

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

On 14th of February SLSQ held the annual AGM and elected a new Management Committee. I thank the members for electing me for the Presidency for 2021. The new Management Committee has new ideas to serve the Society's needs. We are organising exciting activities for the year including celebrating the Sri Lankan New Year which is on the 24th of April. More information will be communicated to you in coming days.

As mentioned in my speech at the AGM, we need to increase our membership and promote the SLSQ profile among the new migrants. Last year our membership was low due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, as a result we were unable to host our main events. We did manage to hold an event for all our members by organising a luncheon in November, after the QLD Government had eased the COVID restrictions.

The SLSQ have introduced dancing classes from October last year in collaboration with Ravibandhu and Samanthi dance academy from Sri Lanka. We are fortunate to meet new families and talented students through these dance classes. In the future we will be introducing drumming classes.

With the help and support from the Management Committee and all the members, we will make every effort to meet the objectives of this wonderful organisation. As we are to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year soon, I take this opportunity to wish all our readers a 'Suba Aluth Awuruddak'.

Mrs Namal Wijeratne

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on Sunday the 14th February at the Toowong Community Centre. The Management Committee Report was presented by the president, Namal Wijeratne and accepted by the members. Namal spoke



of the struggles brought on by the Covid pandemic which meant that we could not hold the same functions last year. However, we were really pleased to have been able to open the Sri Lanka Society Dance Academy and hold an opening ceremony and also to host a Members and Friends lunch.



The auditor's report was tabled and we were very pleased to note that he gave it his unqualified approval. The committee positions were declared vacant and the Honorary Consul Anton Swan was invited to chair the meeting. Anton called for a minute of silence in remembrance of Maurice De Silva who was a founder member and the first Sports Secretary of SLSQ and Mrs. Galapathy, the mother/mother-in-law of Renuka & Haritha Wijerathne. Haritha is a former committee member of SLSQ and he and Renuka have been a very active members for many years.

The new committee was elected and Anton congratulated the past committee for the work done during the difficult time of the pandemic. He also thanked the Sri Lankan community for the assistance given to him. Namal thanked the members and the past committee for their hard work and presented Anton Swan with a Congratulations card for his Order of Australia award which had been signed by everyone present.

This was followed by afternoon tea with a variety of Sri Lankan finger food which was enjoyed by all who attended.

Management Committee for 2021

Position	Name	Email
President	Namal Wijeratne	namalwijeratne@hotmail.com
Vice President	Sandhya Abeysekera	vabeysekera@hotmail.com
Secretary	Champika de Silva	iranjalie@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sharmaine Perera	sharmaine.perera@telstra.com
Social Secretary	Chamitha Weerasinghe	chamitha.weerasinghe@gmail.com
Cultural Secretary	Praba Harvie	prabaharvie@gmail.com
Publications Secretary	Gothami Meepe	gothami08@gmail.com
Committee Members		
	Kumari Perera	lkperera308@gmail.com
	Sepali Weerasooriya	sepaliw@gmail.com
	Nidhani Hewapasingha	nidhani_22@yahoo.com

Honorary Auditor: David Adams

Honorary Solicitor: Mathew Jones

Please remember to renew your membership for this year.

The National Anthem of Sri Lanka

“Sri Lanka Matha”

“Sri Lanka Matha”, the National Anthem of Sri Lanka, was composed by **Ananda Samarakoon**. Ananda was born to a Christian family in Padukka in 1911 and was named Egodahage George Wilfred Alwis Samarakoon. His first school was the Wewala Sinhala School in Wewala, Piliyandala which is now named after him. He then moved to Christian College, Kotte, which was later named Sri Jayawardenepura Maha Vidyalaya.



His musical talent was evident from early days. At the Wewala School, his Maths teacher had pulled him up for not paying attention in class, to find that he was writing a song. The teacher made him sing the song, probably as a punishment but to everyone's delight, he sang it happily! The song was about the river, Weras Ganga which he passed every day on the way to school. Later at Christian College, he composed a song for the Inter



House singing competition, which won the school award. He taught music and art at the same school in later years.

