

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19

ACTIVE CASES
 2,463

TOTAL CASES
 5,977

DEATHS 13 **RECOVERED** 3,501

For verified information on the coronavirus (Covid-19) contact any of the following authorities

- Quarantine Unit: 0112 112 705
- Epidemiology Unit: 0112 695 112
- Govt. coronavirus hotline: 0113071073

Health Promotion Bureau: 1999
 Suwasariya Ambulance Service: 1990

PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL TASK FORCE FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- Telephone: 0114354854, 0114733600
- Fax: 01123330666, 0114354882
- Hotline: 0113456200-4
- Email: ptf@pmoffice.gov.lk

COVID-19 CASES IN THE WORLD

DEATHS 1,131,348
RECOVERED 30,704,893

TOTAL CASES 41,171,890

	CASES	DEATHS
USA	8,524,139	226,273
INDIA	7,670,537	116,068
BRAZIL	5,274,817	154,888
RUSSIA	1,447,335	24,952
SPAIN	1,029,668	34,210

NEW COVID-19 DETECTIONS

TOTAL CASES
2508

* Stats updates as at 10.30 p.m. on 21 October

COVID-19

5 isolated areas declared

The Gorokoda, Beragama, Dapilligoda, and Kekulandara North areas within the Agalawatta Divisional Secretariat (DS) and the Bellana area in the Palindanuwara DS were declared isolated areas, said Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva.

Fort Police Station reopened

The Fort Police Station was reopened to the public from 9 a.m. last morning (21) after disinfection, stated the Police Spokesman.

49 infected persons at Peliyagoda Fish Market

Forty-nine Covid-19 patients were identified from the Peliyagoda Fish Market yesterday (21). The Area Public Health Inspector (PHI) told reporters that these patients were identified through the random tests carried out in the market on Monday (20).

Opposition Leader second contact: Minister

Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi yesterday (21) said in Parliament that the health officials had identified the Opposition Leader as a second contact of a Covid-19-infected person, and advised on the health precautions to be followed.

Social transmission questioned in Parliament

Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa yesterday (21) questioned in Parliament whether there is social transmission of Covid-19 following the isolation of several areas in Kuliyaipitiya.

Kalubowila Hospital staff member infected

An employee of the Kalubowila Hospital tested positive for Covid-19 yesterday (21), confirmed the hospital authorities.

PSC introduces new services

In view of the prevailing situation in the country due to the recent Covid-19 outbreak, the Public Service Commission (PSC) requested members of the public to refrain from visiting its office unless required by a special call-up.

Infected person at Cinnamon Garden Residences

Another person from the Cinnamon Garden Residences at Ward Place, Colombo 7, tested positive for Covid-19, Colombo Regional Epidemiologist Dr. Dinuka Guruge said yesterday (21).

Trader at Meegoda Economic Centre infected

The Meegoda area Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) confirmed yesterday (21) that a trader at the Meegoda Economic Centre tested positive for Covid-19.

Quarantine curfew in Gampaha District

Quarantine curfew was imposed within the Gampaha District from 10 p.m. last night (21), and is to continue till 5 a.m. on Monday (26), Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva said.

The decision was taken due to a surge in the number of coronavirus cases reported within the District.

SEE FULL STORIES ON PAGE 2

PCR TESTS

Unable to increase capacity to 7,500

- Two imported machines not operational
- Non-operational machines at Jaffna, Batticaloa Hospitals
- All documents to get machines released were issued: NMRA
- MSD says machines released to hospitals

BY MAHEESHA MUDUGAMUWA

The required equipment for the successful operation of PCR machines imported to the country by the Health Ministry was yet to be imported, and as a result, two such imported machines were not operational at present, *The Morning* learnt.

According to a well-informed source at the Ministry of Health, who wished to remain anonymous, the two machines in question were given to the Jaffna and Batticaloa Hospitals. However, since the additional equipment that would deem the machines operational had not been imported, these two machines were non-operational at present.

Contd. on page 2

MEGA DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

48 identified in and around Colombo

The Urban Development Authority (UDA) identified 48 new mega development projects in and around Colombo to be implemented next year, UDA Director General Prasad Ranaweera

told *The Morning*. He said the UDA received a large amount of land including down Kirimandala Mawatha, around Racecourse, and several other areas, and said the 48 projects would initially begin in these already identified land plots and would be expanded later on.

Contd. on page 2

Madush's lawyer raises concerns

- Writes letter to BASL President

The lawyer of Samarasinghe Arachchige Madush Lakshitha alias Makandure Madush, who was shot dead in crossfire between the Police and other suspected underworld figures at the Maligawatte Housing Complex on Tuesday (20), raised concerns over the moving of his client from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to the Colombo Crime Division (CCD), contrary to specifications in the detention order (DO) issued in July this year.

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A FINAL ATTEMPT



A protest against the 20th Amendment to the Constitution (20A) was organised by the United Federation of Labour yesterday (21) near the Parliamentary Roundabout. The two-day parliamentary debate on the 20A commenced yesterday, and the final decision on it is to be reached today (22)

PHOTO KRISHAN KARIYAWASAM

AG serves indictment on Champika

The Colombo High Court yesterday (21) served indictments on MP Patali Champika Ranawaka over the 2016 hit-and-run case in Rajagiriya.

The case was filed over the alleged hit-and-run incident on 28 February 2016, where the vehicle in which the former Megapolis and Western Province Development Minister was travelling collided against a motorcycle in Rajagiriya, causing life-threatening injuries to its rider, Sandeep Sampath Gunawardena.

Colombo High Court Judge Dhammika Ganepola then ordered to release the defendant on a cash bail of Rs. 10,000 and two personal bails, each worth Rs. 100,000. The evidence hearing related to the case was scheduled for 4 March 2021 and five witnesses were issued summons to appear before the court on that day.

COVID-19 Parliamentary debate tomorrow

An adjournment debate on the Covid-19 situation is scheduled to be held in Parliament tomorrow, the Parliament Communication Department announced yesterday (21).

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COVID-19 Manning Market closed till Monday

Manning Market in Pettah is closed from 10 a.m. today (22) until 5 a.m. on Monday (26). The Manning Market Traders' Association said the decision was reached upon considering instructions received from the Police.

DEATH OF SUSPECT OIC remanded till 27 October

The Officer-In-Charge (OIC) of the Pugoda Police, who was arrested over the death of a 21-year-old youth in custody, was remanded

until 27 October, said the Police Spokesman. The Pugoda Police OIC was suspended on Sunday (18) after a suspect who was

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Dry ration packs for the quarantined

The Government gave dry ration packs to those under home quarantine on three separate occasions and will continue to do so, it is learnt.

Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga said that for the past three weeks, dry ration packs were given once a week to the families who were under home quarantine. He said that 2,781 people under home quarantine in the Gampaha District were given dry ration packs, and said they would continue to receive dry ration packs in a similar manner until

Contd. on page 2



Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga

20TH AMENDMENT BILL

Not detrimental, but efficient administration: Ali Sabry

The proposed 20th Amendment to the Constitution contains nothing detrimental to society, but will only pave the way for an efficient administrative structure, Minister of Justice Ali Sabry said.

The Minister made these remarks yesterday (21) in Parliament while opening the two-day debate on the 20th Amendment Bill.

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SJB holds protest march to Parliament



Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa sporting the "No to 20A" armband

led by Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa yesterday (21) held a march to Parliament as a mark of protest against the proposed 20th Amendment Bill. The Opposition parliamentarians walked up the Parliament driveway wearing armbands reading "No to 20A" and holding placards with slogans against the 20th Amendment Bill.

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SLFP urged to reconsider stance

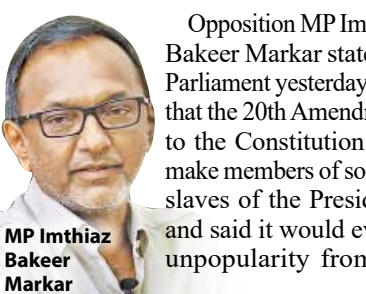
- Buddhist clergy explains danger of dual citizens clause

A group of leading Buddhist monks yesterday (21) requested the main coalition partner of the Government, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), to consider the dangers of the dual citizenship clause in the 20th Amendment Bill.

