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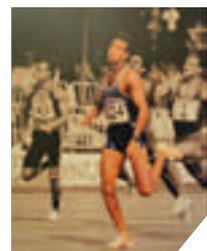
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CHASE THE DREAM!



FOREWORD ASANGA SENEVIRATNE

Vice President, National Olympic Committee

The National Olympic Committee has embarked on an ambitious plan to build a High Performance programme and plan, for our top athletes. We will build a sustainable strategy to increase support for our athletes and help increase Olympic values in our society.

We have documented our athletes and are financially supporting their plans and training programmes. We have engaged Olympic Solidarity and have obtained long term financial support for many of our elite athletes and also arranged top level educational courses for our coaches.

We launched our new website www.olympic.lk and have profiled all our top athletes and have structured new sponsors by identifying levels that will activate returns, with a focus to increase relationships/activation with partners and build our Olympic dream.

The GoodSport magazine has given exposure to all our sports and our athletes' performances. This will help bring sponsors and much needed publicity to sport in the country.

The marketing campaign has given a new corporate image to the NOC and will be further enhanced through

the core Olympic events such as the Olympic Day Run, the World Athletics Championships, South Asian Games (SAG) and Tokyo 2020.

The facilities available for our athletes and coaches for training and competition are inadequate. We must work with the Sports Ministry to start a process to ensure we have top class facilities by at least 2022 - 2024, if we are serious about achieving medal success and world class performances we have to prepare our athletes for competitions.

The Olympic emblem is the most recognizable logo in the world and our exclusive partners will be given access to brand their products and enhance their corporate identity while supporting Olympic values.

We have partnered with ALTIS WORLD, a top class training facility in the USA and our short term plan is to send some of our top athletes to obtain specialist training. We have started supporting athletes to participate in overseas meets since at the moment the level of participation in world class competitions, is grossly inadequate. Our long term plan is to build a world class High Performance facility in Sri Lanka so that all sixty four sports in the country can have access to scientific training.

The National Olympic Committee is striving to taking sport in this country forward and achieve international success.

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Photo:
Sprinter Nadeesha Ramanayake
praying for success

NOC NEWS



Hemasiri and Pinnawela felicitated at the NOC SL SGM

As a tribute to their yeoman service to the development of sport in Sri Lanka and its National Olympic Committee; immediate Hemasiri Fernando who headed the organisation for 21 years from 1997 to 2018 and veteran Olympian Prema Pinnawela who held the position of Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee for fourteen long years from 1983 to 1997 were felicitated at NOC SL's Special General Meeting held at its headquarters, yesterday.

Both these Olympians were heralded with honorary life memberships and felicitation plaques to this effect was handed over to Mr. Pinnawela from NOC SL by President

Mr. Suresh Subramaniam and its Secretary General Maxwell de Silva.

At present, Pinnawela is the present secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association of Sri Lanka.

Prior to that, the NOC SL also had named the Olympic House auditorium, after Hemasiri Fernando as a mark of respect and to honour his contribution to the movement by calling it the "Hemasiri Fernando Auditorium".

Upon taking over as President of the NOC SL in 1997, Mr. Hemasiri Fernando also held many important portfolios in the

government sector and was instrumental in moving the NOC office to the more spacious Sugathadasa Stadium office from an office room at the Race Course where the "Olympic House" dream was hatched.

The real four storied "Olympic House" became a reality on 23 September 2008

.....

Photo:

NOC SL President Mr. Suresh Subramaniam receives the lifetime award plaque in honour of its past president Mr Hemasiri Fernando (absent) from NOC SL General Secretary Maxwell de Silva. Also in the picture is NOC SL Treasurer Mr. Senaka Ranasinghe

NOC NEWS

amidst a huge gathering of dignitaries.

At present Mr. Fernando is the Immediate Past President of the National Olympic Committee (NOC)/Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) of Sri Lanka and also the honorary Vice President, Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) - (since July 2011) and Regional Vice President (Asia), Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) - (since 2007).

Among the other important decisions that were passed were the addition of two new members to its executive committee in Surfing Federation of Sri Lanka and National Association for Climbing and Mountaineering in Sri Lanka while Ski and Snow Board Association was granted Associated Membership without voting rights.

Speaking in his capacity of the President NOC SL Subramaniam said "Though the period under purview of 2017 and he was not familiar with what transpired at that time, he said that on the



strength of the pillars that his predecessor Hemasiri Fernando had built, it was easy for him draw up his strong future plan that is formulated with his present Executive Committee. Noteworthy among them are the forming of the high performance unit under the capable hands of Vice President Asanga Seneviratne and the Sexual Harassment Prevention resolution that was launched under the guidance of NOC SL Women's Committee Chairperson Niloo Jayatilake."

Left:
Mr. Hemasiri Fernando

Top:
NOC SL President Suresh Subramaniam hands over the lifetime award plaque in honour of its former Secretary General Prema Pinnawale, while the present NOC SL Secretary General Maxwell de Silva looks on

Bottom:
NOC SL SGM in progress

NOC SL's coral preservation programme launched

The NOC SL in its strive in becoming a global partner in environment protection and sustainability, launched its Coral Replanting Project in Polhena, Matara.

During this three-year programme, the NOC SL is planning to spread its gospel in a few more locations in Sri Lanka where the country's life sustaining coral cover is damaged due to various reasons.

To make this endeavour a success, the NOC SL have sought the guidance and assistance of different partners such as The National Aquatic Resource and Development Authority (NARA) Sri Lanka NAVY combine with Coast Conservation, Coast Guard, Marine Environment Protection Authority and the Wildlife Authority. Besides the respective hoteliers on such locations will also be partners of the project.

Also there are some individuals who are playing a pivotal part in this programme. M/s Dillai Joseph who is a renowned artist and a environ protection enthusiast, Yusuf Mo a coral protection expert, Hiran Ukwatte the president of the Surfing Federation of Sri Lanka are the front players here.

Once the Coral Protection programme is set in motion, the NOC SL will maintain a fully fledged coral preservation information centre too.

Different parties in different levels will be benefited by this project. The NOC SL has targeted several age groups in the community.

1. Children are the next generation of any society to carry out and make positive impacts. Therefore, approximately 500

schoolchildren will be invited to participate in the Programme.

2. NOC Officials who are also key holders of National Federations in promoting sports and Olympism among different cultural groups will attend the programme.

3. Olympians - the rolemodel/ ambassadors who has power of influencing the community and other general public to give an indirect awareness about the Olympism and Environmental sustainability will be participating on beach cleaning programme.

Hoteliers, and the common community, and the people who are in the tourism arena as their living income will assist in the clean beach and the replanted coral environment programmes.



Medical Panel of NOC Sri Lanka formed



As suggested and recommended by Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Dr. C. Thurairaja, Co-Chair of the Medical Committee to form a medical panel to get services from any Physician in the Medical panel, free of charge for athletes whom have to be identified by NOC Sri Lanka.

Chairman – Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Dr. C. Thurairaja

01. Prof. Rohan Jayasekara - Teaching & Training Team Physician
02. Dr. Lalith Wijeratne - Teaching & Training Team Physician
03. Dr. Narendra Pinto - Orthopedic Surgeon
04. Dr. Upali Banagala - Orthopedic Surgeon
05. Prof. Aloka Pathirana - General Surgeon
06. Prof. Deepal Wijesekara - Gynaecologist
07. Dr. Asela Ratnayake - Kandy, Sports Medicine & Anti-Doping
08. Dr. Susantha Paris - Matara, Sports Medicine & Anti-Doping
09. Dr. Upul Madahapola - Kurunegala, Sports Medicine & Anti-Doping
10. Dr. Sherika Samarasinghe - Military, Sports Medicine & Anti-Doping
11. Dr. Sumudu Rajasinghe - Psychology and Counselling
12. Dr. Harindu Wijesinghe - Rheumatologist
13. Dr. Chathuranga Ranasinghe - Exercise Physiology
14. Dr. N.H. Gooneratne - Aviation and Travel Medicine
15. Dr. Himan de Silva - Karapitiya Teaching Hospital
16. Dr. A.V. Ranasinghe
17. Dr. Sudeera Udawela

Photo:
Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Dr. C. Thurairaja, Co-Chair of the Medical Committee explains a point

OCA Sub committees appointments

It was informed by Mr. Vinod Kumar Tiwari, Director – International & NOC Relations of OCA the following officials have been appointment for OCA Sub-Committees.

1. **Mr. Hemasiri Fernando**
Immediate Past President of NOC-Honorary Vice President,
2. **Mr. Suresh Subramaniam**
President, NOC SL-Member, International Relations
3. **Mr. Maxwell de Silva**
Secretary General, NOC SL-Vice Chairman, Education
4. **Mr. Senaka Ranasinghe**
Treasurer, NOC SL / Secretary, NOC SL Finance Committee - Member, Peace through Sports
5. **Mr. Chandana Liyanage**
Asst. Secretary, NOC SL / Chairman-NOC SL Infrastructure Committee - Member, Information & Statistics
6. **Major General Dampath Fernando** *Chairman, NOC SL Constitution Committee - Member, Sports & Environment*
7. **Ms. Niloo Jayatilake**
Chairperson, NOC SL Women's Committee Member, Women & Sports



Photo:
The organising committee of the Nepal South Asian Games 2019 pose for a photograph

Election of Sri Lanka Hockey Federation



Photo:
NOC SL Vice President Sumith Edirisinghe was elected the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Hockey Federation

After five long years of slowing down of the sport as a result of Interim Committees, the Election of Sri Lanka Hockey Federation was held through a Court of Appeal, on

10th April 2019 under supervision of the Election Committee.

Nominated by NOC Sri Lanka - Mr. S. Wirithamulla - A lawyer by profession, Mr. S. Liyanagama - A lawyer by profession and Mr. Joseph Kenny - Vice President of NOC Sri Lanka supervised the proceedings along with nominated members by the Ministry of Sports were -- Mr. R.B. Wickramasinghe - Assistant Director, Department of Sports Development and Ms. Nadeeka Damayanthi - Assistant Director, Department of Sports Development.

P. Vishvanathan a former president of the Nationalised Services Hockey Association, represented his alma mater Wesley in hockey while at school.

Senior DIG (Retired) Sumith Edirisingha and a present Vice President of the NOC SL and an old boy of Nalanda

College, Colombo was elected as the secretary. Earlier Mr. Edirisingha served as the President of the Sri Lanka Hockey Federation from 2006 to 2008.

Elected office bearers for the period from 2019 to 2021 are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| President | : Mr. P. Vishvanathan |
| Secretary | : Senior DIG (Rtd) Sumith Edirisingha |
| Vice President | : Prison Commissioner (Rtd) Gamini Jayasinghe
ASP Darshana Wijesinghe
Mr. W. Mervin Fernando
Mr. K. Jayarathnam
Flight Sergeant G.H.G.K. Ganegoda |
| Treasurer | : Mr. G. Gaya Perera |
| Assistant Secretary | : Mr. P.M.D.P.D. Basnayaka |
| Assistant Treasurer | : Mr. D.S. Kapukotuwa |

Tokyo 2020 Olympics Chef de Mission Seminar



The CDM seminar of the Tokyo 2020 will be held from 20th to 22nd August 2019 at the Hotel New Otani.

Mr. Maxwell de Silva, Secretary General will attend the Seminar.

There they are scheduled to discuss and agree on matters of mutual interest for speedy action.

Meanwhile Mr. Maxwell De Silva was also appointed the Secretary of South Asian Judo Federation.



NOC SL Vice President Seneviratne in successful HOO meeting



Photo:
NOC SL Vice President Asanga Seneviratne and HOO President Zlatko Mateša in Croatia

The President of the Croatian Olympic Committee (HOO) Zlatko Mateša, along with the Croatian NOC's International Cooperation Department Ljiljana Ujlaki Šubić, received Sri Lanka NOC's Vice President Asanga Seneviratne at its headquarters recently.

NOC SL Vice President, Seneviratne was in Croatia seeking the possibilities of establishing cooperation in the field of sports, especially handball. At the meeting HOO President Zlatko Mateša also recalled the agreement that the two countries signed in Colombo in 2010.

According to the provisions of the agreement signed, it covers the exchange of coaches and athletes and the exchange of expertise as well as professional knowledge on sports infrastructure.

Besides, the Croatian NOC President urged the Sri Lankan counterparts take the maximum advantage of their Handball Training facilities especially in training and coaching.

The vice president of the Croatian Handball Federation Zoran Gobac was also a part of this highly successful meeting.

NOC Sec Gen nominated for post of CGF VP

Sri Lanka's Secretary General of the National Olympic Committee, Mr. Maxwell de Silva has been nominated for position of one of the vice presidents of the CGF.

The election of office-bearers will also be held at the General Assembly which will be held in Kigali, Rwanda on 05th September 2019.

The other contestants for this position would be William Blick (Uganda), Chris Jenkins (Wales), Bruce Robertson (Canada) and Kereyn Smith (New Zealand).

A veteran Olympic and Commonwealth Official, Mr. de Silva has served in his capacity for over a decade and has been the innovator of several concepts within the Olympic realms.

Among the most significant was -- for the first time in the historical journey of Olympism, the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC Sri Lanka) implemented the project of Inter School Pilot Debate Programme which is called 'OVEP Debater'. The theme was Olympic Education Values via schoolchildren, who are the core of society -- a programme which was hailed by many within the Olympic circles.

In June this year Mr. de Silva was the mover of the environmental awareness programme named "Give the coral another chance" where the NOC SL undertook to rejuvenate a section of the dead coral at Polhena, Matara with the blessings of the IOC. This will be a three year sustainable programme.



Photo:
Secretary General National Olympic Committee Sri Lanka Mr. Maxwell de Silva handing over a prize to one of the OVEP winners

NOC Sri Lanka – Policy of Sexual Harassment



Photo:
Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka is chaired by Ms. Niloo Jayatilake

The Women's Committee of NOC Sri Lanka which is chaired by Ms. Niloo Jayatilake has formulated a policy on Sexual Harassment with the assistance of attorney's D.L. & F. De Saram. As stated by Ms. Jayatilake a committee representing

sports committees of all the National Federations have the responsibility to society and through this policy that has addressed abuses which has not formed so far. As described by her, the Policy is a legal platform of Panel of Officials that listen grievances not only for females but for both genders. Policy primary covers sports affiliated to NOC Sri Lanka and also other multi sports that has recognised (comes under Asian Games and South Asian Games, etc that are not affiliated to NOC Sri Lanka) under the purview of NOC Sri Lanka.

Firstly that athlete, any person or any other person on behalf of the affected person could lodge the complaint to the Complaint Committee which consists of a top reputed athlete, two legal officials who are involved in legal entities such harassments/abuses and one member from Women's Committee that not conflict the interest.

Thereafter the voice would be bring out to the Hearing Committee which is the official

Panel consists of President or Secretary General of NOC Sri Lanka, an identified experienced Police Officer and legal persons with knowledge in such scenario. Thereafter the Hearing Committee will submit the status of the complaint with the mechanism for final recourse such as if guilty, to suspend from committees, etc.

The list of the Complaints Committee names has already been shortlisted. They are -- Sabrina Esufally (Lawyer from Harvard and gender equality activist), Preethi Adihetty (Former head of Women in Need and lawyer), Professor Asitha De Silva (Chairman, National Drug Regulatory Authority), Dr Nihal De Silva (apparently former Olympian and Doctor of Medicine), Jayanthi Kuru Uthampala (First to climb Mount Everest), Caryll Tozer (former Mrs. Sri Lanka and activist), Dillai Joseph (Activist cum painter), Nedra Wickremasinghe (Entrepreneur and activist), Shranya Sekaram (Young Activist), Shyalama Gomez – Executive Director, Centre for Equality and Justice.

Trinidad and Tobago to host 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games

Trinidad and Tobago will host the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games after they were selected as the host city of the multi-sport event by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).

Trinidad and Tobago were bidding against Gibraltar for the right to stage the competition and both Commonwealth Games Associations (CGAs) were praised as excellent bidders by the CGF Evaluation Commission following visits in January and February this year.

The CGF Executive Board voted for Trinidad and Tobago as the host of the 2021 Games at their Executive Board Meeting at the Macdonald Burlington Hotel in Birmingham following impressive presentations from both CGAs.

Trinidad and Tobago's success builds on the back of the Bahamas hosting a successful Games in 2017 and continues the CGF's commitment to small states and island states.

CGF President Dame Louise Martin DBE: "We are delighted to award Trinidad and Tobago the opportunity to host the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games.

"We had a very strong bid process and the Board felt at this point in time, the Caribbean offers a fantastic platform for the Commonwealth Sports Movement to build upon.

Programme of Olympic Scholarships for Coaches 2019

Shuttler Chandrika flies high in Budapest

Ms. Hettiarachchige Renu Chandrika De Silva one of the most experienced female shuttlers in the country successfully completed the International Coaching Course conducted by the University of Physical Education in Budapest in Hungary from 18th March to 7th June 2019.

Ms. De Silva who is an active coach in Badminton attached to Sri Lanka Badminton was selected and invited to attend the above course by the above mentioned University of Physical Education in Hungary and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Olympic Solidarity on the recommendation of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka funded the scholarship.

Ms. De Silva successfully completed the course with excellent marks.

Chandrika won the Sri Lanka national championships in 1997 to 2003 and regained the title back in 2005.

In 2004, she won one silver and three bronze medals at the 2004 South Asian Games and at the 2005 Nepal Satellite championship she clinched the women's single and mixed doubles events. In the same year, Chandrika reached the women's doubles quarterfinals at the Asian Championships. She also have won women's and mixed doubles titles in Syria and Jordan.



