



NEWSWIRE

99

THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN 2023





#1 Nominations called for Local Government Election 2023

The National Elections Commission announced that nominations for the Local Government Election will be called from 18- 21 January 2023.

Days following the calling of nominations, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa questioned a directive given by the Cabinet of Ministers to stop accepting deposits for Local Council Elections.

Thereafter, the Election Commission wrote to all District Secretaries informing they should continue to accept deposits for local council elections as per the instructions given previously.



4TH JANUARY

#2 Fake Dalada Maligawa : Mahanayake Theros write to President

President Ranil Wickremesinghe's attention was drawn to the construction of a fake 'Sri Dalada Maligawa', on Wadhakada Road in Pothuhera, Kurunegala.

In a joint statement to the President, the Chief Prelates of the Malwathu and Asgiriya sectors said several people have been caught in the scam, donating money and jewellery for the construction.

The Police also launched investigations into two individuals, including a social media activist, for having defamed the 'Sri Dalada Maligawa' and Buddhism.



#3 PAYE tax : New decision announced

The Ministry of Finance announced that the government has decided to prohibit state and semi-government institutions from paying the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Tax of employees through the respective institutions' funds.

State Minister of Finance Ranjith Siyambalapitiya said the PAYE Tax was introduced for employees of state and semi-government institutions earning an income surpassing a specified level.

He said, however, it has been reported that the funds of state and semi-government institutions have been utilized to settle the tax payments of employees., due to which a decision was taken to prevent the payment of PAYE Tax for state and semi-government employees via the institutions' funds.



#4 **Canada imposes targeted sanctions against Rajapaksa brothers**

Canada imposed targeted sanctions under regulations according to the Special Economic Measures Act against four Sri Lankan state officials responsible for gross and systematic violations of human rights during the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, which occurred from 1983 to 2009.

Accordingly, Canada imposed targeted sanctions against former Presidents Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Mahinda Rajapaksa, Staff Sergeant Sunil Ratnayake, and Lieutenant Commander Chandana Hettiarachchi.



#5 Easter Attack : Maithripala Sirisena ordered to pay Rs 100 million compensation

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka ordered a group of former government officials, including former President Maithripala Sirisena to pay compensation for the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks.

Issuing the verdict, the Supreme Court ordered former President Maithripala Sirisena to pay Rs. 100 million, and former Secretary of Defence Hemasiri Fernando to pay Rs. 50 million in compensation.

#6 Jeewan breaks Ranil's record



Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) MP Jeewan Thondaman became the youngest politician to be appointed as a Cabinet Minister in Sri Lanka.

Thondaman broke the previous record which was set by Ranil Wickremesinghe, who made history as the youngest Cabinet Minister of Sri Lanka at the age of 29 in 1977.

#7 FIFA suspends Sri Lanka Football

FIFA



22ND JANUARY

Football Federation of Sri Lanka was (FFSL) suspended by the FIFA from January 21st 2023 until further notice.

The suspension was due to third-party interference in matters related to the FFSL as the Sri Lankan authorities had deviated from the agreed roadmap and complaints over the Sri Lanka football elections held on January 14th.



#8 SL in Top 10 of most Instagrammable places in the world

Sri Lanka was ranked 09th among the 50 most instagrammable places in the world for 2023 by the travel website, ‘Big 7 Travel’.

Describing Sri Lanka, the site said, “This small island nation may not be as well-known as some of the other destinations on our list, but it’s definitely worth a visit.”

With over 13 million Instagram hashtags and 16.4 billion TikTok views, Sri Lanka offers a unique blend of cultural, natural, and historical attractions, it added.

#9 Local Council Election: Gazette issued



A Gazette notification was issued on the holding of the Local Council Election on March 09, 2023, but weeks later, Postal Voting for the election was postponed indefinitely.

The Finance Ministry Secretary also informed the Election Commission of being unable to provide the necessary funds to conduct the polls due to the current financial situation, after which Sri Lanka officially announced the postponement of the Local Government polls.

#10 Power cuts : PUCSL goes to court



The Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) filed a writ application before the Court of Appeal against the CEB to prevent power interruptions during the 2022 GCE Advanced Level examinations.

During a discussion at the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, several stakeholders of the PUCSL and CEB had reached an agreement not to enforce power cuts until the conclusion of the exams.

However, power cuts were imposed in several areas in the following two days.



8TH FEBRUARY

#11 New Tax including PAYE : Three key points from President's speech at Parliament

- Delivering the Government's Policy Statement in Parliament, the President said compared to other countries, Sri Lanka's direct tax is low and called for the correction of this tax divergence.
- If PAYE tax is abolished, the country will lose Rs. 100 billion. If the tax limit is raised to Rs. 200,000, the economy will lose Rs. 63 billion. The total amount that will be lost is Rs. 163 billion.
- It is required to ensure proper collection of taxes from those directly liable to pay, to reduce the burden on the general public.



