

**Editorial****Tackling Torrents of Trouble****A6****Finance Today****B7**

Sri Lanka on target to meet 2024 Budget deficit

**LOOK****C9****A fresh take on Tamil horror genre****Sports Today****A12**

West Indies Bamboozled by Spin

**No NPP MP visited flood affected**

— Harshana



By BUWANAKA S. PERERA

No politician representing the National People's Power (NPP) Government has visited the areas affected by the recent floods, claims former Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) MP Harshana Rajakaruna.

He made this statement at a media conference held at the Samagi Jana Sandhanaya headquarters in Ward Place, Colombo 7, yesterday (15).

Continued on Page 2

**To construct new grid substation SLBC land in Ekala transferred to CEB**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

The Cabinet of Ministers has approved a proposal to transfer a portion of land belonging to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) to the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) to construct a new grid substation in the Ekala Industrial Zone.

Continued on Page 2

**Following engine fire near Kalutara Station****Train services on Coastal Line disrupted**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Train services on the Coastal Line were disrupted after a fire broke out in the engine of a train near the Kalutara Railway Station, Sri Lanka Railways said.

Continued on Page 2

**Roof repairs amid rains soak Health Ministry**

By DILANTHI JAYAMANNE

A section of the Health Ministry is facing a dilemma due to a roof repair it commenced despite the inclement weather conditions.

Ministry sources yesterday (15) lamented that the showers being experienced from 7 October 2024 till yesterday (15) have affected several offices including that of the Director General of Health Services, and sections coming under the purview of the Deputy Director General Nursing.

Continued on Page 2

**Mangala Wijesinghe appointed EDB Chairman**

Mangala Wijesinghe, Chief Operating Officer of Brown and Company PLC, has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Export Development Board (EDB) of Sri Lanka.

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# CEYLON TODAY



Grade 5 Scholarship Exam 2024

**PARENTS FILE FR PETITION TO HALT RESULTS**

By HANSI NANAYAKKARA

A Fundamental Rights (FR) petition has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking an order to prevent the release of the 2024 Grade 5 Scholarship Examination results and the cut-off marks.

The petition, submitted by a group of 27

parents whose children sat for the recent Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, urges the Court to cancel the second paper of the exam. The petitioners have requested the Supreme Court, through their FR petition, to invalidate Paper 01 of the 2024 Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, in which certain questions were allegedly leaked, and to order a re-examination.

Continued on Page 2

**President vows to protect trust placed in him**

Addressing the progress review meeting of the Ministry of Energy last morning (15), President Anura Kumara Dissanayake advised that the projects aimed at achieving the energy sector's goals over the next three years must be structured and expedited.

The President pointed out that, similar to other countries where the energy sector holds a prominent position, Sri Lanka too has given the

energy sector a leading role, and he also mentioned that the Ministry of Energy generates revenue, and with higher earnings, there are societal discussions about possible irregularities. Dissanayake stated that during this Presidential Election, the people had voted with expectations, and he is committed to fulfilling that mandate, the President's Media Division (PMD) said.

Continued on Page 2

**SC decision key to Adani RE project future in SL – FM**

By SULOCHANA RAMIAH MOHAN

As the Sri Lankan Government has informed the Supreme Court that it will review the controversial Wind Power Project in Mannar, which involves India's Adani Group, Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath, at the Cabinet briefing yesterday (15) said the Government is awaiting the outcomes of several Court cases before taking a final decision. Five Fundamental Rights applications have been filed, seeking to halt the issuance of permits to Adani Green Energy Sri Lanka Limited (AGESL) for the Mannar Island wind power project.

Continued on Page 2

**Govt approves fuel subsidy for fishermen**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Minister Vijitha Herath announced that although the Cabinet had approved remedial measures on 21 August 2024, to address the sharp increase in fuel prices affecting the fishing industry, these measures had not yet been implemented.

He said the Sri Lankan Government has approved a new programme aimed at minimising the impact of the ongoing economic crisis on the fishing industry and helping restore the sector's stability.

Continued on Page 2

**STAY UPDATED!****WEDNESDAY**

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**Govt will have to sue Aloysius to recover Rs 3.5B tax money – Herath**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Public Security Minister Vijitha Herath said yesterday (15) that even though Arjun Aloysius was imprisoned, the Government would not be able to recover the lost tax money of Rs 3.5 billion without initiating a separate case against him.

Continued on Page 2



To strengthen public debt oversight

**SL to acquire new debt management software**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

The Sri Lankan Government has approved a proposal to purchase a new Debt Management Software System aimed at improving the management of the country's public debt, in compliance with the Public Debt Management Act, No. 33 of 2024.

This initiative is part of the establishment of a new Public Debt Management Office, which, under Section 23 of the Act, is required to maintain timely, detailed, and accurate data on public debt.

Continued on Page 2

**Govt sets up Committees for grand 77th Independence celebrations**

By MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

As preparations begin for the 77th Independence Day celebrations on 4 February 2025, the Government has appointed two key committees to ensure the event is organised on a grand scale.

Continued on Page 2

**Cabinet green-lights purchasing locally produced meds**

In a bid to encourage local medicine producers by giving priority to the production of medicines for the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation (SPC), the Cabinet of Ministers approved the purchase of locally produced medicines under the 'Buy Back Agreement.'

Continued on Page 2

**New Government Analyst appointed**

The Cabinet has approved the appointment of Sandya Kumudini Rajapakse as the new Government Analyst.

Rajapakse, currently serving as Assistant Government Analyst, has been appointed following the retirement of Deepika Senewiratne, who held the position until 11 October 2024. According to the seniority list of Special Grade Officers within the Sri Lanka Scientific Service, Rajapakse's promotion to Government Analyst comes in recognition of her experience and expertise in the field.

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**President vows...**

He highlighted that the public has placed their trust in a new political tradition due to dissatisfaction with the old political culture, the economic problems they face, and their dissatisfaction with the performance of the public service.

The President mentioned that the public believes corruption, fraud, and mismanagement are behind the country's economic collapse, and that the people have given this mandate to prevent these issues.

He further stated that he would protect the trust placed in him by the people to stop corruption and fraud across the public sector, and urged public servants to fulfil their responsibilities properly.

The President further stated that public wealth must be protected like religious property, and no one has a legitimate right to subject that wealth to fraud or corruption.

President Dissanayake stated that the commitment of the current public servants is essential to create an efficient and effective public service that satisfies the citizens, and he is ready to take every step necessary to achieve this.

The President emphasised that public servants must act with responsibility and accountability to fulfil the structure, goals, and expectations of this mandate, and stated that his political leadership team is prepared to provide the necessary leadership for this.

President Dissanayake further noted that he stands by every public action taken in the public's interest within the boundaries of official duty and will not hesitate to take necessary action if improper acts are committed.

A detailed and extensive review was conducted regarding the current projects in the energy sector and those scheduled for implementation over the coming years, the PDM said.

Further discussions were held on how to achieve the goals of the energy sector over the next three years, as well as the short-term and long-term relief that could be provided to the public, the statement added.

Professor Udayanga Hemapala, Secretary of the Ministry of Energy; Dr. Tilak Siyambalapitiya, Chairman of the Ceylon Electricity Board; Engineer K.G.R.F. Comester, General Manager of the Ceylon Electricity Board; and Janaka Rajakaruna, Chairman of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and the Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited, along with several officials from the Ministry of Energy, participated in this event.

**Govt will have...**

The minister emphasised that Aloysius was sentenced to six months in prison as a penalty for tax evasion and that the Government has nothing to gain from this. He also blamed authorities for delaying taking legal action against Aloysius up until now and also warned legal action will be instituted against other big businesspersons who have evaded taxes.

**Govt approves fuel...**

According to this programme, fishing vessel owners who use diesel will be granted an allowance of Rs 25 per litre of diesel, capped at Rs 300,000 per month and this subsidy is intended to help normalise the fishing industry and offset the high fuel costs.

Minister Herath said the vessel owners using kerosene will receive a "fishing industry recovery allowance" of Rs 25 per litre of kerosene.

This allowance is limited to 15 litres per day, 25 days per month, and only on working days, easing the burden of fuel costs on small-scale fishers, he said.

According to this programme, in the event of fuel price increases, the maximum concession price for diesel will be set at Rs 250 per litre, while for kerosene, it will be Rs 150 per litre.

Additionally, the programme guarantees that fishing communities will receive a 7.5 per cent discount on diesel and a 12.5 per cent discount on kerosene, compared to market prices, for six months.

This initiative aims to provide much-needed relief to fishing vessel owners and ensure the sustainability of Sri Lanka's fishing industry during a time of economic hardship.

The programme, effective from 1 October 2024, will provide key concessions for six months to support the fishing community.

**PARENTS FILE...**

Furthermore, the petition calls for an order to be issued to the relevant authorities to reconduct Paper 02 of the examination, should investigations reveal that this paper was also compromised. The petitioners also request the Court to nullify the Department of Examinations' decision to award free marks to all candidates for the three questions purportedly leaked during the exam.

Additionally, the petition seeks an order for the respondents to submit to the Court the names of the members of the committee appointed to investigate the alleged leak.

The Commissioner General of

Examinations, the Minister of Education, Prime Minister Dr Harini Amarasuriya, the Secretary to the Ministry of Education, the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and 11 others have been named as respondents in the petition.

On 20 September, an investigation was launched by the Department of Examinations after it was alleged that three questions from one of the exam papers had been leaked. The initial investigation report was later handed over to the CID, which also initiated a separate investigation into the matter.

**Cabinet green-lights purchasing...**

The Cabinet of Ministers had approved a proposal submitted by Health Minister Harini Amarasuriya during their Cabinet meeting held on Monday (14) to enter into buyback agreements to supply medical supplies, including locally manufactured medicines, from identified local manufacturers for one year "without being perverse" to the local medicine manufacturing companies that had already entered into buyback agreements as well as the manufacturing procedure of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation (SPC).

The Medical Supplies Division (MSD) of the Health Ministry has identified 49 local medicine manufacturing companies that have the capability of supplying 454 types of pharmaceuticals, including medicinal drugs.

Approval had been granted at a Cabinet meeting held on 29 November 2013.

Accordingly, approval was granted on 2 October 2018 to enter into buyback agreements for the production of local

medicines manufacturing companies who had already entered into agreements with the SPC for 15 years, to purchase the said medicinal drugs on a priority basis, and to implement the buyback agreements between local medicine producers and the Ministry of Health for the supply of medicines for up to 10 years.

During the Cabinet decisions taken on Monday (14), a pricing committee had also been appointed to determine the prices of the medicines.

According to the strategy of purchasing the said medicines, it has been recognised that 20 per cent of the requirement of medicine supplies was to be covered by the present strategy of purchasing the said medicines.

However, according to the decision taken, there was also a possibility to increase the said amount up to 40 per cent.

(DJ)

**SL to acquire...**

The Government currently relies on the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS) to track foreign debt.

However, the Commonwealth Secretariat has discontinued the system's annual licence updates, prompting the need for Sri Lanka to adopt a new platform.

Following consultations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a technical delegation from the World Bank, it was recommended that the country explore the adoption of either the Commonwealth Meridian software, also provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat, or the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) from the United Nations Conference

on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

In response, the Cabinet of Ministers has approved a proposal presented by the President, in his role as Minister of Finance and Economic Development, to seek a proposal for the purchase of Commonwealth Meridian software.

This proposal will be reviewed by the Procurement Committee, which will assess various factors such as cost-effectiveness, ease of data transmission, data integrity, and system compatibility before finalising the acquisition.

The adoption of this new software is expected to significantly enhance Sri Lanka's capacity to manage its public debt, ensuring effective monitoring and compliance with international standards for debt management.

**No NPP MP...**

Alleging that State intervention in providing relief to those affected by the floods, especially in the Gampaha District, was minimal, Rajakaruna claimed that he has received information indicating that political representatives of the government have not physically visited the affected areas to assess the situation.

"With no access to food and water, the prevailing rains and flood situation have

completely disrupted the way of life of those affected," said Rajakaruna.

While calling upon the government to provide immediate flood relief to the victims, Rajakaruna stated that the SJB is committed to doing their utmost for those affected by the floods.

"We have lost the necessary leadership to tackle this situation. Those candidates who are contesting the General Election from the NPP are nowhere to be found," claimed Rajakaruna.

**Mangala Wijesinghe appointed...**

With over 25 years of senior and top management experience across various sectors, including Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Consumer & Electronics, Industrial Engineering Solutions, and Mobile & Telecommunications, Mangala is a prominent leader in the Sri Lankan corporate world. He successfully manages a portfolio of international suppliers with well-known brands across various industries, driving operational efficiency and business growth.

Mangala holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Additionally, he is a Chartered Professional Manager in Sri Lanka, further reinforcing his credentials in Business Management and Corporate Strategy. His academic qualifications, combined with extensive industry experience, have equipped him with the expertise to lead organisations toward

sustained success. From 2021 to 2023, Mangala Wijesinghe served as the President of the Veterinary Importers & Manufacturers Association (VIMA), where his leadership played a pivotal role in advancing industry standards. He is well-known for his ability to turn around loss-making businesses and guide them toward profitability in a short period. In addition, Mangala is actively engaged with many local and international associations related to export development, further enhancing his influence in the industry.