Photo:
Renu Chandrika with co-member of the course

US Weightlifting Scholarship Navindra Dayan

Navindra Dayan Gamage, one of the senior most national coaches of Weightlifting, has been awarded a full paid Olympic Solidarity and USOC Coaches Scholarship to undergo the ICECP (International Coaching Enrichment Certificate Programme).

A former South Asian Games Silver medallist in the 77kgs category 2006 in Islamabad, Pakistan, Dayan also won the Bronze in the same weight class at the 2003 SAG. As an active athlete he also represented Sri Lanka at the 2006 and 2014 Commonwealth Games respectively in Melbourne and Glasgow.

Dayan is the present Assistant Coach for weightlifting pool under R.B. Wickremasinghe and had been in active coaching since 2005.

As part of the scholarship, all costs related to the educational programme as well as board, lodging, transportation and airline tickets will be covered and the dates of the ICECP are from 15 September – 12 October 2019 and the course is being held at the U.S. Olympic Training Centre in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) in partnership with the University of Delaware and the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity department is pleased to offer the 12th edition of the International Coaching Enrichment Certificate Programme (ICECP), by offering a full paid scholarship based coaching education program to national ranked coaches from around the world.

The U.S. Olympic Committee has benefitted from a close collaboration on this programme with the U.S Department of State, including relations with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Sports Diplomacy Office regarding the benefits of the ICECP and utilisation of sports as a means of diplomacy.

Within the respective programme, coaches will have the opportunity to do a one-week sport specific high-level apprenticeship with a U.S. national team, university team or with a high-performance club.

Winners of 'OVEP 2017 Debater Programme' visit Olympia

It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Four young students from Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy took wings to Greece after they ended up as the winners of the 'Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) 2017 Debater Programme' which was organized by the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka.

The OVEP concept is unique and new to the Olympic Charter. This is the first time in the history of Olympics the OVEP programme was launched and the launchpad happened to be in Sri Lanka.

Thus the four Lankan girls had the opportunity to visit Ancient Olympia to participate in the 59th International Session for Young Participants as observers, 1st to 8th June 2019.

The following took part in their tour of discovery: Apoorva Herath Ekanayake (Captain), Thinali Ovindi Rathnayake and Jayani Buddhini Kumari Herath.

However owing unavoidable circumstances team member Sarah Parami Perera and programme in charge Prof. B.L.H. Perera, Academic Programmes Director of National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka, could not make the trip.

As their winning entry team delivered a presentation on 'Concept of Debate in promoting Olympic Educational Values' amongst over 200 participants.

The following is a guest article written by Deanna L. Binder (PhD), Olympic Educator, Canada on Promoting Olympic

Values after her firsthand experience in Sri Lanka.

The Olympic Games are celebrated worldwide as a great spectacle of sport. What most people don't know is that they began 120 years ago as an educational project. Pierre de Coubertin, a French aristocrat, wanted to reform the schools of France by adding sport and games to the curricula. He organised an international sporting event to bring attention to his project. The rest is history, except that it took a long time before the Olympic Movement actually began to focus on promoting the educational ideals that Coubertin built into the charter that he wrote for his International Olympic Committee. Attention was always focused on the elite sport competitions.



Photo: An OVEP contender proving a point at the debate

NOC NEWS



Photo: Contestants representing Nalanda College, Colombo

The Sri Lankan National Olympic Committee launched a rather remarkable project to promote these ideals among the youth of the country. During the OVEP 2017 Debaters Challenge, secondary students from schools in Colombo and Kandy battled each other on stage over issues related to ethics in sport. It was my privilege to be there.

OVEP stands for Olympic Values Education Programme, and is the title of the international educational programme of the IOC. The programme is based on five educational values of the Olympic Movement: joy of effort in sport and physical activity, fair play, respect for others, pursuit of excellence, and balance between body, will and mind. These values are the core of the fundamental.

The auditorium was buzzing with young people dressed to the nines in their school uniforms when I arrived in August 2017 for the first round of debates. This is not

the typical scene for an Olympic-styled competition. But the Sri Lankan National Olympic Committee under the inspired leadership of Mr. B.L.H. Perera, one of Sri Lanka's outstanding sport educators and Mr. Maxwell de Silva, the Secretary General of the NOC - with the blessing of the Ministry of Education - convinced 10 leading schools from Colombo and 10 from Kandy to participate in the project. Awareness workshops were held in both cities. Then first round, second round and quarter final debates among the schools were held in each city, with two schools eliminated at the end of each round. It was a unique approach to creating awareness about values in sport. I was there as one of the judges.

From my perspective as a judge, and as the author of the original IOC Olympic Values Education Programme tool-kit the initiative presented an excellent opportunity for students who may not have been competitive athletes to engage in deep

reflection and discussion on values-based concerns not only in sport but also in life. Topics for the debates were based on the five educational values of the Olympic Movement as described in the OVEP programme. Thus, each of the teams of three had to explore a topic such as: Joy of effort is the ultimate success for a competitor. Respect is the basis for practising sport as a human right.

Pursuit of excellence is the result of continuous practice.

They were judged on both content and delivery. I was impressed by the confidence and competence of all of the presenters, and by the level of organisation and enthusiasm of the NOC staff and its volunteers.

The OVEP Debaters Programme elicited a great deal of interest in the schools and in the sport media. I was able to interact with students and teachers, all

NOC NEWS

of whom expressed excitement about exploring topics related to sport and the Olympic Movement. Most of these young debaters were not athletes and had limited experience with sport. They certainly learned a lot in a short time.

And with them, the entire Olympic Movement is struggling to learn about values, and specifically how to cope with ethical/values-based issues that threaten the credibility of the Olympic Movement. This credibility depends on the ability of the IOC and its affiliates to “walk the talk” about Olympic values. Performance enhancing drug abuse scandals such as the Russia systematic doping fiasco during the Winter Games in Sochi and the over-the-top expenditures required to host an Olympic Games and/or produce Olympic champions are ongoing challenges for coaches, athletes and officials in the IOC, in the various NOCs and in the International and National Sport Federations.

In December 2014 a new strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement was adopted by the members of the International Olympic Committee which specifically recommended that the IOC, “spread Olympic values-based education.” Titled Agenda 2020 the report includes the following three suggestions under Recommendation 22:



Photo: A Contestant from Sirimavo Bandaranaike BMV in action



Photo: The mentor of the OVEP Mr. Maxwell de Silva addressing the gathering

Recommendation 22: Spread Olympic values-based education:

The IOC to strengthen its partnership with UNESCO to include sport and its values in school curricula worldwide.

The IOC to devise an electronic platform to share Olympic values-based education programmes of different NOCs and other organisations.

The IOC to identify and support initiatives that can help spread the Olympic values (International Olympic Committee (2014).

With this as a mandate, the global Olympic community is now onside to explore the challenges of introducing the values of the Olympic Movement, not only in sport organizations, but in schools and communities. Now there is also a compelling reason for systematic research that offers evidence-based insights for promoting best practices for implementing Olympic values education in school-based settings around the globe. Sri Lankan students could be engaged in this research.

Margaret Sommerville suggests in her book *The Ethical Imagination* that: “Finding

a shared ethical base in a pluralistic, multicultural, global society...is crucial to our survival physically and morally”. The Olympic Movement has a stated mandate for promoting its version of shared values among the over- two hundred countries that send athletes to participate in Olympic Games. These shared values are articulated in the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter.

Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles (Fundamental Principle #1, Olympic Charter, 2015).

Introducing best practices for promoting Olympic values is an educational challenge for coaches and educators, as Mr. B.L.H. Perera has been saying for his whole teaching career, and as Pierre de Coubertin argued when he founded the Olympic Games. This challenge offers up two key questions: How do young people/athletes learn values?... and therefore: How do coaches and teachers teach them? The Olympic Values Education Programme offers suggestions to answer these questions. Good coaching strategies also

NOC NEWS

provide answers. The Sri Lankan National Olympic Committee came up with a unique way to reach secondary students as they explored these questions.

Today, every city bidding for an Olympic Game is required to outline its plans for an Olympic education initiative. The legacy of Olympic education could serve as a 'bridge' between the striving for excellence by elite athletes and the reaching for dreams by a young child jumping over a school bench. What greater legacy could there be for the Olympic Movement? The challenge for all who believe that sport and physical activity provide a context for learning about life is how to realize these aims. As de Coubertin himself writes, it is not enough to talk about them; they must be practised.

In debating the values-based issues of sport and life, the Sri Lankan debaters were practising and communicating these values. In the dramatic finale of the OVEP 2017 Debaters Challenge held at the



Photo: Convener of OVEP Mr. B.L.H. Perera addressing the gathering

Rupavahini Corporation's studio located at the Open University of Sri Lanka three young women from Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya from Colombo faced off against three young ladies from Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy. The Mahamayavians were honoured to write their school's

name in the Sri Lankan Olympic history books by becoming the first ever winning OVEP Debaters in the OVEP Debater 2017 pilot programme. They will be offered the wonderful opportunity of visiting Ancient Olympia, the birth place of the Olympic Games in ancient times.



Photo: Contestants representing Muslim Ladies College



Smart Cooling Garment for Sri Lankan Cycling Athletes

By Tharushi Wickramaratne

Heat illnesses, which occur due to lack of cooling comfort, have been identified as a critical condition among athletes globally. Meantime, with the evolvement of outdoor sports activities and also due to the elevating environmental temperature levels in Sri Lanka, high risk of heat illnesses can be predicted among Sri Lankans.

Therefore, having appropriate heat dissipation/cooling solution, which can support body heat dissipation under extreme climate conditions, is an essential requirement for Sri Lankan outdoor athletes. Additionally, eventhough several cooling garment solutions are available globally, which could averse the risk of heat illnesses and heat discomfort, lack of solutions can be found which were designed considering the requirements of the tropical climate in Sri Lanka. Hence,

this research aims to develop a smart cooling garment concept focusing on Sri Lankan cycling athletes to averse the risk of heat illnesses and heat discomfort.

Research approach

The first phase of the research was conducted in March 2019, and it consisted of four focus group discussions, four idea generation workshops and one screening workshop. These sessions consisted of cycling athletes from the Sri Lanka Navy, Dehiwala Municipal Council (DMC), Air Force and Police cycling teams.

During the focus group discussions, a presentation to brief about research project objective and the purpose was focussed. Afterward, we invited the cycling athletes to engage in group discussions to express their, experiences with existing cycling

garments, expectations for a future cycling garment, cooling comfort requirements and perspective for the smart garment technology.

During idea generation workshops, a few videos of the latest sports smart garment concepts to the athletes were discussed. Afterward, the cycling athletes were invited to engage in workshop activities to express their ideas for future cooling cycling garment concepts. The cycling athletes were given the liberty to express their ideas either verbally, as sketches or as preliminary mock-ups.

Finally, the screening workshop with the representatives from the teams involved in idea generation workshops. The screening workshop was conducted to filter the best design ideas to consider for the project.

NOC NEWS

We initiated the workshop by requesting the cycling athletes to evaluate and select the best design ideas to consider for the project.

All the research activities were conducted after obtaining ethics approvals from Human Research Ethics Division, Swinburne University of Technology. The National Olympic Committee, Sri Lanka (NOC SL) supported the research team, for cycling athlete recruitment for the research activities and the activities were conducted in the premises of NOC SL.

Findings

The cycling athletes identified cooling comfort, odour control, stretch ability, skin friendliness, touch comfort especially with edge elastics, having lightweight material, sweat absorbency, quick drying ability, a lesser thickness of the garment material, durability, fall protection, perfect fit, aesthetics and cost-effectiveness as essential attributes required for a cycling garment.

Concerning smart functions, sensor integrated garments, which could detect heart rate, body hydration level, calories burnt amount, cramp occurrence, and body temperature were identified as the prime requirements. In addition to smart functions, which detect body parameters, cyclists were also interested in smart garment concepts, which could provide customized cooling, adoptable cooling, smart body recovery, coaching instructions, the ability to detect the speed and distance of the competitor team and a communicator system. During the final screening workshop, the cycling athletes filtered and selected 7 concepts from a total of 31 designs and finally, these concepts were filtered into one a t-shirt and a pair of shorts concepts.

Next phase of the research

The next phase of the research is the development of smart garment prototypes and validation trials with Sri Lankan cyclists. The prototype development will



be conducted based on the screened design concepts (Fig 01 and 02). The cycling athletes identified behind the neck and between leg zones as heat sensitive body areas and the cooling technology will be incorporated into these areas of the garment. Additionally, chest, upper back and underarm areas of the garment will include a material, which enhances sweat evaporation to promote evaporative heat loss. Additionally, we will finalize the materials and trims for the garment considering the cycling wear attributes identified by the cycling athletes. Smart functions related to cooling comfort will be considered as prime requirements, which include customized and adaptable smart cooling.

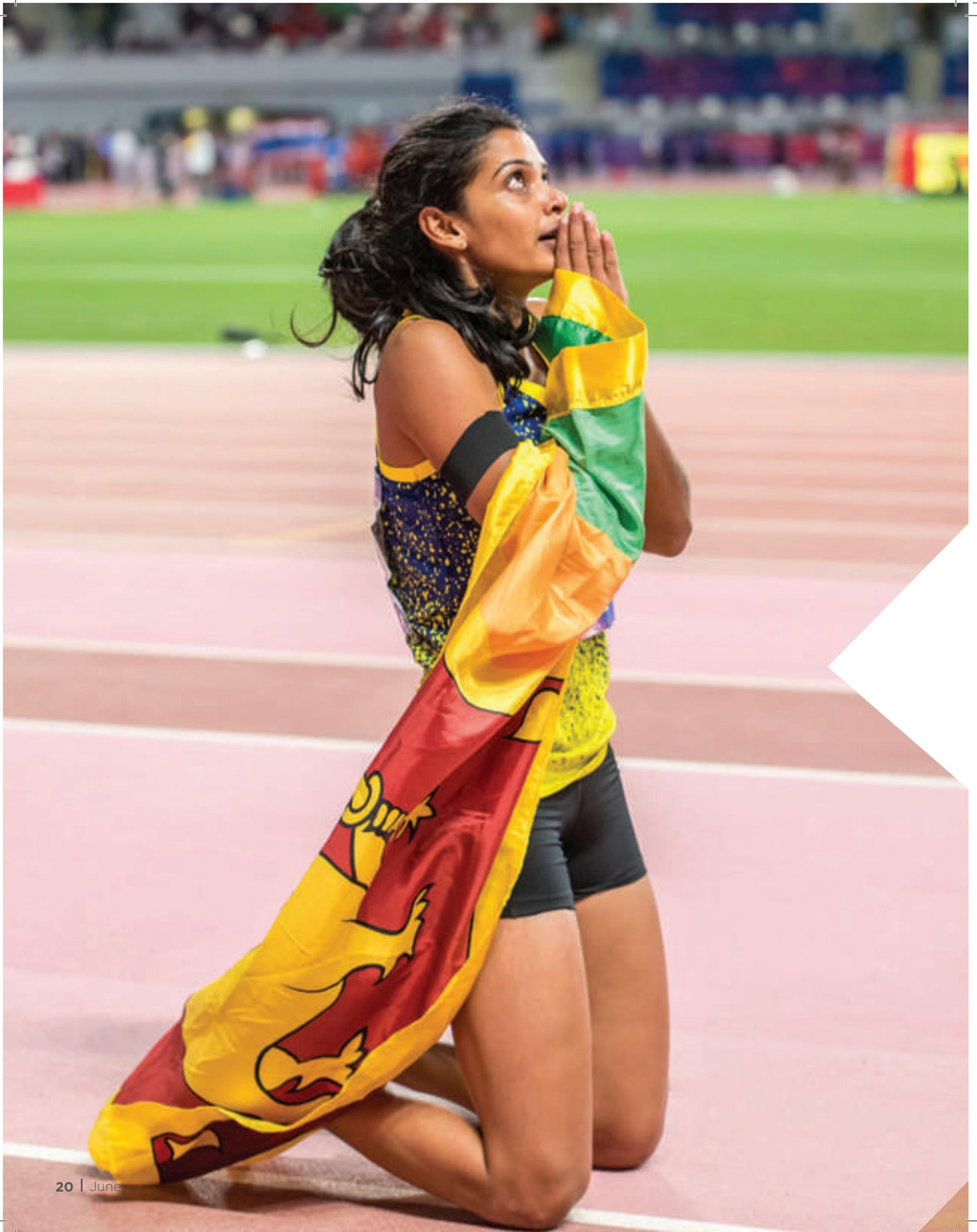
Research Team

This research project has been conducted to satisfy the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy degree of Tharushi Wickramaratne who is a PhD student at Swinburne University of Technology,

Australia. The project is supervised by Dr. Abdullah Al Mahmud (Principal supervisor) and Prof. Blair Kuys (Associate supervisor).

Photo:

Tharushi Wickramaratne explaining her project





THE BRONZE GIRL

By Saabir Cader

Despite different experiences in our personal lives, we cannot afford to back out from our commitments. Vidusha struck a bronze in silence while the entire world gaped in horror after the Easter Sunday attacks on Sri Lanka by terrorists. Yet, as the Asian Athletics Championship (AAC) 2019 concluded on April 24, Sri Lanka's only win was the Bronze medal brought home by 23-year-old Vidusha Lakshani.

"I lost some of my schoolmates as well as some close friends including teachers in the aftermath of that ghastly experience. It was not really the kind of news I wished to hear and I was deeply disturbed. The moment I heard this incident in Negombo I panicked and was trying to reach my people back home over the phone but it was not contactable for a period of time. I somehow got few messages from cousins saying all are safe back home." In reality that was her experience 24 hours before her did her triple jump.

