



# GoodSport



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



## LANKANS READY FOR HANGZHOU CHALLENGE

If someone suggests that Asian Games is serious business, no one would dare to disagree with him. Yet, from a Lankan perspective, are we to once again write off the rest of the flock, barring the defending Gold medal holders in Asian Games Cricket - both our male and female willow-wielders? Ironically, the rest of the others do have a point to prove. The reason? Lankans have not been fruitful in their Medal yield since 2006.

The fable professes that if someone dares to knock on the door, it would open - now a few Lankans definitely are knocking on the door and they have proved that at the recently concluded highly acclaimed Asian Championships, in Thailand.

It is only a time that it would be put to real test at the Hangzhou Asian Games from September 23 to October 8, 2023.

Athletes in the calibre of Yupun Abeykoon - the sole male 100m runner to break the 10secs barrier in South Asia, leads the Lankan promise. He is among the best of the rest in the short-distance realm.

In his day, he definitely brings out that WOW factor into Lankan athletics, in the same manner that female runners like Susanthika Jayasinghe and Damayanthi Dharsha along with Sugath Tillekeratne did in the 90s.

When one starts to set the ball rolling, the others follow.

The best example is the impressive show the set of young athletes blazed the trail in Bangkok. There were records and important statistics in volumes. Sri Lanka ended up in the 4th position out of 42 Asian countries that featured in the Championships. List of Championship golds were listed as Japan 16, China 8, India 6 and Sri Lanka 3 (with a total of 8 medals).

Since the conclusion of that memorable show, the Lankan public has begun to believe and rely on Lankan athletics once again. There is no need to mention, petite Tharushi Dissanayake is already a household name with a record-breaking Gold in the 800 metres and Silver in the mixed 4 x400 relay and women's 4 x400 relay.

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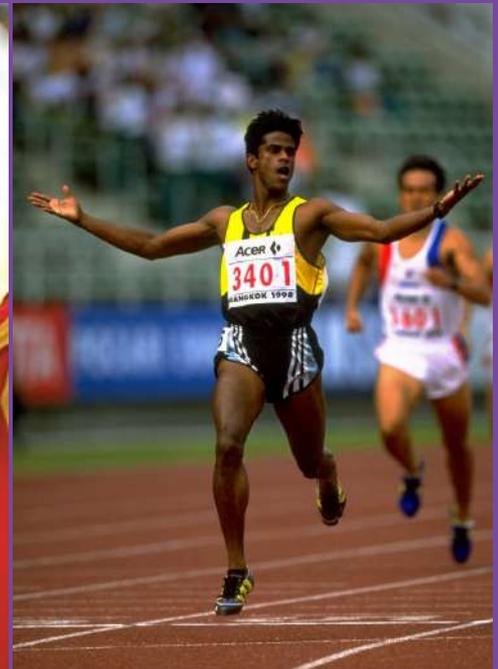
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*Damayanthi Dharsha OLY at the 2002 Asian Games*



*Susanthika Jayasinghe OLY at the 2002 Asian Games*



*Sugath Thilakarathne OLY at the 1998 Asian Games*

The other two gold medals were won by;

- 400metres women's event – Nadeesha Ramanayake (52:61secs.) and,
- 4x400 men's – Aruna Dharshana, Rajitha Niranjan, Pabasara Niku, Kalinga Kumara and \*Pasindu Kodikara (took part in the heats and eligible for Gold) (3:01.56).

The list of medal winners read as;

- 4x400 mixed relay – Aruna Dharshana, Tharushi Dissanayake, Kalinga Kumara and Nadeesha Ramanayake – (Silver – 3:15.41),
- 4x400 women's relay – Nadeesha Ramanayake, Lakshima Mendis, Harshini Fernando and Tharushi Dissanayake, Dilhani Lekamge – women's Javelin throw (Bronze – 60.93.) and,
- Gayanthika Artigala women's 1500m (Bronze -4:14.39).