#12 Cabinet approval to ban several items of plastic

The Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal, presented by the Minister of Environment, to ban several plastic products in Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the ban on the production, importation, selling and use of the following items is effective from June 01, 2023.

- Single-use plastic straws and stirrers**
- Plastic yoghurt spoons, plates, cups (except yoghurt cups), knives, spoons and forks**
- Plastic flower garlands**
- Plastic string hopper trays**

#13 Permission given to kill six animals damaging crops



Minister of Agriculture Mahinda Amaraweera announced that the government permitted farmers to kill monkeys that are found to be destroying crops.

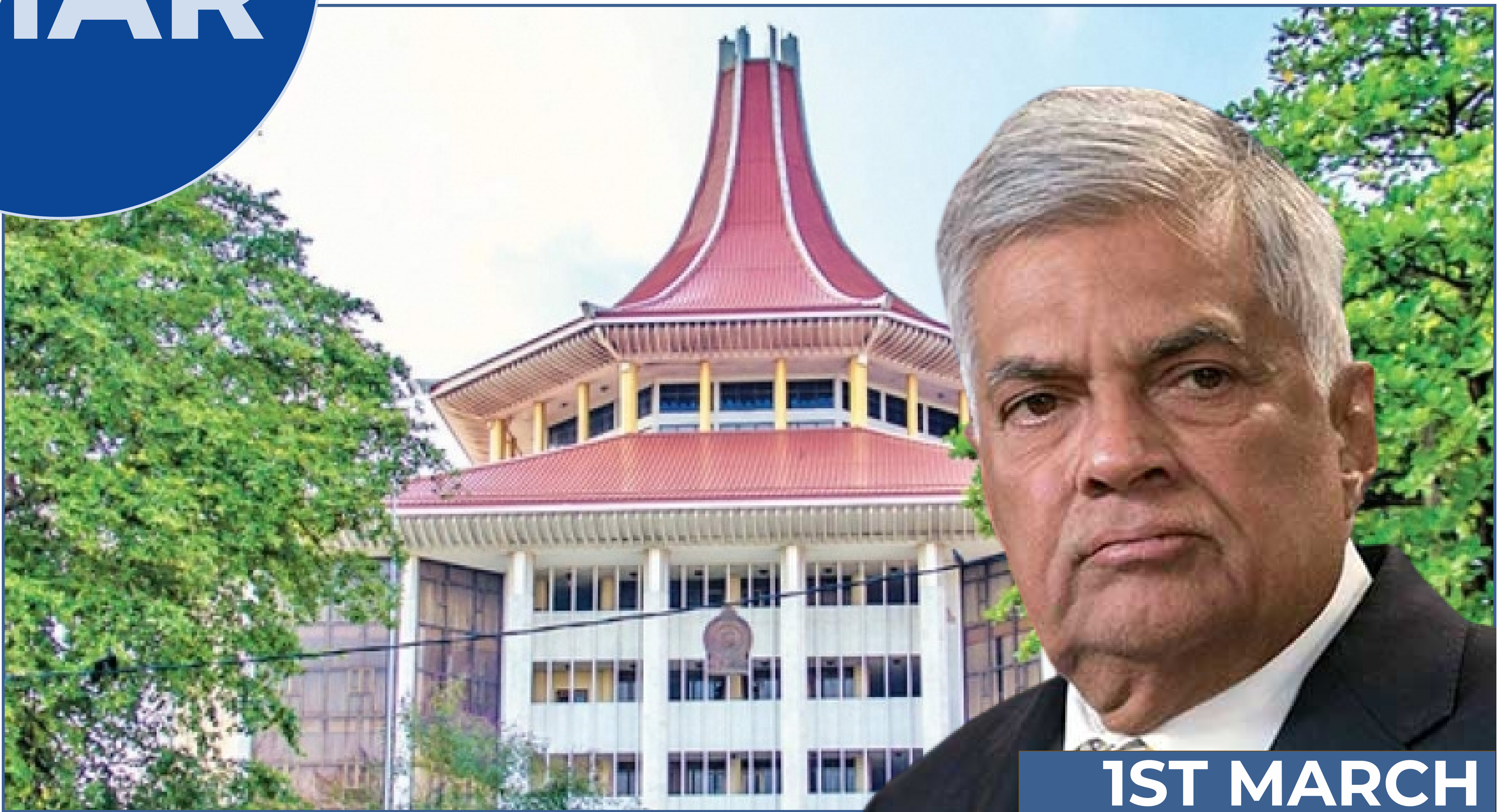
During a meeting with potato farmers, the minister revealed that six crop-ravaging animals, peacocks, monkeys, toque macaques, grizzled giant squirrels, porcupines, and wild boars, were recently removed from the list of protected animals in Sri Lanka.