Doha will remain a memorable place for her as it was her first international medal as a senior athlete. Vidusha expressed her gratitude for the tremendous support she received from her coaches and family who shared her line of progress from the start of her career. She said: "First it was my sister Vindya who initially sowed the seeds of competition and athletics in my family. Yet, she breasted the tape after her stint at school, but I chose to continue."



Photo:
Vidusha Lakshani leaps the final stride



Under the guidance of coach Philip Ranjith, Vidusha shone bright as a junior national athlete at Newstead Girls' College. Having tried both High Jump and 400m hurdles events, Vidusha set her eyes on the Triple jump event. In the last two years, she underwent intensive training with Cuban coach Luiz Miranda. There she was with the firm belief that she could improve herself for the international challenges. She competed in World Juniors at USA in 2014 after winning the gold medal in Junior South Asian event in 2013.

Recognizing her potential the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC SL) offered her a scholarship to study, train and compete in a University in US. However, Vidusha

declined this lucrative offer due to personal reasons.

The key driving force behind her performance in Doha in 2019 was her will to prove herself. In 2017 at the same event she ended up empty handed. This time Vidusha was determined to pull out a trump.

As the 2019 Asian Athletics Championship concluded, Vidusha had achieved both her seasonal best of 13.53m and the bronze medal she was uncertain about. While her 'Bronze' is placed at her cabinet shelf in Negombo, she is striving to bag some more medals at the National Championship and the IAAF World Athletic Championship in September in Qatar.

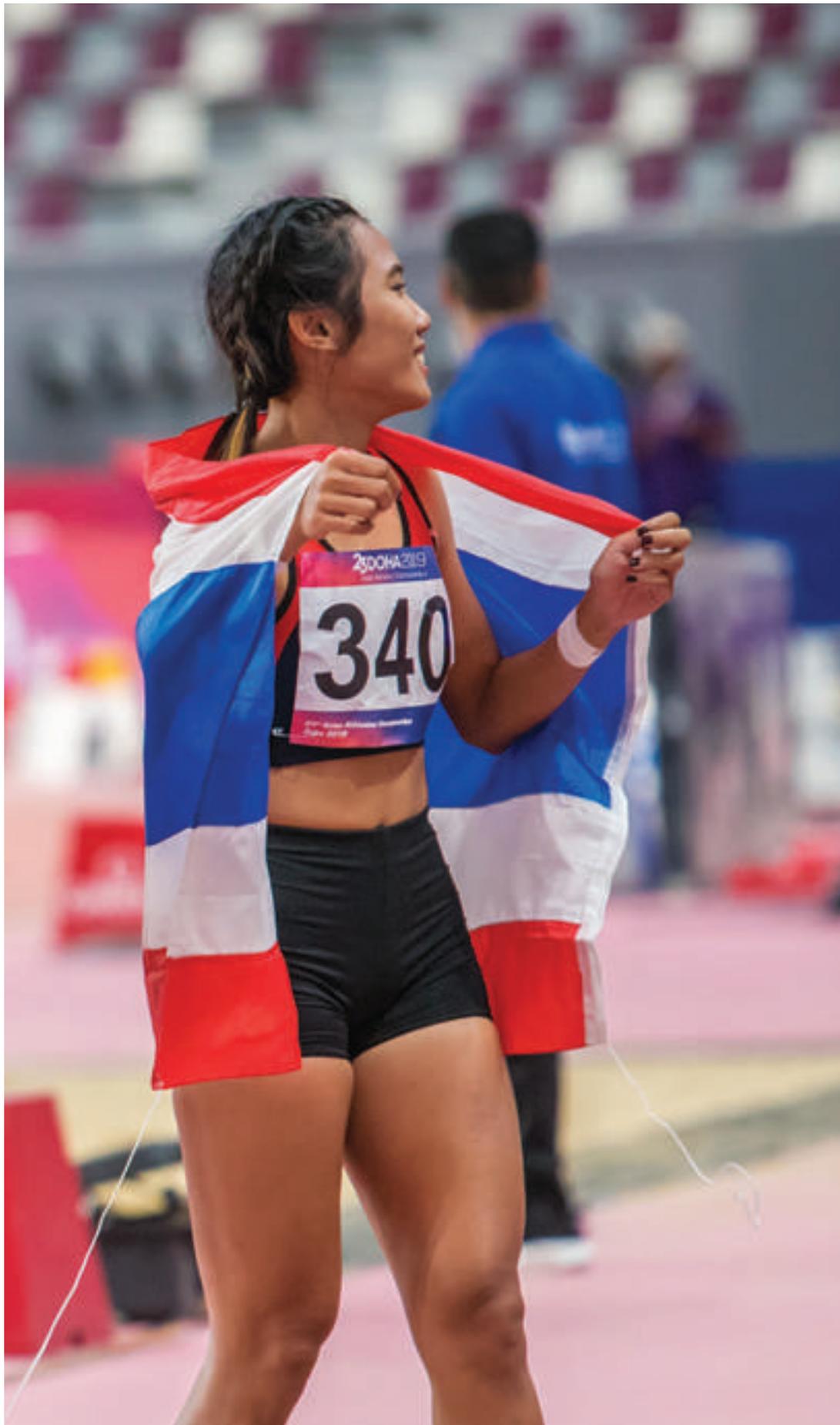




Photo:
Standing (L) Zeng Rui
(CHN), Parinya
Chuaimaroeng (THA) (C),
Vidusha Lakshani (SRI) (R)



Photo:
Jubilant Vidusha poses for a photo



“REJUVENATED BY HER NEW-FOUND STRENGTH AND SUCCESS, SHE EXPRESSED HER DETERMINATION TO REPRESENT SRI LANKA AT THE TOKYO OLYMPICS IN 2020. “TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC IS MY DREAM, THE QUALIFICATION STANDARD IS A CHALLENGING ONE BUT I BELIEVE I CAN WORK HARD AND ACHIEVE THE QUALIFICATION BY THIS YEAR.”

She believes that the more hard yards that you put into any effort, the result ought to be more positive. With that in mind Vidusha trains six (6) days a week while her back up come from the work by the Voluntary Force of Sri Lanka Army and the monthly grant which is given for her training by the NOC.



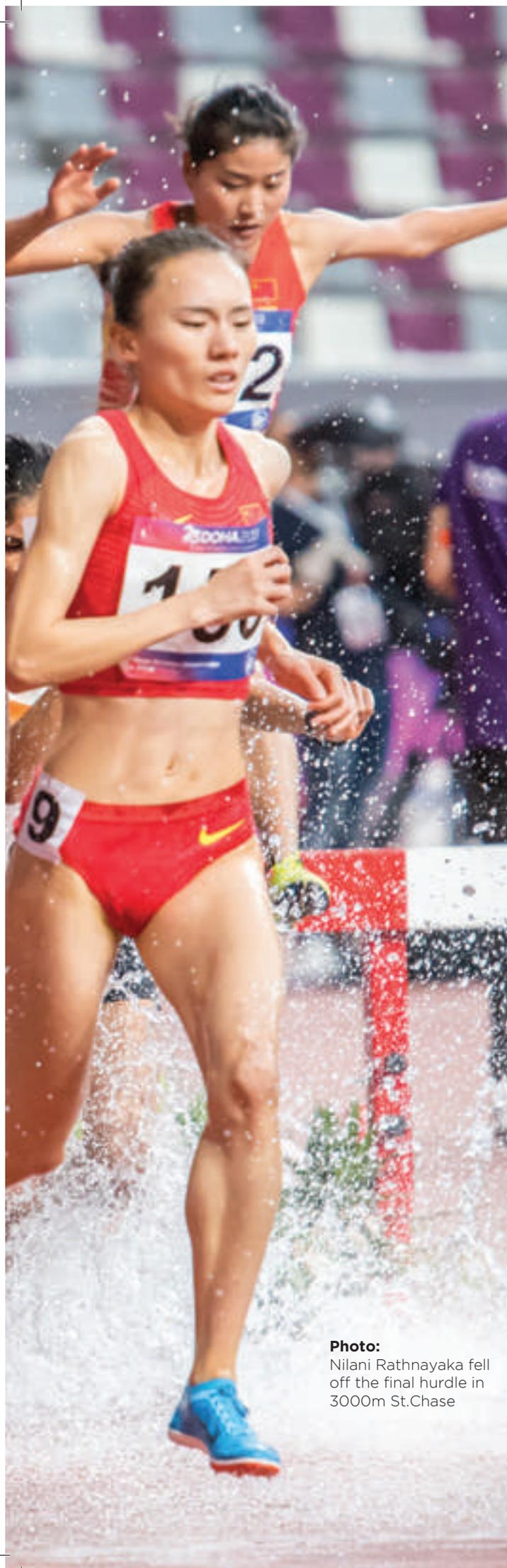


Photo:
Nilani Rathnayaka fell off the final hurdle in 3000m St.Chase

ANOTHER MEDAL QUEST THAT WENT AWRY

By Saabir Cader

Sri Lanka bagged five medals in the 2017 edition of the Asian Athletics Championship (AAC) but failed to impress in this version of this biennial competition. Although the hope was to rake in a healthy tally of medals compared to two years ago, the Lankans eventually ended up with only Vidusha Lakshani's Bronze effort in the women's triple jump event.

Fifteen athletes took part in the competition – namely – Nimali Liyanarachchi (C) – 800m & 4x400m, Himasha Eashan – 100m, Nadeesha Ramanayake – 400m & 4x400m relay, Sumedha Ranasinghe – Javeline Throw, Dhanushka Piyarathne – Long Jump, Prasad Wimalasiri – Long Jump, Vidusha Lakshani – Triple Jump, Greshan Dananjaya – Triple Jump, Gayanthika Abeyrathne – 800m & 1500m, Nilani Rathnayaka – 3000m Steeplechase, Ajith Premakumara – 400m, Rusiru Chathurangga – 800m, Upamali Ratnakumari – 4x400m, Dilshi Kumarasinghe – 4x400m and Damith Hemantha – 1500m.

The 800m duo Nimali and Gayanthika entered the finals after a fine performance in the first heat which was also a semi-final. However, defending Gold medalist Nimali finished 7th in the final whilst Gayanthika missed out the Bronze as she finished fourth. Nonetheless, Indian Gomathi Marimuthi who won the Gold has now found positive on a doping test. As a result Gayanthika may get the Bronze medal after an official hearing from the Asian Athletic Council. Meanwhile, Gayanthika finished 11th in the 1500m on the final day of the championship clocking (4:24.42)

South Asia's fastest Himasha Eashan was unable to produce his form as he made the exit in the semi-final. He clocked 10.42 seconds in the heats and 10.51 seconds in the semi-final which was a below par timing. Despite Himasha who clocked 10.22 seconds in the local trials on 24th February with a new Sri Lankan record, dialed in this mission on the Doha track, where the sprinter was looking to clock a flat 10 seconds at least.

Ajith Premakumara who was a part of the Asian Games 4x400m could not make his way to the finals. He finished 4th in the semi-final clocking 47.07 seconds in the men's 400m. Women's champion Nadeesha Ramanayake also was short of a medal timing in the 400m as she clocked 53.98 seconds for a 6th place finish in the final.

Long jump duo Prasad Wimalasiri and Dhanushka Piyarathne had some expectations of either one going for a medal. However, yet again the national champion Wimalasiri could not leap well enough. Wimalasiri finished 8th with 7.49m while his team mate Piyarathne jumped of 7.65m and finished 7th in the competition.

2016 Rio Olympian Sumedha Ranasinghe was also another prospect to fail. He was only able to throw 73.50m despite going over 80m mark in the local trials. Army's Damith Hemantha who excelled in 1500m in the nationals, also failed to impress as he earned a 11th place finish with a timing of 3:49.28. Other middle distance runner Rusiru Chaturanga could not come in to the top 10 as he clocked 1:51.02 seconds in his 800m quest.

Sri Lanka opted to have a women's 4x400m relay team with a hope of striking a medal. Islanders had a good start after Nadeesha Ramanayake made the first lap in 54.00 seconds, it could have been 52.9 seconds if not for the juggle in the batten exchange. Dilshi Kumarasinghe was the fastest out of four and she finished her lap in 53.4 seconds whilst former national champion Upamalika Rathnakumari ran the distance in 53.65 seconds. However, Nimali Liyanarachchi had a chance of securing a Bronze for Sri Lanka, but Bahrain's Salwa Naser made a stunning comeback from 4th place, to breast the tape before Nimali. As a result Sri Lanka's final day medal hope was shattered as Nimali finished 4th (53.92 seconds). Nonetheless, this team broke the 20 year old Sri Lankan record with the timing of (3:18.5)





Photo:
Himasha Eashan finished 2nd in the
100m heat



Photo:
Dhanushka Piyarathne on his final attempt in the Long Jump

Young triple jumper, Greshan Dananjaya had some promise after making a national record jump in the local trials in February (16.71m) but he finished 7th in the AAC competition with only a 16.16m jump. It was only Vidusha Lakshani who grabbed the Bronze in the triple jump with a seasonal best of 13.53m. The Gold medalist Parinya of Thailand jumped 13.72m and the Silver medalist Zeng Rui of China made a 13.65m jump.

Photo:
Breathless Nimali Liyanarachchi on the floor assisted by team mate Gayanthika Abeyratne





Photo:
Dilshi Kumarasinghe awaits for the baton
change by Nadeesha Ramanayake (4x400m)



Photo:
4x400m team
(L) - (R)
Nadeesha
Ramanayake,
Upamali
Rathnakumari,
Nimali
Liyarachchi,
Dilshi
Kumarasinghe



Photo:
Nilani Rathnayake was second until the final hurdle in 3000m St. Chase

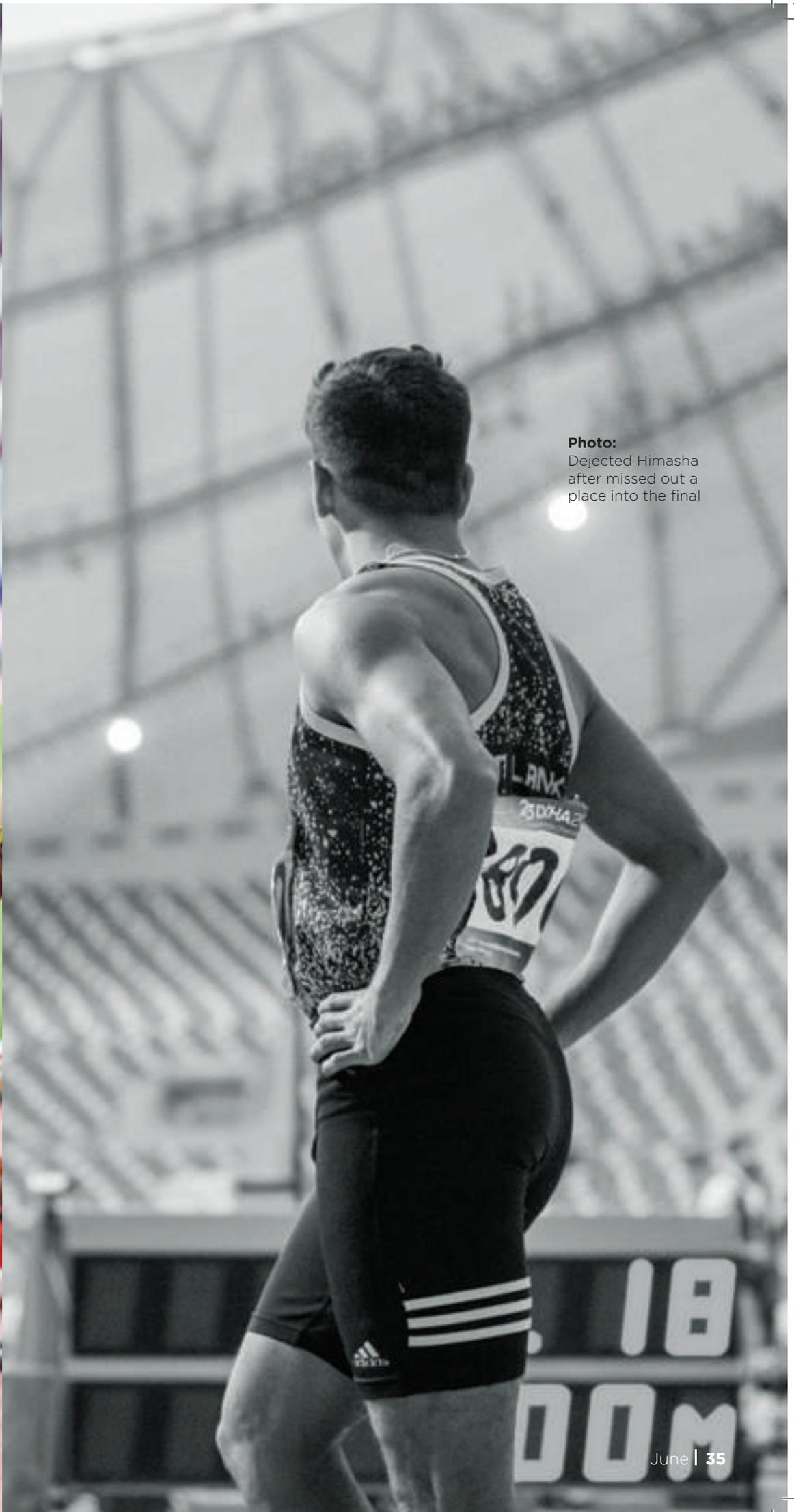
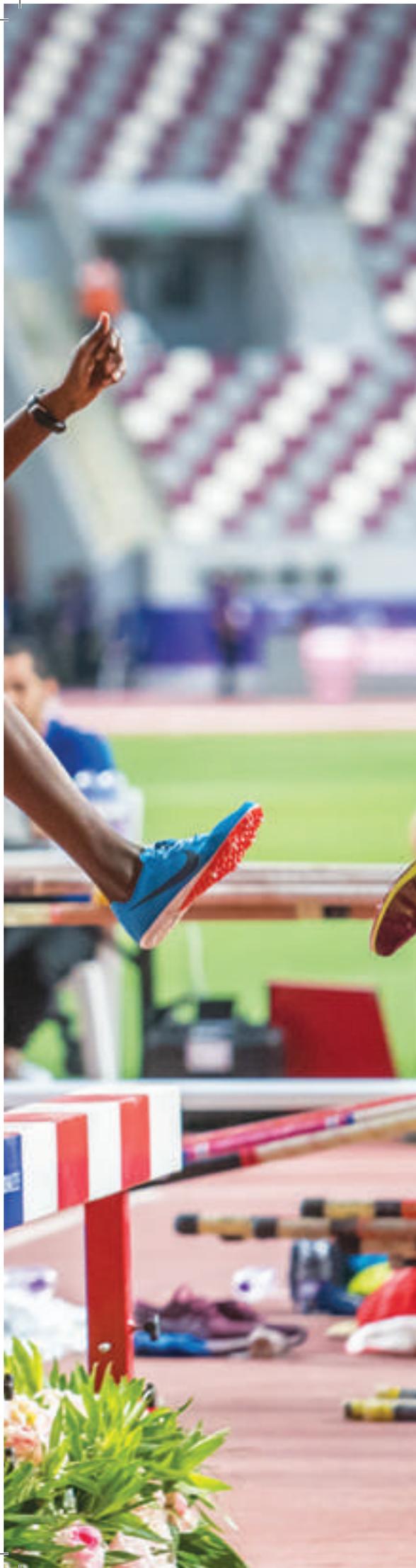


Photo:
Dejected Himasha
after missed out a
place into the final



Photo:
Upamalika takes the final bend in
4x400m



Photo:
Damith Hemantha in action
during 1500m



Finally it could have been a second potential medal but it was a heartbreaking moment for Nilani Rathnayake in the 3000m steeplechase. She was second until the last 50m but unfortunately she lost her footing as she fell off the final hurdle. She crawled her way back, but only managed to finish agonizingly in the fourth position -- she clocked 9:58.55.

