

SRI LANKA SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND Inc *NEWSLETTER*



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am privileged to be a part of the 35th Management Committee of Sri Lanka Society of Queensland. I wish all the members a Happy New Year and I hope the Year 2013 will bring you and your family good luck and good fortune.

This is the 35th year that the Society has celebrated the New Year and I am proud to be part of a group which values the rich traditions and culture of Sri Lanka.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2012 Committee Members for their contribution and the tremendous work done by them for the Society.

Our first function will be the New Year celebrations on the 20th April 2013. I hope to meet all of you.

The Management Committee would appreciate from members. If you have feedback or ideas for functions, please give me or one of the Committee Members a call.

All the very best for the New Year 2013! We hope to see you at the New Year function.

Hermin Goonatilleke
President

FROM THE EDITOR



The Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Society of Queensland (pictured above) was held on 17th February, 2013 at the Toowong Community Hall. It was pleasing to witness the attendance by many founding members of the Society, as well as several new members.

The previous year's Management Committee vacated their positions as scheduled. Dr Victor Gunasekara was invited and took the chair in the interim. All positions were declared vacant and nominations were sought for the office bearers for year 2013. On completion of the election of the new Management Committee, President elect for 2013 Hermin Goonetilleke, spoke briefly and thanked the outgoing Management Committee for a job well done. She also requested the support of all members to steer the Society in the right direction and to achieve it's objectives. Hermin extended her appreciation to the outgoing President Kanaji Wijesekera, Publications Secretary Upali Jayasuriya and Treasurer Asoka

Kottege. Upali spoke briefly about the inception, history of the society and again requested everyone to support the society, particularly during heavy work load periods such as pre and post traditional Sinhala & Tamil New year function. Upali is no doubt a stalwart of the society who was always available for his valuable contribution, sharing his knowledge and experience with anyone who needed it. Thank you Upali. SLSQ also acknowledges the wonderful contribution made by Sagarika Attaduwege and Noel De Silva in their roles. Thank you Sagarika and Noel.

The Sinhala New Year function of Sri Lanka Society will be held on 20th April. Please make a note in your diary and keep the day free. It would be appreciated if you could please pass the word among your friends and family about the function. The Society values your participation. Please contact the Cultural Secretary, should you wish to have your child participate in the cultural show.

The Membership Fee was reviewed at the AGM and the fee for 2013 is \$20 for a family. Thank you in advance for your efforts in enrolling new members to the society.

SLSQ wishes everyone a Happy Easter. Please stay safe and drive carefully.

Your feedback or suggestions for improvement are welcome. Please email: cgodakanda@gmail.com

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Alien Substances from Galle?*

Unidentified substances similar to cobweb-like fibres have allegedly been reported to have fallen from the skies of Aparekka, Galle. Colombo University lecturer and Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies Consultant Dr. Chandana Jayaratne said the phenomenon might be linked to the asteroid 2012 DA14 travelling close to the Earth.

According to Dr. Jayaratne the fine cobweb-like substance had been falling over Aparekka since 15th February night. "I am expecting samples of the substance to carry out an analysis of its elements to determine its origin," he said.

Cable Car Project at Lake Gregory in Nuwara Eliya*

The cable car project, which has been a dream of Nuwara Eliya Municipal Council, is underway, to be constructed in Nuwara Eliya between the Gregory's Lake Park and the Single Tree Mountain, as a tourist attraction. The initial work of this project is expected to commence in April after conducting a feasibility study which is to be prepared with the assistance of a foreign expert who will be arriving shortly. The project is expected to be completed by March 2014, according to Milanka Gajanayake of MLM associates (Pvt) Limited who is undertaking the project.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for commencement of the project, was signed recently at the Nuwara Eliya Municipal Council between Nuwara Eliya Mayor Mahinda Dodampegama on behalf of the Municipal Council, and Milanka Gajanayake, Lakshman Gunawardena and Mahesh Pieris for MLM Associates (Pvt) Limited. The Nuwara Eliya Mayor Mahinda Dodampegama said, the cable car project is of significant importance at a time when the Nuwara-Eliya Municipality is seeking alternative means of revenue in addition to the traditional income sources.

