

Editorial

Time to Finish the Fight

A6

Finance Today

India's NSE IX Eyes Sri Lanka in Global Finance Push

B7

LOOK

A Heartfelt Tribute to Fatherhood

C9

Sports Today

Chamod & Dilhani Win Medals in Taiwan

A12

STAY UPDATED!

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Miscarriage of justice in the name of Presidential Pardon

CID PROBES ILLEGAL RELEASE OF FINANCIAL FRAUDSTER

Convict's name missing from official Vesak pardon list - President's Office denies authorisation

Prisons Department under scrutiny as CID uncovers wider pardon irregularities

CID expands probe after 'ghost names' found on Vesak pardon list

BY SANDITHI APPUTHANTHRI AND MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Continued on Page 2

Justice Minister says: Matara Prison to be relocated to Kotawila

Justice Minister Harshana Nanayakkara said that immediate steps are being taken to relocate the Matara Prison to Kotawila. He made this announcement following an inspection visit to the Matara Prison on the afternoon of 7 June. The visit was followed by a special discussion held under the Minister's leadership, focusing on the current condition of the prison.



Continued on Page 2

Poson security, traffic plan begins today – Police

A special security arrangement and traffic management plan has been put in place by the Sri Lanka Police for the Poson festive season, with particular focus on the sacred cities of Anuradhapura and Mihintale. The plan will come into effect today, 9 June, according to Acting Police Spokesman ASP F.U. Wootler.

Continued on Page 2

Rare macaw stolen from Dehiwala Zoo

A rare blue-and-yellow macaw valued at over Rs 500,000 has been stolen from the National Zoological Gardens in Dehiwala. The theft is believed to have occurred on the night of 4 June and was reportedly captured on a nearby security camera installed at a shop close to the zoo.



Continued on Page 2



Pic by Kumanan Kana/ Social Media

Chemmani mass grave probe: Amnesty urges Govt to ensure transparency

Amnesty International has called on the Sri Lankan Government to ensure transparency and public accountability as authorities begin excavations at a second mass grave site in Chemmani, located in the Northern Peninsula. In a statement, the organisation said the excavation could be a significant step towards truth and justice for the victims and their families—provided the process is conducted in accordance with international standards. Amnesty International urged the authorities to "allocate sufficient funds and resources to complete the excavation, ensure that the process remains transparent by providing access to the media and relatives of suspected victims, and keep them informed of progress and interim findings to build public trust."

Continued on Page 2

COPA reveals: Most rail accidents at protected crossings

In a surprising revelation, the Committee on Public Accounts (COPA) has found that the majority of railway crossing accidents in Sri Lanka take place at locations where safety mechanisms are already installed. This observation came to light during a recent COPA session in which officials from the Department of Railways were summoned for questioning. Responding to a question posed by committee member and MP Chandana Sooriyaarachchi, Railway General Manager Dhammika Jayasundara acknowledged that the country still has around 1,200 unprotected railway crossings, despite efforts to enhance safety.

Continued on Page 2



Customs refutes uninspected container claims

BY MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Sri Lanka Customs, on Saturday (7), denied allegations that 323 shipping containers were released without inspection under suspicious circumstances, asserting the cargo contained only industrial goods and raw materials as declared by importers.

Continued on Page 2

Rs 700M tax evasion: Wife of former SM Dunes Gankanda arrested

Kushani Nanayakkara, wife of former State Minister Dunes Gankanda, was arrested on Saturday (7) by the Colombo Central Crimes Investigation Division in connection with a longstanding income tax evasion case filed by the Inland Revenue Department.



Continued on Page 2

Spike in dengue, chikungunya cases in WP: Health authorities raise concerns

Health authorities raised concerns over a significant rise in dengue and chikungunya cases across the Western Province, attributed to prevailing wet weather conditions. Speaking to the media, Consultant Epidemiologist Dr. Athula Liyanapathirana of the Health Ministry said the highest spread has been observed in the Colombo and Gampaha districts.

Continued on Page 2

Delays in finalising service constitution: Govt vets launch 24-hour token strike

The Government Veterinary Officers' Association, yesterday (8), announced a 24-hour token strike beginning at 6:00 a.m. today (9), in protest against the continuous delays in finalising a dedicated service constitution for veterinary professionals. Speaking at a press conference held in Colombo, the association's President, Dr. Upul Ranjith Kumara, said that although the Government had taken steps to formulate a separate service structure for government veterinarians, the Agriculture Ministry Secretary has been deliberately obstructing the process.

Continued on Page 2

Namal slams Govt over rise in violent crime

BY MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) MP Namal Rajapaksa, on Saturday (7), accused the Government of losing control of the country's law and order situation, citing a rise in violent crime, questionable Customs activity, and a controversial Presidential Pardon as evidence of administrative failure just six months into its term.



Continued on Page 2

Deadly ‘dusting’ trend US TEEN DIES AFTER INHALING AEROSOL

Arizona teen Renna O’Rourke passed away following a week in an intensive care unit.

The 19-year-old had taken part in the “dusting” trend, where young people film themselves inhaling aerosols like spray deodorant, paint thinner, or keyboard cleaner.

O’Rourke reportedly went into cardiac arrest after inhaling a cleaning product, and was later declared brain dead.

Paying tribute to his daughter, Aaron O’Rourke said she had always dreamed of

being famous. “She always said, ‘I’m gonna be famous, Dad. Just you watch. I’m gonna be famous,’ and unfortunately, this is not under the most optimal of circumstances,” he told AZFamily.

Renna’s mother and father shared the tragic story in a bid to raise awareness of the deadly social media trend.

Her mother, Dana, said: “There’s no ID



required. It’s odourless. It’s everything kids look for.” “They can afford it, they can get it, and it doesn’t show in mum and dad’s drug test.”

Dana added that Renna and her boyfriend had used an app delivery service to have the cleaning product delivered to their home.

“Renna and her boyfriend had DoorDashed product to my house and I didn’t know,” she told 12News.

“It’s keyboard cleaner. I didn’t know

what they were doing with it.”

“We want to make sure that we use our tragedy so that no other parent has to experience looking at their child on life support and a ventilator, not breathing on her own, all because she huffed out of a can.”

Following her passing, Renna’s organs were donated to at least six other people, her mother added.

“Through that, we’re finding strength and purpose,” Dana said.

“She will be unbelievably missed, leaving

the most aching hole in our lives, but if her life is to mean anything, we are going to do what we can to prevent somebody else’s child from being where ours is right now.”

A GoFundMe was set up to support the teen’s family. It reads:

“On Sunday, 1 June at 1:30 p.m., our wonderful daughter, after 4 days in the ICU, was pronounced brain dead.”

“She was the light in every room she walked into, and the pain that her family and friends feel is simply immeasurable.”

“We want to use the proceeds of this fundraiser to cover the extensive medical bills, burial costs, therapy costs, and to spread awareness about the dangers of huffing/dusting – the practice of inhaling keyboard cleaner or similar.”

(Agencies)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

CID PROBES ILLEGAL...

BY SANDITHI APPUTHANTHRI AND MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

The unexpected release of a convicted financial fraudster under a Presidential Pardon granted for Vesak Poya Day has triggered a full-scale investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), as it has been indicated that the inmate in question was not included in the official list of prisoners submitted for Presidential Amnesty approval.

In a further startling revelation, authorities suggest that the practice of releasing inmates on special holidays such as Vesak Poya may follow a recurring pattern. There are growing concerns that several others may have been released illegally during this year’s Vesak Poya pardoning as well.

The incident came to light after the Anuradhapura High Court ordered the release of a former manager of the

Anuradhapura branch of CDB Finance, who had been convicted for defrauding Rs 4 million and misusing funds.

The accused, W.M. Athula Thilakaratne, was convicted under Case Number HC/69/2018. He was released and pardoned under the Presidential Pardon on Vesak Poya Day, which fell on 12 May. Prison officials reported this information, leading to the issuance of the release order.

Thilakaratne had been convicted under Section 386 of the Penal Code and received a suspended prison term alongside a Rs 2 million fine, payable as compensation. The Court had ruled that failure to pay the fine would result in six months of Rigorous Imprisonment. However, under the Vesak pardon, the fine was waived, enabling his early release.

The story was first reported as the lead news in *Ceylon Today’s* sister paper *Mawbima* under the headline ‘Person

Convicted for Financial Fraud Released on Vesak Poya Day with a Pardon’. It subsequently sparked widespread public outcry and prompted questions in Parliament from the Opposition.

In response to the backlash, the Prisons Department defended the release. Prisons Spokesman Gamini B. Dissanayake stated that Thilakaratne was among a group of inmates released under the annual Vesak Poya Day pardon, which is granted to prisoners who meet specific eligibility criteria. The department emphasised that Thilakaratne was not singled out but qualified under general guidelines due to his sentence structure and remission of his fine, asserting that the release followed standard legal procedures and was neither exceptional nor politically motivated.

Despite these justifications from the Prisons Department’s side, the matter took a new turn when the President’s Media Division (PMD) issued a statement on Saturday (8) revealing that Thilakaratne’s name was not on the official list of inmates

approved for pardon by President Anura Kumara Disسانayake. Citing Article 34(1) of the Constitution, the PMD explained that the President can grant pardons only upon receiving a vetted list of eligible inmates from the Ministry of Justice, based on recommendations from the Department of Prisons.

“The official list submitted to the Presidential Secretariat under Reference Number 06/01/Proposal/Pres.Pardon/List/05-12/2025 dated 6 May 2025 does not include the name of Thilakaratne,” the statement said.

Following this discrepancy, the Presidential Secretariat filed a formal complaint titled ‘Release of a Prisoner Without Presidential Approval Under the Presidential Pardon’, requesting a full investigation. The PMD also confirmed that disciplinary action will be taken against any officials found responsible for the unauthorised release.

In response to the Presidential Secretariat’s complaint, the CID launched an investigation into the alleged unlawful

release of prisoners under the recent Presidential Pardon.

According to a statement issued by the Police Media Division, the complaint was filed on 6 June 2025 and alleges that, in addition to the officially approved list of 388 inmates, several others were released without proper authorisation.

Preliminary findings indicate that some inmates were falsely classified as recipients of the Presidential Pardon, prompting the CID to scrutinise the conduct of prison officials involved in the release process. The Commissioner General of Prisons was questioned on both Saturday (7) and Sunday (8), and additional statements from other prison officials are being recorded as part of the ongoing inquiry.

The investigation has also uncovered indications that similar irregularities may have occurred during previous Presidential Pardon programmes. As a result, the CID has widened the scope of its probe to examine potential systemic lapses within the prison system, the Police said.

Amnesty urges...

The organisation also emphasised the importance of protecting the integrity of the site to prevent tampering or the loss of evidence, highlighting that the credibility of the investigation depends on a firm commitment to truth, justice, and accountability.

A total of 19 human skeletons have been identified and recovered from the site during the excavation so far.



Customs refutes...

Speaking at a news conference in Colombo, Customs Spokesman and Additional Director General Seevali Arukgodā said there was no indication of illegal items among the cargo.

“These containers did not contain weapons, drugs, or gold,” Arukgodā said. “We thoroughly verified the import documents before releasing them.”

The controversy involves the release of 371 containers on 18 January. Of those, 309 were cleared through committee approval, while 62 were automatically released through the Customs database system. Officials said detailed records have been maintained for all 180 importers involved, including information on company directors, agents, and container numbers.

Arukgodā said the cargo included materials such as plastics, yarn, chemicals, auto spare parts, animal feed, machinery, pesticides, cement, iron pipes, fertilisers, and timber—goods that are essential for local industries. The shipments originated primarily from India and China, with others coming from Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Switzerland, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates.

In response to public speculation and political criticism, Arukgodā said a post-clearance audit has been launched by the Customs Post-Clearance Department. A high-level committee appointed by the Finance Ministry Secretary is also conducting an investigation.

“There was no outside interference in the clearance process,” he said. “All relevant information has been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department. I can say with certainty that no third party influenced the decisions.”

He also noted that about 60 per cent of imported cargo is released without physical inspection under a risk-based assessment system. “This is a standard global practice. Our decisions are guided by risk management, not by arbitrary judgment,” he said.

Rare macaw...

The bird was among 30 blue-and-yellow macaws housed in a secured enclosure at the facility. Zoo officials said only one bird had been taken.

The theft came to light the following morning when the enclosure’s caretaker arrived for duty and discovered the lock had been broken. The incident was promptly

reported to senior zoo officials. Subsequent investigations confirmed that one macaw was missing. The zoo administration has since filed a complaint with the Dehiwala Police through a security officer.

This is not the first such incident at the zoo. On 8 August 2021, another blue-and-yellow macaw went missing from the same enclosure. That bird was later found at a house in Ratmalana.

Govt vets...

As a result, veterinary services at all Government-run animal health offices across the country are expected to be disrupted. The strike is also likely to impact the operations of the Department of Zoological Gardens, the

Department of Wildlife Conservation, quarantine units at ports and airports, and veterinary services under Provincial Councils.

Dr. Kumara said the association has taken this step as a symbolic warning, emphasising that further trade union action will be considered if their demands are not met.

Matara Prison...

The Minister highlighted that the existing premises of the Matara Prison do not provide adequate space for the essential operations of a prison facility. As a result, both prison officers and inmates are facing significant difficulties. He noted that relocating the prison to Kotawila has been identified as the most viable solution, and necessary arrangements are now underway to expedite the move.

He further explained that the new Matara Court Complex has already been established in

Kotawila, and land has been allocated nearby for the construction of the new prison. Nanayakkara also pointed out that the Matara Prison suffered damages during recent unrest, and these conditions were also taken into consideration during the decision-making process.

The Minister added that the land where the current prison stands could be repurposed due to its historical value, aligning with the country’s broader development plans. He assured that further discussions will be held and swift action will be taken to proceed with the relocation.

Namal slams...