Photo:
Long Jumper Prasad Wimalasiri in
action

Catching an Olympic GOLD IN CRICKET!

By S.R. Pathiravithana

The winner of the inaugural Presidential Award for Sports Journalism in 2015

The President of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC), Suresh Subramaniam, also a tennis international himself, is keen to see the country exhibiting an Olympic 'Gold' in their medal shelf.

He says: "We do have an 'Olympic Silver' to boast about, but an Olympic 'Gold' is a different proposition altogether. Now that there is a positive chance of cricket becoming pivotal part of the Asian Games, why not begin to push for a slot for cricket at the Olympics.

"In cricket, we have already won the Cricket World Cup and the ICC T20 Championship in 1996 and 2014 respectively. Then when it was offered at the Asia Cup we brought home the 'Gold' in Incheon (Asian Games) in 2014. Definitely, Sri Lanka cricket is medal material and we positively have placed our tentacles on pushing for cricket to be included at a future Olympic Games. We know it is easier said than done, but it is a cause that is worth striving for," said the Lankan NOC chief.



Photo:
At practices

Photo:
The Lankan team celebrating





Photo: Sports Minister Harin Fernando having a close look at the 1996 World Cup, which was won by Sri Lanka

It is established that cricket will return to the Olympic folder during next Asian Games at Hangzhou 2022 after the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) added it to its sports programme for their next edition.

England won first Olympic Gold

Cricket at Olympics has a unique history. Cricket was part of the 1900 Summer Olympics in France and it took place on August 19 and 20 at the Vélodrome de Vincennes. Yet, there was a glitch in this puzzled episode.

Originally teams representing Belgium, France, Great Britain and The Netherlands were expected to take part in the contest. However, the only match that was played

was between the Great Britain and France which the cricketers from across the English Channel won by 158 runs.

Another issue in this game was neither team wore the national emblem. As a result England was presented with the Silver and France the Bronze. The British side was a touring club, the Devon and Somerset Wanderers (alias Devon County Wanderers), while the French team, the French Athletic Club Union, comprised mainly British expatriates living in Paris. However, at a later stage the two medals were reverted to Gold and Silver.

Since, for more than one reason, cricket has not been a feature at that level, at the Olympic Games.

ICC keen to have cricket in its fold

At the same time the International Cricket Council (ICC) has been pushing for the game's Olympic return with the shortest 20-over format and hopes it will find a place at the 2028 Games in Los Angeles. Nonetheless, the all powerful BCCI (Indian Cricket Board) which has one of the most influential voices in the world cricket body -- the ICC -- fears it might lose its autonomy and be answerable to the country's Olympic committee.

Yet, in the cricket crazy South Asian region, the Olympic cricket dream lives on infrequently. For now cricket has made its presence in the Asian region and at the South Asian Games (SAG) in Kathmandu,



Above:
Sri Lanka Chief Selector Asantha de Mel in conversation with fast bowling coach Rumesh Ratnayake

Below:
Another wicket grabbed by Sri Lanka courtesy Lasith Malinga

Nepal it is definitely a feature. Even prior to that Sri Lanka men and women ended up with gold and bronze medals at the Asian Games held in Incheon, South Korea in 2014.

However, the GoodSport wonder as to how could the game of cricket be a regular feature in both Asian Games and SAG calendars for the simple reason that cricket is a game that Sri Lanka could be a definite medal hope. May be a cricket slot in the Commonwealth Games also would do no harm to Sri Lanka's medal wish list either. Cricket was featured at the 1998 Commonwealth Games held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The gold medal was won on that occasion by South Africa, who defeated Australia by 4 wickets in the final with New Zealand winning the bronze medal. Yet, Sri Lanka is also definite medal front runner in this forum.

The ICC has submitted a bid for the inclusion of women's Twenty20 in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham

Ana, a big fan of the idea

Ana Punchihewa – former President of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka and the man who really inspired professionalism into Sri Lanka cricket and a pivotal part in the country's 1996 Cricket World Cup win says: "I endorse the idea. Cricket becoming a part of the Olympic family may be in the T20 format carries a lot of positives. One is that, people from this part of the globe does not have the physical strength like European, American and competitors from the less humid regions. Yet, people from the Indian sub-continent – India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan can make it up with skill. Just to prove the fact, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan already won the Cricket World Cup.

"I am strong believer that we could do very well in sports like cricket, billiards and golf where physical strength is not the main criteria. Yes, I feel that cricket at the Olympics would be beneficial to countries in the Indian sub continent. Besides, the population in this region is





Photo:
Lasith Malinga



Photo:
Dimuth Karunaratne

more than a billion plus. This means the proposition will be commercially viable too.”

A section of the sports fraternity in Sri Lanka argues that there are so many regular sports that represent Sri Lanka at various forums, but, they hardly manage to bring home a medal even at the South Asian Games. At the 2016 SAG in India, boxing, football, handball, kabaddi and Kho-Kho failed to win a single medal in spite of it

being the least competitive among the Olympic recognized sports. If cricket is made a regular feature, even the Lankan cricket authority could have it in their training schedules in earnest. Right now what happens is that – SAG for instance, the team is picked from the regular training pool instead of an accented training programme. Cricket was, dropped for the Games in Jakarta-Palembang last year and ironically the Lankan contingent returned home empty handed.



Photo:
Isuru Udana





Photo:
Nuwan Pradeep



Photo:
Lasith Malinga

It is also reported that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is open to cricket's inclusion provided all top teams compete but the Indian Cricket Board, the game's richest and most influential, has been rather reluctant. The BCCI did not allow its teams to participate in Guangzhou and Incheon blaming a heavy international schedule; but the Indian Olympic Association was hopeful they would be able to convince the Indian cricket authorities for the 2022 Games.



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PULLING THE 'ACE' OUT OF A WILDCARD

By S.R. Pathiravithana

Like hockey is endemic to Matale, Gampola which also belongs to the hilly terrain in the central region of Sri Lanka is judo crazy. Young Chamara Nuwan Dharmawardena was not even a teenager when he first encountered a group of Japanese judokas visiting the area for a training programme.

This occurred when he was engaged in his primary studies at Wevatenne MV also in Gampola. He stood in awe glued to the action on stage produced by the Japanese experts. While returning home he made a mental

note; this is my life – I am going to be a judoka, thus a dream was hatched.

All successful events are made of external factors too. Nuwan's gainful factor was his Wevatenne school teacher Amal Ratnayake who was also the school's Judo master. Soon the duo moved to the senior school Jinaraja MV, Gampola. Coach Ratnayake was keen to impart his expertise while Nuwan became a keen student. In spite of some unforeseen grey areas; Nuwan did his training and became a budding judoka, but his success was not smooth sailing.

"I think my first ten competitive bouts ended up in disaster – I lost them all. No matter what I did, I found that the opponents were thinking ahead of me," said Nuwan. Yet he became more determined. "I just told myself that I was not trying hard enough. So I put more hours and minutes into my schedules. Gradually I found out that I could beat my opponents and do it as a habit."

In 2007 Nuwan won his first competitive title by taking the 11th All Island School Championship and two years later he took the first

Photo:
Chamara Nuwan Dharmawardena, who made it into the second round in Judo at the Rio Olympics.



place in the 66kgs category of the All Island School Games. Thereafter the accolades followed him and by 2009 he was a regular feature in the Lankan judo calendar. The string of successes included wins at the National Sports Festival to National Championships. He conquered them one by one.

“Upon my success, coach Ratnayake moved me to the Air Force where he was also the main coach. There too I faced a few hiccups but, by the year 2011, I had become the national champion and since I have stayed unconquered, locally.”

His thirst for more success was burning within. He always had the notion that foreign competition is the key for big-time and his first international competition was the Rajiv Gandhi Judo Meet in Pune, India in 2007. There he kept on knocking on the doors of the real champion’s

mat. Adding to his woes, Nuwan also experienced a drought period where there were no local championships in 2015 and 2016.

Yet, Nuwan’s abilities in the arena were not wasted. During this time his abilities had been brought to the notice of the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC) General Secretary Maxwell de Silva. There he had a notion that this little judoka is worth pursuing upon. He said: “I had some connections with the Olympic arena and there I had met influential Judo officials. There I managed to, get the Uzbekistan Judo officials to give him training stint.”

However there was no light at the end of the tunnel. As Nuwan explained in his own words: “There the training was rigorous. But the Uzbek judo was mingled with their indigenous form of the game and it was something





between judo and wrestling. I found it hard to adjust. Even the results were also not encouraging.”

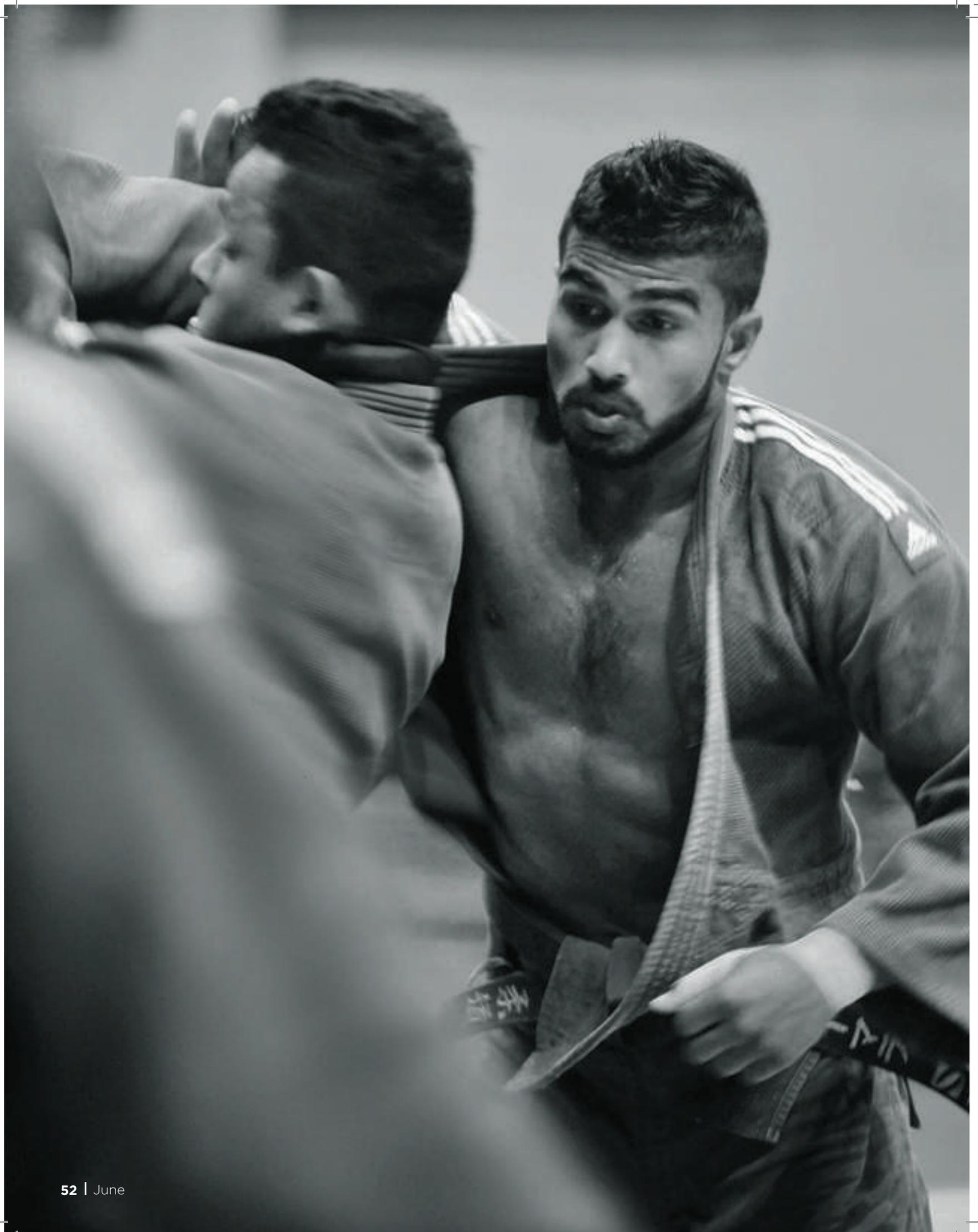
However, the NOC General Secretary managed to convince the Slovak Judo authorities to open a window for the young athlete. The Rio Olympics 2016 was around the corner and Nuwan got a wildcard entry to the Games.

An ecstatic Nuwan explained: “The Slovak experience was unbelievable. Initially I could not believe that countries have such modern equipment and facilities to train athletes for different disciplines. At the same time I also discovered a bitter truth. Though we were in the same weight category the difference was visible. All what I possessed was the will to learn and compete, but the guys over there were full of technique.

“For the first few days I was like fish out of water. I could not last even a minute. But the Slovakian trainers did not give one second’s respite. They kept on pushing me against the locals till I perfected my movements and made them more fluid. Then gradually I convinced myself that I was as good as anyone else in the international arena and with that frame of mind, I joined the 2016 Olympic team as a wildcard judoka.”

As a wildcard entry getting booted out of a competition as big as the Olympic Games is no big surprise. Yet, with the Slovak pep-up Nuwan was in a better frame of mind. He said: “My first opponent in the Olympics was an American Samoan named Benjamin Waterhouse. Though he looked menacing; inside me something told me that I can beat this man. I used my newly learned techniques and tried to keep my hands high through the bout, that worked and I won. I admit

“I CONVINCED MYSELF THAT I WAS AS GOOD AS ANYONE ELSE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AND WITH THAT FRAME OF MIND, I JOINED THE 2016 OLYMPIC TEAM AS A WILDCARD JUDOKA.”





that I made some mistakes during the second bout and that cost me my first Olympic experience as the Georgian named Lasha Shadatuashvili went on to win the 'gold' for the 73kgs category in Judo, while I ended up in ninth position."

However it is very unusual for a wildcard to reach the second round of an Olympic competition and besides Duncan White and Susanthika Jayasingha, only a few other athletes have moved beyond the first round in an Olympic competition for Sri Lanka.

Moving to the Asian Games last year, Nuwan now knows that he

should never repeat the mistakes that he made during that round and is determined to win a 'gold' for Judo at the Kathmandu Games in Nepal.

Nuwan's Slovakian dream is very much alive. Last year he won the first place in the 73kgs category during the European Judo Cup in Slovenia and became the second in the International Judo Turnier Zeltweg in Austria and says: "The key for my success was my training and will to win. I am not worried about trivial injuries; I keep my work ethics through them. I feel if I win the ultimate winner is my country and I live with that Lankan dream."



ANJELIKA'S TENNIS QUEST

By S.R. Pathiravithana

Though she turned 15 last month, Anjelika Kurera is a budding tennis player in the senior circuit with a lot of potential and an ATP win behind her credentials; but what strikes me most are her eyes which are full of determination and zest.

In spite of her beginnings in the peripheries of capital city – in Negombo to be exact, the young Ave Maria student has a lot of influential admirers in the calibre of doyen of Lankan tennis Arjun Fernando and renowned international tennis coach George Paldano.

Paldano recently opined: “At the Colombo ITF under 18 junior event for

girls and boys, three of the four titles went to China. Sri Lanka's Anjelika Kurera won the fourth -- Girls singles. The draw had more Far Eastern players and Anjelika held well coming around from being down. This makes her a potential star of our women's tennis.