Private Universities to be set up through Board of Investment (BOI)*

The government has undertaken to set up non-state universities through the Board of Investment (BOI), with the Higher Education Ministry only to standardise such academic institutions. Accordingly, ten foreign universities have sent their applications seeking approval to establish their campuses in Sri Lanka. These universities are mainly from countries such as the United Kingdom and India. The newly formed 'Investment Promotion Ministry' has stated on its website, "the State university system performs as the main provider of the university systems,

[and this] establishment of private universities will attract around 50,000 foreign students.” These universities are also expected to absorb, on average the 12,000 Sri Lankan students leaving the country for higher education and thereby saving foreign exchange.

Believe it or not – Whopping Rs 2 Billion –Plus bids for SL Cricket!*

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) may have been getting flak from all quarters in recent times over various issues. Additionally, the Sri Lankan cricket team may have lacked consistency on field, however, it was proved beyond any doubts that the brand value of the national team has skyrocketed beyond wildest dreams of any financial expert.

Sri Lanka’s largest mobile phone operator Dialog Axiata had made a stunning all-time record bid of Rs. one billion and seventy seven million to sponsor the Sri Lankan team from May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2017

However, Dialog will not have the right to have their name on the Sri Lankan team shirts, as the government-owned Sri Lanka Tea Board has also submitted a whopping bid of Rs. one billion and two hundred thousand. This bid is in very close proximity to the Dialog’s bid, that it has left SLC’s top officials scratching their heads to evaluate the best possible sponsor.

The team’s current sponsor for ICC events Homestead and Madison Media, a multi-national media agency that handles several

high profile corporate firms of the country, have also made large bids.

Interestingly, Sri Lanka team’s current sponsor Sri Lanka Telecom Mobitel has not made a bid. Mobitel, Sri Lanka’s second largest mobile phone operator took over as the main sponsor of the national team from April 2010 for a three year period for what now looks like a pittance at 4.85 million US dollars.

The National team sponsor has the rights for both the men’s and women’s teams. The women’s team which almost had no commercial value in the past can also claim a right for more attention both commercially and among fans, following their significantly improved performance at the Women’s World Cup recently concluded in India. This will be added value to the winning bidder. According to sources, the SLC will put the interests of the country first by seriously considering having Sri Lanka Tea Board as the team sponsor despite it being the lower bid.

Mathews named Captain*

Angelo Mathews has been appointed as the Captain of the Sri Lanka test Cricket team. Mathews is the first Josephian to captain Sri Lanka Cricket Team. While Dinesh Chandimal was appointed Vice Captain of the team, for a period of two years ending in January 2015. Additionally, Chandimal was appointed captain of the T20 cricket

team while Lasith Malinga was appointed his deputy.

41000 light vehicles enter Colombo each morning*

A survey was conducted recently by Sri Lanka Police to find out the number of light vehicles entering the city of Colombo. The results were a whopping 41 000. The intent of this survey is to have reliable statistics in the efforts to find ways to reduce traffic congestion in Colombo.

Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) to re-structure it's work force*

Employees of the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) have been protesting against what they call a National Salaries and Cadres Commission (NSCC) proposal, which aims to reduce the number of CMC workers from 12,000 to 8,000. However, Sri Lanka media has reported that many CMC workers could be seen just loafing or moonlighting in broad day light at the expense of rate payers.

The Colombo Mayor and other councilors are said to be throwing their weight behind the protesting workers. Critics say, they couldn't have done otherwise being politicians. They deserve the blame for letting the grass grow under their feet without addressing the serious problem of having so many idlers on the CMC payroll. They should have cracked the whip and got

the shirkers to work and earn their salaries. It is high time the problem of excess staff at the CMC was addressed and a solution found. The public must not be burdened further with the cost of maintaining a bunch of shirkers.

Flights from Katunayake via Mattala (Hambantota)*

Operations at Sri Lanka's second international airport in Mattala will begin on March 18. Sri Lankan airlines are planning to have flights from the Katunayake Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) via Mattala three days a week.

A presidential secretariat spokesman recently said President Mahinda Rajapaksa had instructed officials to make arrangements to launch international flights on March 18. On the same day the Chinese Eastern Airlines will fly from Shanghai to the BIA via Mattala.