Colombo, Chief Incumbent Ven. Muruththettuwa Ananda Thera along with Ven. Bengamuwe Nalaka Thera and Ven. Elle Gunawansa Thera participated in the meeting with a group of senior SLFP parliamentarians.

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People will be President's slaves: Imthiaz



MP Imthiaz Bakeer Markar

Over the world if such laws were enforced. He urged all MPs to be accountable for the vote they are about to give, as it will affect social security and the democracy of the country.

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RIYAJ BATHIUDEEN Appeal Court dismisses writ application

The Court of Appeal dismissed the writ application filed by MP Rishad Bathiudeen's brother, Riyaj Bathiudeen, seeking the prevention of his re-arrest by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The writ application was taken up before Appeal Court Justices Mahinda Samayawardhane and Arjuna Obeysekera last morning (21). Delivering the verdict, the judge bench decided to dismiss the petition without a fee.

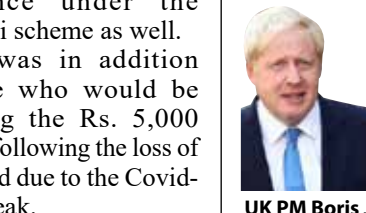
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RISHAD BATHIUDEEN In quarantine, unable to attend Parliament

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena yesterday (21) informed Parliament that MP Rishad Bathiudeen was unable to attend parliamentary sessions since he was in quarantine.

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UK PM appoints trade envoy for SL



UK PM Boris Johnson

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson appointed Lord Davies of Abersoch CBE as the new Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Sri Lanka on 5 October 2020.

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Sample collection at Fort Police Station



The Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) at the Fort Police Station yesterday (21) collected samples for PCR testing from the close contacts of the three police officers attached to the station who contracted COVID-19 recently
PHOTOS LALITH PERERA

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Unable to...

He told *The Morning* that the other three machines were distributed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Angoda, Katunayake, and Colombo, and were currently operating with the available equipment.

As a result, the expected increase in the number of tests as a result of the addition of the five machines is now said to be around 400 per day, despite the initial target being 7,500 from the existing 3,000-odd per day, he claimed.

It was also reported earlier that there were delays in releasing a number of PCR machines ordered by the Ministry of Health that reached the Colombo Port. As learnt by *The Morning*, this was a result of delays in the relevant documents being issued by the National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA).

When contacted by *The Morning*, NMRA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Kamal Jayasinghe denied that there was any delay on their part, as all the relevant documentation had been issued to get the machines released from the Port.

Furthermore, Medical Supplies Division (MSD) Director Dr. H.M.K. Wickramanayake said the machines had now been released from the Port, and the distribution of those machines to the relevant hospitals had been done by the Ministry.

Attempts to contact Health Ministry Spokesman Dr. Jayaruwan Bandara were futile.

As per the information received from the Health Ministry, at present, the 20 laboratories owned by the State have the capacity of conducting around 10,000 tests per day. In reality, however, only around 3,894 are conducted per day.

Fort Police...

The Fort Police Station was temporarily closed after an officer attached to the station had tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday (20).

An Inspector of Police (IP) serving in the Western Province Special Investigations Unit (SIU) of the Fort Police Station tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

Upon detection, the officer was admitted to the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Angoda while 11 officers of the SIU were also directed for quarantine.

Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said the Western Province SIU is located in a room within the same building premises of the Fort Police Station and that around 12 police officers are attached to this unit.

He said the entire unit was quarantined and that around 48 other police officers who were in the Fort Police Station at the time were placed at the station before closure.

In addition to this, all other officers who were assigned to the station over the past couple of days were directed to self-quarantine within those barracks. The Fort Police Station was closed the same day for disinfection, and reopened last morning.

49 infected...

105 employees were tested and 49 of them were confirmed positive for Covid-19.

These PCR tests were carried out after reports that some Covid patients from the Minuwangoda cluster had been exposed to employees of the Peliyagoda Fish Market.

Authorities decided to close down the Peliyagoda Fish Market and conduct PCR tests on all traders and employees.

Opposition Leader...

Wanniarachchi said that the health officials had identified that the Opposition Leader visited a hotel in Yala where a Covid-19-infected person was identified. The Health Minister made this observation noting the efficiency of the health officials.

"Health officials are efficient and immediately traced first and second contacts and ensured the necessary procedures were followed," Wanniarachchi said. Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa said that Opposition members had followed the stipulated health regulations.

Social...

Premadasa noted that there were many questions among the public due to the identification of Covid-19-infected persons in many areas in the country, with the latest being Kuliyaipitiya.

He observed that the Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA) noted that the virus had spread to society, but the health authorities were not prepared to make any clear statement. However, responding to the question posed by Premadasa, Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi denied that there was social transmission of Covid-19.

She explained that infectious diseases experts had not yet declared a situation of social transmission of the virus. She added that the health officials were effectively and efficiently controlling the situation.

5 isolated...

This action was taken in the areas of the Kalutara District due to the Covid-19 outbreak, stated the Army Commander.

Parliamentary...

This was following the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)-led National People's Power (NPP) seeking a one-day parliamentary debate on the Covid-19 situation in the country.

Yesterday (21), NPP Leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake had asked Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena whether Friday (23) could be allocated for a debate on Covid-19 and the present situation in the country.

The Speaker said the request could be taken up at the next party leaders' meeting in order to reach a final decision.

Subsequently, the Parliament Communication

Department, on the same day, announced that an adjournment debate on the Covid-19 situation would be held tomorrow.

Kalubowila Hospital...

The employee, a resident of Dehiwala, was diagnosed with fever while reporting to work at the Kalubowila Hospital on 15 October, following which the PCR test returned a positive result, the Hospital Director said.

According to the Hospital Director, PCR tests were conducted on 16 staff members of the hospital who associated with the Covid-19-infected employee.

PSC introduces...

Accordingly, the PSC introduced several new services for clients to access through its newly introduced service links, PSC Secretary M.A.B. Daya Senarath said in a notice published yesterday (21). Upon the request of its clients, the PSC will issue a reference number through an SMS, along with the customer's NIC (National Identity Card) and mobile numbers, to identify the client's request. Accordingly, the current status with regard to the client's request can be known instantly by sending an SMS to 0704 364 462 with the PSC reference number.

The clients are able to view the progress of their requests by entering the reference number into the Status Tracking field of the website of the PSC: www.psc.gov.lk.

The decisions made by the PSC on client requests will be published on its official website daily. The clients will be able to verify the conveyance of the decision to the respective ministry regarding their matter by viewing the Latest Decisions field on the website, the PSC said further.

The clients may obtain information required by them by forwarding their issues through the Inquiries section in the Contact Us page or by sending an e-mail to: adsec_oper@psc.gov.lk.

The PSC said further information on the process can be obtained through the following contact numbers: 0112 136 600 (General)/0112 136 603 (Additional Secretary/Operations)/0112 136 617 (Secretary).

Infected person...

The individual who tested positive for the virus yesterday is a relative of a Covid-19 patient who tested positive earlier.

Trader at...

His business shop was closed temporarily and 19 close contacts were quarantined.

However, the operations of the Meegoda Economic Centre will continue as before.

Quarantine curfew...

Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said that while vehicles will be allowed to pass through the Gampaha District during the quarantine curfew imposed, they will not be allowed to stop. Currently, quarantine curfew has been imposed in 24 police areas across the country.

48 identified...

According to him, the total cost for the projects have not been finalised yet.

"We have completed the initial planning process for all these lands, and the detailed design would be completed soon and the construction would be launched next year," Ranaweera added. However, Cabinet approval was granted for a proposal submitted by the Prime Minister for the acquisition of 39 plots of land belonging to the State in terms of Section 6 (1) of the Land Ordinance by the UDA via an independent grant and the acquisition of five plots of private land in terms of the Land Acquisition Act.

— Maheesha Mudugamuwa

Madush's lawyer...

In a letter written to the President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), the lawyer, Chaminda Athukorala stressed that his client was

held on a DO under the Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 48 of 1979 (PTA), that was renewed from time to time.