#14 Failure to prevent May 9 violence : Inquiry finds fault with Shavendra



A 3-member Presidential Committee determined that former Army Commander Shavendra Silva neglected his duties in not taking necessary action to prevent violence that took place in the country on the 9th and 10th of May 2022.

The committee comprising Admiral of the Fleet Wasantha Karannagoda, General Daya Rathnayake and Marshal of the Air Force Roshan Gunathilake was appointed by former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to inquire into the May 9th incidents.



#15 President released from 108 lawsuits

The Colombo District Court ordered the release of President Ranil Wickremesinghe from 108 lawsuits pertaining to the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks.

Announcing the decision, the judge observed that the second defendant, Ranil Wickremesinghe, is entitled to immunity in terms of Article 35(1) of the constitution as the President of Sri Lanka.



#16 Sri Lanka thanks countries for supporting its debt restructuring process

The Sri Lankan Government extended its gratitude to India, China, the Paris Club, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Hungary and Kuwait for providing debt restructuring assurances to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also informed the IMF that China is willing to play a constructive part in debt talks involving heavily indebted nations, such as Sri Lanka.



#17 IMF approves US\$3 Billion for Sri Lanka

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board approved a 48-month extended arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of SDR 2.286 billion (about US\$3 billion) to support Sri Lanka's economic policies and reforms.

The government of Sri Lanka used a portion of the first disbursement from the IMF, around USD 121 million from the USD 333 million received, to settle a loan instalment of the Indian Credit Line.

#18 Island-wide strike by several state sector trade unions cripples SL



An island-wide strike action was held by trade unions of several essential services sectors, including health, ports, power, water, railways, postal, and banks.

The strike action was staged over several demands, including the government's new tax policy and the recent hike in electricity tariffs, severely crippling several sectors.

#19 Law exam English-only proposal defeated in Parliament



The proposal to Parliament that all courses and exams conducted at the Sri Lanka Law College should be conducted in the English Medium was defeated during a vote in Parliament.

The Parliament announced that the Rules under the Council of Legal Education Ordinance (Chapter 276) presented in Parliament received 1 vote for and 113 against.



#20 Sports Minister writes to ICC over new committee to investigate SL

Minister of Sports Roshan Ranasinghe sent a letter to the Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), requesting a meeting to address allegations of potential political interference in the management of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

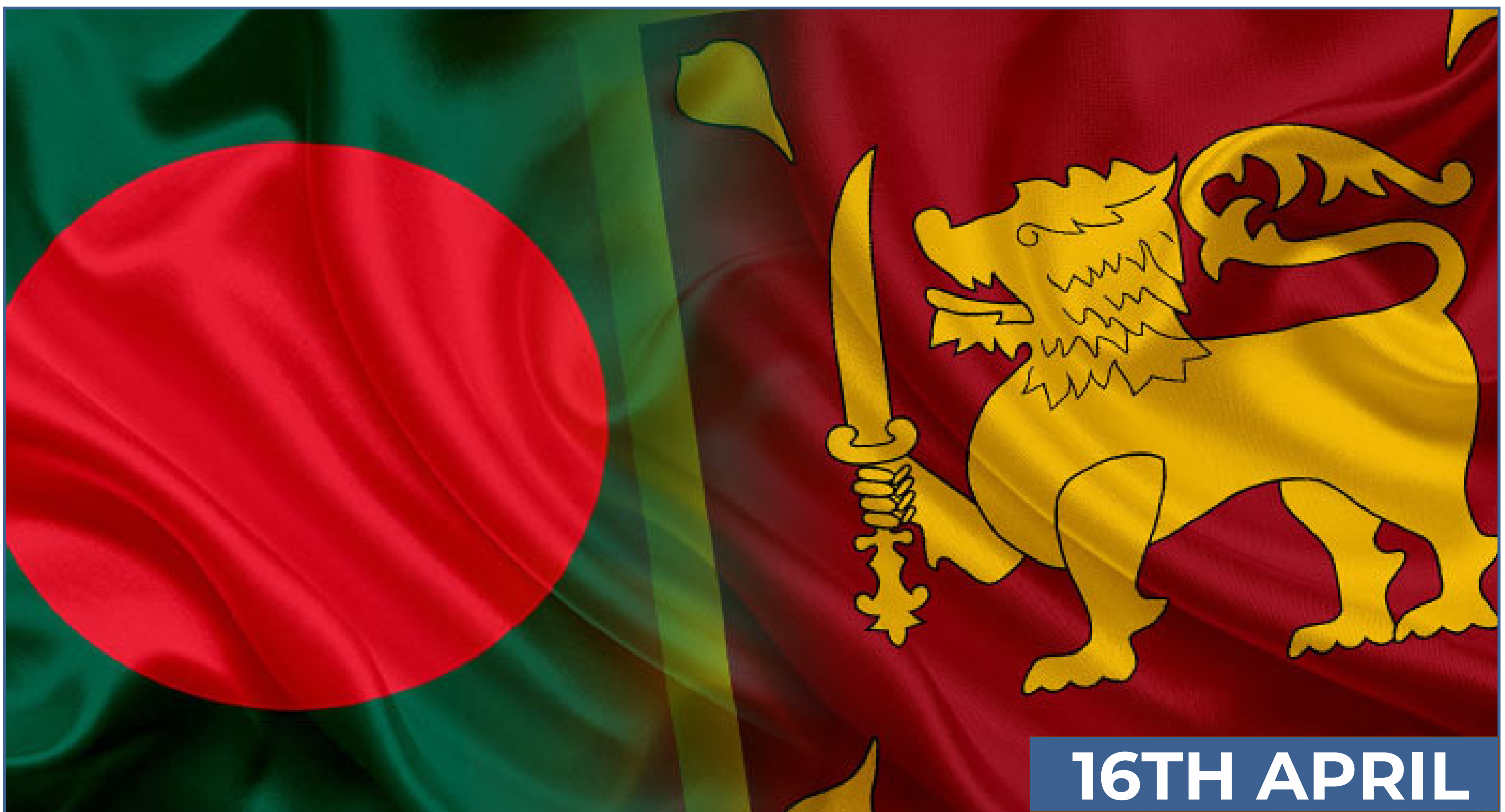
The letter was sent to address the social media rumours about the ICC forming a committee with three members to investigate potential political interference in the management of Sri Lanka Cricket and the related accusations.



