



NEWSWIRE

99

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023



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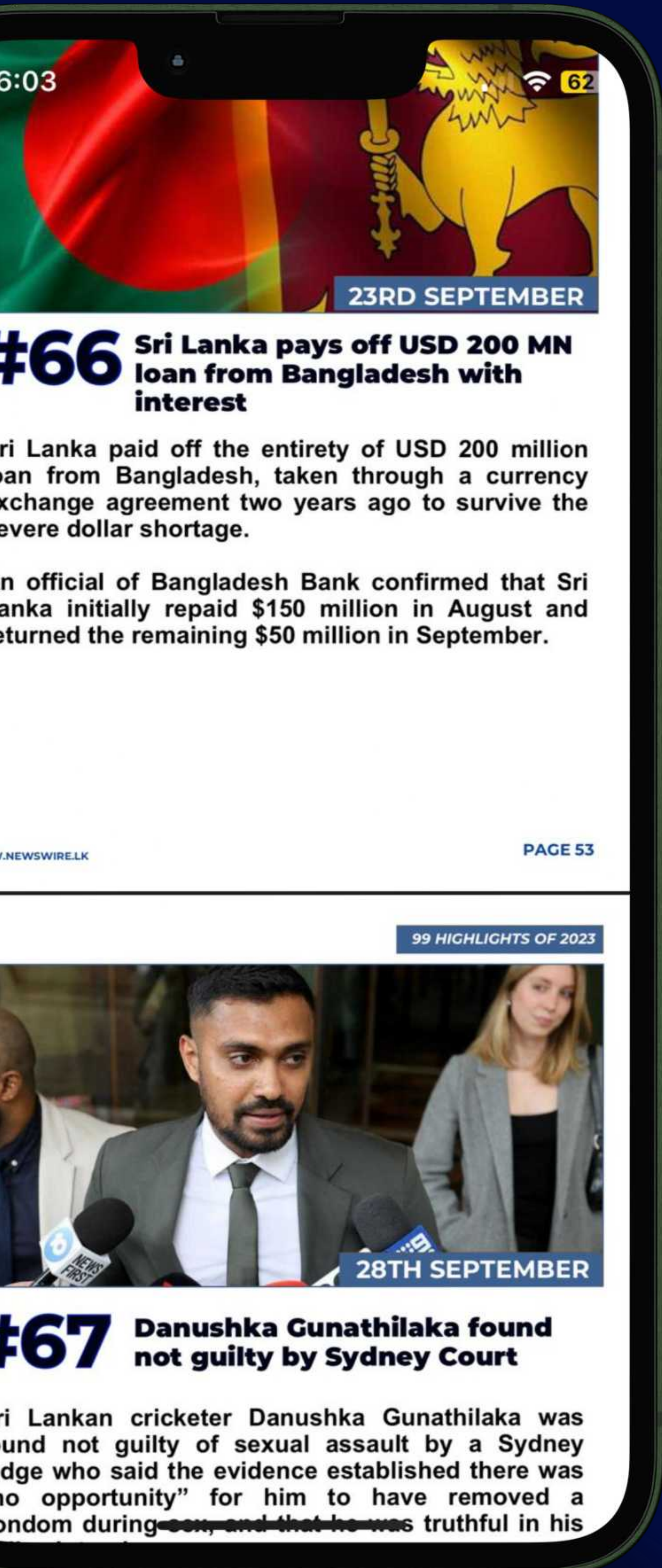
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99

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NewsWire's magazine recaps the year's top 99 moments! Take a quick tour of the key events that shaped Sri Lanka in 2023. Stay in the loop with NewsWire to catch the biggest stories that made waves throughout the year!

Wishing our readers a Happy New Year. May the upcoming year bring you joy, success, and inspiration!

Team NewsWire

BEST VIEWED IN PORTRAIT

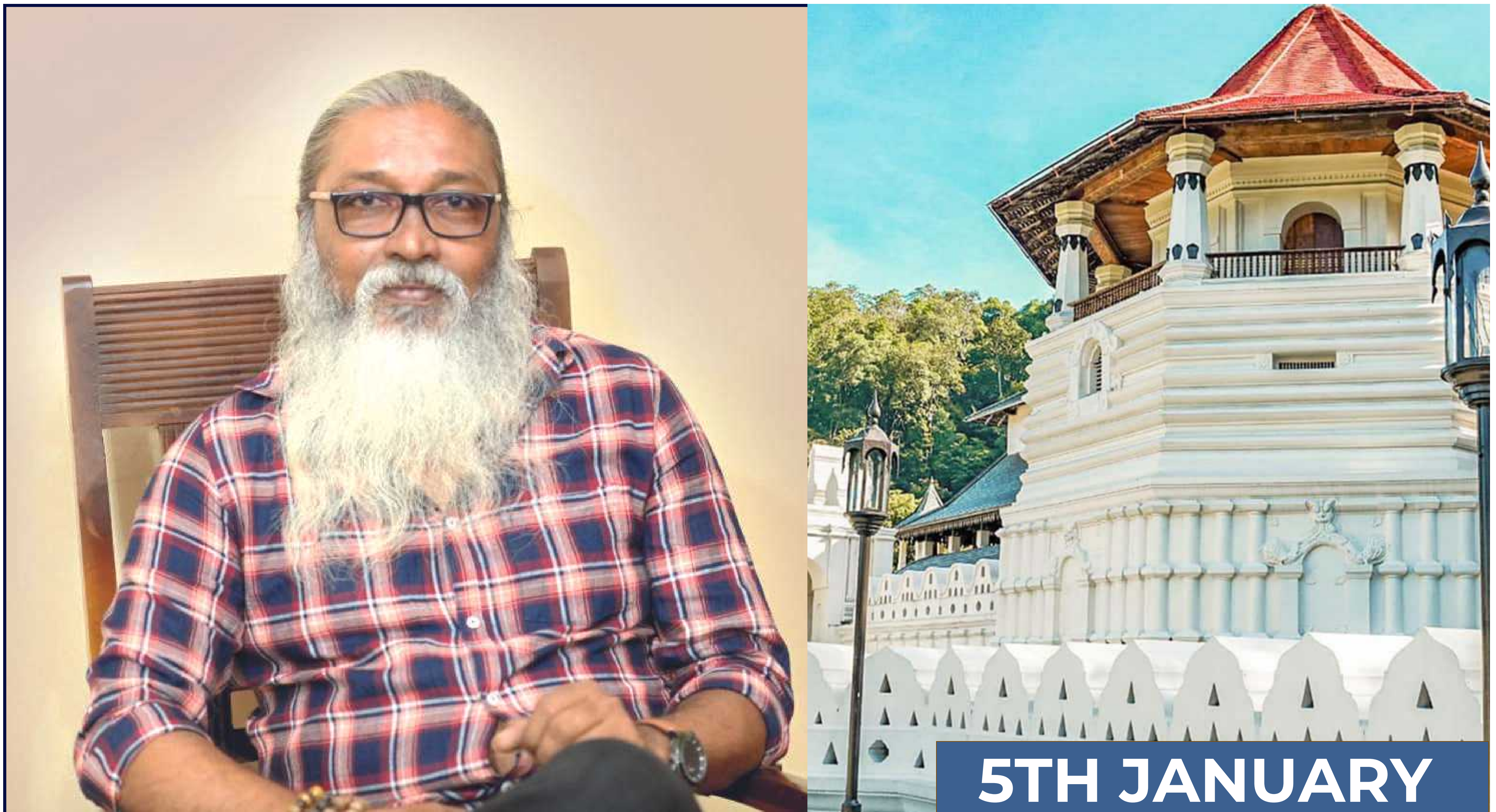


#1 Nominations called for Local Government Election 2023

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

Days after 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.



#2 Activist Sepal Amarasinghe arrested

Sri Lankan YouTuber Sepal Amarasinghe was arrested by the police over a remark he made about the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha.

A police statement mentioned that the suspect had committed an offense by insulting the tooth relic and by acting in a manner derogatory to Buddhism. He was released in late February after offering an unconditional apology.



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#3 Government issues new regulations for PAYE Tax

The government decided to prohibit state and semi-government institutions from paying the Pay As You Earn Tax of employees through the respective institutions' funds.

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

However, it was found that the funds had been utilized to settle the tax payments of employees.



#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 Attacks : Maithripala Sirisena ordered to pay Rs 100 MN 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 Fonterra's support to 'National Integrated Mechanism for Food Security & Nutrition' helps aid challenging circumstances

Fonterra Brands Lanka has contributed over 280,000 milk packs to assist and ensure food security for vulnerable families in Sri Lanka through the "National Integrated Mechanism for Food Security and Nutrition".

The second phase of the project aims to benefit an additional 70,000 families by distributing 140,000 milk packs.

The initiative addresses food insecurity in Sri Lanka and supports local dairy farmers whilst improving the dairy supply chain. Fonterra's commitment to public-private collaboration ensures a brighter, healthier future for all Sri Lankans through good nutrition.

#7 Jeewan breaks Ranil's record



Ceylon Workers' Congress 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.

#8 FIFA suspends Sri Lanka Football

FIFA



22ND JANUARY

Football Federation of Sri Lanka (FFSL) was suspended by FIFA from January 21, 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 14.



1ST FEBRUARY

#9 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.

#10 Local Council Elections: Gazette issued



A Gazette notification was issued on the holding of the Local Council Elections on March 09, 2023.

Weeks later, Postal Voting for the election was postponed indefinitely.

#11 Power Cuts ended in Sri Lanka



The scheduled power cuts in Sri Lanka ended on February 16 after the Ministry of Power and Energy announced uninterrupted power supply for the whole country.

The decision came after a tariff hike approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka.

THE STANDOUT SMARTPHONE RELEASE OF 2023

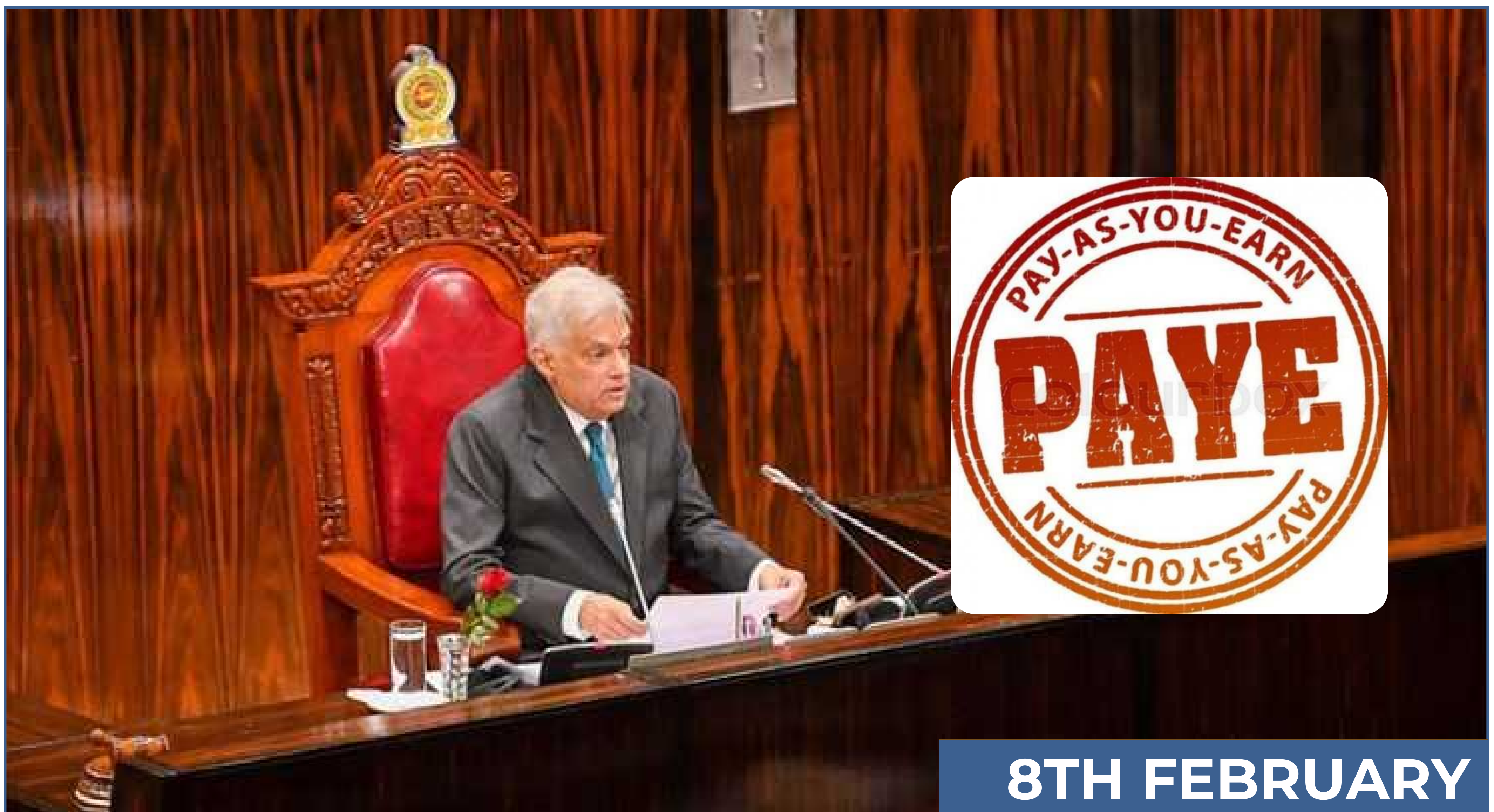


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The SINGER logo is a red rectangular box with the word "SINGER" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word.

This year marked a groundbreaking moment for tech enthusiasts in Sri Lanka as Singer proudly introduced the global smartphone brand HONOR. Celebrated for its cutting-edge features and competitive pricing, HONOR has become a cultural phenomenon and captured the hearts of consumers. With its sleek design and unparalleled performance, HONOR stands out as the definitive smartphone release of 2023. Join us in embracing the future of technology with Honor.