According to him, the last such DO was dated 28 July 2020 and was to expire on 28 October 2020.

"You are aware that in terms of the PTA, such a DO could only be made for a period of 18 months. Accordingly, my client's continued detention was to lapse on 28 October 2020. Be that as it may, you are aware that the DO in terms of the law must specify the place of detention. The said place of detention for the DO numbered above, was the CID. However, illegally and arbitrarily, my client was moved from the CID to the CCD on or around 16 October 2020. The said move was illegal and was precluded (sic) from the incident which took place this morning (20)," Athukorala stated in his letter to the BASL President dated Tuesday.

Requesting the BASL President to urgently take up the matter with the relevant authorities and condemn the action in the strongest possible terms, Athukorala stated: "Fearing such imminent threat to the life of my client, his wife, upon our advice, wrote to the Director of the CCD on 17 October 2020 and informed them by way of a phone call regarding the ruse by state agencies." The letter then specified the fear and apprehension Madush's wife endured as a result of the manner and mode of the murder of her husband whilst in police custody.

"It is recognised that as a civilised society which respects the rule of law, the recent spate of murders whilst in the custody of law enforcement agencies have gone unpunished with no investigation into the veracity of the narrative being forced down to the public.

"It is recognised that no civilised society should condone this behaviour. You are aware that the narrative put forth today by the law enforcement agencies regarding the murder of my client, is on the face of it, a pure fabrication," the letter stated further.

— Maheesha Mudugamuwa

UK PM...

Lord Davies will support the UK's trade and investment promotion objectives through high-level access to Sri Lankan and UK stakeholders, opening doors for UK businesses to catalyse deals that will bring benefits to both countries.

Speaking about this appointment, British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Sarah Hulton OBE stated: "I am delighted that the Prime Minister has appointed Lord Davies as the Trade Envoy for Sri Lanka. Lord Davies brings extensive experience in promoting UK businesses together with a strong affiliation to our identified priority sectors of infrastructure and financial services, which we hope will contribute to driving trade and prosperity for both countries".

Commenting on his appointment, Lord Davies said: "I'm pleased to have been appointed as the Trade Envoy for Sri Lanka. This is an important role to promote UK exports to and inward investment from Sri Lanka, generating long-term benefits for both countries. I look forward to starting on this interesting and challenging role through virtual engagements with key Sri Lankan stakeholders in both the government and private sectors and carry forward the UK Government's trading ambitions with Sri Lanka."

OIC remanded...

A 21-year-old youth arrested on 11 October in connection with a robbery was reported dead upon admission to the Ragama Teaching Hospital allegedly due to sudden illness.

An investigation was later launched into the incident under the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in charge of the Colombo Equestrian Division, on the instructions of the Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP).

Accordingly, eight persons including a police sergeant were arrested in connection with the incident following preliminary inquiries.

Not detrimental...

He explained that there was undue fear over the proposed piece of legislation as it would not provide any additional powers to the executive president that were not already vested with the executive under the 1978 Constitution.

Sabry also said the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, through hybrid in nature, had created many complications in the country's administrative structure, which even the

architects of the said legislation had later admitted. According to the Minister of Justice, the country's administration should give priority to serving the public and not give excuses for failing to serve the people.

SJB holds...

SJB members claimed that the proposed piece of legislation was a blow to democracy.

The two-day parliamentary debate on the 20th Amendment Bill commenced yesterday.

SLFP urged...

During the discussion, the theas discussed the content of the 20th Amendment Bill and commended the Government's decision to amend three vital clauses in the legislation.

However, they noted that all the contentious issues in the 20th Amendment Bill were not addressed since the Government intends to continue with the clause that enables dual citizens to hold public office under the proposed piece of legislation. Ven. Ananda Thera explained to the SLFP that the dual citizenship clause was a danger to the country and should not be passed in Parliament. The SLFP was asked to consider the dangers before supporting the 20th Amendment Bill.

The SLFP delegation included party Ministers Dayasiri Jayasekara, Duminda Dissanayake, Nimal Siripala de Silva, Mahinda Amaraweera, Jagath Pushpakumara, Weerakumara Dissanayake, and Lasantha Alagiyawanna.

People will...

Markar compared the 20th Amendment to a bomb that will detonate and destroy the freedom of the country. He further focused on examples from world history where dictatorships and placing power on one person affected not only one country but the entire world.

Appeal Court...

Riyaj was taken into custody on 14 April this year while in Puttalam. After five months of the arrest, he was released by the CID on 29 September. The CID cited lack of evidence to file a case against him.

Filing the writ application challenging the CID's attempts to re-arrest him, Riyaj said he was apprehended on 14 April this year in connection to the 2019 Easter Sunday terror attacks and was held under custody for a long time on a detention order.

The Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), former Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of the CID Nuwan Wedasinghe, CID Director Prasanna de Alwis, CID Chief Inspector Mihindu Abeyasinghe, and seven others were named as respondents.

He pointed out that during the detention period, the CID sleuths had conducted extensive investigations into his residences, properties, businesses, and bank accounts, following which he was subsequently released as there was no evidence to substantiate any criminal charges against him. Despite this, various parties are pressuring for him to be re-arrested for political reasons, Riyaj stated. The petitioner had further noted that there is reasonable fear that he may be re-arrested as a result. In the meantime, an interim petition was filed requesting the Court of Appeal to revoke the writ application put forward by Riyaj Bathiudeen to prevent him from being re-arrested. Sethsarana Caritas Colombo Director Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayake had lodged the interim petition on behalf of Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith.

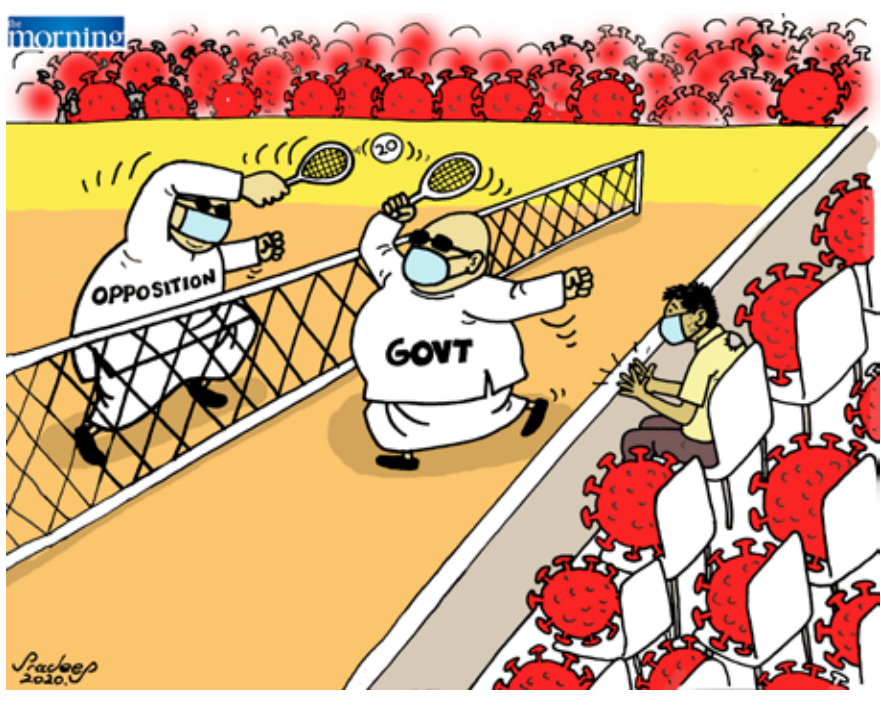
In quarantine...

The Speaker made this observation in response to a question posed by Chief Opposition Whip Lakshman Kiriella. Kiriella asked the Speaker whether directives were given to the Prisons Department to bring Bathiudeen to Parliament, to which the Speaker said the prison officials had explained that the MP was in quarantine.

Kiriella then asked the Speaker whether the health authorities could carry out a PCR test on the MP and permit him to attend Parliament, adding that several MPs had undergone PCR tests and attended Parliament.

The Speaker said he would look into the matter.

