



WESTERN AUSTRALIA – SRI LANKA (CEYLON) ASSOCIATION INC.



NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear WASLA Community

We're delighted to share some encouraging updates with you.

Our recent Senior Lunch was a wonderful success, welcoming over 200 attendees, including members and non-members. The energy, warmth, and positive feedback —from both attendees and external organisations & agencies highlighted WASLA's strength in delivering inclusive, well-organised community events. This success reflects the collective effort of our volunteers, committee members, supporters, sponsors, and attendees.



We are also pleased to report strong membership growth. When we commenced our term in late August 2024, WASLA had 63 active members. Today, that number has grown to 157, an encouraging reflection of renewed engagement, trust, and connection within our community.

While we celebrate this progress, we remain mindful that rebuilding is an ongoing journey. Past records show that many members became inactive in previous years, reminding us that our focus must remain on inclusion, connection, and relevance.

Looking ahead, we will continue to:

- Re-engage past members and welcome new ones
- Deliver inclusive programs for all age groups
- Strengthen partnerships with external organisations

Thank you for your continued support, trust, and participation. We look forward to rebuilding WASLA into a welcoming home for the Sri Lankan community in Western Australia.

Kind Regards
Anthony Nilantha De Silva
President

TREASURER'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026

Current Account Balance	\$14,419.44
Term Deposit	\$158,249.89



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Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026!

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to wish all our members a happy, healthy, and fulfilling year ahead! As we begin another exciting chapter for WASLA, we look forward to your continued support and participation in the events and activities we have planned.

Our association thrives when members get involved—so come along, bring your family and friends and join us in making 2026 a year of connection, laughter, and great memories together.

Regards
Sharifa
Editor

New Year Message from the Sri Lankan Hon. Prime Minister



As we move forward to the New Year of 2026, it is timely to reflect on the year 2025 that has passed. The year 2025 can be granted as a year having made a number of decisive and progressive steps with a people oriented government.

I am confident that, within a new political culture, we were able to strengthen transparency in state governance and lay the foundation for an efficient and corruption free public service. We can be satisfied with the progress achieved in several key areas during 2025, including economic stability, the increasingly positive and optimistic international perception towards our country, the establishment of transparent systems of governance, and the strengthening of the sovereignty of the legislation system.

However, the unfortunate disastrous situation we experienced towards the end of 2025 was a challenging period for our nation. While it deeply moved us all, the spirit of solidarity, compassion, and collectivity shown by Sri Lankans during that difficult situation received admiration across the world.

As we step into the New Year 2026, we hold commitment to overcoming those challenges, healing from the disaster, and restoring the lives and livelihoods that were affected. Moving forward with the goals such as initiating qualitative and sustainable transformation in the education sector, digitalizing all sectors of the public service, creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurs, artists, and creators with innovative ideas to rise on the global stage, and building a compassionate, environmentally friendly society free from drugs and harmful substances I would like to remind, at this moment, that the responsibility of rebuilding this nation rests upon the entire nation, together with the government, transcending differences of ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation, and united by a strong Sri Lankan identity.

Transforming all the challenges we experienced in the past year into sources of strength, I invite you to step into 2026 with renewed energy, hope, and determination.

I extend wishes for a victorious New Year filled with peace, happiness, and prosperity.

Dr. Harini Amarasuriya
Prime Minister





**WASLA
SINHALA AND TAMIL
NEW YEAR
LUNCH**

**SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2026
12PM TO 4PM**

**VICTORIA PARK BOWLING CLUB
18 KENT STREET, EAST VICTORIA PARK**

\$40 PER PERSON

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WASLA Seniors' Lunch

Our annual Seniors' Lunch was held on **Sunday 9 Noember 2025**, during Seniors' Week.

The event took place at the South Perth Civic Centre and was attended by 200 members and friends who enjoyed live music provided by the Oceanites and a sumptuous lunch catered by CK Black Catering. We thank all our supporters who donted prizes and sponsorship for the event.





WASLA February 2026



WASLA February 2026



WASLA February 2026



WASLA February 2026



WASLA February 2026



The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has reported that a total of 194,553 tourists have arrived in the country during the first 22 days of 2026.

According to the SLTDA, the highest number of arrivals in a single day was recorded on January 15, with 10,483 tourists arriving in the country that day.

During this period, India accounted for the largest number of arrivals, with 35,177 visitors, followed by Russia with 19,930, the United Kingdom with 19,893, and Germany with 12,822 visitors.