#12 **New Tax including PAYE : Three key points from President's speech in 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.**



#13 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.

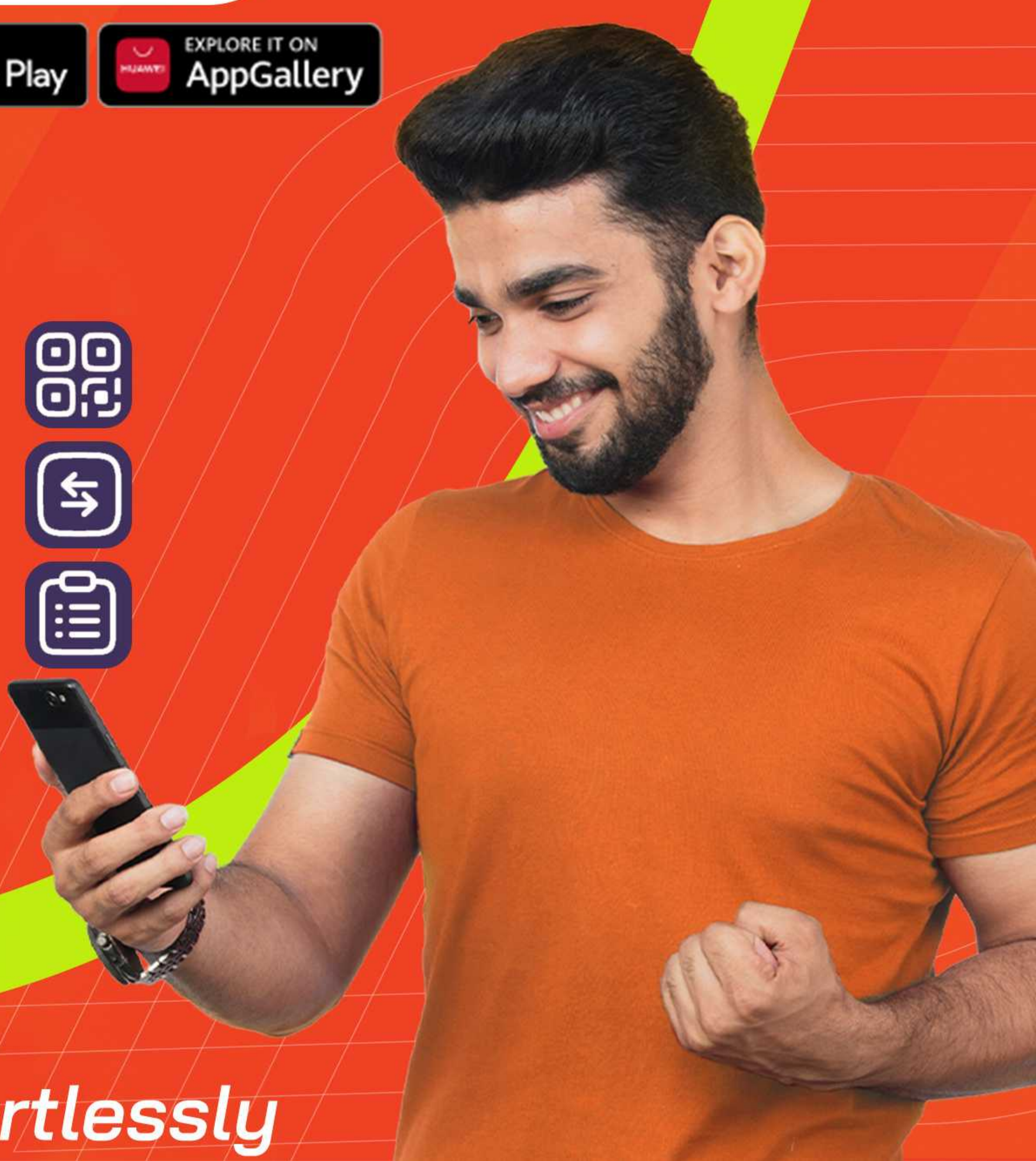
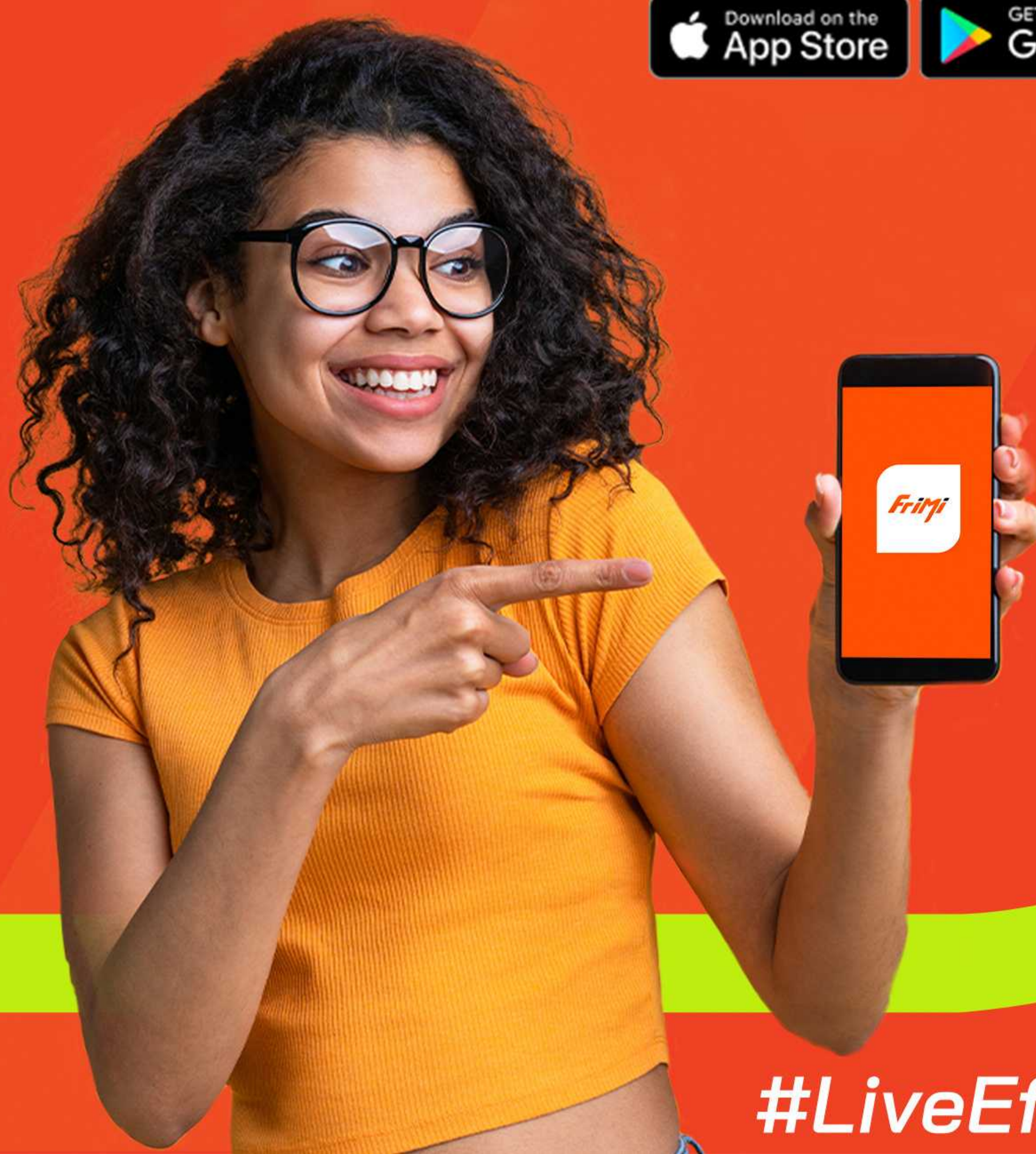
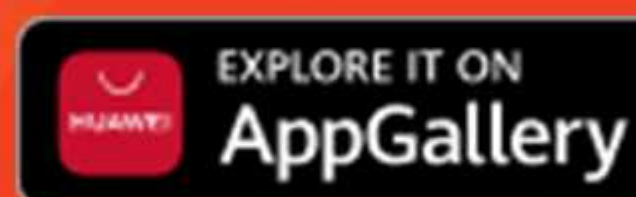
- **Single-use plastic straws and stirrers**
- **Plastic yoghurt spoons, plates, cups, knives etc.**
- **Plastic flower garlands**
- **Plastic string hopper trays**

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#14 **Permission given to kill six animals damaging crops**

Minister of Agriculture Mahinda Amaraweera announced that farmers are permitted to kill peacocks, monkeys, toque macaques, grizzled giant squirrels, porcupines, and wild boars that are found to be destroying crops.

During a meeting with potato farmers, the minister revealed that the six crop-ravaging animals have been removed from the list of protected animals in Sri Lanka and that farmers were at liberty to use any measures to tackle the menace.



#15 Inquiry finds fault with General Shavendra on May 9th violence

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 appointed by former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to inquire into the May 9th incidents recommended that the Criminal Investigations Department should launch a probe against Shavendra Silva.

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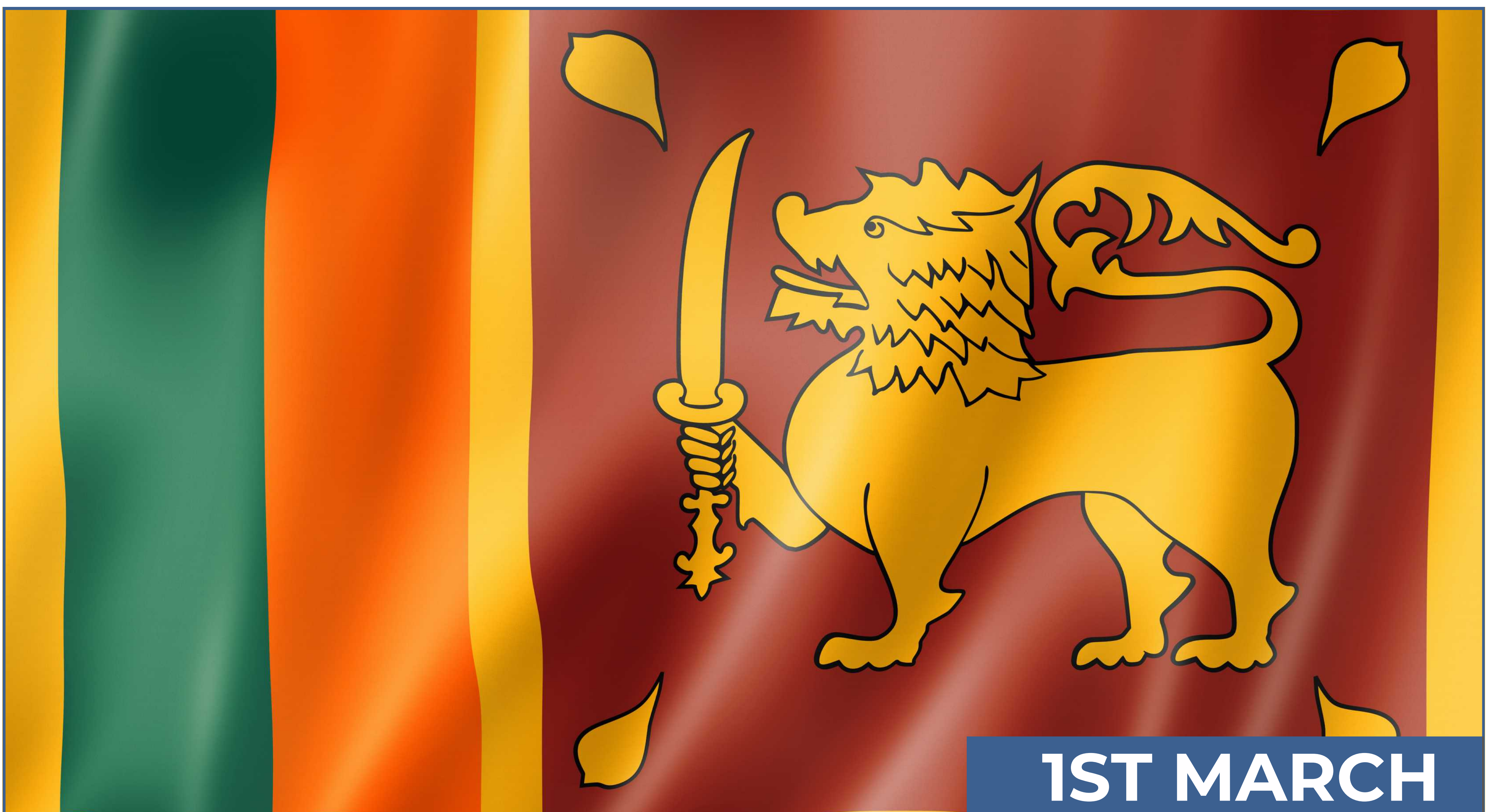




#16 President released from 108 lawsuits

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.



#17 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.



SINCE 1844

Cargills

#18 Islandwide strike by several state sector trade unions



An islandwide strike action was held by trade unions of the health, ports, power, water, railways, postal, and banking sectors.

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

#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 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 of SDR 2.286 billion (about US\$3 billion) to support Sri Lanka's economic policies and reforms.

