacks of the company today range from Microsoft-based solutions to open source, JavaScript with libraries and frameworks like ReactJS, Angular and NodeJS, Python, GoLang and php. The latest technical stream the company has embarked into is in Machine Learning and Analytics, where the number-crunching data scientists and developers in Ascenic today supports Swedish organisations to make smarter use of their data.

Founder and CEO, Anna Kalm, looks back at the last five years with warmth "It's been quite an exciting journey for all of us here at Ascenic. We have had high-set targets from the start of the business, and I'm absolutely amazed with what we

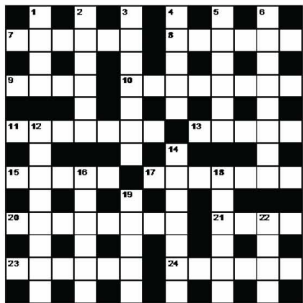
as a team have been able to accomplish. We have such an amazing crew that keeps striving for excellence – both in terms of the technical solutions we craft but also related to the workplace we are creating. Regardless of what challenges we face, knowing the strength and grit of our team 'I'm confident we will grow stronger from it and continue to thrive.'

Being an Ascender has many perks and benefits, such as lifelong learning opportunities, support for a healthy work-life balance, USS pegged compensation, comfy workspaces, a range of social activities among others. Recently the company launched an international rotation program where the Sri Lankan crew members get the opportunity to work onsite in Sweden for a longer period, an initiative that has been highly appreciated since its launch.

The company also made history in Sri Lanka with the introduction of a four-month equal parental leave for both parents, with the aim to contribute to increased equality in the IT industry. Gender-neutrality, equity and inclusivity is not just a buzz phrase at Ascenic, but a cornerstone in building the organisation in a sustainable manner.

Crossword

Puzzle 2027



CLUES

Across

- 7 High-pitched howl (6)
- 8 Result (6)
- 9 Small open pie with a fruit filling (4)
- 10 Overly self-confident or self-assertive (8)
- 11 Crew of an aircraft (7)
- 13 A strong current of air (5)
- 15 Cling (5)
- 17 Atlases - anagram (3,4) someone who, or something that, grounds; a ball that keeps low. (8)
- 21 All right (4)
- 23 Paid in advance (4-2)
- 24 Technician (6)

Down

- 1 Involving water (4)
- 2 Infected (6)
- 3 High shoe with laces over the tongue (7)
- 4 Cluster (5)
- 5 Set on (6)
- 6 Stupendous (8)
- 12 Between the wars, esp. the two world wars (8)
- 14 Release (7)
- 16 Filthy (6)
- 18 Char (6)
- 19 Roll with the punches (5)
- 22 Amongst (4)

SOLUTION FOR CROSSWORD 2026



UP & DOWN WORDS™

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt

1. POSTMASTER
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

CLUES

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Important mail official | Yesterday's answer | Yesterday's answer |
| 2. Large U.S. conglomerate | 1. STERLING | SILVER |
| 3. Battery-powered automobile | 2. SILVER | BULLET |
| 4. Traffic accident | 3. BULLET | HOLE |
| 5. Emergency touchdown | 4. HOLE | PUNCH |
| 6. Airplane's wheels | 5. PUNCH | BOWL |
| 7. Part of a manual transmission | 6. BOWL | GAME |
| | 7. GAME | PLAN |

© 2011 Universal Uclick

A sweet conversion

The Air Company in New York has won first place in NASA's Carbon dioxide Conversion Challenge. The competition was for competitors to come up with a way that Carbon dioxide conversion could allow future inhabitants of the planet to manufacture products using Mars' atmospheric carbon dioxide and water as resources. In hopes that someday we can sustain life on Mars. And the project they presented and won with was, being able to convert Carbon dioxide into sugars to bring new resources to Mars.

"We are thrilled to have received this incredible recognition from NASA," CEO and co-founder of Air Company, Gregory Constantine says, "The possibilities and applications for our technology are vast and we are thrilled to be able to continue to use innovation to push boundaries. From consumer goods that actively help mitigate climate change to sustaining people during space travel, our ambition is to help further humanity both on Earth and beyond."

