



WESTERN AUSTRALIA – SRI LANKA (CEYLON) ASSOCIATION INC.



NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

As my term as President of WASLA comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support over the past two years.

It has been a privilege and an honour to serve our community, and I am truly thankful for the trust and encouragement you have shown throughout this journey.

One of the highlights of this year was our Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebration held at Victoria Park in April. The event was a tremendous success, bringing together our members, families, and friends to celebrate our rich cultural heritage. It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the festivities, delicious food and most importantly, each other's company.



I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated committee members. Their commitment, hard work, and countless hours of volunteering made this event, and many others over the past two years a success. WASLA's achievements are a direct result of the teamwork, passion, and generosity of our committee and I sincerely thank every committee member for their invaluable contribution.

As we look ahead, our Annual General Meeting is fast approaching. I encourage all members to attend, participate, and contribute to shaping the future of our association. Your involvement is vital to the continued growth and success of WASLA.

Thank you once again for your friendship, support, and commitment to our community. I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM and wish the incoming committee every success in continuing the excellent work of our association.

Warm regards

Anthony Nilantha De Silva
President

TREASURER'S REPORT – JUNE 2026

Current Account Balance	\$6,167.12
Term Deposit	\$158,249.89



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Dear Members and Friends

As we bring you this edition of our newsletter, it is hard to believe we are already approaching the end of another busy and rewarding year. This is also our final newsletter before the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which will be held on 30 August 2026.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM. Please refer to the notice elsewhere in this newsletter for further details.

As a community, we also pause to remember and honour the members we have lost in recent months. We extend our sincere condolences to their families and loved ones.

- **Cleve Adriensz** – Our thoughts are with Roma and family.
- **Fred Sinclair** – Our thoughts are with Helen and family.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in WASLA.

Sharifa, Editor



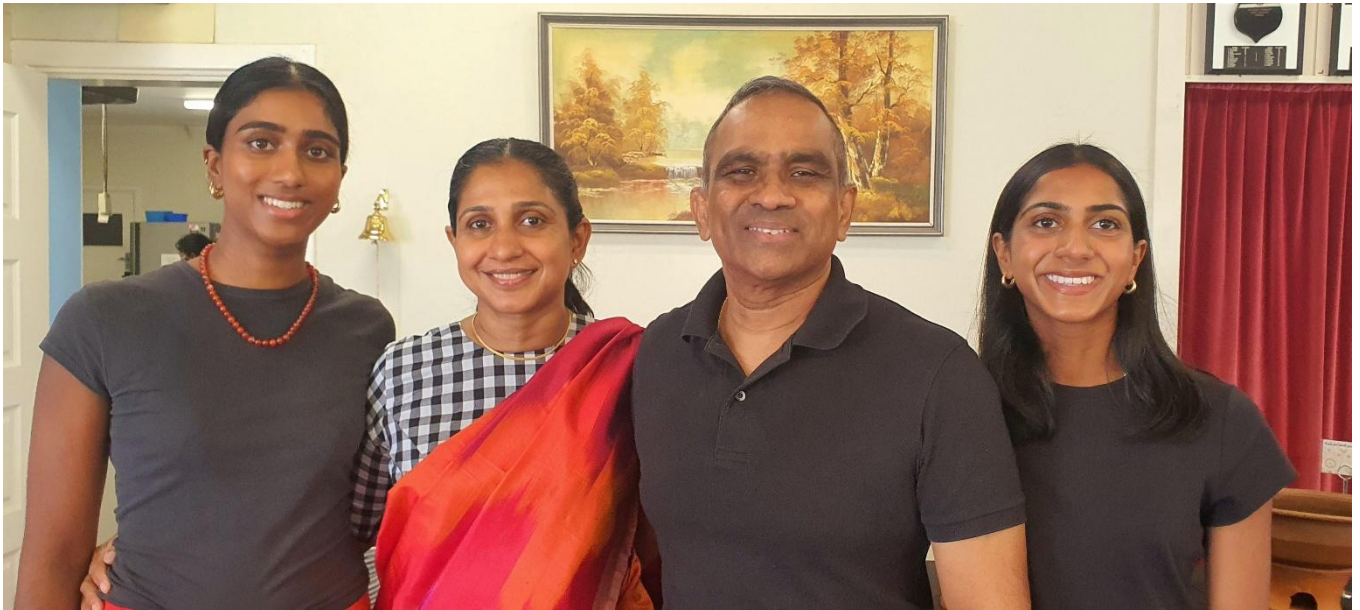
WASLA Sinhala and Tamil New Year Lunch

Our popular Sinhala and Tamil New Year Lunch was held on Sunday, 19 April 2026, at the Victoria Park Bowling Club. Members and friends enjoyed traditional *rasa keveli* and a sumptuous buffet prepared by CK Black.