In the 2014 Incheon Games in South Korea, where the last time cricket was a part of the Asian Games, the Lankans carried a strong contingent under former international senior professionals Lahiru Thirimanne and Dinesh Chandimal, who both later went on to captain the National team. Even at that juncture, they were not strangers in the Lankan National Squad.

As expected, Lankan men carried away the Gold beating Afghanistan in the final, while Chamari Atapattu, who led the women's team, brought home the bronze.

At present, she has turned out to be a cricketing celebrity in the women's international circuit.

Sri Lankan Cricket authorities, considering the tight cricket timetable, will be sending the Development Squad to Hangzhou, but surely that too would be a fighting unit, considering the talent at hand in Lankan men's cricket.

Chamari Atapattu, who already has one Asian Games Bronze, will be leading the female cricket counterpart, looking to climb a step higher with their good international exposure lately.

E-sports and Chess are new to the Asian Games circuit and are also unknown territory.

Yet, if they are successful in their mission in Hangzhou, it would be a proud moment for Lankan sports.

On this premise, we would suggest we are not just Asian write-offs in sports. We have the inner strength to explore how to accomplish the inexplicable.

If these athletes do possess the inner drive, they have the capability of turning tables. On your marks...get set...and the rest is history.

Yet, they must also remember that international athletic medals do not come out of a genie-in-the-bottle.

# 82<sup>ND</sup> MADRAS-COLOMBO REGATTA: BRIDGING WATERS AND BONDS



*(Standing left to right 2nd Row) – Kehan Sooriyaarachchi, Maliq Hassen, Arjun Wikramanayake, Shaylon Gunaratna, Disas Sooriyaarachchi, Viruna Cooray.  
(Standing left to right 1st Row) – Nehan Sithamparam, Abhishek Nanayakkara, Lehana Aluwihare, Oneli Chandrasekara, Rovinya Wijesekera, Binuri Gunawardena, Dhaharath Senanayake, Vihanga Kudaligama.  
(Seated left to right) – Gabrielle Senanayake, Sajin De Livera, Mohamed Rifath(Asst. Coach), Anuradha Nadaraja(Vice Captain), Pasan Ranaweera(Captain), Reshane Fernando(HeadCoach), Thakesha Jayaratne(Asst. Coach), Kemil Peter, Ashvini Subasinghe.*

The excitement is palpable as the 82<sup>nd</sup> Madras-Colombo Regatta approaches, where the Colombo Rowing Club team, consisting of 22 members, will be departing for Chennai on Thursday, July 27, 2023. This highly anticipated annual rowing event, to be held at the iconic Madras Boat Club this year, has been a cherished tradition since 1898, fostering friendly competition and camaraderie between Sri Lanka and India. Among its esteemed accolades, the Men's Boat Race stands as the second oldest inter-club boat race in the world, second only to the famed Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race.

At the heart of the Regatta are the two coveted trophies that await the triumphant crews.

The Men's Boat Race winners will be bestowed with the prestigious Deepam Trophy, while the victors of the Women's Regatta will be honored with the revered Adyar Trophy.

In the previous edition held in Colombo, the Colombo Rowing Club secured victory in the Men's Boat Race, claiming the Deepam Trophy and the Madras Boat Club succeeded in the Women's Regatta, earning the Adyar Trophy. This year, both teams have been diligently training with unwavering determination, setting the stage for an exhilarating showdown on the waters of the Adyar River.

Beyond the competition, this historic event is not just a competition.

It is a testament to the enduring friendship and unity between the Sri Lanka and India and a celebration of the values that sports embody. Last year, in 2022, the Indian CEO Forum generously sponsored the Regatta, bringing together a diverse gathering of Indian expats who took part in the festivities, including the traditional cocktails and the exciting races themselves.

As the 82nd Madras-Colombo Regatta draws near, rowing enthusiasts and sports lovers from both the countries are eagerly awaiting the thrilling races and the display of sportsmanship and skill from the talented athletes. Let the tranquil waters of the Adyar River witness another memorable chapter in the illustrious history of the Madras-Colombo Regatta.