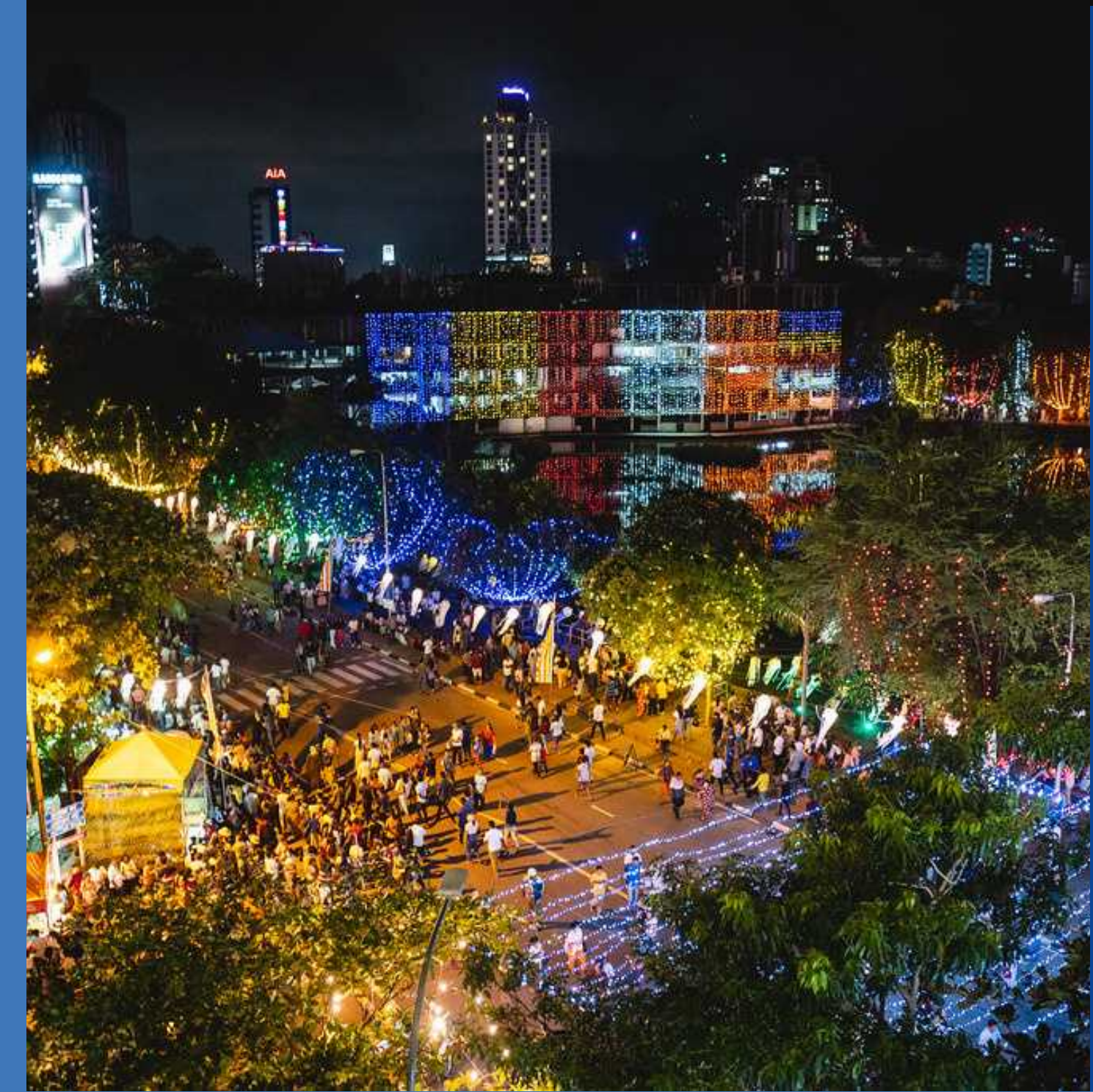
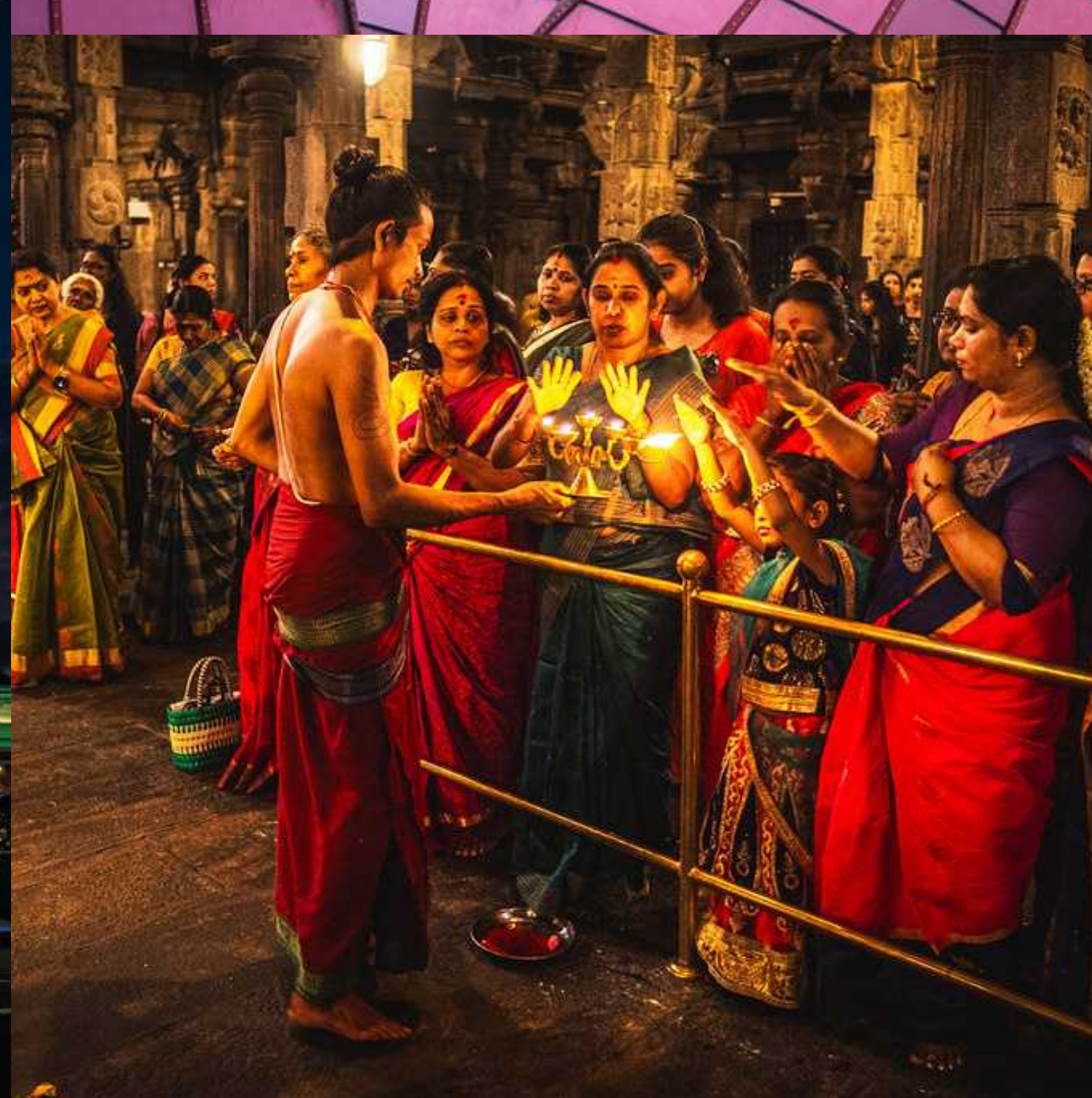
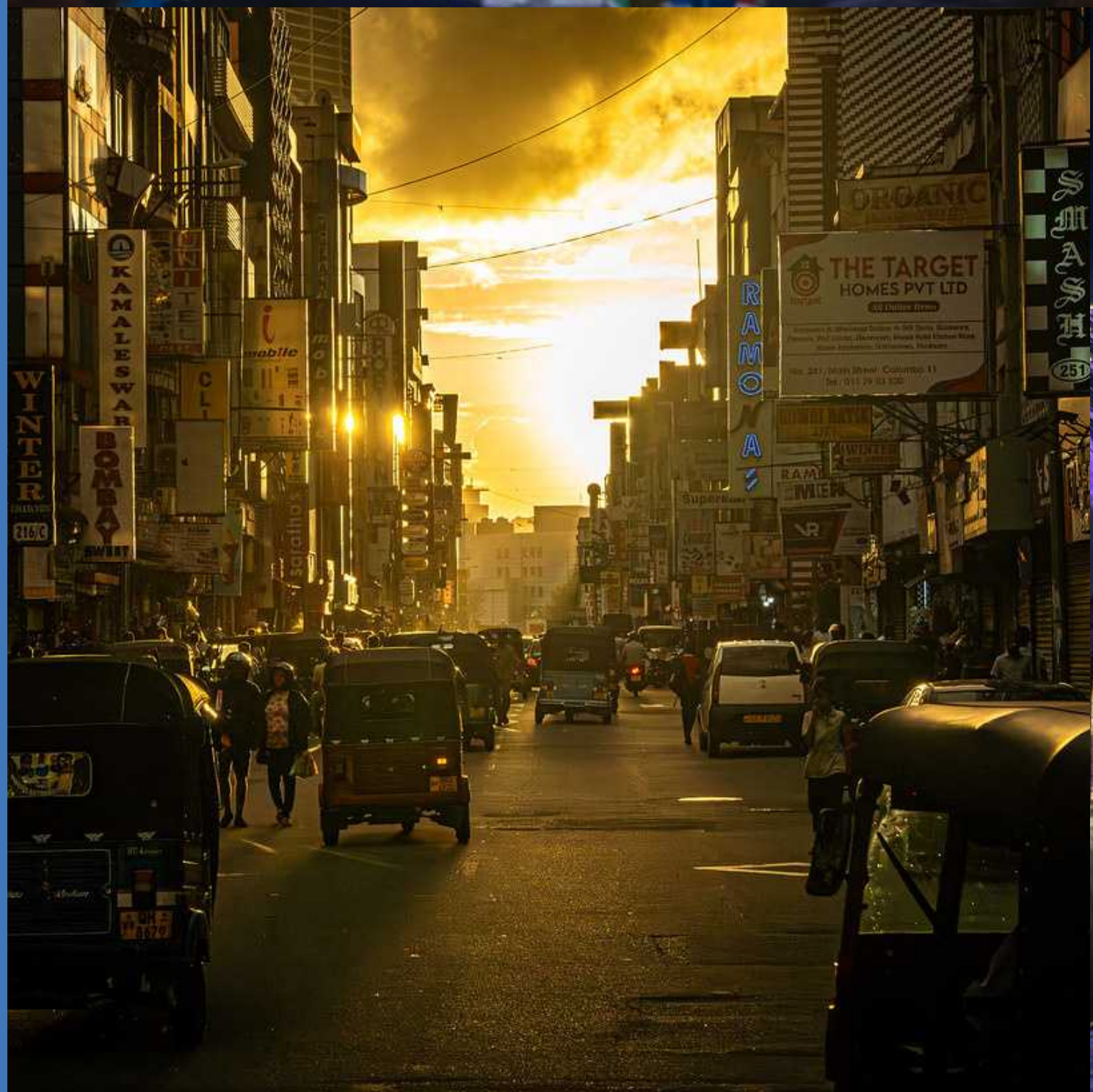
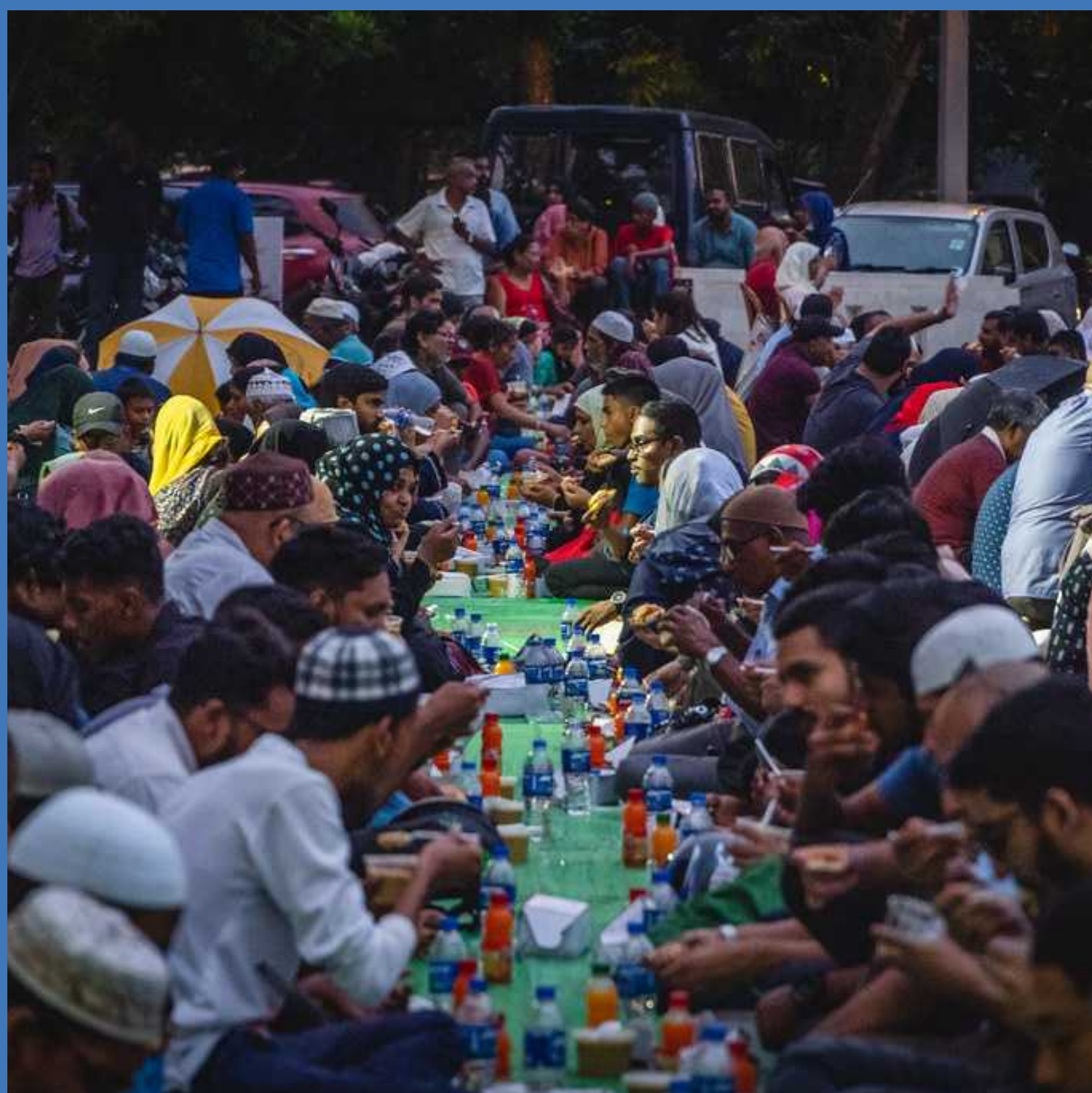
The government of Sri Lanka used a portion of the first disbursement from the IMF, around USD 121 million from the USD 333 million received, to settle a loan instalment of the Indian Credit Line.