After lunch, it was time to crown the Avurudu Kumari and Avurudu Kumaraya. We thank all the finalists for being such good sports and for entertaining everyone with their dancing to the lively baila music while the judges deliberated and selected the winners. Congratulations to all the finalists and winners - Kalpani Uggalla, Avurudu Kumari and Thayan Sivasubramaniam, Avurudu Kumaraya.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event and helped make it such a memorable and enjoyable celebration.







WASLA August 2026















Winner Avurudu Kumari - Kalpani Uggalla

Winner Avurudu Kumaraya - Thayan Sivasubramaniam

WASLA August 2026



UPCOMING EVENT – KEEP THE DATE FREE!

WASLA ANNUAL SENIORS' LUNCH

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2026

12PM TO 4PM

SOUTH PERTH CIVIC CENTRE



More details will be shared soon!



Jenny O'Brien from the **Cultural Engagement and Events Division** (CEED) of the WA Police joined the WASLA Committee meeting on 21 May 2026. The meeting was to explain WA Police Force's role, mission, CEED's role, safety tips (home, personal), and reporting procedures.

All members are encouraged to read the **"Community Guide"** on our website to gain more understanding on how to keep yourselves and the community safe. Link: <https://www.wasla.com.au/>



Sri Lanka named among 'World's Top 50 Food Destinations for 2026'

Sri Lanka has earned international recognition after being named among the Top 50 Food Destinations around the World for 2026, according to

the latest editorial ranking released by "Travel And Tour World (TTW)."

The annual list recognizes countries that are shaping the future of global culinary tourism. The rankings were curated by TTW's editorial experts based on a range of factors, including culinary heritage, regional diversity, street food culture, fine dining, locally sourced ingredients, sustainability, beverage traditions, cultural authenticity, and overall food experiences.

Sri Lanka's inclusion highlights the country's rich and diverse culinary traditions, renowned for their vibrant flavours, aromatic spices, fresh seafood, tropical ingredients, and unique regional dishes.

"Sri Lanka is a vibrant culinary destination where aromatic spices, tropical ingredients and centuries of cultural influences create unforgettable dining experiences, from bustling street-food stalls to elegant coastal restaurants," TTW stated.

From traditional rice and curry to hoppers, kottu, seafood delicacies, and an array of sweet treats, Sri Lankan cuisine continues to attract food enthusiasts from around the world.

As part of its feature on Sri Lanka, TTW highlighted 10 must-visit food destinations across the island:

- Colombo – Renowned for rice and curry, kottu roti, hoppers, and fresh seafood.
- Galle – Known for its seafood, Sri Lankan curries, and colonial-era dining.
- Kandy – Famous for rice and curry, traditional sweets, and authentic local cuisine.
- Negombo – Celebrated for seafood curries, grilled fish, and lagoon specialities.
- Ella – Offers organic produce, Sri Lankan cuisine, and hill-country dining.
- Jaffna – Renowned for its crab curry, dosas, and bold Tamil-inspired flavours.
- Mirissa – Popular for fresh seafood and relaxed beachfront dining.
- Nuwara Eliya – Known for tea-inspired cuisine, pastries, and colonial classics.
- Hikkaduwa – Combines fresh seafood, Sri Lankan curries, and vibrant beachside dining.
- Trincomalee – Famous for fresh seafood and authentic coastal cuisine."

The 2026 rankings place Mexico as the world's top food destination, followed by Italy and Spain, recognizing their longstanding culinary excellence and global influence.



The Top 50 list also features leading gastronomic destinations from Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East, celebrating countries that have successfully preserved their culinary heritage while embracing innovation and sustainable food practices. Sri Lanka's recognition is expected to further strengthen its appeal as a tourism destination, particularly among international travellers seeking authentic food and cultural experiences.

Reference: <https://adaderana.lk/news/cmrijzgd5g0006356qdpqsk994>

Sri Lanka regains upper - middle - income status

By Shabiya Ali Ahlam



SAT, 01 AUG 2026 TODAY'S PAPER

Three years after facing what was the worst economic crisis which pushed Sri Lanka to the brink of collapse, the island nation has regained upper-middle-income status.