“In the last one year, Anjelika's tennis has improved. Particularly, one noticed her agility, which is a combination of sighting, footwork and also to a good extent, anticipation, has evolved noticeably. Under the voluntary managerial guidance of Arjun Fernando, one of the two Sri Lankan players who rubbed shoulders with the top 200 of the world in the Open era, she should



“I PRESUME THAT LOCAL PLAYERS WITH PROMISE AND HAVE THE ABILITY TO SUSTAIN, SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FOCUSSED BREAK WITH A HIGH-PERFORMANCE EXPOSURE.”

make some headway. Excess training makes a player technical and matches makes them tactical. For Anjelika, getting good matches, will decide her future.”

When GoodSport walked to the SLTA to watch Anjelika in action, I saw a lone figure with a set of eyes which were going like a yo-yo with every shot that was played on the court and they belonged to none other than Arjun Fernando himself.

Fernando is of the view that young Kurera is a talented player, yet for him the word ‘tennis’ is a bigger proposition which involves more





than a mere player. He said: “At the age of 15 Anjelika is a player with a lot of potential, yet there are hurdles ahead. For instance it won’t be very long before she would face the first hurdle of sitting for her Ordinary Level Examination, so there might be a break. When she clears that hurdle we would see her facing the challenges of moving to the international stage. For instance we have seen our players beating present day international players like Kei Nishikori of Japan and top level Indian Junior players of the teenage group, yet, those players then change gear to go through guided international training and exposure end up at the top rungs of the ATP rankings.

“I think I was fortunate that as a teenager of 16, I had the opportunity of training in the United States of America and so was Lihini Weerasooriya of the WTA – the Lankan women’s player who had the best ranking internationally.

“I presume that local players with promise and have the ability to sustain, should be given the focussed break with a high-performance exposure and that should be done may be by the National Olympic Committee and the local tennis administration.”

Anjelika even at the gentle age of 15 is quite mindful of her goals and

she thinks that she is with a plan to achieve them. Explaining her tennis stance, with ponderous eyes, she said: “Even while taking on the challenge of playing the ATP tournament that I won, initially I did not have the nerve or composition to say that I am going to win this tournament. But the more I got familiar with the opposition and learned about the ploys that they were using, I knew that I stood a chance and I exploited that notion and the results were quite rewarding.”

Anjelika also was mindful of the hurdles. She says training and practising in Negombo could be a down point in comparison to the facilities and the quality of the





opposition that she faces at the SLTA. Besides that she is also quite aware that the GCE O/L examinations are around the corner and challenge that it poses. She said: "I know that the examination is at hand, but, still I cannot afford to drop my training schedules. I must develop a method to balance both."

In marketing there is a saying – Reach for the moon and you will end up at the top of the mountain. Anjelika's forecast in tennis is also somewhat similar. Her aim in her tennis life is to become one of the top ten players in the world. "I am hoping to take part in many ITF tournament matches according to the opportunities that come my way. I know if I could play enough matches I could improve in my rankings. So my

initial goal is to qualify for the Junior Wimbledon with sufficient number of wins behind me. Once that is done, it is a matter of climbing the ladder. I am quite aware of the sacrifices that I would have to make during that long and winding road, but, if you are interested in success that is the prize that I would have pay," said Anjelika in conclusion.



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GIMHANI'S OBSTACLE RACE FOR OLYMPIC OPPORTUNITY!

By S.R. Pathiravithana

To be or not to be; that is the 'golden' question. Fifteen-year-old, Milka Gimhani took wings to the land of the sun with an eye to become Sri Lanka's sole Olympic qualifier for the 2020 Games in Japan. According to Gimhani's coach Ranjana Tharanga the little lass is within reach of this cherished goal.

While watching Gimhani training which looked under very trying circumstances, she looked quite at ease. The Lankan Sports Ministry equipment looked quite archaic and obviously at least a decade out of date. For mundane me hoping for a medal in an international competition under these circumstances, was

like finding the pommel horse in the Sports Ministry gym. It looked well-nigh impossible. Yet, at the recently concluded Junior Olympics Argentina Gimhani was well within the qualifying mark. With a petite smile Gimhani told GoodSport "I am sure after this stint in Japan, I should be able to make it".

Especially when the competitor is young and is wholly dependent upon the coach to break the ice, Ranjana's part here is crucial. Besides, Ranjana has acted as the National Gymnastics coach for the past twenty years and boasts of a list of medal winning artists male and female, and Gimhani, he ranks as one of his best products.



**“I AM SURE AFTER
THIS STINT IN
JAPAN, I SHOULD BE
ABLE TO MAKE IT.”**

Ranjana explained -- “For the Youth Olympics there were only seven slots for the whole of Asia and Milka was the only female competitor qualified for the Junior Olympics from South East Asia. That is because we had the opportunity of going through a training course in Romania – an opportunity that came our way courtesy National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka.

“At the Junior Olympics, she had to take in four disciplines. There, Gimhani finished ahead of competitors like Japan, Romania and Uzbekistan. The disciplines were Vaulting Table, Balancing Beam and Floor and Gimhani was a head of the competitors coming from countries who are famous for Gymnastics. I feel that this was one of the prime reasons that she was offered this opportunity to train and thus obtain the necessary points to make it to the 2020 games.

“Yet, back home the facilities for Gymnastics are totally different, the two are worlds apart, ours is similar to an obsolete shack, yet this is the best that Sri Lanka could offer in this aspect of activity. In more affluent countries they do not even think of training at centres of this nature. The general floor area event training is 12’x12’, but what we have is very much smaller it is 3’ broad and 6’ long, so the risk of injury is great and Gimhani has experienced this eventuality more than once.





“YET, BACK HOME THE FACILITIES FOR GYMNASTICS ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT, THE TWO ARE WORLDS APART, OURS IS SIMILAR TO AN OBSOLETE SHACK, YET THIS IS THE BEST THAT SRI LANKA COULD OFFER IN THIS ASPECT OF ACTIVITY.”



“For instance if we had a Spring Board we could have achieved better results at the Junior Olympics, as a result Gimhani could not have a proper training in that discipline. There she ended in the fifteenth position, but, if she had proper facilities she may have been able ended up even at the sixth position. At the Youth Olympics Gimhani had to do a lower element because of the quality of equipment available in Sri Lanka, but, if she was blessed with the proper training equipment she could done much better” lamented Ranjana.

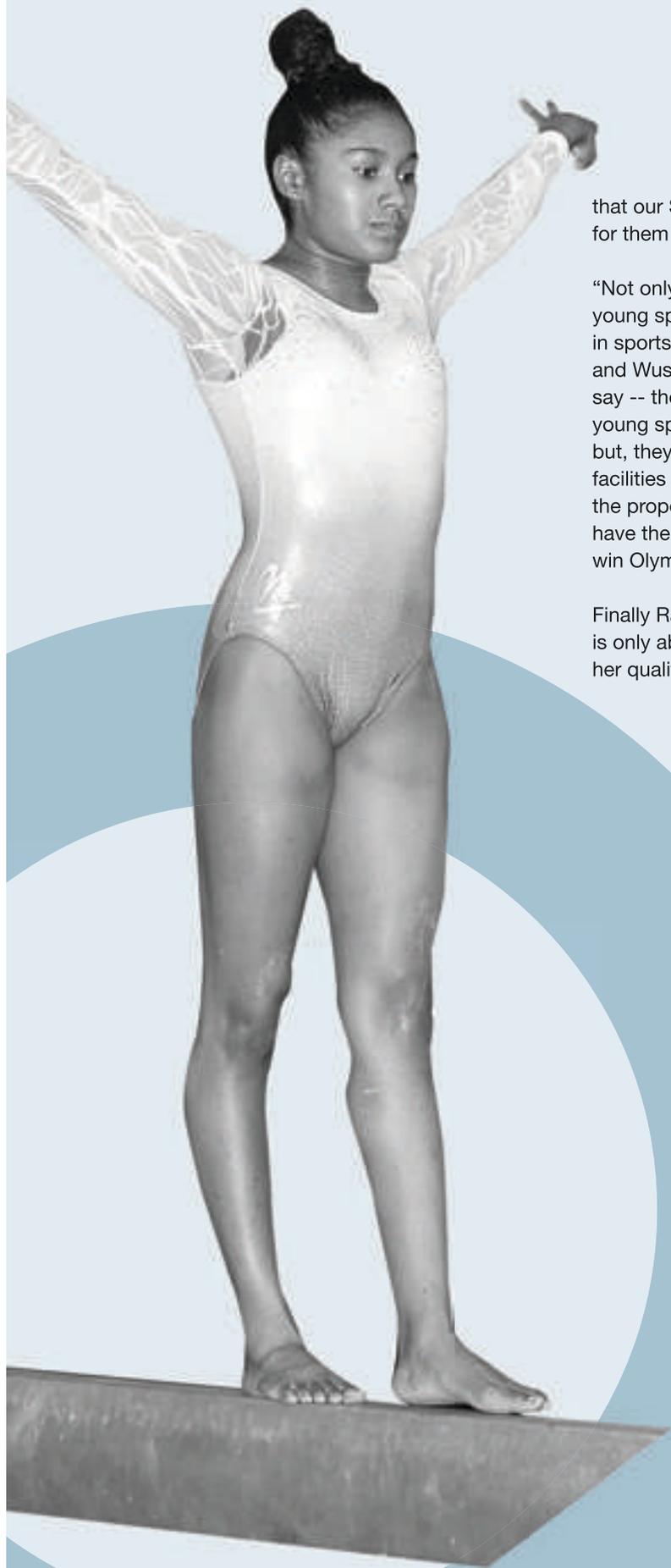
Ranjana explained that in October Gimhani will face her final trial for qualifying for the 2020 Olympics. It is a blessing that we have got this opportunity to train in Japan prior to

this judgement. “I am sure the training stint in Japan would hold her in good stead. At the same time I would be there by her side while this process is going on. I believe that we can make it. I know the period for her training is rather short, but, we are ready to make the most of the opportunity.”

The road to Japan was also long and winding. He said that initially he had problems in obtaining his leave for this programme. Then for Gimhani; she was due to sit for the O’ Level Examination at the end of the year. She had to write to the Education authorities and delay the process by one year owing to her training and international commitments. “She is a very committed girl. She trains six days a week and on holidays the whole day is spent for her training. For

instance every Saturday we train from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. So, the commitment on her part is great.”

Ranjana says that all parents who make up their mind to give their children the opportunity to climb the ladder success through the medium of sport want to end up like either Sanath Jayasuriya or Kumar Sangakkara. “Most of these children who take to sport see the light at the end of the tunnel in this manner and those are their yardsticks. So, we feel that it is our duty as coaches to train them to achieve these goals. For that there are no shortcuts it is only hard yards and commitment. However, I also must stress that these children are committed and they want to achieve; but, in return what do we have? Just look at the best facilities



that our Sports Ministry could offer for them to breast their tapes.

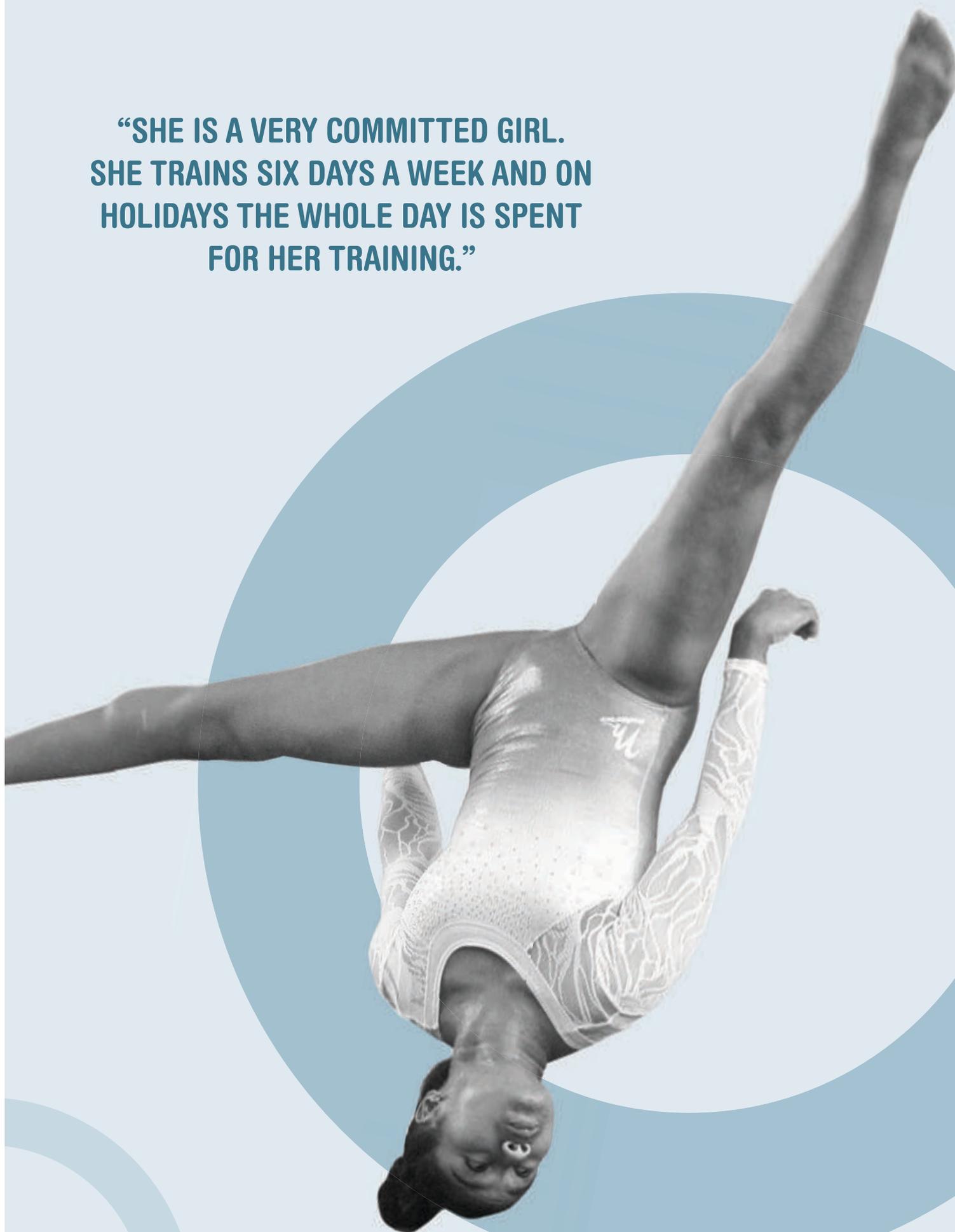
“Not only in Gymnastics, I see the young sports people who engage in sports such as Wrestling, Karate and Wushu face similar plights. I say -- there are a lot of talented young sports people in Sri Lanka, but, they held back by the lack of facilities and opportunities. I sure if the proper facilities are provided we have the talent to reciprocate and win Olympic medals”.

Finally Ranjana said that Gimhani is only about two points short of her qualifying mark for the 2020

Olympic Games. When they evaluated her Youth Olympic performances it was revealed that she is only about two points short of her target. “So we are very confident what Gimhani could come up with the Olympic Qualifying standards. She already has 48.5 points through the previous performances and the qualifying mark is 50 points. So in reality she only has to achieve another 1.5 points to make it possible for the 2020 games through ability. Element wise she only has to perfect some of those moves to make the final cut.”



**“SHE IS A VERY COMMITTED GIRL.
SHE TRAINS SIX DAYS A WEEK AND ON
HOLIDAYS THE WHOLE DAY IS SPENT
FOR HER TRAINING.”**





BE THE CHAMPION NOT THE VICTIM

By Guyanga Weerasekera

Eight-time Grand Slam and Olympic champion Andre Agassi's fascinating autobiography, *Open*, caused much debate in 2009 for his revelation for using a recreational drug and then lying about it to the governing body of tennis, to avoid any suspensions. However, this book for me was so much more than this one 'incident'. As much as this was about Andre Agassi's story it was also about his father, Mike's tunnel vision to make his son 'Number 1 in the world'. Father Agassi worked at a Casino in Las Vegas and it was till he could afford to buy a property with a big enough backyard to build a tennis court. After he did buy a property, he

mixed cement on his own to lay out a tennis court for little Andre. He had done the math and forced Andre to play 2,500 balls each day, that was 17,500 balls a week and almost a million balls a year, to the point where Andre played tennis to the fear of his father. This 'tennis machine' like mentality did make Andre eventually 'the Number 1 in the world' in 1995 although Andre does admit that he never really enjoyed tennis at certain periods of his career but had no option than to labour on.

Boxer Manny Pacquiao, inspiration to over 100 million Filipino people started off in a remote village well below the extreme poverty line.

Pacquiao often had only one meal a day and use to drink a lot of water just to fill his stomach. His sport as a 5-year-old was not boxing but his fight for daily survival. Pacquiao was a skinny kid, but his determination made him a giant and as he said in his Oxford Union speech: "Think of David and Goliath. Look at me. I am not very big and I never had five smooth stones to throw at any obstacle, but determination is a power tool. I won a lot fights." Pacquiao, now a global phenomenon, is one of the highest paid athletes in the world and a Senator in Philippines.

Pre-1996 Sri Lanka cricket was considered as minnows, with not

many opportunities to play long foreign tours, the top bowler being targeted for chucking and foreign teams unwilling to travel to play in Sri Lanka for security reasons. When Australia declined to travel to Colombo for the group stage match of 1996 Cricket World Cup, inspirational Captain Arjuna Ranatunga, stated that, Sri Lanka is good enough to meet Australia in the final and beat them in Lahore, and that aura of confidence prevailed, with the minnows Sri Lanka beating the mighty Australia

comprehensively in the final.