## SAILING UNCHARTED WATERS



The 2023 ILCA 4 Youth World Championship will be held in Volos, Greece at the Nautical Club of Volos.

The Laser 4.7 World Championships, have been held every year since 2002, and is organized by the International Sailing Federation. All sailors are under the age of 18 years and will compete under the 4.7 Laser category. Spread over 10 days, the event is a restricted entry allocation championship that attracts leading sailors from all over the world.

For the first time, a female sailor will represent Sri Lanka at a World Laser Sailing Championship. Taalya Tranchell, a 17 year old student of Ladies' College will compete alongside 150 female sailors.

Selected to represent Sri Lanka at the Asian Games in China, Taalya has been training hard since 2021 when she moved from being an Optimist sailor to 4.7 Laser sailor. In 2022, Taalya represented the country at the Asian Championships in Abu Dhabi and ILCA Asia 2022 in Thailand. Competing in the overall 4.7 category in Sri Lankan, she was placed second at the Sailing Nationals in February and first at the Navy Cup held in April. She was awarded a scholarship to train at Sail Coach, Spain and has been training there since 30<sup>th</sup> June.

Mr. Asanka Goonewardena, the sailing convenor for the Yachting Association of Sri Lanka said, "I am so proud of Taalya. She's an amazing sailor and serves as an example to the growing body of Sri Lankan junior sailors.

"The sport is seeing remarkable growth now, and it is especially encouraging to see girls such as Taalya excelling even at the international level. All of us at the Yachting Association of Sri Lanka are following the event closely and cheering for her."

Wishing Taalya all the best, Mr. Purajitha Taldena, Commodore of the Ceylon Motor Yacht Club said, "I am very happy to see a member of CMYC represent Sri Lanka at the highest level. Sailing is a fantastic sport and we would like to see more young people participating in it".

The event which started on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July will conclude on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July.

*Yachting Association of Sri Lanka*

# GAMES FOR A NEW ERA

*In one year, France and Paris will host the Olympic Summer Games. In doing so, Paris will join London (1908, 1948 and 2012) and later be joined by Los Angeles (1932, 1984 and 2028) as three-time host cities*



## Impressive numbers

The record-breaking numbers seen in the post-Great War period have been far surpassed today. The Olympic Games, once the bastion of amateur sport, have moved triumphantly into the professional era and gone truly global. In 1924, the athletes came from 45 countries, 27 of which were European; in 2024, Europe will no longer be the continent sending the most nations to the “City of Light”. The number of athletes set to compete – 10,500 – is also a world away from the 3,089 who took part in 1924.

Since the Paris Games of 1900 and 1924, this great sporting festival has changed significantly, and organising the event today is a very different beast.

The profile and wider impact the Olympic Games enjoy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is barely comparable with the situation at the start of the previous century.

Put simply, the world has changed, sport has changed and the IOC has changed – meaning the Olympic Games have also changed.

The figures speak for themselves: we’re no longer in the same world, no longer on the same sporting planet.

Back in 1924, the event was still very much in its infancy; today, it is the equivalent of 32 world championships taking place at the same time, the vast majority in the same city.

Back then, much of the event was concentrated around facilities belonging to a single club, the Racing Club de France. One of the biggest clubs in the world, granted, but a scenario that would no longer be possible today: multiple venues are required, which only a country can provide. While Paris 1924 was the first edition to feature an Olympic Village, a number of participants were still put up in hotels. Paris 2024, on the other hand, has set up an Olympic Village that will accommodate more than 15,000 people.

The primary venue at the 1924 Games, the Stade de Colombes, will nevertheless once again have the privilege of hosting a sports competition one century on: hockey.

The renovated Yves-du-Manoir Stadium (as it is officially known) will also have a post-Games legacy, as it is set to become the headquarters of the French Hockey Federation.