In addition to his corporate achievements, Mangala is recognised for his visionary leadership and commitment to operational excellence. His new role as Chairman of the EDB presents an exciting opportunity to leverage his wealth of knowledge and expertise to enhance Sri Lanka's export sector and strengthen the country's global trade relationships.

**SC decision key to Adani...**

The Minister emphasised that the government cannot take any decision regarding the project at this stage. The legal proceedings and Court decisions will play a critical role in determining the project's future. This comes amid growing public and political scrutiny surrounding the project, particularly concerning transparency and environmental concerns.

The Adani Group's Wind Power Project in Sri Lanka is a significant venture tied to renewable energy development on Mannar Island, off the northwest coast of Sri Lanka. Adani Green Energy Sri Lanka Limited (AGESL), a subsidiary of the Adani Group, has proposed the establishment of a large-scale wind power plant on the island. The project is part of a broader push for renewable energy in Sri Lanka as the

country aims to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and achieve a higher percentage of energy from renewable sources.

However, the project has faced legal and political hurdles. Several Fundamental Rights applications have been filed in the Supreme Court, with petitioners seeking to prevent the issuance of necessary permits to Adani's subsidiary for the development of the wind farm.

Due to these Court cases, the Sri Lankan Government, as conveyed by Foreign Minister Vijiha Herath, has postponed any decision on the project's future. The government has stated that it will wait for the outcomes of the Court proceedings before taking further steps. The Adani Group was invited to Sri Lanka in 2022 and it has stirred a geopolitical setback as well.

**Govt sets...**

The decision was made following a proposal by the Prime Minister, in his role as Minister of Justice, Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils, Local Government, and Labour.

Cabinet Spokesman, Minister Vijiha Herath announced that a high-level committee, comprising Cabinet Ministers, has been established to provide guidance and supervision.

He said this committee will include the participation of the President, Prime Minister, and the Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, ensuring top-level oversight of the

event's planning and execution.

He said a monitoring committee has also been appointed, which will include chief officers from relevant ministries and departments, along with representatives from the Tri-Forces and Police.

He also said this committee will focus on organising the Independence Day celebrations grandly and efficiently, with all necessary coordination between national institutions.

He added the two committees will work in tandem to ensure the 77th Independence Day is celebrated in a manner that reflects the nation's history, culture, and unity.

**SLBC land...**

This initiative aims to meet the rising demand for electricity in Ekala and surrounding areas, ensuring continuous power supply and improving the quality of the existing electrical infrastructure.

The proposed substation will be built on 2 acres and 2 rods from a 10-acre plot owned by the SLBC, located adjacent to the Ekala Sand crop garden.

This land transfer, valued at Rs 320 million by the Government's Chief Value, will enable the CEB to enhance the power grid in the region, which is critical for supporting both industrial and residential energy needs.

Meanwhile, the land located at the Ekala Broadcasting Station, formerly belonging to the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), has been transferred to the Urban Development Authority (UDA) for a sum of Rs 1.286 million.

This decision, made during the

Cabinet meeting on 27 February 2023, aims to use the funds to restructure SLBC into a self-sustaining, finance-generating institution.

Of the total amount, Rs 525 million has already been received by SLBC, with Rs 205 million allocated to compensate employees under the corporation's voluntary retirement scheme. The remaining funds are set to be used for modernisation efforts.

The Cabinet of Ministers has approved a proposal presented by the Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, National Integration, Social Security, and Mass Media to implement 25 activities aimed at modernising SLBC.

A total of Rs 145.72 million from the remaining amount will be utilised for these initiatives, marking a significant step in upgrading the national broadcaster's operations and infrastructure.

**Train services on...**

They said the incident occurred on a train plying from Kalutara to Maradana. A senior officer of the Kalutara Station said the train, which departed Kalutara at 7:00 a.m. yesterday (15), caught fire near the Kalutara Station.

The fire broke out in the rear engine of the train and the firefighting unit of the Kalutara Municipality put out the fire.

The Railway Department

announced that the cause of the fire is yet to be determined and the train journey has been cancelled. However, the passengers on the train were brought to Maradana by another train, and due to this, there was a slight delay in the train on the Coastal Line. The Railway Department also stated that an internal investigation had been initiated to ascertain if there was any foul play.

**Roof repairs amid...**

The water has been seeping in from a roof which was under repair in the building which housed the offices and meeting room of the DGHS, Deputy Director General (Nursing), Director (Professions Supplementary to Medicine), a section of the Procurement Branch and Development Branch.

They lamented a large number of personal files, invoice claim vouchers, handwritten minutes taken during various meetings, etc. had been damaged as a result. They alleged that certain documents had been placed on the floor in these offices after

being sent for approval from the DGHS.

Further, even some of the cupboards and wooden furniture had been damaged. Most of these documents are either printed or handwritten. And the rainwater would have not merely made the files soggy but also affected the documents inside them, Ministry sources lamented.

They said that remedial measures had been taken to minimise the damage while desperate attempts were being made to salvage the documents that had been damaged by the rain.

# CHILD OBESITY ONCE MORE ON THE RISE-FHB

BY PANEECHA AMERASEKERE

The declining trend of 'overweight and obesity' among children under the age of five years, in Sri Lanka witnessed from 2020 to 2023 seems to have reversed this year (2024), a new report warned.

Health Ministry's Family Health Bureau (FHB) in a report, titled 'National nutrition month summary report 2024', released last Monday (7), said, "Obesity among schoolchildren has also increased, from 2.7 per cent reported in 2023 to 3.1 per cent in 2024," it added. The same was

observed among Grade 10 students, the report said.

Overweight among schoolchildren too has increased, from six per cent in 2023 to seven per cent in 2024, FHB further said. Overall, there was also an increase in 'overweight and obesity' among children under five years of age too, FHB said.

'Overweight and obesity' among children under five years which was 0.43 per cent in 2023,

increased to 0.49 per cent in 2024, it said.

Therefore, to check obesity and overweight among children, there is a need to impose restrictions on excessively high

calorie ultra processed food and carrying out intensified efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy food behaviours among children, FHB advised.

Obesity is one of the primary risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), it said. The epidemic of obesity and its related comorbidities have adversely impacted children and adolescents all over the world. Childhood obesity is a major risk factor for the development of adult obesity and many NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, and some forms of cancer developed later in life is linked to obesity.

## Salient moments of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament

With the inaugural session on 20 August 2020, the term of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament spanned 4 years, 1 month, and 4 days. During this period, the Parliament convened for 390 days across five sessions. Significant events during the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary term included Constitutional amendments, the election of a successor President through a Parliamentary vote, the submission of No-confidence Motions, the removal of a Commission Chairman/Member through a resolution, and the suspension of the service of Parliamentarians due to disciplinary actions.

### Constitutional amendments

With the commencement of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament in 2020, then Minister of Justice M.U.M. Ali Sabry, presented the '20<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment' Bill to Parliament on 22 September 2020, aiming to amend the Constitution.

On 21 and 22 October, following the Second Reading Debate, the Bill was passed with a special majority. During the voting, 156 votes were cast in favour and 65 against the Bill. After the Committee Stage, the Bill's Third Reading was also passed by a special majority, with 156 votes in favour and 65 votes against. The Bill, with amendments, was subsequently approved. On 29 October 2020, following the Speaker's assent, the 20<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment was officially enacted.

In 2022, following the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa due to the prevailing crisis, Ranil Wickremesinghe, who was appointed as the 8<sup>th</sup> Executive President, formed a new Cabinet. As part of this Cabinet, (Dr.) Wijeyadasa Rajapakse, PC, the then Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, introduced the '22<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment' Bill to Parliament on 10 August 2022, to amend the Constitution.

Subsequently, during the debate pertaining to the Second Reading held on 20 and 21 October, the Bill received 179 votes in favour and 1 vote against. During the Committee Stage, amendments were incorporated into the Bill in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling. During the vote for the Third Reading, 174 votes were cast in favour, and 1 vote against. Accordingly, the Bill was passed as the '21<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment'. On 31 October 2022, following the Speaker's assent, the 21<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment was officially enacted.

### No-confidence Motion against the Minister of Power and Energy

The No-confidence Motion against Udaya Gammanpila, the then Minister of Power, was considered the first No-confidence Motion presented in the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament. It was submitted by 43 members of the Opposition at the time, including the then Opposition Leader Sajith

Premadasa. The Debate on this Motion took place on 19 and 20 July 2021. During the subsequent vote, the Motion received 61 votes in favour and 152 votes against, resulting in its defeat.

### Resolution to remove PUCSL Chair

The Resolution for the removal of J.D.B.M.J.P.K. (Janaka) Ratnayake from membership of the Sri Lanka Public Utilities Commission, as per the provisions of the Sri Lanka Public Utilities Commission Act No. 35 of 2002, was presented by Dinesh Gunawardena, the then Prime Minister and Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government Affairs. The Debate on this Resolution took place on 24 May 2023, during which the Motion received 123 votes in favour and 77 votes against, resulting in the Resolution being passed with a majority of 46 votes.

### No-Confidence Motion against the Health Minister

The No-confidence Motion against Keheliya Rambukwella, the then Minister of Health, was presented by 45 members of the then Opposition, including the then Opposition Leader, Premadasa. The Debate on this Motion took place for three days, from 6 to 8 September 2023. Following the Debate and during the subsequent vote, 113 votes were cast against the Motion, while 73 votes were in favour. As a result, the Motion was defeated by a majority of 40 votes.

### No-confidence Motion against the Speaker

On 19 March 2024, the then Opposition Leader, Sajith Premadasa, along with 45 members representing the main Opposition, presented a No-confidence motion against the Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena. The Debate on this Motion took place from 19 to 21 March. At the conclusion of the Debate and during the subsequent vote, 117 votes were cast against the motion, while only 75 votes were in favour. As a result, the No-confidence Motion was defeated in Parliament by a majority of 42 votes. Following this, the Speaker made a special statement.

The Election of an MP for the first time in Parliamentary History to fill the vacancy created by the Executive President.

Amid the political crisis in the country, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned from the Presidency on 14 July 2022. Consequently, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, an MP was elected to fill the vacant position, until Ranil Wickremesinghe, the Prime Minister at the time, served as the acting President.

In this context, in terms of the Presidential Elections (Special Provisions) Act No. 2 of 1981, Parliament convened on 19 July to conduct the Election. During this session, Ranil Wickremesinghe, the then Prime Minister and acting President and then MP's Dullass Alahapperuma and Anura Dissanayake were nominated to

fill the vacancy created by the resignation of the then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Accordingly, for the first time in Parliamentary history, a vote was held in Parliament to elect a President on 20 July 2022. During this voting, Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as the 8<sup>th</sup> Executive President of the country by a majority. In this secret ballot, Ranil Wickremesinghe received 134 votes, while Dullass Alahapperuma received 82 votes and Anura Dissanayake received 3 votes respectively.

### Suspensions of service term of MPs

On 23 August 2023, due to a contentious situation arising from raising supplementary questions related to questions for oral answers in Parliament, MPs Nalin Bandara Jayamaha and Wasantha Yabandara caused a clamour. Given the situation, Deputy Speaker Ajith Rajapakse temporarily suspended the Parliamentary session for 10 minutes.

Thereafter, the Speaker, Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, who took the Chair suspended Nalin Bandara Jayamaha and Wasantha Yabandara from the proceedings of that day.

Furthermore, on 19 October 2023, in light of a chaotic

situation that arose during the questions for oral answers in Parliament, the Speaker, Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, announced that the service term of Ajith Manappuruma would be suspended for four weeks with effect from that day. This action was taken since touching the mace while placed in the bracket of the Chamber is considered a serious disciplinary violation under Standing Order 77 (3).

Meanwhile, on 20 October 2023, due to an incident reported to have occurred between MPs Diana Gamage, K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera and Rohana Bandara, their service term was suspended for one month, effective from 2 December 2023 by way of a motion moved in Parliament.

This Motion was presented to Parliament on 2 December 2023, based on the recommendations made to Parliament after considering the matter by the Committee on Ethics and Privileges. During the voting, 57 votes were cast in favour of the proposal, while 1 vote was against it. Additionally, 3 members were recorded as abstaining from voting.

Additionally, on 23 May 2023, MP Ali Sabri Rathnayake was involved in an incident related to smuggling gold and mobile phones worth more than Rs 70 million, through the VIP terminal of the Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake. Based on the recommendations of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges, his Parliamentary service was suspended for a month effective 6 March 2024, through a Motion in Parliament, citing his misconduct; which was deemed to violate the privileges of Parliament and Members of Parliament, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 118.



## SLAF observing flood situation from above

Sri Lanka Airforce deployed a Bell 412 helicopter belonging to No 4 Helicopter Squadron yesterday on the reconnaissance of flood situation in Western and North Western Provinces.