#21 SINGER wins 'People's Brand of the Year' for the 17th consecutive year at SLIM awards.

Singer Sri Lanka PLC received the People's Brand of the Year Award at the SLIM-KANTAR People's Awards 2023, marking their 17th consecutive win. The award highlights the company's dominance in the consumer durables industry and the popularity of the Singer brand in Sri Lanka.

Singer also won the 'People's Durables Brand of the Year Award' and has evolved its brand proposition to having 'Home at our Heart'. This proposition drives Singer's success and future growth as it expands its range of products and services to enhance its customers' lifestyles.



PHOTOSTREAM BY NAZLY AHMED

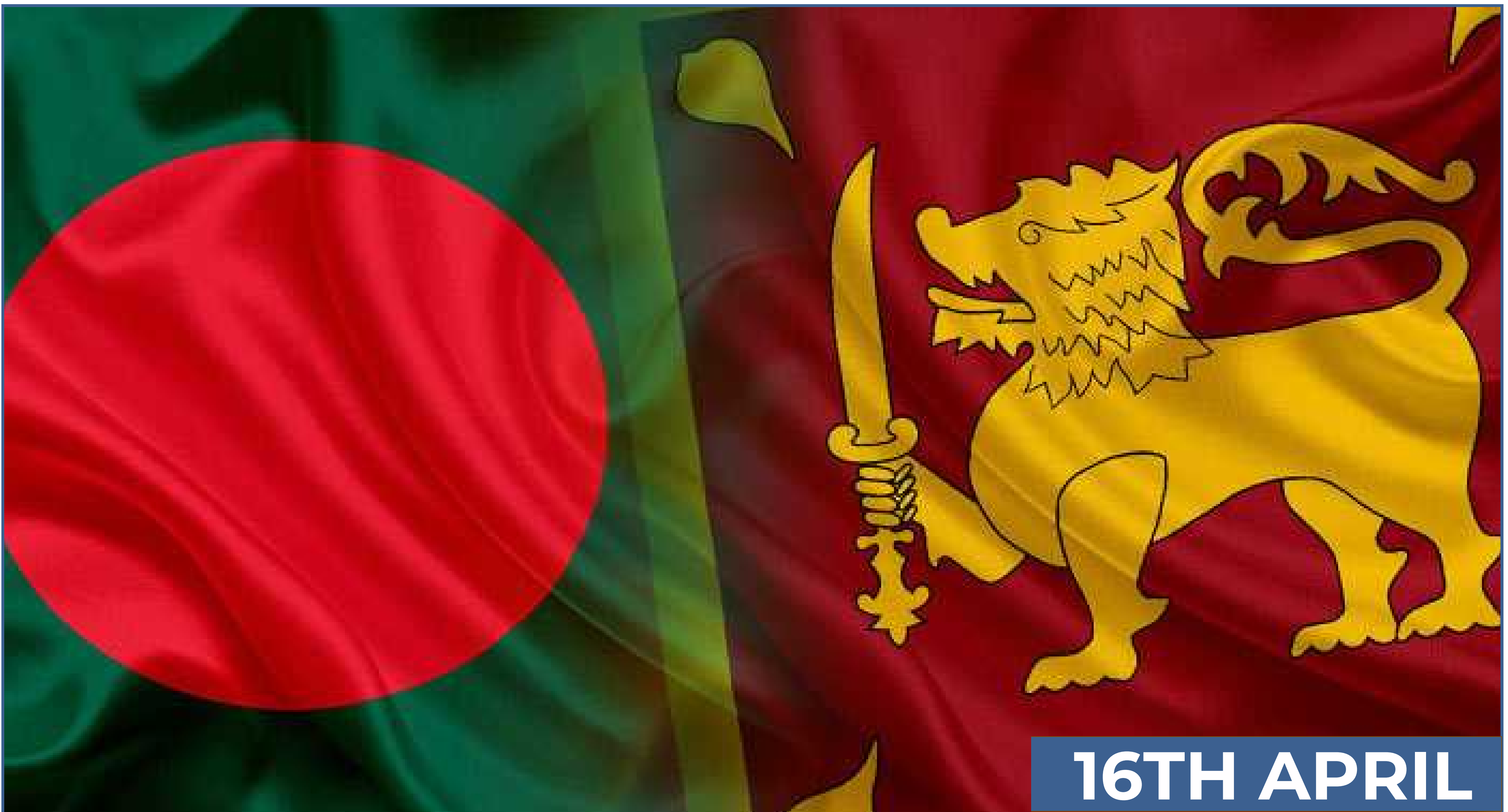
A GALLERY CAPTURING THE URBAN
BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF THE CITY



#22 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.



#23 Bangladesh gives more time for SL to repay loan

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.



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#24 Govt prohibits political meetings at Galle Face Green

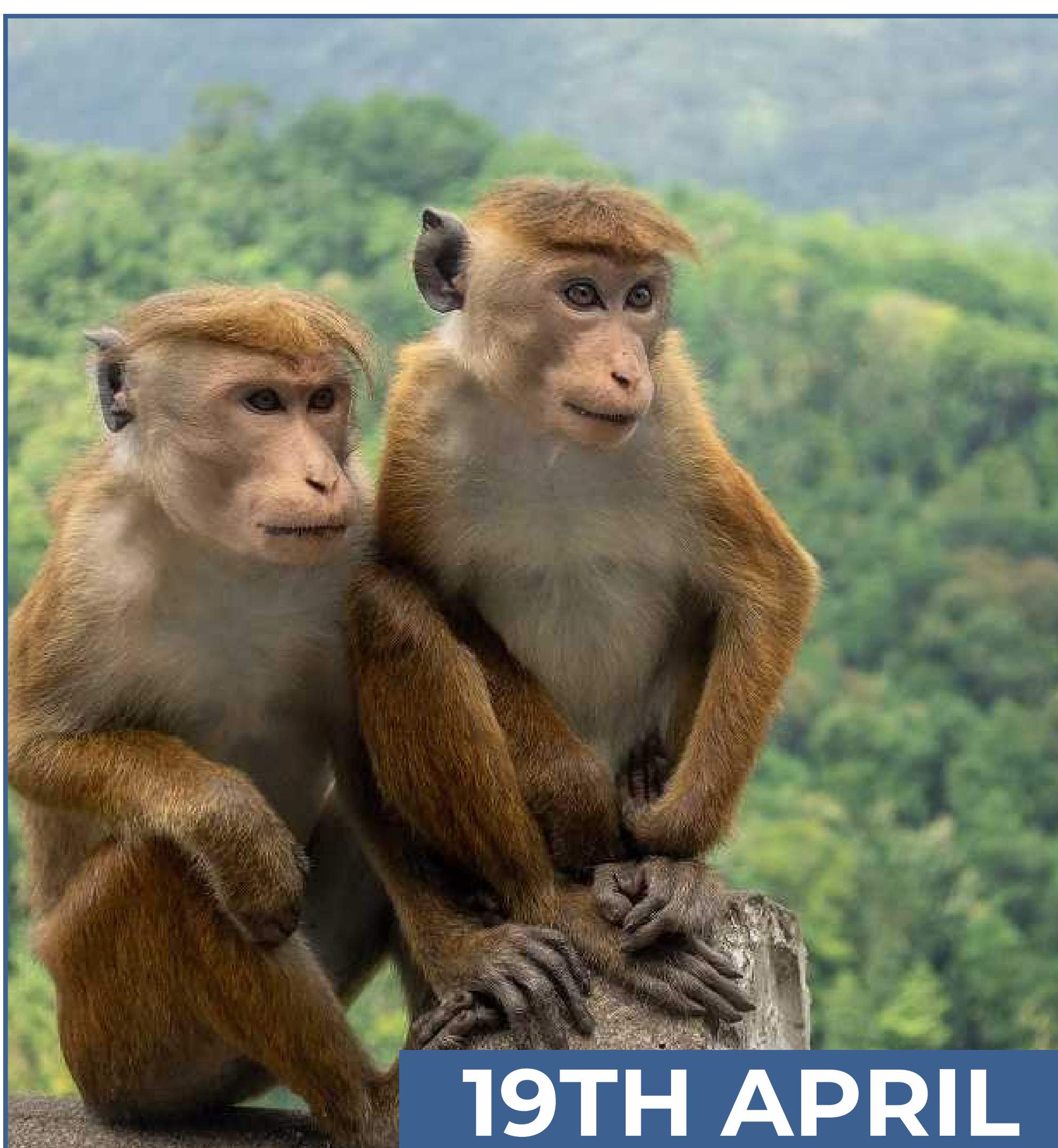


18TH APRIL

The Cabinet of Ministers decided to prohibit musical shows, political meetings, & mass gatherings from being held at the Galle Face Green from April 2023.

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

#25 Govt announces plans to export monkeys to China



19TH APRIL

The government announced plans to export 100,000 Sri Lankan Toque macaque monkeys to China to be placed for exhibition purposes at private zoos.

Issuing a clarification on the matter, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo said relevant authorities in Beijing were not aware of the request for monkeys.



#26 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.



#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' peoples' 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 billion 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.

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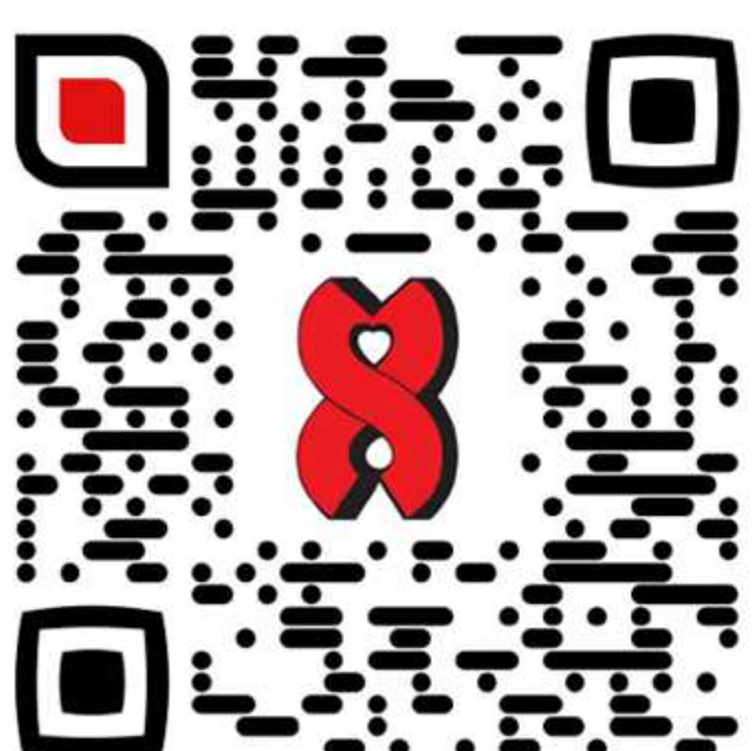
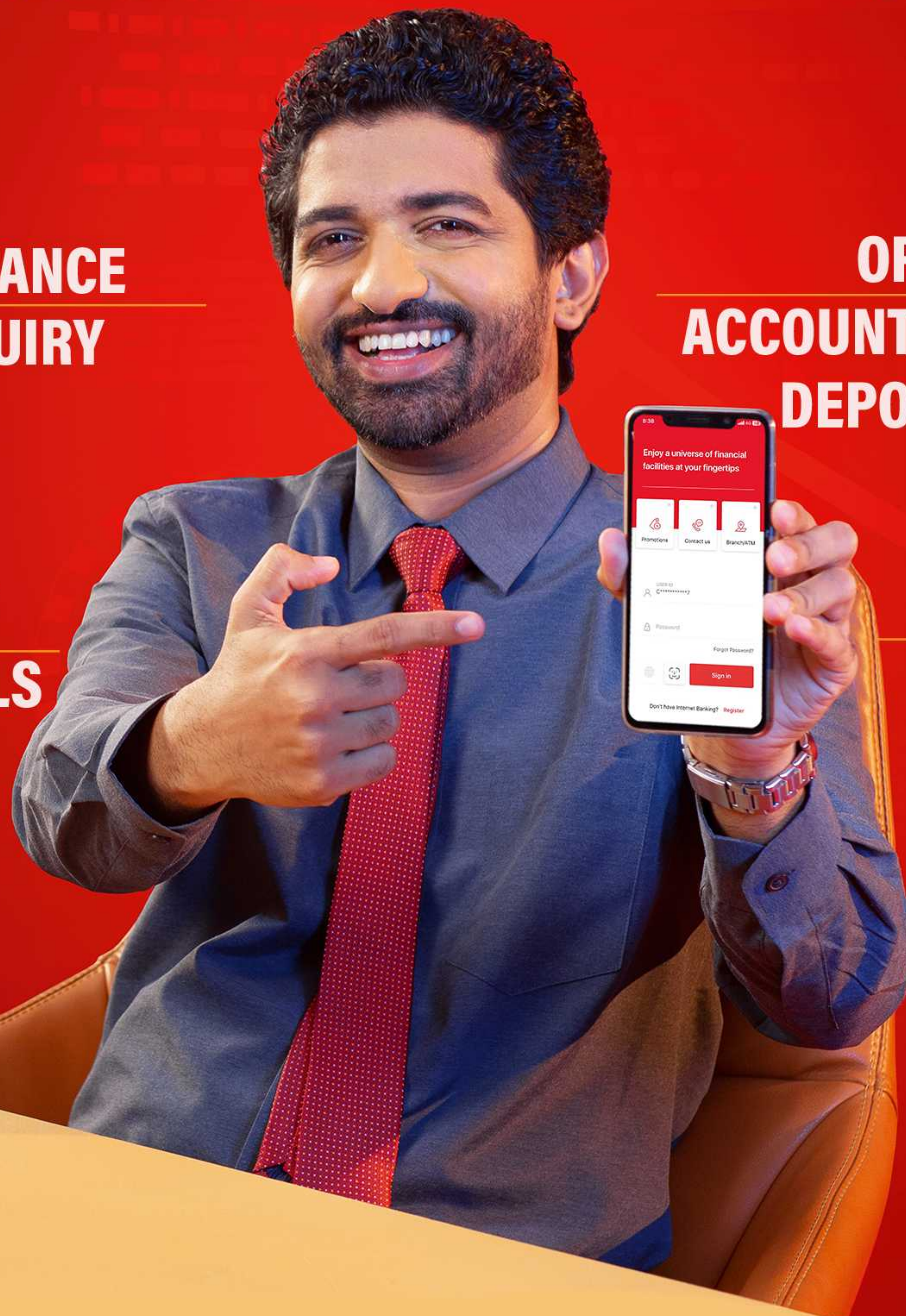
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#29

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 Sajith Premadasa selected as SJB's Presidential candidate



16TH MAY

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya decided to make party leader Sajith Premadasa the Presidential candidate of the SJB.

