



GoodSport NEWS

S R I L A N K A O L Y M P I C W E E K L Y N E W S B U L L E T I N

NOC NEWS

Main idea is a broad base the sport

Gunawardena's ergometer in and out of Diyawanna waters

If you are curious to dip-test as to how Rowing is and how healthy the game is at present, it's President Dimuth Gunawardena who definitely knows a thing or two about it. So, the GoodSport bulletin and *Voice of GoodSport* met up with him to go through a fact-finding mission about the game's anatomy.

Initially GoodSport came up with the question asking where the sport is perched right now and the development of the game. Gunawardena explained "Right now rowing is a Colombo centric sport, unfortunately, but we have very specific plans to take it to the outstations.

Sports like cricket, rugby and even have managed to do it in a big way. Now the minister of sports Namal Rajapaksa has indicated that there is a location in Anuradhapura next to the lake and we have been able to secure the boats this place, so its a matter of months before the school children of the area gets on with it.

We also can keep a qualified coach who is attached to the armed forces; our vice-president captain Chaminda Wijesiri is in charge of this project. "When speaking on the subject of the status of the game; we have in the region of 700-800 athletes in total involved with the game.

At the senior national level, it's the universities and the armed forces that get into the pool.

Hopefully this year we have get out a specific plan for the Asian Games.

"It's a very sophisticated strategy, we hope to go there, and we will be having our Nationals in early March from 11-13 in spite of all the difficulties and we hope to win a medal at the Asian Games."

From Page 01

He said that development-wise there has been a development during the past few years.

He said that there was a stage that we nobody knew us in the Asian rowing circuit. From there they have made vast strides. In 2017 three of their boats came to the 'A' finals, we were always in the 'D' group that was a huge achievement.

Once again in 2019, at the Asia Cup our ladies quadruple sculls won the 'silver' and the 'bronze' in the history of Asian rowing for Sri Lanka. Thereafter the sport has been besieged by the Covid Pandemic.

GoodSport then asked Gunawardena about the present structure and status of the game and the facilities that they could explain.

Gunawardena said "In reality we have seven rowing facilities at the moment and they are all Colombo based entities.

They are – Colombo Rowing Club, Bolgoda Lake Club and we have the Diyawannawa Rowing Centre; which is the national rowing centre and it has a DRA and there is another branch which acts like a separate club entity, the Para rowing centre, then Sri Lanka Army and Sri Lanka Navy also have their rowing facilities in the same Diyawannawa waters.

Then St. Joseph's College has their own pier at the Beira Lake and the Moratuwa University has their own facility at Bolgoda.

Now you can see they are all Colombo centric and we are determined to take them out within the next two years. We have also thirteen schools who are involved with the sport."

We asked if the game is an expensive indulgence. "The inhibition for the expansion of this sport has been the cost of boats. A boat can cost anything between Rs. 1.5 million to 4 million rupees.

So, it is very difficult for an outstation school to import a boat.