What led to the Air Company's victory was the design of an efficient and reliable non-biological process that was able to operate without the help of a human. The carbon dioxide system can be deployed as miniaturised units sized to fit inside a Mars Exploration Rover or deployed at massive scales for more widespread operation. The system is split into three phases, phase one is carbon dioxide and hydrogen using water electrolysis, and they are passed over a catalyst to produce water and alcohol. In phase two,



alcohols are converted into aldehydes. In phase three, the resulting mixture is transformed into sugars using a novel catalyst designed by Air Company for the system.

Air Company's goal is to make the planet a better place. Even when the pandemic hit, Air Company knew they could help and they did. They started making hand sanitizer with a technology that converts Carbon dioxide into ethanol. They also created the world's first carbon-negative vodka.

"This is one example of how NASA

challenges spur innovation to help life on Earth and beyond. We catalyse a culture of change makers and problem solvers, many of whom go on to apply their technology and creativity to make a difference in their own communities and around the world." They went on to lead out the carbon dioxide conversion technology to many industries. And the company was championed by TIME for 100 Best Inventions of 2020 and Fast Company for the Best World Changing Idea North America.

(innotechtoday)

Under-19 Girls Devapathiraja in big win

Devapathiraja Rathgama beat newcomers Meegoda Maha Vidyalaya by 469 runs in a first-round fixture of the Under-19 Girls Inter Schools Cricket tournament in Meegoda recently. The tournament is conducted by Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Association (SLSCA) and sponsored by Sri Lanka Cricket.



Iimesha Dulani

Skipper Iimesha Dulani, who is also in the National squad, scored a valuable 191 runs and claimed 3 wickets, while Rashmi Nethranjali scored 120.

In Meegoda (Devapathiraja won by 469 runs)
Devapathiraja: 519/3 (30) (Iimesha Dulani 191, Rashmi Nethranjali 120, Sumudu Nisansala 61 n.o., Kavya Kavindi 57, Ayesha Piyumali 2/73)

Meegoda MV: 50 (24.3) (Iimesha Dulani 3/2, Sapna Madubhashini 3/13, Hiruni Hansika 2/8)

In Giriulla (Wickramashila NS won by 5 wickets)

Liambem MV Matale: 151 (23) (Roshani Wijesinghe 25, Ashinsana Rathnayake 22, Desha Nethmini 4/23, Chamudi Bhagya 3/18, Ayodya Sewwandi 2/14)

Wickramashila NS: 152/5 (24.3) (Pawani Chamodya 42, Punsarani Prabodha 41, Yasanthi Herath 3/32)

In Eppawala (Sri Siddhartha MMV won by 7 wickets)

Jayasiripura KV Polonnaruwa: 101 (24.3) (Bhagya Harshani 24, Nuwanthika Wanasingha 3/11, Sumudu Kumari 2/16, Nimesara Dissanayaka 2/13, Ayesha Nethmi 2/30)

Sri Siddhartha: 102/3 (18.4) (Nimesara Dissanayaka 52 n.o.)

In Hunumulla (Rathnavali BV Gampaha won by 8 wickets)

Princes of Wales Moratuwa: 78 (23.5) (Vidushika Perera 4/12, Dewmini Pabasara 2/23)

Rathnavali BV: 79/2 (10.2) (Vishmi Gunaratne 51 n.o.)

In Atharagallewa (Vijayaba MV Karukkankulama won by 106 runs)

Vijayaba MV: 221/6 (30) (Rashmi Wijewardane 50 n.o., Dilini Nimesha 36, Prabodhani Kaushalya 30 n.o., Rashmi Kaveshka 2/37, Nethmi Thiwangi 2/39)

Atharagallewa MV: 115 (19.4) (Rashmi Kaveshka 20 n.o., Prabodini Kaushalya 4/13, Rashmi Wijewardane 3/34)

In Galagedara (Nugawela CC won by 60 runs)

Nugawela CC: 125 (23.3) (Tharushi Rajakaruna 41, Sansala Wanigasekara 22, Nimeshika Seneviratne 5/24, Amanthi Kodithuwakku 3/17, Gaveena Sithmi 2/24)

St. Anthony's Kandy: 65 (23.4) (Diyoni Nimala 20, Tharushi Rajakaruna 5/06, Ishara Dharmseba 2/16)

(R)

Swiatek emotional at Barty's shock retirement



Iga Swiatek

World number one Iga Swiatek said she cried for 40 minutes after learning of three-times Grand Slam champion Ash Barty's shock retirement last month.

