

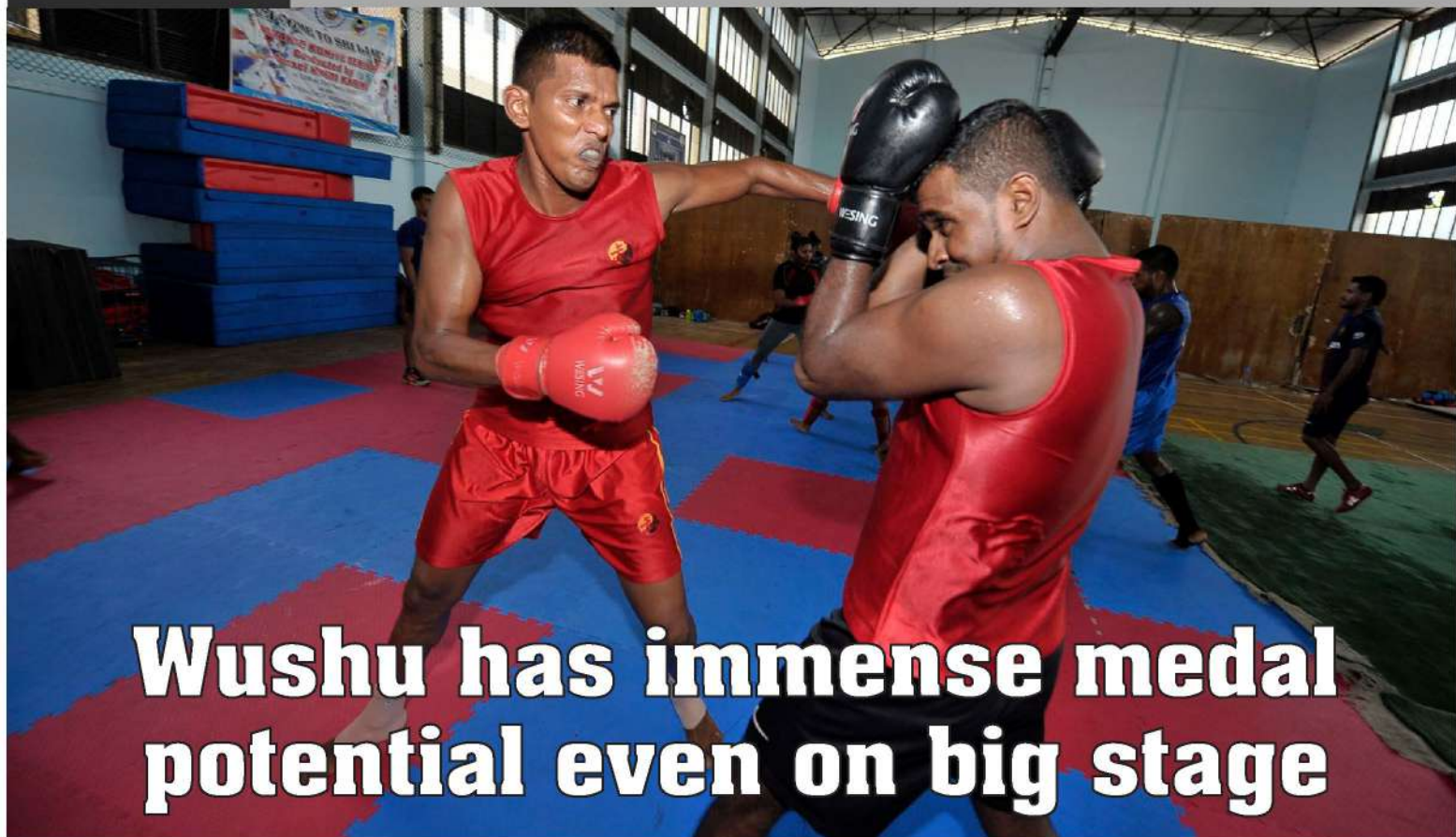


GoodSport NEWS

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

Celebrating one year of GoodSport e-magazine



Wushu has immense medal potential even on big stage

Sport is a vast subject and though some may try to include it in the segment of extra-curricular activity, sport is essentially a part of human evolution.