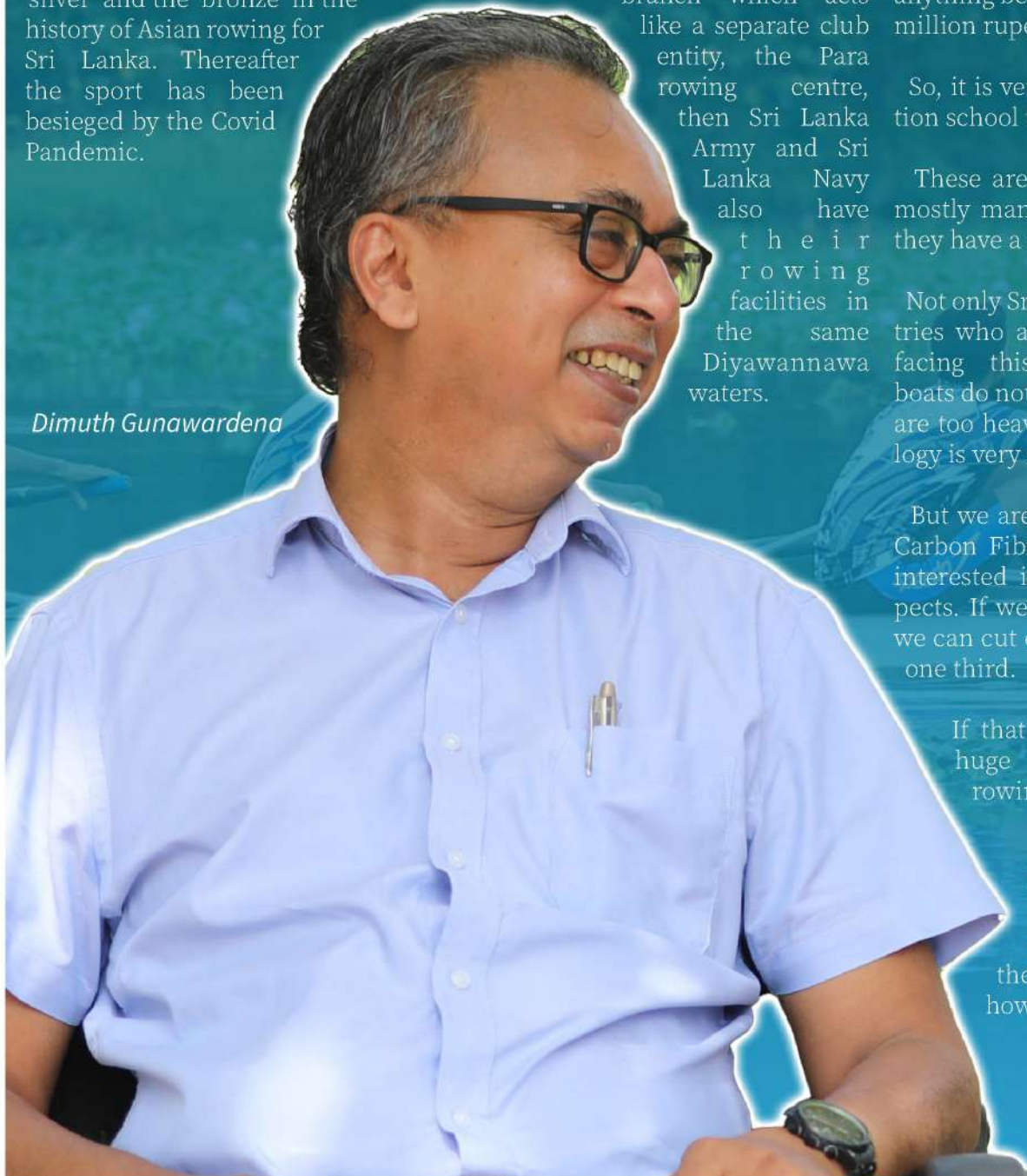
These are carbon fibre boats and mostly manufactured in China and they have a monopoly on this.

Not only Sri Lanka, all poorer countries who are part of this sport, is facing this dilemma. Fibreglass boats do not serve the purpose. They are too heavy. Carbon Fibre technology is very sophisticated.

But we are lucky that we have one Carbon Fibre manufacturer who is interested in working on the prospects. If we succeed in this project, we can cut down the cost by at least one third.

If that happens it would be a huge impetus to outstation rowing" said Gunawardena.

GoodSport then asked how we Sri Lankans being smaller in stature in comparison that of the competition outside how you fill the void.



Dimuth Gunawardena

From Page 02

The Lankan Rowing President was of the view – “That is multifaceted. We cannot achieve these overnight. Like I said we have a very sophisticated strategy for the Asian Games, to win a medal.

That is over a two-year period. The reason why I say this is, we have a set of senior athletes with some international exposure; which is very important.

We are going to train them to get proper strength building and proper nutrition.

These two are very important. The rice-packet mentality will have to go out of the window.

We need proper nutrition – may be about 6-8 thousand calories a day while on training, this means they would need at least six meals a day.



Our senior pool is mostly are from the armed forces, they are from poor rural areas but we have sustained them. Some of these schools have 20million budgets; but, our national budget is less than one million. Sometimes they have to pocket out their own nutrition.

So, like you inquired we have to find ways to get these facilities.

Luckily, the Sports minister is mindful of this situation and he too agreed that this is a necessity.

“Speaking about the long term, the height of a rower is very important – the length the stroke. That we have to develop at a junior level, now the National Olympic Committee has a strategy of developing this kind of talent and develop that at school level.