Swiatek took over the top ranking on Monday after Australian Barty decided to call time on her career at the age of 25.

"I was crying for 40 minutes," Swiatek told the BBC on Monday. "Mainly, it was because of Ash's retirement. I didn't know it was going to happen and it really surprised me."

"I always had this vision that we would all play until we are 35 or something until our bodies are so tired that we can't anymore."

"I needed time to actually understand what she must have thought. Her decision was really brave and I felt a lot of emotions because of that."

Swiatek said she also became emotional after finding out that she could take over the top spot, which the 20-year-old Pole did after a second-round win at the Miami Open. She eventually went on to lift the title.

"I realised after two hours of being really emotional that 'Hey, you don't know what is going to happen yet and you still have to win some matches,'" Swiatek said.

"So I told myself 'let's wait with the emotions and with being excited because I have work to do.'"

(Reuters)

PALACE BLOW ARSENAL TOP-FOUR HOPES

Arsenal's hopes of securing a top-four Premier League finish this season were dealt a blow as the below-par visitors suffered a 3-0 defeat against rampant Crystal Palace on Monday.

Arsenal were put to the sword in the first half by the clinical hosts, with goals from forwards Jean-Philippe Mateta and Jordan Ayew giving Palace a deserved 2-0 interval lead.

The Londoners improved after the break, with Emile Smith Rowe and Martin Odegaard missing big chances to get their team back in the match. Their wastefulness proved costly as Wilfried Zaha put the game to bed with a penalty 16 minutes from time.

Tottenham Hotspur's 5-0 home victory over Newcastle United on Sunday means they are fourth, ahead of their north London rivals on goal difference having played a game more.

Arsenal had been in fine form on the road in the Premier League prior to their trip to south London on Monday.

"Congratulations to Palace for the game they played, but we made it impossible for ourselves with the way we competed," Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta told Sky Sports.

Arsenal's 1-0 win at Aston Villa last time out was their fifth away league victory in a row - the first time they had been on such a run since May 2015. But they struggled from the start to find any rhythm, with Palace very much the better side in the opening period.

Arsenal just could not create any openings of note in the first half, with Mateta going close to adding a third for Palace before the interval.

Content with a two-goal lead, the hosts sat back and invited pressure after the break. Smith Rowe should have done better from close range before Odegaard dragged his effort wide.

Zaha then broke on the counter and was awarded a penalty - only Raheem Sterling (23) and Jamie Vardy (21) have been given more penalties in Premier League history than the Ivory Coast forward - which he converted emphatically.

A second defeat in their last three league games opens the door for Arsenal's top-four rivals and Arteta's side still have it all to do to secure a return to the Champions League for the first time since 2016-17.

Fifth-placed Arsenal are level on 54 points with Spurs and three points ahead of West Ham United and Manchester United, albeit with all their top-four rivals having played more games.

(Reuters)

SA vs Bangladesh - Second Test South Africa keen to spin another win

Hosts South Africa will look to impose another trial by spin on seething tourists Bangladesh in the second and final Test starting at St George's Park in Gqeberha, formerly Port Elizabeth, on Thursday.

The home side completed a dominant 220-run victory in the first Test on Monday, bowling Bangladesh out for a paltry 53 in a second innings which lasted only 19 overs.

The visitors' management were unhappy with some of the decisions from local umpires Marais Erasmus and Adrian Holdstock in Durban and promised to lodge a formal complaint with the International Cricket Council.

Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque gave a blunt assessment of his side's horror second innings, when all 10 wickets fell to spinners Keshav Mahajar (7-32) and Simon Harmer (3-21).

"I think it was a big crime on our part to give wickets to spinners on foreign soil," he said.

"You simply cannot give wickets to spinners when you are on tour. You have to score runs against spinners. It is nothing but a total batting failure. I think we just couldn't handle the pressure."

The pitch is expected to be low and slow at St George's Park and unlikely to produce the same bounce as Kingsmead, which will be more to the liking of the visitors.

"We played well in four out of five days," Mominul added. "There are enough positives to suggest to me that we can bounce back easily in the next game."

South Africa are without six regulars, with five playing in the Indian Premier League, including their entire first choice seam attack.

