



# 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

*A yielding sport in the international arena*

## 13<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH ASIAN GAMES 2019

DEC 1-10, KATHMANDU-POKHARA



# Nishanthan's Barbell plans working for Lanka

**D**efinitely the Sri Lanka Weightlifting Federation (SLWF) is an organisation that is result oriented and, especially in the South Asian Level and the Commonwealth Games Level, they have been producing results at a very regular basis.

Now, they only have to seek ways of establishing their identity at the Asian and the Olympic Level.

The important fact is that this Federation knows where the strengths and weaknesses lie and acts accordingly. Right now, the SLWF is planning to send a six-member team for the Asian Weightlifting Championship.

The Asian Weightlifting Championship, postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic last year, will be held from the April 16th to the 25th in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, according to the Asian Weightlifting Federation. This is the first time Sri Lanka's weightlifters will be taking part in a competition since the 2019 Kathmandu South Asian Games (SAG).

A three men and one woman team is billed to participate in the Asian event, according to the SLWF Secretary G. Nishanthan. The team that will make the Uzbek tour will be Nilanka Isurukumara, Thilanga Palangasinghe, Indika Dissanayake and Chathurika Priyanthi (woman).

The Asian competition in Uzbekistan is the final qualification event for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

To get an insight on how the Lankan Weightlifting mechanism keeps ticking; GoodSport spoke to the man on the spot – Nishanthan, and asked him about the current status of the sport. .

He explained, "There was a bit of a lull after the last SAG in Nepal owing to the Covid-19 Situation. So much so we even brought a halt to our training programmes till August 2020.

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**“ In 2022 in Birmingham, we would be able to fare even better because we have now got into the mindset of winning at that level.”**

He said, “It came our way in 2006 when Chinthana Vithanage won the Commonwealth Games “Gold” in Melbourne, Australia.

In reality, that broke the ice for weightlifting nationally and internationally.

Thereafter, the ignition was set off and we have become one of the most yielding sports in the island. In 2006, we won only one medal.

In 2010 we won two medals – taking silver and a

bronze, through Vithanage and Sudesh.

Thereafter, we won one medal in 2014 and, in 2018 at the Gold Coast Games, we won three medals.

In 2018, there would have been more, but, there were a considerable number of fourth places in the count.

I must say our performances are now consistent at the international level and especially, at the Commonwealth Level.

Now I feel in 2022 in Birmingham, we would be able to fare even better because we have now got into the mindset of winning at that level.”

GoodSport then asked about as to why Sri Lanka does so well at the Commonwealth Level, but, fail to perform in the Asian Games and the Olympics.

Nishanthan explained, “The top lifting countries that are not in the Com-

monwealth Games framework are in the Asian Games list and, they are the best in the world.

But in the 2019 Asian Championships, we won a bronze in the clean and jerk event and another lifter finished in the fourth place; that is Y D I Kumara in the 55kgs category.

The reason is, all good lifters come from the Asian regions – China, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Iran and Iraq; they are the best in the world.

So, we must work harder and become even smarter to compete in the right categories.



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I feel that if we can win a medal in the Asian Championships or in the Asian Games, we could easily hope to win a medal even at the Olympic Level because of the level of competition.”

We queried on the status of the game domestically and how the schools and clubs are doing.

“The level of weightlifting at school level is very high.

When you put them in the junior Commonwealth competitions, they have won some medals.

Last time in the Asian Youth Games in Uzbekistan, we won three bronze medals.

Now the school activity is at a standstill but, they could pick it up once they are back on stage.

“We have around 1500 lifters from 50 schools in the fray now – both girls and boys.

“However, we too face perennial problem of lifters giving up the sport in preference to their studies, but luckily around 75% of the athletes continue with their training right through”, said Nishanthan.

During the conversation we observed that most of the contestants hail from poor rural backgrounds and for them, the sustenance in the game is a huge task.

The SLWF general secretary explained, “This task cannot be addressed only by our Federation.

“We need the help and the backing of institutions like the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Sports in Sri Lanka.

The other aspect is, coaches and other institutions who are willing to help this sport since the sustenance of good coaches is an important factor.



Coaches from areas like Polonnaruwa and Jaffna, we have to manage them. Remember, even Chinthana Vithanage

from Royal Polonnaruwa College

“Arshika Baskaran is a girl from Jaffna; she won a silver at the last SAG in Nepal and she is only 19 years old.

“Through children, the Jaffna peninsula is picking up the sport, while the Galle area that took up the game very recently is also moving forward at a great speed.

“I feel that weightlifting is picking up as a sport because the sport is yielding good results internationally, and is being picked up by the populace of this country.”



*105<sup>th</sup> Sri Lanka Tennis Nationals*

**Yasitha and Anika wear singles crowns**

**Y**asitha De Silva won the Men's Open Singles title while Anika Seneviratne won the Women's Open Singles titles at the 105<sup>th</sup> Sri Lanka Tennis Nationals which was successfully held from the 09<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of January at the Sri Lanka Tennis Association courts under necessary health guidelines.

In the open doubles' category, Thehan Wijemanne and Chathurya Nilaweera won the Men's title and Janali Manamperi and Savini Jayasuriya won the Women's title.

The tournament which was originally scheduled to be held in 2020 was postponed to this year due the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Sri Lanka Nationals is the biggest All-Island Category 1 Tennis ranking tournament in the country. The tournament consisted of 23 events in junior, senior and open categories and over 500 entries were received including players from outstation; namely, Kandy, Batticaloa, Negombo, Jaffna and Bandarawela.