Nonetheless, sport is always segmented; with some persons being able to perform better than the others in a given sport because of their size.

For instance, rugby is a game where weight and the height play a huge part while martial arts could be performed specially by the Asians through their superior agility.



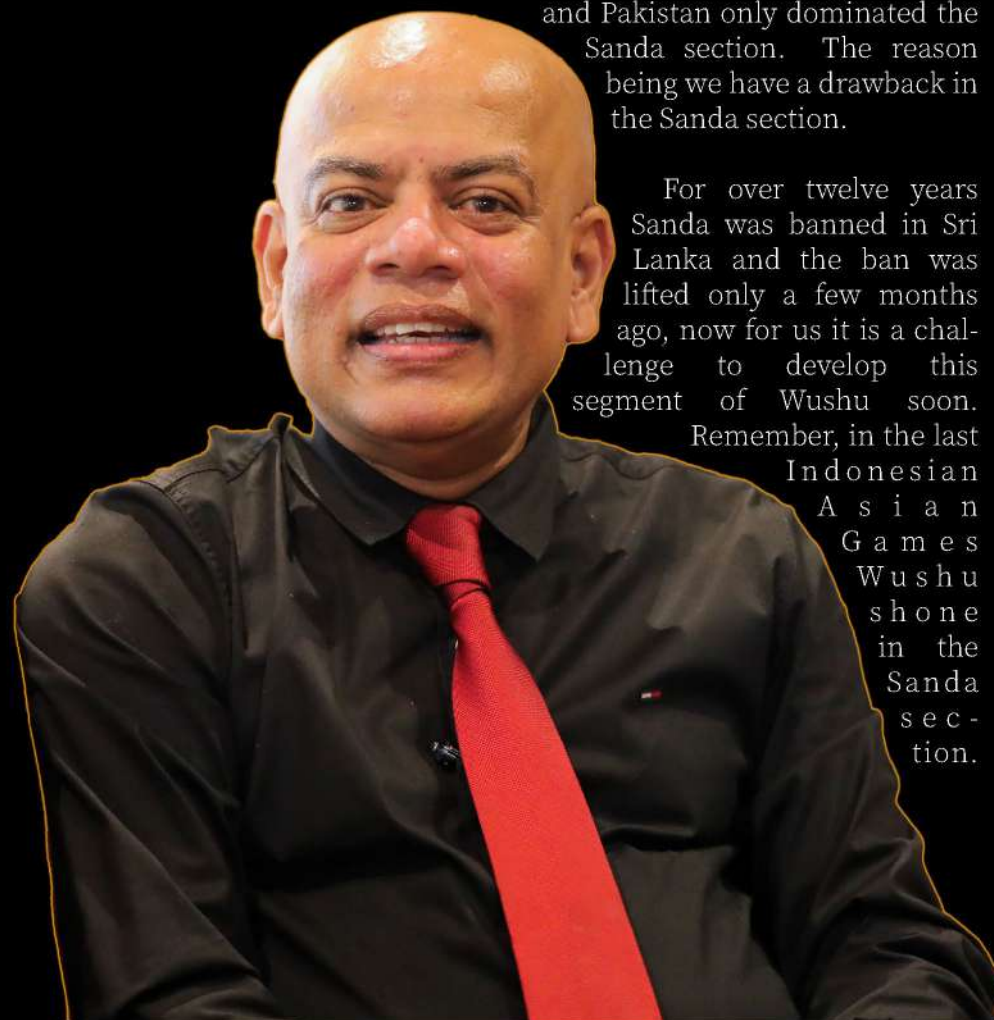
Wushu is such a performing art. GoodSport and the Voice of GoodSport picked Wushu as the topic of our first-year anniversary and talking to us was Sri Lanka's Mr. 'Wushu' Manel Dharmakeerthi who looks at the pulse of Wushu as if it is his own 24x7.