In 1933, Rabindranth Tagore, the famous poet and writer of Bengal, visited Ceylon. Many young artists were



Visva – Bharati

Photo Source -The Better India .com

inspired by him and joined his school of fine arts ‘Visva - Bharati’ located in Shantiniketan, West Bengal in India. Tagore wished to use the best new ideas of Europe and the best Indian traditions, to create new forms of art and literature. He named his place of learning, Visva-Bharati, which means “the spiritual union of the world with India”. Tagore loathed formal education and believed that learning should be about invoking the curiosity of the mind and not about giving information. He strongly believed that learning outdoors was the best way to learn and that staying within four walls limited the mind. Many classes were held under trees - and that tradition continues to this day. He once wrote: ***“Without music and the fine arts, a nation lacks its highest means of national self-expression and the people remain inarticulate.”***

Samarakoon also joined Visva-Bharati accompanied by his newly married wife Chandra Seneviratne, a fellow musician and music teacher. He only stayed at Shantiniketan for 6 months and came back to Sri Lanka, abandoning his studies. However, he seemed to have been invigorated and was full of new ideas. He changed his name to Ananda and embraced Buddhism. On his return flight, Ananda felt so much emotion when he got his first glimpse of his motherland again, that he penned the beautiful lyrics to his song Namo Namo Matha.

He began teaching again and taught in many schools and recorded his first song along with his wife Chandra in 1939. But in 1940 he divorced his wife and married Caroline de Silva. In the same year, he recorded his hit songs ‘Ennada Menike’ & ‘Punchi Suda’. His unique style became very popular and he recorded many more songs in the first half of the 40’s. Some of his most memorable include ‘Podimal Ethano & Pudamu me kusum’. Until this period, the popular Sri Lankan music was derived from Ragadhari music of India. Ananda Samarakoon is credited as the creator of original Sinhala music. His simple lyrics and the original music appealed to the Sinhala audiences.

Tragedy struck Ananda in his private life. He became a father when Caroline bore him a son but sadly, his son died at the age of 5. Ananda was stricken with grief and left Sri Lanka. He stopped composing songs and roamed all over India from 1947 to 1951 and turned to painting instead. He held many art exhibitions in India, Malaysia and Singapore. One of his contemporaries, Sunil Shantha, remarked that *‘It is no easy task to discern whether Samarakoon was born as a musician or a painter.’*



from the Daily News archives

On February 4, 1948 Ceylon gained independence. By then, a committee had been formed to select a new National Anthem. They called for submissions from all musicians and the song that won was “Sri Lanka Matha Pala Yasa Mahima” by P. B. Illangasinghe and Lionel Edirisinghe. Even though the song was very suitable, both the composers were members of the committee and this upset the people. The song was played on Independence Day morning on Radio Ceylon but not at the actual celebration due to the protests.

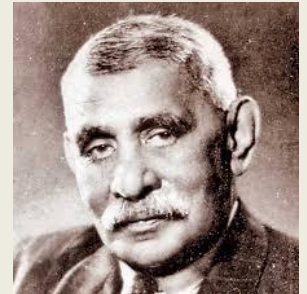
Ananda was not in Ceylon at this time but his wife had entered his song “Namo Namo Matha” into the competition. This song had gained a lot of

popularity and had even been translated to Tamil by Pandit M. Nallathambi. Both the Sinhala & Tamil versions were played along with other National Songs at the Independence Day celebrations in 1949.

In 1950, the government appointed another committee to choose a new national anthem. This time the already popular “Namo Namo Matha” was selected. A minor change was required to the 10th line to reflect the gaining of independence and this change was approved by Samarakoon. The song was sung as the official National Anthem at the Independence Day celebrations in 1952.

This song which brought out so much of nationalistic sentiments was not without problems. The first line of the song was thought to be unlucky and articles were sent to the newspapers by various pundits. To begin with the ‘Na’ sound and the arrangement of the first three syllables with the short and long sounds (‘Gana’) of the opening words ‘na-mo-na’ is associated with misfortune.

Ceylon was going through some difficult times. In 1952 D.S. Senanayake died and his son Dudley became the Prime Minister. That year there was a world-wide rice shortage and the price of rice was unaffordable for Sri Lanka. Fortunately, Robert Gunewardena managed to enter into a trade pact with China who gave Sri Lanka the rice at a lower price in exchange for rubber. However, the country went into a trade deficit with the price of its traditional exports going down.



D.S. Senanayake

In 1953, the government cut many welfare payments and there was the famous Hartal which saw many people take to the streets. Ten people died in clashes and the Prime Minister became gravely ill and resigned. In 1956 there were riots between the Sinhalese and Tamils, now known as the Gal Oya riots. Then in 1959 the new Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranayake was assassinated. With many people clamouring for a change to the first lines of the anthem, the government again appointed a committee to make a decision. The first line was changed to ‘Sri Lanka Matha’ in 1960.

The National Anthem brought much fame and honour to Ananda Samarakoon. It also brought him heartache. By the time the song was chosen to be the National Anthem of the country, he had sold the song to PKW Siriwardena. Therefore, when the government decided to award Samarakoon Rs.2500 as a gesture of honour, Siriwardena made a legal challenge that the song belonged to him. Samarakoon lost this legal battle. Then came the change of the first line and by this time the song was owned by the government.