Cartoon of the day



Sri Lanka's charitable organisations need govt. collaboration: New study

Only 11% of social delivery organisations (SDOs) in Sri Lanka have contracts with the government, compared to the Asian average of 26%, while foreign funding is increasingly scarce with the rise in Sri Lanka's per capita income, according to a new report.

"Today, 71% of Sri Lankan SDOs surveyed receive foreign funding, making up 54% of their budget. With Sri Lanka having been classified as a lower middle-income country in 2010 and upper middle-income in 2019, foreign funding is increasingly being redeployed to low-income countries," notes the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society's (CAPS) in the second edition of its Doing Good Index (DGI2020).

The study was conducted in 2019, and Sri Lanka has subsequently been reclassified as a lower middle-income country. However, it is still placed at the higher end of lower middle-income countries list, and therefore diminishing foreign funding will continue to be an issue.

It adds that only 16% of SDOs surveyed in Sri Lanka receive

government grants, half the average proportion across Asia, and that government grants make up only around 2% of the average Sri Lankan SDO budget.

In light of these, the Doing Good Index advocates greater collaboration between the Sri Lankan Government and SDOs, as government procurement can be an important source of growth for the social sector.

"Only 11% of SDOs surveyed in Sri Lanka have contracts with the government, compared to the Asia average of 26%," it said, adding that most SDOs continue to find procurement processes lacking in transparency, not just in Sri Lanka but in Asia as a whole.

The Doing Good Index (DGI2020) examines the vital role of the social sector, and how Asian countries help or hinder it. It identifies opportunities for the Sri Lankan Government to do more for society, as well as how private/corporate donations must play their part in meeting people's needs.

"The global pandemic has accelerated the decline in foreign funding among local social delivery organisations, and there is a growing reliance on domestic philanthropy more

than ever to ensure that community needs are met," said Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka Research Economist Kithmina Hewage. "It is crucial for the social sector to work closely with the government and corporates to increase domestic funds that not only address immediate Covid-19-related needs, but also longer term needs related to disaster management, environmental conservation, poverty alleviation, and post-conflict reconciliation."

The Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) is the local partner for the Sri Lankan component of the study.

In terms of regulatory oversight, the study acknowledges that the establishment of the National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organisations in 1996 made all necessary regulations easily accessible through its official website, and that more recently, it introduced an online platform for registration. However, it notes that the oversight of the organisation has changed frequently between different government ministries, resulting in a lack of continuity and consistency. Furthermore, it says 41% of SDOs in Sri Lanka find laws pertaining to the

social sector difficult to understand.

On the tax front, country experts in 14 out of 18 economies, including Sri Lanka, have said they have difficulty in accurately identifying relevant tax policies. Going further, 70% of Sri Lankan SDOs believe it is difficult to claim available tax deductions, according to the study.

On the positive side, the study found that in Sri Lanka, nearly 80% of SDOs report occasional or regular participation in policymaking. Furthermore, 51% of Sri Lankan SDOs receive corporate funding, making up 16% of their average budget, while 40% of Sri Lankan SDOs receive in-kind services from corporates or partner with them to raise awareness of social issues.

The DGI2020 research surveyed 2,189 SDOs and interviewed 145 country experts across 18 Asian economies: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. It examines regulatory regimes, tax incentives, procurement procedures, and sociocultural conditions.

DFCC provides Rs. 9 b financing for Havelock City construction

DFCC Bank PLC entered into a Rs. 9 billion revolving financing arrangement for the Havelock City commercial development, comprising a 50-storey office tower and a 200,000 square foot international-standard shopping mall.

Havelock City claims to be Sri Lanka's largest mixed development project, built on 18 acres of prime land in Sri Lanka.

DFCC Bank Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Lakshman Silva commented: "DFCC Bank continues to be a dominant force in the banking sector and this transaction further stands testament to the ability we have in closing large transactions and manifests our strong and continued commitment to support in navigating the current

financial uncertainties and challenges posed."

DFCC Bank Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Banking Shamindra Marcelline stated: "This is another significant achievement by the bank. We are proud of our longstanding partnership with Havelock City and the Overseas Realty Group, undoubtedly the largest corporate real estate developer and operator in the country. We have clearly demonstrated our ability to remain nimble and responsive to our client needs."

Havelock City (Pvt.) Ltd. is a Board of Investment (BOI)-registered company which is a fully owned entity of Overseas Realty (Ceylon) PLC, the owner, manager, and developer of the iconic World Trade Centre, Colombo.

George Steuart Teas lays foundation for \$10 m tea facility

George Steuart Teas recently laid the foundation stone for a tea processing and packaging facility in Thalwatta, Kelaniya, which will be built on a six-acre land extent with the building area covering over 150,000 square feet.

The facility will carry out tea and packing material storing, processing, blending, bagging, and packaging. Furthermore, the manufacturing process follows ISO 9001:2015, ISO22000:2018, HACCP, GMP, and organic standards, George Steuart Teas said. The storage area will have the capacity to store over one million kilos of tea and will be equipped with a temperature-controlled cold room to store herbs and flavours to preserve the freshness and quality. The complex is strategically located in close proximity to tea broker warehouses, and main highways to access the port, airport, and other parts of the country. This will enable ease of



George Steuart Chairman Dilith Jayaweera (centre), flanked by colleagues, laying the foundation stone for the tea processing and packaging facility in Thalwatta, Kelaniya

logistics for local and international distribution.

The facility will be equipped with modern, fully automated machinery including staple-free tea bagging machines, blending machines, pouch

machines, and multi-layer storage racking systems, the company said. International buyers will be able to do tea tasting sessions and visit a miniature tea garden within the same location.

George Steuarts Chairman Dilith Jayaweera said: "As the oldest tea company in Sri Lanka, we are very proud of our journey thus far and this venture will allow us to further show our commitment to promote Ceylon

Tea to the world and to cater to global standards and requirements."

Commenting on the new venture, George Steuart Teas Managing Director Dai Pathmanathan said: "We are happy to embark on this project

to enable George Steuart Teas to further improve on quality standards, capacity, and to efficiently serve our customers both internationally and locally."

The project partners include Access Engineering, Civil and Structural Engineering Consultants (CSEC), and George Steuart Engineering. The project is planned to be completed in 2022 Q1 at an estimated cost of \$10 million.

Established in 1835 by brothers James and George Steuart, George Steuart & Company is the oldest mercantile establishment in Sri Lanka. The history of George Steuart & Company is closely intertwined with the fortunes of Sri Lanka's tea industry.

Today, the Steuarts tea brand is exported to over 50 countries. Locally, Steuarts BOPF Premium Tea Rosa Kahata, Steuarts Natural Ginger Tea, and Steuarts Green Tea are sold in many retail outlets and supermarkets across the island.

Research firm SRL celebrates 31st anniversary

Research and consultancy firm SRL recently celebrated 31 years in operation with the participation of Chairman Neel De Silva and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mihirani Dissanayake.

A few invitees who had supported SRL from its inception were in attendance such as SRL Emeritus Chairman Dilano Uduman, Words Founder Rohan Rajaratnam, Freddy Arumugam, Ceylon Biscuits Ltd. CEO Nalin Karunaratne, Omnicom Media Group CEO Keith Wijesuriya, Media Factory Director Kapila Vithanagamage, Media Factory Chief Operating Officer Harshana Weragama, and Company Secretary Samanmalee Rupasinghe.

The occasion also saw the launch of SRL's new platforms: the revamp of the SRL website with a new and improved data-driven site, the relaunch of SRL SuperTrak which is the first-ever supermarket tracker to monitor shopper parameters, a new standalone platform for the existing SRL NewsTrak which tracks all TV,



SRL CEO Mihirani Dissanayake (right) hands over anniversary memento to SRL Chairman Neel De Silva

print, radio and digital news, and the SRL CosNet which helps assess the effective and efficient use of your ATL (above the line) budgets.

Following addresses made by Dissanayake, De Silva, and Rajaratnam, the special invitees were presented with tokens of appreciation for being pillars of strength and support to SRL.

SRL Chairman De Silva was then presented with a memento by the rest of the SRL team. Having co-founded the company in 1989, De Silva has been the brains behind the innovations of the company. In his address, De Silva reflected on the journey of SRL, their support system, and their hopes for the future.