We asked our customary inquiry about the status of the sport.

Dharmakeerthi explained "In spite of the prevailing Covid pandemic, we have been continuing with our training programme at the Ratnapura stadium with an eye for the next Asian Games. However, in this programme only our elite contingent are in training. We were about to start the programme with the junior lot targeting the Asian Youth Games, but we have been informed by the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka that it has been put off till 2022 and is due to take place in Hangzhou in China.

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Pakistan did not win a gold. India and Pakistan only dominated the Sanda section. The reason being we have a drawback in the Sanda section.

For over twelve years Sanda was banned in Sri Lanka and the ban was lifted only a few months ago, now for us it is a challenge to develop this segment of Wushu soon.

Remember, in the last Indonesian Asian Games Wushu shone in the Sanda section.

However, we are hoping to start the 'Taolu' training programme soon targeting the junior Asian Games. However, there are fifteen elite athletes in training at present in both Sanda and Taolu."

GoodSport then inquired about the Lankan team ending up third at the South Asian Games behind India, Pakistan with two gold and five silver and how could Sri Lanka could aim high for an Asian Games medal at the next games on that playing field.

The Lankan Wushu chief explained "Though we were number three, we beat India in the Taolu section. We won those two gold in Taolu while India won only one gold. Nonetheless they beat us in the Sanda segment.

"There came a point where we very nearly ended up with a bronze medal. However, our pleas to send one of the competitors to China for training prior to the games fell into deaf ears, but the Vietnam player who beat our player in the quarter-finals came direct from training in China and he ended up as the Bronze Medallist.

"So if you want us to win medals, we must have the necessary facilities."

In the next question we asked Wushu being a game that is taken very seriously in the Far East and is pretty strong and taking on them obviously is an enormous task and how does he see this challenge. Dharmakeerthi replied "We believe that we should take martial art seriously.

“ We believe that we should take martial art seriously. Definitely we can win medals in this sport. ”

"Definitely we can win medals in this sport. However, in Wushu the world champions, is in China and they are in Asia, the Sanda segment is now dominated by Iran (another Asian country), there are also some other Asian countries like Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Korea and Japan are very strong in both segments. But, still Sanda in the comeback event I still believe we can win medals.

"We can take India as an example. India is winning medals in the Sanda section in Asian Games and World Championships, but, in certain cases we beat the Indian players. But I must say in India the game is well structured.

Recently India donated Sanda Lai Thai platforms to every state and their original carpet is being given to every state association, but we have only one such facility in the whole country.

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“So, our players have no facilities to train in proper platforms.

“If you need to improve the sport, we must have the necessary facilities.

“The standard of our players is good but, if they are to be competitive internationally, we must give the proper equipment.

“So, give us the facilities we will bring home the international medals.

In answer to the question as to how many schools are involved in Wushu, Manel said that there are over 300 schools directly involved in the sport and added “All elite schools like Royal, Visakha and Musaeus are involved with the game.

“Yet, our drawback is the necessary equipment to get involved in the sport is expensive and our federation is not that rich.

“We need sponsors; we need Ministry support and support from the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka.

“I must thank the NOC president Mr. Suresh Subramaniam, because when he became the president, we requested some support and he arranged a very good specialised coach from China, through the Chinese Olympic Committee.

“He was here for six months and we were grooming sixteen junior players and that was very encouraging, but, ironically the Covid Pandemic had the better of the exchanges.

“Nonetheless that is the support that we need; we need coaches and equipment, if we get this support, we assure deliverance.”

Delving on the subject of long term and short goals Dharmakeerthi said “Our main aim is to win a medal at the next Asian Games.

“That is our main target and we have won a lot of championship medals to prove it.