Speaking at a press conference, Rajapaksa highlighted what he described as a “disturbing wave of violence,” noting that at least 50 daylight shootings have been reported since January.

“This is the state of law and order today,” he said. “People no longer feel safe. Criminal networks are operating with impunity in broad daylight.”

Police have linked many of the incidents to turf wars involving organised crime groups, contributing to growing public anxiety over security. Rajapaksa also criticised Sri Lanka Customs over the release of 323 containers in January, alleging they were cleared without proper inspection. He argued that the lack of oversight raised serious concerns about the possible entry

of contraband or other dangerous goods.

“What guarantees do we have that narcotics or prohibited items weren’t smuggled in?” he asked. He further questioned the reported release of a prison inmate convicted of financial fraud under a Presidential Pardon granted during the Vesak holiday. The Presidential Media Division has denied any such approval, prompting a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probe into how the individual was released.

“How was a convicted fraudster allowed to walk free?” Rajapaksa said. “Was this an administrative error or something more serious?”

He criticised the administration for failing to deliver on its promises of reform and discipline. “They came to power pledging order and good governance. But six months in, all we see is chaos and confusion,” he said.

Health authorities raise...

He warned that early symptoms of both dengue and chikungunya are often similar, including fever, headache, body aches, and vomiting. “If these symptoms persist for more than two days, individuals are strongly advised to seek medical attention immediately,” Dr. Liyanapathirana said.

Highlighting the nature of chikungunya, he noted that joint pain is often more severe than in dengue. He cautioned against the unsupervised use of painkillers, which could lead to serious complications, urging the public to rely on paracetamol for pain and fever relief.

The doctor also recommended staying well-hydrated to prevent dehydration, advising the

intake of fluids such as water, fruit juices, soup, and oral rehydration solutions like Jeevani.

Dr. Liyanapathirana stressed that only a medical diagnosis can differentiate between the two illnesses and emphasised the importance of consulting a doctor for proper identification and treatment.

He further noted that in some cases of chikungunya, patients may experience prolonged joint pain lasting weeks or even months, which requires ongoing medical care.

He urged the public to take precautions, eliminate mosquito breeding grounds, and seek timely medical attention to prevent complications.

Most rail accidents...

Adding to the discussion, the Additional General Manager of the Mechanical Division, K.K. Hewavithana, announced that the department has secured approval to purchase five new

train carriage sets. He noted that all new additions will be air-conditioned third-class coaches, aimed at improving commuter comfort on long-distance services.

Poson security,...

Nearly 3,500 Police officers have been deployed to ensure the safety of pilgrims and manage the expected influx of devotees. These officers will be responsible for maintaining security, controlling traffic, assisting with life-saving operations near rivers, and performing duties both in uniform and civic attire.

ASP Wootler urged those attending the pilgrimage to take necessary precautions to safeguard their valuables, keep the sacred sites clean, and avoid bringing plastic or polythene. He also requested the public to cooperate with Police officers who have been deployed for the safety of the devotees, and to approach them if any assistance is needed.

As much of the public attention during the Poson season is centred around Anuradhapura, the Police have taken steps to implement a special traffic plan in and

around the city. Several designated parking areas have been established to ease traffic congestion and ensure orderly vehicle movement. These parking locations include the Ruwanwelisaya Car Park, Ruwanwelisaya VIP Car Park, Mirisawetiya Car Park, Wata Wandana Car Park, Isurumuniya School Car Park, Thuparamaya Cemetery Car Park, Sandahiru Seya Car Park, Old Bhikshu Vidyalā Car Park, Abhayagiriya Car Park, Lankarama Car Park, Samadhi Buddha Statue Car Park, Jethavanarama Car Park, Nellikulama School Car Park, Puravidya Junction Car Park, Old Prison Car Park and Kurunegala Junction Car Park.

Motorists are advised to make use of these designated areas and follow the instructions of Police officers to ensure a smooth and safe Poson festival experience for all.

Wife of former SM...

The arrest follows a Court Case (No. 495/08/20) filed in the Colombo Magistrate’s Court No. 9, accusing Nanayakkara, a businesswoman, of failing to pay more than Rs 700 million in income tax over several years.

Nanayakkara serves as a Director of Green Lanka Travels, Green Seed Lanka, and Green Sri Lanka Shipping. Investigators allege she deliberately evaded taxes on income earned through these enterprises, despite being repeatedly notified by tax authorities over the years.

After multiple official warnings went unheeded, the Inland Revenue Department sought legal action, which led the Colombo Magistrate’s Court to issue three summonses and subsequently an open warrant for her arrest, citing her continuous failure to appear in Court.

In a startling revelation, it was reported that

Nanayakkara had travelled overseas on at least four occasions while the open warrant was still active — raising concerns about enforcement delays.

Owing to the lack of prompt action, the Magistrate issued a direct order to Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP) Priyantha Weerasooriya, demanding her immediate arrest and production in Court.

Following this directive, the Central Crimes Investigation Division, under the guidance of Director SSP Shani Abeysekara, launched a special operation that led to her arrest at a house in Narahenpita. The house, owned by one of her uncles, had reportedly been used as a hideout.

During the operation, Nanayakkara allegedly attempted to flee through a back door but was thwarted by the Police team, who had already surrounded the premises.

DMC implements safety measures for Poson pilgrims

BY NAALIR JAMALDEEN

The regional office of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) for the Anuradhapura District, under the supervision and guidelines from the Head Office in Colombo, has planned to implement special measures to ensure the protection of the large number of devotees who are to visit from across the country for Poson Poya, which falls on 10 June.

Pradeep Kodippili, Director of Media and Public Awareness Division at the DMC Head Office in Colombo, said yesterday (8) that routinely the DMC's Anuradhapura office implements a special programme during the Poson season every year to safeguard the devotees who visit the sacred cities of Mihintale and Anuradhapura.

He said that this year too, special disaster management plans have already been implemented in the sacred cities of Mihintale and Anuradhapura to safeguard the pilgrims from falling victim to unexpected disasters and to protect their lives in the event of any unforeseen disaster.

The special plan will be operational during the season under the supervision of the Anuradhapura District Secretary and the Divisional Secretaries of the respective areas, and will be coordinated by the DMC's regional office for Anuradhapura District, according to Kodippili.

"The Special Operation Room at the DMC Head Office will be operational until the completion of the Poson Festival (Poya) season. In any disaster situation, assistance can be obtained by contacting the DMC Hotline 117 at any time. In addition, a special rescue team has been deployed at vulnerable locations for disasters such as lakes, rivers and other water bodies," Kodippili said.

The rescue teams have been deployed in the vicinity of Rajanganaya, Nachchaduwa, Tissa Wewa and Nuwara Wewa reservoirs and Basawakkulama Wewa, and in addition, necessary arrangements have been

made to deploy such a team in the Mahakanadawara Wewa area, according to Kodippili.

Kodippili stated that the lifeguard team of Richmond College has volunteered until the completion of the Poson season and added that awareness billboards have been installed at disaster-prone locations with support from private sector entities.

The lifeguard teams have been provided with the required number of lifejackets and engine boats, and the lifeguard teams from the Police and Navy will also be deployed until the completion of Poson Poya. These teams will provide maximum service to the public in terms of disaster management, he said.

He said, "It is important to draw the attention of the majority of the public. The DMC is coordinating with the State machinery of District Secretaries and Divisional Secretaries. The DMC has made arrangements to notify the public about climate change in coordination with the Meteorology Department."

Citing weather predictions by the Meteorology Department, Kodippili said an increase in rainfall can be expected after 10 June. The DMC has made every arrangement to issue weather forecasts from time to time about possible weather changes in these areas.

Kodippili said, "All agencies which disseminate disaster warnings have been kept on alert. Special arrangements have been made to disseminate disaster-related information to the public on time. The public has been instructed by the DMC to avoid bathing or swimming in unsafe locations in rivers or reservoirs."

Four persons drowned yesterday (8) while bathing in the Aralaganwila Tank in the Polonnaruwa District and have been identified as residents of the Ratmalana area in the Colombo District. Due to unsafe bathing or swimming, the country loses a large number of lives every year. People visiting Anuradhapura must strictly adhere to safety precautions to safeguard their lives from unwanted disasters, Kodippili added.

CTU ALLEGES APPOINTMENT OF UNDERQUALIFIED TEACHERS

BY MITHUN JAYAWARDHANA

Ceylon Teachers' Union (CTU) General Secretary Joseph Stalin alleged that 75 individuals had been appointed as teachers by the Western Provincial Education Ministry, with 70 of them having earned Bachelor of Education degrees from private institutions — many reportedly completing their degrees in less than a year.

Stalin expressed deep concern over what he described as an 'injustice' to State university graduates who have followed more rigorous and time-consuming academic paths. He called on the Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Harini Amarasuriya, to immediately engage with teachers' unions to clarify the Government's stance on the matter.

"It is deeply ironic that Harini Amarasuriya, who once stood with us against the privatisation of education, is now part of a government that is undermining free education by legitimising teacher appointments from private degree mills," Stalin said.

He also accused the Government of attempting to dismantle Sri Lanka's free



education system by promoting private university qualifications and even allowing private education institutions to gain influence within government-run schools.

Chairman of the All Ceylon United Teachers' Union, Ven. Yalwela Pannasekara Thera, echoed Stalin's concerns, condemning what he termed as the 'backdoor legalisation' of private education. He accused the Government of betraying its pre-election promises and warned that appointing inadequately qualified individuals to teaching roles would degrade educational standards across the country.

"These so-called graduates have secured teaching posts after completing online degrees in less than a year. The quality of education will be significantly compromised if such practices are allowed to continue," the Venerable Thera warned.

Meanwhile, the General Secretary of the Government Teachers' Association, Indika Paranavithana, made even stronger allegations, claiming that some of the private graduates had falsely declared to a foreign university — believed to be based in the United States — that they studied in Sri Lanka for four years, thereby fraudulently obtaining degrees in under a year.

"The Government is knowingly accepting these questionable qualifications and endangering the credibility of the entire education system," Paranavithana said.



India-SL forum explores capital access via GIFT City

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), Government of India, NSE International Exchange (NSE IX), and CareEdge Global, in collaboration with the High Commission of India in Colombo, Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ILCCI), TWCorp (Pvt) Ltd, and the Indian CEO Forum (ICF), organised an event titled 'Credit and Capital: Building Trust through Ratings and Regulations' recently in Colombo.

The event was graced by the chief guest, Dr. Harshana Suriyapperuma, Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning, Government of Sri Lanka, and witnessed participation from key stakeholders, including representatives from the Government of Sri Lanka, Indian and Sri Lankan banks, IFSCA, NSE IX, CareEdge Global, members of various trade chambers, media, and think tanks.

The primary focus of the event was on India's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City, which offers access to global capital at competitive costs, attractive tax incentives, and a



regulatory framework aligned with global best practices.

The event commenced with welcome remarks delivered by the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, Santosh Jha, and was followed by detailed presentations by Pradeep Ramakrishnan, Executive Director, International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, Revati Parag Kasture, CEO, CareEdge Global, and Venkataramani Balasubramaniam, CEO, NSE International Exchange (NSE IX), offering insights into the evolving GIFT City ecosystem, credit rating mechanisms, and recent regulatory reforms that have enhanced its global competitiveness.

The National Stock Exchange also provided an overview of the listing requirements for companies seeking to access international capital markets through GIFT City.

A panel discussion moderated by Thilan Wijesinghe, Chairman, TWCorp, featured an engaging exchange among experts on key themes such as access to global capital, international regulatory frameworks, tax and financial incentives, and the potential for Sri Lankan companies to raise capital at affordable rates while linking with a dynamic and emerging financial ecosystem in India.

The event served as a catalyst for further advancing collaborative efforts across financial and investment-related domains.

SLIC Life in Anuradhapura to assist Poson pilgrims

Sri Lanka Insurance Life will be in Anuradhapura from 9 to 11 June, extending round-the-clock, 24-hour support to thousands of pilgrims visiting the sacred city to commemorate Poson Poya.

In collaboration with the Anuradhapura District Secretariat, a special service will be in operation to assist in locating lost individuals and belongings across key pilgrimage sites.

The main coordination centres will be located at Pethmaga, supported by five sub-centres strategically placed at Mahamevna Uyana, Sinha Kuluna, Mirisavetiya, Thuparama, and Sandahiru Seya.

Additionally, a dedicated wheelchair service will be available to support pilgrims with mobility needs, ensuring a more comfortable and inclusive spiritual journey.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INCORPORATION

The following company has been incorporated under the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007.

Company Name: LUNA CAREER DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY (Pvt) Ltd.

Company Number: PV 00329353

Date of Incorporation: 09.05.2025

Registered Office Address: 292/7/1, 15th lane, Hansagiri Road, Gampaha

Kanthi Perera
Director

Prof. Junaideen appointed SEUSL Vice-Chancellor



BY M.A.P. DEEN – AMPARA

Prof. S.M. Junaideen has been appointed as the 6th Vice-Chancellor of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) by President Anura Kumara Disasanayake.

He assumed duties at the Vice-Chancellor's Office of the University in the presence of Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr. U.L. Abdul Majeed, Acting Registrar M.I. Nowfer, and Deans of the Faculties.

Prof. Junaideen, who hails from Maruthamunai in the Ampara District, has



already served as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of this University for three consecutive terms. Earlier, Prof. Junaideen served as a professional engineer for many reputed engineering firms in Singapore and Hong Kong. He also served as Senior Engineer and Geotechnical Engineer for ARUP in Singapore, and as Design Engineer for AECOM, Hong Kong.

He is an old boy of Maruthamunai Shums Central College.

Public Auction

Unredeemed gold articles during the agreed period of mortgage shall be sold by public auction at City Office which was to be held on 17th June 2025, **had been postponed to 24th June 2025 from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm.**

Regret any inconvenience caused.