Andre Agassi and Manny Pacquiao are just two examples of over hundreds of 'rags to riches' stories, maybe it be from Sports, Business or Politics. Agassi and Pacquiao had every opportunity to fold the cards they were dealt with and play the 'victim'; instead they developed a burning desire to be successful. When it seemed the whole world was against them, they



sacrificed sweat, blood and tears in order to reach their goals. On many occasions we are guilty of playing the 'victim' and blame the 'system' as to why we are not successful. Your success as an athlete is not on how good your excuse is, it is in the countless hours you have put in. Stop blaming how your rival has better equipment than you, stop blaming how politics has led to your non-selection, stop blaming the weather, stop blaming this, that and everything in between. If Agassi and Pacquiao was never a victim, then you are not a victim. The world is your oyster and disciplined perseverance will eventually lead you to your goal.

“We must all care for one another — this is our task in life. But also we must care for ourselves, which means we must be careful in our decisions, careful in our relationships, careful in our statements. We must manage our lives carefully, in order to avoid becoming victims.”

Photo:

Andre Agassi and Manny Pacquiao are just two examples of over hundreds of 'rags to riches' stories





SEMENYA CONUNDRUM

By S.R. Pathiravithana

The controversial Caster Semenya case is gradually converting itself to more than an issue that involves the individual concerned. Now it's gradually meandering into a case on 'what's next' and where would this conundrum end. Some feel that the final outcome may be more than what the naked eye could see.

Now the globe's sports fraternity would have to find the answers as to what are we going to do with the next Semenya on the track and already there is one. Indian sprinter Dutee Chand has been publicly identified as having high testosterone. So, would the IAAF or whoever is responsible consider having a different category for this type of persons competing – the

question is how and when or could it ever happen?

The two-time Olympic champion in the 800 metres will have to lower her testosterone levels by such means as using birth control pills or prostate cancer drugs if she wants to defend her world title in September in Doha, Qatar.

The story does not end at this point. Recently Kenya's Olympic 800 metres bronze medallist Margaret Nyairera Wambui was quoted by AFP saying that she can feel her career slipping away from her, with no idea when, or if, she will be able to compete internationally again.

The 24-year-old is one of several star female athletes affected by an International Association of Athletics

Federations (IAAF) ruling this month that requires women with high levels of testosterone to take medication to suppress it.

She was meant to leave for the IAAF World Challenge athletics meeting in Nanjing, but now her future is one big question mark.

"I am very disappointed, I don't feel even like going on with the training because you don't know what you are training for," she told AFP.

Prior to that, Associated Press was quoting the IOC President Thomas Bach saying that he has a lot of sympathy for Semenya's plight. Bach said at a media conference: "First of all I must say I have a lot of sympathy for Caster Semenya over this decision."

Photo:

(Top) Recently Kenya's Olympic 800 metres bronze medallist Margaret Nyairera Wambui was quoted by AFP saying that she can feel her career slipping away from her, with no idea when, or if, she will be able to compete internationally again



“Having said this, the issue as such is extremely complex,” Bach added. “It has scientific impact, it has ethical impact, it impacts on fair play in competition so it’s extremely delicate and it’s extremely difficult to do justice to all these.”

“The IOC respects CAS (Arbitration for Sport decisions), as we always do, but from a human point of view, yes, I have sympathy for her.”

Bach said an IOC committee would go over the full CAS ruling once it was available, including recommendations on how the rules should be implemented.

During an earlier speech to the IOC meeting, Bach said: “In Olympic sport, all people are equal regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background or political beliefs. Therefore, we stand firmly against discrimination of any kind.”

The IAAF argued that athletes like Semenya who incidentally is a two-time Olympic Champion, had an unfair advantage over other female athletes whose testosterone levels are lower. As a

result it was decided by Court of Arbitration for Sport say that female athletes with elevated testosterone will have to take suppressive treatment if they wish to compete as women in certain events. However, the World Medical Association (WMA) have already urged doctors not to enforce controversial new IAAF gender rules for classifying female athletes, warning that attempts to do so would breach ethical codes.

A WMA spokesman said: “No physician can be forced to administer these drugs, and we definitely urge our colleagues to refrain from giving hormonally active medication to athletes simply because some regulations demand it.

“If physicians do apply these drugs they do break ethical codes.

“The basic ethical code of all medical practice is never do harm, and it is doing harm to a perfectly normal body with just a rather high level of testosterone by administering drugs to use this in order to make them eligible for women's sport under these regulations.”

Semenya is defiant and says that she does not intend abiding by the IAAF ruling of medication to lower her testosterone levels. She said: “No man, or any other human, can stop me from running.”

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had previously ruled that female athletes like Semenya who have naturally high levels of testosterone must now take hormone-suppressing drugs to compete in any event between 400 metres and one mile. Synthetic testosterone is banned from international sports (except for approved therapeutic purposes).

In the 1930s, the men who controlled sports claimed that such women were “abnormal” and introduced “gender verification” to police them. In the 1960s, when women from the Soviet Union and the newly independent nations of the Global South, many of whom didn’t look



Photo:
IOC President Thomas Bach

“NO MAN OR ANY OTHER HUMAN CAN STOP ME FROM RUNNING”



like western women, began to win many of the medals, the test was made universal.

Every female athlete can recount the stress of “gender verification” and hundreds suffered from the stigma of false positives. Worldwide opposition led to the abolition of the universal sex test in 1999, but the very same people who administered it tried again when Semenya raced onto the scene. The legacy of this history continues to pit women against women and poison the sport.

TANIA'S BASKETBALL DREAM

In cloud number 9 – ranked No. 01 in the world

By Allaam Ousman

She was barely twelve-years-old when Tania Perera was bouncing a borrowed Basketball on the St. Joseph's College courts during the recess, when her mother who happened to be there noticed her little girl had a natural knack of handling the court's proceedings. So, Tania also thought of diving into the idea and the result was -- a star was born.

Right now the 18-year-old is the queen of the 3 on 3 version of the game and is ranked number one in that age group in the world. A No. 1 ranked in sport is a rarity and in Lankan terms and in the present context it is something to take pride on.

Tania explained to GoodSport that when she began the game playing the conventional version of Basketball. However, gradually the focus changed to the shorter version of the game, but, she never gave up playing the longer version at any juncture.

World's search engine Google Wikipedia describes this version of the game in this manner. 3x3 (pronounced 3 on 3, 3 by 3 or 3x3) basketball is a form of the game played three a side on one hoop. It is the largest urban team sport of the world (ESSEC study commissioned by IOC).





This basketball discipline is currently being promoted and structured by FIBA, the sport's governing body. Its main competition is an annual FIBA 3X3 World Tour, comprising a series of Masters and one Final tournament awarding six-figure prize money in US dollars. The FIBA 3x3 World Cups for men and women are the highest tournaments for national 3x3 teams.

3x3 has been a basketball format long played in streets and gyms across the world, albeit in a less formal way. Starting in the late 1980s, three-on-three began to become standardized throughout the United States, most

notably through the Gus Macker and Hoop It Up tournament series, which held large events across the country that invited teams and players from all skill levels. Thus, the number of 3x3 events and competitions has been steadily growing all around the world.

Right now Tanya is busy training for the Asia Cup 3 on 3 tournament in Mongolia and the matches began early June. She said "It was a very important tournament where players from the entire Asian Region was down take part and there would be some tough oppositions in the fray".

She went on to explain about the exposure that she has had. She said "My first tour was a tour of Thailand and I was only 16 years old at that time, and that was a conventional Basketball tournament. Then it was the under 18 Asia Cup tournament in Malaysia, that was in 2017. Then in the same year I toured with the 3 on 3 team to take part in the World Cup in China.

"Then I was made captain of the under 16 team (conventional) while taking on India. Then there were two under 23 tours in Mongolia and Japan and the next was the Asia Cup



tournament in Indonesia, which was followed by an under 18 tour.”

Tania thought the Youth Team qualifying for the Junior Olympics in Rio was an achievement. “There we won our first game against Egypt in our first outing. Spurred by that, we entered the quarters in the above mentioned Asia Cup tournament in Malaysia.”

Tania says that international exposures ensure that they get points to enhance their rankings and their involvement with the game while in action is ascertained and points are

given by the International Basketball Authority. She said “At present I have accumulated over 138,000 points to be ranked number, but, I am yet to take in the Senior Nationals. Right now I am in Senior National Pool, but, still I do not know if the doors have opened as yet – I am awaiting that opportunity”.

Tania said it is not only herself who is in the top ten in rankings. Even my team-mate Lubna Morseth from Lyceum College, Wattala, is ranked number 11 in World rankings while the third is a girl from Ukraine. She also explained that rankings do not

come from winning matches. It is a system that derived through individual performances.

Finally, Tania said that she is hoping to make a career out of the game she loves. “Having said that I am mindful of my other obligations also Tania said. I am aware that the GCE examinations are round the corner and I know it my duty to do well. However, I have two people who are my guiding lights, they are my mother and my coach and I am prepared to groom my Basketball according to their plans.”



RAMANI MANGALIKA

BROUGHT HOME SRI LANKA FIRST 'SAG' GOLD

By Susil Premalal

Ramani Mangalika is an athlete whose name should be written in golden letters but has been consigned to the dust bin of history despite bringing glory to Sri Lanka without seeking material benefits.

Sri Lanka's top female sprinter in the '80s era left an indelible mark at the inaugural South Asian Federation (SAF) Games held in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1984 when she became the first athlete to win a gold medal scorching the track in the 200metres. But few would remember how she anchored Sri Lanka 4x100m relay to victory despite carrying a painful injury in her leg which prevented her from competing in the 100m final.

The saga of Thotagoda Gamage Ramani Mangalika began as a tender eight-year-old when she took part in an inter-house sports meet at Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Pannipitiya and won the 50metre race. But even then just like during her career, her precocious talent was not nurtured to the maximum.

"I had stopped athletics for three years because no one was there to encourage me," recalled Ramani.

However, in a tryst with destiny, she came under the wing of Dhammika Alwis, wife of late Lakshman de Alwis, a legendary Sri Lanka national coach, and Padma Tilakawardena, two teachers at Dharmapala who revived her interest in athletics.

"Those days to represent the school athletes were randomly chosen by teachers who selected their favourites not necessarily on merit," said Ramani who distinguished herself by winning title at the All Island Public Schools Championships, being the number one athlete at National level in the 100 and 200 events from 1980 to '88.

It was as a schoolgirl that Ramani won her first title at National level when she clocked 12.50 seconds in the 100metres at the National Sports Festival in Badulla in 1979.



Photo:
Memories of yesteryear

She made her international debut at the 1982 Delhi Asian Games where she competed in the 100 and 200 but more significantly was a member of the 4x400m women's relay team that set a new Sri Lanka record of 3 minutes 57.5 seconds shattering the old mark of 4:08.9mts.

In 1983 she was selected by the National Youth Sports Council as a young sports star and went on a worldwide educational tour on the ship Nippon Maru giving her international exposure of what was happening in the world.

Then came the sage of the 1984 SAF Games in Nepal where she took part in the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay. There were only five disciplines – athletics, boxing, football, swimming and weightlifting at the Games.

Sri Lanka won five gold medals in athletics and two from swimming out of a total medal haul of 37.

“The technical side at the Games was not up to the mark but Nepal were good hosts,” said Ramani who achieved the honour of winning the first gold for Sri Lanka at the Games when she emerged champion in the women's 200m final. Her coaches at the time were Brig. Parry Liyanage and Lakshman de Alwis.

However, despite qualifying to the final of the 100m, an injury to her leg dashed her hopes of going for a golden double in the sprints. But amazingly she mustered courage to bring glory for her country in the 4x100m relay race running with a heavily bandaged leg.





Ramani fondly recalled how she was treated like a hero by national coach late Lakshman de Alwis who virtually carried her from the plane on her return to the country after her golden effort.

There were no riches or rewards of houses at that time even though she risked her limb to anchor Sri Lanka to another gold medal despite carrying an injury.

“Those days there was no medicine unit in the Sports Ministry and we had to deal with our injuries on our own. I had to go for treatment for my injury to Horiwila in Anuradhapura but had no transport. The ministry also had only three vehicles for use by top officials. Fortunately then Sports Minister Vincent Perera gave his own vehicle with a driver for me to go for treatment

for which I am eternally grateful,” said Ramani Mangalika who never ran after riches but always put country before self.

At the peak of her career now, in 1985 she broke a 15-year-old Sri Lanka record clipping another legend K.G. Badra’s time of 25.6 by clocking 25.5 in the 200m event. The same year she ran in the semi-finals of the 100m at the Asian Championships in Jakarta clocking 12.08.

She holds the distinction of becoming the first female athlete to represent Sri Lanka at the 2nd World Athletics Championships in Rome in 1987 while at the Calcutta SAF Games she won a bronze in the 100m and silver in the 4x100m relay in the twilight of her career.

“Those days we ran for the country not with expectation of rewards. When I won the first medal in the SAF Games, the government did not shower me with houses and money but we did not expect this too. But today after winning a Thai Open also houses are given. There is no standard for recognizing merit,” she said.

Top Right:

Felicitation ceremony for Medalist at 1st South Asian Games 1984, held at Katunayake Airport
 L:R Mr. Pinnawale, Deputy Minister M.D. Premaratne, Simmone Van Heer, Minister M Vincent Perera, Ms. KG Badra, Lt. Col. RP Liyanage, Mr. KAS Gunasekara (Actg. Secretary of Ministry of Sports), Mr. Roy De Silva, Mr. Julian Bolling, Mr. Ruwan Chandrathilake, Brig. Vijaya Athukorala (Chairman of Interim committee for Athletics in SL)





“Now because of win at all cost mentality, they use even illegal means such as steroids to win events because of greed for monetary gain,” lamented athletic legend Ramani who was adjudged Best Athlete at the National Sports Festival (NSF) in 1980. She won the 100m gold at the NSF four times in 1979, 1984, 1985 and 1986 and the 200m gold in 1979, 1980, 1984 and 1985.

“We were the top nation in sprint events at the South Asian Games even then and till today in both men and women. India’s PT Usha came much later,” she said with a glint of pride.

Ramani Mangalika recalled the hardships they went through during their time.

“We trained without any proper clothing attire, diet or even proper running shoes.

We just used to wear shorts and run,” said Ramani who used to travel from Athurugiriya in bus route 108 which went to Town Hall and walked to Torrington for training thereafter.

“I used to go back home after drinking plain tea at Gune Ayya’s kade (shop). There no facilities but we did not expect any luxuries either unlike nowadays when they demand this and that,” she said.

However, thanks to late Minister Lalith Athulathmudali who was President of the athletics body, she got a job at Sathosa as Sports Officer on merit of her performance at the SAF Games which she served from 1984 till 2004 before opting for the early retirement scheme.

Ramani Mangalika is content with her life having built a two-storey house at

Siddamulla, Kottawa with the lump sum she received. Married to an athlete Jagath Gnanasiri Silva who is the Assistant Director of Sports Western Province and they have two teenage children who are more inclined to education than sports and are attending Sri Jayawardanepura University.

Her only regret is that people in Sri Lanka even officials have short memories of her achievements.

“I may not have won a medal at the Olympics, World Championship or Asian Games but I have created history. Nowadays people don’t know me. Even those who knew me, don’t appreciate my achievements. I do not get an invitation for any national event or for a school meet. Even my school Dharmapala has not invited me despite bringing glory to

their alma mater. The reason is because former athletes are not honoured and people don't know history. Officials are responsible for this situation," lamented 57-year-old Ramani.

"Those days there were hardworking coaches and officials, less political interference and differences between coaches," she said related how in 1982 when her coach Lakshman de Alwis had to attend a scholarship in Germany he used to send her training schedules by post because there were no alternative coaches at the time.

She gained a Diploma from the Institute of National Sports Science during its inauguration, but has not been called to the either any selection committee or technical committee of the national athletics governing body though she would like to give back to the sport.

Ramani fervently hopes she would be able to donate a trophy in her name at the upcoming 100th Athletic National Championships.

It would indeed be a fitting tribute to Sri Lanka's original 'Golden Girl'.