Vivo launches V20 in SL with 44 MP front camera

Vivo, the global smartphone brand, launched a new addition to its flagship V Series, the vivo V20, in Sri Lanka last week, which has professional-grade 44 MP eye autofocus camera with advanced Autofocus (AF) capabilities.

The V20 has a 7.38 mm ultra-sleek AG glass and comes with a 64 MP rear camera with super night mode, and is backed by 33 W FlashCharge capability.

"Vivo strongly believes in catering to the changing customers behaviour and preferences. We understand the selfie craze, photography trends, and needs of creative minds. With V20, Vivo is all set to change the paradigms of premium-range smartphones with its futuristic features and



design. V20 has it all, with enhanced autofocus camera capabilities packed in an ultra-sleek and fashionable design," said Vivo Sri Lanka Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kevin Jiang.

V20 is available at Abans, Dialog, and Singhagiri outlets, and other Vivo authorised dealers islandwide, and is priced at Rs. 69,990. Moreover, those who purchase the V20 model

are eligible for a free anytime data bundle of 50 GB from Dialog that will be valid for a period of two months from 15 October.

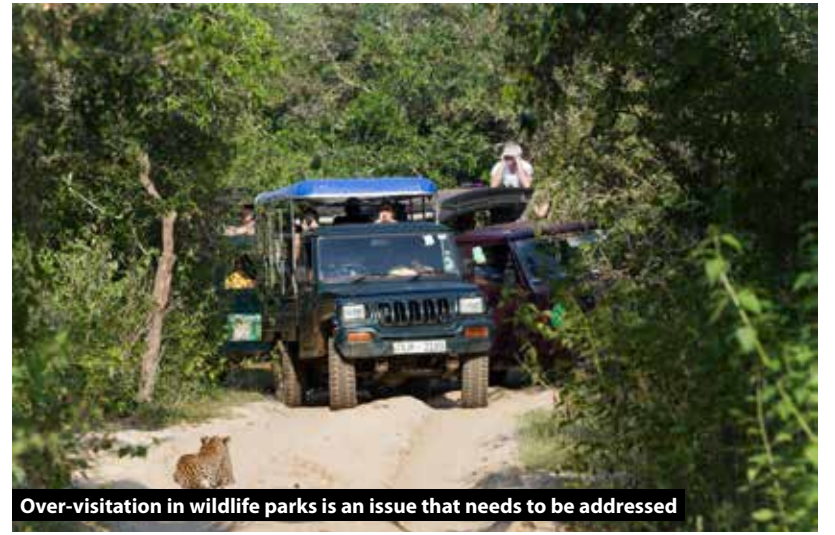
Vivo has its headquarters in China, which is supported by a network of nine research and development centres in Shenzhen, Dongguan, Nanjing, Beijing, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Taipei, Tokyo, and San Diego, and five production hubs (including a brand-authorised manufacturing centre), across China and South and Southeast Asia, manufacturing over 200 million smartphones each year. As of 2019, Vivo had branched out its sales network across more than 30 countries and regions, and is loved by more than 370 million users worldwide.



A pod of dolphins in Sri Lankan waters



Elephants sighted at a national park



Over-visitation in wildlife parks is an issue that needs to be addressed

BY NAVEED ROZAIS

We all speak about the adverse effects of Covid-19. They are known; they are ongoing; they will likely be felt for years to come. But Covid-19 has brought with it a few positives as well. It has given many people a chance to reflect on how they live their lives, the choices they make, and how those choices can be improved.

Sri Lanka's wildlife is legendary. Though we are one small island, we have an incredible range of biodiversity. Sadly, much of this renowned biodiversity is at risk. Finite land resources and an exploding population coupled with poorly managed development means much of the land that was previously wilderness has now been converted to land for human settlement as well as for agriculture, pushing the country's precious natural heritage to the brink.

Sri Lanka's wildlife resources have many stakeholders – the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) and the Department of Forest Conservation form a custodial and management role supported by others like conservationists, scientists, and tourism operators, as by and large, tourism in Sri Lanka is "nature-based" and the country's tourism-dependent economy is heavily reliant on its wilderness and wildlife. Sadly, the latter rides on the coattails of Sri Lanka's enviable biodiversity but has also been at great cost due to issues like over-visitation in wildlife parks.

The recent pandemic has been an eyeopener for many but also provided respite for the country's wildlife within park borders. This month's Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS) Public Lecture focuses on these themes, where Environmental Foundation Ltd. (EFL) Director Rukshan Jayawardena addresses the windfall as a result of Covid-19 in terms of how we manage tourism in wildlife parks.

Jayawardena is a lifelong wildlife enthusiast and photographer who believes the role of photography in conservation is best served by adhering to standards and ethics. Jayawardena is a Founding Trustee at the Leopard Trust, Chairman of the Wilderness and Protected Areas Foundation, and Past President WNPS. Ahead of the WNPS Public Lecture, *The Morning Brunch* reached out to Jayawardena for a little more insight on how exactly the pandemic has been a boon to wildlife conservation.



EFL Director Rukshan Jayawardena

The good side of Covid-19 for SL's wildlife

Jayawardena explained that many of Sri Lanka's wildlife parks, especially the popular parks like the Yala National Park and the Horton Plains National Park struggle with over-visitation in the name of tourism and that in the national context, tourism can often take precedence over protecting national parks and biodiversity.

"No long-term studies have been conducted on the over-visitation of wildlife parks," Jayawardena said, adding: "And until you study and quantify and look at it through time, you can't say anything for sure. However, the pandemic led to park closures and people being unable to visit in any number."

This drastic drop in visitors to national parks for a period close to three months has given wildlife conservationists a unique opportunity to see how parks, and wildlife in particular, develop with little human interaction; it had very telling results.

"If you were to take Yala, for example, sightings of animals like leopards and other mammals have increased dramatically," Jayawardena shared. "The duration of sightings and range of behaviours the animals show has also improved greatly. I see this as a direct result of the pressure from tourism being reduced, and really, it negates the need for a long-term study because in a very short time, without the pressure of tourism on the parks, you see a rebounding of the parks' usual natures

and much more relaxed behaviour from the animals."

This phenomenon isn't exclusive to Yala, which is Sri Lanka's most well-known wildlife park. Jayawardena commented that this trend has been observed in most if not all wildlife parks across Sri Lanka.

The reduced numbers of visitors, particularly after lockdown, has also made park management much more effective. "It is much easier for the park management to manage and control tourist behaviour in reduced numbers," Jayawardena said. "The Department of Wildlife is chronically understaffed, and high numbers of tourists in parks greatly interfere with the animals' behaviour."

The impacts of over-tourism on our wildlife

The key issues Jayawardena raised that were compounded by over-tourism were issues like roads and other development cutting through animal habitats and not only inhibiting the animals' way of life but also decreasing the quality of tourism because animals are not used to humans and so end up staying away from the main roads or they only come within 10 m of the road, regardless of if the vegetation by the side of the road is what they normally eat. There is also tremendous interference to animals accessing waterholes because of vehicles coming by every 30 seconds-one minute.

"Just because a few animals are habituated and don't show fear around humans doesn't mean that they represent all the animals in the park," Jayawardena stressed. "We can no longer say it doesn't matter because it definitely makes a huge difference. It may not be fatal to them in

any way, but roads that intersect parks so that animals have to cross them, combined with large numbers of visitors, can be traumatic to the animals."

Jayawardena explained that the need for tourism to take precedence and the need to make money can lead to serious ecological consequences in the long term. "There is great value that animals and ecosystems provide. Symbiotic associations between animals and plants create things like the quality of our water and the quality of our soil – things we can't achieve artificially without great inconvenience."

Over-tourism can even sometimes lead to damaging environmental consequences in the name of improvement, Jayawardena shared. Because of the priority tourism takes, initiatives like restoring old water tanks and improving waterholes are undertaken with the idea of both providing animals with extra water as well as boosting tourism through animal sightings at these waterholes.