Manager
COMMERCIAL CREDIT & FINANCE PLC

City Office
No.165, Kynsey Road,
Colombo 08



සියපත ෆිනෑන්ස්
சியபத் பிணான்ஸ்
Siyapatha Finance
(Finance Company of Sampath Bank Group)

Public Auction Notice

The gold items pledged at all branches of Siyapatha Finance PLC up to 28th February 2025 and not redeemed before the agreed date will be sold at public auction on the following date to recover the money due from the gold loan borrowers.

The public auction will commence on 20th June 2025 at 9.30 a.m. at the Siyapatha Finance Head Office, No. 111, Dudley Senanayake Mawatha, Colombo 08.

Siyapatha Finance PLC reserves the right to cancel, postpone, or merge this auction with another branch's auction if necessary.

Chief Operating Officer
Siyapatha Finance PLC
No. 111, Dudley Senanayake Mawatha,
Colombo 08.

Registration No. PB 917PQ

For more information : 0117605605

Siyapatha Finance PLC is a finance company licensed by the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka under Finance Business Act No: 42 of 2011.

Registered Business Address:
Siyapatha Finance PLC, 111, Dudley Senanayake Mawatha,
Colombo 08.



Complaints and suggestions

Fitch Rating - A(ika); Outlook Stable



The Future of Television:
CAN TRADITIONAL TV SURVIVE THE OTT REVOLUTION?

The Electrical, Electronics, and Telecommunication Sectional Committee of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka (IESL) last week organised a timely and engaging public lecture titled "The Future of Television." The session was delivered by Engineer (Dr.) Darshitha Diyanath Samarakoon, a veteran in television technology with nearly two decades of industry experience.

Focusing on the dynamic transformation reshaping the global television landscape, the presentation explored the rise of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and local streaming services, which are rapidly redefining content consumption patterns. As audience behaviour continues to shift in favour of on-demand, personalised, and mobile-accessible content, traditional broadcasters are under increasing pressure to adapt or risk obsolescence.

A key point explored during the discussion was how OTT services have changed consumer expectations. Unlike traditional TV, which relies on fixed schedules and one-way communication, OTT platforms offer flexibility, interactivity, and access across multiple devices. Viewers now expect to consume content at their convenience, an expectation particularly prevalent among younger demographics.

The current global trends in both OTT and conventional broadcasting were also examined. Despite the surge in OTT adoption and investment, traditional television remains a strong presence in specific segments, including live sports, news, and regionally tailored content. This dual relevance indicates a possible future of coexistence, where both platforms serve complementary roles rather than one replacing the other entirely.

Challenges facing traditional broadcasters were clearly outlined. These include declining



viewership, fragmented advertising markets, rising content production costs, and the pressing need for infrastructure modernisation. However, opportunities still exist, especially for broadcasters that can leverage local trust, audience familiarity, and regulatory presence to innovate and transition effectively into the digital age.

Attention was also drawn to Sri Lanka's evolving media landscape. The nation is gradually embracing OTT technologies, particularly in urban centres and among digitally fluent users. Nonetheless, traditional television remains dominant in rural areas, where internet connectivity and affordability remain significant barriers. Additionally, the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework for OTT services has contributed to an uneven and sometimes fragmented transition.

One of the most critical points highlighted was the urgent need for Sri Lanka to transition from analog to digital terrestrial television broadcasting. This

shift, it was emphasised, is vital not only for aligning with international technological standards but also for unlocking a host of user benefits. Chief among them is the release of valuable frequency spectrum, referred to as the "digital dividend" which can be redirected to enhance mobile broadband and support other essential national services. The digital migration was presented as more than a technical upgrade; it was framed as a strategic necessity for modernising the broadcasting ecosystem, improving accessibility and service quality, and generating far-reaching socio-economic benefits. Widely appreciated by attendees, the importance of implementing this transformation without delay was strongly underscored as a national imperative.

As the global television industry undergoes rapid change, driven by emerging technologies and shifting consumer habits, the need for adaptation has never been greater. For traditional television to remain relevant, embracing digital transformation and integrating with new platforms is essential. In the Sri Lankan context, addressing the dual priorities of expanding OTT adoption and completing the digital broadcasting transition will be pivotal. The future of television lies not in choosing between old and new, but in building a cohesive, inclusive, and forward-looking media environment for all.



Navigate Sri Lanka 2025
Shaping the future of sustainable trade

The Department of Business Economics of the University of Sri Jaywardenepura, Sri Lanka's pioneering department in economic and management education, recently hosted the Navigate Sri Lanka 2025 Industry Forum, organised by its final-year undergraduates. Since its inception in 2002, the department has remained committed to bridging academic theory with practical business needs. Navigate, now in its sixth consecutive year, reflects this mission, serving as a collaborative platform that brings together students, academics, alumni, and corporate leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue on emerging economic and policy challenges.

This year's forum was held on 28 May 2025 under the theme "Sri Lanka's Role in Global Sustainable Trade: Aligning Policies and Enhancing Competitiveness for a Sustainable Supply Chain." The discussion brought to the forefront some of the most pressing questions facing Sri Lanka's external sector in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

This year's forum featured a high-profile panel comprising Nimesha Jayakody (CEO, Frontier Research Pvt Ltd), Yohan Lawrence (Secretary General, Joint Apparel Association Forum), Rozanne De Almeida (Head of Trade, Hatton National Bank PLC), and Talal Rafi (Director - Business Consulting, Ernst & Young Sri Lanka).

The discussion tackled critical themes shaping Sri Lanka's export future, including the impact of Trump-era tariffs, shifting global supply chains, and the



vulnerabilities of Sri Lanka's USD 12 billion export economy. Panellists highlighted that while these tariffs represent a global challenge, Sri Lanka could gain a relative advantage if trade negotiations result in lower tariff exposure compared to regional peers. However, they also stressed the need to eliminate para-tariffs as a gesture of goodwill in advancing US-Sri Lanka trade relations.

Though Sri Lanka currently enjoys macroeconomic stability along with fiscal and external surpluses, the panel underlined the urgency of trade liberalisation,

policy reform, and sustainability integration as essential to remaining globally competitive. Further discussions examined trade finance barriers, struggles within the apparel sector, and the importance of digital trade facilitation, including the need to implement a National Single Window for investment and customs integration.

The event was proudly supported by Frontier Research (Bronze Partner), MLP Group (Complementary Partner), The Brownie Station and Munchee Kome (Gift Partners), and Ceylon Today (Official Printed Media Partner).

Navigate Sri Lanka 2025 stood out as a timely and impactful initiative. It reinforced the department's commitment to real-world learning and its role in shaping national conversations around sustainable trade, competitiveness, and economic transformation.



World's largest carpet manufacturer, Shaw Industries, and Alpha Industries Form strategic alliance to elevate commercial interiors in Sri Lanka

Alpha Industries, one of Sri Lanka's most trusted names in interior and manufacturing solutions – proudly announces its partnership with Shaw Contract, a commercial flooring brand under Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer and a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway. This collaboration brings Shaw Contract's world-class, high-performance flooring to Alpha Industries' extensive portfolio, with the shared goal of delivering smart, design-forward, and environmentally responsible interiors across commercial, hospitality, and mixed-use developments.

Two partners with shared values

Headquartered in Dalton, Georgia, Shaw Industries carries almost 80 years of history and produces USD 6 billion in annual revenue, with approximately 22,000 employees worldwide. The company's mission is to create flooring solutions that positively impact people and the planet. The new alliance between Shaw Contract and Alpha Industries supports that mission by making it easier for Sri Lankan architects, designers, and developers to access products that are optimised for low embodied carbon, contribute to the health & well-being of occupants, and perform in diverse and



Edward Mak, Shaw Contract's Regional Vice President, Southeast and Northeast Asia

demanding spaces.

Alpha Industries has earned a reputation for quality and trust over the past six decades. Known for pioneering steel furniture and safe manufacturing in Sri Lanka, Alpha has evolved into a total interior solutions provider with a growing footprint in commercial sector. This synergy with Shaw Contract reflects a shared commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, and customer-first service.

"Alpha Industries has long understood what it means to build with purpose and integrity," said Edward Mak, Shaw Contract's Regional Vice President, Southeast and Northeast Asia. "We are



Safraz Careem, CEO/Director, Alpha Industries Pvt Ltd

thrilled to collaborate with a partner who not only shares our values but also brings deep local expertise to meet the needs of designers, project managers, and end users in Sri Lanka."

Supporting designers and decision-makers

The Shaw Contract-Alpha partnership is designed to support a wide range of stakeholders in the building and design community. It improves access to in-stock solutions and quick-response information for flooring dealers, including details on cost, maintenance and product availability. Architects and designers will

benefit from streamlined local support through Alpha's team, enabling faster decision-making with curated collections that emphasise design, performance and sustainability leadership. For facilities managers and end users, the alliance prioritises efficiency and durability – Shaw Contract flooring is engineered for quick installation, minimal disruption and long-term performance across sectors like workplace, hospitality, multifamily and education.

Every collection offered through Alpha Industries will be supported with the technical resources, installation expertise and aftercare service both companies are known for.

Design with purpose, backed by science

Shaw Contract's commitment to sustainability and material health will now have a wider impact in the region. The suite of carpet tile using EcoSolutions Q100 on Ecoworx backing achieve leading health scores – including WELL and LEED – and are optimised for circularity and low embodied carbon. 90% of the available collections are Cradle to Cradle® Certified and manufactured in carbon-neutral facilities, aligning with global ESG benchmarks and helping projects meet their sustainability goals.

A future built on collaboration

This partnership is not only about access to flooring – it's about creating environments where people can thrive. From vibrant office spaces to serene hospitality settings, Shaw Contract and Alpha Industries are here to support the complete journey of design and delivery.

With showrooms and customer service centers across Sri Lanka, Alpha Industries will provide hands-on access to Shaw Contract samples, product insights and design consultation.

"We are honoured to represent Shaw Contract in Sri Lanka," said Safraz Careem, CEO/Director, Alpha Industries. "This partnership allows us to offer our clients global design standards with localised support and insights. Together, we are confident in setting new standards for flooring in commercial interiors."

Shaw Contract, a brand of Shaw Industries Group – a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway – designs flooring solutions that make a smarter impact on people and the planet. With global reach and a purpose-driven approach, Shaw Contract serves diverse sectors including workplace, hospitality, multifamily and education.

Below is a summary of a recent interview with Mark Salter (MS) about his forthcoming Book, *From Independence to Aragalaya: A Modern History of Sri Lanka*, conducted by *Jurist.org*.

Mark Salter is a Journalist, Analyst and Writer, and the Author of *To End a Civil War*:

Norway's Peace Engagement in Sri Lanka (Hurst, 2015). A former BBC Radio Journalist, he first visited Sri Lanka in 2002, and has lived mostly on the island since 2019.

What was it that made you interested in the ethnic conflict and Sri Lankan history?

MS: I've been working on issues of conflict, democracy, reconciliation, and conflict management for over 30 years, in places like former Yugoslavia, Central and Eastern Europe, Iraq, and Somalia. I first visited Sri Lanka in 2002. When you travel a lot there are some countries you find interesting and then move on. But with a few places, you feel a pull — "I like this place, I want to understand it better." That's what happened with Sri Lanka from the very beginning.

The discourse around Sri Lanka's modern history is frequently framed in teleological terms. That is, people often speak as though the war was the inevitable outcome of everything that came before. I don't subscribe to that view. While I accept that events are connected, I draw a line at determinism. The fact of British colonialism and its violent, extractive legacy should not be minimised for a moment. But to say that this alone made the civil war inevitable is, in my view, inaccurate and unhelpful.

The war didn't erupt simply because of colonialism. It emerged from the particular convergence of ideologies, decisions, and power structures that came into play after independence. These were rooted in earlier dynamics, but they took on new forms in the post-colonial context. After the British left, power shifted to a Sinhalese-majority government, whose leadership made a series of choices — especially in relation to ethnic politics — that systematically marginalised the Tamil population. These choices played a central role in the lead-up to the war. But again, this trajectory wasn't preordained; it was contingent on specific political and social developments of that time.

This distinction is vital, particularly in the Sri Lankan context, where both Sinhalese and Tamil narratives often fall into deterministic readings of history. You'll hear Sinhalese nationalists point to ancient invasions, or Tamil nationalists refer to British favouritism in employing Tamils in colonial administration, as though these factors alone explain everything that followed. I would argue that we need to pay closer attention to the post-independence actors, ideologies, and institutions that shaped events.

Going further back to the immediate post-independence era, I wish the Ceylon authorities had paid more attention to what was happening in India. If we look at India's federal framework, especially the language provisions, wouldn't it have been beneficial if Ceylon had followed a similar model?

I remember an Indian scholar telling me that if you compare Sri Lanka and India, looking at the position of Tamils in the immediate post-independence period and then jumping to the 1980s, what becomes clear is that in Sri Lanka, while before independence Tamils had been very prominent in the Ceylon National Congress, by the mid-1980s they had mostly shifted to a position of sympathy with the LTTE.

In contrast, in India, particularly in Madras State, the first 20 years of Indian independence saw a strong anti-Hindi movement. The Tamils there, especially those in the Dravidian movement, did not necessarily want to be part of an all-Indian polity. It was only thanks to the federal structure and language provisions the post-independence Indian state adopted that this sentiment began to shift. By the 1970s, Tamil Nadu had become an integral part of the Indian polity. Meanwhile, Sri Lankan Tamils shifted from broadly supporting national independence to supporting the LTTE. This difference in political settlements and the respective outcomes is striking.

What is the central argument in your new book?

MS: Sri Lanka's modern crisis stems fundamentally from a crisis of governance. The country has been poorly governed for decades. Since J.R. Jayewardene, we've seen the consolidation of a political elite that entrenched itself in power across both major parties: over time corruption, nepotism, and other hallmarks of bad governance became deeply embedded in this political system.