Photo:
Injured Mangalika being wheeled into the BIA lounge

LOOKING FOR THAT "18-HOLE" GOLF GOLD IN KATHMANDU

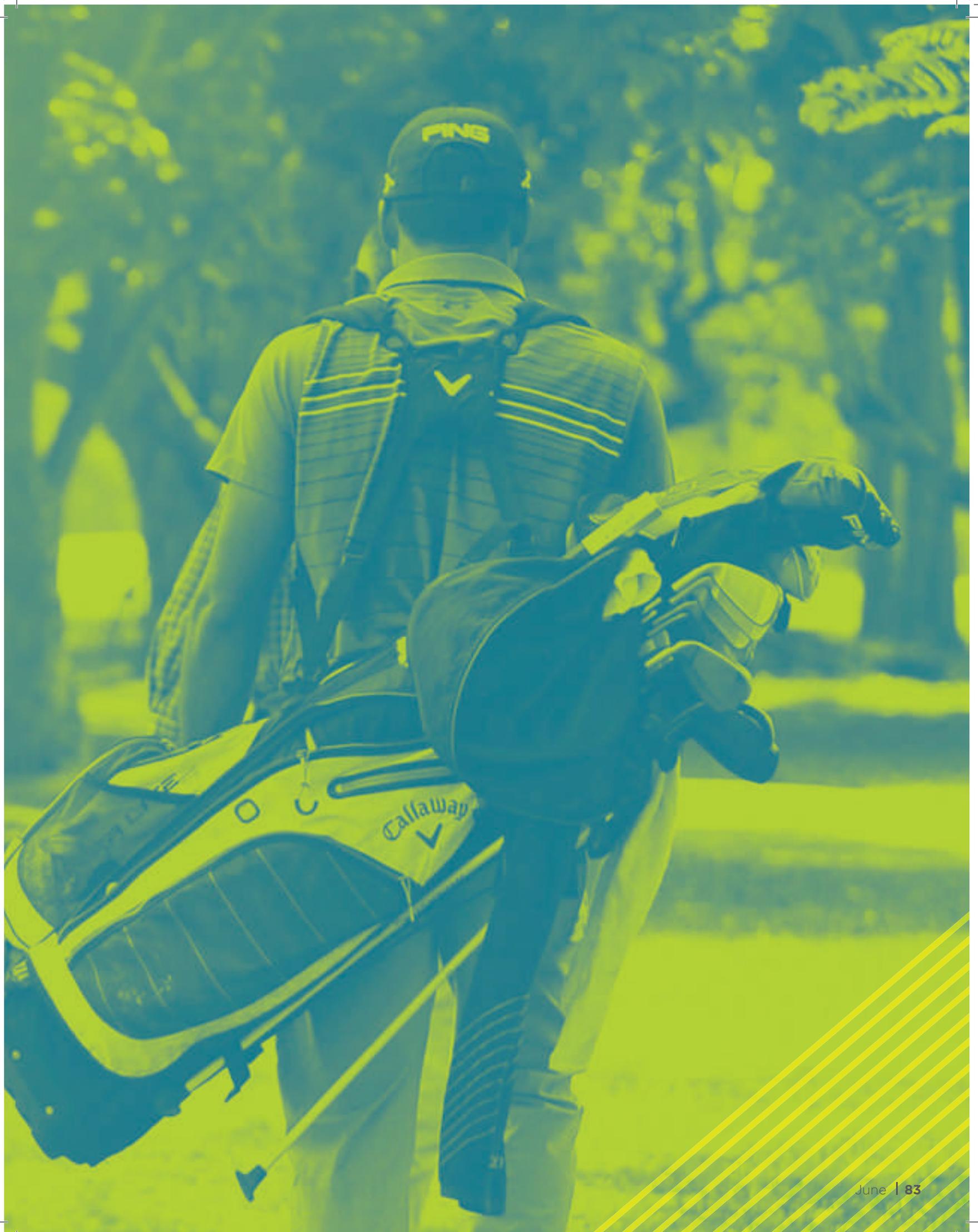
Amateur golf in Sri Lanka has a rich tradition that counts to more than a hundred years and is only younger to the mother of all golf – the British Amateur Championship. Now from the Ridgeway to Victoria and the other few courses with eighteen holes, the game is on the ascend with an enthusiastic team of golfers who are looking to pin it on the global map.

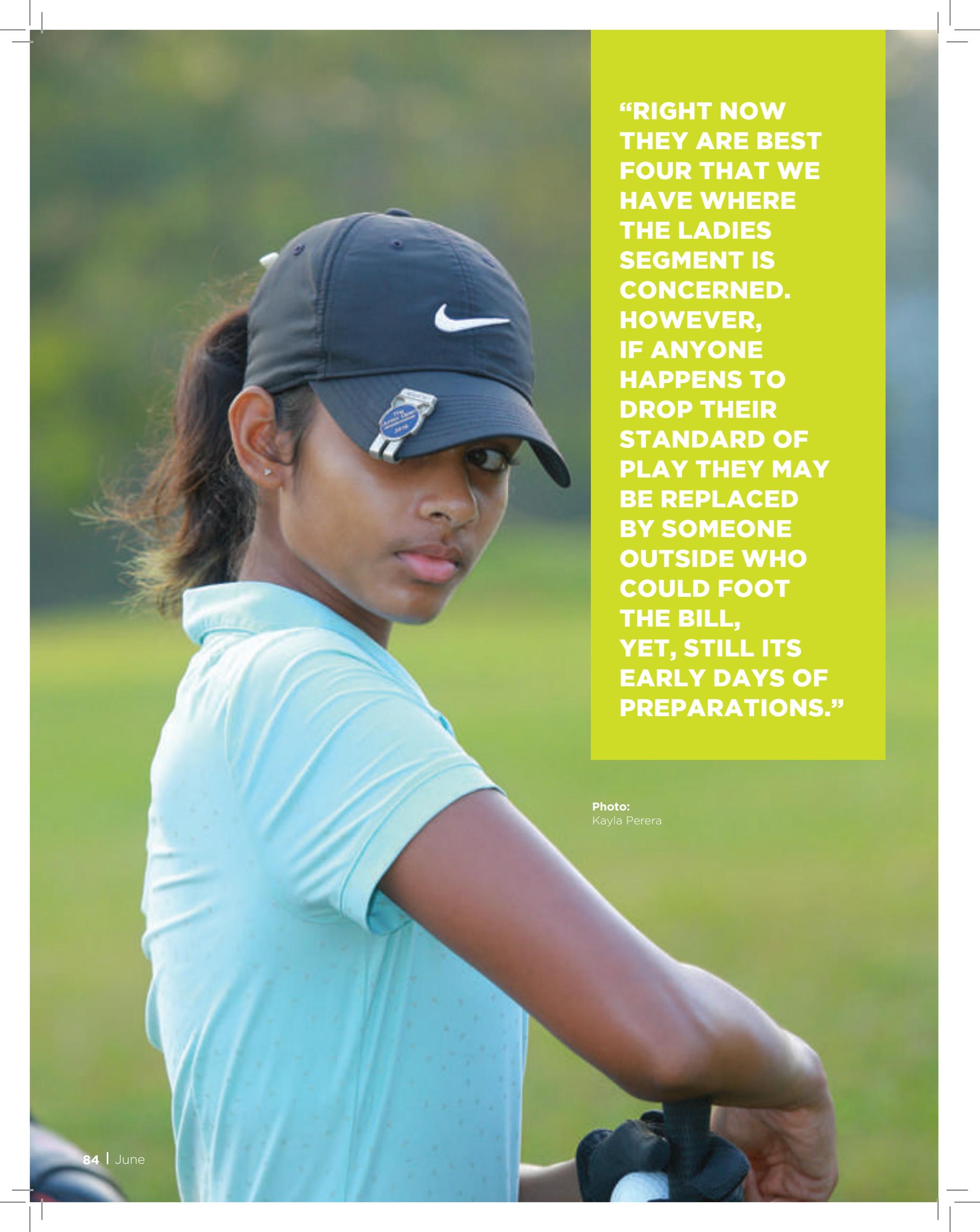
We met up with the 24 SAG hopefuls who are looking to book their berth at the courses in Nepal and Pokhara for the 13th edition of the event which will

be held in Nepal. When we looked at the initial preparations it was evident that they are readying themselves for the event and they are pretty serious about it.

Guiding through the preparations was G. M. Pradeep Kumara who is also Golf Union's Administration Executive and analyst and a keen golfer with a very decent handicap. Incidentally he himself is an aspirant for the ticket to Nepal at the end of the year.

Pradeep explained "To be very frank, during the past few months





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PREPARATIONS.”**

Photo:
Kayla Perera



the competition here has become very aggressive and spirited and the testimony to that are the scorecards that looks very impressive. Players like G.P. Sisirakumara, N. Amerapathma, B. Sanjeewa, Chanaka Perera and Navinda Ranga have been in the limelight in turn and there is hardly any difference in their scores.”

Pradeep explained that right now in training there are twenty male competitors and four ladies and most likely the teams will comprise four males and four females each. When asked if the four ladies are having a free entry to Kathmandu Pradeep explained “Right now they are best four that we have where the Ladies segment is concerned. However, if anyone happens to drop their standard of play they may be replaced by someone outside who could foot the bill, yet, still its early days of preparations.”

When asked how confident the players are in making the SAG fruitful one

and how confident are the players in bringing home ‘gold’ Pradeep explained “Especially in the men’s segment the competition is intense at present and as the selection dates gets closer it would be real contest to watch. Then in the women’s segment our number 1 player Tanya Minel Balasuriya is a natural and is highly motivated. Besides, her training schedule also caters to the challenges at hand. Coming back to the SAG challenge what we are looking at is the Golf Gold and nothing else.”

Pradeep said that they are hoping to finalize the squad by September and from there the squad would be training with specialized focus until the competition in December. “As we

Top:
Some of the SAG contenders (men’s)

Left:
U.A. Ranasingha



“Amateur Golf especially in India is of very high standard, but, our golfers have stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the exchanges in the recent past.”

have already learned the climate in Nepal is rather cool and temperate very similar to what it is in Nuwara Eliya during that period in December. So, we are hoping to shift training schedules to Nuwara Eliya for the rest of the period.” stressed Pradeep.

Finally we posed the question – Though you say that you are confident of the SAG Gold, are you saying this knowing that there is going to be formidable opponents in India and Pakistan. “Amateur Golf especially in India is of very high standard, but, our golfers have stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the exchanges in the recent past. Pakistan’s amateur circuit is also of a good standard, but we have that inclination that we could over these oppositions. We feel that being competitive and confident is a good omen for competition of this nature,” Pradeep said in conclusion.



Top:
Chanaka Perera

Bottom:
J.M.D. Indika



Lankans ready in spite from strong challenge from their neighbours

Sri Lanka has a long-term plan to develop the sport of Kabaddi beginning by targeting a gold or silver medal from both men and women at the upcoming South Asian Games in Kathmandu.

“In the South Asian region, the leading Kabaddi players come from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is very difficult for us to challenge them,” said Anura Pathirana, President of Sri Lanka Kabaddi Federation (SLKF).

In the 2016 South Asian Games (SAG) both men and women from Sri Lanka won bronze medals.

However, Sri Lankan players managed to defeat Indian and Pakistani players in the first round.

Ahead of the SAG, the federation hopes to participate in international competitions in Singapore, Dubai and South Korea.

The federation has formed two national pools of 30 men and women each.

Training has been ongoing at Torrington Indoor Stadium in Colombo and after the second selection trial the national pool was trimmed to 20 each.

One month before the SAG the final squad of 15 each will be selected.

“In 2016 South Asian Games, the Sri Lankan women had a chance to fight for silver medal but we had to settle for bronze because our coaches lacked the technical and tactical knowledge. Our biggest drawback is two of our best players have tested









positive for drug use and could be banned from the sport. This will affect our overall performances at the South Asian Games,” Pathirana said.

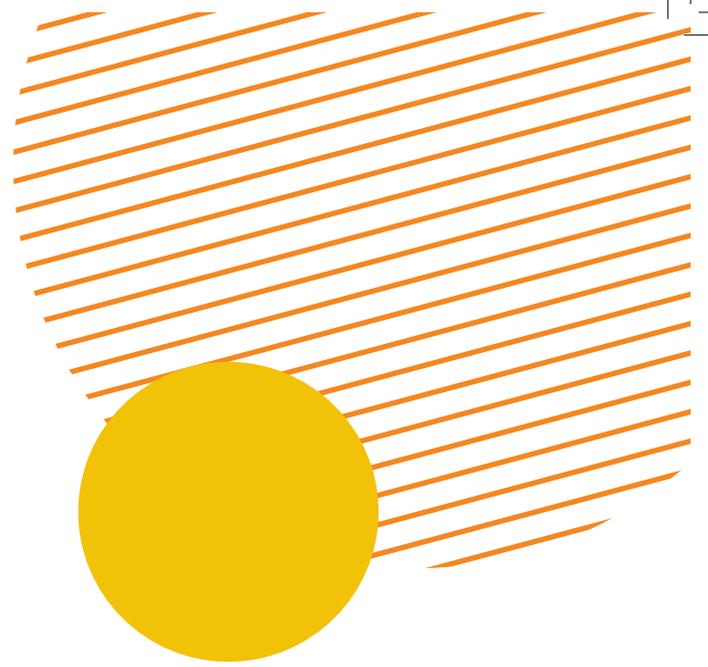
“We have many talented players. We have a long-term plan to develop the sport and have appointed six local coaches including a head coach, assistant coach and trainer to train the men and women national pools,” he said.

The Kabaddi Federation has also conducted interviews to hire a foreign coach. “Three foreign coaches have already been earmarked. They are two from India and one from Iran. This is the first time that a foreign coach will be hired for the South Asian Games. However, in the 30-year-old history of kabaddi, there was a foreign coach earlier when Sri Lanka took part in the Jakarta Asian Games last year. He was Udaya Kumar from Kerala, India. He was in Sri Lanka for five months last time. He has also indicated his willingness to coach the national side again,” said Pathirana.

Last time the federation spent US\$ 2,500 per month for a foreign coach but this figure could increase in future.

There are over 800 Kabaddi men and women players in Sri Lanka now. They are mostly from the three Services, Police and National Youth Service Council.





Striving hard to make a

Memorable Impression

By Susil Premalal



Photo:
Lady Footballers at training

Jaswar Umar, Secretary of the Football Federation of Sri Lanka (FFSL) says that with the South Asian Games (SAG) as target, national pools of both men and women have begun training for the Kathmandu competition.

Initially Football at the SAG was an event for under 23 players, this time they are hoping to send the full squad according to National Football sources.

The Senior National Men's coach Romy Packeerally is handling the under 23 team as well, while the women's team is trained by national coach Tilak Alphonso.

Now the national team is striving hard for their preparations with a series of international matches.

The women's national pool comprises 29 players.

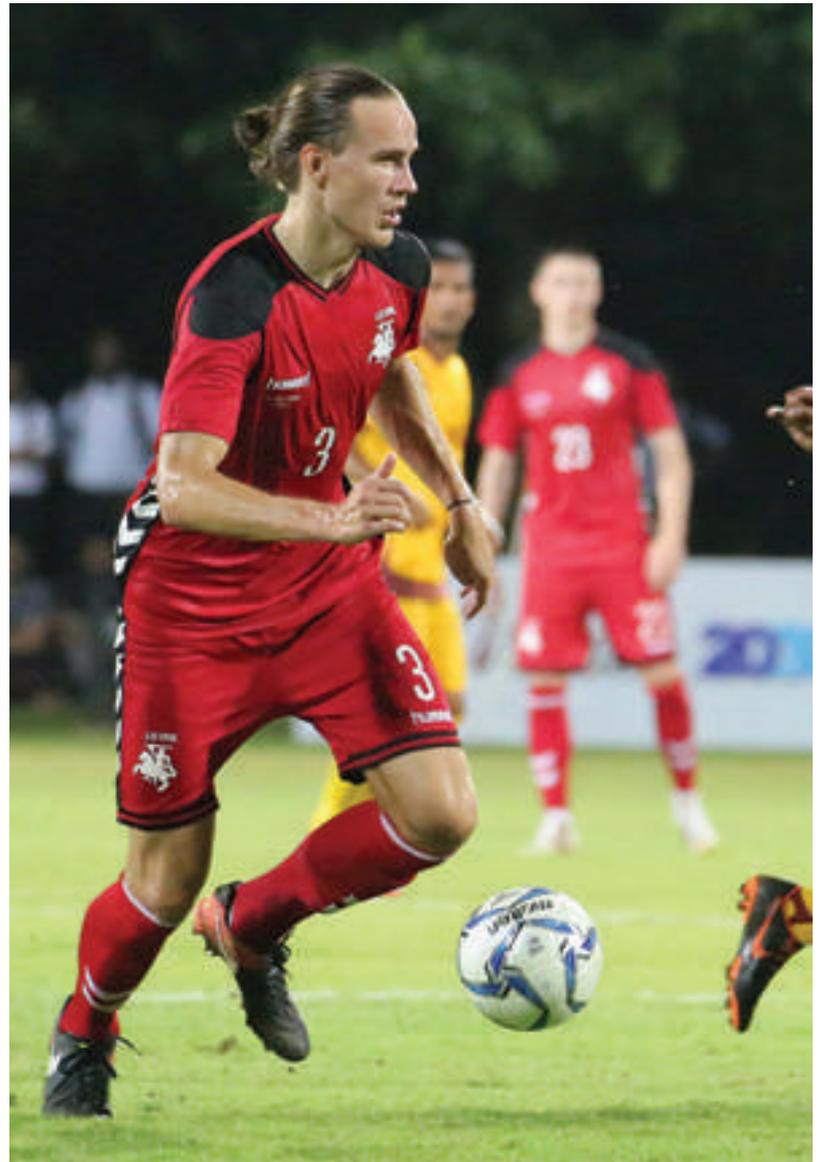
The men's team is training at Baddegana Football Complex in Kotte while the women's pool train at Sugathadasa Stadium and Torrington grounds.

The women's pool underwent a training programme in Bahrain last December and played three friendly matches to gain experience.

In addition to the Kathmandu Games, the women's team will be participating

"The men's national team participated in the SAFF men's football championships held in Bangladesh last year. They gave a much improved performance than in previous years and missed the chance of qualifying to the semi-finals by a whisker"





in the South Asian FF women’s football tournament. They will be gaining more international exposure and experience as a result.

The men’s national team participated in the SAFF men’s football championships held in Bangladesh last year. They gave a much improved performance than in previous years and missed the chance of qualifying to the semi-finals by a whisker.

This year the Men’s National team took part in the World Cup qualification round held in Macau and Sri Lanka. In addition they toured Laos to play some friendly matches

in order to give exposure to the young team.

The national men’s team comprises a fine blend of experienced and young players which bodes well for the future.

The federation secretary said coach Packeerally has been given a target of winning the gold medal at the South Asian Games.