For instance, they are targeting the Youth Olympics, if it is 2023 Youth Olympics, we are looking at a child of thirteen years, because he has to be under-18 by 2023.

That child we have to keep a check on his growth, his muscular structure – we have analysed all that. Ironically, we are no position to have the Junior National under the present circumstances.

The moment the schools re-open we can have the Junior Nationals and we start the strategy for these programmes both at the ministry and the NOC Sri Lanka. They will be our nucleus in rowing may be for the next four years.”



Namal proposes 20% hike in sports budget allocation

Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa has made a request from the government to increase the allocation for sports in the next budget by up to 20 per cent.

He made this revelation at the launch of a High-Performance initiative and press conference held at the Sports Ministry auditorium in Colombo.

“Only six per cent of the current budget allocation could be used for the development of athletes’ performance whereas 94 per cent goes for administration of the Sports Ministry and building infrastructure facilities,” he said attributing the decline in the standard of sports in the country for this.

He warned that if this status quo remains there is no way sports in the country could achieve results at international level.

“India on the other hand spends 20 per cent of their national budget for sports while Australia allocates 40 per cent. That is why we have proposed that this year the budget allocation for sport be raised by 20 per cent and increased to 40 per cent the following year,” said Rajapaksa who holds the Cabinet ministry portfolio of Youth Affairs and Sports.

While lauding Sri Lanka’s efforts of reaping a harvest of 262 medals at the 2019 South Asian Games (SAG), the minister said it is no big deal to win medals at the regional event.

He said Sri Lanka’s focus should not be the SAG but winning laurels at Asian Games, Asian Para Games, Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

“Sri Lanka has a rich history of winning medals at Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Olympics and Cricket World Cup though not achieving success in recent memory. We should strive to regain our past glory at these competitions,” he said.

He noted that the National Sports Council has been in existence since 1979 but has not made any significant impact.

“But the present National Sports Council (NSC) has launched a National High-Performance Strategy and Sports Tier system in the country. Seven sports comprising 56 athletes have been chosen for this pilot project.

Their target is medals at the 2022 Asian Games and Commonwealth Games and 2024 Olympics. Their personal coaches are also registered for this programme,” he said.

“If an athlete is selected for training overseas, he or she should focus on improving standards while those participating in competitions should go with the objective of winning,” he declared promising unprecedented cash rewards -

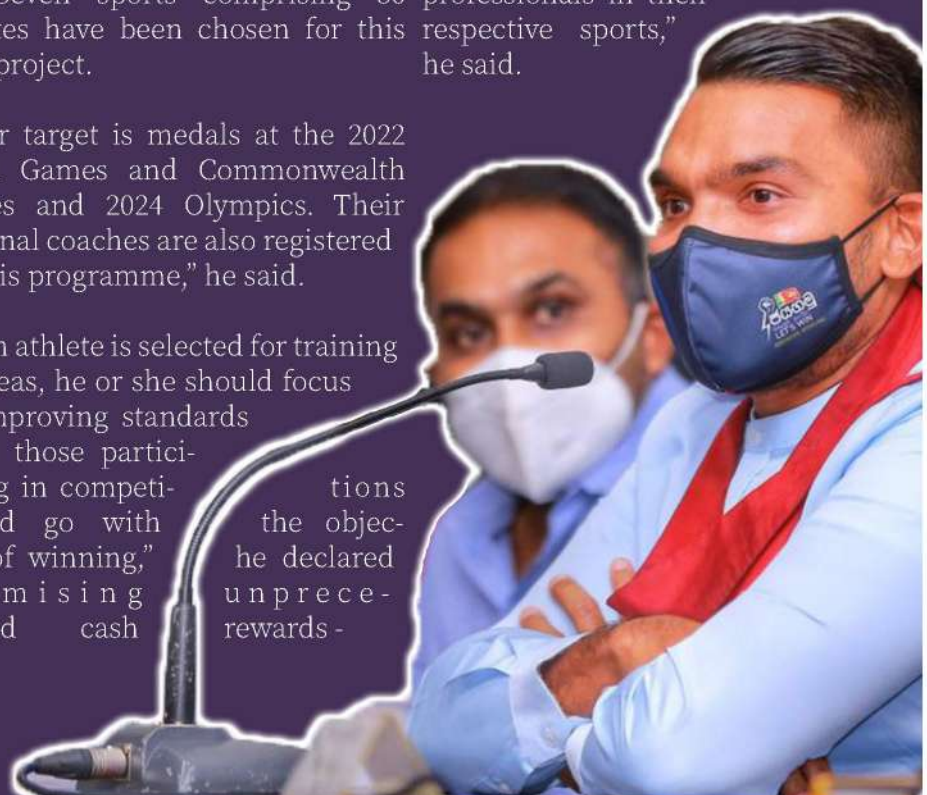
like never before to those who succeed at these Games including for coaches.