Another major development next year will see advances in the participation of female athletes (135 competed in 1924)\*. Olympic Agenda 2020, adopted in 2014 at the IOC Session in Monaco, marked a real turning point in this respect: the Olympic Games in Paris next year will be gender-equal for the first time in history, with the same number of men and women (5,250) competing in 329 events across 32 sports. Over the past century, opportunities for travel have also increased dramatically as travel itself has become global, significantly changing things for spectators attending the event. In 1924, there were around 600,000 spectators over the course of the Games, though it’s impossible to know how many of those in Paris between 5 and 24 July 1924 came from abroad. This time, almost 10 million tickets are on sale for spectators all over the world – 13.5 million if we include the Paralympic Games, which didn’t exist in 1924.

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But what has revolutionised the scale of the Olympic Games more than anything has been the increasingly important role of the media. For decades, the market consisted solely of the written press and photo journalists. The advent of radio provided a platform for the Olympics to develop a voice from 1924 – this helped create suspense and capture the public imagination, as images of the sporting action were painted through words.

Since then, television has taken the Games to a whole new level. While there were only 685 journalists in attendance in 1924 – including a small number of women – more than 25,000 media personnel (mostly from television) will be present next year, and the Games, broadcast in more than 220 countries and territories, will be beamed into households across the planet. Therein, in fact, lies their success: while the 1924 Olympics were essentially for a French audience, Paris 2024 will be watched throughout the world. And in another major development, a village has been built specially for the media, a stone's throw away from Paris-Le Bourget Airport and the Stade de France.

A century on, then, the Games are completely different. A hundred years ago, they were simply an international sports event. Now – and throughout the 10 years or so between the start of the candidature phase and the Games next year – the aim has been to make sure every person in France feels part of the process.

Many other towns and cities will have the privilege of hosting events; Paris 2024 will be Games not just for the capital, but for the whole of France.



Marseille, Châteauroux, Lille and even Tahiti will stage Olympic competitions, although most events will be taking place in Paris and the Paris region.

The day after the Olympic flag was handed over to the city of Paris, a team from Paris 2024 began a journey across France with three flags, featuring the Olympic rings, the Paralympic Agitos and, of course, the Paris 2024 emblem. This was just the first stage in the Olympic adventure. The second came in the shape of “Terre de Jeux 2024”, a label designed to connect people and groups involved in sport – from National Federations and local organisations to French embassies – to encourage joint projects and make sure the Games engage the country as a whole.

Paris 2024 President Tony Estanguet said of the label: “My ambition is for us to use the Games to further strengthen the position of sport within society, and to achieve this, we must engage with all regions. The driving forces for increasing the reach of sport in this country are all the small towns, where we all started out.”

Olympic Day on 23 June has also been harnessed to generate enthusiasm for sport and the Games across France. Sporting greats have taken part in the various editions, sharing their passion and interacting with members of the public, while participants have been able to enjoy all manner of sports demonstrations.

And as part of the “Terre de Jeux 2024” programme, a global 24-hour sports relay was organised, starting in New Zealand and ending in Tahiti, to mark the 500-day countdown to Paris 2024.

## Half a million spectators for the Opening Ceremony

In a historic first, and a departure from previous editions, the Paris Opening Ceremony won't be taking place inside the Olympic Stadium. With Artistic Director Thomas Jolly – Director of the Quai National Drama Centre in Angers, known for his 18-hour production of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* at the Odéon theatre and a new version of *Starmania* – at the helm, the Opening Ceremony is set to light up the river Seine.

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Paris 2024 is breaking new ground by taking sports competitions into the city; the same will be true of the Opening Ceremony. With 140 to 170 barges transporting the national delegations, the athletes' parade will wend its way down a 6km stretch of the river between the Austerlitz bridge and the Trocadéro, where the final shows and protocol ceremonies will take place. The boats will be equipped with multiple cameras so that TV and online viewers can see the athletes up close.

While around 60,000 spectators normally attend the Opening Ceremony, at least eight times as many will be present on the banks of the Seine, and more than 80 per cent will be able to attend free of charge. Eighty giant screens throughout Paris will allow everyone to follow the ceremony live.