The World Bank, in its latest income classification update released yesterday reclassified Sri Lanka from the lower-middle-income category after the economy expanded by 5 percent in 2025, supported by a broad-based recovery across industries and growth in tourism and financial services.

This is a commendable recovery from the 2022 economic meltdown and offers fresh international validation of Sri Lanka's progress in restoring stability and growth under a difficult reform programme.

Describing the country as "a story of recovery", the World Bank said: "Just three years after a severe economic crisis brought the country to the brink of collapse in 2022, real GDP grew by 5% in 2025, driven by a rebound across industries and growth in financial and tourism services." "The reclassification is a marker of resilience, though the country only narrowly crossed the threshold," it added.

The promotion is a major turnaround for Sri Lanka, which slipped from upper-middle-income status following a succession of shocks that weakened economic activity and eroded per-capita income.

The Easter Sunday attacks in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent balance-of-payments crisis culminated in the country's sovereign default in 2022, pushing the economy into its deepest downturn in decades.

Yesterday's reclassification indicates the progress made since then under a far-reaching economic stabilisation effort backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), alongside fiscal consolidation, monetary reforms and external debt restructuring.

The recovery is attributed to revival in tourism, stronger worker remittances, improving external sector performance and a return to economic growth following two years of contraction. These gains helped lift Sri Lanka's Gross National Income per capita above the World Bank's upper-middle-income threshold.

The upgrade also strengthens Sri Lanka's economic credentials, which would help the government attract greater foreign direct investment, accelerate private sector-led growth and reposition the country as a more competitive destination for capital.

However, the World Bank's income classifications do not directly reflect living standards or poverty levels.

Sri Lanka first entered the upper-middle-income category in 2019 before falling back to lower-middle-income status as economic growth slowed and income levels deteriorated amid mounting domestic and external pressures.

Sri Lanka was among five economies upgraded to upper-middle-income status in the World Bank's 2026-27 classification cycle, alongside Jordan, Micronesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

When joy becomes simple, life becomes extraordinary



By Sangeeta Mittal

One morning, as I padded from 66 to 67, a warm cup of tea brought surprising clarity. I realized that this phase of life is not about counting years but about finally understanding them. After decades of being a daughter, sister, wife, mother and mentor, I found myself meeting my own self again. And what emerged were not heavy truths, but gentle ones – like early sunlight slipping into a silent room.

The first truth was simple: Life moves forward, whether or not we hold on to its passing moments. Children grow into their destinies; friends walk their chosen paths and even the body changes its rhythm. Holding life too tightly is like trying to contain water in a closed fist – the more you grip, the more you lose. When I finally let life flow, I felt the first taste of inner freedom.

The second understanding came from 46 years of marriage. Long relationships, I realized do not survive because they are perfect: they survive because hearts learn to soften. Companionship grows when forgiveness outweighs ego, when pride quietly steps aside to make space for kindness. A long marriage is not a trophy on a shelf, but a discipline practiced quietly every day.

Age also taught me that health is not something we merely manage, it is something we must respect. The body whispers, then speaks and finally demands. Wisdom is like listening to the whisper. A brisk walk, a lighter plate, more sunlight, less sugar, deeper sleep – these are not routines of ageing but blessing that steady the journey.

Somewhere along the way, I discovered that peace became the most incredible luxury of the later years. In youth I chased recognition, validation and identity. Today silence feels like companionship. Not every comment deserves energy; not every argument

needs a response. Guarding peace has become my most treasured discipline.

And then, joy revealed its simplest form. It hides not in outstanding achievement but in the smallest spaces – a warm shawl, a gentle sunrise, a melody that softens the soul, a quiet meal with someone who understands your pauses. When joy becomes simple, life becomes extraordinary. Growing older is compulsory but growing deeper is a choice.

Perhaps the most tender truth of all is this: You are your longest and most faithful relationship. People come and go, but you remain with yourself from the first breath to the last. Be gentle with your memories. Respect your journey.

To the younger generation, I offer only one reminder. Your parents, too, were young once. We loved, made mistakes, worried and learned – without any degree in parenting. You grew up watching us grow. Let there be mutual forgiveness, understanding and respect. Families stand together strongest not on perfection but on empathy.