The 2022 Aragalaya protests laid this bare. Although largely driven by Sinhalese,

CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE AND FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY



If bad governance has been Sri Lanka's defining crisis, then the path forward must be rooted in structural reform — improving leadership, dismantling the nexus between corrupt politicians and business elites, and ensuring accountability

there was notable participation from the Muslim and Tamil communities. At its core, the movement was a mass rejection of how the country had been governed. Gotabaya Rajapaksa merely brought decades of misrule to a tipping point.

If bad governance has been Sri Lanka's defining crisis, then the path forward must be rooted in structural reform — improving leadership, dismantling the nexus between corrupt politicians and business elites, and ensuring accountability. The clearest sign of bad governance has been the collapse of the economy, but the damage goes far beyond that.

The challenge now is whether the government can do more than satisfy IMF benchmarks. Can it actually improve the lives of ordinary Sri Lankans? Can it reverse the conditions highlighted by last year's UNDP data — widespread poverty, hunger, and families skipping meals? We're far from that goal. My first argument, then, is that Sri Lanka's core crisis is one of governance — marked by identifiable, addressable failures.

My second point concerns identity. Ethnic identity in Sri Lanka — Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher — has rigidified, but historically these identities were rather more fluid. Both in terms of personal identity and everyday coexistence, the picture before the war was more nuanced. With the notable exceptions of anti-Tamil violence in 1956, 1958, and to some extent in 1977, interethnic relations resembled those in other South Asian nations. That's not to deny tensions, but the broader pattern was one of living together, with overlapping identities and mutual tolerance. And one of the war's most tragic outcomes has been the erosion of that coexistence.

On the economic front, some argue that the neoliberal policies implemented during the J.R. Jayewardene era had long-term detrimental effects.

MS: I'm no fan of J.R., but your depiction of his policies is somewhat skewed. A key motivation behind his liberalisation of the economy was what he

had observed over the previous 15 years. Under Sirimavo, the country was on the brink of default. Deteriorating international terms of trade were a key part of the problem. Sri Lanka's balance of payments, and its ability to sustain the very substantial social security network you described, were both becoming almost impossible to maintain. This challenge had existed since Senanayake's time, due to the highly protectionist policies he adopted. The price of rice, for example, was kept at a government-set level — any attempt to change that led to national strikes. It was a social market economy, but one in which protectionism played a major role.

Under Sirimavo, this went even further — she nationalised major sectors, including the petroleum industry. To be fair, these types of policies were quite common in the early 1970s, and Sri Lanka wasn't alone in adopting them.

By the time J.R. came into power, however, there was a growing consensus that the economic situation was untenable. The country simply could not sustain its level of social protection without also attracting significant investment. In J.R.'s view, liberalisation was the path to doing that — bringing money into the country. Beyond this, the debate shifts into more ideological territory. I agree that neoliberal governance contributed to the crisis. But it wasn't the sole cause.

A major part of the problem was Sri Lanka's political elite: both before and after independence, a small coterie of families monopolised power. By the 2000s the Rajapaksas had joined this elite circle, but even before them, a tiny group of families produced most of the country's leaders.

So, yes, I agree that economic liberalisation had serious consequences — particularly in exacerbating inequality. But some degree of reform was necessary, not least to attract investment. The tragedy is that both Jayewardene and his successors squandered the resulting opportunities. Much of the money they borrowed simply ended up funding the war.

I want to briefly turn to the ethnic issue.

MS: Let me remind you of the

comparison with India. Broadly speaking, at the time of independence, the average Tamil was, at worst neutral, and at best supportive of Sri Lankan independence. By and large, Tamils saw themselves as an inextricable part of the new polity.

I would depict the ethnic conflict's evolution in three broad phases. Up until the late 1950s, the central issues concerned foundational state structures: What would be the official language? Who would be employed by the state? How would representation be distributed among ethnic groups? These were formative, ethnic questions — essentially, how would the cards be dealt now?

This formative period lasts roughly until the assassination of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1959. From then until the early 1970s, the focus of Tamil political struggle shifted to legislative institutions. To their great credit, under leaders like Chelvanayakam, Tamils sought to resolve their grievances through democratic channels, supplemented by nonviolent direct action — satyagraha, sit-ins, and other creative protests.

However, despite repeated dialogues and some attempts at settlement, very little tangible progress was made. No firm agreements emerged on issues like language policy or university admissions. The latter, especially, became deeply contentious when standardisation policies were introduced, which Tamils rightly saw as attempts to limit their access to higher education.

After about a decade of political engagement, a new generation of Tamils began emerging in the early to mid-1970s. These younger Tamils did not share their parents' faith in parliamentary debate or traditional political avenues. Their questions were more urgent: When will we get the university access we deserve? When will we get fair representation? When will we get our language rights? This marked the beginning of a shift from democratic to extra-parliamentary and eventually violent struggle.

That said, the move to militancy was neither immediate nor widespread. In the early years, the LTTE were a fringe group — small, marginal, and not representative of the broader Tamil population. But with the outbreak of civil war, and especially after the watershed moment of Black July in 1983, things changed. That was the

flashpoint when large numbers of young Tamils decided to join 'the Boys', as the LTTE came to be known, and a number of other armed groups.

By the end of the '90s President Kumaratunga (CBK) had tabled her constitutional reform proposal. It's crucial to recognise, though, that the reason it failed was mainly due to classic Sinhalese bipolar politics. Specifically, Ranil Wickremesinghe, UNP leader, and supporters tore up a copy of her draft constitution in Parliament, which contained many of the same ideas they had proposed two years earlier. The difference was simply that it came from the other party.

What has happened again and again through the years is that when one party proposes something, the other opposes it simply because it came from the other side. This dynamic led, for example, to CBK's undermining any realistic chance of reviving peace talks in late 2003. When the LTTE tabled their Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal, she responded by calling it a threat to national security, sacking the Defence Minister, and regaining control of the government from Ranil, completely undermining the peace process.

To go back a bit, by the end of the '90s there was an implicit understanding between the two sides: "We could keep fighting this forever, but it's a stalemate. No one will win, and we're all suffering." This is why both sides approached the Norwegians, asking if they would facilitate peace talks.

This was an extraordinary move, especially by the LTTE. A common mistake is to suggest that the peace process simply empowered the LTTE, giving them an opportunity to buy more weapons and supplies. But it's important to remember that Prabhakaran agreed to the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) at the height of the LTTE's military strength. From a traditional military perspective, this was hardly the ideal time to seek peace — which in turn suggests that there was some genuine interest on their side. I'm not sure this interest lasted long, but there was clearly an opening.

Much of the commentary confuses the role of the facilitator — for example blaming the facilitator for the fact that the war didn't end, or that it didn't end in one side's favour. A facilitator's role is just that: to bring the two sides together. They are only as strong as the parties they're working with. And if those parties don't sustain their commitment, how could the process possibly succeed?

The JVP has now come into power with a supermajority. Historically, the party was anti-Tamil, but they have now garnered significant support, even within the Tamil-dominated North. They're not introducing major reforms nearly as fast as expected.

MS: You called them the JVP, but you never hear about the JVP now. It's all about the NPP, and I can't help but feel this is a conscious attempt to keep the JVP brand out of sight.

We're seeing two things. First, this administration is mostly made up of people who have never been in government before, with very little experience of the mechanics of getting things done in Sri Lanka — not always an easy task. It requires time, patience, and commitment to move things forward, including in Parliament, all the committee processes, and the bureaucratic side of Sri Lankan governance. This is proving to be an obstacle, as we can see in the lack of speed with which things are happening.

The second thing is that in terms of this government's priorities, for all the rhetoric around 'We are now one country', the national question, reconciliation is not their number one priority. They may not even be number two or three. They are on the list — I don't think they're completely unprepared to do anything about them. I just think they're being pulled in other directions. And of course, the economy is number one.

I don't intend this as an excuse, but it may be part of the explanation for what's happening. What I'm not getting is that one of the obstacles is residual JVP anti-Tamil sentiment. Sometimes Tilvin Silva says things that make me think, "That sounds like the old JVP to me." But apart from that, I'm really not picking up such sentiment from them. If you're looking for some encouragement, that could be one measure of hope. It might lead one to conclude that, for example, if AKD is thinking in terms of his overall Presidency, possibly addressing Tamil rights will come in part two. I certainly hope so.

From Independence to Aragalaya: A Modern History of Sri Lanka will be published by Hurst in late 2025.

EXCHANGE RATES 06.06.2025

Currency	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
Australian Dollar	189.6166	199.3190
Canadian Dollar	214.5478	223.0531
Chinese Yuan (Renminbi)	40.2313	42.7924
Euro	335.7228	348.5339
Japanese Yen	2.0431	2.1199
Singapore Dollar	227.5741	237.4829
Sterling Pound	398.9380	413.0253
Swiss Franc	356.7357	372.8066
US Dollar	294.9831	303.4025

Country	Currency	Indicative Rate
Bahrain	Bahrain Dinar	793.8000
Kuwait	Kuwait Dinar	975.5982
Oman	Oman Rial	777.3868
Qatar	Qatar Riyal	82.1314
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabian Riyal	79.7938
UAE	UAE Dirham	81.4885

Source: CBSL

Understanding the Strategic Value of Listing on the Colombo Stock Exchange

Kanishka Munasinghe, Vice President of the Listing Division at the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), outlines the strategic value of listing on a stock exchange, explaining the role of the Listing Division, the benefits for companies, the broader economic impact, and essential considerations entities must assess before going public.



Kanishka Munasinghe, Vice President of the Listing Division

What is the role of the Listing Division at the CSE?

The Listing Division of the Colombo Stock Exchange supports both potential and existing listed companies in raising debt and equity capital through a diverse range of products. Its role includes reviewing applications from prospective issuers and granting approval to those that meet the required criteria and comply with the applicable rules for listing on the CSE, whilst positioning the CSE as the preferred platform for further capital raising by listed companies. The Division also strives to grant approvals within stipulated timelines, provided all documentation complies with the listing rules.

When reviewing initial listing applications, the Listing Division ensures that companies adhere to the applicable rules of the CSE and the CSE Listing Framework, which promote transparency and adequacy of disclosures in offer documents (i.e. prospectus, introductory document, and circular to shareholders).

The CSE's review process also includes an in-depth analysis of the potential issuer's financial performance in its current operating history, as well as a financial analysis for a pre-defined future period. All listing applications are reviewed by a dedicated Listing Review Committee comprising senior members of the CSE's management, who are responsible for granting listing approvals.

Overall, this review process ensures that potential issuers conduct IPOs, and that existing issuers carry out further issues of securities, in line with the rules, regulations, and procedures of the CSE.

In addition, the Listing Division of the CSE also:

- Advises listed companies, potential issuers, and investment banks on the listing of securities and the application of the CSE Listing Rules and Framework.
- Contributes to the formulation of policies and rules applicable to listed companies.
- Supports the implementation of strategic initiatives that are important to listed companies and potential issuers.
- Performs the necessary system entries to enable the listing of securities.

Could you elaborate on the key advantages a Company can unlock by accessing the Capital Market through listing on the Colombo Stock Exchange?

Listing allows companies to raise capital by issuing shares to the public through an Initial Public Offering (IPO) or further issues, offering advantages not typically seen in traditional funding methods such as borrowing. It helps companies diversify funding avenues for various purposes.

Funds raised through IPOs can be used for debt settlement, helping companies manage their gearing and reduce debt exposure, thereby strengthening their balance sheets. Funds can also be utilised for expansion and new business opportunities. Importantly, funds raised via an IPO can be used for any purpose, provided companies operate within the prevailing legal and regulatory frameworks.

Listing typically requires compliance with corporate governance rules, which improves transparency and accountability. This helps attract strategic investors seeking to invest in companies with sound governance.

Continued on Page 8

FINANCE TODAY

Dialogue on Credit and Capital: Building Trust through Ratings and Regulations

INDIA'S NSE IX EYES SRI LANKA IN GLOBAL FINANCE PUSH

GIFT City's growth opens new funding avenues for Lankan firms



High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha and Sri Lanka's Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning Dr Harshana Suriyapperuma with key organisers and participants of the Colombo event Credit and Capital: Building Trust through Ratings and Regulations, co-hosted by IFSCA, NSE IX, CareEdge Global, and partners including the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, TWC Corp, and the Indian CEO Forum

BY ISHARA GAMAGE

India's National Stock Exchange International Exchange (NSE IX), located at Gujarat's GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City), is accelerating its global expansion, with Sri Lanka emerging as a potential strategic partner, according to its CEO, Venkataramani Balasubramaniam.

Speaking at the Colombo event 'Credit and Capital: Building Trust through Ratings and Regulations', co-hosted by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), NSE IX, CareEdge Global, and partners including the High Commission of India, Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ILCCI), TWC Corp (Pvt) Ltd, and the Indian CEO Forum, Balasubramaniam highlighted the NSE's vision to facilitate dual listings for Sri Lankan companies seeking global capital.

He said Sri Lankan firms engaged in export-import activity or renewable energy development could gain access to India's vast investor base through dual listings. He noted that with Indian households allowed to remit up to USD 250,000 annually, the available pool of capital is significant.

He also spoke about the NSE's transformative journey since India's 1991 economic liberalisation. Now the world's largest exchange by equity trading volume and derivatives contracts, the NSE is leveraging its presence at GIFT City to attract global investors and issuers to India's evolving financial ecosystem.

Since its launch a few years ago, NSE IX has achieved rapid growth, recording an 88 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in trading volumes. Nifty futures traded on the IFSC platform now exceed those on India's domestic markets.

Entities operating within GIFT City benefit from a favourable tax regime, with zero transaction taxes, no capital gains levies, and a flat 9 per cent corporate tax. Through a remote "follow-the-sun" trading model, market participants based in New York, London, or Singapore can access Indian financial markets without maintaining a physical presence in India.

NSE IX has also formed a strategic partnership with the Singapore Exchange (SGX), which has helped double liquidity for Indian derivatives in under two years. Balasubramaniam emphasised the power of

international collaboration, stating: "One plus one doesn't mean two—it can become ten."