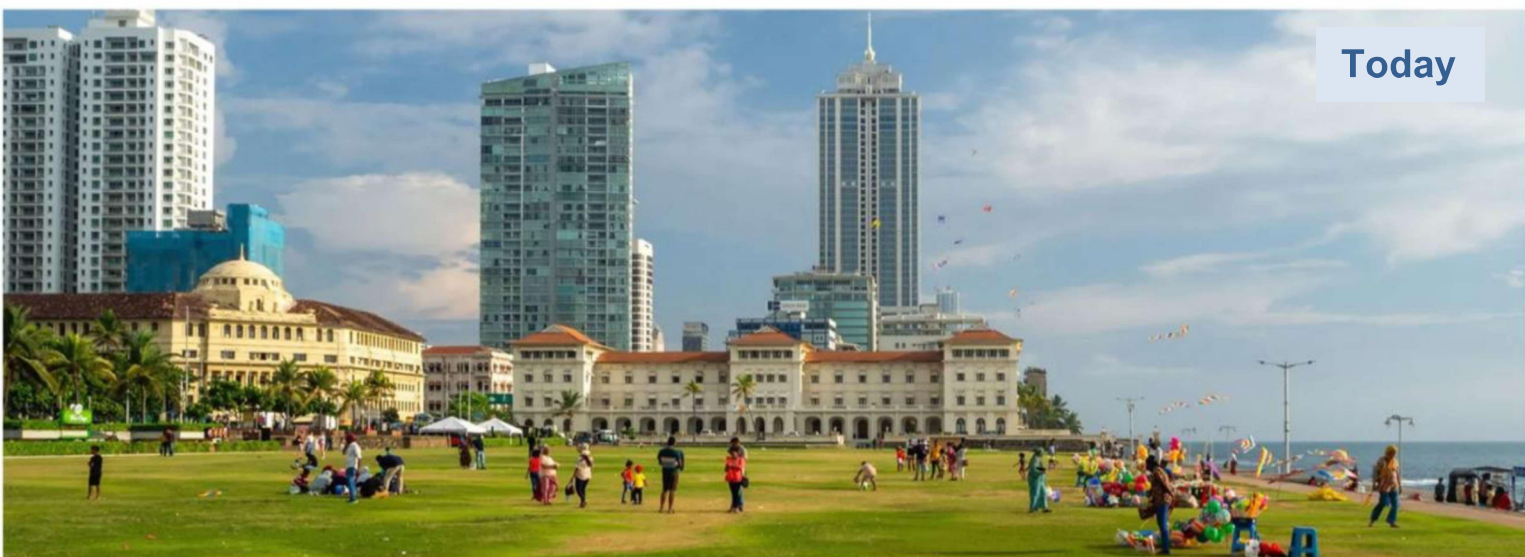
Rererence: <https://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=117538>

Galle Face Green - before and after

1980



Today





Sri Lanka unveils a rare purple star sapphire claimed to be the biggest of its kind

A massive purple star sapphire weighing 3,563 carats has been unveiled in Sri Lanka

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press



COLOMBO, Sri Lanka –

A Purple Star Sapphire weighing 3,563 carats which is claimed to be the world's biggest of its kind was unveiled on Saturday in the Sri Lankan capital by the owners, who are ready to sell the precious stone which is estimated to be worth at least \$300 million.

The round shaped gem named “Star of Pure Land” is the world's largest documented natural purple star sapphire, said Ashan Amarasinghe, a consultant gemologist.

“This is the largest purple star sapphire of its kind,” he told the media, adding that the gem “shows a well-defined asterism. It has six rays asterism. That's something special out of all the other stones.”

The gem, which has been polished, is owned by the Star of Pure Land Team, who want to remain anonymous for security reasons.

One of the owners said the gem was found in a gem pit near the remote Sri Lankan town of Rathnapura, known as the “city of gems,” in 2023.

It was purchased together with other gems in 2023 and about two years later, the owners found that it was a special stone. They then got it certified by two laboratories.

Amarasinghe said the value of the stone has been estimated at \$300 million to \$400 million by international valuers. Sri Lankan sapphires are renowned for their unique color, clarity and shimmer.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sri-lanka-unveils-rare-purple-star-sapphire-claimed-129306758>



WASLA February 2026



Purnima Anurangi: Sri Lanka's trailblazing MI-17 engineer

Breaking barriers in the sky

By Ruwini Jayawardana

Sunday Observer



Purnima Anurangi goes down in Sri Lankan history as the first female flight engineer who is qualified to serve on MI-17 helicopters. Her achievement marks a significant milestone in Sri Lanka's aviation and engineering history. It also opens doors for young women who dream of working in the skies.