## Wayamba Uni FAPM nature quiz

The FAPM Nature Team of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with Prasara Washing Plant, Dambulla, is holding the Annual Sahasvita '24 Nature-Based Quiz Competition. This exciting event

aims to promote environmental education and awareness among Sri Lankan youth. Open to both university undergraduates and school students above grade 10, Sahasvita '24 offers a unique opportunity to test

your knowledge of the natural world and contribute to a greener future. The competition will be held online on 26 and 27 October.

### NOTICE OF SHORT TERM AMALGAMATION

In the matter of a proposal for Amalgamation in terms of section 34(1) (o) of the Companies Act No. PV3645 has its registered office at No. 361 Kandy Road, Nittambuwa, and Damco Electronics (Private) Limited Company No. PV84734 having its registered office at No. 200/1, Kandy Road, Nittambuwa, and D.R. Property Developers (Private) Limited Company No. PV5503 also having its registered office at No. 361, Kandy Road, Nittambuwa.

Public Notice is hereby given that a proposal has been made for the amalgamation of D.R. Industries (Private) Limited with Damco Electronics (Private) Limited and D.R. Property Developers (Private) Limited to become effective from the date of issuance of the amalgamation certificate by the Registrar General of Companies and the Boards of Directors of all three companies are of the opinion that the proposed amalgamation is in the best interests of all concerned. It is also stated that the amalgamated company D.R. Industries (Private) Limited will immediately after the amalgamation becomes effective, satisfy its solvency test.

Copies of amalgamation proposal are available at the Secretary of the Amalgamation of D.R. Industries (Private) Limited, No. 1, Level 02, 200/1, Kandy Road, Nittambuwa, for inspection by any shareholder or creditor of the Company and any such shareholder or creditor or any person to whom the Company is bound by an obligation is entitled to obtain a copy of the said amalgamation proposal free of charge by making a written request for same, on any working day between 8.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Board of Directors,  
D.R. Industries (Private) Limited  
Damco Electronics (Private) Limited and  
D.R. Property Developers (Private) Limited

# UN PRIORITISES SL'S EDUCATIONAL REFORMS, PUBLIC SECTOR DIGITALISATION



The United Nations has prioritised Sri Lanka's educational reforms and digital transformation of the public sector, focusing on enhancing sustainable development and strengthening cooperation between the two entities, the Prime Minister's Media Division said in a statement released yesterday (15).

During a meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office on 14 October, Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya engaged in a discussion with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Kanni Wignaraja. The talks centred on supporting Sri Lanka's efforts to reform its education system and modernise its public sector through digitalisation.

Wignaraja extended her well wishes to the Prime Minister and reaffirmed the United Nations' commitment to working with Sri

Lanka in achieving long-term developmental goals. The dialogue emphasised key areas such as public safety, social protection, and digital innovation, all of which have become focal points for Sri Lanka's future growth.

The meeting also addressed the role of international cooperation in these reforms, with special attention given to the United Nations' role in facilitating these processes.

The discussions were attended by Prime Minister's Secretary Deepadeep Saputhanthri, Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister Mahinda Gunaratne, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Azusa Kubota, UNDP Digital and Innovation Team Leader Fadhill Bakir, and Director General for Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dayani Mendis.



## AIA Insurance introduces AIA SaveSmart

AIA Insurance proudly announces the launch of AIA SaveSmart, the smartest and highly customisable life insurance plan designed to meet the diverse financial needs of Sri Lankans at every stage of life. Whether saving for a child's higher education or planning for a dream retirement, AIA SaveSmart offers the most flexible and accessible solution tailored to individual savings goals.

AIA SaveSmart stands out as the smartest choice for anyone looking to secure their financial future. The plan can be uniquely tailored to the specific needs of the customer's savings requirements, providing unparalleled flexibility. From funding a child's education to building a health fund or planning for retirement, AIA SaveSmart caters to the savings needs of different generations, ensuring a comprehensive solution that grows with you.

In addition to its investment benefits, AIA SaveSmart offers a wide range of optional benefits that customers can choose based on their protection and health needs. These additional benefits enhance the overall value of the plan, ensuring that all individual's unique requirements are met with the highest level of care and attention.

AIA SaveSmart goes beyond being just a savings plan, it is enriched with a holistic ecosystem of well-being solutions designed to improve your quality of life. With a focus on health, wellness, and financial security, AIA SaveSmart



empowers Sri Lankans to live healthier, longer, and better lives. The plan integrates various health, wellness, and financial benefits, reinforcing AIA's commitment to supporting the overall well-being of its customers. Having partnered some of Sri Lanka's most reputed health and wellness partners including Flash Health, High Octane Fitness Gyms, Siddhalepa,

My Dentist, Vida Medical Clinic, Unilever Pureit, Vision Care and Doc990, AIA is the only insurer in Sri Lanka to offer customers such attractive offers and discounts to help them stay active, healthy and happy.

"AIA SaveSmart is a revolutionary product that aligns with our brand purpose of helping people live better lives," said Sashith Bambaradeniya, Chief Marketing Officer of AIA Insurance. "We are thrilled to offer a life insurance plan that not only meets the diverse financial needs of Sri Lankans but also empowers them to dream big and achieve their goals with confidence."

AIA SaveSmart is now available through AIA Insurance, providing Sri Lankans with a smart and comprehensive savings solution that adapts to their lifestyle and life stage.

For more details and information call AIA Insurance on 011 2310 310

## Turning the right to food into reality: A collective path to a food-secure future

BY VIMLENDR SHARAN, ABDUR RAHIM SIDDIQUI, AND SHERINA TABASSUM

This World Food Day, we come together to emphasise the crucial need for collective action to realise the "Right to Foods"—not just as an aspiration but as a tangible reality for every Sri Lankan and every citizen of the world. On the theme "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future," we are reminded that while global agricultural production may yield enough calories, millions still struggle with hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. Approximately 2.8 billion people worldwide cannot afford a healthy diet, contributing to all forms of malnutrition, from undernourishment to rising rates of overweight and obesity.

Here in Sri Lanka, the challenges are multifaceted. Natural disasters, economic downturns, and global shocks have intensified food insecurity, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations—especially women, children, rural communities and persons with disabilities. We can choose to ignore this only at our own peril.

The Right to Food extends beyond mere survival—it is about accessing a diverse, nutritious, and affordable diet that allows people to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

Achieving this right requires transformative changes in our agrofood systems. These systems must be efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Moreover, they should respect our traditional food cultures while embracing science-based solutions and

technology.

As the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP), and our collective work in Sri Lanka focuses on ensuring food availability, accessibility, and affordability. FAO's multiple initiatives, including the "One Country One Priority Product" programme, as well as climate-smart agriculture techniques under "GAP" and sustainable production enhancements through "RiceUp" and "RiceRethink" projects, are critical to these efforts.

Meanwhile, WFP's "Home Grown School Feeding" strengthens the sustainability of the national school meal programme while its "ADAPT4IR" programme helps farming communities adapt to climate change, and IFAD's investments are not only helping rural women and men eat healthier by encouraging a diversified diet, they are also helping rural communities increase their incomes by enhancing productivity and improving market connections, thereby, increasing their ability to purchase nutritious food.

While the role of UN agencies is important, the leadership of the Government, along with the effective participation of NGOs, the private sector, and academia and research institutions, is vital for success in this endeavour.

Governments must integrate the right to food across their policies, ensuring equitable access to resources like land, water, and fisheries while fostering inclusive decision-making that involves

local communities, women, indigenous peoples, and youth. Private sector actors need to be accountable, supporting sustainable agriculture and making nutritious, diverse foods more affordable and accessible. Academia and Research Institutions have the responsibility to generate evidence to inform policy-making and bring innovative practices to the fore. Consumers, too, must make informed choices by reducing food waste and creating demand for nutritious food to help elevate it as a priority.

Now, more than ever, we must unite to build agrofood systems that leave no one behind. It is time to turn words into action—transforming Sri Lanka's agrofood systems to meet the needs of today and ensure a brighter food-secure future for tomorrow. Together, we can help Sri Lanka and the world realise the Four Bettters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life for all.

As we commemorate World Food Day, let us pledge to take meaningful actions that promote the right to food for all. This involves advocating for policies that support food sovereignty, investing in local agriculture, and ensuring that marginalised voices are heard in discussions about food systems. It also means holding ourselves accountable as consumers to make choices that align with our values.

Let us act now to honour everyone's right to nutritious and diverse foods, recognising that our collective future depends on it.

## IEEE Young to Niche Professionals hosts electric vehicle workshop series

The IEEE Young to Niche Professionals (Y2NPro) initiative of IEEE Young Professionals Sri Lanka recently wrapped up its landmark workshop series on "Battery Technology and Charging Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles," from 10 August to 5 October 2024. This multi-faceted programme was designed to provide deep insights into the rapidly evolving electric vehicle (EV) industry, featuring a blend of ten webinars, a hands-on workshop, and a community-building session. The event was organised in collaboration with IEEE Industrial Electronics Society, IEEE Power & Energy Society of Sri Lanka Chapter, and supported by knowledge partner IEEE Vehicular Technology Society and Industry partners K D Rise Electrical Motors Pvt Ltd and Applied Energy Labs Pvt Ltd, reflecting a strong partnership between academic, industrial, and technological sectors.

Participants—42 from Sri Lanka and five international attendees—were immersed in a learning experience that covered a wide range of cutting-edge topics, from electric vehicle advancements to the latest trends in



ultra-fast charging technology and integrated battery management systems (BMS). The series attracted global attention, thanks to its remarkable line-up of expert speakers, which included influential thought leaders like Prof. Faz Rahman, Dr. V. Logeeswaran, Eng. Kasun Jayalath, Dr. Beshan Kulapala, Prof. Anura Wijayapala, Prof. Giambattista Grusso, Prof. Niles Perera, Prof. Xaosong Hu, Dr. Sudheera Navaratne, Prof. Atif Iqbal, Eng. Dhanuka Perera, and Eng. Danul Welihinda. These professionals shared their expertise on crucial subjects, shedding light on both the technical aspects and future trends of the EV market.

The culmination of the workshop series on 5 October 2024 was marked by the hands-on session focused on Battery Management and Serial Communication. It was led by Eng. Dhanuka Perera from Rise Electrical Motors and Eng. Danul Welihinda from Applied Energy Labs (PVT) Ltd, this

physical workshop gave participants a unique, practical learning experience. The day commenced with a deep dive into BMS technologies, followed by an interactive demonstration of how to communicate with BMS systems in real-world applications effectively. Participants were then guided through a hands-on activity, where they applied their learnings to real-life battery management setups, helping bridge the theoretical knowledge with tangible skills.

In line with Y2NPro's mission of fostering growth in niche technological fields, participants were awarded IEEE-certified credentials based on their engagement and performance throughout the series. This certification reinforces the initiative's core goal of elevating Sri Lanka's technological capacity while simultaneously contributing to global progress in the electric vehicle industry. By offering a platform for engineers,

professionals, and enthusiasts to gain expertise in niche areas like EV technology, Y2NPro continues to play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between academic learning and industrial needs, equipping participants with the necessary skills to navigate the future of sustainable transportation.

This workshop series is part of a broader vision to ensure that Sri Lanka remains at the forefront of technological innovation while contributing to global developments in electric mobility. Y2NPro aims to maintain its commitment to enhancing industry-academia collaboration, fostering professional growth, and delivering high-quality, expert-led training sessions in emerging fields. The series has not only equipped participants with cutting-edge knowledge but has also inspired them to contribute to the global EV landscape, driving forward the future of sustainable transportation.



Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni (Retd)

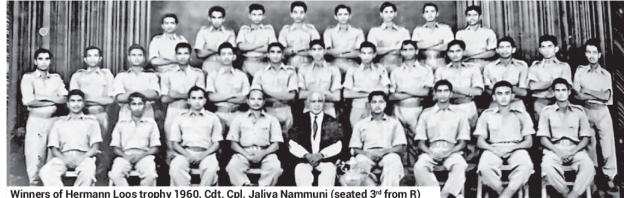
# A TIMELESS LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY

BY NILAKSHAN PERERA

Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni's life is not just a story of a leader whose visionary approach transformed the lives of soldiers and civilians alike. His name is etched in history as a man of unwavering integrity, deep compassion, and relentless commitment to our nation. A true soldier at heart, his contributions to the Sri Lanka Army continue to shape the future of the Sinha regiment, inspiring generations of officers to uphold the values he so graciously embodied.

Maj. Gen. Nammuni's leadership was characterised by his ability to see beyond the ordinary and implement solutions that others couldn't. His leadership in addressing the water scarcity at Ambepussa camp by establishing the "Bubula" water project is one such example. Despite challenges, his initiative to tap into a natural spring and lay a pipeline across the fields was a hallmark of his resourcefulness and ingenuity. His ability to galvanise people, win villagers' trust, and bring about sustainable change demonstrates the depth of his leadership far beyond the battlefield.