The NSE's newly launched Sustainability Exchange Platform is gaining momentum by enabling green bond and ESG-related listings. In addition, the presence of India's first unified financial regulator within the IFSC simplifies compliance for firms across sectors such as banking, insurance, and aviation finance.

Looking ahead, NSE IX plans to operate a near-24-hour market and onboard more global investors, positioning itself as a credible rival to financial hubs such as London and Singapore. Balasubramaniam concluded by stating that NSE IX is not only reforming India's capital markets but also helping to redefine the architecture of global finance. He added that partnerships with neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka could help reshape capital flows across South Asia and beyond.

The Colombo event was attended by Sri Lanka's Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning, Harshana Suriyapperuma, and brought together stakeholders from the Sri Lankan Government, Indian and Sri Lankan banks, IFSCA, NSE IX, CareEdge Global, and members of various chambers, think-tanks, and the media.

The main focus of the event was to showcase the opportunities available through India's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City, which offers access to global capital at competitive rates, tax incentives, and a regulatory framework aligned with international standards.

Welcome remarks were delivered by the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, Santosh Jha, followed by presentations from Pradeep Ramakrishnan, Executive Director of IFSCA, and Revati Parag Kasture, CEO of CareEdge Global. These sessions provided insights into the GIFT City ecosystem, credit rating methodologies, and the regulatory reforms that have enhanced the zone's international competitiveness.

The NSE also outlined the listing requirements for companies seeking access to international capital through GIFT City. A panel discussion, moderated by TWC Corp Chairman Thilain Wijesinghe, brought together experts who examined key topics such as access to global capital, regulatory frameworks, tax benefits, and the potential for Sri Lankan companies to raise funds at affordable rates while connecting with India's dynamic financial ecosystem.

Group Delivers Broad-Based Growth Across All Core Sectors

Vallibel One Posts Rs 16Bn Profit, Rs 122Bn Revenue

Strong Finance, Aluminium, Packaging Performance Drives Group Profits



Dhammika Perera, Chairman-Vallibel One PLC; S.H. Amarasekara, Co-Chairman-Vallibel One PLC; Yogadinusha Bhaskaran, Managing Director-Vallibel One PLC

Vallibel One PLC (CSE: VONE), Sri Lanka's leading diversified holding company, announced its consolidated financial results for the financial year ended 31 March 2025, reporting robust performance across all key metrics.

The Group recorded consolidated revenue of Rs 122.8 billion, reflecting a marginal year-on-year increase from Rs 122.3 billion, driven by continued expansion across its finance, tile, aluminium, and consumer segments. The Group reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 16.02 billion and EBITDA of Rs 34.5 billion, with net profit attributable to equity holders rising 19% to Rs 11.76 billion, compared to Rs 9.89 billion in the previous year.

In Q4 alone, Vallibel One posted a PAT of Rs 5.92 billion, a 30% increase compared to Rs 4.55 billion in Q4 FY2023/24. Profit before tax stood at Rs 7.94 billion, with gross margins sustained at 44% for the year.

Earnings per share (EPS) rose significantly to Rs 10.34, compared to Rs 8.69 a year ago, reflecting strong shareholder returns. Net asset value per share improved to Rs 95.74 from Rs 80.88, with total equity rising to Rs 158.3 billion, up from Rs 139.2 billion in FY2023/24. Total assets increased to Rs 406.8 billion, compared to Rs 346.6 billion in the previous year, driven by strategic investments and asset revaluations.

The finance sector, led by LB Finance PLC, recorded a profit after tax of Rs 10.86 billion for FY2024/25, marking a 12% year-on-year increase. This performance was driven by a 3% increase in net interest income and an impairment reversal of Rs 261 million, in contrast to a charge of Rs 270 million in the previous year. The cost-to-income ratio remained at a commendable 33%, positioning it among the best in the industry. The total asset base expanded by 19% year-on-year to Rs 241.9 billion, while the lending portfolio grew significantly by 23%, rising from Rs 162.5 billion to Rs 199.3 billion.

The aluminium sector, driven by Swisstek Aluminium, delivered a remarkable financial turnaround, recording a profit after tax of Rs 417.9 million compared to a loss of Rs 335.5 million in the previous year. This was accompanied by a 66% revenue growth and more than doubled gross profit.

Delmege demonstrated strong revenue growth, increasing from Rs 11.7 billion in FY2023/24 to Rs 15.4 billion in FY2024/25, while profit before tax rose by 69% year-on-year to reach Rs 1.49 billion. The Group's total asset base also expanded significantly, rising to Rs 15.6 billion from Rs 11.8 billion.

The packaging sector, led by Unidil Group, reported a profit after tax of Rs 744 million for FY2024/25, a 4% increase from the previous year, despite including four months of operational losses from its new offshore subsidiaries in Kenya. Sri Lankan operations delivered a strong PAT of Rs 814 million, up 14%, highlighting continued domestic strength. Despite early losses in Kenya, the Group remains confident in long-term growth in East Africa.

ExpoScaleUp Empowers Sri Lankan SMEs for Global Growth

The Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB), in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the European Union (EU), successfully organised the Pitching Event for the ExpoScaleUp programme at the Ramada Hotel, Colombo.

The event, part of the European Union's regional initiative Accelerating Climate Smart and Inclusive Infrastructure in South Asia (ACSIIIS) under the EU Global Gateway Strategy, marks a key milestone in the Sri Lanka Export Excellence Initiative (SLEEI) 2025.

ExpoScaleUp is designed to boost the export readiness of Sri Lankan small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by providing specialised training in market research, branding, logistics, and export marketing plan development. The programme



culminated in a dynamic pitching event where 25 high-potential SMEs presented their strategic export plans to a panel of investors, trade experts, and development partners. In his opening remarks, EDB Chairman Mangala Wijesinghe underlined the pivotal role of SMEs in economic development and stressed the need to equip them to compete globally. He also thanked the European Union and IFC for their

sustained support in empowering Sri Lankan SMEs.

Gregory Smith, Manager, Country Advisory and Economics South Asia at IFC, reaffirmed IFC's commitment to strengthening Sri Lanka's SME sector.

"SMEs are the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy. Empowering them through access to trade opportunities and capacity building is essential to unlock their full potential," he said.

Smith added that strategic partnerships and collaborative initiatives like ExpoScaleUp can transform Sri Lanka's export landscape, enabling SMEs to compete more effectively in international markets while advancing economic sustainability.

Dr Johann Hesse, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, stated that supporting local SMEs enhances Sri Lanka's integration into regional and global markets.

"This initiative strengthens future-ready partnerships between Sri Lankan and EU businesses. It also supports alignment with EU standards and green transition objectives," he said. The EU's support aligns with its Global Gateway strategy, which promotes deeper connectivity and trade between the EU and partner countries.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Understanding the...

Furthermore, listing enhances value creation and price discovery through secondary market trading. It also improves corporate visibility, raises the public profile, and often leads to improvements in internal systems, processes, and overall business performance.

How does listing on a Stock Exchange contribute to broader economic development?

listing enables companies to raise capital to fund expansion, R&D, and new ventures. This capital injection fuels economic growth through investment in infrastructure, technology, and job creation. Listing also attracts both domestic and foreign investors, facilitating foreign capital inflows into the local market. These inflows are crucial for economic growth as they help fund and sustain local businesses.

Furthermore, listed companies must comply with strict corporate governance and disclosure requirements, which promote transparency, investor confidence, and long-term economic stability.

As listed companies grow and diversify, they create employment across various sectors, leading to a more skilled workforce, reduced unemployment, and improved living standards.

What key factors should a company take into account before listing?

- Financial Stability:** A company intending to list should assess its financial statements to ensure it meets the CSE's listing criteria, focusing on revenue growth, profitability, and asset valuation.
- Market Conditions and Investor Sentiment:** Companies should carefully evaluate market conditions and investor sentiment to determine the optimal time for launching an IPO.
- IPO Pricing and Valuation:** An appropriate IPO price reflecting true company value is essential. Companies should apply suitable valuation techniques to attract investor interest.
- Existing Financial, Legal, or Governance Issues:** Any existing or potential issues must be thoroughly assessed and addressed, as these can impact IPO success and post-listing sustainability.
- Corporate Governance and Management:** A robust governance framework builds investor confidence. Companies should be prepared to fully comply with the CSE's corporate governance requirements.
- Rules and Regulations:** Companies must understand the listing and ongoing compliance obligations, including enforcement actions, to avoid disruptions or penalties post-listing.
- Shareholder Considerations:** A company must evaluate its ownership structure and understand the implications of share dilution through offers for sale or subscription, while ensuring compliance with minimum public holding requirements.

43 CEYLINCO LIFE SALES OFFICERS EARN FINANCIAL DIPLOMAS



Ceylinco Life's latest Batch of Graduates in Financial Sales Management with Directors of the Company and representatives of SLIM

A group of 43 sales officers of Ceylinco Life recently graduated with Diplomas in Financial Sales Management, under a programme tailor-made for the life insurance market leader by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM).

Covering subjects such as Financial Planning, Communication, Analytical Skills Development, Time Management, Financial Markets, and Taxation among others, the bespoke Diploma programme was introduced by Ceylinco Life to enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of its sales personnel, and to nurture a highly proficient sales force capable of tapping into premier markets and delivering exceptional services to customers.

The nine-month Course includes contemporary coursework, examinations and assignments to ensure a well-rounded education for Diploma Students.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Ceylinco Life Executive Director/CEO Samitha Hemachandra said the company had from its inception, placed special emphasis on developing and rewarding professionalism among the members of its sales force. "We led the way in equipping our sales

professionals with digital tools, pushed them to obtain professional qualifications from leading international bodies relating to life insurance, to qualify for Million Dollar Round Table membership, and to improve their knowledge in finance," he said. "As a result, they have earned the respect of the community and their peers, and built stable and lucrative careers with Ceylinco Life."

SLIM President Prof. Jayantha N. Dewasiri said: "Promoting professional competence as a contributor to the economic growth of our country is one of the objectives of SLIM. In furtherance of this, we provide professional education to thousands of Sri Lankans every year and are happy to support Ceylinco Life's efforts to advance the careers of its sales officers through professional development. This is an example to other corporate entities."

Ceylinco Life's Senior Directors Messrs. Devaan Cooray and Palitha Jayawardena, Director/Deputy CEO Ranga Abeynayake, SLIM Vice President – Education and Research Dr. Dilhan Sampath Jayatilleke, CEO Chamil Wickremasinghe and other distinguished guests attended the graduation ceremony at the Ceylinco Life Auditorium.

MullenLowe's Harendra Uyanage awarded the Inaugural Next Generation Leader Scholarship to Cannes Lions

At a special ceremony held in Colombo recently, MullenLowe Group Sri Lanka's Harendra Uyanage, Senior Vice President & Executive Creative Director, was named the first-ever recipient of the Next Generation Leader scholarship.

For the first time in ad industry history, Metal Factor, as the organising body, initiated a scholarship to honour the late ad stalwart Yong Lye Peng, to be extended to a next-generation leader of the industry from any field in the business to attend the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in 2025.

The recipient of Metal Factor's Next Generation Leader Scholarship was selected through a careful adjudication process led by a distinguished panel comprising Ranil de Silva – Founder, Metal Factor, Gian de Rose – Director, Brand and Communications, Sysco LABS, Chevaan Daniel, Group Director, Capital Maharaja Group, Renuka Marshall – Managing Director, TBWA Sri Lanka, and Jannesh Paul Antony – Director, Marketing, Singer Sri Lanka PLC.

The primary purpose of this scholarship is to provide future industry leaders exposure to the global industry and to bring back the learning and play a leading role to drive the industry in Sri Lanka forward. The attendee will have full access to all activities, workshops and courtesies, mentoring programmes, and other such learning initiatives. "My heartfelt congratulations to Harendra of MullenLowe on being selected as the first-ever Next Gen Leader to attend the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in France. This scholarship was created to give emerging creative leaders the chance to experience global standards firsthand, something I believe is essential if Sri Lanka is to make its mark internationally. I trust Harendra will return inspired, ready to push boundaries and strive for a Golden Lion while contributing meaningfully to the growth of Sri Lanka's creative industry. My sincere thanks to Mr. Douglas Khoo for establishing the fund that made this possible, in memory of his late wife and my dear friend, Yong Lye Peng," said Ranil de Silva, Founding Partner of Metal Factor.



Ranil de Silva (Left) congratulates Harendra Uyanage (Right) on being named the recipient of Metal Factor's Next Generation Leader Scholarship

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A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE TO FATHERHOOD

Supun Perera's newest song: Mage Duwe

BY LIHINI JAYAWARDENE

H. Jackson Browne has said, "Life doesn't come with an instruction book—that's why we have fathers." This aligns well with Supun Perera's newest song Mage Duwe, a tribute to fatherhood and a song dedicated to Supun Perera's the late father Peter Perera.

From the beginning of the song, it keeps proving the fact that music drives emotion. From Supun's emotionally-moving voice, the melody which fills ones ears to the powerful video, everything seems to be just right.

Trending No.5 on YouTube, the song was released on 15 May 2025. While the melody of the song was done by Dinesh Gamage, the lyrics of the song were penned by Nisal Gamage. The music, mixing and mastering were handled by Amith Guru @ Icon Rain.

Nisal Gamage's lyrics capture the bittersweet essence of fatherhood, its quiet strength, its uncelebrated sacrifices, in a way that feels deeply personal, yet universally relatable. Dinesh Gamage's melody complements this tone allowing the lyrics to breathe and the listener to reflect.

The official music video launch was unveiled to an audience of fathers and daughters including Kanchana Anuradhi and her father, Niroshan Wijesinghe and his daughter, Hirushi Jayasena and her father and more. Each of these spectators were emotionally moved having seen the music video.