Jayawardena explained that the ecological impacts of manufacturing waterholes like this can have lasting adverse effects, citing South Africa's similar initiatives as an example. In South Africa, water was pumped up from windmills into waterholes, even during rainless times where waterholes normally dried up completely. The result was that the natural vegetation around these waterholes was overgrazed by herbivores, basically creating mini ecological deserts in the areas surrounding these waterholes. South Africa has since ceased this practice, the result being that the strong animals survive, which is what is necessary.

"These are tried and tested evolutionary cycles. Sri Lanka still provides water to

areas in waterless times. This needs to be done very judiciously," Jayawardena explained, adding: "Especially doing things like restoring old water tanks on the boundaries of parks. In this sort of instance, we need to be prepared to protect this sort of area because poachers and illegal hunters are also automatically drawn to areas where animals are abundant."

Getting things right for the future

Jayawardena shared that limiting the numbers of visitors to parks is a crucial way forward. There has to be a way of staggering visitors entering parks and a quota on how many visitors enter a certain park at any given time. Jayawardena said: "Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya headed an excellent park management study and made a proposal to the former Government on such measures. The study was conducted with all Sri Lanka's wildlife stakeholders including the tourism industry. It looked at sustainably reducing visitors to parks in a way that could be beneficial to all. Now, proposals like this have a lot more strength because we can see how parks have fared with reduced numbers of visitors."

Jayawardena noted the financial impact to reducing the numbers of visitors allowed into parks, both in terms of tourism as well as funding for the DWC, but he stressed that Sri Lanka's wildlife is a living resource. "Our inability to control this is going to have a long-term impact on these ecosystems that may be irreversible over time. We may not see the impact immediately, but in 50 to 100 years, we may see the disappearance of animals in these parks because of how they are affected by noise and people."

Jayawardena also shared that important steps for the future included the DWC developing better practices in parks and improving overall park management. Jayawardena also commented on the role political interference plays when developing these systems, especially when disciplinary action is taken against people who abuse wildlife.

"This is the time for us to take stock of what has been happening and decide the best way forward," Jayawardena said, adding: "Sri Lanka's wildlife is not any department's personally owned thing. It's something that is held in perpetual trust for future Sri Lankans and the world. Many of our wildlife parks are World Heritage Sites."

Rukshan Jayawardena discusses the themes above and more at this month's WNPS Public Lecture which takes place today, 22 October at 6 p.m. via Zoom and Facebook Live on the WNPS Facebook page.

Unspoken Pandemic 2020

● A discussion on the importance of speaking to children on child abuse

Leads has organised a webinar on 24 October at 4 p.m. to speak about the "importance of speaking to children on child abuse". They intend to build a public discourse surrounding it; thus bringing everyone together to ensure that every child is protected and has a safe and wholesome environment to grow. It is vital to speak to children regarding child abuse and how to protect themselves from a younger age. This Children's Month, the unspoken pandemic of sexual violence experienced by children should not be forgotten. Therefore, Leads invites the public to join



Unspoken Pandemic 2020 and be a pillar of influence in creating a

change for our future generation. Visit this link before 23

October 2020 to register: bit.ly/2T4py0Q

- Panelists:
1. Sri Lanka Tourism Chairperson Kimarli Fernando
 2. Prime Minister's Office Director – Communications Chamithri Rambukwella
 3. National Institute of Mental Health Consultant Psychiatrist Dr. M. Ganesan
 4. Ikon Marketing Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dulinda Perera
 5. Leads Sri Lanka CEO Monroe Jayasuriya
 6. Child Representative Hithara Kuruwita
 7. Moderator Danu Innasithamby



From left: Signature Studio Showroom Manager Mohan de Silva, Chief Guest Minister of Power Dullas Alahapperuma, and Signature Brand Manager Amjad Marikkar Hameed



Signature team

Signature Studio flagship store opens in Matara

Signature has unveiled the latest Signature Studio flagship store in Matara, making it the newest addition to the company's expanding Signature Studio network.

As the flagship store of the Signature brand, the Signature Studio caters to aspiring youth in the market by offering the most comprehensive collection of Signature brand items under one roof. Centrally located at No. 181, Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Matara, the new Signature Studio offers customers convenient access

and ample parking as they step in to experience the latest in men's fashion.

Expressing his views, Signature Brand Manager Amjad Hameed stated: "This is the latest milestone in our ongoing efforts to create awareness of the Signature brand and expand our market islandwide. Our primary aim has always been to provide our valued clientele the customer-centric, fashion-forward, high-quality services they deserve."

Established in 1989, Signature has made a name for itself as the "value for money" brand for both formal

and casual categories, operating as the most trusted local menswear brand in Sri Lanka.

Well known for its ability to build confidence by enriching personalities of the younger generation, Signature has a developed, encompassing lifestyle line that is fashionable for men to be flamboyant and loud. Signature features carefully designed pieces for young undergraduates, executives, and junior managers who dream to be a chief executive officer (CEO) one day and want to look extraordinary.



Bravo pullout flattens CSK

Ruled out for the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in United Arab Emirates with a groin injury, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) all-rounder Dwayne Bravo has urged the beleaguered outfit's fans to keep supporting it in what has turned out to be a forgettable season. His pullout came as a massive blow to the already struggling side which has very slim chances of advancing to the play-offs.

USA aims at playing Test cricket

USA Cricket announced this week its bold new vision to achieve International Cricket Council (ICC) Full Membership within a decade. The new strategy, contained in the "Foundational Plan", outlines both long and short-term objectives for their cricket administration across both the on-field and operational sides of the organisation. Their first goal on the playfield is qualification for the 2022 ICC Men's U19 World Cup.



Cricket gets its 1st Covid replacement

The Plunket Shield now being played in New Zealand became the first cricket tournament to feature a "Covid replacement". Ben Lister (pictured) turned out for Auckland in their match against Otago on Tuesday (20), in place of Mark Chapman, who reported feeling ill on Monday (19). Chapman, as per the new precautionary measures in place, will await the results of his Covid-19 test. In June, the International Cricket Council allowed subs in Tests if a player showed symptoms of the virus.



Funeral of 'national cricket'!

● *Int'l cricket moves closer to 'split-team era'*



Australia cricketer Steve Smith. His country may be playing a Test match in South Africa and a T20I in New Zealand on the same day

BY REVATHA S. SILVA

At the start of 2021, England and Australia will have separate international squads in different countries playing separate series, meaning the "national" cricket psyche of their fans back home will face an unprecedented quandary.

Will it cause an expansion of the nationalistic faith of cricket's fan base? Will it revitalise Test cricket? Or else, will this dangerous experiment dismantle all that is faithful and spiritual remaining in world cricket?

'A fissure inescapable'

"At half past six at the George Hotel, Huddersfield, on 29 August 1895, rugby split. Officials from leading northern rugby clubs, fed up with southern clubs' elitism and their insistence on maintaining amateurism – a ruse to keep the northern teams down – voted to form a Northern Rugby Football Union, heralding the birth of rugby league. At a stroke, the game of rugby fragmented into two.

"Cricket has managed to avoid such a breakaway. In many ways it is quite an achievement: Uniquely, cricket is a sport that has three different formats all run by the same governing body. And yet, while this veneer of unity remains, the fissures in the sport are increasingly inescapable," wrote Tim Wigmore in The Telegraph on Sunday (18).

'Big Three' and 'Small Nine'

Arguing about the possible reason for this new move of "the split team concept" which is to be practised by the present "Big Three" in world cricket – Australia, England, and India – Wigmore wrote: "For all those concerned about Test cricket (played by 12 countries now), the most salient fact is that Tests NOT involving the 'Big Three' lose boards in the region of £ 500,000 apiece (Rs. 120.9 million).

"While the sums are altogether less dramatic, and profits are more common, many One-Day Internationals (ODIs) and Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is) between NON 'Big Three' sides also lose money... So, besides the revenue they receive from the International Cricket Council (ICC), there is essentially only one way for teams to make cash: A tour by one of 'the Big Three'."

Problem of 'one tour at a time'

Wigmore further explains: "It is standard practice for boards to plan their entire four-year cycles around tours from the 'Big Three'. The proceeds of selling these matches to broadcasters dictate what other fixtures boards can afford to stage and when.