Equally striking was his dedication to honouring the fallen heroes of the Sinha Regiment. The monument he designed stands as a tribute not only to their sacrifice but to Maj. Gen. Nammuni's dedication to their memory. His approach – selecting a few soldiers, capturing images of them in action, and translating these into a powerful sculpture –



Winners of Hermann Loos trophy 1960, Cdt. Cpl. Jaliya Nammuni (seated 3rd from R)



Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni with his officers of Galent Sinha Regiment; L to R, Maj. Gen. Kumudu Perera, Maj. Gen. Dushantha Rajaguru, Maj. Gen. Jayantha Senevirathne, Maj. Gen. Lakshmi Waduge, Maj. Gen. Manoj Mudannayake &amp; Maj. Gen. Rohitha Dharmasiri.

reveals his meticulous attention to detail and his ability to translate vision into reality.

Though he was a man of great ideas, Maj. Gen. Nammuni believed in empowering others. He frequently entrusts young officers with significant responsibilities, allowing them the freedom to innovate and lead. His mentorship was subtle yet profound, building confidence in junior officers and encouraging them to think creatively. This unique leadership style, grounded in trust, remains one of his most enduring legacies within the Army.

Born on September 6, 1943, Maj. Gen. Nammuni's early life was a testament to the leadership qualities that would later define his military career. Educated at Maliyadeva College and later at Nalanda and Ananda Colleges, he excelled in cadetting, becoming the Sergeant of both junior and senior platoons. His natural leadership shone as he led his team to victory in the prestigious Hermann Loos Trophy competition in 1960 and 1961. A multifaceted talent, he represented his school in boxing, badminton, and soccer, showcasing his competitive spirit

and determination.

Upon joining the Sri Lanka Army as an officer cadet, Maj. Gen. Nammuni underwent training in Pakistan before being commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Sinha Regiment. His service was marked by many accomplishments, leaving an indelible mark on the regiment's proud history. In 1988, he further cemented his legacy by founding the Vijayabahu Infantry Regiment, building it from the ground up into a formidable unit of the Sri Lanka Army. His vision for this regiment was celebrated in 2023 when the regimental grounds were named the "Gen. Jaliya Nammuni Pavilion," honouring his contributions with the grandeur they deserved.

Beyond his military achievements, Maj. Gen. Nammuni's character – defined by his integrity, fairness, and fatherly approach – earned him the respect of his peers and subordinates alike.

Throughout a remarkable 35-year military career, he was the Commander Jaffna during the Jaffna Fort siege, operation "Thirvida Baya" to break the

siege and evacuate, and "Operation Eagle" by Sri Lanka Air Force to supply essential medicine and casualty evacuation 6th Sinha Regiment men. He commanded troops (as CO 1SLSR with Commandos) launched from ElephantPass during Op Liberation (Wadamarachchi). Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni held numerous prestigious positions in the Sri Lanka Army, with the pinnacle being his role as Adjutant General. Renowned for his steadfast leadership and strategic brilliance, his contributions have left an indelible mark on the institution he faithfully served.

In recognition of his exceptional service to the nation, Maj. Gen. Nammuni was decorated with numerous honours, including the *Ranuras Padakkama*, *Vishishta Seva Padakkama*, and *Uththama Seva Padakkama*, among many others. These accolades stand as a testament to his unwavering dedication, valour, and commitment to the Army and the country. GEN Nammuni is a remarkable Officer & a Gentleman in its true sense. He was someone who could be approached, a mentor, a father to young officers, steadfast visionary administrator.

Upon his retirement as Deputy Chief of Staff on the 5th of September, 1998, Maj. Gen. Nammuni continued to serve our nation, voluntarily taking on the role of Chairman of the National Social Services Board. His post-retirement service reflects his lifelong dedication to the welfare of his fellow citizens, further cementing his legacy as a leader who always put others before himself.



Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni

On the personal front, Maj. Gen. Nammuni married Madam Kamala Weerawardane on 19 June 1970. Together, they were blessed with three sons and a daughter, creating a loving and supportive family, that remains his anchor. Today, he enjoys a peaceful retirement surrounded by his cherished family, at Thalangama, Battaramulla continuing to embody the values of humility, integrity, and service that have defined his life. He is a wonderful father to his children and a loving husband.

As the oldest living Anandian General, Maj. Gen. Nammuni stands as a towering figure in Sri Lanka's military history. His life and service remain a powerful testament to visionary leadership, selflessness, and an unwavering commitment to both his soldiers and the broader community. His enduring legacy continues to inspire generations of officers, who strive to live by the same principles he so nobly exemplified.

His mature judgment, combined with a gentle demeanour, made him a revered figure, not only in the Army but also among the communities he touched.

Maj. Gen. Jaliya Nammuni's life is a legacy of courage, integrity, and selfless service. His impact will resonate for generations, as his spirit continues to guide and inspire the officers who walk in his footsteps. Long live the memory of General Nammuni – a soldier, a leader, and a true patriot whose values will forever endure.

Thank you for your service!

## In the certificate course in women's studies at the University of Jaffna A COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY OF ACADEMIA AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

BY DR (MRS) DILOGINI SANGARATHAS

In a milestone collaboration aimed at promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), the Centre for Gender Equity and Equality (CGEE) at the University of Jaffna (UoJ) and the Staff Development Centre (SDC), UoJ, joined forces with the Women's Education and Research Centre (WERCO) in Colombo. This collaborative journey, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 16 May 2023, marked the beginning of a significant academic and social initiative – the "Certificate Course in Women's Studies," conducted in Tamil.

The course for the first batch officially commenced on 5 August 2023 at the Physics Auditorium of UoJ, with sessions held every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the SDC's Mini Conference Hall. Designed to address critical issues surrounding gender, feminist theory, and social inclusion, this programme was a pioneering initiative tailored specifically for Tamil-speaking participants. Under the coordination of Dr (Mrs) Dilogini Sangarathas, a Senior Lecturer at UoJ, the certificate programme attracted twenty-two community development workers and students interested in women's empowerment and gender equity.

### A Journey of Academic Enrichment and Social Inclusion

The Certificate Course in Women's Studies at UoJ is much more than an academic pursuit; it is a transformative experience that fosters critical thinking, leadership, and community engagement among women. The curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender issues, starting with an "Introduction to Gender Studies". This foundational module explores how gender is socially constructed and the profound effects of these constructions on society. As the course progressed, participants delved into more complex topics such as "Feminist Theories", introducing students to key feminist movements, from historical perspectives to contemporary struggles. This module encouraged critical discussions on the intersections of gender, race, and class, equipping students with the theoretical frameworks necessary for gender advocacy.



Further sessions on "Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming" highlighted how policy-making can integrate gender considerations to achieve equality. Other topics included "Identity, Power, and Violence Against Women," fostering deep reflections on societal challenges and the urgent need to address gender-based violence. In exploring "Women and the Economy," participants gained insights into the economic dimensions of gender, learning about the barriers women face in accessing resources and the policies that can be implemented to promote women's economic empowerment. These discussions equipped students with both the knowledge and practical tools necessary to advocate for gender-sensitive economic policies.

Moreover, the Women's Studies certificate course covered key topics such as women and technology, and women and globalisation, exploring how technological advancements and globalisation impact women's lives and opportunities. The cyberspace SGBV section focused on sexual and gender-based violence in online spaces, highlighting its prevalence and strategies

for combating it. Additionally, the research methodology in women's studies module provided tools and approaches for conducting gender-sensitive research, equipping students with critical skills for academic and practical investigations in the field.

Each session was enriched by presentations, assignments, and extended essays, allowing participants to engage deeply with the material. The course culminated in students presenting their research on various gender-related topics, ranging from women's challenges in public transport to women's roles in entrepreneurship and education. These presentations reflected the mission of the programme to empower individuals with the knowledge necessary to advocate for gender equality in their communities.

### Key Highlights and Outcomes of the Field Visit

A field visit was held on 13 January 2024 in Kandalawila, Kilinochchi as part of this certificate course programme. This event brought together a diverse group including CGEE directors and members, programme students, and local women

entrepreneurs. Activities ranged from cultural performances to insightful speeches, fostering dialogue on gender issues and empowerment. Participants shared experiences through poetry, music, and film, reflecting a commitment to fostering inclusive communities and advancing gender equality. The event concluded with gratitude to all contributors, underscoring its role in inspiring ongoing efforts for social change and empowerment.

### Completion of the First Batch

The first batch of students successfully completed the Certificate Course in Women's Studies on 31 January 2024. A celebratory Certificate Awarding Ceremony was held at the Hoover Auditorium, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna. This significant milestone honoured the achievements of the twenty-two students who had completed the programme. The event underscored the importance of academic enrichment and social inclusion in advancing gender equality. Special guest Mrs J. Shironi Leonard, Secretary of Shanthiham - Association for Health and Counselling, delivered a powerful speech highlighting the critical role of women's education in achieving broader social justice. She emphasised how education empowers women to challenge societal norms, recognise their rights, and take active roles in their communities as agents of change.

In addition to the certificate awarding, the event also recognised the contributions of ten government and non-government organisations that had supported a drawing competition themed 'Gendered Impact of the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka' organised by CGEE in 2023. This competition, aimed at fostering creative expression around the theme of gender equality, was an essential part of the overall mission to promote advocacy through art and creativity. Each of the ten organisations was presented with framed drawings as a token of appreciation for their efforts. They acknowledged the tireless efforts of all those involved, from the students to the organisers, and reaffirmed their commitment to continuing the mission of gender equality through education.

### Looking Forward

With the success of the first batch firmly established, the University of Jaffna

is now preparing to welcome its second cohort of students for the Certificate Course in Women's Studies, set to commence on 11 October 2024. Building on the achievements of the first batch, the upcoming course promises to continue fostering a deep understanding of gender issues while empowering a new group of students to become advocates for gender equity and social inclusion. The second batch will follow a similar structure to the first, with classes held every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the SDC's Mini Conference Hall. The curriculum will once again explore critical topics such as gender studies, feminist theories, gender mainstreaming, and women's roles in society, with a special focus on practical applications and advocacy. Anticipation for the second batch is high, with growing interest from students across the Northern Province. The programme's success has attracted attention from various sectors, including local NGOs, women's rights organisations, and policymakers, all of whom are eager to see the next generation of women's studies students contribute to societal progress.

### Conclusion

The Certificate Course in Women's Studies at the University of Jaffna is a pioneering programme that bridges the gap between academia and social inclusion. It not only educates but also empowers participants to become catalysts for gender equality. As the first batch of students celebrates their achievements and the second batch prepares to embark on this transformative journey, the course continues to stand as a testament to the power of education in driving societal change. The collaborative efforts of the University of Jaffna, the Centre for Gender Equity and Equality, and the Women's Education and Research Centre have created a platform where women can learn, grow, and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable future. The continuation of this programme is a beacon of hope for gender equality in Sri Lanka, and its success will undoubtedly inspire similar initiatives across the country.

**The writer is Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing, UoJ, Chairperson, Education and Research Committee, CGEE, UoJ**

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## Tackling Torrents of Trouble

It begins as it always does – dark clouds gathering ominously overhead, casting long shadows across the land. A steady drizzle transforms into a torrential downpour within minutes, and in its wake, roads disappear under torrents of water. Rivers swell to monstrous proportions, devouring the banks, surging violently through villages, and flooding the streets of towns and cities alike. This is a story far too familiar to the people of Sri Lanka, where the rain seems to carry with it not just water, but the seeds of destruction. Homes are submerged, belongings washed away, livelihoods lost in mere hours. It is as if the heavens have turned vengeful, punishing the nation for its missteps – its neglect of proper planning, and its ignorance of the long-term effects of environmental exploitation.

But, the rain cannot be blamed alone. The true culprits lurk beneath the surface. The drainage systems, designed decades ago for smaller cities, now choke on plastic and polythene waste. The natural marshlands, once barriers against such flooding, have been paved over, and converted into sprawling housing estates. Land once reserved for agriculture is now swallowed by ill-conceived developments that pay no heed to the warnings of environmental experts. And so, with each monsoon, Sri Lanka finds itself caught in this grim cycle – one where nature and negligence collide to create chaos.

The recent downpours in October 2024 have been no exception, with over 61 Divisional Secretariats across the island submerged under floodwaters. Families have been displaced, roads cut off, and daily life brought to a halt as torrents of water inundated both urban and rural areas.

In Colombo, the irony is especially striking. The city, which has seen significant development over the past decade, now finds its newest constructions struggling to withstand the deluge. Floodwaters encroach on buildings that were intended to symbolise progress and economic growth. Many of these developments have been built on what were once natural floodplains, areas designed by nature to absorb excess water. The loss of these natural buffers has worsened the effects of flooding, particularly in a city already burdened by outdated drainage systems.

This issue is not confined to the capital. Throughout the country, poor urban planning has led to severe drainage problems. Systems designed decades ago for much smaller populations are now overwhelmed by urban sprawl and the increased use of impermeable surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. Without adequate drainage, even relatively modest rainfall can cause flash floods, turning roads into rivers and damaging homes and businesses. These problems are compounded by the widespread pollution of drainage systems with plastic and other non-biodegradable waste. As drains and canals become clogged, floodwaters rise faster and higher.