“We have won a bronze in Wushu World Championships in 2013, once again in China in 2014 we won a bronze in Sanda World Cup, in 2017 we won a bronze in Russia – World Wushu Championships, in 2018 we won two bronze medals in Sanda World Cup, then

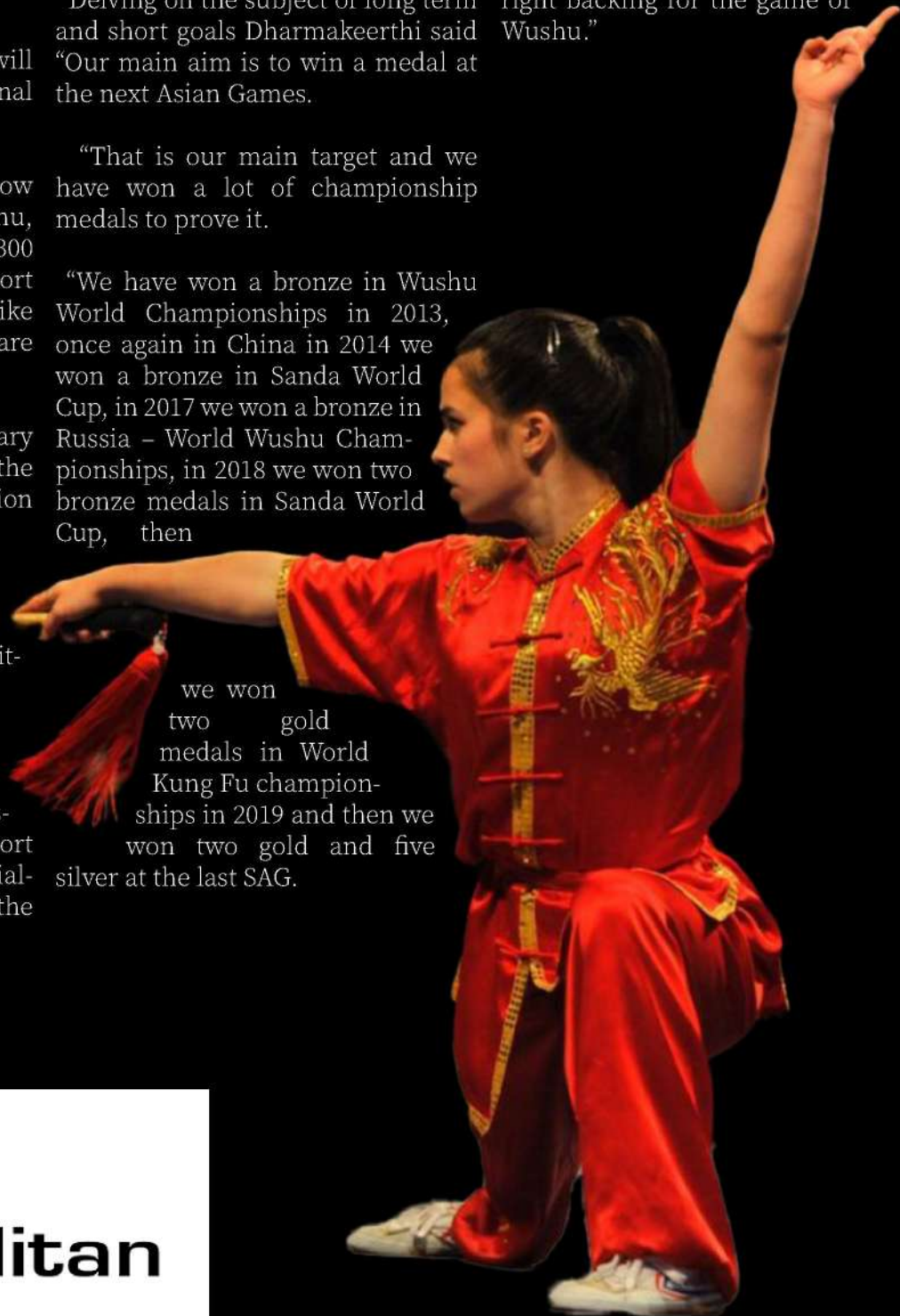
we won two gold medals in World Kung Fu championships in 2019 and then we won two gold and five silver at the last SAG.