"It adds up to an inherently perilous model, which means that boards can face catastrophic financial damage if relations with a 'Big Three' member collapse, as has happened with Pakistan and India.

"Even for boards who avoid this fate, there is an essential snag: There are only so many 'Big Three' tours to go around, and only one country that any member can tour at one time."

Losing nationalistic essence

Here is the rub; the rationale for the England Test team to be playing here while their ODI team is playing there, and its T20I team could be playing somewhere else! All that to send the entire cricket world into an unprecedented era of "split national sides". At what cost, is the most significant problem here.

Cricket became a business most overtly in the last two to three decades. Now the national boards need to run this business without losing. To do that, they will have to depend on the so-called giants of the trade, or the self-proclaimed "Big Three". As a result, in the name of smooth running of the cricketing business, the grand old game is now going to lose its very nationalistic base and core.

The fans' dilemma

Here, as a result, the 2021 cricket season is going to start with the Australia T20I team being in New Zealand next February while their Test team is simultaneously playing a series in South Africa.

Then, the England T20I team will probably play Pakistan in January while their Test team will be either playing or preparing for a two-match Test series against Sri Lanka.

"Whether the matches take place on the same day is a moot point: Players will only be able to be selected for one of the series," the said The Telegraph article rightly predicted. If the same nation is going to play two matches on the same day, it could be: "You cheer our Test side while I cheer the T20 side" for the poor old fans!

'We're one country, aren't we?'

When the Indian Premier League (IPL) was founded in 2008, critics including Tony Greig feared the very ideological base of the sport could one day be in tatters due to its progress. The lure for money by the international player was to undermine their commitment towards their country and their nation.

Remember Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene skipped that time a rare opportunity of playing a Test series in England – including one match at Lord's – because the proposed series clashed with the IPL? Now for the greed created by the IPL, the entire cricket world is facing the music. The USD has bought over cricketers' nationalism quite smartly!

"I don't ever want to have two Australian teams," says present Australia Head Coach Justin Langer, who played at the highest level before the advent of the IPL era. "I didn't like it at all. We're one country, aren't we?"

Now it's up to the ICC: Two wrongs don't make a right.



Salman Khan stars with Madhuri Dixit in the 1991 Lawrence D'Souza blockbuster movie Saajan

Salman Khan to watch LPL in Kandy

● *The Khan family consortium buys Kandy Tuskers*

Bollywood star Salman Khan's family has bought the Kandy Tuskers franchise in the Lanka Premier League (LPL), Times of India (ToI) reported on Wednesday (20).

"Salman Khan's younger brother Sohail and father, noted scriptwriter Salim Khan, are part of the consortium – 'the Sohail Khan International LLP' – that has made the investment," the report revealed.

Sohail, the youngest of the three brothers in the Khan family – with Arbaaz and Salman being elder – has told ToI: "Salman will attend all the Kandy matches."

A star-studded team

Meanwhile, the LLP organisers, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) and Innovative Production Group (IPG), officially announced in a joint statement yesterday (21) that the tournament has caught "Bollywood attention as film-maker, producer, writer, and actor, Sohail Khan became the proud owner of the Kandy Tuskers franchise in the T20 League scheduled to be played from 21 November to 13 December 2020 at Pallekele and Hambantota".

"Kandy franchisee, which picked West Indies legend Chris Gayle in the player draft on Monday (19), also have local icon Kusal Perera, Sri Lankan T20 specialists Kusal Mendis, and Nuwan Pradeep and England right-arm fast bowler Liam Plunkett among others. Former Sri Lankan skipper Hashan Tillakaratne is part of the Kandy coaching staff," the above statement mentioned.

Can reach the final

"There is a lot of



LPL official logo

potential in the LPL. We are really very happy to be part of this exciting initiative. Sri Lankan fans are very passionate about the game and I am sure they will come out in large numbers to support the team," the release quoted Sohail Khan as saying.

"Gayle is obviously the universal boss, but he is not alone. We have a very good team, a good balance of youth and experience, and I am backing my team to play the final," Sohail has added.

Anil Mohan, Wickramaratne views

Meanwhile, IPG Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Anil Mohan has said: "We are committed to create a world-class league with LPL and what better way than to spread the message through Bollywood and Sohail Khan. Sohail's love for cricket is well documented. He will not only add glamour to the whole event but he is also passionate about the sport. We couldn't have asked for a better partner than him."

SLC Vice President and LPL Tournament Director Ravin Wickramaratne has said: "We are extremely glad that 'Sohail Khan International LLP' is part of the Kandy Tuskers consortium. Cricket and celluloid have been interconnected for a long time, and the

presence of movie stars brings an element of fun, entertainment, and glamour to the whole proceedings. I am sure Lankan fans will enjoy the superstars' presence in the League."

Galle owned by PSL franchisee

"The LPL player draft took place over the last 48 hours and despite all the confusion on player availabilities, and the rules set in place, Khan says he's happy with the team he's put together," the ToI has added.

It further said that the Galle franchise in the LPL is owned by the same consortium that runs the Quetta Gladiators in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Russel Arnold involved!

"However, it's not clear yet as to who owns the other teams. It is learnt that the LPL has two other India-based consortiums and one based out of Sri Lanka which have picked up the teams. Former Sri Lankan all-rounder and commentator Russel Arnold is learnt to be associated with the Sri Lanka-based consortium," it explained.

But with the sudden spike in the Covid-19 cases in the island, the start of the LPL on schedule is highly doubtful, experts believe.

COS Campus offers OTHM qualifications for professionals

It is never too late to learn, which is why the COS International Campus has come forth with a plethora of OTHM qualifications targeting working professionals seeking to obtain academic qualifications with five or more years of managerial work experience.

The qualifications offered by COS International Campus are accredited by OTHM UK, which is a UK-based qualification-awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulation). COS International is part of OTHM's global network of delivery centres. Once an individual completes any of these courses, he/she will be eligible to do an MBA/Master's or Bachelor's degree from a recognised UK university.

The COS International Campus aims to offer OTHM Level 4 and 5 programmes in accounting and business, logistics and supply chain management, and business management, targeting school leavers and undergraduate students. The Level 7 programmes are targeted at working professionals and will be based on the subjects of strategic management and leadership, education management and leadership, accounting and finance, and logistics and supply chain management.

These courses will be delivered through a panel of qualified and experienced board of academics headed by Senior Academic Consultant Dr. Jayantha Pathirana. Dr. Pathirana is a Visiting Academic at the Sabaragamuwa University and holds a PhD in Professional Study in Leadership, an MA



Director Irfas Kamil

in Teacher Education, and a Bachelor's in Education.

The lecture panel of the COS International Campus comprises academic experts in various fields including University of London and University of Moratuwa Visiting Lecturer and COS International Academic Advisor Chathushka Kiriella, Institute of Research and Development Chairman Dr. Godwin Koditwakku, Commercial Leasing and Finance PLC Manager/Head of Islamic Business Division Ilam Awfer, University of Colombo, SLIDA, IPM, CINEC, and MSU Visiting Lecturer Dr. Sharmani Perera, CIPM Senior Lecturer and former Browns Group of Companies General Manager – Human Resources (HR) Ajith



Director Ayshathul Afra Ishaq

Director Thariq Edayathulla

Bopitiya, and Waters Edge Ltd. Director – HR Ken Vijayakumar.

The COS International Campus started its operations this October. The founders of COS International Campus have experience for the past 15 years in the fields offering early childhood, primary and secondary education, higher education, and sales and marketing to Sri Lanka and overseas students. The prime objective of launching this campus is to provide a pathway to higher education. The COS International Campus will be a platform that provides students access to the full spectrum of educational qualifications that he/she would require to add value and knowledge to his/her life.

The leadership of COS International Campus include Director Thariq Edayathulla, Director Irfas Kamil, and Director Ayshathul Afra Ishaq, who envision making this institute a destination of choice for balanced and quality higher education for future leaders in Sri Lanka and the region. For more information on the courses offered by COS International Campus, please call 0114 292 382 or 0771 529 717.

SLIIT honours academic excellence with convocation ceremony

Sri Lanka's premier higher education institute, SLIIT celebrated the determination and success of its graduates at its September 2020 Convocation held at the SLIIT Campus Malabe recently.