Those absences forced them, in a way, to play two spinners and captain Dean Elgar does not foresee too many changes for the second Test, especially with such a quick turnaround.

"It shows a lot of character with regard to adapting and being put in conditions we are not familiar with," Elgar said. "It also shows a lot of strength within our group that we have the resources to adapt."

"We play quite a lot of cricket in the sub-continent. It was great to expose our bowling attack to having two spinners operating in tandem. There's so many positives out of that."

(Reuters)

BCB to lodge official complaint to ICC on umpiring



Adrian Thomas Holdstock and Marais Erasmus

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said on Monday that they will lodge an official complaint to International Cricket Council (ICC) about South Africa's umpiring at Kingsmead after the ongoing series.

Several decisions went against the host in the two-match Test series opener, while tourist skipper Mominul Haque insisted after the game that they were a victim of severe sledging.

According to players of the touring camp and BCB officials, the umpiring of Adrian Thomas Holdstock and his senior partner Marais Erasmus was certainly not up to the mark.

"We will file an official complaint to ICC about umpiring after the series," BCB Cricket Operation Chairman Jalal Yunus told Cricbuzz on Monday (4 April). "We have already lodged one complaint about the umpiring after the ODI series and it was given to the match referee (Andy Pycroft), but he did pay any heed to it," he said.

"Regarding umpiring decision everyone had seen globally and we cannot do anything as they are the final judge, but after the Test in Port Elizabeth we will go with everything that had happened."

"You have seen Mominul raised concerns

over sledging and we feel umpires should have told both parties impartially about it, but instead of doing that they warned our cricketers," he said.

Jalal added that they were quite disappointed as they expected the umpires to make up for lost time as the start of the Test was delayed due to a sight-screen issue by half an hour on the opening day.

"To make up this half an hour, they extended the lunch session instead of starting early, which we usually see," he said.

"It is definitely at the umpire's discretion, but generally, we see them making up for lost time by starting early but they didn't do that. It looked like they did not want our pace bowlers to have a go at the opposition," he said.

After the fourth day's play, Mahmud ul-Jal for neutral umpires to be officiating and Jalal echoed the same sentiment.

"I feel we should now have neutral umpires," he concluded.

Cricbuzz understands that according to the Memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by both boards, it was mentioned that if a match is delayed it will be compensated by playing in the afternoon and not having an early start.

(Cricbuzz)

SPORTS TODAY



Wanindu Hasaranga

Wanindu gets top deal in The Hundred 2022

Sri Lanka's star all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga has been picked by the Manchester Originals to play in The Hundred 2022 scheduled to commence from August. He has been signed for £100,000.

Andre Russell and Sean Abbot are the other top stars who were picked by the

Manchester Originals as their overseas players for The Hundred 2022.

The Hundred was staged last year for the first time by the England Cricket Board. It's a shorter version of T20 cricket where each side gets to face 100 balls each in their respective innings.

AFC Cup Qualifiers 2022

GOALS FROM IHSAN, SANDESH SET UP BLUE STARS WIN



Blue Star players celebrate after scoring

BY MUSTAQ SYDEN

Two first half goals from Mohamed Ihsan and Shenal Sandesh set up Sri Lanka Super League Champions Blue Star's comfortable 2-1 victory over Machhindra FC of Nepal in their first preliminary round of the AFC Cup Qualifiers 2022 kicked off at Dasharath Stadium in Tripureswar, Kathmandu yesterday.

Blue Star drew first blood in the 24th minute through Mohamed Ihsan, when a brilliant through ball found the striker who beat the onrushing goal keeper and tapped in to the bottom corner to take an early lead.

They were delighted again just three minutes later when Shenal Sandesh wriggled his way into the penalty area

before firing a 12-yard effort into the top corner of the net to virtually seal the match.

The early goals put Blue Star on a perfect track, where they played a clean game of football while taking maximum advantage of the given opportunities.

On the other hand, Machhindra defence played a sloppy game in the early exchanges where they allowed the Blue Star forwards to easily control the ball and play freely with back to back counter attacks which cost them two early goals.

The Sri Lanka Club Champions once again showed that they are a tough nut to crack with a measured away performance, restricting their opponents to rare goal scoring opportunities and end the first half 2-0.

Into the second half Blue Star continued

their dominance but failed to threaten their opponents and chances went a begging at both ends and the game was slowed down and looked dull with neither team able to concoct any goal scoring opportunities.