The unanimous decision was taken by the working committee of the SJB.

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



17TH MAY

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 the court's rules.



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

Puttalam District MP Ali Sabri Raheem was arrested by Sri Lanka Customs officials at the Katunayake airport with a stock of undeclared gold and other electronic equipment.

He was found to have 3.5 kilos of undeclared gold valued at Rs. 74 million and 91 smartphones worth more than Rs. 4.2 million.

The MP was fined Rs. 7.5 million and released on payment of the same.

#34 **MPs vote to remove PUCSL Chairman Janaka Ratnayake**



23RD MAY

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 voting against it.

#35 **Sri Lankan stand-up comedian Natasha Edirisooriya arrested**



28TH MAY

Natasha Edirisooriya was arrested by the CID for allegedly making disrespectful remarks about Buddhist philosophy and culture.

The stand-up comedian was accused of having made the statements during a stand-up comedy show in Colombo.



1ST JUNE

#36

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.



#37 **SL enters Guinness World Records for removing 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.

Previously, the largest kidney stone found in the world (India in 2004) was 13 cm and the heaviest kidney stone found (Pakistan in 2008) was 620 g in weight.



#38 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.

#39 Wildlife Dept assures monkeys will not be exported to China

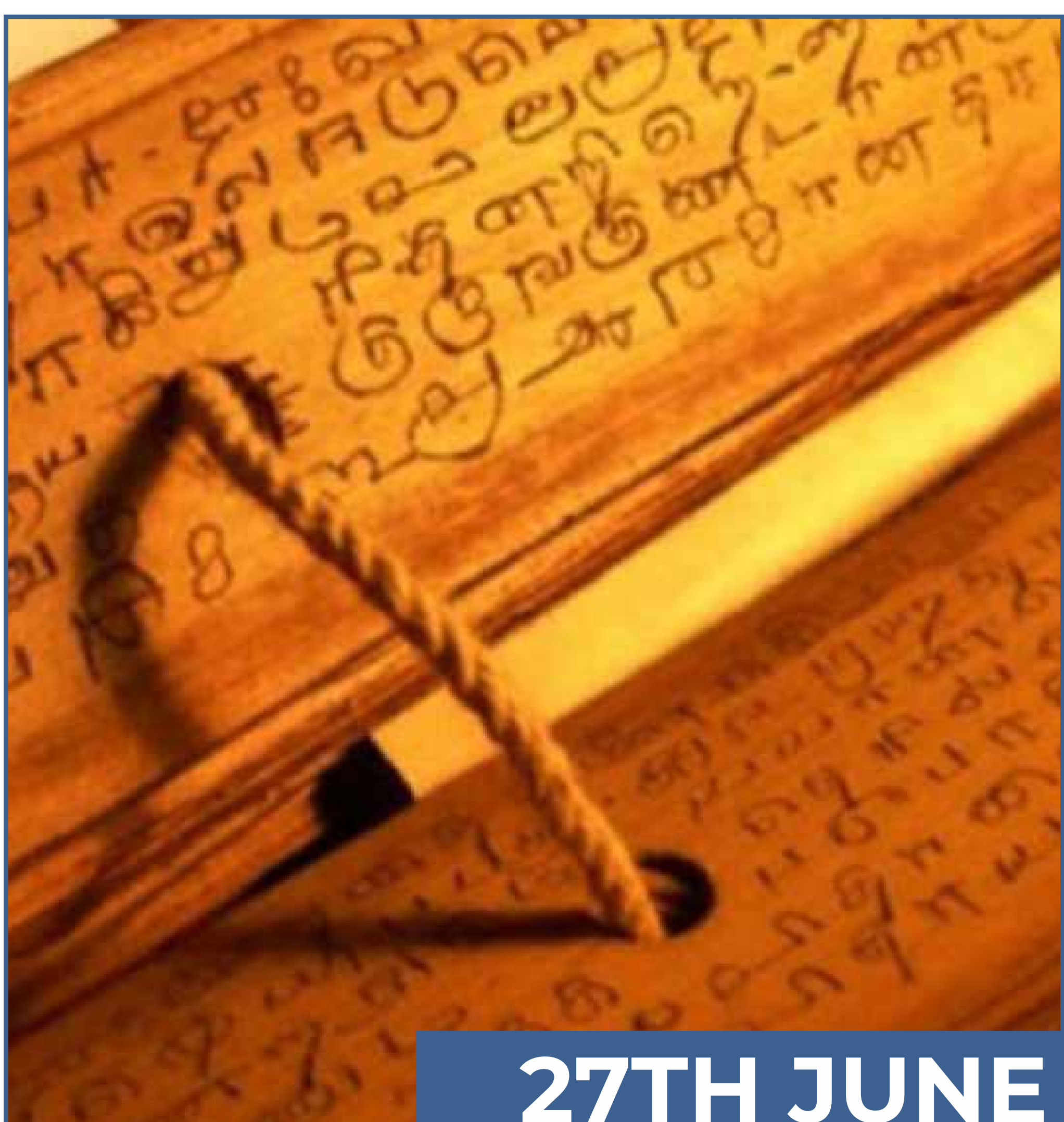


26TH JUNE

The Department of Wildlife and Conservation announced that it will not take steps to export Sri Lankan toque macaque monkeys to China.

The Wildlife Department assured the Court of Appeal through the Attorney General after concerns were raised on the matter.

#40 “Mahawanshaya” declared as World Documentary Heritage



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.

It 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 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 Sri Lanka are winners of the WC Qualifiers 2023

Sri Lanka sealed the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier crown with a comfortable 128-run victory over the Netherlands in the final in Harare.

Losing the toss and batting first, Sri Lanka scored 233 runs in 47.5 overs, which the Netherlands failed to chase, being dismissed for 105 runs in 23.3 overs.

Sri Lanka's World Cup Qualifier performance success was built on the threat of the top two wicket-takers, Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana.



10 NEW RESTAURANT ENTRANTS IN 2023

YAMU diligently curated a comprehensive list showcasing the most recent additions to the culinary scene for the year 2023, highlighting the newest and most exciting restaurants in the market.



BEIRA KITCHEN
BLUE ORBIT
DAMPA SEAFOOD



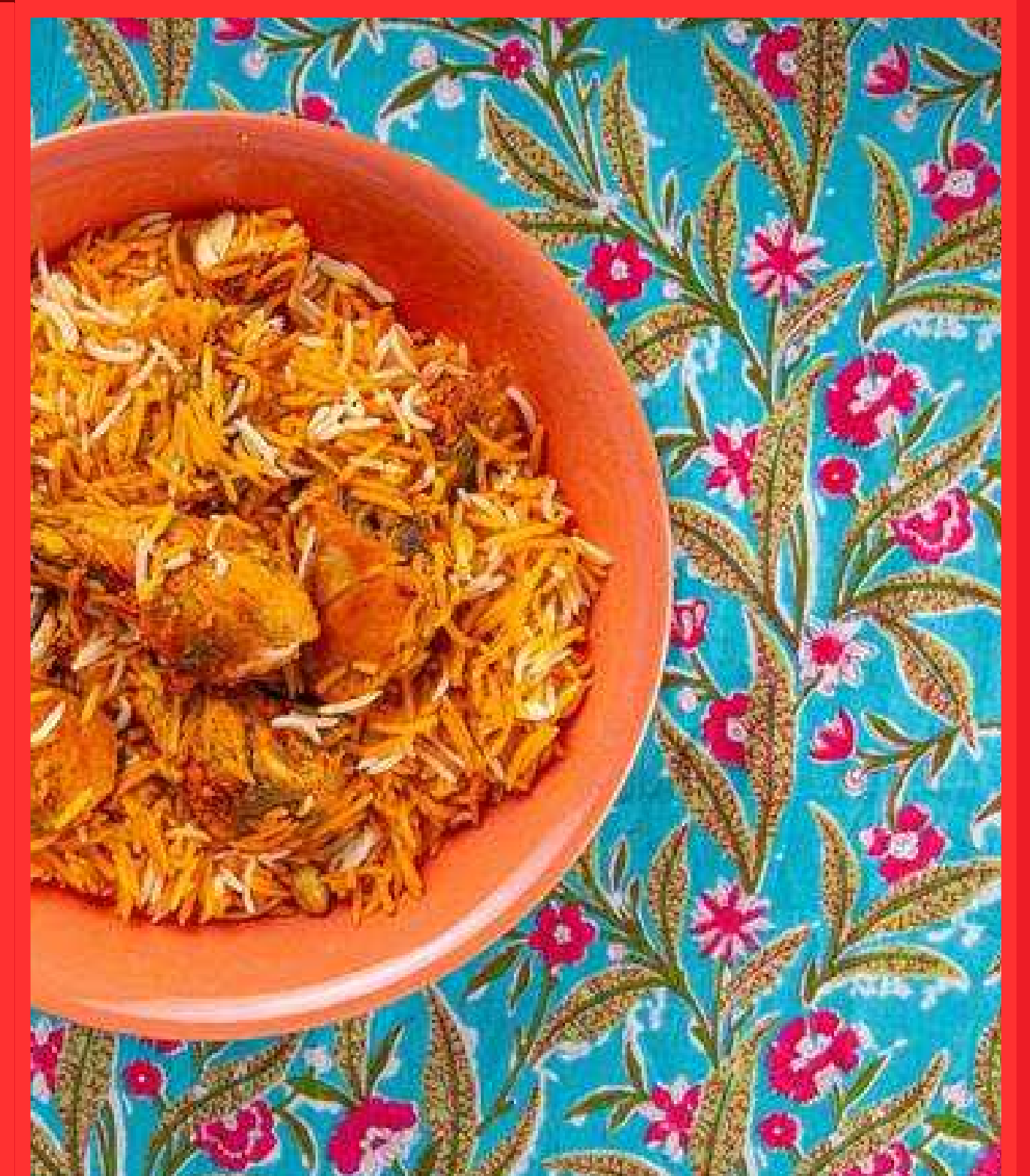
HANGLA
JUNIOR KUPPANNA



MARINE SPICE
OLD DELHI



PENNE
QUQU CAFE
TIKI BAR



#44 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.

#45 French President Emmanuel Macron makes historic visit to Sri Lanka



Emmanuel Macron's visit marked the first time a French President has visited Sri Lanka.

The visit focused on elevating the existing relations between the two nations, especially considering the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic ties marked this year.



#46 **Govt inquiry over Umara's 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.



#47 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.

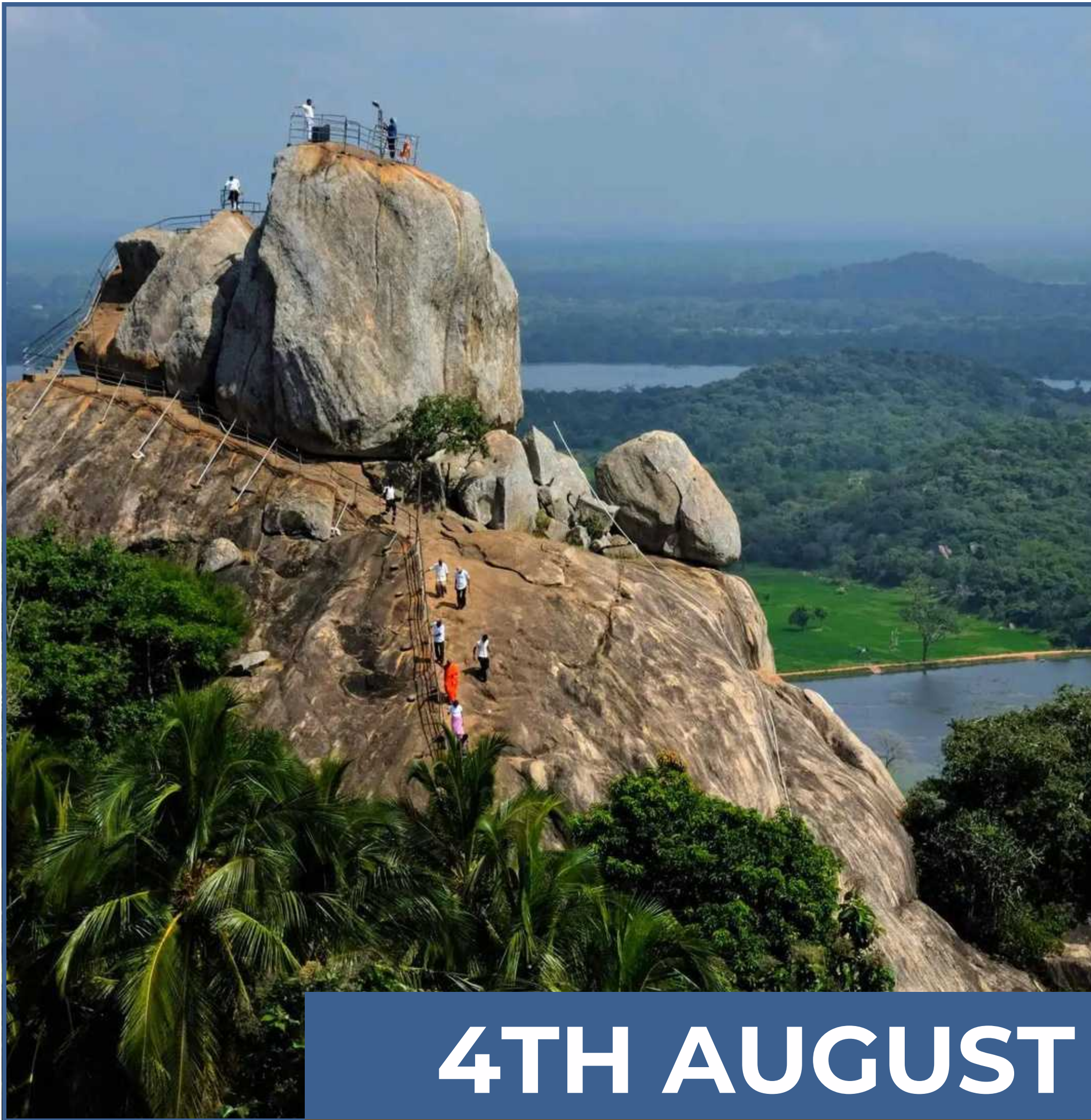
This move reinstates both individuals as active members of the Working Committee, allowing them to resume their roles and responsibilities within the party.