She developed a natural curiosity for machines from a tender age. She loved taking things apart, putting them back together and understanding how things worked. Her family encouraged her to learn more and explore this sector. They supported her dreams even when they seemed difficult to achieve.

"From a young age, I was deeply inspired by the discipline, courage, and professionalism of the Tri Forces. This admiration naturally drew me towards a career in aviation, where technology, precision, and service to the nation come together.

"Although aviation engineering was a field where very few women ventured to at the time, I saw this not as a barrier but as a motivation to challenge myself and set an example for others. The Air Force provided the ideal environment of disciplined, structured and demanding, where I could excel technically while contributing meaningfully to my motherland.

"My choice was driven by both passion and purpose, and it is a dream I have carried with dedication since childhood," Purnima unfurled her thoughts on what inspired her to choose aviation engineering.



Breaking boundaries

After finishing school, Purnima chose engineering. It was not a common choice for girls around her. Many people told her it would be no walk in the park, but she believed in herself. She wanted to break boundaries and show that women can excel in technical fields.

Her journey into aviation engineering was not easy. The training required strength, discipline, and deep technical knowledge. She worked long hours and studied complex systems to make it to the top.

“I began my career as an Aeronautical Engineer with Squadron No. 7, where I gained my initial exposure to aircraft maintenance and operational duties. I was later selected for flight engineer training, a responsibility that had not been taken up by a lady officer before me at that time.

“I then moved to Squadron No. 6 in Anuradhapura, where I completed ground school and advanced technical courses that strengthened my capabilities. Further flight training with Squadron No. 4 in Ratmalana broadened my operational knowledge.

“Through these experiences, I developed a strong interest in the MI-17 fleet. Their vital role in troop movement, medical evacuation and special missions made the platform both challenging and fulfilling, motivating me to specialise in MI-17 operations,” she said.

Mastering the techniques

The MI-17 helicopter is a powerful aircraft which is used for transport and rescue during military missions.

It requires special handling and careful maintenance.

Purnima completed every step of this process with dedication. She sharpened her skills and became exceptional. Her instructors recognised her excellent skills. She proved herself again and again through hard work.

“The most challenging part of my training was mastering the technical and operational responsibilities of a Flight Engineer, particularly because no lady officer had undertaken these duties before me.

“Every stage required precision, quick decision-making, and endurance, both mentally and physically. I was able to overcome these challenges through the expert guidance of my instructors, the discipline and resilience I developed during basic combat training, and the support and encouragement from my family,” Purnima said.





Becoming fully qualified to service and fly MI-17 helicopters is a major achievement. It requires both engineering expertise and flying competence.

Engineers who work on this aircraft must understand every small detail. They must be able to repair faults, test systems, and prepare the aircraft for safe flights. They must also understand how the aircraft behaves in the air.

Queried if there was a particular experience, during training or on duty, that made her feel, “Yes, I was born for this work”, and she said, “From a young age, I always wanted to add meaningful new chapters to my life. That ambition led me to join the Sri Lanka Air Force, qualify as an aircraft engineer, and later become a paratrooper who jumped from 1,000 feet.

When the chance came to serve as the first female Flight Engineer in the Air Force, the same passion inspired me to take on this rare challenge. I truly believe this is the career where I can show my strengths and prove my abilities.”

Confident and brave

Asked what personal qualities helped her stand strong in a male-dominated environment as the first woman in Sri Lanka to qualify in this field, she was quick to respond.

“As an officer of the Sri Lanka Air Force, I have always believed that our environment gives priority to performance and professionalism. Stepping into a field where no woman had qualified before demanded confidence, discipline, and a strong sense of duty.

“My greatest strength was my commitment to meeting the same standards expected from any Air Force officer. I stayed focused on my duties, relied on my training, and maintained a positive mindset even during challenging moments,” she said.

Being the first woman in this field also comes with responsibility. Many young girls look up to her. They see her as a symbol of courage and progress. Purnima welcomes this role.

She believes girls should pursue any career they love. She believes talent has no gender. She encourages others to be brave and break barriers.