Weras Ganga, Walking Path

Changes are made to National Anthems to reflect the changes in society and the country. The tragedy is that it happened so early and Ananda Samarakoon seemed to have taken it as another tragedy in his life. The fact that he was not consulted about the change must have added to the heartache.



In 1961, he wrote a letter to the Times Newspaper stating “The anthem has been beheaded. It has not only destroyed the song, but also destroyed the life of the composer. I am frustrated and broken-hearted. It is a misfortune to live in a country where such things happen to a humble composer. Death would be preferable”.



Sadly, he was found dead in his bed on April 5, 1962, due to an overdose of sleeping pills. It is very unfortunate that a man who had the honour of writing the National Anthem of Sri Lanka had such a tragic ending. His song however, continues to inspire and bring beautiful images of our mother land and a sense of pride and longing to those of us living away from Sri Lanka.

Tribute to Maurice De Silva

GENTLEMAN SPORTSMAN PAR EXCELLENCE

The curtain came down on the life of Maurice De Silva on 28th January 2021 at four score and three leaving friends and family to reflect on the qualities of a sporting legend and a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

Maurice attended St Peter's College and his sporting abilities were noticed at an early age. To quote a recent Daily News article "Maurice had natural talent and his coaches were amazed at his abilities. He was widely regarded as one of the greatest centres in the history of Sri Lanka Rugby." Maurice captained the Havelock's Clifford Cup winning team of 1961. While rugby was his true calling it was as a cricketer that Maurice had his name first etched in the record books. Playing in the 1st X1 for St Peter's and winning against St Joseph's in the big match in 1955. Maurice also excelled in Athletics, Hockey, Tennis and was a member of the Stubbs Shield winning St Peter's Boxing team. He went on to mentor and coach Kandy Lake club, Isipathana and St Anthony's Rugby teams.

Maurice's Australian chapter commenced in 1973 settling down with Moira and Tron in the leafy suburb of 'The Gap'. With trees and hills reminiscent of Kandy, it was fitting for this Rugby Great to make it his home as he was renowned for finding 'The Gap' on the rugby field. Later in life he became an award winning golfer at the Ashgrove Golf Club for 30 years where he won many club championships, including The Ashgrove Cup. He was a founder member of the Sri Lanka Society and the first Sports Secretary.

To quote from Maurice's daughter Tron's eloquent eulogy at the St Brigid's Church in Brisbane

"Dad's family meant everything to him. He loved his parents & siblings. Dad and Mum had a devoted 52 years of marriage and worked together to achieve great things. His love for Mum and I was only surpassed by his love for his grandchildren."

Though miles away Maurice you are much in our thoughts. May you find 'Peaceful Rest' as you so richly deserve.

S V Ranasinghe Brisbane Australia – February 2021

Trinity college Rugby Captain 1976

Brisbane Bhutan community celebrates the King's 41st Birthday

Our Society was invited to attend Bhutan King's birthday on the 21st February. The event was well patronized by families of the Bhutan community in Brisbane.



The ceremony started with Buddhist and cultural observances to wish his Majesty a long life and blessing on his reign of the county. As a special guest I was invited to cut the cake. There were many cultural performances by children and adults followed by a Bhutan traditional lunch.

I thanked the organizing committee for inviting the Sri Lanka Society of Queensland to this important occasion.

Mrs Namal Wijeratne



Achieving Gender Equality In a COVID-19 World

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Declaration, adopted on December 10, 1948, confirms that,

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, birth or other status”.

8th March 2021, UN Women theme for International Women's Day Celebrations was “*Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World*”. This was a global theme selected to demonstrate the enormous struggles of women around the world in moulding an equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Today when we start looking at the world during this COVID-19 pandemic struggles, there is no doubt that women are some of the best exemplary and efficient national leaders in combating the pandemic.

Women worldwide as health care workers, caregivers, innovators, community coordinators, homemakers at the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the uniqueness of their contributions and the disparate burdens that women carry. Women leaders and women's organisations worldwide have demonstrated full and effective participation networks to lead in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts effectively.

Regardless of women making up a majority of front-line workers, there is a disparate and inadequate representation of women in national and global COVID-19 policy spaces.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives universally, as countries went into lockdown and restricted movement to contain the spread of the virus. As doors closed and isolation began, reports of all forms of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, began to rise.

Domestic and family violence against women is not new. During this COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence escalated where most women organisations had to meet several challenges when needed to arrive at decision making in all areas of life.