However, Machhindra came out with more determination in the second half and threatened to take control of the game, and almost succeeded when their striker rose high to head home, but his effort was saved by the Blue Star custodian.

Machhindra continued to threaten and succeeded with a late goal from skipper Sujal Shrestha, but it was too little too late for them to make a comeback as Blue Star walked out as winners in a thrilling contest.

The Blues will now look ahead to next week's clash against ATK Mohun Bagan.

(Picture courtesy: AFC)

National Sports Council members resign

National Sports Council (NSC) members headed by former National Skipper Mahela Jayawardene have resigned.

The Council was appointed by former Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa and included prominent sports figures.

Meanwhile, it is also learnt that the NSC appointed Cricket Technical Advisory Committee, which includes the likes of former skipper Kumar Sangakkara and Aravinda de Silva, too, will become defunct with the resignations.

Under-19 Division One Tier 'A' St. Joseph's and Richmond enter final

Defending champions St. Joseph's Colombo (unbeaten throughout the tournament) and Richmond Gale entered the final of the Under-19 Division One Tier 'A' Inter Schools Cricket Tournament yesterday.

St. Joseph's beat De Mazenod Kandana at Surrey grounds, Maggona, while Richmond beat Mahanama Colombo by 139 runs at Reid Avenue.

St. Joseph's won the toss and elected to field. De Mazenod were bowled out for 138 runs in 38.1 overs. Ashen Silva top scored with 56 runs. Muditha Lakshan (3), Mithira Thenura (2) and Yenula Dewthusa (2) were the main wicket takers.

St. Joseph's scored 140 runs for 5 wickets in 27.2 overs. Hiran Matheesha scored an unbeaten 64 runs. Dunith Wellalage and Hiran Jayasundara made useful contributions.

Richmond won the toss and elected to bat scored 202 runs in 49.5 overs. Tharinda Nirmal scored 59 runs. Maheesha de Silva (31) and Vishara Fernando (20) helped to build their innings. Devindu Kekirideniya claimed 5 wickets for 21 runs.



Hiran Matheesha (St. Joseph's College)



Tharinda Nirmal (Richmond College)

Mahanama were bowled out for a paltry 63 runs in 22.4 overs. Tharinda Nirmal claimed 4 wickets for 21 runs, while Kalpa Nethsara (3) and Sharon Abhishek (2) also bowled well.

The final between St. Joseph's and Richmond will take place at Bloomfield on 12 April.

In Maggona (St. Joseph's won by 5 wickets)

De Mazenod: 138 (38.1) (Ashen Silva 56, Mithul Senarath 23, Muditha Lakshan 3/08, Mithira Thenura 2/22, Yenula Dewthusa 2/29)
St. Joseph's: 140/5 (27.2) (Hiran Matheesha 64 n.o., Dunith Wellalage 37, Hiran Jayasundara 20, Thareen Sanketh 1/8)

At Reid Avenue (Richmond won by 139 runs)

Richmond: 202 (49.5) (Tharinda Nirmal 59, Maheesha de Silva 31, Vishara Fernando 20, Devindu Kekirideniya 5/21, Duvidu Ranathunga 2/29)

Mahanama: 63 (22.4) (Viranga Yeshan 20, Tharinda Nirmal 4/21, Kalpa Nethsara 3/14, Sharon Abhishek 2/10)

(IR)

Under-19 Division One Tier 'B' Group Champions clash today in semis

Thurstan Colombo will meet Maris Stella Negombo in the semi-final of the Under-19 Division One Tier 'B' Inter Schools Cricket Tournament at Surrey grounds, Maggona today (6).

Thurstan advanced to the quarter-final as group champion with 4 wins. Thurstan beat Lummini Colombo to advance to the semi-final.

Thurstan will be led by Bhawantha Jayasinghe.

Maris Stella advanced to the quarter-final as group champion with 4 wins. Maris Stella beat Moratu Vidyalaya to advance to the semi-final.

Maris Stella will be led by Kavitha Dinalya.