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#48 CEB disconnects power to Mihintale sacred city



4TH AUGUST

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

The Opposition SJB settled the outstanding electricity bill through donations received from party members and other donors.

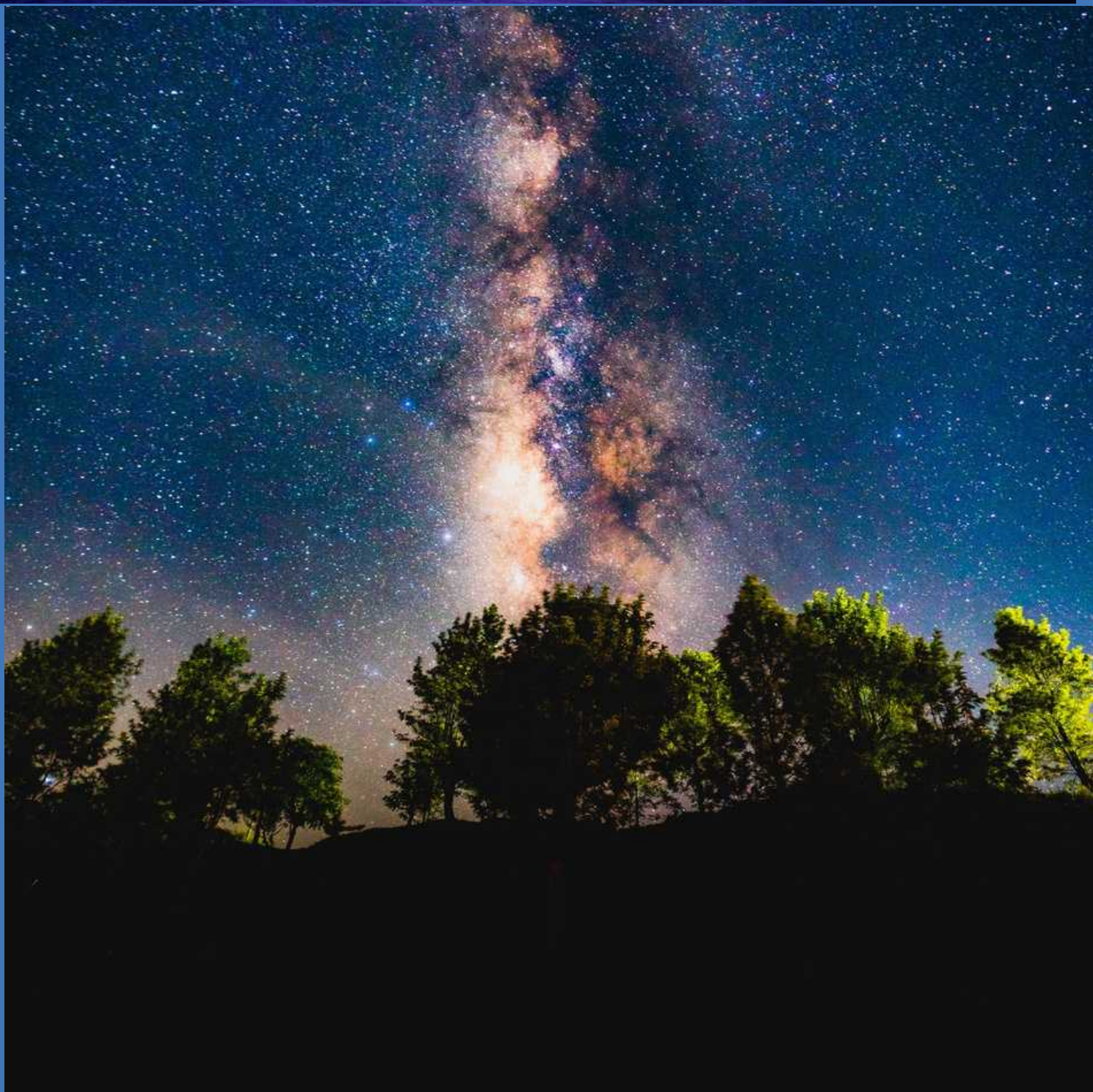
#49 Party leaders requested to submit proposals on the 13th Amendment



4TH AUGUST

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.



PHOTOSTREAM
BY THILINA KALUTHOTAGE
A GALLERY THAT DISPLAYS THE
MARVELS OF NATURE AND THE
AMAZING WILDLIFE SRI LANKA
BOASTS



#50 **‘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.

#51 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.

#52 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



#53 B-Love Kandy : New Lankan Premier league champions

B-Love Kandy defeated Dambulla Aura to become the new champions of the Lanka Premier League 2023.

Wanindu Hasaranga's team defeated Dambulla Aura by 5 wickets in the final played at R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

The 4th edition of the Lanka Premier League 2023, Sri Lanka's top-most domestic T20 tournament with an international flavour, took place from July to August.

#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 AKD selected as the next NPP Presidential candidate



MP Anura Kumara Disanayake announced that he has been chosen as the candidate of the National People's Power (NPP) for the upcoming presidential election.

Speaking at a television political programme, MP Disanayake said the decision was made after a thorough discussion within the NPP's Executive Council.



#56 First Sinopec fuel station opened

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

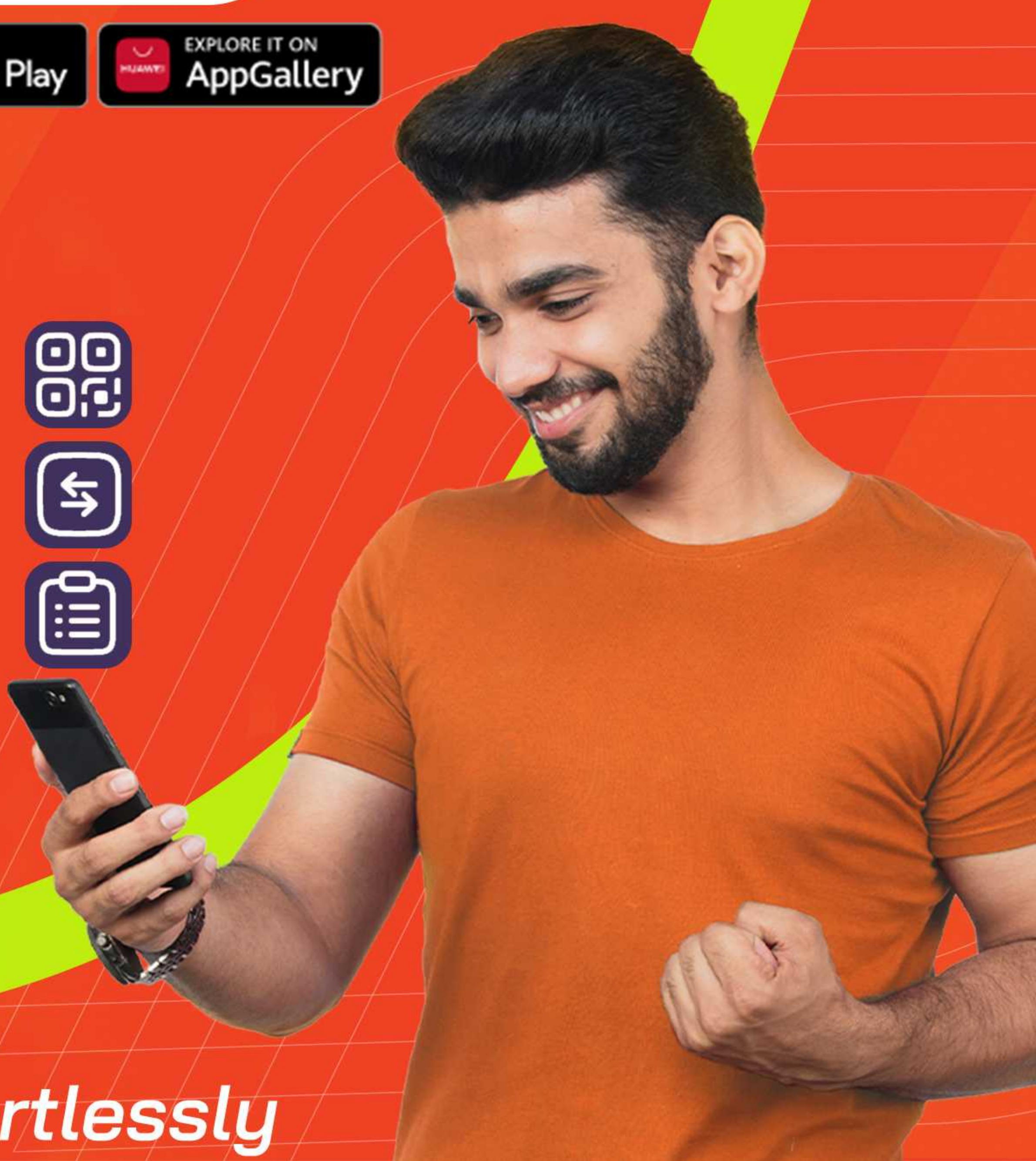
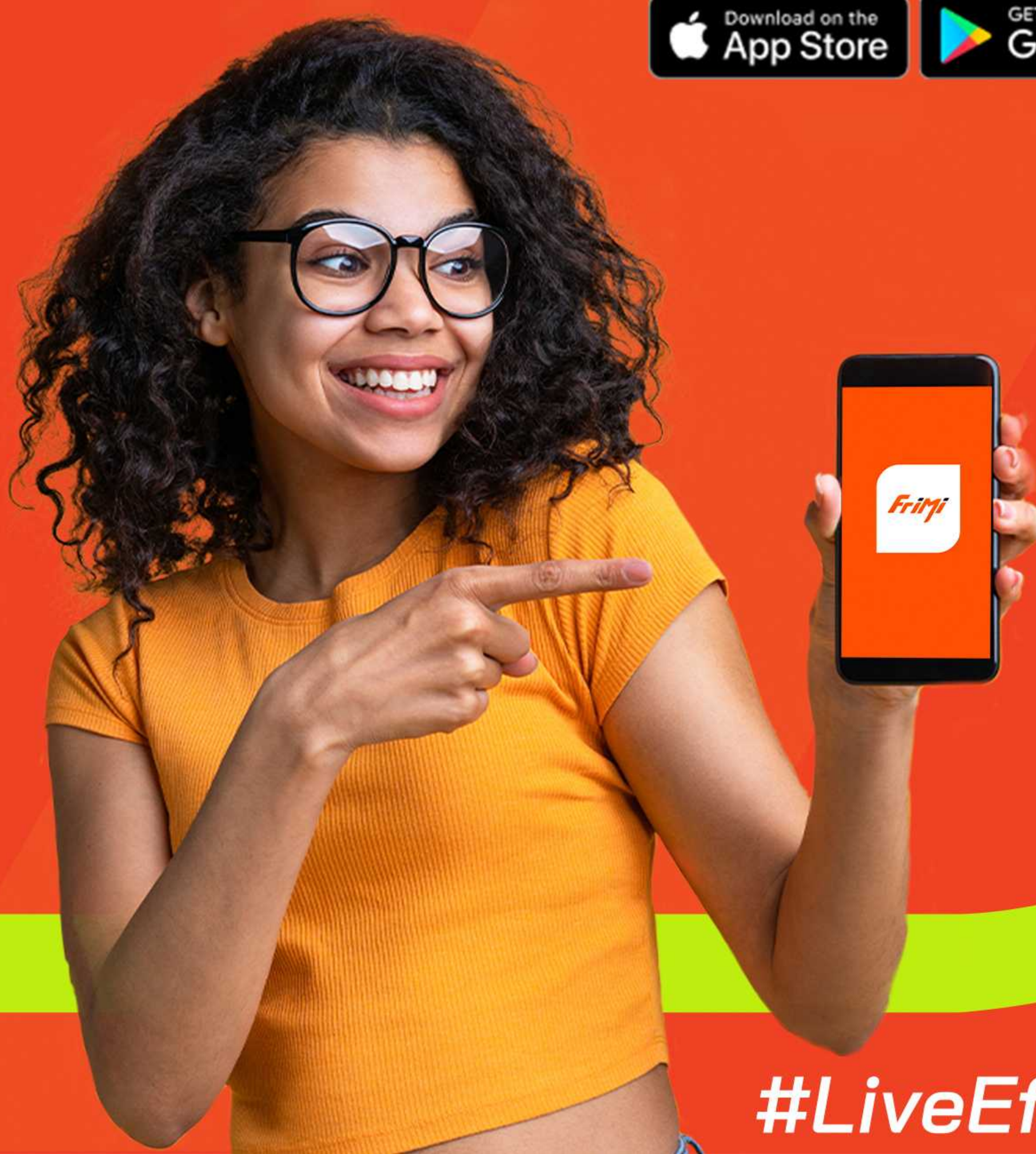
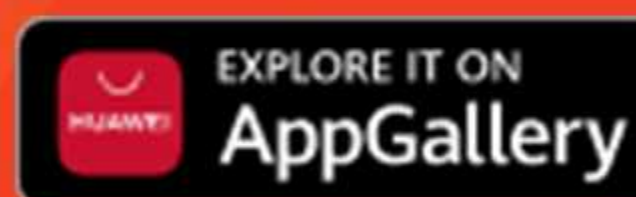
Under the signing of the Long-Term Contract of Importation, Storage, Distribution, and Sale of Petroleum Products in Sri Lanka with the Ministry of Power and Energy, Sinopec has been granted a 20-year license to operate 150 fuel stations.

