

July 2024

ISSUE 60

# PHOENIX

## Monthly Newsletter

ISSUE

60

July 2024



# PHOENIX

# 10

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வது ஆண்டு விழா  
அழைப்பு



## Akkinip Paravaikal

““

*No matter how many obstacles are in the way,  
we will keep fighting*

**Phoenix TNG**

””

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|----------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| <b>International</b> | <b>03-06</b> | <b>Economic</b>                        | <b>10-12</b> |
| <i>Bilateral</i>     | 03           |  |              |
| <b>Military</b>      | <b>06</b>    | <b>Oppression &amp;<br/>Resistance</b> | <b>13-14</b> |
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# International News

## 01.07.2024: **World Bank Group** -

According to Economy Next, Gevorg Sargsyan has been appointed World Bank Group Country Manager for SL, effective 01.07.2024. This newly generated position will provide a single point of contact for access to the full range of World Bank Group products and services, the Washington-based lender said in a statement.

11.07.2024: **Solidarity** - Relatives of 49 Sri Lankans trapped in cyber slavery camps in Myanmar's Myaeaddy region staged a protest in Colombo near SL's Parliament.

17.07.2024: **Security measures** - According to Economy Next, following the recent attack on former US President Donald Trump, R.

Wickremesinghe has tabled a cabinet paper proposing security measures for presidential candidates and former presidents. A committee is to conduct threat assessments and determine necessary security measures.

22.07.2024: **India** - The Registrar of the Delhi High Court, Vinal Kapoor issued a public notice addressed to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to show cause as to 'why your association should not be declared as unlawful' and to appear before the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal on 23.07.2024.

23.07.2024: **Solidarity** - Trade unionists, students and political activists protested opposite the

Bangladeshi high commission in SL in solidarity with the Bangladesh students' protest to demand an immediate end to the violence unleashed by the Sheikh Hasina

27.07.2024: **LTTE** - According to Economy Next, the European Union (EU) has extended its ban on the LTTE for another six months. The decision, dated 26.07.2024, continues to enforce measures such as the freezing of funds and economic resources related to the LTTE and the ban on EU entities from providing financial support to the organisation.



**Solidarity**  
Source: Lankafiles, X

# Bilateral

**02.07.2024: ADB** - According to Economy Next, SL's Cabinet of Ministers has approved the borrowing of USD 100 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The loan is the first part of a USD 300 million program.

**03.07.2024: Japan** - According to Economy Next, SL and Japan have discussed the resumption of suspended projects under Japanese Yen loans. They also discussed ways to increase Japanese investment in SL and expand employment prospects for SLs in Japan in various sectors.

**03.07.2024: Airport** - According to Economy Next, SL will hand over the operation of its Chinese-built airport to a consortium with Indian firm Shaurya Aeronautics Pvt Ltd and Russian firm Airports of Regions Management Company. However, officials from the United States have approached the SL government to inform them that the major shareholder of the Russian Airports of Regions Management Company was

sanctioned by the US Treasury Department in 2018 for allegedly interfering in the 2016 US elections. Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva says it is not true.

**04.07.2024: GTEX2** - According to Economy Next, SL has been included in the Swiss government-funded GTEX2 program for the period 2024-2027, which aims to improve the capabilities of the local garment sector and increase its presence in the global market. The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDCA) and the International Trade Center (ITC) are funding and providing technical assistance in the second phase of the Global Textile and Apparel Program (GTEX2).

**04.07.2024: China** - According to Economy Next, China's Vice Minister of General Administration of Customs, Wang Lingjun, met with SL officials to discuss cooperation with SL customs and the export of agricultural

products. She discussed the expansion of exports of tea, coconut, pineapple and spices as well as fishery products. Amaraweera said SL's agricultural exports to China would be USD 3.3 billion in 2023.

**05.07.2024: Israel** - According to Economy Next, SL's Minister of Labor and Foreign Employment said that he had spoken to the Israeli ambassador about farmers coming to SL to recruit workers for the agricultural sector. There were concerns about the behavior of the SL workers who were sent to Israel with the first group. There were problems with pay and accommodation. However, instead of discussing these problems, they took union-like action and protested.

**06.07.2024: Germany** - According to Economy Next, SL is in the final stages of talks with a German investor for a technical university to be built in a suburb of the capital Colombo. It involves an investment of USD 25 million. They intend to focus on agriculture, renewable energy and food

technology.

**08.07.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, after several months of consideration, SL's Cabinet of Ministers has approved a revised Indian-funded project for a unique identity card and sent a proposal to the Indian High Commission. SL has been trying to implement the project for more than a year due to concerns over a potential data breach.