Bhawantha Jayasinghe (Thurstan Captain)



Kavitha Dinalya (Maris Stella Captain)

Squads:

Thurstan: Bhawantha Jayasinghe (Captain), Pasindu Rathnayake, Ruvidana Dilshan, Tharindu Harshana, Shanithya Deshapriya, Vihas Theemika,

Mohammed Waseem, Nipun Premarathne, Upul Hettiarachchi, Thenuka Devapriya, Thanuka Palihawadana, Ushan Imesh, Devinda Dishan, Pasindu

Rashmika, Ranga Rasanga, Himantha Hansaka, Nivindu Dulan, Malaka Bandara (Master-in-charge), Heshan Thilakarathne (Head Coach), Dumula Perera (Asst. Coach)

Maris Stella: Kavitha Dinalya (Captain), Eeven Kalahara, Shane Adithya, Sandew Rathnayake, Kaveesh Fernando, Hanssaja Hiruna, Sachiru Hansala, Mahiduru Malith, Hasidu Perera, Ramith Bandara, Navidu Wijesuriya, Akalanka Fernando, Unshane de Silva, Ishara Dilshan, Mithusha Vishmitha, Rahumath Deen, Sanjewan Navarathnam (Master-in-charge), Ranjith Fernando (Master-in-charge), Anil Gunasinghe (Head Coach), Nuwan Ruchira (Asst. Coach)

(IR)

Avesh stars in LSG's hard-fought win over SRH

The Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) registered their second consecutive victory in the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by 12 runs on Monday at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

LSG made one change – Jason Holder replaced Dushmantha Chameera in the eleven.

Fifties from skipper KL Rahul and Deepak Hooda guided LSG to a competitive total of 169-7 before Avesh Khan's 4-wicket haul helped the LSG bowling attack restrict SRH to 157/9.

Chasing 170, SRH lost skipper Kane Williamson in the fourth over off Avesh Khan's bowling. Avesh scalped his second wicket inside the powerplay to dismiss

Abhishek Sharma. Rahul Tripathi started his innings confidently by scoring three boundaries. Three more were scored in the 8th over bowled by Andrew Tye, who conceded 15 runs in his second over.

Tripathi stormed to 33 off 18 deliveries and SRH were 82/2 at the halfway stage. Aiden Markram was dismissed for 12 as Krunal Pandya claimed his first wicket. Pandya added Tripathi's wicket to his tally as the right-hander was caught in the deep for 44.

Nicholas Pooran clubbed three fours and a six and was well supported by Washington Sundar at the other end.

With 33 required off the final three, Pooran smashed a maximum before Avesh Khan struck twice in consecutive deliveries

to dismiss Pooran and Abdul Samad. Jason Holder bowled the final over with perfection by claiming three wickets as SRH fell 133 runs short of the target.

SRH made a rewarding start with the ball as they claimed three wickets in the powerplay – those of Evin Lewis, Quinton de Kock and Manish Pandey. Washington Sundar claimed two while Romano Shepherd picked one.

LSG were 32-3 at the end of 6 overs as skipper KL Rahul was joined by Deepak Hooda.

Brief Scores:

LSG: 169-7 (KL Rahul 66, Deepak Hooda 51, Washington Sundar 2-28)

SRH: 157-9 (Rahul Tripathi 44, Nicholas Pooran 34, Avesh Khan 4-24)

Under-19 Division Two Tier 'B' P. De S. Kularathna in final

P. De S. Kularathna College Ambalangoda entered the final of the Under-19 Division Two Tier 'B' Inter Schools Cricket tournament, when their semi-final against President's College Kotte ended in no result at the Army ground Dombagoda yesterday.

As per tournament rules, P. De S. Kularathna were declared the winner based on the average points scored in the previous rounds of the tournament.

President's College won the toss and elected to bat. The President's College batters fared very poorly against the P. De S. Kularathna bowlers and were shut out for

just 81 runs in 32.3 overs. Dinal Induwara and Tharuka Thasmin were the only batters to show some resistance. Dhanushka Madushanka, Kaveesh Sathasara and Lasheen Vanidu claimed 3 wickets each.

P. De S. Kularathna College had scored 24 runs no loss in 6.1 overs at close when the match was called off.

In Dombagoda (No result)

President's Kotte: 81 (32.3) (Dinal Induwara 21, Tharuka Thasmin 20 n.o., Dhanushka Madushanka 3/01, Kaveesh Sathasara 3/17, Lasheen Vanidu 3/28)

P. De S. Kularathna 24/0 (6.1).

(IR)