The floodwaters rise, and with them, the voices of the people, asking the same questions they have asked for years: when will it end? When will the rains stop being synonymous with disaster?

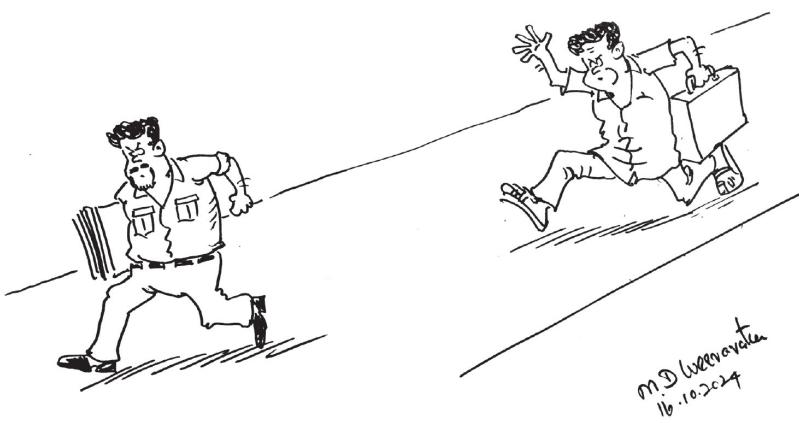
Despite the clear evidence of the issues, there has been little in the way of long-term, comprehensive solutions from authorities. Each year, after the floods subside, the Government steps in with emergency relief, providing temporary shelter and resources for displaced families. However, these short-term fixes do nothing to address the root causes of the flooding problem. Without significant investment in infrastructure, proper urban planning, and stricter environmental regulations, Sri Lanka will continue to face the same cycle of destruction year-after-year.

Hence, Sri Lanka's drainage systems urgently require expansion and modernisation to handle the increasing water volume from intensified monsoons, particularly in cities like Colombo, Gampaha, and Kandy. Without significant investment and political will, the economic and human toll of flooding will continue to rise. At the same time, stricter land use regulations must protect natural flood barriers like wetlands, with rigorous Environmental Impact Assessments for new developments. Additionally, addressing plastic waste is crucial for flood prevention, necessitating stronger enforcement of regulations and public education on its impact, alongside community-based waste management initiatives.

The time for temporary solutions has passed. Sri Lanka's flooding problem is not going away, and if anything, it is likely to worsen as climate change intensifies. The government, local authorities, and the private sector must work together to implement long-term strategies that address the underlying causes of these annual disasters. This includes modernising infrastructure, enforcing environmental regulations, and tackling plastic pollution. Without immediate and decisive action, Sri Lanka will continue to face the same devastating consequences every time the rains begin.

## Will join the President to build the country

- Sajith



# SCO'S CRITICAL ROLE IN COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION

*Terrorism's reach extends far beyond immediate violence, eroding the social, political and economic foundations of a country*

BY DR. IMRAN KHALID

"Regional cooperation on counter-terrorism and counterviolence is very important," said Pakistan's Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, while highlighting the pressing need for enhanced regional cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Islamabad, scheduled for 15-16 October. The Summit's anticipation, however, has been overshadowed by a troubling surge in militant violence this month. Just days before the Summit, a brutal attack in Balochistan claimed the lives of 20 miners and left seven others injured. Armed militants stormed a coal mine in the province's Dukki District, gathering workers before mercilessly opening fire. No group has claimed responsibility, but Balochistan, long a hub for insurgent movements like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), remains rife with unrest. Adding to the security concerns, just three days before this incident, a suicide bombing at the Karachi Airport killed two Chinese Engineers. The BLA took responsibility for that attack as well, raising further alarm about the group's growing momentum. Pakistan has pointed fingers at neighbouring Afghanistan, accusing it of sheltering these militant factions, a claim the Taliban administration denies.

With two major terror attacks in less than a week, the SCO Summit, meant to foster regional cooperation on counter-terrorism as the key agenda, faced the stark reality of the region's deep-seated security challenges. The recent terrorist attack targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan marks the second such incident in seven months, raising renewed concerns over the country's security situation. On 26 March, five Chinese citizens and their Pakistani driver were killed in a suicide bombing at the Dasu Hydropower Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Despite Pakistani authorities arresting 11 Islamist militants linked to the March attack, the latest incident suggests a

the exercise took place in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and focused on live drills and specialised operations, including the eradication of terrorist groups. For the first time, all SCO member States were united in a joint counter-terrorism live drill, marking a notable shift from previous bilateral or multilateral exercises that lacked full participation.

As terrorist threats increasingly spill across borders and reverberate globally, the need for deeper cooperation among SCO members has become paramount. These drills are aimed not only at boosting individual nations' anti-terrorism capabilities but also at fostering interoperability among the participants – an essential element in a world where terrorism knows no boundaries. At the heart of the SCO's security efforts is the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which has been instrumental in coordinating defence and security initiatives across the member States. The Organisation itself has grown into one of the largest trans-regional entities, focusing heavily on security-related cooperation. This joint exercise underscored the SCO's long-standing history of collaboration on counter-terrorism, but with all members engaged, the Organisation demonstrated its evolving commitment to facing the rising tide of global terrorism with collective force. As threats evolve, so must the strategies – and the 'Interaction-2024' drill represented a crucial step towards the joint counter-terrorism drive of the SCO.

To address the challenges, the SCO must prioritise the root causes of terrorism: poverty, lack of education, ideological extremism and external interference. Policies targeting these issues should form the backbone of the Summit's agenda, reinforcing the funding goals of the SCO. Established in 2001 by China, Russia and Central Asian nations, the SCO focuses on countering terrorism, fundamentalism and separatism, with its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) playing a crucial role in coordinating counterterrorism efforts and sharing intelligence among member States. Pakistan, situated at the heart of strategic initiatives like China's Belt and Road, holds

particular significance in the fight against terrorism. The 24<sup>th</sup> SCO Meeting in Astana had already highlighted the urgency of enhancing security amid rising global tensions. As the SCO convenes in Islamabad, counter-terrorism will undoubtedly remain at the forefront, a necessary focus for ensuring stability in a world increasingly marked by conflict and chaos. The task now is turning these discussions into actionable, coordinated efforts that reshape the region's security landscape.

The SCO has, over its 23-year existence, grown into a sprawling entity, uniting 26 nations and standing as the largest regional cooperation group by population and territorial reach. Yet, despite this impressive footprint, its mechanisms, still remain rather inadequate to confront the evolving threats of cross-border terrorism. Quick and efficient intelligence sharing is critical, but it's not happening with the speed required. Military coordination across borders remains haphazard at best, a flaw that could be remedied through joint training exercises. And then there is the issue of resources. China and Russia, two dominant SCO members, possess cutting-edge technology, but others lag behind.

Without narrowing this technological divide, the Organisation's ambitious policies on counter-terrorism risk becoming little more than theoretical musings. Practical, coordinated actions will remain elusive if some nations are sprinting ahead while others crawl. As the world confronts growing instability, the 'Shanghai Spirit' and the very essence of the SCO seem more relevant than ever. But relevance must translate into action. The Islamabad gathering will focus on one of the most pressing issues of our time: combating cross-border terrorism. Isolating nations that harbour terrorists is vital, as is bolstering the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS). The SCO's influence may be growing, but its vitality hinges on overcoming internal divides and ensuring every member can equally contribute to, and benefit from, a unified fight against terrorism. The stakes are high – and the window for decisive action is narrowing.

CEYLON TODAY

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**EXCHANGE RATES**

15.10.2024

Currency	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
Australian Dollar	192.5258	202.2283
Canadian Dollar	207.8521	217.2571
Chinese Yuan (Renminbi)	39.9242	42.5881
Euro	313.4788	326.6996
Japanese Yen	1.9239	2.0035
Singapore Dollar	218.9383	229.4443
Sterling Pound	375.3193	389.9771
Swiss Franc	332.9268	349.6265
US Dollar	288.5097	297.4942

Country	Currency	Indicative Rate
Bahrain	Bahrain Dinar	776.7852
Kuwait	Kuwait Dinar	955.1411
Oman	Oman Rial	760.7632
Qatar	Qatar Riyal	80.3225
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabian Riyal	77.9961
UAE	UAE Dirham	79.7320

Source: CBSL



Cabinet Spokesman Minister Vijitha Herath

## Sri Lanka Plans IMF Talks for Tax Relief, Concessions

– Cabinet Spokesman

Government to Decide on Adani Wind Power Project After Court Verdict

Sri Lanka Monitors Exchange Rate Closely

BY ISHARA GAMAGE

The Sri Lankan government is planning to finalise the debt restructuring process during the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Spring Meetings in the coming week, Cabinet Spokesman Minister Vijitha Herath said.

Addressing the weekly Cabinet press briefing yesterday (15), he stated that the government has no intention of deviating from the existing IMF programme at this moment, but they plan to discuss with the IMF the possibility of offering more concessions and tax relief to citizens.

“As a government, we have no intention to deviate from the existing IMF programme. However, we have to provide more relief and tax concessions to the people, as mentioned in our election manifesto. Therefore, we intend to discuss this matter with the IMF in the near future, need to take a collective decision to amend the agreed conditions of the current IMF-EFF agreement,” he said.

A date for the third review of the IMF-backed programme will be decided after Sri Lanka’s general election in November 2024. However, sources have indicated that the IMF has already begun virtual meetings with local authorities and plans to visit Sri Lanka next month to officially commence the third review.

Government sources further told *Finance Today* that they expect to obtain the IMF Executive Board’s approval for the third review during its January meeting, with disbursement anticipated in February.

The Sri Lankan team travelling to Washington will be led by Central Bank Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe, Treasury Secretary Mahinda Siriwardana, and Presidential Adviser Duminda Hulangamuwa. Their main objective is to work on stabilising and growing Sri Lanka’s economy with the assistance of global financial cooperation.

It has been learned that Hulangamuwa plans to attend the meetings using his own funds, even though he is representing the nation.

The 2024 Annual Meetings of the IMF and World Bank will be held from October 21 to 26, with key sessions and events taking place between October 22 and 25. Important events include the plenary session and meetings of the Development Committee and the International Monetary and Financial Committee.

The Ministry of Finance recently announced that its discussions with the IMF and the Official Credit Committee were successful, indicating that policy changes are unlikely to affect the IMF programme or the debt agreement from the previous government.

The Cabinet spokesman also mentioned that the government-appointed committee is currently overseeing the rising threats to Sri Lanka’s exchange rate due to the Middle East crisis and the potential lifting of vehicle import restrictions.

“We are closely monitoring the exchange rate scenario, and we have decided to ease vehicle import procedures without significantly impacting the reserves,” he said.

Regarding to controversies surrounding the Adani wind power project, the Cabinet spokesman said that the government plans to make a final decision on the matter after considering all court proceedings and verdicts.

# FINANCE TODAY

## SRI LANKA ON TARGET TO MEET 2024 BUDGET DEFICIT

BY PANEETHA AMERESEKERE

In a positive development, Sri Lanka has met 31.95 per cent (Rs 911 billion) of the 2024 budget deficit target in the first eight months of the year, keeping on track to meet the approved deficit target for the year, the Finance Ministry said in a report released on Monday (14).

The report, titled Pre-Election Budgetary Report 2024, further stated that for the fiscal year (which in this context refers to the first 12 months of a year) 2024, a budget deficit of Rs 2,851 billion was anticipated, including a Rs 450 billion allocation for bank recapitalisation.

However, in the first eight months of the year, a budget deficit of Rs 911 billion was recorded, which marks a significant reduction from the deficit of Rs 1,470.7 billion recorded in the same period of 2023. Consequently, Sri Lanka's overall budget deficit declined by 38.1 per cent, or Rs 559.7 billion, to Rs 911.0 billion in the first eight months of 2024, down from Rs 1,470.7 billion during the same period of 2023, the report noted.

The primary balance also notably improved to Rs 648.8 billion in the first eight months of 2024, up from Rs 55 billion recorded in the same period of 2023. In the first six months of 2024, a primary balance of 3.7 per cent of GDP was recorded, reflecting that the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is well-positioned to achieve the primary balance target of 1.0 per cent, as prescribed under the second review of the IMF-EFF programme, the Finance Ministry said.

To finance the estimated 2024 budget deficit, the government expected to borrow Rs 2,851 billion on a net basis, with Rs 726 billion in foreign borrowings and Rs 2,125 billion borrowed from domestic sources on a net basis.

Meanwhile, GoSL, in the first eight months of 2024, has borrowed a total of Rs 1,881 billion, in face value terms, via Treasury Bills, Treasury Bonds, and foreign loans under the gross borrowing limit of Rs 7,350 billion approved for the year, the Ministry added.

Debt service payments, both domestic and foreign, in the reviewed eight-month period amounted to Rs 2,321 billion, of which, Rs 762 billion was for amortisation payments, and the balance Rs 1,559 billion was for interest payments.