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#57 Govt scraps fuel QR system

The government decided to discontinue the QR-based system for fuel purchases, as the nation had sufficient stocks to provide an uninterrupted fuel supply.

The QR system was initially introduced for fuel purchase following the fuel crisis faced in Sri Lanka in 2022, which resulted in long queues at fuel stations.



#58 Govt announces inquiry into 'Channel 4' allegations of Easter attacks

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.

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

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

#59 Former Sri Lanka cricketer Sachithra 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.

#60 Cardinal calls for Int. 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.




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#61 NCM against Health Minister defeated in Parliament



8TH SEPTEMBER

The No Confidence Motion against Health Minister Keheliya Rambukwella was defeated during a vote in Parliament, with 113 MPs voting against and 73 voting in favour.

The motion was presented over the shortage of medicines and several deaths at state hospitals due to the administration of substandard medication.

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



9TH SEPTEMBER

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.

The majority of the consecutive wins came in the ICC World Cup Qualifiers.



#63 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 a paltry 50 runs on home turf, India chased down the target in just 6.1 over.

A dejected Chris Silverwood, the Sri Lankan coach, said his side came up against a high-class bowling attack but should have done better.

“It has been a below par performance. To get bowled out the way we did was very disappointing,” he said



19TH SEPTEMBER

#64 Government issues Gazette on new Online Safety Bill

Key objectives of the bill include;

- **Establishing the Online Safety Commission**
- **Making provisions to prohibit online communication of certain statements of fact in Sri Lanka**
- **Preventing the use of online accounts and inauthentic online accounts for prohibited purposes**
- **Making provisions to identify and declare online locations used for prohibited purposes in SL**
- **Suppress the financing and other support of communication of false statements of fact**



#65 Seylan Bank enables Sri Lanka's first 'Signfluencer'

Seylan Bank introduced Sri Lanka's first 'Signfluencer' with the aim to advocate recognition for sign language and support the user community by creating an opportunity to unlock their potential in the social media platforms.

Launching the campaign, Seylan Bank introduced Nikita, Sri Lanka's first 'Signfluencer. Nikita advocates raising awareness of sign language as an official language and aims to eliminate isolation among the hearing-impaired community, fostering inclusivity in people's hearts.



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#66 Sri Lanka pays off USD 200 MN 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.



#67 **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.



#68 President Ranil lashes out at German media

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.



#69 **Tharushi Karunaratna** **secures Gold at Asian Games**

Sri Lankan athlete Tharushi Karunaratna secured a gold medal in the 2023 Asian Games in China.

Karunaratna emerged victorious in the women's 800m event after clocking a time of 2:03.20.

This was Sri Lanka's first gold medal in the Asian Games athletics category since 2002.



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#70 Five killed after tree falls onto bus in Colpetty



6TH OCTOBER

Five people were killed and 10 others injured after a tree fell onto a passenger bus near Liberty Roundabout on Duplication Road in Colpetty due to inclement weather.

The government has decided to provide compensation of Rs. 500,000 to each of the families of the victims who lost their lives in the tragic accident.

#71 Veteran Actor Jackson Anthony passes away



9TH OCTOBER

Sri Lankan Veteran Actor Jackson Anthony passed away at the age of 65 after being treated for 14 months for injuries sustained in an accident.

The actor had been undergoing treatment at the Colombo National Hospital since the accident in July 2022, in which his vehicle collided with a wild elephant in Thalawa.



#72 Sri Lanka's Only privately owned airline FitsAir marks one year of operations

FitsAir, a privately owned airline in Sri Lanka known for its affordability and punctuality, recently celebrated its first anniversary marking a year filled with achievements and innovation.

FitsAir became the first privately owned airline to be designated by the Government of Sri Lanka to operate scheduled international passenger air service out of Sri Lanka.

FitsAir operates a modern fleet of A320 aircraft and flies to destinations such as Chennai (India), Dubai (UAE), and Male (Maldives).



#73 **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.



#74 Several Ministries changed in Mini Cabinet reshuffle

A mini Cabinet reshuffle was carried out by the government. 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**



#75 Court rules businessman Dinesh Schaffter's death a crime

The Colombo Magistrate's Court ruled that the death of the late businessman Dinesh Schaffter was a crime.

The court informed that the 5-member Expert Panel appointed to investigate the death concluded that Schaffter's death was caused by pressure applied to the areas of the neck and face.

Schaffter was found tied up in the driving seat of his car at the Borella Cemetery in December 2022 and died due to a cardiac arrest while being treated at the Colombo National Hospital.

THE STANDOUT SMARTPHONE RELEASE OF 2023



HONOR

#76 Poor show in World Cup : SLC calls for urgent explanation



Sri Lanka Cricket expressed concern and disappointment over the performance of the Sri Lanka national team during the World Cup 2023, particularly the humiliating loss against India.

In light of these concerns, the SLC called for an urgent and comprehensive explanation from the entire coaching staff and selectors.

#77 SLC crisis deepens



Sri Lanka Cricket requested the intervention of President Ranil Wickremesinghe, stating that its day-to-day operations were being affected due to the “deliberate harassment from the Sports Ministry.”



DILSHAN MADUSHANKA
21 WICKETS AT THE WORLD CUP



FIFTY ALL OUT
SL ALL OUT FOR 50 IN ASIA CUP FINAL



KUSAL MENDIS
FASTEST WORLD CUP 100 FOR A SRI LANKAN



ANGELO MATHEWS FIRST BATSMAN TO BE
TIMED OUT



**PATHUM SCORES
4 HALF CENTURIES
IN A ROW IN
WORLD CUP**



**ARAVINDA
DE SILVA
WAS
INDUCTED
INTO THE ICC
HALL OF
FAME**



**DUNITH
PICKS UP
5/40 VS
INDIA
IN ASIA CUP**



**SRI LANKAN FANS
SHOWING THEIR
COLORS IN THE
ASIA CUP**

2023 IN NUMBERS

ODIs

PLAYED 31 WON 16 LOST 15



RUNS
1151 - P.NISSANKA
893 - K.MENDIS
850 - S.SAMARAWICKRAMA

WICKETS
37 - M. THEEKSHANA
31 - D. MADUSHANKA
28 - W. HASARANGA

TESTS

PLAYED 6 WON 2 LOST 4



RUNS
608 - D. KARUNARATNE
586 - K. MENDIS
486 - D. DE SILVA

WICKETS
30 - P. JAYASURIYA
17 - R. MENDIS
15 - A. FERNANDO

T20s

PLAYED 7 WON 1 LOST 5 TIED 1



RUNS
211 - K. MENDIS
162 - C. ASALANKA
147 - D. SHANAKA

WICKETS
06 - D. MADUSHANKA
05 - W. HASARANGA
04 - N. THUSHARA



#78 Interim Committee appointed for Sri Lanka Cricket

Sri Lanka's Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe appointed an interim committee for Sri Lanka Cricket via a Gazette, suspending the current administration.

Former cricketer and World Cup-winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga was appointed Chairman of the interim committee which consisted of 07 members.



#79 **Angelo Mathews becomes first ever batsman to be 'TIMED OUT'**

Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews became the first batter ever to be TIMED OUT in the 146-year history of international cricket.

Mathews posted video stills disproving that his helmet broke after the two-minute cut-off, rather than before, during his controversial incident in the World Cup match against Bangladesh.

Several former Sri Lankan cricketers also urged SLC officials to file a complaint with the ICC regarding the conduct of the umpires, after broadcaster footage established that Mathews was at the crease on time before his helmet strap broke.

#80

Court issues stay order against Gazette on new SLC Interim Committee



6TH NOVEMBER

The Court of Appeal issued a stay order against the Gazette issued by the Sports Minister on the appointment of an interim committee for Sri Lanka Cricket headed by former cricketer Arjuna Ranatunga.

The Cabinet also appointed a ministerial committee, chaired by Foreign Minister Ali Sabry, to investigate the future activities of the SLC and the Gazette on the SLC Interim Committee.

#81 Two Lankans confirmed dead in Israel- Palestine conflict



9TH NOVEMBER

A Sri Lankan woman, identified as Anula Jayathilake, who was reported missing in Israel was confirmed to have been shot dead in the conflict.

Sujith Bandara Yatwara was the second Sri Lankan confirmed dead in the conflict following a match in the DNA samples of an unidentified body and those obtained from his children.



#82 **Parliament vote to remove SL Cricket officials**

A Parliamentary debate on Sri Lanka Cricket was held with the Opposition presenting a joint motion with the government calling for the dismissal of the SLC office-bearers.

The motion, which is non-binding and is the joint stance of the party leaders that the Office Bearers of SLC should step down and a new Sports Act be passed, was passed with a majority vote in Parliament.



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#83 ICC suspends Sri Lanka Cricket

The International Cricket Council suspended the SLC with immediate effect due to significant government interference in the board's administration. After hearing representation from the SLC, the ICC Board decided;

- Sri Lanka can continue to compete internationally both in bilateral cricket and ICC events.**
- Funding to SLC will be controlled by the ICC.**
- Sri Lanka will no longer host the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024, which will be held in South Africa.**



#84 Sri Lanka out of the Champions Trophy 2025

Sri Lanka was officially knocked out of an ICC event for the first time in history after failing to qualify for the Champions Trophy 2025.

Sri Lanka failed to qualify due to its poor show in the World Cup and its low Net Run Rate in the ICC Cricket World Cup points table.



SRI LANKA BUDGET 2024

13TH NOVEMBER

#85 KEY HIGHLIGHTS: BUDGET

The Appropriation Bill for the 2024 fiscal year was presented to the Parliament by President Ranil Wickremesinghe. The bill includes:

- A Rs 10,000 allowance for state employees from April 2024.
- An increase in VAT up to 18% from January 2024
- Rs 3 billion for an Artificial Intelligence center.
- Rs 1.5 billion for cricket development in schools and provincial levels.



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#86 Presidential and parliamentary elections next year

President Ranil Wickremesinghe announced that the Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held in 2024.

Addressing the Parliament, the President further assured that the two elections will not be postponed.



#87 Supreme court holds Rajapaksas responsible for economic crisis

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka ruled that former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and certain officials from his government were responsible for the economic crisis faced by Sri Lanka.

The court held that former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, former Finance Ministers Mahinda and Basil Rajapaksa, former Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivad Cabraal and several others were responsible for the economic crisis.



27TH NOVEMBER

#88 Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe sacked

Minister of Sports Roshan Ranasinghe was sacked from his ministerial portfolios of Sports & Youth Affairs, and Irrigation, with immediate effect by President Ranil Wickremesinghe following a spat related to the Sri Lanka Cricket crisis.

Minister of Tourism Harin Fernando was appointed as Sri Lanka's new Minister of Sports & Youth Affairs in addition to his ministerial portfolios of Tourism and Land.



#89 **Deshabandu Tennakoon appointed Acting IGP**

Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of the Western Province, Deshabandu Tennakoon was appointed Acting IGP of Sri Lanka.

According to the Police Department, the appointment is effective for a period of three months.



#90 **Pastor Jerome Fernando arrested**

Controversial Sri Lankan Pastor, Jerome Fernando was arrested by the Criminal Investigations Department after providing a statement for the second consecutive day.

The Sri Lankan Pastor was wanted by the Sri Lanka Police after allegedly having made derogatory statements about Lord Buddha, Islam, and Hinduism in front of a packed congregation in May this year.