#21 Sri Lanka catholic church seeks UN-led probe on Easter attacks

On the fourth anniversary of the Easter Sunday bombings, the Archdiocese of Colombo, in an interview with Vatican News, sought justice by calling for a UN-led international investigation.

Lamenting the lack of justice for the bombings, Fr. Julian Patrick Perera of Sri Lanka's Catholic Church alleged there appears to be evidence of a cover-up, pointing to the removal of several key investigators from the case.



#22 Bangladesh accepts Sri Lanka's request on loan payment

Bangladesh extended the repayment period of Sri Lanka's \$200 million loan it had given, by six more months.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder revealed Sri Lanka sought six more months, assuring it would make its first instalment by August this year and another instalment by September.

#23 Govt takes new decision on usage of Galle Face Green



18TH APRIL

The Cabinet of Ministers decided to permit only religious events at the Galle Face Green from 20th April 2023.

Accordingly, permission would not be granted for musical shows, political meetings, or mass gatherings to be held at the Galle Face Green.

Apart from religious events, the Galle Face Green would only be opened for the public to freely spend their leisure time.

#24 Chinese Embassy issues clarification on request for monkey export



19TH APRIL

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#25 Sri Lankan spinner breaks 71-year-old Test record

Sri Lanka spinner Prabath Jayasuriya smashed a 71-year-old record when he dismissed Ireland's Paul Stirling to claim his 50th Test wicket on the final day of the second Test in Galle.

Jayasuriya hit the 50-wicket mark in just his seventh Test to snatch the record from West Indies' Alf Valentine as the spinner to reach the milestone in the fewest matches.



#26

Fonterra distributes value bundle to boost farmers' productivity

Fonterra Brands Lanka has actioned a programme to provide free access to 3 critical inputs – quality fodder, specially-formulated Minerals Mix packs and mechanised equipment to its smallholder dairy farmers in a drive to elevate on-farm productivity and yield.

Managing Director of Fonterra Brands Lanka and Indian Subcontinent, Ms. Vidya Sivaraja said, “We work closely with our smallholder farmers to get their inputs and feedback from our grassroot Dairy Discussion Groups with them, bringing in our global knowledge and expertise. Based on this we develop the key interventions required to improve productivity.

It’s encouraging to see the initial progress made through these interventions, through on-ground training and development. We will continue to support our farmers to leverage and adopt these best practices into their daily farm management.”



#27 Court prevents events related to 'May 09' commemoration

The Fort Magistrate's Court issued a restraining order preventing protesters from commemorating incidents related to the 'May 09' people's protest in 2022.

The court order was issued based on a request made by the Colpetty Police preventing Sri Lankans from marking one year since the countrywide unrest.



#28 India extends \$1 bln credit line for Sri Lanka by a year

India extended a US\$1 billion credit line for Sri Lanka by one year giving the crisis-hit country backup funds to pay for essential imports.

The credit line was part of about US\$4 billion in emergency assistance extended by India during the peak of Sri Lanka's financial crisis in 2022 and was scheduled to end in March.