As per the United Nations annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign (25th November – 10th December 2020), statistics depicts that even before the COVID-19 pandemic reached globally, 243 million women and girls were abused by their intimate partners in the past year. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the violence, even as support services weakened and accessing help became harder.

This International Women's Day focuses our attention on minimising the women in our society facing domestic violence.

Ending violence against women is everyone's business.

What holds back a woman experiencing Domestic Violence from speaking out?

It goes without saying that women do not always enjoy the same opportunities as men. Sometimes women are afraid to speak up because of the risks or doubts about going beyond the conventional social and cultural norms.

How do we overcome this situation for women facing violence in any form?

Create awareness in our society whilst maintaining confidentiality and having a "24/7 Hot Line "to reach out for support.

Be proactive and use all the resources that the government provides, and enlist experts working in fields related to this area to support and help the victim. Women's organisations should be able to provide the services fit and proper for survivors of violence.

Educate the younger generation and also learn from them.

Start conversations about gender roles early on and challenge the traditional roles and characteristics assigned to men and women.

Point out the pigeonholes that children frequently encounter, whether in the media, on the street, at school or in the community and let them know that it is OK to be different.

Promote a culture of acceptance with respect and dignity.

Arrange community events and discussions about consent, physical independence and responsibility with boys and girls, and listen to what they have to say about their experience of the world.

Hold each other accountable - SPEAK UP!!!

Domestic and family violence can take many forms, and it is necessary to take a stand by calling it out when you see it and not be afraid to act on it.

The most inappropriate form of denigrating connected to domestic violence is displayed on most popular social media sites. When you witness inappropriate sexual comments and jokes – Speak Up.

Women Organisations, Multicultural Communities and Associations must take steps to establish a safer environment for everyone by challenging your colleagues/partners/friends to reflect on their behaviour and speak up when someone crosses the line or enlist the help of others when needed. Listen to anyone experiencing Domestic Violence and make sure they have the support they need.

Women and Men Should Work Together.

Women and men should work together and achieve an equal gender balance at all levels.

A male and female were created to enjoy life and to bring forth new generations to live in this universe. Men's ideas and experience are different from women's ideas and experience. Therefore, Women's and Men's organisations need to work together to overcome the urge to foster domestic violence and/ or any forms of violence in our society.

Last but Not the Least - Get the Funding!

There should be a voluntary movement by all Sri Lankans living in Queensland to collectively join hands during this COVID-19 pandemic to call on governments to bond funding openings to address violence against women and girls, ensure essential services for survivors of violence are maintained, implement deterrence measures, and invest in gathering the data necessary to improve life-saving services for women and girls.

We currently live in a world where people tend to find solutions to all problems from the point of view of technology. But the escalating violence around the globe shows that the use of digital technology can not diminish violence.

The necessity has arisen for all Sri Lankans living worldwide to realise women's and men's voluntary participation and contribution in community activities is important, and to be engaged in these achieves a peaceful and nonviolence society. The first step to achieve this should be created by holding awareness programmes and workshops through community engagements.

Diminishing and/or eradicating domestic family violence cannot be achieved overnight, but what is stated herein should be the primary step that should be taken to build confidence in women and men to achieve nonviolence and live with peace and harmony.

There is still a long way to go to accomplish these objectives. But nothing is impossible, and it is vital for those who are in leadership and decision-making at all levels to create more awareness opportunities and rally around the community without taking a step back and observing such violence pass by your eyes.

My ultimate message to all women during this year of COVID-19 pandemic struggles that it is up to you to break your barriers, to overcome under-representation or any violence that you face in life.

The message across our community to women who experience any form of violence should be that you are not alone and reach out for help when needed without keeping silent and suffering until it is too late.

Santhoshi Sandra Watapuluwa
Solicitor QLD

Sri Lanka Society Dance Academy



Sri Lanka Society Dance Academy



For Information & Registration:

Gothami – 0421 635 353

Eshanie – 0415 461 613

Chamitha – 0430 047 664

New Term begins
2nd May 2021

Sunday 3:30-4:30pm

**Clayfield Uniting Church Hall,
170 Bonney Avenue, Clayfield**

Teacher – Mrs Eshanie Thajudeen

The Dance Academy continues this year with plans to celebrate the Sri Lankan New Year at the end of the term with a concert. Avrudu celebrations with Kiribath and 'Kavili' and games for the students and their families is planned. Due to Covid restrictions, guests are limited to the Dance Academy families and invitees.

As the students are busy with concert practices, new students were kept to a minimum this term.