Organised over three sessions, students who had successfully completed their bachelor's and master's degrees, and postgraduate diplomas were awarded their certificates. The best performers among the students were also recognised during the convocation.

Minister of Education Prof. G.L. Peiris graced the occasion as the Chief Guest for the final session. Laugfs Group Chairman Deshabandu W.K.H. Wegapitiya and Dialog Axiata Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Supun Weerasinghe were the Chief Guests for the first and second sessions, respectively.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Peiris stated: "I warmly congratulate all those who have graduated today. It is worthy of recognition as an institution which has rendered yeoman service and contributed very actively, very vigorously to the cause of higher education in this country."

"As the country's Minister of Education, I am legitimately proud that today you have established enduring relationships with as many as 30 foreign universities of established repute. That is indeed a worthwhile achievement. Some other features of SIIT that are exemplary, which are out of the box and which blaze a new trail, which I hope will be emulated by other higher education institutes in the country," Prof. Peiris added.

Welcoming the audience, SLIIT Vice Chancellor/CEO Prof. Lalith Gamage said: "I congratulate all the graduates gathered here today as you mark a significant milestone in your life. For many of you, this institute has been a home away from home and we hope that you have enjoyed your stay at SLIIT. You are now part of an important human resource necessary for the growth and development of our country. We recognise that your success has not only been achieved by your individual effort



Minister of Education Prof. G.L. Peiris awarding the Gold Medal to a "Best Performance" student



The flags being hoisted at the SLIIT September 2020 Convocation

alone – your parents, guardians, and family have walked with you in your academic journey. Spare a moment to thank them for their sacrifices. I would like to assure all parents, guardians, and family members that these graduates have been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to make a significant contribution to the development of our nation and beyond."

At the September 2020 Convocation, SLIIT conferred degrees for the BScs in Information Technology, Business, Computing, Engineering, Marketing, Human Capital Management, Mechanical Engineering, and Accounting and Finance. Additionally, MScs were awarded for Information Technology, Information Management, and Information Systems, while the MPhil in Electrical and Electronic Engineering was also presented.

From the Liverpool John Moores University, UK degrees in electronic and electrical engineering, quantity surveying, and nursing, and masters in project management were awarded.

Students received

degrees from the University of Bedfordshire, UK for computer science and software engineering, computer networking, business administration, and computer science.

The special award winners of the convocation were Mihindukulasuriya Nishali Romesha Perera, Vidana Ralalage Sahana Chathura Priyashantha, Mihindukulasuriya Nishali Romesha Perera, Ranawaka Arachchige Dhanushika Malshani Ranawaka, Jayawickrama Gamachchige Keshala Gathurangee Jayawickrama, Kalutota Kuruwe Arachchige Wimarsha Madhubhashana, Laneesha Ocashanee Ruggahakotuwa, Gamamedia Liyanage Ann Kaveesha Nirmani Perera, and Lahiru Lakshan Hewawasam.

While each of the programmes offered contributes towards broadening the horizons of education in Sri Lanka, it also ensures the graduates are making a vital contribution to the nation's workforce, to business, environmental, and the community services helping the local economy and society thrive.

Ceylinco Life launches 20th 'Pranama' scholarship programme

● **Marks two decades of motivating tomorrow's leaders with Rs. 166 m in disbursements to 2,885 students**



Some of the winners from the last batch of Pranama recipients

Ceylinco Life announced it will award more than Rs. 11 million to another 160 brilliant young minds with the launch of the 20th edition of the company's "Pranama" scholarship programme which will culminate in May 2021.

The collection of applications from students eligible under four categories is now open and will continue until 15 January 2021, considering the delays in examinations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the company said. All Ceylinco Life branches islandwide are now accepting applications.

Launched as a rewards scheme to benefit Ceylinco Life policyholder's children, the Pranama scheme has to date disbursed a total of Rs. 155 million and benefitted 2,725 students. Completing the second decade of recognising and encouraging young talent, the life insurance leader will take this total to Rs. 166 million and the beneficiary numbers to 2,885 with this round of scholarships.

Commenting on the programme, Ceylinco Life Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thushara Ranasinghe said: "These are challenging times for businesses, but we are determined to continue investing in the future generations of our country through the Pranama scholarships. Keeping the programme going for 20 years

is a measure of our commitment and we are deeply heartened to be able to play a role in encouraging the pursuit of excellence among children who will grow up to be leaders in their chosen fields and become assets to our country."

Ceylinco Life's Pranama scholarship programme rewards the academic as well as extracurricular achievements of children of policyholders with cash prizes for those who achieve the best results in their respective districts at the year five scholarship examination, the GCE Ordinary Level, and the GCE Advanced Level, as well as for children who excel at an international and the national level in sports, drama, invention, or creativity.

The newest edition of Pranama scholarships will reward 25 students who excelled at the 2020 year five scholarship examination with Rs. 120,000 each, payable in instalments over five years. Another 25 students who excelled at the 2019 GCE Ordinary Level examinations will each receive Rs. 84,000, payable monthly over two years, while 25 students placed first in their districts at the 2019 GCE Advanced Level examinations will receive scholarships worth Rs. 144,000 each, payable over a three-year period.

Furthermore, one-time payments of Rs. 30,000 each will be presented to 75 students



A student receiving a Pranama scholarship from Ceylinco Life Chairman R. Renganathan (right)

placed second, third, and fourth in their districts at the 2019 GCE Advanced Level examination.

Ten students who have excelled in sports, drama, invention, or creative fields in 2019 and 2020 will be presented merit awards, each to the value of Rs. 35,000.

Additionally, 600 students who are ranked in the top 10 in all three public examinations at a district level will be presented a certificate of appreciation and a gift pack at their respective branches, after the conclusion of the main event, the company said.

Sri Lanka's leading life insurer for more than half of the 32 years it has been in existence, and certified as a "Great Workplace" in Sri Lanka by Great Place to Work®, Ceylinco Life was ranked the Most Valuable Life Insurance Brand in Sri Lanka by Brand

Finance this year and declared the "People's Life Insurance Service Provider of the Year" for the 14th consecutive year at the 2020 SLIM-Nielsen People's Awards. The company was ranked among the 10 "Most Admired Companies" in the country by the International Chamber of Commerce, Sri Lanka (ICCSL) in 2019 and in the same year was named the "Best Life Insurer in Sri Lanka" for the sixth consecutive year by World Finance, and ranked sixth overall in the Business Today ranking of the country's top 30 companies.

Ceylinco Life has close to a million lives covered by active policies and is acknowledged as a benchmark in the local insurance sector for innovation, product research and development, customer service, professional development, and corporate social responsibility.

Genie revolutionises the education payment mechanism in SL

Powered by Dialog Axiata PLC, Sri Lanka's premier connectivity provider, Genie, Sri Lanka's first PCI-DSS-certified payment app, has extended its seamless service to parents, students, and administrative bodies in the education sector for a convenient system in securing academic payments for their services digitally.

Dialog is at the forefront of fintech products since 2012, and by extending its service to the expansive education sector, it provides merchants and customers the convenience and ease of making payments via Genie. Most recently, Pay by Genie has facilitated leading schools and educational institutes in the country such as Wesley College, National Institute of Business Management (NIBM), Negombo South International College, and Inspiro Business School with their administrative, term, and course fees. Genie has further extended its virtual payment service to e-learning platforms Notes.lk and Cloud

Smart Schools to administer similar periodical payments. Additionally, the Old Boys' Union of Isipathana College and Bandaranayake College have also adopted this pay-on-the-go service, allowing them to create a linear method for convenient payment transactions made towards their respective unions.

By onboarding merchants from the academic sector, Genie has seen their efforts reach new heights in financial inclusivity, all the while giving academic and administrative staff and payers an added benefit of operating a simple user interface to secure critical payments from anywhere at any time. This virtual mechanism will not only reduce the maladministration of funds but further acts as a vital solution during unprecedented times such as the Covid-19 pandemic when social distancing restrictions were in place, lessening the inconvenience and hassle of payers having to physically secure payments.