#29 China joins SL debt restructuring meeting as an observer

Sri Lankan authorities formally presented a request for debt treatment in the first meeting of the official bilateral creditors' committee held in May.

The committee, co-chaired by India, Japan and France, consists of 17 members, including Paris Club creditors as well as other official bilateral creditors.

China also attended as an observer, alongside Paris Club members with no claims on Sri Lanka, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran.



#30 ICC visits Sri Lanka over allegations of political interference

Deputy Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), Imran Khwaja arrived in Sri Lanka, as part of the ICC's 3-member committee appointed to look into the political interference in administering the game of cricket in Sri Lanka.

As part of his 'Fact Finding Mission', Khwaja held discussions with the President of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Shammi Silva, and the Executive Committee of the SLC.



#31 President orders CID inquiry against Pastor Jerome

President Ranil Wickremesinghe called for a probe against the controversial statement made by Pastor Jerome Fernando.

The President had instructed the head of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) to commence an immediate investigation.

Pastor Jerome is accused of having made derogatory statements related to Lord Buddha in front of a packed congregation.



#32 MP Ali Sabri Raheem detained at the airport with undeclared gold

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#33 AG files claim in Singapore HC on X-Press Pearl case



Sri Lanka's Attorney General filed a claim in the High Court of Singapore over the X-Press Pearl Incident involving six defendants.

The AG's Department was also considering transferring the case to the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) based on SICC's rules.

Litigation was being managed by a Singaporean law firm approved by the Cabinet to represent the Sri Lankan Government.

#34 MPs vote to remove PUCSL Chairman Janaka Ratnayake



The motion to remove the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL), Janaka Ratnayake was passed in Parliament with a majority of 46 votes, with 123 MPs voting in favour and 77 MPs voting against it.



#35 Income tax registration made mandatory for professionals from 14 categories

A Gazette notification was issued making it mandatory for professionals from 14 categories to be registered with the Department of Inland Revenue.

Doctors, Engineers, Chartered Accountants, Architects, and Attorneys-at-Law of the Supreme Court, among others, were on the list of selected professionals.



#36 Sri Lanka Army Doctors enter Guinness World Records for removing the World's Largest Kidney Stone

The surgery to remove the world's largest and heaviest kidney stone (calculus) conducted at the Colombo Army Hospital was entered into the Guinness World Records.

The kidney stone was recorded to be 13.372 cm long and weighing 801 g.

#37 Online passport system launched



The online passport application system was launched under the patronage of President Ranil Wickremesinghe at the Homagama Divisional Secretariat.

The new process aims to streamline the passport application process and ensure that passports are delivered to applicants' residences within three days via courier service.

#38 Investigation launched against Pastor Jerome under the Money Laundering Act



The Attorney General informed the Court of Appeal that an investigation was launched against controversial Sri Lankan Pastor, Jerome Fernando under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Pastor Jerome Fernando was wanted by the Sri Lanka Police after having made derogatory statements related to Lord Buddha, Islam, and Hinduism in front of a packed congregation.