We will be delighted to welcome new students in the second term which begins on the 2nd of May.

If you have any family and friends with children interested in learning Sri Lankan dancing, please contact us.

Classes are held on Sunday afternoons in Clayfield.

Due to many requests, we are starting Adult Classes for the ladies!

Please call for more information.



Sri Lanka Society of Queensland

In collaboration with the Ravibandhu-Samanthi Dance School, Sri Lanka



SRI LANKA SOCIETY

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

24th APRIL 2021 11:00 AM

Jindalee Bowls Club

Cnr Sinnamon Road &, Yallambee Rd

Jindalee QLD 4074

**Contact : Namal 0433 427 377
Sandhya 0422 932 366
Gothami 0421 635 353**

Tickets :	Members	\$ 30
	Non-Members	\$ 35
	Children	\$ 15
	Under 10 years	

News from Sri Lanka

Veteran journalist Bandula Jayasekara passes away

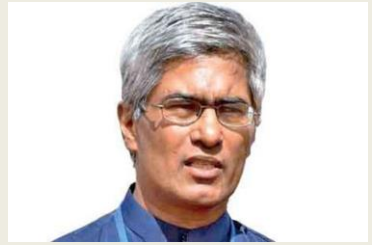
March 5, 2021 01:15 pm

Veteran journalist and former diplomat Bandula Jayasekara has passed away at the age of 60.

He had passed away while receiving treatment for a blood cancer, which he had been battling for over a year.

Mr Jayasekara, who was the Editor-in-Chief of Daily News, had also worked for The Island and Sunday Leader newspapers.

In addition, he had served as a diplomat representing Sri Lanka in Canada, the United States and Australia. He was the former Sri Lankan Consul General in Sydney.



Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute inaugurated as fully-fledged university

March 5, 2021 09:36 am

The ceremony to mark the official launch of Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute as a fully-fledged university was held under the patronage of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, at the BMICH on Thursday (March 04).

Ayurveda Cakrawarti Pandith G.P. Wickramarachchi established the Gampaha Sidayurveda Vidyalaya in 1929 as a centre of learning of Sidhayurveda system of medicine. The first batch consisted of 20 students.

In 1995, it was elevated to the status of a university campus, affiliated to the University of Kelaniya.

WindForce launches LKR 3.2 billion IPO to boost Renewable Energy in Sri Lanka and abroad

March, 5, 2021

WindForce launches LKR 3.2 billion IPO to boost Renewable Energy in Sri Lanka and abroad

WindForce Limited, the pioneers in the growth and supply of renewable energy in Sri Lanka, has announced an Initial Public Offering (IPO) that aims to raise Rs.3.24 billion to fund its strategic expansion and growth in the renewable energy sector. The IPO offers 202,615,341 ordinary voting shares at Rs.16 per share and aims to raise Rs.3,241,845,456. The Joint Managers and Financial Advisors to the issue are CT CLSA Capital (Pvt) Limited and Capital Alliance Partners Limited. WindForce has been issued a [SL] AA- (stable) credit rating by ICRA Lanka, which is the highest rating given to a corporate in Sri Lanka at the time of the issuance by ICRA Lanka Limited.



WindForce plans to allocate a sum of Rs. 2,310 million as the equity investment for a wind power project in Mannar and a solar power project in Senegal. Remaining funds of Rs.932 million will be utilized for future projects the company intends to undertake in Sri Lanka or in other countries. The total installed capacity of the company will increase from 218MW to 263MW with the completion of the projects in the pipeline which would further strengthen the Company's position as the largest renewable energy Independent Power Producer (IPP) in Sri Lanka and one of the largest in the region.

Courtesy - Ada Derana



Ethnic Communities
Council of Queensland

FUNDED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR QUEENSLAND JOB SEEKERS

ECCQ OFFERS CHC33015 CERTIFICATE III IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

ARE YOU LOOKING
FOR A REWARDING
CAREER IN AGED
CARE?

ECCQ IS SEEKING
EXPRESSIONS OF
INTEREST NOW!

TO BE ELIGIBLE, YOU
MUST BE:

- Australian qualification provided by DIVTEC Training and Further Education.
- Class training and practical workshops plus on the job training with local employers.
- Commencement date: **19 April, 2021.**
- Location: West End QLD 4101.

ECCQ will provide support to help you find employment after completing the course.

- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school.
- an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident (includes humanitarian entrant), temporary resident with the necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency, or a New Zealand citizen.
- unemployed or need support to secure more stable employment.

**For more information and to confirm your eligibility contact Reza on
0429 449 832 or email rezaa@eccq.com.au**

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