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**Sampath Bank Strengthens Global Ties with USD 750 Million Investment in SBI Syndicated Loan**

Sampath Bank PLC in a statement stated that they have participation in a significant financial milestone, contributing to the USD 750 million senior unsecured syndicated term loan facility for the State Bank of India (SBI), facilitated by Mashreq, one of the leading financial institutions in the MENA region.

“This collaboration highlights Sampath Bank’s commitment to supporting strategic international financing initiatives, it stated.

The facility, initially launched at USD 350 million in May 2024, attracted strong global interest, leading to its upsize to USD 750 million.

These funds will support the general corporate needs of State Bank of India (SBI), the nation’s largest financial institution, bolstering its capacity to drive economic growth and stability.

Speaking on the decision to participate, Amal Kirihene, Senior DGM – Corporate Banking from Sampath Bank PLC stated, “Our involvement in this syndicated loan aligns



Representatives from Unilever, USAID, USAID Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity, Codegen/Vega Innovations, and the Ministry of Environment

**Unilever SL partners with USAID and Vega Innovations To scale-up Refillable Systems**

Unilever Sri Lanka, in partnership with Vega Innovations, and the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) is scaling up the use of refillable stations. These stations, part of Vega Innovations’ Ufill initiative, offer consumers cost-effective ways to refill Unilever products such as laundry liquids and shampoos, while reducing reliance on single-use plastic packaging.

By 2027, the Ufill initiative is expected to prevent over 128 metric tons of plastic waste from entering Sri Lankan landfills. Consumers will also benefit from 20-30% lower cost by refilling instead of purchasing new packaging. USAID’s Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity will support these efforts through strategic and technical assistance. The Memorandum of Understanding formalising the partnership was signed at Vega Innovations’ headquarters – a significant milestone in efforts to reduce plastic waste across Sri Lanka. This builds on Unilever’s and Vega Innovations’ existing network of refill stations in locations such as the Colombo Fort Railway Station, Seva Vanitha Budget Centre and apartment complexes, with plans to scale up across the country.

This localised initiative also aligns with Unilever’s broader efforts through the CIRCLE Alliance – Catalysing Inclusive, Resilient, and Circular Local Economies – a global public-private collaboration launched earlier this year by Unilever, USAID, and EY to address plastic waste and drive the development of circular economies.





# LOOK

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# A FRESH TAKE ON TAMIL HORROR GENRE

By KHALIDHA NAUSHAD

If you've ever watched an Indian Tamil horror film, you might find yourself bracing for the typical—forced romance, and a sprinkle of cringe-worthy humour. So, when I came across *Pechi*, I was both sceptical and intrigued. However, the positive buzz surrounding the film piqued my interest.

Directed by Ramachandran, *Pechi* marks a refreshing departure from the genre's usual pitfalls, offering a visually stunning experience filled with genuine suspense. The film immerses viewers in a chilling tale of black magic and supernatural dread. The story unfolds in a dense forest, where a group of friends becomes entangled in the dark legacy of *Pechi*, a woman known for her sinister rituals. This haunting narrative explores themes of fear, sacrifice, and the battle against an immortal evil. The film features an impressive cast, including Bala Saravanan as Maari, Gayathrie as Meena, and Dev Rammiah as Charan. Other

## Review: *Pechi*

notable performances come from Preethi Nedumaran as Charu and Jana as Sethu.

From the moment *Pechi* begins, it grips you with its unsettling tension. The stunning visuals by director Parthiban showcase the forest's beauty and its darker side, blending peaceful scenery with the lurking menace of *Pechi*.

As the story unfolds, the group stumbles upon a voodoo doll, awakening the spirit of *Pechi*, which leads to a series of unnerving encounters. The plot, while rooted in horror tropes, offers several unexpected twists that elevate it beyond the typical scare-fest.

The idea of *Pechi* as both a victim and a villain adds layers to her character, allowing for moments of sympathy amid the terror. The performances are commendable, particularly that of Gayathrie, whose portrayal of Meena is both captivating and chilling.

The editing is a highlight too, smoothly moving from one scene

to the next without overwhelming the viewer, which is a tricky balance in horror films. The music fits perfectly with the film's eerie atmosphere, deepening the sense of dread that hangs over the story.

However, the film could have benefited from more depth in its backstory. *Pechi*'s origins and motivations are not entirely clear, which might leave some viewers wanting more. A tighter narrative focusing on these elements could have elevated the emotional stakes and made the horror more impactful.

*Pechi* emerges as a refreshing addition to Tamil horror, not quite reaching the heights of films like *Tumbbad* but certainly a step above many of its contemporaries. It manages to avoid the pitfalls of forced music and romance, delivering a horror experience that is both entertaining and engaging. If you're looking for a film that will keep you guessing and on the edge of your seat, *Pechi* is worth the watch. It may just change your perception of Tamil horror—at least for now.

## Sanam Teri Kasam 2: A sequel that might ruin a perfect love story

By KHALIDHA NAUSHAD

Starting from *Chandramukhi 2* and *Dhadak 2*, Bollywood is starting to ruin every successful film from the past in the name of a sequel, and now *Sanam Teri Kasam* is set to follow suit. The original film, released in 2016, captured hearts with its poignant love story and unexpected twists, leaving audiences emotionally drained yet satisfied. However, the announcement of a sequel raises a pressing question—is this really necessary?

The film, starring Harsvardhan Rane (Inder), is making a return after several years since the release of its predecessor. His chemistry with co-star Mawra Hocane (Sarawati) in the original film left a lasting impact on viewers, and many are excited to see his return. However, while Rane's involvement has been confirmed, the search for a director is still ongoing. The film's production team is keen on finding a director who can bring the vision of the sequel to life while staying true to the essence of the original film.

Inder and Sarawati were two characters who faced insurmountable odds in their quest for love and their love story was a beautifully crafted narrative that resonated deeply, evoking genuine emotions and making us feel every triumph and tragedy. It was a cinematic gem that many hold dear, cherished for its depth and relatability.

Now, with *Sanam Teri Kasam 2* looming on the horizon, one can't help but wonder what the creators are hoping to achieve. Sequels often have a tendency to dilute the magic of the original. While the first film left us with a bittersweet conclusion that lingered long after the credits



rolled, a sequel threatens to strip that away, replacing it with unnecessary complications and plot twists that might feel forced or contrived. To add to it, the trailer hasn't generated much excitement either; it feels lackluster and doesn't quite capture the magic of the first film.

What could possibly follow such a compelling narrative? Will we witness the resurrection of characters or the introduction of new ones who somehow complicate the already intricate storyline? Perhaps Inder will develop an inexplicable talent for dance battles or engage in a rivalry that feels completely out of place. The possibilities are endless, and therein lies the danger.

Furthermore, the emotional weight that the original film carried is at risk of being overshadowed by the demands of a sequel. The magic of *Sanam Teri Kasam* was in its simplicity and sincerity. It captured the essence of love and sacrifice without the trappings of excessive melodrama. A sequel could easily fall into the trap of over-the-top storytelling, robbing the narrative of its authenticity.

As fans of the original, many of

us cherish the emotional depth and character arcs that *Sanam Teri Kasam* provided. The movie's music, soulful melodies composed by Himesh Reshammiya, added an extra layer of emotion, becoming anthems for those in love or heartache. A sequel may attempt to recreate that magic, but the risk of disappointment looms large.

In an industry where sequels often seek to capitalise on the success of their predecessors, it becomes increasingly vital to consider whether a story truly warrants a follow-up. Some narratives are best left untouched, their endings preserved like cherished memories. The original *Sanam Teri Kasam* shows us the power of love and sacrifice, and its sequel may threaten to unravel that beautifully woven tale.

As we prepare for *Sanam Teri Kasam 2*, we can only hope that the creators approach it with the same sensitivity and depth that made the first film a classic. However, the scepticism remains. Will this sequel enrich the original narrative, or will it merely serve as a reminder that sometimes, it's better to leave well enough alone?

## This week in cinema

### Christopher Nolan sets new movie at universal for 2026

Christopher Nolan is teaming up with Universal again for his next movie, set to release on July 17, 2026. Following the success of *Oppenheimer*, Nolan is bringing back Matt Damon, his star from *Oppenheimer* and *Interstellar*, to lead the new project. While the plot remains under wraps, Nolan will write and produce the film with his long-time partner Emma Thomas. Filming is expected to start in early 2025.

### The Wild Robot sequel confirmed at DreamWorks

DreamWorks' latest animated film, *The Wild Robot*, has yet to hit British cinemas, but it's already a critical and commercial success in the US, grossing over USD 100 million.

Writer-director Chris Sanders' adaptation of Peter Brown's book has been so well-received that a sequel is already in the works. At the Contenders event in London, Sanders confirmed plans for a follow-up, stating, "100 per cent yes, there are absolutely plans for a second one."

Details about the sequel's

release date, returning voice cast, or plot are yet to be announced.

### Anthony Hopkins to star in Maserati: The Brothers

Anthony Hopkins is attached to star in *Maserati: The Brothers*, an English-language biopic directed by Bobby Moreco about the family behind the high-performance automobiles that, along with Ferrari and Lamborghini, Italy is known for.

The legendary Oscar-winning actor will play an Italian financier who bankrolls the Maserati brothers. The Maserati movie is produced by Italy's Andrea Iervolino via his new film and TV outfit called The Andrea Iervolino Company.

### Xavier Dolan announces next film

Xavier Dolan is x-ing out his retirement plans.

After announcing he was stepping away from filmmaking in 2023, the 2024 Cannes Un Certain Regard jury president confirmed he has a new film in the works. Dolan made the announcement during a masterclass at the Lumière Film Festival while launching his book, *A Friendship Through Film*. The event marked the 10th anniversary of his feature Mommy.

### Kyle Chandler cast as Hal Jordan in Lanterns

In a major casting announcement for the DC Universe Emmy Award-winning actor Kyle Chandler has been confirmed to star as Hal Jordan in the upcoming HBO series *Lanterns*, based on the Green Lantern comics.



BY DR. SARATH MATARAARACHCHI

In previous columns, I have explored the multifaceted realm of urban planning, urban development, and sustainability—examining its essential elements, significance, and the vital role it plays in the comprehensive growth of a nation. Throughout these discussions, my goal has been to offer insights and a distilled understanding of this intricate topic. However, I must recognise that the questions posed and the answers provided have merely scratched the surface of this issue's complexities, which impact countless stakeholders, individuals, and communities, leaving much still to be explored.

Sri Lanka currently lacks a cohesive urban development vision, which represents the views, expectations, and aspirations of the people who are associated with the urban domain. Planners should work with communities across various divisions that exist in society. Such planning moves beyond superficial, short-term, and issue-specific consultations. Instead, it focuses on cultivating relationships across communities to build networks that foster a continuous transformation. This approach encourages self-driven change and empowers individuals to take the initiative to be part of city life and intuitively move towards improvement and progress without needing external prompting.

To address urban challenges effectively, the vision for urban development should be rooted in the perspectives and experiences of those who live and work within these environments—the very citizens who navigate the streets daily and rely on urban spaces for their living, engage in livelihoods, and visit for many purposes. Planners, policymakers, and community leaders must engage in open dialogues with them to understand their needs, aspirations, and challenges. By doing so, a shared vision can be established—one that not only reflects the collective desires of the community but also actively empowers its members to take part in the planning process.

#### The human element in urban planning

This week's column highlights the crucial importance of citizen engagement in urban planning. It goes beyond mere procedure; a partnership that requires the active involvement of those for whom the plans are intended. Unfortunately, the voices of individuals most affected by planning decisions are frequently ignored, resulting in feelings of disconnection and disempowerment. Who are these citizens and communities? They come from diverse backgrounds, each bringing unique perspectives, views, and aspirations for the neighbourhoods they inhabit and the city as a whole. Together, they embody various facets of urban life, and their collective vision contributes to making cities vibrant, functional, and distinct from each other.

The role of a town planner extends beyond the initial planning stage; it includes crucial monitoring and evaluation phases that are often overlooked in our country. After collaborating with other professionals and engaging the community to prepare the plan, planners should not simply move on to the next project. Instead, they must remain involved in the implementation phase. When the planners work alongside the community, it is the community who are best positioned to assess the successes and shortcomings of the plans, during implementation and beyond, as they are the actual users and beneficiaries of the outcomes.

Incorporating citizens into the urban planning process is vital, as it allows their perspectives and experiences to inform the development of more relevant and effective solutions. When communities encounter challenges such as inadequate housing, limited access to public transportation, disturbances from stray cats and dogs, or the Heat Island Effect caused by extensive



# TOWN PLANNING FOR THE PEOPLE WITH THE PEOPLE

**Collaborative planning to shape the future of our cities**  
**Empowering people to be contributing partners**



impervious surfaces lacking greenery, the insights gathered from residents become crucial in developing plans that effectively address these issues. Participation should not be limited to superficial feedback sessions; rather, it must involve meaningful collaboration, ensuring that the community is an essential part of the planning process.