#39 Wildlife Dept assures that Monkeys will not be exported to China

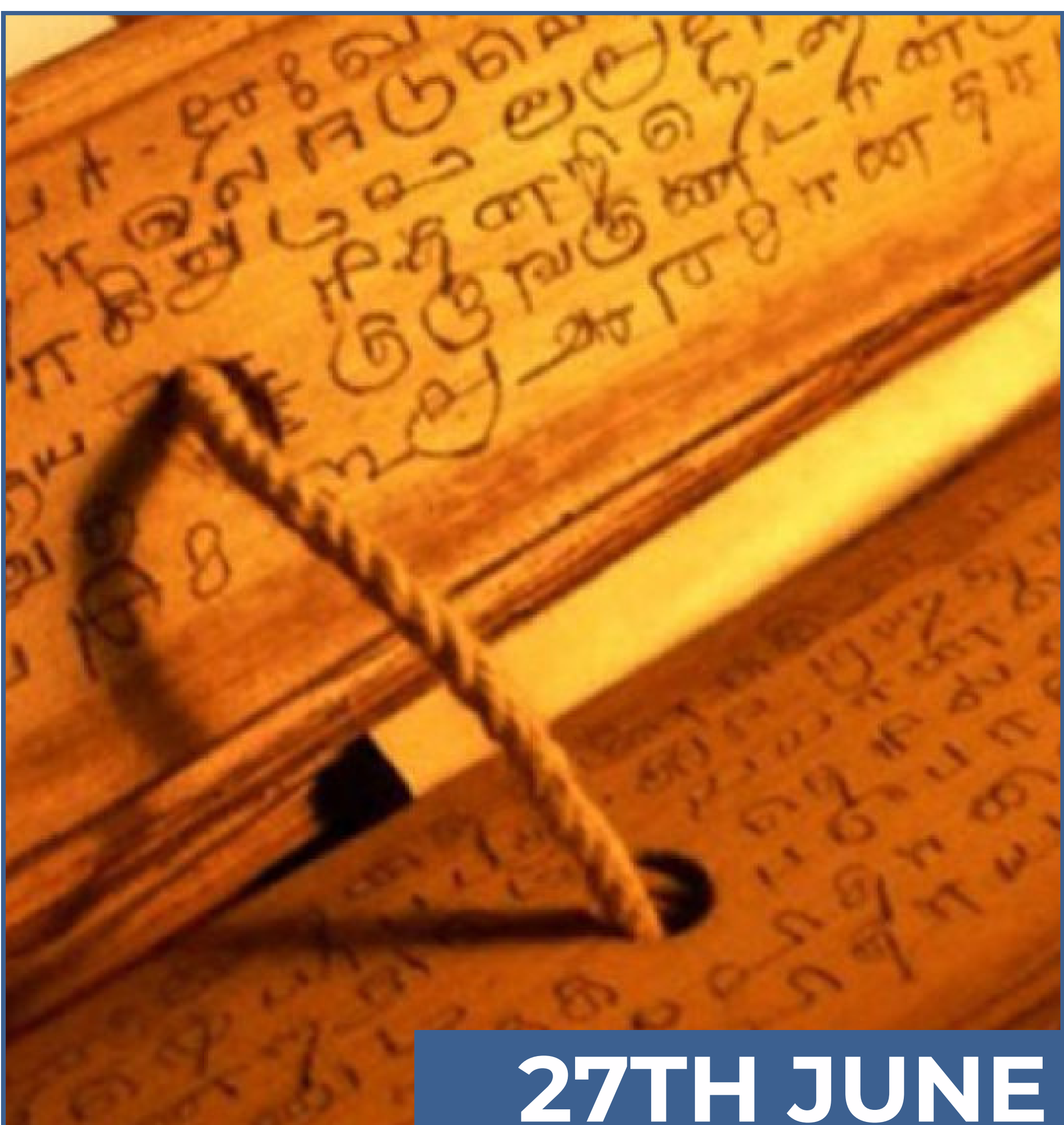


26TH JUNE

The Court of Appeal was given an assurance by the Department of Wildlife and Conservation that they will not be taking steps to export monkeys from Sri Lanka to China.

Nearly 30 petitions were filed in response to a statement made by Minister of Agriculture Mahinda Amaraweera claiming that plans were being made to export toque macaque monkeys from Sri Lanka to China.

#40 “Mahawanshaya” declared as World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO



27TH JUNE

‘Mahawanshaya’, related to Sri Lanka was declared as a World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO.

The ‘Mahawanshaya’ is one of the world’s longest unbroken historical accounts and presents Sri Lanka’s history in chronological order from the 6th century BCE.



#41 World Bank approves \$700 million for crisis-hit Sri Lanka

The World Bank approved \$700 million in budgetary and welfare support for Sri Lanka, the biggest funding tranche for the crisis-hit nation since an International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal in March.

About \$500 million of the funds was allocated for budgetary support while the remaining \$200 million was for welfare support earmarked for those worst hit by the crisis.



#42 Rare cricket record for Chamari Athapaththu

Sri Lanka Women skipper Chamari Athapaththu became the first player to outscore the opposition total while chasing in a limited-over international cricket match (men/women).

Chasing New Zealand's target of 127 runs, Sri Lanka posted 196 for 2 as per the Duckworth and Lewis method due to rain interruption.

Chamari Athapaththu scored 140 runs in 80 balls making her the first player to outscore the opposition total in an ODI.

#43 Domestic Debt Restructuring proposal passed in Parliament



1ST JULY

The proposal on the Domestic Debt Restructuring process was passed in Parliament with a majority of 60 votes.

122 MPs voted in favour of the proposal, while 62 voted against it.

#44 SL receives first disbursement of US\$ 250 mn from WB budget support



4TH JULY

The first disbursement of US\$ 250 million for budget support from the World Bank was received by Sri Lanka.

The first disbursement is out of the US\$ 500 million budget support being provided by the World Bank to Sri Lanka.

#45

EU extends GSP+ scheme allowing continued access to SL

The European Commission proposed a 4-year extension to the current GSP+ scheme until December 31, 2027, allowing countries like Sri Lanka continued access to EU markets.

The Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka said the extension of the tariff facility will grant Sri Lanka continued access to the EU markets with the same obligations under 27 international conventions.

#46

SC informed of Rs. 12.2 Bn worth of transactions related to Pastor Jerome

The Supreme Court was informed that investigations had found Rs. 12.2 billion worth of transactions related to bank accounts held by Sri Lankan Pastor Jerome Fernando.