**09.07.2024: Turkey** - According to Economy Next, the Turkish naval vessel TCG Kinaliada has called at the port of Colombo for an official visit. The TCG Kinaliada will conduct a passage exercise (PASSEX) with a SL Navy vessel in Colombo waters before its departure on 11.07.2024. The PASSEX will test cooperation, communication and interoperability between the two navies, including ship manoeuvres and procedures.

**10.07.2024: UNCLCS** - According to Economy Next, SL is in talks with the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLCS) and the International Seabed

Authority (ISBA) over cobalt-rich crust in the Bay of Bengal, where India has filed a claim against the island nation's application. The cobalt-rich crust of the Afanasy Nikitin Seamount is located in the southern part of the Bay of Bengal between SL and India. The SL Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement that after careful consideration and expert opinion, it had submitted its technical and scientific data and other material to the UNCLCS on 08.05.2009 to determine the outer limits of the continental shelf. The ministry said that under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), all coastal states have the right to claim an extended continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and that the documents submitted are accordingly.

**10.07.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, SL will construct 60 smart classrooms in selected schools in the districts of Nuwara-Eliya, Kandy and Badulla with financial support from the Indian government. This will improve the quality of

education in science, technology and mathematics for senior secondary students in the settlements.

**11.07.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, India's Tata Sons (Pvt) Ltd. has offered to donate 50 ambulances to SL's Suwaseriya ambulance service and the ADB 45. SL's Cabinet of Ministers had decided to take the necessary steps to procure the said ambulances for the Suwaseriya Foundation established in 1990.

**11.07.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, India will send 30 teacher experts this month to train local science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teachers in the plantation sector for 03 months. India has also pledged its support to upgrade a vocational training center in the central town of Hatton to help IOTs improve their skill requirements. Upcountry Tamils are also referred to as Indian-origin Tamils (IOTs) as their ancestors were brought from India by the British colonial rulers to work on SL's plantations.

**11.07.2024: Singapore** - According to Economy

Next, SL's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry met with Singapore's business community and outlined potential investment opportunities on the island at an event organized by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI). He invited Singaporean investors to invest in SL, particularly in the renewable energy, port and logistics and digital economy sectors.

**11.07.2024: ADB -** According to Economy Next, the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced that it has approved a USD 100 million policy loan to support reforms in the power sector in coordination with a reform program supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This program will support power sector reforms introduced under the Electricity Act, including institutional and regulatory reforms and improving the operational sustainability of the power sector.

**11.07.2024: China -** According to Economy Next, SL has signed an exchange agreement with the China

International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) for a project on digital transformation of general education under the China Aid program. The main focus of the grant is to establish a state-of-the-art education infrastructure, including a cutting-edge education data center, a multimedia distance learning and conferencing solution, and a national streaming hub.

**12.07.2024: IMF -** According to Economy Next, the International Monetary Fund is still reviewing SL's agreement with investors to restructure its sovereign bonds. The team is in the process of evaluating the agreed terms of the debt restructuring and determining whether they are consistent with the parameters of our program.

**12.07.2024: Lease -** According to Economy Next, SL's Urban Development Authority will lease a 52-perch land it owns in Kollupitiya to Expo Property Developers (Pvt) Ltd on a 99-year lease based on the current valuation for a housing project.

Approval was originally granted in 2007 to lease 40 plots in the Marine Drive area on a long-term 50-year lease under the provisions of the Urban Development Act. An amount equal to 25 % of the value of the land was charged.

**18.07.2024: Indonesia -** According to Economy Next, the SL Chamber of Commerce is negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Indonesian officials to increase Sri Lanka's exports to Indonesia. In the first round of negotiations, proposals were discussed for the export of processed food and machinery, in addition to the knitwear and chemical compounds exported so far. There is also potential for the export of spices, plastics and rubber. The upcoming INSACA Business Forum 2024 in Indonesia was also discussed at the meeting.

**18.07.2024: United States -** According to Economy Next, the United States is committed to supporting SL's progress in the IMF program by promoting private sector investment, improving anti-corruption capacity

and addressing food insecurity. At a 12.07.2024 meeting in Washington, DC, both countries reaffirmed their intention to explore ways to improve market access, bilateral trade, investment and tourism. They welcomed the continuation of talks under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in the coming year.

18.07.2024: **USAID** - According to Economy Next, the U.S. has donated critical equipment to SL's Disaster Management Center (DMC) to help prepare SL for climate-related emergencies. This donation, provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), is part of a USD 2.5 million WFP project funded by USAID.

19.07.2024: **Japan** - According to Economy Next, during their visit to SL, a Japanese delegation discussed the resumption of Japan Development Cooperation (ODA) projects that were halted after SL's state bankruptcy. Among the

projects that can be restarted quickly are the Bandaranaike International Airport Development Project, the Colombo Port Eastern Terminal Development Project, the construction of the Central Expressway and the Digital Broadcasting Project.

19.07.2024: **Education** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to reform its post-school education by consolidating the numerous existing agencies and departments that oversee it into a single agency. R. Wickremesinghe emphasized at the Human Capital Summit 2024 that there are about 700-800 such agencies that will be consolidated into about 300 vocational colleges. The aim is to modernize technical colleges and introduce the associate degree in technical and vocational subjects to improve the quality of post-secondary education.

19.07.2024: **Tenure** - According to Economy Next, SL's Commercial Bank of Ceylon said it has received an opinion from Sustainable Fitch endorsing a framework that will allow the

lender to sell green bonds in the future. The bank said Sustainable Fitch had given its green bond framework a 'Good' rating as it was in line with the International Capital Market Association's Green Bond Principles 2021, Social Bond Principles 2023 and Sustainability Bond Guidelines 2021.

20.07.2024: **Japan** - According to Economy Next, SL and Japan held a meeting with R. Wickremesinghe to discuss the financing of projects to reduce carbon emissions and the resumption of stalled projects. Japan can provide new loans through an agreement to restructure SL's bilateral debt. The financing is to be provided through Japan's Joint Credit Mechanism (JCM), which relies on advanced Japanese technologies.

22.07.2024: **Poland** - According to Economy Next, SL and Poland are discussing a bilateral agreement to provide employment opportunities in Poland for SL workers in certain sectors. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister M U M Ali Sabry, who is on an official visit to

Poland, met with Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. Sabry reported on Twitter that Poland will grant visa facilitation and that the talks covered various topics such as ports, connectivity, education, tourism and people-to-people relations.

22.07.2024: **Japan** - According to Economy Next, SL's Ministry of Health has received nine refrigerated trucks procured by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with financial assistance from Japan. These are intended to improve the delivery of vaccines to children. The vehicles are part of a USD 3 million contribution from Japan to fund cold chain equipment, which includes large cold rooms, portable vaccine carriers and temperature monitoring equipment.

22.07.2024: **Education** - According to Economy Next, China has agreed to provide 1,000 smartboards to SLZ to support the digitisation of schools. This comes shortly after India funded a similar project to equip 200 classrooms with 2,200 smart tablets in the Southern

Province.

22.07.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, SL glove manufacturer Dipped Products Plc (DPL) has opened a marketing office in Mumbai, India, to strengthen its market presence. India has an annual GDP growth of 7.5% and is the fourth largest economy in the world.

25.07.2024: **BRI** - According to Economy Next, SL's Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana spoke in China about expanding cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The focus was on important projects such as the Colombo Port City and Hambantota Port. Abeywardana emphasized the importance of the BRI for economic development and the close cooperation between Sri Lanka and China.

25.07.2024: **FAO** - According to Economy Next, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has called on countries in the Asia-Pacific region to take urgent action against rising bird flu cases. This follows an expert

meeting in Bangkok, supported by USAID and the CDC. The FAO warns of an alarming increase in human-to-human cases, particularly in Cambodia, China and Vietnam, and of a new, more complex variant of the H5N1 virus.

27.07.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, Colombo Dockyard, a unit of Japan's Onomichi Group, will invest one million dollars in a new floating ship repair facility at Hambantota International Port. This port, operated by China's CM Ports, is to be expanded with the construction of a modern ship repair workshop. The port's strategic location on key east-west trade routes is expected to drive the development of ship repair services.





# Military News

**03.07.2024: Marine** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to enlist the help of the military to promote deep sea diving for tourists. SL's genocidal armed forces (army, navy, air force) and police account for nearly 30 % of SL's total government sector workforce looking to promote marine tourism. As part of efforts to boost marine tourism, Sri Lanka is planning water festivals in Trincomalee, Arugam Bay and Kalpitiya in August, 2024.

**11.07.2024: Police** - According to Economy Next, SL creates a new police unit for investment matters. SL's special unit, headed by Senior Deputy Inspector of General of Police Asanka Karavita, is to solve problems faced by local and foreign investors in the investment sector.



**17.07.2024: Thailand** - According to Economy Next, SL and Thailand have released a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that aims to provide exporters access to 85 % of liberalised tariffs over 15 years. Upon entry into force, about 50 % of tariffs will be liberalised, while 15 % of products will remain on a negative list to protect special interests and ensure high profits for domestic producers.

**17.07.2024: Romania** - According to Economy Next, SL has opened an embassy in Bucharest, Romania to support over 40,000 SLs working in the country. Foreign Minister M U M Ali Sabry emphasised that the presence of the embassy will serve as a valuable mechanism to enhance bilateral relations and create further opportunities

for SLs. Sabry held talks on politics, economy, employment, education, tourism and reconciliation and signed a cooperation program in the fields of education, science, culture, mass media, youth and sports.

**17.07.2024: IMF** - According to Economy Next, a team from the International Monetary Fund led by Peter Mullins met with representatives of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce to discuss SL's tax system.

The IMF team, which was in Colombo "on a technical assistance mission on tax policy," met with representatives of the Chamber to "discuss SL's tax system, including challenges and concerns, particularly with respect to tax expenditures, exemptions and incentives," the CCC said in a statement.

**IMF**  
Source: Economy

# Domestic News

## Tamil Eelam

09.07.2024: **Mahaweli** - According to Economy Next, SL is discussing funding of 100 million dollars from the OPEC Fund for Development for Irrigation and Water Security. The USD 100 million will be used to support a project related to the Mahaweli River in SL, which is already supported by the ADB with a USD 300 million loan.

22.07.2024: **SL Election** - 07 Tamil political parties and 07 Tamil civil society activists joined in Jaffna to announce their intentions to field a Tamil candidate for the impending SL presidential elections due to a failure of Sinhalese leaders to resolve any of the Tamils' imminent grievances.

13.07.2024: **Jaffna** - According to Economy Next, SL's government is determined to improve the living conditions of the people in the Northern Peninsula. For this, the SL government has embarked on an increase in most departmental

expenditure and also special allocations for rural and urban development in the local government area. SL Nationalist Gunawardena met with Tamil politicians at the Divisional Secretariat office in Jaffna and participated in the distribution of rice and egg incubators for low-income families.

13.07.2024: **Archeology** - According to Economy Next, R. Wickremesinghe has stated that he will discuss initiatives for long-term archeological projects in the city of Anuradhapura with the Director General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay. R. Wickremesinghe would like to discuss initiatives for long-term archaeological work in the city of Anuradhapura. Anuradhapura has a rich history of more than a millennium and was once known as a center of trade and commerce. The preservation and exploration of the archaeological treasures of this ancient city is still an important concern.

### 15.07.2024: **Solar Power Plant** -

According to Economy Next, SL's WindForce PLC and Vidullanka Plc will acquire 36,500,000 ordinary voting shares of Solar Universe (Private) Limited held by HiEnergy Services (Private) Limited for LKR 370 million. Solar Universe (Private) Limited is the owner and operator of the 10 MW Vavunathivu solar power plant in the Batticaloa district. Suryashakthi (Pvt) Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Solar Universe, has obtained a license to develop and operate the Vavunathivu II Solar Power Plant with an installed capacity of 10 MW in Batticaloa.



# Sri Lanka

**24.07.2024: Easter Sunday** - SL Supreme Court restrained Deshabandhu Tennakoon from his role as SL's Police Chief. According to Lanka Files, orders based on 9 FR petitions filed after 06 days of hearing. Reports indicate that the petitioners argued that Tennakoon neglected his duty during the Easter Sunday bombings of 2019.

**04.07.2024: Port** - According to Economy Next, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) and the Virginia Ports Authority (VPA) in the United States of America have agreed to exchange expertise and technical cooperation between the ports of Colombo and Virginia. The agreement comprises ten articles: Exchange of Information and Knowledge, Exchange of Visits, Exchange of Best Practices, Cooperation in General Logistics, Exchange of Technical Expertise, Support for Maritime Security Initiatives, Liaison between the Parties, Dispute Settlement, Entry into Force, Validity and Renewal,

**08.07.2024: SAMAJ** - According to Economy Next, a coalition of civil society organizations comprising representatives from Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka is calling on South Asian countries to take immediate action to address the high incidence of sexual violence and low conviction rates. The South Asian Movement for Accessing Justice (SAMAJ) advocates for "comprehensive legal reforms to close protection gaps in sexual violence laws, address deficiencies in criminal justice systems and invest in holistic support services for survivors.

**08.07.2024: Elections** - According to Economy Next, SL's presidential elections will be held in 2024 regardless of legal challenges. Parliamentary elections will be held thereafter, followed by provincial council elections.

**08.07.2024: Reconciliation** - According to Economy Next, the bills for the proposed Truth, Unity

and Reconciliation Commission and the National Land Commission are ready to be presented to SL Parliament. This is to resolve the issues between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities with SL's Forest Department regarding the takeover of their villages.

**08.07.2024: Tenure** - According to Economy Next, SL's Supreme Court has dismissed the petition to limit the President's tenure. The court was presided over by SL's Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya. R. Wickremesinghe ruled in favour of holding the presidential elections in 2024 and dismissed the above-mentioned petition before SL's Supreme Court seeking a ruling that the presidential term was 06 years.

**08.07.2024: Public transportation** - According to Economy Next, SL's public transportation will be converted to an electronic ticketing system by the end of this year. This should prevent the theft of revenue by bus conductors. The amount

they take home is LKR 10 million a day or 100 lakhs, which adds up to LKR 3 billion a year.

**08.07.2024: Tenure** - According to Economy Next, SL is in the process of amending its Telecommunications Regulatory Code (TRC) to allow the Starlink satellite system founded by billionaire SpaceX and Tesla chief. However, SL's TRC Act does not provide for third parties to be licensed to operate telecommunication services. However, amendments have been made and will be tabled in Parliament to allow the TRC to grant Starlink a license as a telecommunication service provider.

**09.07.2024: Swearing in** - According to Economy Next, Shanmugam Kugathan of the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK) was sworn in as a Member of Parliament, filling the seat left vacant by the demise of former opposition leader R. Sampanthan. The new MP, who represents the Trincomalee district, was the chairman of the Tamil National Alliance, whose main party is the ITAK. He has been a member of the Illankai

Tamil Arasu Kadchi Party since 1975 and has worked as the party's district leader in Trincomalee since 2018. He has also worked as the Eastern Province Development Affairs Coordinator in the Ministry of National Policy, Economic Affairs and Resettlement.

**10.07.2024: Telecommunications Act** - According to Economy Next, SL's parliament has passed an amendment to the Telecommunications Act that will allow Elon Musk's Starlink to be licensed, according to Technology Minister Kanaka Herath. Starlink has applied for a license for March 2024, but SL did not have the necessary legal framework to allow such independent service providers to operate in SL, SL Minister Herath said. The new law will also provide a framework for the licensing and regulation of cable landing stations.

**10.07.2024: Land Leases** - According to Economy Next, SL's cabinet has decided to expedite the drafting of "necessary legislation to cancel land leases with the government" by privatized plantations

that do not pay the wages prescribed by the SL state. SL had prescribed a daily wage of LKR 1,700 rupees for plantation workers, which companies say undermines productivity-based wages and will raise labour costs above the levels of India and other countries and lead to lower future investment.

**11.07.2024: Coconut Water** - According to Economy Next, Hayleys Nature Nest (PVT) Ltd, a newly formed subsidiary of Hayleys Plc, has signed an agreement with the Board of Investment (BoI) of SL to produce frozen concentrated coconut water for the export market. SL is the fourth largest exporter of coconut products in the world, according to SL's Export Development Board.

**11.07.2024: COPF** - According to Economy Next, the Committee on Public Finance (COPF) has passed SL's Public Financial Management Bill, which will replace the Financial Management (Responsibility) Bill. The bill had set a 13 % ceiling on primary expenditure (expenditure before

interest) to improve fiscal discipline in the future.

12.07.2024: **Duty-free** - According to Economy Next, a third international duty-free operator has set its eyes on SL's Colombo port city after the Cabinet gave approval to 02 operators to set up shop in the special economic zone. China Duty Free and One World Duty Free were given the status of companies of secondary strategic importance by SL's Cabinet of Ministers.

12.07.2024: **Visa** - According to Economy Next, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee has recommended that the controversial Visa deal between GBS, IVS and VFS Global be scrapped or revised and that the awarding of the deal be forensically reviewed without competitive tendering. The consortium was awarded the contract without competitive tendering, preventing SL's Department of Immigration and Emigration from getting the best value for money.

12.07.2024: **Appointment** - According to Economy

Next, R. Wickremesinghe has appointed K A Parinda Ranasinghe PC as Attorney General. Ranasinghe is the 49th Attorney General of SL.

14.07.2024: **Plantation** - According to Economy Next, SL's cabinet has approved the drafting of a law to create village communities in areas where mainly descendants of former plantation workers live. A new law is expected to be introduced that will consolidate the existing settlement houses and spaces in the settlement areas and create villages for them.

15.07.2024: **Land allocation** - According to Economy Next, a court order 20 years ago prevented the allocation of property rights under the "Urumaya" program in SL. The government had attempted in 2002 and 2003 to provide land ownership to the affected people who were resettled for the construction of the Kotmale and Theldeniya reservoirs. Wickremesinghe stated that SL's Supreme Court ruled that a referendum was necessary to pass a law to that effect. Wickremesinghe had introduced a bill, but the court ruling stopped the

attempt.

16.07.2024: **Ginger** - According to Economy Next, SL customs will release 50 tonnes of confiscated ginger for the production of Ayurvedic medicine to address a current shortage. SL Cabinet Spokesperson Minister Bandula Gunawardena stated that seven medicines were in short supply as medicinal ginger, which is required for 87 % of SL Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation medicines, is in short supply.

16.07.2024: **Students** - According to Economy Next, SL's Cabinet has approved a policy to admit foreign students to 26 public and private universities based on internationally recognized minimum qualifications. Cabinet spokesperson Bandula Gunawardena explained that the minimum qualification for university admission, which is recognised by 193 UN member countries, will serve as the benchmark. Exceptional cases will be assessed according to the British NARIC standards.

16.07.2024: **Newspaper Article Competition** -

According to Economy Next, SL's government is launching an island-wide newspaper article competition to promote youth awareness and engagement in public financial management and economic transformation.

Students are to submit articles on the topic "My country evolves through formal public financial management and sustainable economic transformation by 2048".

16.07.2024: **Land** - According to Economy Next, an 8-acre plot of land in Vedamulla, Kelaniya, will be given to H M K Property Developers (Pvt) Ltd for a residential project approved by the Board of Investment. The Cabinet approved the transfer of a portion of the 8 acres 2 rood 16.26 perches land based on the current valuation by the Chief Assessor of the Government. Originally a 12 acre plot was to be provided but due to non-fulfillment of relevant agreements by H M K Property Developers, it was not released.

18.07.2024: **Loans** - According to Economy Next, 02 SL banks have agreed to provide loans to the settler community

for the construction of houses once they obtain land ownership. These loans will also be used for their children's education and other purposes. Thondaman emphasized that only 8 % of families in the plantation sector own homes, compared to the national average of 86 %.

18.07.2024: **Brain drain** - According to Economy Next, the SL Human Capital Summit 2024 was held on 18.07.2024 at Temple Trees in Colombo to tackle the brain drain that threatens the country's economic growth. Speakers included former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and former President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed. The forum, themed "Unlocking SL's Economic Potential by Building a Sustainable Global Talent Pool", brought together government officials, business leaders, educators and industry experts to explore strategies to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce.

18.07.2024: **Enterprises** - According to Economy Next, SL has announced a financial aid package of LKR 13

billion to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). R. Wickremesinghe stated that the program will be implemented before the local government elections and will include investment and working capital facilities. Loans will be provided at a concessional interest rate of 7 % for a period of 10 years and with a maximum limit of LKR 15 million.

19.07.2024: **SriLankan Airlines** - According to Economy Next, SL Cabinet of Ministers has cancelled the sale process of SriLankan Airlines. The government now plans to pursue an alternative strategy to divest the airline, which is expected to be finalised soon.

19.07.2024: **Term of office** - According to Economy Next, SL has published a draft law to amend Article 83 of the SL Constitution, which concerns the term of office of SL's President. The proposal is to change the term of office from the current six years to five years. This corrects a discrepancy in the constitution, as Article 83 mentions a six-year term, while other parts of the

constitution specify a five-year term.

#### 22.07.2024: **Aswesuma**

- According to Economy Next, more than 135,000 beneficiaries of the Aswesuma poverty alleviation program in SL are unable to receive their monthly cash because they do not have bank accounts. Although the government has recognized 1.8 million households as beneficiaries, about 200,000 of them are missing benefits. Disbursements are made exclusively through formal banking channels to prevent corruption.

#### 23.07.2024: **WindForce**

- According to Economy Next, SL's WindForce Plc has commissioned a 389 kWp solar power project in Zanzibar. The off-grid project includes engineering, procurement, installation, testing and commissioning and was completed on 15.07.2024 despite delays in customer-side infrastructure development.

#### 23.07.2024: **Divorce**

- According to Economy Next, SL has drafted a bill to allow no-fault divorces. The draft stipulates that

summonses can also be served electronically via email and Whatsapp. So

far, the Marriage Registration Ordinance only allows divorces in cases of adultery, malicious desertion or incurable impotence.

23.07.2024: **Muslims** - According to Economy Next, SL's Cabinet of Ministers has approved a proposal to apologise for the grief caused to the Muslim community by the cremation of bodies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This measure comes ahead of the presidential elections where Muslim votes could be decisive. The decision of the previous government under G. Rajapaksa to forcibly cremate bodies of Covid-19 victims caused considerable tension, especially with Muslim countries Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

#### Muslims

Source: Economy



#### 24.07.2024: **Corruption agenda**

- According to Economy Next, SL has adopted a national anti-corruption agenda that also incorporates the findings of a technical report by the IMF. Planned measures include revising the Anti-Bribery Act in line with the UN Convention against Corruption and the Financial Action Task Force, developing an anti-corruption plan for 2025-2029, amending the National Audit Act, and taking action against money laundering and the proceeds of crime.

#### 25.07.2024: **Coconuts**

- According to Economy Next, toque monkeys and giant squirrels destroy around 200 million coconuts annually. A planned export of 100,000 toque

monkeys to China has been halted due to animal welfare concerns. While the export of wild animals is generally prohibited, certain species such as monkeys have been removed from the protected list to help farmers. To control the monkey population, the University of Peradeniya is testing IUDs.

#### 25.07.2024: **Election Commission** -

According to Economy Next, SL's Election Commission will publish an extraordinary gazette notification on July 26, 2024 to announce the date for the presidential election and the nomination date. The Chairman of the Elections Commission, R M A L Rathnayake, stated that this will be done in accordance with the Presidential Elections Act No. 15 of 1981.

25.07.2024: **Visa deal** - According to Economy Next, SL's opposition MPs have petitioned the Supreme Court against a visa deal that was awarded to the private consortium IVS-GBS and VFS Global without competitive bidding. MPs Patali Ranawaka, M. A. Sumanthiran and Rauf Hakeem accuse the government of cheating

in the deal. The Public Accounts Committee is calling for the deal to be canceled or amended as the new visa website is expensive and difficult to navigate.

#### 25.07.2024: **Financial Management** -

According to Economy Next, the SL Parliament has passed the Public Financial Management Act and the Economic Transformation Act. These laws will help ensure a sustainable economy and avoid another crisis. Both laws were passed without a vote after amendments were incorporated at the committee stage.

#### 26.07.2024: **Presidential Elections** -

According to Economy Next, SL's Elections Commission has set the date for the Presidential Elections for 21.09.2024. Nominations will commence on 15.08.2024, in line with the constitutional requirement that the election must be held not less than one month and not more than two months before the end of the incumbent president's term.

#### 26.07.2024: **Elections** -

According to Economy Next, 04 candidates have deposited their

cash deposits for the presidential elections in SL, which will be held on 21.09.2024. The depositors include former Deputy Minister Sarath Keerthirathne, R. Wickremesinghe, activist Oshala Herath and businessman A S P Liyanage, who is running for the SL Workers' Party. The other candidates are running as independents.

#### 26.07.2024: **ITAK** -

According to Economy Next, the Ilankai Thamil Arasuk Katchi (ITAK), SL's main Tamil party, will not field its own candidate for the presidential election on 25.09.2024. Instead, ITAK will support a candidate who can present a manifesto that offers a solution for devolution of power, among other things. The party, which has influence in SL's Tamil-dominated north and east, is currently in talks with opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayaka and possibly R. Wickremesinghe.



01.07.2024: **Projects** - According to Economy Next, SL has appointed a committee to renegotiate all canceled projects with bilateral loans following last week's debt rescheduling agreement. A number of infrastructure projects that were started with bilateral loans before Sri Lanka declared bankruptcy in April 2022 have been suspended.

07.07.2024: **Restructuring** - According to Economy Next, SL is working with local banks to restructure its government bonds. SL has now reached final or in-principle agreements with most of the debt, with domestic rupee debt finalized, bilateral debt also finalized and the latest agreement with foreign investors holding government bonds. However, about 15% of outstanding government bonds are held by private local banks who have their own advisors.

19.07.2024: **Prices** - According to Economy Next, SL's government will be forced to reintroduce price controls on some

essential commodities as most traders have failed to reduce their prices in line with the government's cost cuts on fuel, energy, gas and transportation. The plan is now being considered after the island nation gradually reduced electricity costs by an average of 22.5 percent and cooking gas and fuel prices over the past two months.

23.07.2024: **Interest Relief** - According to Economy Next, SL is introducing a scheme to grant interest relief to individuals who pledged gold with licensed commercial banks during the economic crisis. The Cabinet approved the President's proposal to grant interest relief of up to 10 percent per annum for pledge loans below 100,000 rupees taken up to June 30, 2024.

25.07.2024: **Treasury bills** - According to Economy Next, the Central Bank will run out of SL's Treasury bills in the coming months as only a small amount of them remain on its balance sheet. Instead, the central bank plans to use alternative methods for its domestic operations.

28.07.2024: **Lending** - Private lending in Sri Lanka has increased by 146 billion rupees in the first half of 2024. Lending to the government has slowed but continues to outpace private lending. Commercial bank credit to the government increased by 354 billion rupees in the six months to June 2024, compared to 1,043 billion rupees a year earlier, partly due to a 517 billion rupee restructuring of state enterprise debt. Government and SOE debt increased by 293 billion rupees in the first half of 2024, compared to 405 billion rupees last year. Loans to state-owned enterprises fell by 60 billion rupees in the first six months. In the 12 months to June, private lending increased by 432 billion rupees. From June 2022 to May 2023, private credit contracted by 733 billion rupees.



# ***St. Election***

***SL's Presidential Committee of experts recommended an iconic building as a repository of artistic and cultural expressions produced by all parties to the war, despite the concerns of Tamil families of the disappeared in what the memorialisation of the dead represents for the unknown and missing, reports Lanka Files.***

09.07.2024: **Mass Grave**

- A section of the Mullaitivu-Kokkilai highway near the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave site was excavated. Human rights officer for OHCHR in UNSL Ludyana Shelrine Ahilan visited the site on 10.07.2024.

10.07.2024: **Mass Grave**

- Forensic archaeologist Professor Raj Somadeva identified the bodies found in the Kokkuthoduvai mass grave site as from the 1990s.

11.07.2024:

**Commemoration** - A memorial was held at Jaffna's Navaly St Peter's Catholic church in memory of over 150 displaced Tamils.

12.07.2024: **Strike** -

According to Economy Next, SL's State Transport Minister Lasantha Alagiyawanna sees privatization of the railroads as a permanent solution to avoid inconvenience to the public due to strikes by railroad employees. The union of station masters went on strike earlier this week to demand the filling of some vacant posts and the resolution of other administrative issues. Hundreds of scheduled train trips were

anceled Wednesday because of the strike.

12.07.2024: **Protest** -

Tamil cattle farmers continued to protest against their loss of livelihood in the occupied Eastern province. Their peaceful protest has exceeded 300 days of demanding the removal of settlers who have illegally occupied the grazing lands of their animals.

16.07.2024: **Mass Grave**

- The Kokkuthoduvai mass grave excavations have concluded with the recovery of approximately 52 skeletons of LTTE cadres potentially killed in gunfire.

17.07.2024: **Protest** -

The 2,700th consecutive day of protest by relatives of forcibly disappeared Tamils was marked as the longest ongoing protest in SL.

23.07.2024:

**Commemoration** - The 41st commemoration of the 1983 Black July pogroms were conducted across the Tamil homeland. According to Lanka Files, a commemorative vigil was arranged in Jaffna by TNPF.

24.07.2024: **Protest** -

According to Lanka Files, the Association of Relatives of Enforcible Disappearances (ARED) staged a protest opposite Kilinochchi Kandasamy Kovil, to raise awareness regarding their forcibly disappeared relatives. Kokilavani Kathirgamanathan mentioned that, "we are appealing to the international community because we haven't received any response from the Sri Lankan government. Delivering justice to victims is the responsibility of [the] international community."

# PHOENIX snapshot



**02.07.24: Switzerland ,  
Maveerar Cup, runner up**

## Upcoming Events

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Sunday, 11.08.2024   | Tamil Eelam Cup, Winterthur, Switzerland<br><br>SC Phoenix is participating in the U21 Category |
| Saturday, 24.08.2024 | 10 Years Phoenix Event, Wichtrach, Switzerland  |
| Sunday, 15.09.2024   | HFT Event<br><br>infos will follow  |
| Thursday, 26.09.2024 | HFT<br><br>infos will follow  |





**AKKINIP PARAVAIKAL**

*This service is provided by:*

Akkinip Paravaikal Newsletter

Overseen by Puradsi Media  
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Facebook page created: 29.02.2016  
Puradsi Media's first article: 04.01.2017