Niroshan Wijesinghe commented at the launch of the music video, "By the end of the song, my daughter was telling me, 'that the song has a father and daughter like us.'" Even though the song was dedicated to one father it speaks for all fathers who silently tire themselves out for the betterment of their small ones. As



From the beginning of the song, it keeps proving the fact that music drives emotion.

From Supun's emotionally-moving voice, the melody which fills ones ears to the powerful video, everything seems to be just right

father puts on the seat belt of his small daughter and how the grown daughter fastens her own seatbelt. These scenes, stitched together with a minimalist aesthetic, allow the viewer to insert their own memories into the story.

The imagery is not grandiose. There are no sweeping landscapes or dramatic climaxes. Instead, it visualises the plain reality. And maybe that's why it hits so hard, because it mirrors real life, the true sacrifices and love of a father, in the context of the song, a single father, who showers immense love and affection to his daughter allowing her to grow and watching her reaching the sky with silent tears of pain and joy.

Among thousands of YouTube comments, one fan had mentioned that he couldn't stop crying since the beginning of the song and others have commented on their personal stories with their fathers and how much the song reminds them of the memories they had with their fathers.

Making art is not difficult. But making a piece of art which leaves a huge impact is not at all a piece of cake and Supun together with his team has done that by gifting a powerfully moving piece of art to the public celebrating the unheard and untold story of fatherhood.

said by an attendee, the song moved each and every person at the launch, "this song was able to move all these great male figures." It serves as a call for not only daughters but also for sons to recognise the untold and unspoken love of a father. The music video narrates the journey of a father and daughter in everyday moments contrasting the past and the present, one in which the



The Forgotten Prodigy

Before Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart became a household name, his sister Maria Anna Mozart—known as Nannerl, was captivating European audiences as a child prodigy. Performing alongside her brother, she received top billing on concert tours. But by the age of 18, her career was cut short by the social norms of 18th century Europe. Women were not expected to compose or perform publicly. Despite her talent, Nannerl's compositions were lost, and her story was nearly forgotten.

A theatrical revival

The Other Mozart, created by Sylvia Milo, revives Nannerl's untold story. Built from the Mozart family's letters, the solo play portrays her life within the constraints of her time. The performance unfolds on a five-metre-wide 18th century-inspired dress that doubles as the set—symbolising both beauty and confinement. Directed by

Isaac Byrne and performed by Milo and Daniela Galli in rotation, the production offers a multi-sensory experience with original music using clavichords, fans, and teacups.

International acclaim

The play has toured to 30 U.S. states and 9 countries, earning critical praise. It has also inspired a PBS documentary, Mozart's Sister (2024), drawing wider attention to Nannerl's life and legacy.

More than history

The Other Mozart is not just a biography; it's a reminder of how many creative voices have been silenced. Nannerl's story speaks to on-going conversations about gender, recognition, and the importance of preserving the legacies of overlooked women in history.

(TheatreNews)



USBus Mobile American Space begins its journey across Sri Lanka

BY INDUWARA ATHAPATTU

Sarvodaya Fusion, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka, officially launched the USBus, a Mobile American Space, on 30 May 2025 at the University of Kelaniya. Over the next 18 months, the USBus will travel across all nine provinces, visiting universities and underserved areas to provide access to educational and cultural resources.

The event marked the beginning of a new outreach initiative aimed at bringing American-style learning and engagement to Sri Lankan youth. Attending the launch were U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Her Excellency Julie J. Chung, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Senior Professor Kapila Seneviratne, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya, Senior Professor Nilanthi Renuka De Silva, President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Dr Vinya Ariyaratne, and Chairman of Sarvodaya Fusion, Professor Rohan Samarajiva.

The USBus is an extension of the U.S. Embassy's American Spaces network in Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna, Matara, and Batticaloa. It has been designed to take similar services — ranging from STEM workshops and 3D printing demonstrations to English learning sessions and EducationUSA guidance — directly to communities that do not have access to a physical centre. Participants will also be able to explore virtual reality and other digital tools as part of the programme.



Speaking at the launch, Ambassador Chung stated, "The USBus is more than just a vehicle; it's a symbol of American innovation and our enduring partnership with Sri Lanka."

UGC Chairman Prof. Seneviratne also noted the significance of the project, highlighting how it promotes English language learning, STEM education, and entrepreneurial leadership among young people.

The mobile unit will travel to institutions such as the Universities of Peradeniya, Ruhuna, Sabaragamuwa, and Jaffna, in addition to schools and communities in districts without physical American Spaces. The organisers aim to engage over 7,000 students during the 18-month period.

Each session conducted on board is free and focuses on building practical, future-ready skills. The USBus initiative offers an opportunity for students to experience a diverse set of learning formats and gain exposure to international perspectives in a local context.

BY SHASHI DHANATUNGE

The Port of Colombo, Sri Lanka's busiest harbour, is strategically located on East-West shipping lanes. However, its current bunkering facilities are modest when compared with its world ranking. Establishing a deep water bunkering infrastructure at Colombo would allow Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) and Ultra Large Crude Carriers (ULCCs) to call for replenishing stocks. This report evaluates the required infrastructure upgrades, investment costs, timeline, revenue projections, and economic impact of such a project. It also compares outcomes with and without the project and identifies a suitable development zone at the port.

To accommodate VLCCs/ULCCs and high-throughput fuel operations, Colombo's port infrastructure must be enhanced:

Mooring Facilities: A dedicated oil berth (or single-point mooring) capable of berthing a VLCC/ULCC is crucial. This includes heavy-duty mooring dolphins, fenders, and navigation aids to handle vessels over 300 m LOA. The berth should be sited to avoid impeding container traffic – likely at the harbour outer edge or near the new breakwater.

Tank Farm & Pipelines: Onshore storage must expand significantly. New tank farms (e.g. 100,000–200,000 m³ total capacity for various fuel grades) with pipeline connections to the berth are needed for high-speed discharge. For example, Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port built a tank farm (initial 500,000 tonnes annual capacity) as part of its bunker terminal. Colombo would require a comparable or larger facility. Pipelines should support rapid transfer (loading/unloading rates to turn around a VLCC within ~24 hours).

Pump and Loading Systems: High-capacity pumps and manifolds must be installed to enable high-speed fuel discharge. Modern bunkering terminals use multi-product pipelines and loading arms to move fuel efficiently. This ensures a VLCC can discharge cargo quickly into shore tanks, and bunker barges can be loaded in minimal time to serve client vessels.

Bunkering Barges: The project should include a fleet of fuel barges capable of bunkering ships at anchorage or alongside. These barges (e.g. 1,000–5,000 DWT) would load from the tank farm and deliver fuel to large container ships, etc. High pumping rates (e.g. 500+ m³/hour) on barges will reduce vessel idle time.

Support Infrastructure: Ancillary needs include a dedicated control room, safety systems (firefighting, spill response), and possibly a blending facility for different fuel grades (to supply VLSFO, MGO, etc. per IMO 2020 rules). Upgrades to port utilities (power, security, access roads) around the bunkering zone will also be required.

These upgrades leverage Colombo's existing deep water harbour but tailor it for oil logistics. Notably, a prior project relocated a 10 km crude oil pipeline and offshore moorings during harbour expansion, indicating the scope of works needed to integrate bunkering into port operations.

Benchmark Costs & Capital Investment Estimate

Capital costs for a bunkering hub can be substantial. We derive estimates from similar international projects and Colombo's context:

Tank Farm and Berth Construction: Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port built a bunker terminal for \$76.5 million in 2010, which included fuel tanks (LPG and oil) and a jetty, yielding around 500,000 tonnes initial capacity. Given Colombo's larger scale (targeting VLCCs), a more extensive facility is needed. A single deep water berth with dredging might cost on the order of \$40–60 million (comparable to large oil jetty projects). Storage tanks (e.g. 100,000 m³ across multiple tanks) and pipelines could add another \$50 million.

Supporting Infrastructure: Pump stations, automation, safety systems, and barge acquisition may require \$20–30 million. For instance, buying or retrofitting bunker barges and installing high-capacity loading pumps would be in this range.

Using these benchmarks, we estimate the total initial investment to be around \$120–150 million for a fully operational deep water bunkering facility at Colombo. This assumes one VLCC-capable berth and a moderate tank farm. A larger multi-berth oil terminal (for simultaneous discharge and loading) could raise costs towards \$300 million, but the initial phase is likely to be scaled down. Table 1 summarises the rough cost breakdown:

For context, major oil-terminal projects



elsewhere have seen similar scales: the new Kipevu Oil Terminal in Kenya (4 berths including a VLCC berth) cost about \$385 million, while Oman's Duqm port recently added a bunker terminal integrated with a refinery (part of a multi-billion project). Colombo's investment in the ~\$100–150M range is reasonable for a first-phase development focusing on one berth and storage, given the Hambantota experience. Notably, Sri Lanka's Government is already planning to invite the private sector to partner and invest in the development of two oil berths in the Northern part of the Port of Colombo. Hopefully, the limited draft towards the North of Colombo Port shall not constrain the full development potential and optimisation of the opportunity. Therefore, this proposal suggests the Government to consider an alternative area for the development.

As an example, if the Sapugaskanda Oil Refinery Expansion & Modernisation (SOREM) project proposed by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) becomes a reality, then it is imperative that a deep water bunkering terminal is established in Colombo for its best outcomes, competitiveness and sustainability. One of the available options is to look at a Single Point Mooring Buoy (SPMB) installed offshore in the Northern end of the Port of Colombo.

Timeline for Implementation

Developing the bunkering infrastructure would be executed in phases over the short, medium, and long term:

Phase 1: Planning & Approvals (Short Term, ~1–2 years). This includes feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, design work, and financing arrangements. Regulatory approvals (from Sri Lanka Ports Authority, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, etc.) are obtained in this phase. By the end of Phase 1, contracts for construction and equipment procurement would be in place.

Phase 2: Construction & Commissioning (Medium Term, ~3–5 years). Major works commence, such as dredging the berth pocket and access channel (if needed), building the jetty/berth structure, and constructing tank farms and pipeline networks, which could take up to 3 years. By year 4, the initial infrastructure could be ready. Commissioning and testing (pumping systems, safety drills) would occur towards the end of this phase. Outcome: initial operations begin by year 5.

Phase 3: Expansion & Optimisation (Long Term, 5–10 years). In the longer term, the facility can be expanded in stages based on demand. This might involve adding more storage tanks for future fuels such as Biofuels and Methanol, a second berth or improving loading infrastructure for higher throughput. It also includes business ramp-up – marketing Colombo as a refuelling stop to shipping lines. By year 10, the facility would aim to reach steady-state high volumes (potentially handling 4.5–5.0 million tonnes of bunker fuel annually, as discussed next).

Milestones: Short-term (years 1–2) would yield project kick-off and ground-breaking; medium-term (year 5) sees the first bunkering operations underway; long-term (beyond year 5) realises full capacity and additional services (e.g. lubricant supply, blended fuels). This phased timeline allows initial revenue generation while scaling up gradually.

Revenue Projections (10-Year Outlook)

Once operational, the deep water bunkering terminal can generate multiple revenue streams: fuel sales, port fees, and ancillary services. Below is a 10-year projection assuming a conservative ramp-up (Table 2):

COST COMPONENT	ESTIMATED COST (USD)
Deepwater Berth & Dredging	\$50 million
Tank Farm (storage tanks)	\$40 million
Pipelines & Pump Systems	\$20 million
Bunkering Barges (fleet) & Marine Pollution Preventive Systems	\$15 million
Total Initial Investment	\$125 million

Table 1: Estimated capital costs for Colombo deep water bunkering facility (Phase 1). Benchmarked to similar port projects.

Given Colombo's larger scale (targeting VLCCs), a more extensive facility is needed. A single deep water berth with dredging might cost on the order of \$40–60 million (comparable to large oil jetty projects). Storage tanks (e.g. 100,000 m³ across multiple tanks) and pipelines could add another \$50 million

These figures illustrate the potential scale. By year 10, handling 5 million tonnes of bunkers could bring in over 3.5 billion dollars in fuel turnover. Sri Lanka's Hambantota bunker terminal, after leasing to Sinopec, handled around 600,000 tonnes of bunkers in 2023 – a useful real-world benchmark for Colombo's ambitions. Colombo could target nearly ten times the volume within a decade, given its greater ship traffic. The profit margins in bunkering are typically thin – global players like World Fuel Services report margins on the order of only \$3–5 per tonne. I have assumed \$16/tonne in the later years by factoring in value-added services and higher-margin products (e.g. marine gasoil, biofuel and methanol). Even with modest margins, the large volume yields a solid cash flow.

Return on Investment (ROI): If the initial investment is \$125 million, and by year 10, net profits reach \$87.5 million/year, the project's simple payback period would be 4 years. The internal rate of return (IRR) could be on the order of 29–31% over 20 years (assuming volumes continue to grow beyond year 10). More optimistic scenarios (higher regional demand or higher margins) could improve ROI, while risks (under-utilisation or oil price volatility) could lower it. One mitigation is leasing the facility to experienced operators (as

Impact on Bunker Fuel Pricing

Current Pricing (Illustrative) - Table 5:

Location	MOPS Base	Premium	Final Price
Singapore	\$550	\$10–15	\$560–565
Colombo	\$550	\$40–70	\$590–620

Future Pricing (Post-Development illustrative) – Table 6:

Location	MOPS Base	Premium	Final Price
Singapore	\$550	\$10–15	\$560–565
Colombo	\$550	\$15–25	\$565–575

Price gap narrows from \$50+ to <\$10, making Colombo competitive. Allows Sri Lanka to hedge, import in bulk, and reduce buyer costs.

Year	Bunkering Volume (MT)	Fuel Sales Revenue (US\$)	Net Profit (US\$)
1	1,500,000	\$1.0 billion	\$25.0 million
5	4,000,000	\$2.7 billion	\$67.5 million
10	5,000,000	\$3.5 billion	\$87.5 million

Table 2: Hypothetical revenue/profit trajectory over 10 years. Assumes average bunker fuel price of \$650-700/tonne and approx. net profit margin of 2.5%.

done with Hambantota's bunkering leased to Sinopec) to ensure high utilisation and steady rent/royalty income for the port, regardless of fuel price swings.