The court was informed that the transactions were found following the examination of 11 bank accounts held by the controversial pastor.



31ST JULY

#47 Govt inquiry over Umara national anthem issue

The Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs announced the launching of a probe into the alleged distortion of Sri Lanka's national anthem during the opening ceremony of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) cricket tournament.

Singer Umara Sinhawansa faced severe backlash on social media, over her rendition of the national anthem at the LPL opening ceremony during which she was accused of mispronouncing certain keywords of the national anthem.



#48 UNP lifts Harin & Manusha's suspension

The Working Committee of the United National Party decided to lift the suspension that was previously imposed on two prominent members, Harin Fernando and Manusha Nanayakkara.

This move reinstates both individuals as active members of the Working Committee, allowing them to resume their roles and responsibilities within the party.

#49

CEB disconnects power to Mihintale sacred city over arrears



Electricity supply to the Mihintale sacred city was disconnected due to non-payment of due arrears amounting to Rs. 4.1 million since 2022.

Meanwhile, the Opposition, Samagi Jana Balawegaya settled the outstanding electricity bill of the Mihintale Sacred City through donations received from the party members and other donors.

#50

Party leaders requested to submit proposals on the 13th Amendment



Party leaders were requested to submit their proposals and suggestions regarding the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, following the All-Party Conference held by the President.

The President's Media Division reported that the request was notified in writing to all party leaders by the President's Secretary.



#51 **Yaal Nila' luxury train service launched**

The luxury train service, 'Yaal Nila', from Kankasanthurai to Mount Lavinia commenced operations in August.

Targeting the Northern Province, the new train service offers first-class tickets for Rs. 4000, second-class tickets for Rs. 3000, and third-class tickets for Rs. 2000.

The luxury train consists of 106 seats in first class, 128 seats in second class, and 336 seats in third class.



8TH AUGUST

#52 Government announces amendment to EPF Act

The government announced that the Employees' Provident Fund Act (EPF) will be amended to ensure at least a 9% annual interest rate for EPF members.

Cabinet Spokesman Minister Bandula Gunawardena stated that the amendment will see at least a 9% annual interest rate for the next four years from 2023.

#53 Shani Abeysekera freed from Vaas Gunawardena case



Former Director of the Criminal Investigations Department Shani Abeysekera was discharged from the Gampaha Magistrate's Court proceedings on the case of fabricating evidence against former DIG Vaas Gunawardena.

The Gampaha Magistrate discharged all four suspects, following submissions made by the Attorney General's Department.

#54 Sri Lanka football suspension lifted



The global governing body of soccer, FIFA decided to lift the suspension on the Football Federation of Sri Lanka (FFSL) with immediate effect.

The decision was taken by the Bureau of FIFA Council after the FFSL had met the criteria that were laid out for the lifting of the sanction.



#55 First Sinopec fuel station opened

Sinopec Lanka officially commenced business operation and started fuel supply at its first franchising filling station in Mattegoda West Province of Sri Lanka.

Under the signing of the Long-Term Contract of Importation, Storage, Distribution, and Sale of Petroleum Products in Sri Lanka with the Ministry of Power and Energy, Sinopec has been granted a 20-year license to operate 150 fuel stations.

LPL



#57 **Easter attacks : Government responds to Channel 4 allegations**

The government announced it will conduct a fresh probe into the allegations made in the video published by Channel 4 on the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks.

Channel 4 published a video in September claiming that its Dispatches have exclusive interviews with high-placed whistleblowers who allege that some Sri Lankan government officials were complicit in the bombings.

#58 Former Sri Lanka Cricketer Sachitra Senanayake arrested



6TH SEPTEMBER

Former Sri Lanka cricketer Sachithra Senanayake was arrested on charges of match-fixing, after surrendering to the Special Investigation Unit of the Sports Ministry.

The former cricketer is accused of trying to fix matches during the Lanka Premier League in 2020 by approaching two cricketers via telephone from Dubai.

#59 Easter attacks : Cardinal calls for Intl probe on Channel 4 allegations



6TH SEPTEMBER

The Archbishop of Colombo called on President Ranil Wickremesinghe and his government to initiate a comprehensive independent international investigation into the alleged plot behind the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe appointed a committee chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice S.I. Imam to investigate the allegations.

#60 NCM against Health Minister defeated in Parliament



The No Confidence Motion against Minister of Health Keheliya Rambukwella was defeated after being taken up for a vote in Parliament, with 113 MPs voting against it and 73 MPs voting in favour.

The motion was presented by the Opposition over the shortage of medicines and medical supplies in Sri Lanka, and several deaths reported at state hospitals due to the administration of substandard medication.