“So, our performances have been consistent.

“Even in junior world championships we have silver medals.

“After Susanthika Jayasinghe we were the first sport that won a bronze in an official World Championship.

“So it is all but right that we get the right backing for the game of Wushu.”



SLVB to conduct super league beach volleyball tournament in May

Sri Lanka will conduct a super league beach volleyball tournament for the first time in May, the Sri Lanka Volleyball Federation (SLVB) revealed.

It will be held in the beaches of Negombo or Volleyball House in Galle.

Eight teams (men and women) are expected to participate in this tournament, according to SLVB secretary A.S. Nalaka.

SLVB is in discussions with Dialog to sponsor the tournament.

Meanwhile, an international beach volleyball coach is expected to arrive in the island on February 15.

Sponsored by FIVB, the foreign coach is expected to train the beach volleyball national pool in March and April in preparation for international competitions.

The beach volleyball coach from Finland Shailen Ramdoo has trained the beach volleyball national pool earlier as well.

As a result, Sri Lanka men and women beach volleyball teams won both the gold and silver medals at the 2019 South Asian Games in Pokhara.

The SLVB has decided to participate in the two Asian beach volleyball tournaments in September conducted by the Asian Volleyball Confederation.

A 16-member beach volleyball national pool comprising men and women have begun training in preparation for this tournament.

The SLVB hopes to send two teams of men and women each for this tournament.

By Susil Premalal



Sri Lanka to celebrate Centenary of Netball this year

Netball in Sri Lanka which is one of the oldest in the South Asian region is completing 100 years of existence.

A sport which began in Colombo and Kandy in 1921 will be celebrating its centenary this year, according to the Netball Federation of Sri Lanka (NFSL).

The federation is planning to hold a series of events during the next few months to mark its centenary from 1921-2021.

During the past century, Sri Lanka has emerged as the number one netball nation in Asia and is ranked 18th in the INF (International Netball Federation) rankings.

In 11 editions of the Asian Netball Championships which began in 1985, Sri Lanka emerged champions on five occasions.

Sri Lanka netball won their first title at the 1989 event in New Delhi. Hyacintha Wijesinghe was captain of the team while

In addition, Sri Lanka led by P.D.N Prasadi won the Asian championship held in Singapore (1997), 2001 in Colombo led by Damayanthi Jayathilakage, 2009 in Kuala Lumpur captained by Sashika Samarasinghe and on the last occasion in Singapore (2018) led by Chathurangi Jayasuriya.

Tilaka Jinadasa was coach when Sri Lanka won the title in 2009 and 2018.

The Sri Lanka Youth team also emerged champions in the Asian Youth Netball championship on three occasions in 1998, 2002 and 2015 and runner-up five times.

Sri Lanka has also taken part in the Netball World Cup which was first held in 1963 on ten occasions.

Sri Lanka were ranked ninth in Eastbourne (1963), 14th in Singapore (1983), 16th in Glasgow (1987), 15th in Sydney (1991), 19th in Birmingham (1995), 21st in Christchurch (1999), 18th in Kingston (2003), 14th in Singapore (2011), 16th in Sydney (2015) and 15th in Liverpool (2019).

The two occasions Sri Lanka netball took part in the Commonwealth Games were in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 and in Manchester in 2002

Sri Lanka also clinched fourth spot all four occasions they took part in the Nations Cup invitation tournament in Singapore in 2007, 2008, 2012 and 2013.

Sri Lanka has hosted the Asian Netball Championship on one occasion in 2001.