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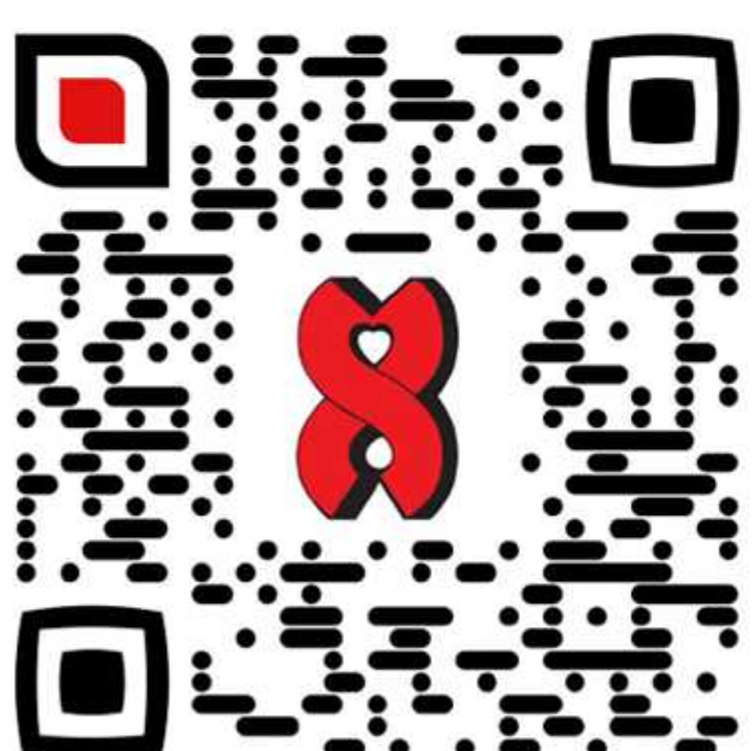
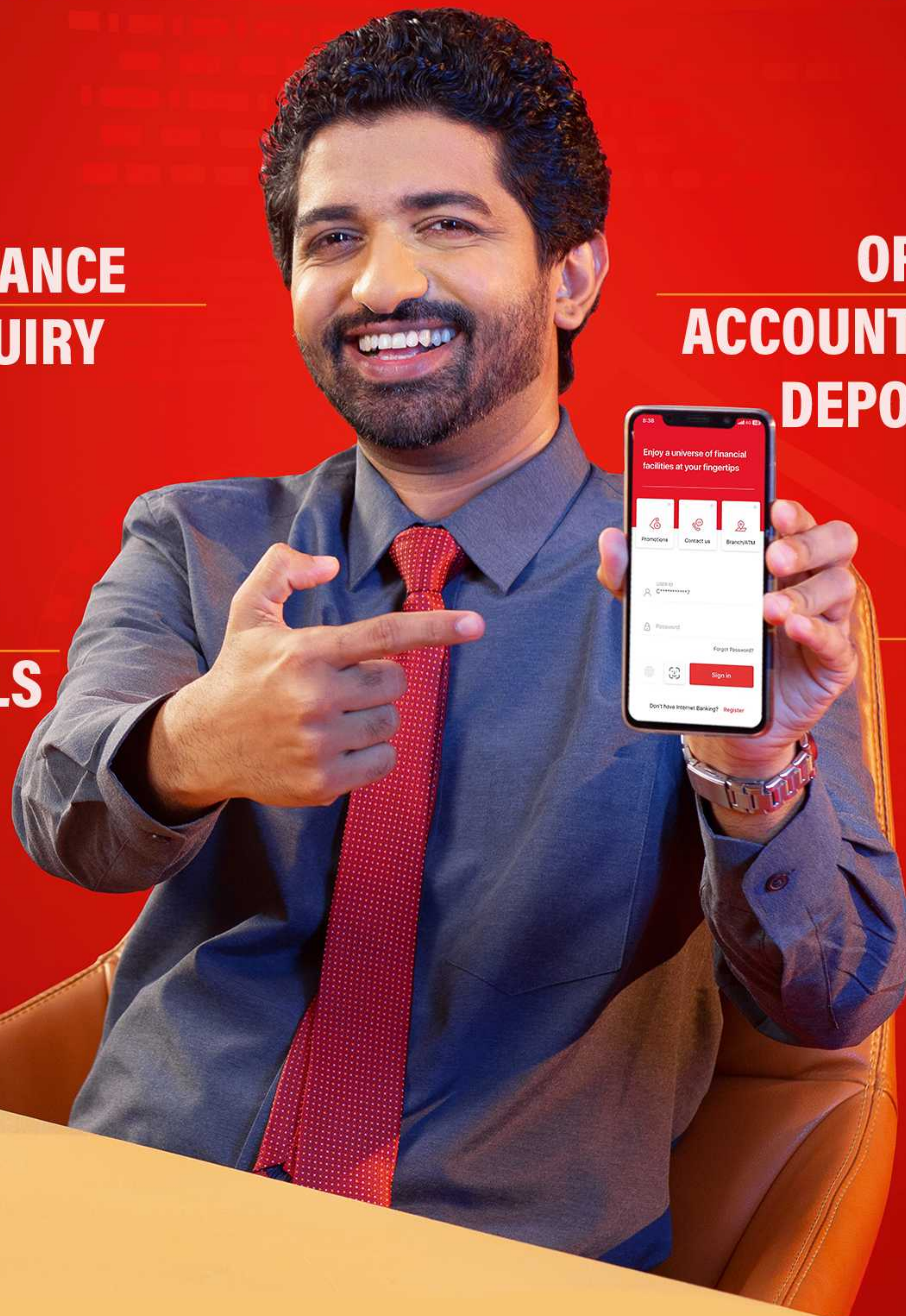
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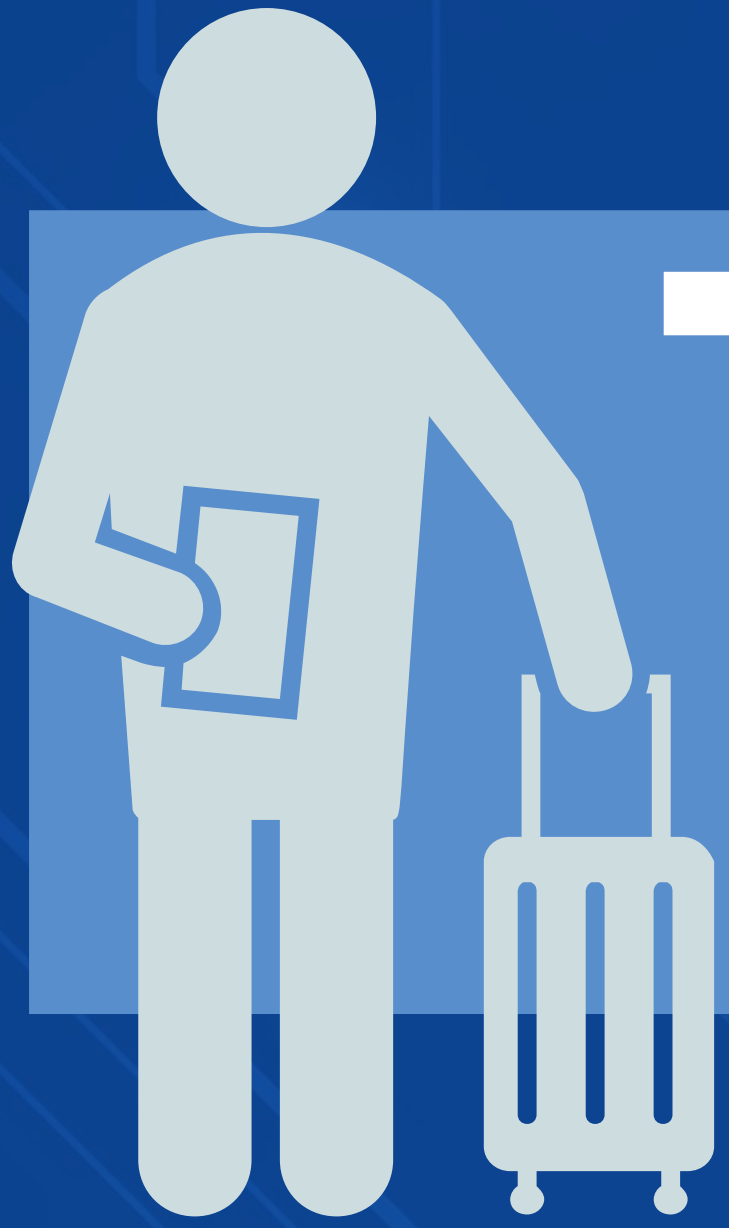


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2023 IN NUMBERS



1.5 MILLION
TOURIST ARRIVALS

COMPARED TO
2022



719,978

www.sltda.gov.lk



\$5.4 billion
FOREIGN REMITTANCE
AS OF NOVEMBER 2023

COMPARED TO
2022



68%

#91 Sri Lanka issues first digital birth certificate



5TH DECEMBER

The first digital birth certificate in Sri Lanka was issued under the patronage of State Minister of Home Affairs Ashoka Priyantha at the Kalutara District Secretariat.

The government announced that it plans to expand the digital birth certificate programme to other areas soon.

#92 Three Sri Lankans killed in action fighting for Ukraine



7TH DECEMBER

Three Sri Lankans, who were working as officers attached to the Ukrainian military, died in fighting between Ukraine and Russia.

The Sri Lankan Embassy in Ankara, Turkey confirmed that the three Sri Lankan officers had died while fighting against Russian forces on the Ukrainian front in Bakhmut.

#93 Sri Lanka experiences Islandwide power outage



9TH DECEMBER

An island-wide power outage was reported for several hours due to a system issue at the Ceylon Electricity Board.

The CEB said that the all island power outage was caused by a fault pertaining to the line running from Kotmale to Biyagama.

#94 Proposal to increase VAT passed in Parliament



11TH DECEMBER

The VAT (Amendment) Bill was passed in Parliament with amendments, receiving 100 votes in favor and 55 against.

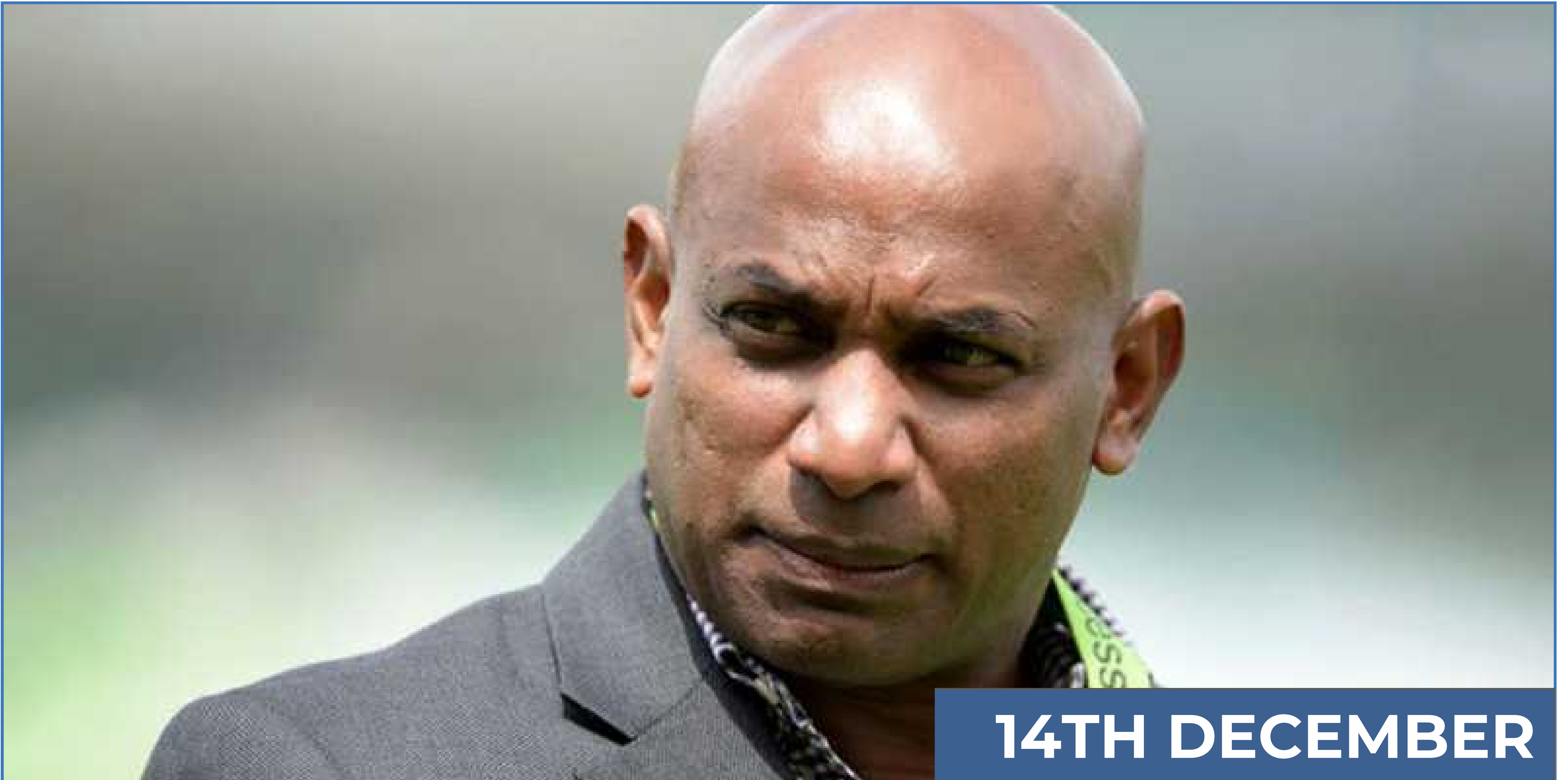
The proposal is to raise VAT to 18% from January as part of the fiscal year 2024 budget.



#95 IMF approves **USD 337 Mn** for **Sri Lanka**

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the first review under the 48-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Arrangement.

The completion of the first review allows for an immediate disbursement of US\$ 337 million, bringing the total IMF financial support disbursed so far to approximately US\$ 670 million.



#96 Sanath Jayasuriya appointed as SLC Cricket Consultant

Sri Lanka cricketing legend Sanath Jayasuriya will work directly with Sri Lanka Cricket's High-Performance Center after being appointed as a cricket consultant.

Jayasuriya will review and analyze current cricket structures to design a clear and effective development plan for the Sri Lanka cricket system.

#97 Five member Cricket Selection Committee appointed



Sports Minister Harin Fernando officially appointed a five-member selection committee for Sri Lanka Cricket headed by former Captain Upul Tharanga.

- Ajantha Mendis,
- Dilruwan Perera,
- Tharanga Paranavithana,
- Indika De Seram

are the remaining members of the SLC selection committee.

#98 Three Sri Lankan cricketers sold in IPL Auction



Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga was sold for a base price of 1.5 Crore INR to Sunrises Hyderabad in the IPL Auction 2024 as there were no other bidders.

Sri Lankan rising pacer Dilshan Madushanka will represent Mumbai Indians after being purchased for 4.6 Crore INR.

Sri Lankan fast bowler Nuwan Thushara was also sold to Mumbai Indians for 4.8 Crore INR.



#99 SC finds new Acting IGP guilty of violating rights

The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka ordered Acting IGP Deshabandu Tennakoon and three Police officers to pay compensation for the violation of the fundamental rights of an individual who was detained at the Mirihana Police Station in 2011.

The Supreme Court also instructed the Police Commission to take disciplinary action against the four Police officers.



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