#61 Sri Lanka becomes first Asian team to win 13 consecutive ODIs



Sri Lanka set a remarkable record with 13 consecutive ODI wins, making them the longest-winning Asian team in ODI history. Sri Lanka achieved the feat against Bangladesh in the 2023 Asia Cup.



#62 India thrash Sri Lanka to win the Asia cup 2023

Sri Lanka faced a humiliating defeat at the hands of India, who won the Asia Cup for the record 8th time after bowling out Sri Lanka for 50 runs in just 6.1 overs.

#63 Sri Lanka pays off USD 200 million loan from Bangladesh with interest



Sri Lanka paid off the entirety of USD 200 million loan from Bangladesh, taken through a currency exchange agreement two years ago to survive the severe dollar shortage.

An official of Bangladesh Bank confirmed that Sri Lanka initially repaid \$150 million in August and returned the remaining \$50 million in September

#64 Concerns raised over resignation of Mullaitivu District Judge



Mullaitivu District Judge and Magistrate T. Saravananarajah handed in his resignation citing threats to his life and undue pressure from state authorities over his ruling on the Kurunthur Malai case.

The decision was taken over the order issued in June 2022, by the Mullaitivu District Court prohibiting any form of construction at Kurunthur Malai, an ancient Hindu temple.



#65 Danushka Gunathilaka found not guilty by Sydney Court

Sri Lankan cricketer Danushka Gunathilaka was found not guilty of sexual assault by a Sydney judge who said the evidence established there was “no opportunity” for him to have removed a condom during sex, and that he was truthful in his police interview.

The 32-year-old was accused of “stealthing” during sex with a 29-year-old woman without her knowledge in her eastern suburbs home in November 2022.



1ST OCTOBER

#66 Sports Minister writes to ICC over refusal to meet new committee

President Ranil Wickremesinghe expressed his strong opposition to an international investigation into the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks during an interview with German media, Deutsche Welle.

The President also revealed that the US Secret Service has ruled out any foreign involvement in the Easter Sunday terror attacks.



#67 President Ranil lashes out at German media

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The President also revealed that the US Secret Service has ruled out any foreign involvement in the Easter Sunday terror attacks.

#68 Risky roadside trees ordered to be removed following Colpetty accident



6TH OCTOBER

The State Minister of Defence in Sri Lanka has ordered an immediate study of large roadside trees at risk of falling due to inclement weather.

This follows a tragic accident where a tree fell onto a bus near the Liberty roundabout, killing five passengers and injuring at least 10 others. The directive is to remove any trees that may pose a threat to the public.

#69 Import ban lifted on all items, except vehicles



29TH SEPTEMBER

The government decided to lift all import restrictions, except those imposed on vehicles, with effect from October 09, 2023.

A ban was imposed on several items as a part of the government's prolonged stringent import restrictions from March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

#70 SL reaches agreement with China Exim Bank on debt



The government of Sri Lanka reached an agreement on the key principles and indicative terms of debt treatment with the Export-Import Bank of China.

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance announced that the agreement in principle covers approximately USD 4.2 billion of outstanding debt.

#71 SL woman confirmed dead in Israel- Palestine conflict



A Sri Lankan woman who was reported missing in Israel was confirmed dead by Israeli authorities, becoming the first Sri Lankan casualty to be reported in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

Sri Lankan Ambassador in Israel Nimal Bandara said the woman, identified as Anula Jayathilake, had been shot dead in the conflict.



#72 **Govt reaches agreement with IMF after first review**

The government said the agreement reached with the IMF on a staff level following the First Review of Sri Lanka's Extended Fund Facility Arrangement will support the settlement of arrears owed to multilateral creditors while expediting the debt restructuring process.

State Minister for Finance Shehan Semasinghe said Sri Lanka is poised to receive the second tranche of US\$ 330 million after the approval of this Staff-Level Agreement by the IMF Executive Board.



#73 Several Ministries changed in Mini Cabinet reshuffle

The Government carried out a mini Cabinet reshuffle making changes to several ministries. The revised Cabinet portfolios are as follows;

- **Keheliya Rambukella – Minister of Environment**
- **Ramesh Pathirana – Minister of Industries & Health**
- **Mahinda Amaraweera – Minister of Agriculture & Plantation Industries**
- **Ranjith Siyambalapitiya – Non-Cabinet Minister of Plantation Enterprises & State Minister of Finance**



#74 Sports Minister replies to ICC over political interference allegations

Minister of Sports Roshan Ranasinghe issued a clarification to the International Cricket Council on media reports of a letter by the ICC to SLC alleging political interference.

In his letter to the ICC, Minister Ranasinghe pointed out that allegations of political interference by him to the SLC were factually incorrect, while he accused the SLC of having taken extreme measures to prevent future legal and administrative actions against them.

FITSAIR