As for where the Olympic cauldron, containing the flame that will burn throughout the Games, could go, Jolly certainly has a few ideas. "Leaving it on the water, like a floating candle, would be beautiful. But the flame needs to be big and mobile, and resemble the emblem.



"The city will become the real-life backdrop for this unique event, and the various tableaux will showcase the monuments, bridges and cultural establishments along the banks of the Seine."

While the Games will attract spectators from all over the world, there will also be places where people who haven't been able to get tickets can follow the competitions: the fan zones, which of course didn't exist in 1924; and especially Parc de la Villette, where "Club France" will be based, and which will be one of the official Live Sites next summer, with 200 hours of sports action being broadcast live. The park will be able to welcome between 50,000 and 100,000 people every day, and an extraordinary atmosphere is guaranteed.

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Organising festive Games has been the guiding principle for Paris ever since the candidature phase – Games that break the mould and use monuments in the city and suburbs as the backdrop for competitions.

Sport will be everywhere in Paris: fencing and taekwondo at the Grand Palais, beach volleyball at the Eiffel Tower, triathlon swimming in the Seine, and equestrian and modern pentathlon at the Château de Versailles. And the Organising Committee has decided that the urban sports and disciplines, featuring some of the younger participants, will be best served by being moved out of the more traditional arenas and into the very heart of the city.

For more or less the duration of the Games, from 27 July to 10 August, Place de la Concorde will play host to BMX freestyle, breaking, skateboarding and 3x3 basketball.

For the first time in Olympic history, athletics and cycling, two of the major sports, will have events that are open to the general public, who will therefore be able to say that they have taken part in the Games.

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One of these mass participation events is the marathon, which will follow a symbolic route, on a looped circuit between Paris and Versailles, that ties into France's revolutionary history.

On 5 and 6 October 1789, with the capital suffering from bread shortages, between 6,000 and 7,000 women set out from Paris City Hall and marched on Versailles, to make Louis XVI aware of their plight and demand reforms – which led to the ratification of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and saw the King return to the Tuileries.

The Paris stretch of the route will also take runners past the Palais Garnier opera house and the Louvre pyramid.

Double Olympic marathon champion, Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge, himself came to the capital to launch the event.

For those who don't feel they have done the training to tackle the marathon's 42.195km, a 10km run will also be open to the public.

The other mass participation event will be a cycling race, which will take place in Parc de la Courneuve, not far from the Stade de France.

The revolutionary spirit is also reflected in the Paris 2024 mascots. Unlike most editions since 1972, the Organising Committee decided not to select an animal as the mascot, opting instead for the "Phryges". An unorthodox choice to many foreign onlookers, but very much in keeping with the tone Paris 2024 organisers wanted, the "Phryges" are based on an item of clothing that is a symbol of freedom, has been part of history for centuries, and dates back to ancient times.

Having featured on certain flags in Latin America before being widely popularised by French revolutionaries, the Phrygian cap has now become a familiar symbol in France.

It is a symbol of revolutions, the French Republic and freedom, and can be seen on the French national icon, Marianne, depicted in busts at town halls and on stamps. The National Archives show records of Phrygian caps being worn during the construction of Paris's Notre-Dame cathedral in 1163.

## Sustainable Games

Faced with the environmental and social issues of the 21st century – humanity's greatest challenge – the world of sport needs to assume its share of responsibility.

By halving Games-related emissions and offsetting more than the CO2 emissions generated, the Paris 2024 Games will be sustainable in a way never seen before. And because the Games provide an opportunity to think bigger and look to the future, they have to help pick up the pace of the environmental transition in sport, regions across France and major events.

This is why the city of Paris will be opening 60km of cycling lanes to link all the competition venues, complete with dedicated route signage. The lanes closest to the venues will be decorated with the Games pictograms and colours. These Olympic lanes will be kept as a post-Games legacy, becoming part of the daily lives of Paris residents.

The Olympic lanes, and the many other innovations, are all part of the transformation of Paris which, in one year's time, will play host not just to a sporting event, but an experience for everyone – athletes, spectators, residents and the watching world.

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