“My advice to young girls is to have confidence in your abilities and never underestimate your potential. During my school years at Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda, I developed leadership and discipline as a senior prefect and house captain.

“In 2018, I joined the Sri Lanka Air Force as an Officer in the Aeronautical Engineering Branch, earned a BSc in Aviation Studies, and qualified as a paratrooper, jumping from 1,000 feet. After one and a half years of intensive training, I proudly became the first female Flight Engineer in the





Air Force. I have also been selected to serve as a Flight Engineer in the United Nations Mission in Central Africa with the 11th Sri Lanka Aviation Contingent in 2026,” she added.



The Air Force values performance and professionalism above all, and embracing this mindset helped Purnima thrive.

“To young girls, I would say: don’t let anyone tell you that fields like engineering or aviation are only for men. You are equally capable, talented, and intelligent, and with dedication, courage and perseverance, you can achieve anything you set your mind to,” she said.

How have the achievements of other women influenced her approach to challenges in the Air Force?

“Seeing the achievements of other women in the Sri Lanka Air Force, whether as the first female pilots or excelling in various professional and sports roles, taught me that challenges can be overcome with determination, skill and perseverance.

“Their successes showed me what is possible and gave me the confidence to tackle difficult tasks, take on responsibilities that had never been held by a woman before and persist even in demanding situations,” she added.

Skill and passion

Her achievement also changes how society sees engineering. For many years, engineering was seen as a male-dominated field. Purnima challenges that idea. She stands as strong proof that women can excel in mechanical and aviation engineering. She shows that skill and passion matter more than stereotypes.

Through her achievements, Purnima Anurangi becomes more than a pioneer. She becomes a symbol of progress. She becomes a message of hope. She becomes a reminder that courage and determination can rewrite history.

She said that in recent years, more women are breaking barriers in both military and civil aviation. This trend needs to grow.

“Greater visibility of women succeeding in these roles will inspire confidence and show that with dedication, anything is possible. Sharing real success stories and achievements makes aviation feel achievable for young women. The SLAF has already taken steps by actively recruiting more women into aviation and recognising their talents,” she said.

Reference: <https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2026/01/18/spectrum/69974/breaking-barriers-in-the-sky/>



Who should embrace the power of magnesium supplements?



Hello readers,

Let's discuss today's magnesium requirements and its functions in the body. Many people take magnesium supplements without understanding their importance.

At the outset, I would like to emphasise that magnesium supplements should not be taken if you don't have a magnesium deficiency or have kidney issues. People with kidney

issues are more likely to experience adverse effects from magnesium supplements.

If you need to take on a doctor's advice, at what age should you start taking magnesium?

In addition to what you get from food, the highest dose you should take of magnesium supplements is 65 milligrams/day for children aged 1-3, 110 milligrams/day for children aged 4-8, and 350 milligrams/day for adults and children aged nine or older.

Do Sri Lankans face a magnesium deficiency? Available data indicate a higher prevalence of iron, zinc, calcium, folate, and vitamin A deficiencies. However, the incidence of iodine deficiency has gradually declined due to the implementation of a universal salt iodisation program. Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anaemia and low red blood cell indices.

Is it okay to start taking magnesium?

It becomes tricky when relatively healthy people start taking magnesium supplements. Although too much magnesium can be toxic to your body, bringing low levels — less than 350 mg daily — probably won't cause any harm unless you have kidney disease.

It is a good idea to check your blood magnesium level when you visit your GP for your annual checkups.

Why don't doctors recommend magnesium?

Also, certain medicines (including some "water pills" and antibiotics) can lower blood magnesium levels. Magnesium supplements may be necessary for these situations, but



too much can cause or worsen diarrhoea. **If you have chronic kidney disease, it's crucial to avoid taking supplements unless your doctor has prescribed them. Prioritising your health and following medical advice can help manage your condition effectively.**

An additional significant consideration is that calcium, zinc, and magnesium supplements should not be consumed simultaneously. When ingested with food, these three minerals are gentler on the gastrointestinal system. Therefore, if your physician advises their use, it is advisable to take them at different meals or snacks.

Now, let us discuss the functions of magnesium in your body. Magnesium is crucial for the body's functions.

Magnesium is critical in regulating blood pressure, maintaining bone density, and stabilising heart rhythm. It is also vital for managing blood glucose levels and contributing to the synthesis of proteins and DNA.

Now, what are the signs of early deficiency?