“I have been appointed Sports Minister to develop sports not to function as a welfare minister,” he quipped rapping National Sports Associations who are only focused on elections than developing the performance of athletes.

He added that his main objective is to upgrade sports and not working to please officials of sports bodies including Sri Lanka Cricket.

NSC chairman Mahela Jayawardene said they are in the process of formulating a national sports development plan. “The initial step is to identify talented athletes and provide insurance cover. The goal is to make them professionals in their respective sports,” he said.

Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa at a press conference





Athletes Shreshan and Lakshini with NOC SL Secretary General Maxwell de Silva prior to their departure.

Shreshan and Lakshini to Doha

Further to the negotiations and on the request of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka, the Qatar Athletics Association through the -

Qatar Olympic Committee agreed to assist two of our athletes, Liyanapedige Shreshan Dhananjaya (Men) and Sandaradura Lakshini Sarangi Silva (Long Jump) to undergo -

training for 5 months in Doha, Qatar commencing from 15th January to 15th June 2021.

Both aforementioned athletes obtained first places at the recently concluded National Athletics Championship.

All expenses during their stay in Doha Qatar will be borne by the Qatar Athletics Association.

China cancels

Asian Athletics Championship

The 24th Senior Asian Athletic Championship has been cancelled by the Chinese Athletic Association since there is no improvement in the containment of the coronavirus outbreak.

This championship was scheduled to be from May 20 to 23 in Hangzhou, China.

It was earlier scheduled to be held in April 2020 but postponed to this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Asian Athletic Association has accepted the decision of the Chinese Athletic Association to cancel the event because of the viral outbreak.

Held every two years, the Asian athletic body has not decided whether the next Asian Athletic Championship will be held in 2023 or 2024.

The 24th Asian Athletic Championship which was to serve as a final qualification event for the Tokyo Olympics has dashed the hopes of many athletes -

who are on the fringe of qualification.

No Sri Lankan athlete has still qualified for the Olympic Games and will have to depend on 'wild card' entries to participate in the event.



“Nextolympichope” portal launched

The National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka and Crysbro successfully handed over fourteen scholarships and also launched the “Nextolympichope.com” portal at a simple ceremony at the Olympic House recently.

Under the programme the following athletes received their scholarship certificate and the cheques. They were Kanas Kumar Danushan (Golf), Amandhika Amarasinghe (Shooting), M. Tehan Sanchith Rayman (Boxing), Sudhdhathcharige Nethmi Nimthera (Boxing), H.H. Ravindu Sithum Jayasundara (Athletics), D.M.T.D. Tharushi Karunaratne (Athletics), W. Deshan Kapila Kumara (Weightlifting), R.L.Sachini Rajika Laksarani (Weightlifting), P.D. Senura Dilanka Silva (Table Tennis), A.D. Nadila Nethviru (Gymnastics), U.L. Tharinda Mandara Premakumara (Taekwondo), M. Senori Sasadara Fernando (Taekwondo), Seneca Gunaratne (Athletics), Milka Gehani (Gymnastic).

The balance eight scholarships will be awarded soon.

Meanwhile “Nextolympichope.com” portal where the public could be of assistance to needy athletes was also launched.

This programme initially would be only for the athletes under this programme.



The picture shows the Senior Marketing Manager Crysbro Amores Sellar and President National Olympic Committee Suresh Subramaniam press the button to launch the nextolympichope.com portal while (L to R) Nalin Aluthge (PR Manager Crysbro), Secretary General National Olympic Committee Maxwell de Silva and Gamini Jayasinghe (Treasurer NOC SL) looks on.