The secretariat spokesman stated that there would be another flight from Colombo to Beijing via Mattala operated by the China Eastern Airlines and to Male from Katunayake via Mattala by Sri Lankan Airlines. While Mihin Lanka will fly to Budhgaya via Mattala on Saturdays and Sundays.

The spokesman said discussions had been held on developing the BIA. He said a

modern aircraft maintenance apron and pilot training unit would be set up at Mattala and special transport network would be in place to travel to and from Mattala for passengers.

The spokesman said prestigious international carriers have been invited to fly to Mattala on an open skies policy without any binding obligations, as Sri Lanka needed to market Mattala and divert a part of international flights to Mattala to avoid the increasingly congestion at BIA.

Huge concessions have been offered for international airlines that use Mattala with discounts for ground handling. The government has already held discussion with several leading airlines to motivate them to use Mattala.

In a lighter vein: Flight crew at BIA – Please be ready to take off. By the way get ready for landing as well.

Colombo Harbour – South Port Under construction

Existing harbor (far right of the picture) has been regularly accommodating huge container ships over 300 meters in length with maximum draft of 14.3 metres, over the past 20 years, though Port of Colombo was built well over 100 years ago to berth much smaller ships. Recently, Queen Mary II (352 metres) berthed in Colombo harbor. Longest ship ever to berth in existing Colombo harbor is 367 metres. In comparison, South Port which has three terminal should be able to handle much larger ships, provided draft of the ship is within safe limit of 17 metres initially. First ship (400 metre long) is expected to berth at South Port in July.





News & Events

- 02.03.2013 Annual General Meeting of Silver fawn Club
- 23.03.2013 "Prathiba" talent show presented by the Art Circle of Sri Lanka Buddhist Monastery.
- 24.03.2013 Annual General Meeting of Sinhala Association of Queensland Inc
1000 hrs at Sunnybank Hills Library Hall
- 20.04.2013 Annual Cultural Concert, dinner & dance – Sri Lanka Society of Queensland – Starting 6pm at Clairvaux Mackillop College, Klumpp Road, Upper Mount Gravett. *Flyer to follow***

Richmond – Mahinda Old Boys Association of Brisbane

Please be advised that "**Richmond Mahinda Old Boys Association of Brisbane**" will be set up in the near future. Please email required details to organisers, if you are a past student of either school and wish to join the association.

Upali Vithana (3879 2106 / 0431 599 625) Arawinda Serasinghe (0430 205 654)

richmondmahindabrisbane@gmail.com

Required details - Name, School and Year left school



Much has been spoken and heard about Titanic, particularly after the movie enjoyed by almost everyone who watched it.

Some facts you may enjoy!

- Titanic was built in Harland & Wolff Shipyard in Belfast, Ireland. She had over three million rivets put in the hull.
- Length of the Titanic was 270 metres (nearly three times the length of a football field), the rudder weighed over 100 tonnes, with the anchors weighed over 30 tonnes in total, the propellers were about the size of a windmill.
- President of Harland & Wolff was to join Titanic in its maiden voyage but opted to stay out due to a surgery he had to undergo a couple of months earlier. Lucky escape.
- Captain Edward Smith, was to retire on completion of the Titanic's maiden voyage, after a distinguished career at sea for over half a century.
- Titanic was certified to carry 3547 passengers and crew however, she only had life boat capacity for 1178 (yet, shockingly within legislation at the time)
- American millionaire and the richest person on board, John Jacob Aster IV, had \$4000 in his pocket and a 19 year old farm worker had a pocket mirror, comb, a wallet containing 10 cents and a train ticket to Milwaukee (post recovery of corpses)
- Three crew members (who were also brothers) decided to have a few drinks in local pub before setting sail, and ended up being refused boarding by an officer in charge due to their unpunctuality and unreliability. The crew members who replaced the brothers unfortunately died in the disaster.
- Thomas Andrews, the naval architect (who was on board), upon hearing the extent of the damage sustained by the ship post collision, calculated that it would take 2.5 hours for the ship to sink – he was not far off. Unfortunately, he died in the disaster.
- Titanic sank nearly 101 years ago on 15th April, 1912 at 2:20 am, 2 hours and 40 minutes after the collision with the iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean.