

August 2024

ISSUE 61

# PHOENIX

## Monthly Newsletter

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**Akkinip Parabaikal**

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*Despite the many obstacles faced during their migration journey, Tamil immigrants remain resolute, still fighting passionately for their rights and the survival of their homeland.*

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; Resistance</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Domestic</b>	<b>07-09</b>		

# International News

0101.08.2024: **SEZ** - According to Economy Next, around 300 companies have applied to set up in SL's Colombo Port City Special Economic Zone (SEZ), of which around 50 applications are being processed. Thus far, around 20 companies have been approved by the SL Cabinet. The Colombo Port City Commission classifies major investments as primary businesses of strategic importance and others as secondary.

05.08.2024: **Bangladesh** - According to Economy Next, over 90 individuals were killed in Bangladesh over the weekend as protests - initially commenced as a students' movement, spread across their country. The cause was a lack of foreign currency and devaluation under an IMF deal. The clashes



left 13 policemen and 06 Awami League members dead.

15.08.2024: **LTTE** - According to Economy Next, the SL government has welcomed Canada's decision to continue to list the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the World Tamil Movement (WTM) as terrorist organisations. Canada first listed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in 2006 and, following a review in June 2024, confirmed that the group continues to have international networks for financing and procurement. The WTM is classified as an organisation that supports these LTTE activities through fundraising.

15.08.2024: **Compensation** - Himalee Subashini Arunatilaka - the current Ambassador & Permanent

Representative of SL to the UN in Geneva has been ordered by the Australian Federal Court to pay AUD 543,000. The payment had been ordered as compensation for unpaid wages and interest to a domestic worker who served her when she served as the deputy high commissioner to Australia. These complaints were disputed by SL's Foreign Ministry, reports Lanka Files.

17.08.2024: **Indigenous** - In marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, it has been reported that the first settlers of the occupied East coast of the Tamil homeland are facing hardships due to oppression by the majority community in the area. According to Lanka Files, this includes land encroachment of farming and residential land by private companies and individuals.

LTTE  
Source: EconomyNext

# Bilateral

**02.08.2024: China -** According to Economy Next, China has pledged to support the SL military in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to Chinese Ambassador Qi Zhenhong. This support includes continuous military training and the provision of equipment worth over LKR 08 billion. Zhenhong emphasised the long-standing relationship between their 02-armed forces and China's commitment to SL's defence capabilities. SL's Defense Minister General K. Gunaratne acknowledged China's assistance, which is provided without "external interference", as a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship.

**02.08.2024: SLIIP -** According to Economy Next, SL's Industry Development Board (IDB) has launched the Sri Lanka Institute of Industry Professionals (SLIIP) to provide an active platform to address industry related issues. The SLIIP is operated under SL's Ministry of Industry and aims to enhance the knowledge, experience and skills of

professionals in the sector to strengthen the industry. SL's Minister of Industry, Dr. Ramesh Pathirana, emphasised the importance of industrialisation for SL's economic development. SLIIP aims to promote communication among professionals, serve as a platform for problem solving and provide training programs.

## **02.08.2024: Crisis management -**

According to Economy Next, the air forces of SL, the Maldives and the US will conduct joint exercises to improve disaster relief - the US Embassy in Colombo announced. The 'Atlas Angel' exercise, which will take place between 05.08.2024-09.08.2024, will involve more than 70 US personnel and 02 C-130 Hercules aircraft training alongside their SL and Maldivian counterparts. The exercises include urban and medical search and rescue missions and airfield repair, culminating in a crisis management simulation on 09.08.2024.

**02.08.2024: India -** According to Economy Next, the Indian airline IndiGo will commence daily non-stop flights between Chennai and Jaffna from 01.09.2024.

This will be IndiGo's second destination in SL after Colombo and the 34th international destination in the airline's 6E network. This new connection is expected to further strengthen cultural and trade ties between India and SL. India is the main source market for tourists to SL, with 214,910 Indian tourists between 01.01.2024-21.07.2024.

**03.08.2024: Romania -** According to Economy Next, SL plans to create more job opportunities for SLs in Romania, despite concerns about misleading job agencies. There are already 40,000 SLs in Romania, but there are reports that some workers are being misled by agencies and not getting the jobs they were promised despite paying high fees. Sabry emphasised the importance of going to Romania with work visas and contracts rather than visit visas.

**06.08.2024: Indonesia -** According to Economy Next, SL plans to sign a preferential trade agreement with Indonesia in March 2025 to boost SL's export potential, cabinet spokesman Bandula Gunawardana said.

Negotiators from both countries had met in Colombo on 15.07.2024 and 16.07.2024 and agreed to conclude talks by December 2024. SL has already signed FTAs with Thailand and Singapore that will gradually liberalise trade over several years.

**07.08.2024: New Zealand** - According to Economy Next, SL and New Zealand have discussed strengthening their bilateral relations in the areas of trade, education, dairy industry and sports. New Zealand High Commissioner David Pine emphasised the importance of SL positioning itself in the international market under a unified brand.

**08.08.2024: Thailand** - SL's Dipped Products PLC has received board approval to purchase a rubber glove factory in Thailand for USD 11 million, reports Economy Next. The acquisition will be made by Dipped Products (Thailand) Ltd following due diligence. The company already operates a factory in Thailand and has recently opened a marketing office in Mumbai to strengthen its presence in India.

**13.08.2024: Malaysia** - According to Economy Next, 05 Malaysian universities have arrived in SL to promote their courses and target students from SL for degrees and higher education qualifications. SL is among the top 10 countries with the most applications to study in Malaysia, reflecting the growing interest of students. Malaysian universities offer degree courses in fields such as medicine, engineering, information technology and science, and an education fair has been organised to showcase these opportunities in cities such as Negombo, Colombo and Kandy.

**14.08.2024: Egypt** - According to Economy Next, SL and Egypt have signed an agreement to strengthen diplomatic cooperation and exchanges in various fields, including trade and investment. The foreign ministers of both countries also discussed expanding bilateral relations in areas such as tourism, renewable energy and education. They also discussed ways to promote trade and investment between the 02 countries, particularly in the areas of agriculture, IT and textiles.

**15.08.2024: Myanmar** - According to Economy Next, SL has organised the release of 20 SLs who were victims of a human trafficking scheme in Myanmar. SL's embassies in Yangon and Bangkok worked together to secure their safe release and they are now in Mae Sot, Thailand. These individuals were originally lured to Myanmar on tourist visas to seek work and fell into the clutches of cyber criminals. The SL government is now coordinating their repatriation and warns the public to be cautious when seeking employment opportunities abroad to avoid becoming victims of human trafficking.

**20.08.2024: US** - According to Economy Next, Jennifer Littlejohn, the Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, will visit SL from 19.08.2024-21.08.2024. During her visit, she will meet with officials and partners, explore US-supported conservation projects, and discuss opportunities for collaboration between SL and US experts in the fields of hydrography, climate change and



biodiversity. Topics to be discussed include wildlife and marine conservation, plastic and air pollution, the climate crisis, deforestation, wildlife crime and empowering women and girls in STEM subjects. After her stay in Colombo, Littlejohn will travel on to India and the Maldives.

**US** - The United States Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Jennifer R. Littlejohn met SL's Premitha Bandara Tennakoon at his office in Colombo to discuss support for the hydrography service in SL.

**20.08.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, SL's LTL Holdings and Indian company Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop LNG infrastructure and supply LNG in SL - their Ministry of Energy and Power announced. This MOU marks a crucial step towards cleaner and more sustainable power generation in SL. It includes the joint development of the

necessary infrastructure and LNG supply for the Sobadhanavi power plant in Kerawalapitiya, which will be commissioned soon. The project is an interim solution to the introduction of LNG in SL, whereby the LNG will be imported through the Colombo port and used for power generation.

**21.08.2024: India** - According to Economy Next, Petronet LNG will supply LNG to the Sobadanavi power plant in SL for 05 years. The gas will be transported by ship from the Kochin terminal in India to Colombo, where it will be stored, regasified and piped to the power plant. The agreement can be extended by mutual agreement.

**21.08.2024: China** - According to Economy Next, 09 SL banks, including the Commercial Bank of Ceylon and the Bank of China, have expressed interest in opening branches in the Colombo Port City SEZ, according to the Chief Operating Officer of the Colombo Port City Economic Commission, Revan Wikramasuriya. The banks are regulated by the Central Bank of SL and will serve

offshore clients and companies operating in the Port City. The Colombo Port City is a dollarised special economic zone that is independent of central bank liquidity instruments and therefore remains free from currency crises.

**22.08.2024: Visas** - According to Economy Next, SL will grant visa-free entry for tourists from 35 countries from 01.10.2024. This measure, which has been approved by SL Cabinet, is intended to support the tourism sector while the country recovers from a currency crisis. The countries with visa-free entry include the UK, Germany, the US, China, India and Australia.

**22.08.2024: Japan** - According to Economy Next, Japan and UNFPA SL have donated 278 computers to SL's Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to improve support for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). These computers will enable staff in the SL-wide women's units to regularly update the upcoming GBV reference service database system, which should enable faster and more effective support

for those affected. The system is expected to improve coordination, response times and the overall effectiveness of GBV-interventions in SL.

**22.08.2024: Fuel** - According to Economy Next, United Petroleum from Australia has started operations in SL and will sell fuel from September 2024 with 150 service stations. It is the 04th international player in SL, after LIOC, Sinopec and RM Parks-Shell, and is expected to help ease pressure on the state-owned CPC. The GoSL has ordered foreign companies to finance their imports in foreign currency and banned the repatriation of foreign currency from SL.

**23.08.2024: Palestine** - According to Economy Next, SL Prime Minister D. Gunawardena assured Palestinian Ambassador Zuhair M H Zaid that SL will continue to support the rights of the Palestinian people. He stated this during a farewell visit by the Ambassador on 22.08.2024. Gunawardena was also briefed on the current situation in Palestine.

**23.08.2024: South Korea** - According to Economy Next, a South

Korean entrepreneur, Tong-Jo Mun, has expressed his interest to invest in SL's energy and agriculture sectors during a meeting with D. Gunawardena in Colombo. Mun, President of the International Interchange Development Association, plans to invest in solar energy projects and the cultivation of fruit for export. They also discussed possible investments in the fisheries, health and construction sectors to improve production through new technologies.

**24.08.2024: Diplomats** - According to Economy Next, SL's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry, who is also SL's Justice Minister, briefed diplomats in Colombo on recent developments in SL, including progress in the areas of reconciliation, legal reforms and the strengthening of national institutions. Sabry emphasised the efforts to establish a Truth, Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the progress made in counter-terrorism legislation. SL Central Bank Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe reported

on the SL's economic recovery and thanked the international community for its support.

**26.08.2024: Central Asia Forum** - According to Economy Next, SL is seeking stronger relations with Central Asian countries, focusing on economic diplomacy, SL's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. At the Central Asia Forum 2024, the potential for future cooperation in areas such as trade, tourism, environment and sports was discussed, highlighting the success story of SL company LOLC in the region. Sri Lanka is also planning to establish diplomatic missions in Astana, Kazakhstan, and Colombo to further deepen cooperation.

**28.08.2024: South Korea** - According to Economy Next, South Korea is showing interest in investing in SL's renewable energy sector and in graphite, which is important for South Korea's semiconductor, battery and automotive industries. At a recent discussion in Colombo, Kyungjin Song of the Asia Foundation Korea emphasised the opportunities in these

areas, while Korean Ambassador Miyon Lee highlighted the importance of protecting intellectual property and promoting innovation for economic transformation. Both countries are currently exploring closer cooperation, including a possible trade agreement.

30.08.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met with R. vWickremesinghe in Colombo on 29.08.2024. The meeting, which was also attended by Security Advisor Sagala Ratnayake, was held to discuss the ongoing economic cooperation between the 02 countries. No further details were disclosed. The upcoming presidential election in SL is scheduled for 21.09.2024. Reports of an alleged Indian diplomatic report predicting an election for Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the National People's Power (NPP) have been dismissed by the Indian High Commission.

**Fuel**  
Source: EconomyNext



**China**  
Source: EconomyNext



**Visas**  
Source: EconomyNext





# Military News

**03.08.2024: India -** According to Economy Next, India's submarine INS Shalki, a diesel-electric submarine, visited the port of Colombo in SL from 02.08.2024-04.08.2024 to replenish fuel and supplies. During this stay, the crew members will have the opportunity to visit places of interest in SL. Their Commander will meet SL's Rear Admiral WDCU Kumarasinghe and 50 SL Navy personnel will visit the submarine. Earlier visits of Indian submarines to Colombo took place in February 2024 and June 2023.

**12.08.2024: Navy -** According to Economy Next, the SL Navy will participate with the Australian military in Indo-Pacific Endeavour (IPE) activities, starting with a maritime law workshop focusing on maritime surveillance and involving members of the SL Air Force Maritime Squadron. This cooperation aims to deepen defence ties and combat regional security issues such as drug smuggling and illegal fishing, as part of Australia's efforts to

strengthen diplomatic and defence partnerships in Southeast Asia and the northeast Indian Ocean.

**15.08.2024: Australia -** According to Economy Next, the Australian Border Force has donated 03 all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to the SL Coast Guard (SLCG) to strengthen its coastal patrols on land. These vehicles, which will be deployed in Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee, are equipped with drones to monitor illegal activities in coastal areas. The ATVs are part of a package of measures announced by Australia in 2023 to strengthen cooperation with SL in the fight against maritime threats such as smuggling and maritime crime.

**20.08.2024: US warship -** According to Economy Next, a US warship, the USS Spruance, called at the port of Colombo in SL on 19.08.24 for a resupply visit and will leave again on 20.08.24 the SL Navy said. The Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, of which the USS Spruance is a part, are 160 metres long and can perform various

missions including anti-submarine warfare, air defence and surface warfare. The ship is operated by 338 crew members under the command of Commander Thomas Adams.

**21.08.2024: US -** According to Economy Next, US warship USS O'Kane, a 154-metre Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, called at the port of Colombo on 21.08.2024 for a resupply visit and will depart again on 22.08.2024, the SL Navy announced. The ship follows the USS Spruance, which visited Colombo on 19.08.2024. The Arleigh Burke destroyers are versatile warships that can be used for anti-submarine warfare, air defence and surface warfare, among other things. The US is reportedly moving more military equipment to the region due to the tense situation in the Middle East/West Asia.

## WHAM

28.08.2024: **WHAM** - According to Defence LK, the occupational SL army opened the CIMIC Park Kilinochchi on 25.08.2024 to support the local community. Additionally, 03 houses built by the occupational forces were given to local families in Dharmapuram, Evenai and Kondavil.

28.08.2024: **WHAM** - 'AERO BASH 2024,' a 05-day event organised by the SL Air Force Academy at China Bay, concluded on 26.08.2024. This included various demonstrations and activities aimed at engaging the Trincomalee community, especially the youth.

28.08.2024: **WHAM** - The occupational SL Navy rescued 02 Indian fishermen from a capsized vessel near Kachchativu Island, following a search operation initiated after 01 fisherman swam ashore. The SL Navy is continuing its search for the remaining 02 fishermen, while the rescued individuals are in good health and will be handed over to Indian authorities.

# Domestic News

## Tamil Eelam

02.08.2024: **Water Supply** - According to Economy Next, the Thalaiyadi Desalination Plant has been inaugurated in Jaffna to provide drinking water to over 300,000 people in 186 Grama Niladari Divisions. The project, part of the Jaffna-Kilinochchi Water Supply Project (JKWSSP), was financed with USD 266 million from the ADB and the SL government. The project began in 2011 with support from the ADB and the French Development Bank (AFD) and was awarded to Suez International of

France in 2017. It includes the construction of 20 elevated water tanks, 186 km of water transmission lines and 382 km of water distribution lines and is expected to be fully completed by mid-2025.

02.08.2024: **River for Jaffna** - According to Economy Next, SL is planning to implement the long-term "River for Jaffna" project to combat water scarcity in the occupied North of the occupied Tamil homeland. This was announced at the opening of the

Thalaiyadi desalination plant. Wickremesinghe explained that in addition to the plant, the Paliaru Reservoir project will also commence to improve the water supply in the Pooneryn area. The 'River for Jaffna' project, originally proposed by Engineer Arumugam in 1954, aims to completely solve the water problem in Jaffna and re-green the Vadamarachchi area.

**08.08.2024: TPA -** According to Economy Next, the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA), a major Tamil political coalition in SL, is supporting SL opposition leader Sajith Premadasa in the 21.09.2024 SL presidential election. As part of an agreement, they are demanding that 'Indian origin' be removed as a designation for Tamils in the highlands to reinforce their identity as SLs. The TPA's alleged support for Premadasa comes with conditions, including improvements in housing, education and land ownership for their community.

**13.08.2024: University** - According to Economy Next, SL's state universities will sign MoU with leading international universities to improve the ranking of local universities and strengthen collaboration in higher education. The aim of these partnerships is to promote research, the exchange of students and academic staff and the development of joint educational programs.

The agreements include collaborations between:

- University of Peradeniya and University of Illinois
- University of Jaffna and Oxford University
- University of Moratuwa and University of Maryland

**17.08.2024: Jaffna -** According to Economy Next, the passenger ferry service between Jaffna in SL and Nagapattinam in India resumed on 16.08.2024, with 50 passengers making the first trip. The ferry "Sivagangai" takes around 04 hours to complete the route and return tickets currently cost around LKR 35,000. India supports the service financially and subsidizes it with around LKR 25 million per month for one year.

India is also providing a grant of USD 63.5 million to modernise the port of Kankesanthurai in Jaffna.

**22.08.2024: Trincomalee -** According to Economy Next, SL is planning to set up a new logistics hub in Trincomalee's Kappalthurai that will focus on heavy industries and attract investments of up to USD 1.5 billion. The 600-hectare investment zone will combine sea, air and rail transportation and will be the country's second major logistics hub after Hambantota. The project is seen as particularly attractive to international investors, and the government emphasises that all investors should be treated equally to avoid geopolitical conflicts.

**Trincomalee**  
Source: EconomyNext



# Sri Lanka

**02.08.2024: IVS-GBS -** According to Economy Next, SL's Supreme Court has temporarily suspended the contract with the private consortium IVS-GBS and VFS Global for the issuance of visas. This follows 08 fundamental rights complaints filed against the award of the deal without a competitive tender process. The suits, including from Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL), opposition SL MPs and others, argued that there were procedural violations and abuse of public trust in the award of the contract. The Court barred the government from taking any further action on the contract for the time being and called for a review of the procurement process.

**03.08.2024: Visas -** According to Economy Next, SL has closed the electronic visa application site of VFS Global, IVS and GBS following a court order suspending the contract awarded without tender. Instead, arriving tourists will continue to

be issued physical visas at the airport. SL's Supreme Court ordered the restoration of the previous state of affairs before 18.04.2024, when the site was operated by domestic company Mobitel. Mobitel charged a fee of one dollar, while VFS Global charged different prices ranging from 10-18.5 dollars depending on the visa category.

**06.08.2024: Election Laws -** According to Economy Next, 99 complaints of violations of election laws have been filed in SL so far. Between 31.07.2024-05.08.2024, SL's National Election Complaints Management Center received 68 complaints, while SL's District Election Complaints Offices also registered 68 complaints during this period.

**09.08.2024: Corruption -** According to Economy Next, SL Finance Minister Ranjith Siyambalapitiya has opened a new internal investigation office at

the Customs Department to receive and investigate public complaints. This follows a recommendation by the IMF to combat corruption. Similar units are also to be set up at SL's Inland Revenue and Excise Agency to monitor the integrity of officials and take action if misconduct is suspected.

**12.08.2024: Appointment -** According to Economy Next, R. Wickremesinghe appointed SL Foreign Minister Ali Sabry as SL's new Minister of Justice on 12.08.2024 after the previous incumbent Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe resigned. Sabry takes over SL's Ministry of Justice, Prisons and Constitutional Reforms in addition to his current post as Foreign Minister. Rajapakshe resigned on 25.07.2024 to contest the upcoming SL presidential election on 21.09.2024 as the candidate of the National Democratic Front (NDF).



**14.08.2024: Anti-drug agency** - According to Economy Next, R. Wickremesinghe has proposed the creation of a new anti-drug agency that would combine SL police, military and civilian organisations into a single entity. This agency would take long-term action against drug-related activities and introduce specific legislation to control criminal networks. The opening of SL's Special Operations Command of the Special Task Force marks an important step in maintaining law and order in SL - especially in dealing with crisis situations.

**21.08.2024: Online Safety Act** - According to Economy Next, SL has published a draft bill to make amendments to the controversial *Online Safety Act*, which was passed in parliament despite opposition from civil society groups and the tech industry. The Act aims to monitor online discourse through an Online Safety Commission, which has wide-ranging powers. SL's new bill stipulates that the appointment of commissioners is subject to the approval of their Constitutional Council. Other amendments include limiting the scope to



**Appointment**  
Source: EconomyNext

offenses committed in SL and deleting Section 19, which had provided for a seven-year prison sentence for persons who spread false statements with the intention of causing disorder in the armed forces or endangering public order.

**21.08.2024: Mining projects** - According to Economy Next, SL is on the verge of completing 10 mining projects that have been stalled for years due to previous strict regulations. A new regulation allows companies to export raw materials without immediate value addition for up to 02 years, or 30 % of the deposits, before they have to set up a value addition facility. The change is intended to attract investment into the minerals sector, which has been held

back by corruption and impractical regulations.

**28.08.2024: Passport** - According to Economy Next, long queues have once again formed in SL, this time due to a shortage of passports caused by the government's transition to a new electronic passport system. SL Foreign Minister Ali Sabry apologised for the situation and acknowledged that the government could have planned the supply better. The shortage is expected to continue until 16.10.2024, when new passport books are due to arrive; both traditional and electronic passports are expected to be available by the end of October, 2024.

**01.08.2024: US -** According to Economy Next, the US Federal Reserve has kept interest rates on hold but noted that the unemployment rate is starting to rise. The committee is closely monitoring risks to both sides of its dual mandate, pointing to a possible rate cut. Despite solid economic growth, job growth has slowed and inflation remains slightly elevated, although it is approaching the 2 % target.

**05.08.2024: CIABOC -** According to Economy Next, at least 90 of SL's 225 MPs have not yet submitted their asset and debt declarations to the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Corruption (CIABOC) under the new Anti-Corruption Act. This law requires senior public officials, including SL's President and Prime Minister, to disclose their financial circumstances. So far, only 135 SL MPs, including their Prime Minister, Speaker and 13 SL cabinet ministers, have made their disclosures.

**06.08.2024: Stock Market -** According to Economy Next, US markets continued their

losses that started last week and Asian markets also fell, with Japan seeing the biggest drop with the Nikkei down 12.4 %. The Dow Jones fell 1,033 points (2.6 %), the S&P 500 lost 3 % and the Nasdaq Composite fell 3.43 %. European markets fell by around 2 %. This was caused by fears of rising unemployment and a shrinking money supply in the USA.

**07.08.2024: Import -** According to Economy Next, SL will gradually lift the ban on vehicle imports from 2025 as SL requires the revenue from tariffs, explained R. Wickremesinghe. The final decision on this is expected to be made in August 2024, with the import release depending on SL's foreign reserve and priorities.

**09.08.2024: ADB -** According to Economy Next, the ADB is working on a USD 100 million loan to support the tourism sector in SL, according to country director Takafumi Kadono. The loan includes USD 70 million dollars for budget support and USD 30 million dollars for specific projects. The ADB promotes sustainable tourism and

plans to support policy measures to make the sector more resilient to shocks and strengthen institutions. Other ADB loans for SL's economic recovery are also underway, including USD 100 million dollars for electricity reforms and planned loans for financial and water reforms.

**12.08.2024: Port -** According to Economy Next, a fire that broke out on the merchant vessel MSC CAPETOWN III at the Jaye Container Terminal of the Port of Colombo on 11.08.2024 at 00:30 was extinguished by the port's fire fighters, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) said. SL Shipping Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva has ordered an investigation into the incident after the fire was successfully extinguished. The Chairman of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, Keith Bernard, announced that a comprehensive report would be prepared and



that the insurers would also conduct their own investigations. The vessel was due to unload 995 containers and load 880 at the port.

**13.08.2024: Tariffs** - According to Economy Next, the SL government has agreed to reduce domestic water tariffs by up to 10 % based on a cost-reflective tariff formula, SL Minister Bandula Gunawardana announced. Low-income households will see a reduction of about 10 %, while other categories will receive a reduction of about 5.9-6.0 %. This reduction in tariffs is due to lower costs of electricity, fuel, chemicals and interest.

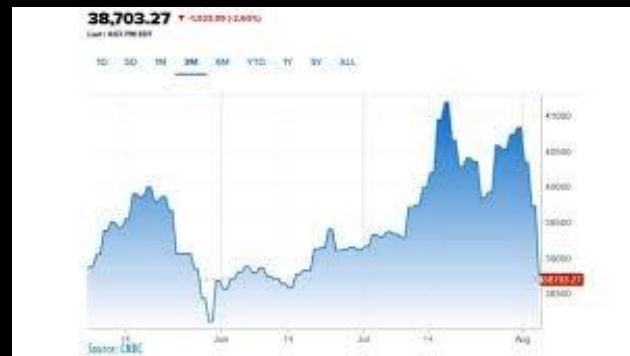
**16.08.2024: LKR** - According to Economy Next, the recent appreciation of the LKR is due to higher foreign exchange inflows compared to outflows, SL's central bank said. The LKR has appreciated in recent months and was trading at around LKR 300 per USD this week, compared to LKR 320 in January, 2024. However, SL central bank officials warned that depreciation was possible in the second half of 2024, especially if imports rise and inflows are insufficient.

**27.08.2024: IMF** - According to Economy Next, the SL cabinet has approved borrowing USD 200 million from the World Bank through a development policy loan. The loan is linked to reforms under an IMF program and is the second half of a USD 400 million package, the first part of which has already been completed. The approval to sign the loan agreement followed a proposal by R. Wickremesinghe in his capacity as SL Finance Minister.

**30.08.2024: EU** - According to Economy Next, the EU Election Observation Mission in SL has identified a notable change of focus in the upcoming SL presidential election on 21.09.2024. Chief Observer Nacho Sánchez Amor reported that the economic focus has become more prominent in the election campaign, in contrast to the usual communal rhetoric. The mission, consisting of 10 experts and 26 long-term observers, will monitor various aspects of the electoral process, including the work of the electoral

authorities and the role of the media and social networks. The EU emphasises the importance of this election for strengthening democratic institutions and expects it to be conducted in a peaceful, transparent and inclusive manner.

Stock  
Source: EconomyNext



ADB  
Source: EconomyNext

LKR  
Source: EconomyNext





# Intimidation

**Tamil activists fear for their lives due to intrusive questioning by SL state intelligence officers at Mullaitivu court premises when cases on disappearances of former cadres following their surrender to the genocidal SL military in 2009, reports Lanka Files.**



# Oppression & Resistance

07.08.2024: **Protest** - According to Lanka Files, residents of Navatkadu village continued their protest until SL's first agro voltaic solar power plant is shut down completely. According to reports they cited that the plant deprived them of their livelihood due to irreversible environmental damage.

08.08.2024: **SL Election** - Tamil national political parties, civil society activists and academics from the occupied Tamil homeland announced former Batticaloa MP Packiaselvam Ariyanethran as their collective Presidential candidate. According to reports the announcement was made by former SL MP and Attorney Nallathamby Srikantha in Jaffna, reports Lanka Files.

10.08.2024: **Commemoration** - According to Lanka Files, a memorial event was held at the Muththumari Amman kovil, in Thirayikerni of Amparai, over 50 Tamils massacred by SL state sponsored paramilitaries in 1990.

10.08.2024: **Media** - Journalists from the Tamil homeland decried

'discrimination' after being invited to Colombo and prevented from meeting R. Wickremesinghe to submit a letter demanding justice for murdered colleagues, while Sinhala journalists were permitted - further raising discontent, reports Lanka Files.

14.08.2024: **Mass Grave** - According to Lanka Files, the JMO's comprehensive reports regarding the Kokkuthoduvai Mass excavations which were concluded on 15.07.2024 are expected in six months.

14.08.2024: **Commemoration** - According to Lanka Files, the 18th memorial of the Sencholai massacre was held by relatives and locals.

20.08.2024: **Media** - Following interrogations by SL's terror police over his literary activity, Tamil writer T. Piratheepan submitted a letter to SL's top official in Kilinochchi (District Secretary S. Muralitharan), expressing concerns for his safety and freedom of expression. The letter had also been submitted to Amnesty International, UNESCO

and Sivagnanam Sritharan,

26.08.2024: **Protest** - According to Uthayan, a call for a protest on 30.08.2024 in Jaffna was announced during a press conference at the Jaffna Media Center by the Northern and Eastern Association of Relatives of the Disappeared, along with civil society representatives.

28.08.2024: **Candidacy** - Tamil candidate in SL's presidential election, Pakkiayaselvam Ariyanethiran commenced a campaign tour from Polikandy to Pottuvil in the return direction of the P2P march in 2021, reports Lanka Files. It is notable that he paid respects at the remains of Lt. Col. Thileepan's monument.

30.08.2024: **Arrest** - According to Lanka Files, occupational SL Police arrested Tamil activist Rajeev Kanth in relation to a protest led by the Association of the Relatives of Enforced Disappearances (ARED) at the Trincomalee beachfront. The arrest was made after the local court banned a rally to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.



# PHOENIX snapshot



11.08.2024: SC Phoenix at Tamar Cup in Winterthur, Switzerland.



24.08.2024: Phoenix 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event, Switzerland.