Unfortunately, our planning frameworks often lack meaningful opportunities for public engagement. This disconnect between planners and the community leads to impractical solutions and diminishes the sense of ownership and belonging in implementing these plans. It is essential to promote change that ensures people are not merely informed about existing plans, but actively involved in their development. When people feel excluded from the planning process, their connection to it weakens, decreasing their likelihood of supporting or engaging with the outcomes, which ultimately undermines the effectiveness of any plan.

#### The discrepancy between plans and realities

Urban planning encompasses a wide range of social and physical elements within cities. While infrastructure, housing, buildings, and landscaping often come to mind when one thinks of urban planning, it is the intricate details of these components that are closer to the people that require scrutiny. Factors such as waste management, amenities, traffic and pedestrian movement, street furniture, personal safety, public health, and fitness are just the beginning. A complex web of elements influences the day-to-day and long-term well-being of communities in urban areas.

In Colombo, public toilets serve a frequently neglected role in urban life. Although the Government has made numerous investments to establish these facilities throughout the city, their functionality and accessibility often fall short. Residents depend on these public conveniences, yet city authorities display little concern for their upkeep or accessibility. When public toilets are available, they are typically in poor condition and poorly maintained, even with paid attendants on duty.

**The dialogue with the community should commence with a clear understanding of the primary purpose of urban planning: to enhance the liveability of those who inhabit our cities. However, these conversations must be conducted in a language that resonates with the everyday experiences of ordinary people and is accessible to all**

In some instances, public toilets are completely closed, while unauthorised individuals occupy them for illicit activities, effectively denying access to those who genuinely need these facilities. Meanwhile, the authorities seem to turn a blind eye, pretending not to notice the issue. While citizens should feel empowered to raise questions about the condition of these amenities, many remain unaware of their rights to express their concerns.

Pedestrian safety is a critical issue that often goes overlooked in our cities. Ongoing roadworks and large construction projects frequently create hazards that compromise the safety of citizens. This negligence not only violates individuals' rights but also puts them at risk every day.

Despite the struggles and accidents that result from such carelessness, many people remain silent, enduring the consequences imposed by government authorities, private builders, and developers alike.

When pedestrian crossings are available, they often come with unreliable signal lights. In the absence of any traffic lights, pedestrians find themselves at the mercy of drivers—many of whom exhibit rudeness and arrogance, often lacking basic awareness of road safety.

Waste accumulates on roadsites, around railway stations, and along pedestrian pathways, creating undesirable conditions. Perhaps most alarming is the disposal of construction waste, which can pose serious health risks. Contractors may carelessly discard items such as broken asbestos, oblivious to the dangers they present to the public.

All of these issues reflect the need for a more engaged citizenry that understands its role in urban planning. Communities must be informed and empowered to learn about the plans being developed, as their input is essential to shaping a city that truly meets the needs of its residents.

Currently, many urban plans remain gathering dust on shelves, and additional plans are continuously being developed. The visions of clean, well-designed pathways, vibrant streets, landscaped boulevards, attractive homes, and well-placed streetlights exist only on paper. In reality, what we encounter on the streets of Colombo is a stark contrast to these idealised illustrations.

#### Involvement of people enhances urban plans

Public engagement in urban planning has long been a contentious issue, and regrettably, it remains an area where planners have struggled to achieve significant progress in many regions. However, this does not imply that meaningful engagement is unattainable; rather, it necessitates a committed effort from both planners and the community.

It is important to recognise that the primary responsibility for fostering this engagement lies with the planners themselves. They are the experts who understand the intricacies of urban

planning and are expected to possess the skills needed to communicate effectively with people in a way that is approachable and meaningful. Given the complex nature of urban planning—which encompasses a wide array of factors impacting city life—communicating these concepts can be challenging, yet this complexity should not serve as an excuse to neglect community involvement.

To promote meaningful engagement, planners should return to the very roots of their profession. The planning discipline initially emerged in response to the unsanitary and inhumane conditions prevalent in the industrial cities of Europe and America, where urban environments became overcrowded and polluted, and workers often lived in unhealthy conditions. The core motivation behind early urban planning was not solely economic development, but rather a commitment to improving the quality of life for city dwellers.

In today's context, planners must rekindle this foundational ethos. By prioritising community engagement and embracing the voices of the people they serve, urban planners can create more effective, inclusive, and responsive plans that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. Ultimately, the success of urban planning lies in its ability to foster collaboration and dialogue, ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in shaping the cities where they live and work.

#### Communication with people

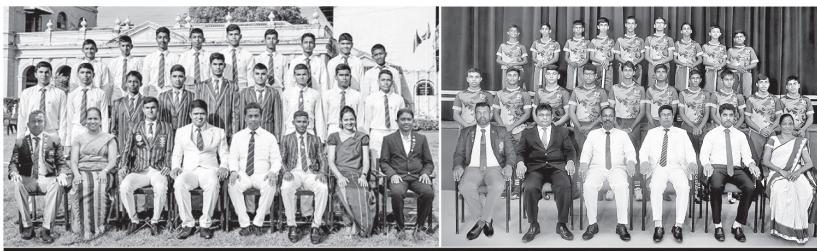
The dialogue with the community should commence with a clear understanding of the primary purpose of urban planning: to enhance the liveability of those who inhabit our cities. However, these conversations must be conducted in a language that resonates with the everyday experiences of ordinary people and is accessible to all. One significant barrier to effective communication in urban planning arises from the reliance on English as the language of instruction in planning education. This practice can create a disconnect between planning students and the communities they are meant to serve, dulling their empathy and diminishing their sensitivity toward the very individuals they aim to help.

To bridge this gap, planning schools must make a concerted effort to immerse students in the communities facing real issues. This exposure is crucial for fostering a genuine understanding of the challenges local populations encounter. Learning theoretical concepts in a classroom setting is no longer sufficient; students must engage directly with the community and confront urban realities first-hand. A hands-on approach allows future planners to appreciate the nuances of local concerns and develop solutions that are both practical and culturally relevant.

Employing an international language enhances access to global knowledge and best practices, but it is equally vital to complement this with experiential learning grounded in local contexts. Interacting with real people in their environments allows students to contextualise their knowledge and develop a greater understanding of the values and priorities of the communities they intend to serve. There is a prevailing perception that academia often lacks practical relevance, operating in an idealistic realm that fails to connect with the realities faced on the ground.

The effectiveness of the dialogue also depends on how planners interact with the people they serve. Unlike other professions, planning influences every aspect of community life. Recognising that the planners should view themselves as equal partners rather than as "Town Planners," removing the possibility of creating an "Us against Them" mentality. There is no better way to foster this partnership than by connecting with the community's culture, living conditions, and language. Such authentic engagement has the potential to create cities that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of their residents, ultimately improving the quality of life and well-being for all communities.





The two teams pose for a photo (Presidents – left and Prince of Wales – right)

5<sup>th</sup> Annual Hockey Big Match

# PRESIDENT'S MAHARAGAMA, PRINCE OF WALES CLASH ON 18 OCTOBER AT MALAY PADANG

BY M.H. YAKEEM

The fifth annual Hockey Big Match between President's College Maharagama and Prince of Wales College Moratuwa will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> at the Malay Padang, Colombo 2.

Prior to the main event at 4.00 p.m. the Under-14 encounter will take place at 2.00 p.m. followed by the Old Boys match at 3.00 p.m.

President's College has been playing hockey for the last 40 years, and this year's Big Match is sponsored by the Old Boys'

Hockey Association. Two of their players have been selected to represent the Sri Lanka Junior Hockey team at the Asia Junior Hockey Cup Championship this year.

The school has earned a reputed name in this sport

mainly due to the support extended by the Old Boys who oversee the development of the sport.

President's Maharagama will be captained by Suchira Sathasringhe, whilst Prince of Wales will be captained by Rasitha Ranketh.



## France edge Belgium in UEFA Nations League match

Randal Kolo Muani scored twice as France beat Belgium in an incident-packed Uefa Nations League match in Brussels.

Youn Tielmanns skied a penalty for the hosts after William Saliba brought down Lois Openda, a decision given by the video assistant referee (VAR).

France then won a penalty of their own when Wout Faes handled the ball on the ground. Kolo Muani sent goalkeeper Koen Casteels the wrong way from the spot for the 35th-minute opener.

Opanda equalised for Belgium in first-half added time with a header from Timothy Castagne's left-wing cross. The goal was initially ruled out for offside but given by the VAR.

France thought they were back ahead through Manu Koné's strike - but

it was disallowed for a handball in the build-up by Kolo Muani.

But Paris St-Germain forward Kolo Muani scored what proved to be the winner in the 62nd minute when he headed in a Lucas Digne cross.

However, Les Bleus played the final 14 minutes with 10 men when captain Aurelien Tchouameni was shown a second yellow card for clipping Tielemans just outside the box.

Belgium pushed for an equaliser but could not find one.

Italy beat Israel 4-1 in the group's other game in Udine, the first match Israel have played outside of Hungary this year.

The Italians top Group A2 on 10 points with France a point behind. Third-placed Belgium, on four points, are likely to face a relegation-promotion play-off.

## FFR expresses 'firm opposition' to 20-minute red card

The French Rugby Federation, National Rugby League and Provale have expressed 'firm opposition' to the proposed 20-minute red card, saying it is an 'unacceptable step backwards' by World Rugby.

In 2024, the Rugby Championship and World Rugby's Under-20 Championship in South Africa trialled the new law for the first time, meaning a team is able to replace a red-carded player after 20 minutes in the sin-bin.

This month World Rugby announced 'successful initial trials' were passed, leading to support for further elite-game trialling. In a joint statement, the three French governing bodies say the 'data collected remains insufficient' to go through with the proposal.

"Statistics provided by the FFR [French Rugby Federation] to World Rugby show that a red card does not systematically mean defeat for the penalised team," the statement said.

"Indeed, the analysis based on 480 Top 14 matches and Tier 1 international matches shows that only 60% of the teams receiving a red card lost at the end of the match."

Last year more than 300 former football, rugby league and rugby union players in the United Kingdom took legal action over brain injuries they claim to have sustained during their playing careers.

The statement adds that the current red card is 'a crucial tool' to deter 'unsportsmanlike behaviour', and

without it the sport faces an 'unacceptable step backwards on the measures put in place over the last few years to reduce head impacts.'

Furthermore, the law would 'encourage more aggressive play', which would negatively impact 'the image of the game.'

The last men's and women's Rugby World Cup finals ended with one team having 14 players on the field for the majority of the game. On the decision to trail the 20-minute red card, World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont said in May that rugby's disciplinary process needed 'streamlining to be simpler for players and fans to understand.'

"This is a trial, and it is important to remember that the ability to replace a red-carded player after 20 minutes is coupled with sanctions that are strong, clear and will not be mitigated down," Beaumont added. The FFR says it will speak out against the law's entry at the meeting of the World Rugby Council on 14 November.

If approved, World Rugby will work with member unions, competition owners and key stakeholders to finalise the timeline and processes for trial adoption, with implementation from 1 January.

"We call on World Rugby to reconsider this experiment, ensuring that any decision is based on concrete and convincing data, which is not the case today," Vice-President of the FFR Jean-Marc Lhermet added.



## Kenya's Chepngetich breaks marathon world record



Kenya's Ruth Chepngetich broke the world record to win the Chicago Marathon on Sunday.

The 30-year-old clocked a time of two hours, nine minutes and 57 seconds to surpass Ethiopian Tigist Assefa's previous record by nearly two minutes.

Chepngetich is the first woman to run a marathon in under two hours and 10 minutes. Assefa set the previous record with victory at the 2023 Berlin Marathon in two hours, 11 minutes and 53 seconds.

"I feel so great, I'm proud of myself. This is my dream that has come true," said Chepngetich, the 2019 world marathon champion.

"I've fought a lot thinking about the world record and I have fulfilled it."

Victory for Chepngetich is her third in Chicago, where she missed out on breaking compatriot Brigid Kosgei's then-world record by 14 seconds in 2022. Four of the five fastest women's marathon times have been run on the flat Chicago course over the last six years.

## NDB-MCA 'C' Division 50-Over League Tournament 2024

# Nawaloka crowned champions

Nawaloka defeated LOLC and emerged as the champions of this highly competitive tournament at the NDB-MCA 'C' Division 50-Over League Tournament 2024 final held on 29 September at the Bloomfield Grounds to claim the coveted NDB Trophy.

The NDB-MCA 'C' Division 50-Over League Tournament is a much-anticipated event in Sri Lanka's Mercantile Cricket calendar, bringing together exceptional talent and fostering camaraderie within the corporate community.

The final saw Nawaloka and LOLC deliver a thrilling match, but it was Nawaloka's outstanding team performance and skill that led them to secure this victory.

Apart from the prestigious NDB Trophy, NDB Bank awarded individual accolades to recognise exceptional performances and dedication that the participating teams and players have displayed over the course of the tournament.

These awards included honours for Thareesa Kahoduwarrachchi – Nawaloka for Best Batter, Asela Sampath – MAS Unichela for Best Bowler, and Thilanka Kakulwala – Nawaloka for both Man of the Match and Man of the Tournament, while LOLC secured the award for the runner-up team.