A prolonged magnesium deficiency may arise when there is a sustained insufficient intake of magnesium over an extended period. At the outset, individuals may not recognise the deficiency, as the body reserves the existing magnesium, which can be quantified in urine samples. Numerous medical conditions and pharmacological agents may impede the body's ability to metabolise magnesium, thereby elevating the risk of deficiency.

Common signs and symptoms associated with magnesium deficiency include: -

- Decreased appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Muscle weakness

If you are experiencing a significant magnesium deficiency, you may feel numbness and tingling sensations, develop muscle cramps, suffer seizures, or encounter alterations in your cardiac rhythm. Specific individuals are more predisposed to magnesium deficiency, including:

- People with gut problems such as Crohn's or celiac disease
- People with type 2 diabetes
- People who misuse alcohol over a long period
- Older adults
- People who have parathyroid problems
- People who take certain drugs for diabetes and cancer
- People with kidney disease.



Healthcare providers sometimes suggest that people with these conditions take magnesium supplements.

When suffering from GERD, doctors often recommend proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), which are a standard treatment for acid reflux and may also be linked to low magnesium levels.

Examples of PPIs include:

- Dexlansoprazole (Dexilant)
- Esomeprazole (Nexium)
- Lansoprazole (Prevacid)
- Omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid) P
- antoprazole (Protonix)
- Rabeprazole (Aciphex)

If you have been taking any of these medicines for a long time, your healthcare provider may perform a blood test to check your magnesium level.

Experts indicate that a considerable segment of the United States population is not obtaining adequate intake of magnesium-rich foods. Adults who do not fulfil the recommended daily magnesium intake are more prone to display elevated inflammatory markers. Chronic inflammation has been associated with severe health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and particular types of cancer. Additionally, insufficient magnesium levels may increase the risk of osteoporosis development.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that incorporating foods high in magnesium and other essential minerals can help prevent high blood pressure in individuals with prehypertension.

Some individuals regard magnesium tablets as a potential aid for weight management. Research indicates that magnesium supplementation may help reduce body mass index (BMI), especially among individuals with magnesium deficiency who are diagnosed with obesity. This suggests that magnesium may support initiatives to reduce overall body fat.

Which fruit is rich in magnesium?

Avocados: One whole avocado = 58 mg of magnesium.

Bananas: One medium banana = 32 mg of magnesium.

Papaya: One small papaya = 33 mg of magnesium.

Blackberries: 1 cup = 29 mg of magnesium.

I hope you find this article helpful.

(I wrote this article on magnesium for our readers after being inspired by R. Morgan Griffin's piece for WebMD.)



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About Us

Chandika Wanigasekera is the Founder & Principal of Wizdom Finance & Advisory. He has over 33 years of experience in the Banking and Finance industry and brings a wealth of expertise to his clients. Known for his client-first approach, Chandika is deeply committed to helping clients achieve their financial goals.



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SRI-LANKA A HEAVEN ON EARTH

Enjoy Your Next Holiday in Paradise!

Escape to exotic destination that promise unforgettable experiences, where every moment is crafted to inspire, delight, and rejuvenate your soul.

Our Travel Packages

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13 Days 12 Nights Package

Draw inspiration. Breathe beauty. Capture the soul of a timeless island.

Embark on a creative journey across Sri Lanka — a land of breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture, and untouched natural beauty. From misty mountains to golden shores, every corner offers something to sketch, paint, or photograph.

Let your fingertips translate the island's magic into art. This is more than a tour — it's a sensory experience with a touch of class, designed for artists, dreamers, and lovers of the extraordinary.

\$

Start from 1495 /pax



Small Island Big Trip

12 Days 11 Nights Package

Explore Sri Lanka like never before — where every mile tells a story.

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\$

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14 Days 13 Nights Package

Relax. Rejuvenate. Rediscover yourself in paradise.

Indulge in a specially curated wellness package designed to soothe your body, calm your mind, and uplift your spirit. Travel through Negombo, Sigiriya, and the South Coast, combining luxurious relaxation with moments of awe and wonder.

From serene beaches to ancient healing traditions, this journey blends wellness and island heritage — offering you can unwind with Ayurvedic treatments, yoga sessions, and tea experiences, all while witnessing the wonders of Sri Lanka, like the majestic Sigiriya Rock Fortress and the tranquility of coastal hamlets.

A perfect balance of comfort, culture, and care — to leave you feeling truly renewed.

\$

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