Yasitha De Silva, a recent graduate from the University of Jayewardenepura, was crowned as the National Men's Open Singles Champion for the first time, defeating the defending champion Sharmal Dissanayake. Yasitha also led the Sri Lankan contingent as the Captain at the -

World University Games in 2019.

Both Yasitha and Sharmal are also South Asian Games Bronze medalists and former Davis Cup players. Anika Seneviratne was crowned as the National Women's Open Singles Champion for the second time after in 2018, defeating the second seed, Janali Manamperi. Anika, aged only 19 years hailing from Ladies College, is a South Asian Games Silver and Bronze medalist while both Anika and Janali are former fed cup and junior fed cup players.

Meanwhile, Janali Manamperi and Savini Jayasuriya emerged as the National Women's Open Doubles Champions, defeating the defending pair of champions, Anika Seneviratne and Alana Seneviratne.

The speciality in the 105<sup>th</sup> Sri Lanka Nationals is that all the champions of the open events were not defending champions and all were newly crowned.

This tournament also marked the beginning of the official calendar of Sri Lanka Tennis for the year 2021.

All matches were played with strict spectator controlling allowing only one parent to accompany the player and no spectators were allowed.

However, the finals of the open singles and doubles were played in the presence of limited invitees.

Brigadier Shiran Abeysekera and Mr. Iqbal Bin Isaack, President of the Sri Lanka Tennis Association were the chief guests for the women's and men's open singles finals respectively.



Thehan Wijemanne and Chathurya Nilaweera emerged as the National Men's Open Doubles Champions, defeating the defending pair of champions, Yasitha De Silva and Sankha Athukorala.

**By Yasodara Dunuwille**

# National Federations enriched by ANOC Special Fund

The Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), through the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), distributed funds to NOCs that facing the biggest challenges and needs in achieving their tasks due to COVID 19 pandemic.

The function was held at the NOC 'Hemasiri Fernando' auditorium on Monday.

Accordingly, the NOC Sri Lanka assisted NFs that requested assistance through the said fund.

All together 15 NFs will be benefited through this project.

13 NFs responded requesting equipment by the given deadline and they received laptops.

The NFs are: Equestrian, Gymnastics, Handball, Judo, Karate, Roller Skating, Surfing, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Triathlon, Wrestling, Yachting and Baseball – (Pending due to their outstanding amounts to IOC – OS).

And Weightlifting Federation requested a washing machine for the use of National pool athletes. And Basketball requested assistance for their administration expenses and they received the some.

Also, an additional funding was requested through the same project to assist below mentioned athletes in their preparation targeting Tokyo 2020.

- a. Training cost for Chamara Dharmawardhana - Judo in Slovenia for 6 months and 2 Olympic qualifiers
- b. Training cost for Chamara Milinda in Mongolia for 6 months and 2 Olympic Qualifiers
- c. Training cost for W.K.L. Nimal – Athletics – 800m – locally for 6 months and Olympic qualifier

- d. 6 months overseas training for Sumedha Ranasinghe - Athletics - Javelin Throw and 2 Olympic Qualifier
- e. Assistance for Niluka Karunaratne - Badminton to participate in 8 Olympic Qualifiers.
- f. 6 months Overseas Training for Indika Dissanayake - Weightlifting and Olympic Qualifiers.



## Commonwealth Sport Foundation confirms Dr. Jeya Wilson as new Trustee

The Commonwealth Sport Foundation, the charitable foundation of the Commonwealth Sport Movement, has announced Dr Jeya Wilson, as its newest Trustee following a global search.

Dr Wilson, an Aotearoa/New Zealand citizen, brings a wealth of international experience having held numerous high-profile positions across a broad spectrum of organisations, sectors and countries.

She is on the board of the Nigeria-based Africa Initiative for Governance, a private sector led initiative to transform the public sector in Africa where she was founding CEO, Chair of Adam Smith International Ltd, Governor of Northumbria University, and Trustee of the Oxford Union.

She previously served as Vice-Chair of Fairtrade International, Chair of the World Health Organisation's Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, and the oversight committees of the International Labour Office and the Global Fund.

Dr Wilson's executive positions include CEO of Africa's largest chamber of commerce and industry, Director for Business Partnerships at UNDP, CEO of the World Heart Federation, and Executive Director of the International MBA of the University of Geneva.

She was also New Zealand Honorary Consul in South Africa.

Dr Wilson will join the Foundation's Board of Trustees led by Chair Christian Brodie and Vice Chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. The Board also includes CGF President Dame Louise Martin and Vice President Chris Jenkins, who leads the CGF Development Committee.

Commonwealth Sport Foundation Chair Christian Brodie said: "I am delighted we have appointed a hugely talented individual in Dr Jeya Wilson as the newest Trustee of the Commonwealth Sport Foundation.

Our ambition, when we launched our search for Trustees, was to recruit talented individuals from across the globe who reflect and embody the rich cultural diversity of the Commonwealth and Jeya's appointment demonstrates the start of fulfilling that commitment.

Jeya brings significant skills and experience to the Foundation, having worked in numerous high-profile leadership roles in several countries of the Commonwealth. I have no doubt that she will be a significant and valuable contributor to all areas of our work."

Commonwealth Sport Foundation Trustee Dr Jeya Wilson said: "I am honoured to have been appointed to the Commonwealth Sport Foundation Board.

The Foundation has a pivotal role to play in harnessing the power of Commonwealth Sport to positively impact the citizens of our 72 nations and territories.

I am passionate about supporting this work while promoting the Movement's wider vision to create peaceful, sustainable and prosperous communities across the Commonwealth through sport."

The Commonwealth Sport Foundation will continue its recruitment for new Trustees over the coming months, with a focus on finding energetic, committed and capable people to take the Foundation forward to new levels of impact and engagement.