To those who are my age, I say this: Today's youth are doing their best in a world far more complex than ours. Let us not weigh them down with our nostalgia. Remember philosopher Khalil Gibran's wisdom: "Your children are not your children... they come through you, but not from you." We are the doorway they walked through, not the path they must walk. Let them write their own story in their own hand.

Finally, one lesson stands strong: If no one comes to lift you, stand up anyway – because you still can. That one truth holds the power to transform everything ahead. As Sufi poet Bulleh Shah reminds us, "Bulleh ki jaana main kaun." The deepest journey of life is always inward, towards the unmasked self, waiting quietly within.

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The author is a Hoshiarpur-based philanthropist and social activist

The 1960s: A Decade That Changed Everything



The 1960s were unlike any time we had known before. At the start of the decade, life still carried much of the neatness and formality of the 1950s. People dressed carefully, families gathered around the television, and there was still a strong sense that things should be done in the proper way.

But then the world began to change.

Music was at the heart of it. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, folk singers, soul singers, and countless others gave young people a voice of their own. Fashion became brighter and bolder, with mini skirts, go-go boots, long hair, sharp suits, and colours that seemed to announce a new kind of freedom.

It was also a decade of questioning. People marched for civil rights, protested against war, and challenged old ideas about class, race, gender, and authority. Not everyone welcomed these changes, but no one could ignore them.

There were shadows too: war, assassinations, unrest, and fear. Yet there was also wonder. In 1969, when man first walked on the Moon, it felt as though the future had arrived before our very eyes.

Looking back, the 1960s were more than music, fashion, and bright colours. They were a turning point. The world became louder, freer, more restless, and more hopeful.

After the 1960s, nothing felt quite the same again.

- Featured with permission from Dodwell Keyt



To our one and only Mariazelle: Thank you for the songs

Mariazelle Goonetilleke, the veteran singer synonymous with numbers like Kandy Lamissi and Sihina Nelum Mal, passed away Friday, July 10, aged 68 at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital in Kalubowila. Mariazelle was a child prodigy, beginning her career as a seven year old, winning the Ceylon Observer All Island Talent Competition aged ten. She then became part of the Junior Rhythmiers- a pre-teen group that got featured on Radio Ceylon. Later she became part of bands like the Emeralds and the Midnight Mist.

Kandy Lamissi was her *baila piece de resistance*, the quintessential 'party number', but she also sang away from the *baila* genre, hits being *Sihina Nelum Mal* and *Yowun Sihina Loke*, *Kumaranane*, *Oba Labaganna*, *Gayu Gee Atheethey*, *Dilisena Es Walin*, *Pahan Nowena Reyaka*, *Rahasayi Sonduru Jeewe*, *Sihineka Pavee Pavee* and *Adare Oba Mata*.

Kandy Lamissi sprung Mariazelle overnight to stardom and she would perform at places like the former Soaltee Oberoi in Kathmandu.



Among those whom she collaborated with musically are Sunil and Piyal Perera of the Gypsies, M.S. Fernando, Dalreen Suby, Ronnie Leitch, Clarence Wijewardena, Desmond de Silva, Annesley Malewana, and Ashanthi De Alwis.

Mariazelle was adored by the international Sri Lankan community nostalgic for the *baila* days and she regularly toured Melbourne, London, West Asia, Canada and other venues with Lankan expat populations.

Piyal Perera of the Gypsies, among those bereft in showbiz, said: "I knew Mariazelle from the 1970s when she was part of a band called Modsters, with singers hailing from Ratmalana- amongst them Kamal Perera. She was also a very good keyboard player and had a great knowledge of music.

"I knew her well from the time we did a four-song cassette which included *Adare Ma Hata Ethida Kiya* which was a Sinhala version of Lambada by Kaoma.

"She would always call me *machang*... I called her 'the Harmony Machine' (because of her amazing ability to harmonize). She was a dear friend and had a rare talent. Wherever she might be she should be happy- because she had a good life..."

"She was a God-fearing child. God has now called her to be in heaven with the angels. Her songs will never fade away- at every party her songs were sung by male and female artistes- the ever popular *Kandy Lamissi* will echo in every heart. There's no one to replace her... It's God-given talent. "Thank you Maria for the beautiful songs- May you rest in the arms of our Lord Jesus."

By Yomal Senerath-Yapa

Extracted from the *The Sunday Times*: <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/260712/news/to-our-one-and-only-mariazelle-thank-you-for-the-songs-648893.html>



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