In addition to direct fuel sales, Colombo Port Authority would earn ancillary revenues: berth fees from tankers, wharfage on fuel, and services (water, sludge disposal, etc.) for ships calling to bunker. These add to the ROI indirectly. Overall, the 10-year outlook suggests the project can be financially viable, with cash flows ramping up in the mid-term and a respectable ROI in the long run, provided Colombo captures a share of the regional bunker market.

Economic Impact: With vs. Without the Project

Investing in a deep water bunkering terminal would have significant economic implications for Sri Lanka. Below, we compare scenarios:

Boost to Port Competitiveness: Colombo would offer one-stop service (container transshipment and refuelling), attracting more vessel calls. Ships that might bypass Sri Lanka could choose Colombo to bunker, increasing maritime traffic. This underpins Colombo's status as a regional hub.

Diversification of Port Services: With the development of Indian ports (eg. Vizhinjam), the container transshipment business in Colombo Port would be at stake. Adding West Container Terminal (WCT) and East Container Terminal (ECT) to the supply side might result in overcapacity (from the current 7.1 million TEUs to 15.1 in 2027) than the residual demand for the transshipment business, with the result that the income for SLPA would be declining. Therefore, as a diversification of port services, SLPA must seriously look into developing Colombo Port as a proper Maritime Hub. The obvious option is developing a bunkering business to an international level with competitiveness, with economies of scale. Deep draft mainline container vessels that are expected to call forthcoming transhipment hubs in India need bunkering. Colombo, being closer to the main sea route, has the competitive edge for the bunkering business when compared with Indian ports.

Revenue and Forex Earnings: Annual bunker sales of hundreds of millions of dollars translate into substantial income. Even at a few dollars margin per tonne, much of the fuel value flows through the local economy (through port fees, supplier contracts, labour wages, and possibly some local refining/blending if developed). It reduces outflow, as currently, many Sri Lankan ships refuel abroad.

Employment and Skills: The project would create jobs in construction (hundreds during a 3-5 year build) and operation (terminal staff, barge crews, maintenance, laboratory technicians for fuel quality, etc.). It also develops local expertise in oil terminal management.

Strategic Fuel Reserve: A large tank farm increases Sri Lanka's storage capacity for petroleum. This can improve energy security – Colombo could hold buffer stocks of marine fuel and even Jet A1 aviation or power fuels if needed, reducing vulnerability to supply shocks.

Value-Added Services: Over time, Colombo can expand into blending low-sulphur fuel, supplying biofuels, methanol, LNG bunkers (future option), and other services, moving up the value chain. An ecosystem of marine services (ship chandling, surveys, minor repairs during bunkering stops) could flourish, adding further economic value.

Without the Project:

Colombo remains primarily a container/transshipment port without major refuelling activity. Ships must detour to Singapore or Fujairah for bunkers, meaning lost opportunities. Sri Lanka would continue to rely on its smaller bunker setups (e.g. the existing Colombo oil berth from 1997 and the modest tankage, plus Hambantota's facility), which limit volume.

The foregone revenue is significant: for example, 1.0 million tonnes of bunkers sold elsewhere means \$650–700 million in turnover not captured in Sri Lanka. The port would miss out on bunker-related fees and might see slower growth in throughput (since some shipping lines prefer ports where they can also refuel).

Strategically, Sri Lanka remains less competitive relative to regional ports. With no new investment, Hambantota's bunkering (now under foreign lease) might siphon whatever regional demand exists, and Colombo would not emerge as a true maritime hub beyond containers. Further, without expanded tank capacity, the country's ability to secure fuel at lower prices (by importing in bulk via VLCC) is limited.

The economic outcome of the project is far superior: higher port revenue, improved balance of trade (by servicing foreign ships), and multiplier effects on the economy. Sri Lanka could become a premier bunker supplier in South Asia, an official goal noted by the Ports Authority (Sri Lanka: Ports as a Premier Bunker Oil Supplier). Without it, Colombo risks ceding the bunker market to competitors and remains vulnerable to regional competition. Further, the Government's plan to expand and modernise the Sapugaskanda oil refinery (SOREM project) shall not bring the best outcomes, once again.

Development Zone Selection & Layout

After evaluating Colombo's geography, the ideal zone for the bunkering hub is the southwestern side of the port, leveraging the newly reclaimed land of Colombo Port City. This area (269 ha of reclaimed land adjacent to the main harbour) provides ample space for tanks and is directly accessible from the deep water entrance channel. Key advantages of the site include: proximity to deep water (for VLCC berthing along the new breakwater) and isolation from main container terminals (for safety and to avoid traffic conflict).

A bunkering berth could be created seaward of this breakwater or alongside it, where deep drafts are naturally available. The tank farm would lie just behind, on land that is currently underutilised (Port City's developmental zone). This positioning ensures bunkering operations have direct sea access and ample safety buffer, while remaining within port limits. Additionally, the northern waterfront of Colombo (around Bloemendhal or the existing oil jetties) was considered, but space constraints and shallower depth make it less optimal than the Port City zone.

Developing deep water bunkering at Colombo Port is feasible and economically compelling. The required upgrades – though capital-intensive – draw on proven models from other ports. An investment on the order of \$125+ million could be recouped through steady growth in bunker sales, especially given Colombo's strategic location on global shipping lanes. Over a 10-year horizon, the project can transform Colombo from purely a container hub into a dual hub of containers and fuel, with millions of dollars in new revenue and a stronger competitive position.

In conclusion, establishing deep water bunkering infrastructure at Colombo is a forward-looking move. It is a technically feasible endeavour with manageable investment needs (supported by analogous projects' data) and offers a favourable ROI when considering not just direct profits but also wider economic multipliers. With phased execution and strategic partnerships, Colombo can realistically become a regional bunkering hub, elevating its port into a more diversified and resilient economic asset for Sri Lanka.

The writer is a former Chairman of Ceylon Shipping Corporation, Director of Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and Vice Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority. To be continued...



Rajapaksha Central v Debarawewa NS limited overs

Rajapaksha Central record maiden win

Rajapaksha Central College Weeraketiya recorded their maiden win against Debarawewa National School in their 'Battle of Ruhunu Maroons' annual limited overs encounter on Friday.

Rajapaksha Central won by 21 runs in Debarawewa.

Rajapaksha Central: 243/8 (50) (M.G. Anuththara 45, Didula Rashan 44, (IR)

Vihanga Nethmal 37, Mithum Jayasinghe 30, Nushen Sathsara 23, Chamika Sathsara 3/42)

Debarawewa NS: 222 (48.3) (Wihanga Sathru 72, Chenul Minalka 63+, Chamika Sathsara 35, Lakindu Jayasinghe 3/36, Sinal Manjitha 2/28, Didula Rashan 2/47)

GAUFF BEATS SABALENKA TO WIN FRENCH OPEN TITLE

Coco Gauff won the first French Open singles title of her career by fighting back to beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka in a rollercoaster final.

American second seed Gauff claimed a 6-7 (5-7) 6-2 6-4 victory after a tense battle between the WTA Tour's two leading players in testing conditions.

It is the second Grand Slam singles triumph of Gauff's career, adding to the US Open title she won in 2023, also by beating Belarus' Sabalenka.

"I think this [Grand Slam] win was harder than the first because you don't want to get satisfied with just that one," said 21-year-old Gauff.

Gauff recovered from a difficult start where she trailed by a double break, eventually finding her rhythm and benefiting from a huge number of mistakes from 27-year-old Sabalenka.

"This hurts so much. Congratulations to Coco - she was a better player than me," said Sabalenka, who was also bidding for her first Roland Garros title.

A stiff breeze played havoc



with serve in the opening two sets, leading to the pair exchanging 12 breaks in an entertaining if not high-quality affair.

Gauff, who lost in the 2022 final, settled quicker in the deciding third set to move a break up and kept her nerve to serve out victory.

She had to survive another break point before winning her second championship point, falling to the clay on her back when Sabalenka pushed a forehand wide.

With her parents Candi and Corey dancing euphorically in the stands, Gauff shared an affectionate hug with Sabalenka before running off court to celebrate with her family.

Gauff's previous appearance in the French Open singles showpiece, when she was still a teenager, ended in her covering her head with a towel as she sobbed on her chair.

It was the defining image of her defeat by Iga Swiatek, but she vowed to come back stronger - and she has.

"I was going through a lot of things when I lost here three

years ago," Gauff said.

"I'm just glad to be back here. I was going through a lot of dark thoughts."

Three years on, Gauff returned to the final as a Grand Slam champion, having fulfilled the potential promised by winning in New York.

A productive clay-court swing, taking her to the Madrid and Rome finals, meant she arrived in Paris considered a sounder bet than defending champion Swiatek.

"Three finals... I guess I got the most important win - that's all that matters," said Gauff.

Only Sabalenka, who beat her to the Madrid title, had performed better and it was therefore unsurprising the top two seeds met again with the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen at stake.

The tricky conditions meant neither woman was able to play their best tennis, but Gauff showed indefatigable spirit and will to win.

Like in 2022 after her defeat by Poland's Iga Swiatek, there were more tears for Gauff - this time, ones of joy.

SLAF Women dominate Wushu Championship

The 13th Defence Services Wushu Championship 2024/2025 was conducted successfully at the Sri Lanka Army Mahinda Rajapaksa Indoor Gymnasium, Ambepussa from 2 to 4 June.

The Sri Lanka Air Force Women's Wushu team emerged as the Women's Champions, securing an impressive haul of three Gold, three Silver and Five bronze medals.

The event was attended by the Chairman of SLAF Wushu, Air Commodore Sulochana Marapperuma, SLAF Wushu officials, senior officers of Sri Lanka Army and Navy and other Wushu officials.

The Chairman of the Sri Lanka Army Wushu, Brigadier CS Thibbatuge graced the occasion as the chief guest.



Devapathiraja - Wadduwa Central

Devapathiraja win 2nd 'Battle of the Heroines' on first inning

Devapathiraja College Rathgama won on the first inning against Wadduwa Central College in their 2nd 'Battle of the Heroines' Girl's annual Cricket encounter played at De Soysa Stadium Moratuwa on Friday. Each team was restricted to a maximum of 55 overs per innings.

Devapathiraja won the toss and elected to bat and scored 144 runs in 38.4 overs. Opener Sanjana Kavindi scored 59 runs in 90 balls with 3 boundaries. Sanjana and Sumudu Nisansala (34) were involved in 56 runs stand for the 3rd wicket. Homesha Charithiri claimed 4 wickets for 24 runs and Erandi Warnakulasooriya claimed 3 wickets for 28 runs.

Wadduwa were perilously placed at 68 runs for 7 wickets in 55 overs at close. Hiruni Hansika, Shashini Umeha and Shashini Gimhani claimed 2 wickets each.

Sanjana Kavindi of Devapathiraja was adjudicated player of the



Captains Mahinsa Nethmini and Erandi Warnakulasooriya receiving the trophy from Chief guest Prasanna Amarasekara, President of Kalutara District Cricket Association. Principals R.K.P. Mendis (Devapathiraja) and K.C. Perera (Wadduwa Central) are also in the picture

match.

Devapathiraja: 144 (38.4) (Sanjana Kavindi 59, Sumudu Nisansala 34, (IR)

Homesha Charithiri 4/24, Erandi Warnakulasooriya 3/28)

Wadduwa Central: 68/7 (55) (Hiruni Hansika 2/6, Shashini Umeha 2/10, Shashini Gimhani 2/24)

'Worst final I ever played' - Sabalenka on Paris loss



Aryna Sabalenka said it "hurt to show such terrible tennis" in what she described as "the worst final I ever played" in her French Open loss to Coco Gauff.

World number one Sabalenka, bidding for a fourth major singles title, put in a frustrated and error-strewn performance in a 6-7 (5-7) 6-2 6-4 loss to the American.

Sabalenka committed 70 unforced errors - the highest in any women's

singles main-draw match at this year's Roland Garros.

The Belarusian has lost successive Grand Slam finals, having been beaten in three sets by Madison Keys in the Australian Open showpiece in January.

Known for bringing humour to her speeches - Sabalenka jokingly threatened to fire her team after her US Open final loss in 2023 - the 27-year-old became tearful in Paris as she apologised to them for her performance.

"It was honestly the worst tennis I've played in I don't know how many months," Sabalenka said.

"Conditions were terrible, and she simply was better in these conditions than me."

"I think I was overemotional and I didn't really handle myself well."

"I think she won the match not because she played incredible, just because I made all of those mistakes from, if you look from the outside, easy balls."

SPORTS TODAY

Last-minute decision leaves junior cagers in agony

National Selectors remove talented players from U-16 side before Asian Championship

BY ANJANA KALUARACHCHI

The last-minute removal of Ashain George Theverapperuma from Sri Lanka's U-16 basketball team ahead of the FIBA U16 Asia Cup 2025 SABA Qualifier Tournament, scheduled to be held in Maldives from 12 June, has sparked outrage, with his parents demanding justice.

A Rising Star Cut From the Team

Ashain, a 14-year-old student at Gateway College Colombo, is an exceptional athlete who has excelled in both basketball and athletics. Despite his young age, he has won multiple awards, including the Most Valuable Player title at the All-Island U-17 Inter-School Basketball Championship, where Gateway College emerged champions.

Beyond basketball, Ashain also showcased his athletic prowess last year by setting three All-Island Schools Games records and winning Gold Medals, proving his natural sporting talent.

Given his exceptional abilities, Ashain earned a spot in the initial

25-member pool for the National U-16 team, alongside his elder brother. Both were later selected for the final 12-member squad, and on 22 May, the Basketball Federation submitted the team list to the Ministry of Education for approval.