NDB Bank's sponsorship of the NDB-MCA 'C' Division 50-Over League Tournament reflects its commitment to supporting both professional and community development beyond traditional banking. The bank's involvement in the tournament demonstrates its dedication to fostering

sportsmanship, team spirit, and excellence within the corporate sector.

As a proud partner of the Mercantile Cricket Association (MCA), NDB Bank extends its heartfelt congratulations to Nawaloka and LOLC for their remarkable performances and to all the participating teams who contributed to the excitement and success of the tournament.

This partnership underscores NDB's ongoing commitment to empowering Sri Lanka's corporate athletes and celebrating their achievements.

NDB Bank looks forward to continued support of the tournament in the coming years, promoting the spirit of competition, teamwork, and excellence that resonates both on and off the cricket field.

NDB Bank is the fourth-largest listed commercial bank in Sri Lanka. NDB was named Sri Lanka's Best Bank for Corporates at Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2024 and was awarded Domestic Retail Bank of the Year - Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Domestic Project Finance Bank of the Year by Asian Banking and Finance Magazine (Singapore) Awards 2024. NDB is the parent company of the NDB Group, comprising capital market subsidiary companies, together forming a unique banking and capital market services group. The bank is committed to empowering the nation and its people through meaningful financial and advisory services powered by digital banking solutions.



## 2024 Inter-University Taekwondo Championship

# University of Kelaniya Girls Team Shine

BY JANANI KAUSHIK

The University of Kelaniya Girls Taekwondo team has achieved a remarkable victory, securing the joint championship title with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura at the 2024 Inter-University Taekwondo Championship held recently at the University of Moratuwa. This prestigious event brought together top teams from various universities across the nation, showcasing the exceptional talent and skill of young athletes.

Under the guidance of the Head Coach Ruwan Alahakoon, the team demonstrated an outstanding performance throughout the competition, culminating in securing victory through a combination of technique, teamwork, and determination. Their hard work and commitment to the sport were evident as they faced tough competitors in a series of challenging matches.

As they celebrate this amazing victory, the University of Kelaniya Girls Taekwondo team look forward to future competitions, aiming to build on their success and inspire others within the university community.



# SPORTS TODAY

Inter District Under-15 Limited Overs

## Galle Zone 1 win by 8 wickets

**Thenusha guides Galle Zone 3 home in tricky chase**

Galle Zone 1 beat Hambantota by 8 wickets in their limited overs fixture yesterday, while Galle Zone 3 sealed a two wicket win over Badulla.

Thenusha Weerasinghe remained unbeaten on 33, guiding Galle Zone 3 home as he batted through 98 deliveries in 147 minutes, while wickets tumbled around him.

Match ended without a result between Moneragala and Ratnapura due to rain.

### At DC Grounds Moneragala (No result)

**Moneragala:** 138 (41.2) (Vishwa Fernando 40, Nisal Nethmira 5/20)

**Ratnapura:** 43/2 (11.3)

(Jeewanthi Chamuditha 24)

### In Pelwatta

**Hambantota:** 118 (42.3)

(Mohamed Rimzi 66, Gesundu Bisas 4/21, Thiyon Helika 2/18)

**Galle Zone 1:** 119/2 (28.1)

(Senuja Vehan 46\*, Sanuga Nethmira 37\*)



Thenusha Weerasinghe

### In Badulla

**Badulla:** 90 (Ayush Nethma 3-18, Hirun Mathiesha 2-16, Dinusha Sathsara 2-18)

**Galle Zone 2:** 91-8

(Thenusha Weerasinghe 33\*, Tharun Wanasinghe 5-14)

### In Ratnapura

**Galle Zone 2:** 121 (Sandaru Malshan 38, Bhurasra Sankalpa 2-18, Nisal Nethmira 2-35)

**Ratnapura:** 67

(Sandaru Malshan 4-7, Karshapani Irandha 2-12)

(IR)

## India's 2036 Olympic bid at risk amid possible IOC suspension

Less than two years after her historic appointment as the first female President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), P.T. Usha faces a vote of no confidence at a Special General Meeting (SGM) on 25 October amid allegations of constitutional violations and financial mismanagement. With 12 out of 15 council members opposing her, the conflict has prompted the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to intervene, cutting off vital funding and threatening India's bid for the 2036 Olympics.

The motion, according to the Executive Council's agenda, centres on "alleged constitutional violations and actions potentially detrimental to Indian sport."

Tensions between Usha and the IOA Executive Council have been escalating for months. Usha, who has issued show-cause notices to several council members for allegedly violating eligibility norms, has been accused by her critics of "high-handedness" in her leadership. In addition, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has raised questions about a contract Usha approved with Reliance for a hospitality lounge at the Paris Olympics. The CAG alleges that "undue favours" were given to Reliance, resulting in a financial loss of ₹2.8 million to the IOA. Usha has strongly denied these allegations, calling them "baseless."

In a significant development, 12 of the 15 members of the IOA Executive Council have united against Usha and have included a no-confidence motion against her in the 2036 agenda for the upcoming meeting. On 3 October, Usha released her own agenda for the SGM, which included 16 items. However,

her opponents released their own agenda on 10 October, with the no-confidence motion as the main item.

A major point of contention is Usha's conflict with All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaudhary. Usha has accused Chaudhary of issuing an "unauthorised agenda" for the SGM and "impersonating" the acting CEO of the IOA. In an official statement, Usha said, "This action is both illegal and in violation of the IOA constitution. The current and only CEO of the IOA is Raghuram Iyer, who officially joined the IOA on 15 January 2024."

Despite Usha's assertions, Chaudhary, backed by 12 members of the Executive Council, issued a circular on 10 October listing a no-confidence motion among other issues. In response, Usha insisted that "Chaudhary does not hold the position of acting CEO" and that his actions were unauthorised.

The internal conflict has attracted the attention of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has now intervened in the matter. In a letter sent by James MacLeod, Director of NOC Relations and Olympic Solidarity, the IOC expressed its concern about the governance issues plaguing the IOA. "It is clear that there are ongoing internal disputes and governance issues within the IOA, including a number of mutual accusations that have been made within the Executive Council," the letter said. As a result, the IOC has announced that it will withhold Olympic Solidarity grants until the situation is resolved, citing a "need for clarification".



# WEST INDIES BAMBOOZLED BY SPIN

Bowled out for 89 as Sri Lanka level series

BY ANJANA KALUARACHCHI

Debutant Dunith Wellalage claimed three wickets in the power play as West Indies were bamboozled by spin, with Sri Lanka beating them by 73 runs to level the series in the 2nd T20I played in Dambulla yesterday.

Chasing Sri Lanka's 162, West Indies were reeling at 24-4 after the power play compared to 74-1 in the first T20I as Wellalage struck twice in his first over. Maheesh Theekshana claimed 1 for 7 within the power play as only one over of pace was bowled. Even Charith Asalanka, bowling his part-time off-break, struck twice, while Wanindu Hasaranga got into action from the very first delivery as the visitors were bowled out for 89 runs.

Earlier, Pathum Nissanka made a half-century, digging deep as Sri Lanka reached



162 for 5 on a tricky surface. Sri Lanka started off slow in conditions that favoured spinners, scoring just 8 runs off the first three overs. Nissanka then hit five consecutive fours off Shamar Joseph. Together with a boundary that went as a leg bye, the over gave Sri Lanka 25 runs, making

it 52 for no loss in the power play.

West Indies' poor ground fielding helped Sri Lanka's cause, though they struggled a lot. Left-arm spinner Gukesh Motie bowled his four overs for just 13 runs, while Roston Chase conceded a run a ball in his four. The pacers came back well towards the latter part to contain Sri Lanka to 162, though they looked like they would go beyond that when they brought up 100 in 12.4 overs, with Kusal Perera hitting 24 off 16.

### Score:

**Sri Lanka:** 162 for 5 (20.0) (Pathum Nissanka 54, Kusal Mendis 26, Kusal Perera 24, Romario Shepherd 2-23)

**West Indies:** 89 (16.1) (Maheesh Theekshana 2-7, Dunith Wellalage 3-9, Charith Asalanka 2-6, Wanindu Hasaranga 2-32)

## NZ knock Pakistan (and India) out Secure first T20 World Cup semi spot in eight years

India's hopes briefly arose. New Zealand could perhaps feel a sense of déjà vu. Pakistan themselves threatened to do the unthinkable. Only for all of it to come crashing at the end of it all.

New Zealand crushed Pakistan in their final group game to qualify for the semi-final of the Women's T20 World Cup for the first time since 2016. Batting first, they could only finish on 110 for 6. India needed Pakistan to beat New Zealand for them to make the semi-final. Pakistan themselves needed to hunt down the score anywhere inside 11.3 overs to qualify for the last four at the expense of India and New Zealand. In a bid to do so, they were bowled out for 56, their lowest all-out total in T20 World Cups.

Nasra Sandhu led Pakistan's charge with the ball, picking up three wickets to pull the plug on New Zealand's scoring. But Amelia Kerr returned with three of her own, following Eden Carson's strikes up top as New Zealand completed a remarkable comeback having come into the competition on the back of a record ten-match losing streak.

### Bates, Plimmers and a fours-ful start

When Suzie Bates drove the second ball of the game down the ground to beat mid-off, it looked as if New Zealand's decision to bat first was vindicated. An over later, both Georgia Plummer and Bates managed to hit a four apiece off Fatima Sana before Plimmer bisected the gap at extra cover in



the fourth over. By the end of five overs, New Zealand had hit five fours and looked good for more, despite a slightly higher number of dot balls faced. Only when Omaima Sohail was brought on for the final over of the powerplay, did there come a sign of what was to follow.

### Pakistan drop catches, NZ drop scoring

Nida Dar's first over, the fifth of the game, gave an indication of her fortunes for the day. Bates attempted a reverse lap on the second ball against Dar, only to deflect it to the wicketkeeper. But Muneeba Ali failed to hang on.

That was the first of five dropped chances Pakistan missed off Dar's bowling line. In the sixth, Bates pulled Sohail straight to midwicket but Sandhu could not hold on. A

ball before, Plimmer had survived a run-out chance.

Plimmer and Bates could not make those chances count. With New Zealand's score on 41, the former skewed a top edge off Sandhu towards cover, where Sana fumbled before hanging on. In Sandhu's next over, Bates hit one down long-on's throat. Sohail had grasped a tough catch and bowled chance when Amelia Kerr was on nought but managed to have her caught at the deep midwicket ropes cheaply.

Boundaries were hard to come by. Sophie Devine tried using her feet to counter spin but to no avail. She was also given a life when she was on 13. Pakistan dropped five catches in the last three overs. Despite that, New Zealand could hit only seven fours - the last two

coming off Brooke Halliday's bat - and were restricted to a total that seemed very gettable at the halfway mark. Sandhu finished with 3 for 18 while Dar, Iqbal and Sohail also picked up a wicket apiece.

### Pakistan's attacking ways play into NZ's hands

Pakistan knew they had to hunt down the 101-run target inside 12 overs for a semi-final place. Their intentions were clear when they sent Aliya Riaz up to open the batting alongside Muneeba. It was only the second time that Riaz had walked out to open in 2014. Her stay lasted only three balls as she miscued offspinner Carson to cover. Muneeba began solidly, first skipping down to loft Carson straight back and then pulling Le Tahuhu through deep backward square leg - aided by a misfield. But Tahuhu got one to seam in, past the inside edge, to make a mess of Muneeba's stumps.

That was the start of a massive collapse from Pakistan. They lost five wickets inside the powerplay to be 28 for 5. A massively reworked batting order - that saw Dar bat at No. 7 - did not bear the desired result. Dar and Sana's 24-run partnership for the sixth wicket was Pakistan's best. But once their most experienced all-rounders fell in the tenth over, Pakistan folded as quickly as New Zealand started. They lost their last five wickets for just four runs in 11.4 overs, the exact over mark by which they had to complete the chase to qualify.

**New Zealand:** 110 for 6 (Bates 28, Halliday 22, Sandhu 3-18) **Pakistan:** 56 (Sana 21, Kerr 3-14, Carson 2-7)

## Hathurusinghe suspended on disciplinary grounds

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe has been suspended by the BCB on disciplinary grounds. He has been suspended for 48 hours and is to be "terminated" immediately after that period, and has also been served a show-cause notice by the board. Phil Simmons will take over as head coach in an interim capacity till the 2025 Champions Trophy.

"Hathurusinghe has two counts of misconduct," BCB President

Farouque Ahmed said. "First is about an assault on a player. Secondly, he took too many leaves, more than what was in his contract."

Hathurusinghe returned for his second stint as Bangladesh coach in February last year. In August this year, shortly after Ahmed was appointed as Board President, he had said that Hathurusinghe should no longer continue as Bangladesh's head coach.

Under Hathurusinghe,

Bangladesh put up underwhelming performances during last year's ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup campaign this year. His best achievement during this term was Bangladesh's 2-0 Test series win against Pakistan this year. It was their maiden win in Pakistan, and first overseas Test series win in 15 years.

However, in the India tour that followed, they lost 2-0 in the Tests and 3-0 in the T20Is which included a record loss in the third match.