Selection Controversy & Sudden Removal

However, following an appeal letter addressed to Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya on 18 April, which questioned the inclusion of young players like Ashain and Tahara Arusan (for the women's team), the National Selection Committee decided to remove all players born in 2011 or later from the U-16 squad, despite basketball regulations not placing restrictions on younger players representing the team.

The last-minute decision has left Ashain's parents devastated, arguing that he is being penalised for his exceptional talent beyond his age.

Sri Lanka's Basketball Team Faces More Challenges

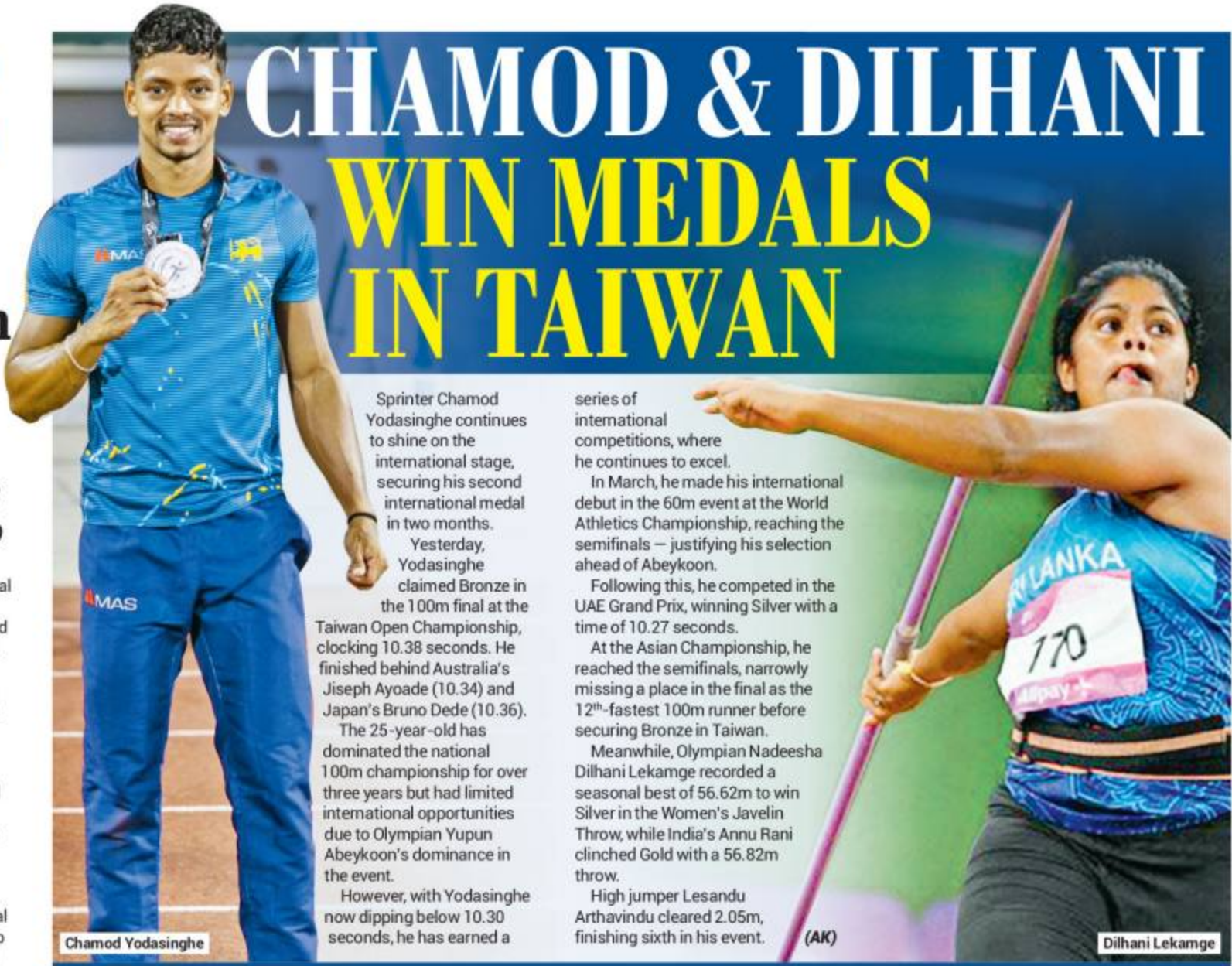
With official entries already closed, a source within the Basketball Association confirmed that the team will now have to compete with only 11 players, as it is too late to add a replacement, despite the National Selectors' decision.

Sri Lanka's Basketball Association is also facing sanctions from FIBA due to previous administrative failures. The 3x3 team has already been banned for two years, and the basketball team has received two penalties for last-minute withdrawals. If one more penalty occurs, the team could face a two-year ban, further jeopardising Sri Lanka's participation in international competitions.

The team is set to leave on Wednesday (11).



Ashain George Theverapperuma



Chamod Yodasinghe

(AK)

Dilhani Lekamge

CHAMOD & DILHANI WIN MEDALS IN TAIWAN

Sprinter Chamod Yodasinghe continues to shine on the international stage, securing his second international medal in two months.

Yesterday, Yodasinghe claimed Bronze in the 100m final at the Taiwan Open Championship, clocking 10.38 seconds. He finished behind Australia's Jiseph Ayode (10.34) and Japan's Bruno Dede (10.36).

The 25-year-old has dominated the national 100m championship for over three years but had limited international opportunities due to Olympian Yupun Abeykoon's dominance in the event.

However, with Yodasinghe now dipping below 10.30 seconds, he has earned a

series of international competitions, where he continues to excel.

In March, he made his international debut in the 60m event at the World Athletics Championship, reaching the semifinals — justifying his selection ahead of Abeykoon.

Following this, he competed in the UAE Grand Prix, winning Silver with a time of 10.27 seconds.

At the Asian Championship, he reached the semifinals, narrowly missing a place in the final as the 12th-fastest 100m runner before securing Bronze in Taiwan.

Meanwhile, Olympian Nadeesha Dilhani Lekamge recorded a seasonal best of 56.62m to win Silver in the Women's Javelin Throw, while India's Annu Rani clinched Gold with a 56.82m throw.

High jumper Lesandu Arthavindu cleared 2.05m, finishing sixth in his event.

SLC Major League T20 – 2025

Hemantha's all-round brilliance powers Panadura past Colombo CC

BY MUSTAQ SYDEEN

Skipper Dushan Hemantha delivered a stellar all-round performance to guide Panadura Sports Club to a thrilling 7-run victory over the much-fancied Colombo Cricket Club in a Group 'A' Encounter of the SLC Major League T20 Tournament at the P. Sara Oval on Sunday.

Put into bat, Panadura endured a horror start, losing four wickets for just 35 runs inside six overs. Vishwa Fernando's fiery opening spell removed both openers for ducks, while Colombo's disciplined bowling left the middle order in disarray.

But, Hemantha stood firm amid the collapse. Walking in under pressure, he played a captain's innings of the highest quality — an unbeaten 59 off 39 balls featuring four boundaries and two sixes. He found able support from Vishwa Lahiru, who added a gritty 25 off 31 balls.

Their 67-run stand proved to be the turning point, lifting Panadura to a fighting total of 126 for 6.

Colombo's chase was anchored by opener Nishan Madushka, who struck 52 off 38 balls. However, regular wickets kept derailing their progress. Vishen Halambage claimed 3 crucial wickets, while Vishwa Lahiru's miserly 2 for 7 turned the screws. Hemantha returned with the ball to apply further pressure, conceding just 17 runs in four overs and picking up a wicket.

Despite a late push from Isuru Udana, Colombo fell short at 119 for 9, handing Panadura a memorable upset win.

Meanwhile, in other games, Tamil Union, Moors SC, BRC, Colts CC and NCC also registered victories.

Brief Scores:

At P. Sara Oval Panadura SC: 126-6 (20) (Dushan Hemantha 59*, Vishwa Lahiru 25, Vishwa Fernando 2-14)

Colombo CC: 119-9 (20) (Nishan Madushka 52, Isuru Udana 23*, Vishwn Halambage 3-25, Vishwa Lahiru 2-7)

At CCC Bloomfield: 119-8 (20) (Lahiru Madushanka 25, Theeshan Vithushan 2-22, Vihas Thewmika 2-26, Vijayakanth Viyakanth 2-18)

Tamil Union: 120-8 (20) (Minod Bhanuka 44, Eshan Malinga 3-28, Kithma Vidanapathirana 2-17)

At Colts Badureliya SC: 124 all out (20) (Keahara Nuwantha 57, Shanikya Deshapriya 28*, Shiran Fernando 2-27, Praveen Jayawickrama 2-15, Ramesh Mendis 2-19, Malsha Tharupathi 2-21)

Moors SC: 127-6 (15) (Omesh Mendis 51, Sadeera Samarawickrama 41, Seekuge Parsanna 2-19, Keshara Nuwantha 23-2)

At CCC Chilaw Marians CC: 121-7 (20) (Sakuna Liyanage 35, Hiran Jayasundara 25, Movin Subasinghe 3-15)

BRC: 127-2 (11.5) (Ravija Sandaruwan 51, Isuru Fernando 36, Movin Subasinghe 32*, Kasun Vidura 1-19)

At P. Sara Oval Colts CC: 166-6 (20) (Sangeeth Cooray 93*, Charuka Jayathilake 2-25)

Police SC: 107-9 (20) (Chathuranga Jayathilake 30, Dilshan Madushanka 3-12, Shyamsunder Krishnashriram 3-13)

At Colts NCC: 118 all out (18.5) (Dineth Goonawardene 37, Nimesh Gunasinghe 3-21, Wanuja Sahan 2-27, Anuka Wijewardene 2-21, Raveen de Silva 2-14)

Ace Capital CC: 115-7 (20) (Nimesh Gunasinghe 62, Chamika Karunaratne 2-17, Sampath Nishshanka 2-23, Matheesha Pathirana 2-21)



Dushan Hemantha

Pathana beat Mahanama after last fifteen minutes rally

BY VIMAL PERERA

The final match of the first week of the Dialog Schools League Tournament proved to be a riveting display of determination and bounciness.

Isipathana emerged triumphant with a hard-fought victory, amassing an impressive 34 points through five tries, three conversions, and a penalty. However, Mahanama's spirited display caught the Greens off guard, as they valiantly fought for every point, ultimately scoring 19 through three tries and two conversions.

Despite their commendable performance, fatigue seemed to catch up with Mahanama in the last fifteen minutes. Their struggle with lineouts and untimely knock-ons, compounded by indiscipline at the breakdown, resulted in a couple of yellow cards, forcing them to play short-handed. It was a match that highlighted both the exhilarating highs of competitive spirit and the sometimes cruel realities of sport.

As newcomers to the Premier League, Mahanama headed into halftime narrowly trailing Isipathana 12-14. Sithum Bometh scored in the second minute, and Nimath Sandeepa converted another goal by Dhamsara Vitrana. Within fifteen minutes, the Greens led 14-0.

Navith Kanangara scored for Mahanama, and Sanduri Rathnayake converted. Another unconverted try by Akhilesh Hettigodage followed it, and at the break, it was 14-12 in favour of Isipathana.

Things took an interesting turn right after the break when Mahanama surged ahead to lead 19-14 with a converted a try with

Isipathana scrambling to keep up.

However, the momentum shifted when Mahanama struggled to maintain possession and lost crucial lineouts, while also picking up penalties and a yellow card. The lapses let Isipathana inch closer, and a Nimeth Sandeepa penalty brought the score to 17-19 — and a nail-biting finish for all involved was on the cards. Pathana went ahead with a Nevith Menuka try and the scores read 22-19. The game was taken away as Shakib Zumri created an overlap and involved Thinethra Dodangoda who scored, increasing the lead to 27-19. Kaveen Jayasinghe sealed the game with a try in the dying stages and, converted by Nimeth Sandeepa, to win 34,17.

Week 1 results Trinity 49 (8T, 3C, 1P) beat Sri Sumangala 15 (2T, 1C, 1P) Royal 74 (12T, 7C, 0P) beat Thurstan 15 (2T, 1C, 1P) DSS 26 (4T, 3C) beat St. Anthony's 19 (3T, 2C) Zahira 56 (10T, 3C) beat Dhammaraja 19 (3T, 2C) Vidyartha 24 (4T, 2C) drew St. Joseph's 24 (4T, 2C) Wesley 63 (9T, 9C) beat Science College 15 (2T, 1C, 1P) S. Thomas' 29 (4T, 3C, 1P) beat Kingswood 28 (4T, 4C) St. Peter's 38 (6T, 4C) beat Ananda 22 (3T, 2C, 1P) Isipathana 34 (5T, 3C, 1P) beat Mahanama 19 (3T, 2C)



Inter-Schools Rugby

Sumangala Kandy show promise despite defeat in opener



Sri Sumangala College, Kandy, delivered an encouraging performance in their opening match of the Inter-Schools Under-19 League Rugby Tournament, despite a 15-49 defeat to a dominant Trinity side in Pallekelle.

Sumangala started the game with confidence, setting the tone early through centre Ramitha Kavinda, who crossed the line for the team's first try of the season. Flanker Tharusha Dilshan followed up with a second try, while fly-half Pasindu Samarakoon added a penalty and a conversion to keep the scoreboard ticking. Their spirited first-half effort saw them trail by just five points (15-20) at the break, showcasing both defensive resilience and attacking flair.

However, the second half

belonged to Trinity, who stepped up their intensity and capitalised on key opportunities to widen the gap. Despite being outscored after the interval, Sumangala's first-half showing highlighted a team with potential, composure, and the ability to compete against top-tier opposition.

While the final scoreline may not reflect their early competitiveness, Sumangala's performance laid a strong foundation for the rest of the season. The team will look to build on these positives as they progress through the tournament.

Sri Sumangala College's rugby journey this year is proudly supported by AFI Corp which connects Sri Lankan talent with opportunities around the world, serving as the team's platinum sponsor.