“He should deliver a medal for Sri Lanka at these Games having been appointed as coach in January 2018. He has been given ample time to prepare our players to go for gold at the South Asian Games,” said Umar.





“He should deliver a medal for Sri Lanka at these Games having been appointed as coach in January 2018.”

Packeerally, whose term ends in March 2020, is determined make a statement at the forthcoming Games since his future depends on the results in Kathmandu. Sri Lanka have the potential to win the gold medal at the SAG though India is the favourite, according to officials.

The federation is not bringing down foreign coaches for national pool training since they have confidence in the local coaching staff. However, they hope to hire a technical director and

fitness trainer ideally from a European country this year.

The cost of maintaining the national pool for the upcoming event is Rs. 35 million, the bulk of which goes for the men's team (Rs. 25m).

Women's football is being held only for the second time at the SAG.

In the 2016 Games, Sri Lanka failed to win any medals in football.



LOOKING FOR FOREIGN EXPERTISE TO DO WELL AT THE SAG

By Susil Premalal

The Wrestling Federation of Sri Lanka (WFSL) is planning to bring down four coaches from Iran to prepare the National wrestling squad for the upcoming South Asian Games (SAG) in Kathmandu.

“We have a long-term objective to develop wrestling to prepare our wrestlers for international competitions and seek the assistance of the Sports Ministry to hire foreign coaches failing which we will go all out to get them through private sponsorship,” said Chaminda Kumara Mallawarachchi, Secretary of WFSL.

Among these four coaches, one of them will be a Consultant coach while the other three are fitness trainers.







They are expected to arrive in the island in June or July.

The Iranian coaches will on a four-month contract and will continue to remain until the SAG, according to Mallawarachchi.

Initially a 54-member national pool was selected in preparation for the Games, including 34 men and 20 women.

Now it has been reduced to 45 wrestlers, including 26 men and 19 women.

The National pool began training from February at the North Central Province Sports Complex in

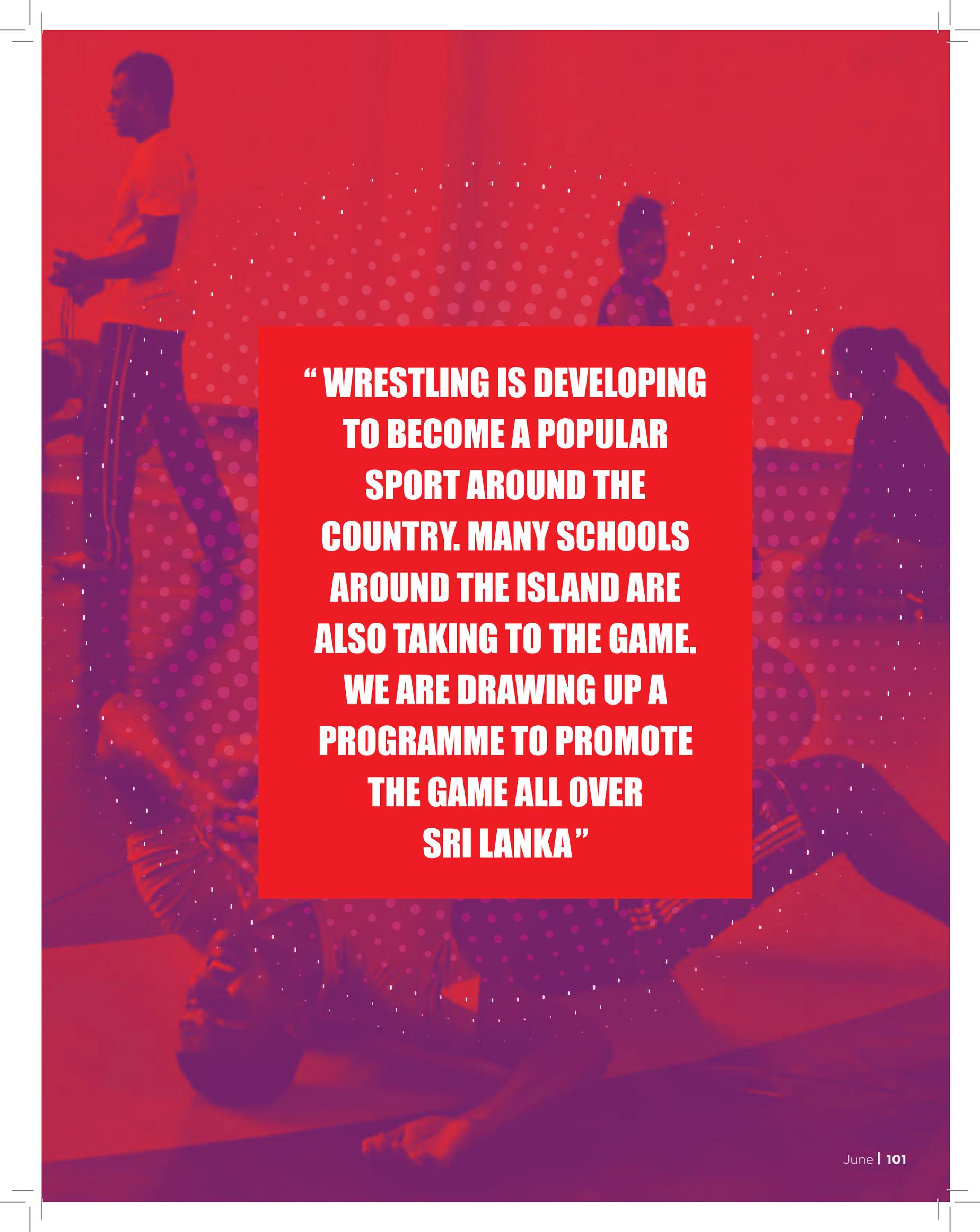
Anuradhapura. The training base has shifted to Torrington Indoor Stadium from May.

The pool was selected after the completion of the National Wrestling Championships in December 2018.

M.K.J. Piyaratne is in charge of training the national pool assisted by Y.R.C. Fernando.

Sri Lanka's men and women hope to compete in 10 weight categories at the South Asian Games.

"Our target is to bring home 11 medals, including at least one gold medal, in the wrestling competition. In the 2016 Games held in India we



**“ WRESTLING IS DEVELOPING
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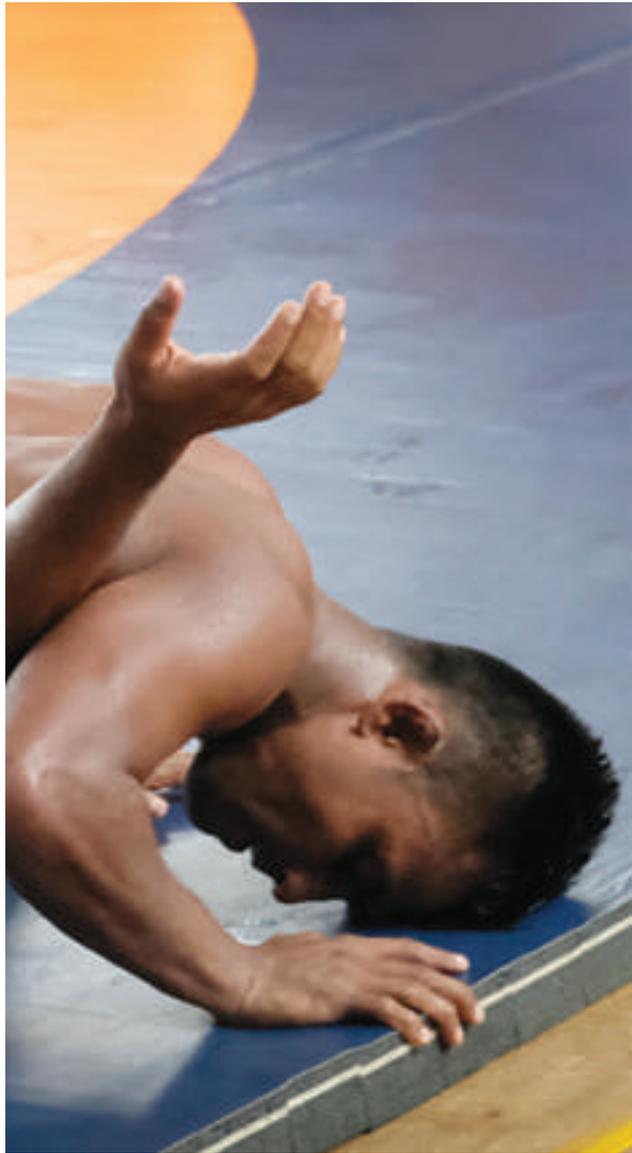


Photo:
The SAG wrestlers male and female contingents



won a total of 12 medals, including five silver and seven bronze medals. Our main challenge for medals will come from India and Pakistan,” said Mallawarachchi.

Sri Lanka has been participating in the wrestling event since the inaugural South Asian Games in 1984. In the history of SAG, the biggest medal haul for Sri Lanka came at the last event held in India. There are a total of 650 wrestlers registered with the federation, including 450 men and 200 women. Most of the

wrestlers represent the three Armed Forces and Police.

In addition, there is Young Shadows Wrestling Club in Ja-Ela who are at the forefront of this sport.

“Wrestling is developing to become a popular sport around the country. Many schools around the island are also taking to the game. We are drawing up a programme to promote the game all over Sri Lanka,” said Mallawarachchi.



Race Walking still in the balance

By Susil Premalal

Walking past the Independence Square in Colombo in the precincts of the Sports Ministry area there is unmistakable scene that you could witness. The National Walking Race hopefuls keep practising almost every morning without a break.

Now they feel that they have been left out. They are among those who could not be accommodated for the Kathmandu spectacle in December.

At the recently concluded National Games Festival Race Walking winners were Isuru Salindha

Dunukara (men) and Gayani Prathapasinghe (women), both from the Sri Lanka Army.

Dunukara, 27, is from North Central Province while Gayani, 25, from the Southern Province.

This is the fourth time Dunukara been a medal winner in the 20-km race at the festival clocking a time of 1 hour 38 minutes 38 seconds. He won gold in 2016, silver in 2017 and gold again in 2018.

He has represented Sri Lanka at the Asian Race Walking Championship

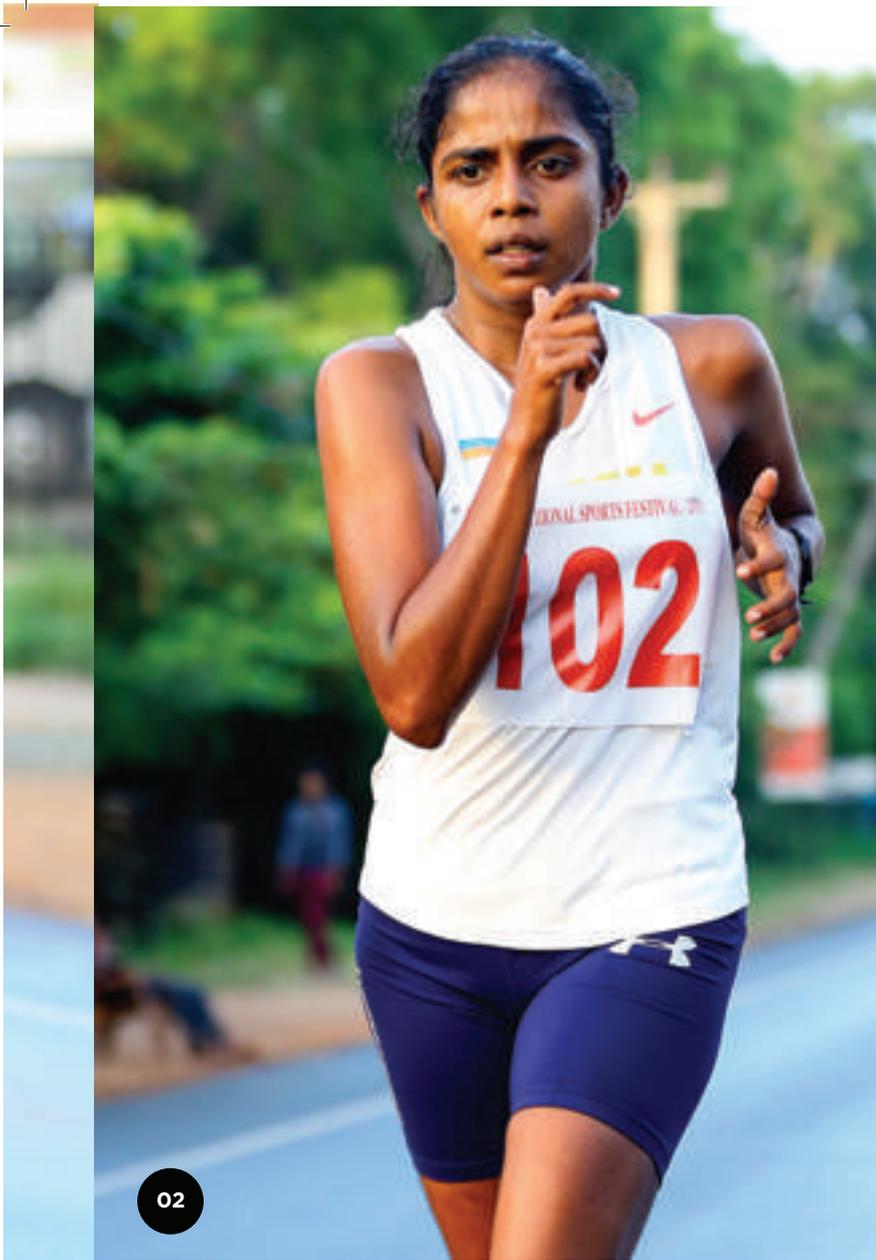


01



03

01. H.A.D. Vimukthi Wimalaratne & R.M. Pasindu Lakshitha (Eastern Province) 02. U.W. Kalhari Madrika (Western Province)
04. Lakshmi Kalyani, P.B. Gayani, Dinusha Dilhani (All from the Southern Province)



03. Niroshan Appuhamy (Western Province), D.M.I.S.S. Dunukara (North Central Province), G.S. Chanaka (Western Province),
05. M.R. Jagath Chandana Ranasingha (North Central Province)



Photo:
D.M.I.S.S. Dunukara
breasting the tape



Photo:
Praying before the start

in Japan in 2017 where he achieved a personal best of 1:31.01 clinching ninth place.

Gayani won the gold medal in a time of 1:54.28. She has won the gold medal at the Festival since 2015.

She clinched sixth position at the Asian Race Walking Championship in Japan in 2017.

She achieved her personal best of 1:43.00 in a Southern Province competition.

The aim of both these Race Walking athletes is to participate in the South Asian Games in Kathmandu. However, it is still not certain whether this event would be included at the Kathmandu Games.

The AASL hope to discuss with national bodies of participating countries to push for its inclusion in this Games which needs the approval of at least three countries.



‘Snow Volleyball’ comes from the same embryo

By **Susil Ranasinghe**

General Secretary (2005-2015); Sri Lanka Volleyball Federation

It was in 1895 that at Holyoke in America that William J. Morgan initiated Volleyball by the name of “Mintonate” which was subsequently that Prof. A.T Hulstet of the YMCA who reverted “Volleyball” instead of Mintonate. In 1947 Volleyball was recognised by the FIVB in Paris which resulted in the formation of the International Volleyball Federation. The first World Men’s Volleyball Championship was held in Prague-Czechoslovakia 1947 and the first World Women’s Volleyball Championship was held in 1952 in Moscow – Russia and subsequently introduced to the Olympics Games as a Sport 1964 in Tokyo, Japan.



It was in 1930 that Beach Volleyball was introduced as a segment of the Volleyball Family at St. Monica Beach – California and the First Match was held Polycet Beach – California in 1976. Thereafter 221 countries affiliated to the FIVB popularised Beach Volleyball resulting in it being recognised in 1996 Atlanta Olympics as an Official Olympic Sport.

It was also observed that there was a vast discrepancy between the rules and regulations of Beach Volleyball and Indoor Volleyball and therefore the FIVB made the necessary adjustment to inaugurate a “One Sport – Two Discipline” under their jurisdiction.

Introduction of Snow Volleyball in XXIII Winter Olympic Games at PyeongChang – South Korea; a new Sport was

introduced to the Volleyball Family: namely “Snow Volleyball” where the Rules and Regulations were very similar to Beach Volleyball. It will be in 2022 that the FIVB now in the process decided to introduce this Sport to the Winter Olympic Games as an Official Sport.

A Snow Volleyball Team will consist of three Players and a Reserve with the game to be played on a Court with a Length of 16m and a Width of 8m (16m x 8m), Free Zone of 2m and a Snow depth of the Court being 30cm. In addition a Net of 2.43m for Men and 2.24m for Women respectively, two Antennas with a height of 1.5m parallel to the Side Lines. The Ball should weigh 250g – 280g and a Circumference of 66cm – 88cm. For the moment, there is no specific uniform designed for snow volleyball, so various types of clothing

can be observed on the courts. Most athletes who play snow volleyball are also beach or indoor volleyball players. As snow volleyball players, they usually wear thermal underwear under existing volleyball uniforms, that consist of synthetic t-shirts and shorts with some promotional logos. This helps players keep warm – especially in negative temperatures – while conveying the image of volleyball in general to the audience. Football boots are used when playing snow volleyball, since they provide a grip on the snow and prevent the player from sliding when playing.

A match will consist of three sets of 15 points each and in the event of a tie the winning team will be the team that is two points ahead at the termination of the set and this has been confirmed by the FIVB. It must also be mentioned that the Austrian



by the name Martin Kaswarm in the 2006 who introduced the basic concept of the Snow Volleyball to a section of the existing Ski-Resort for the use of foreigners, resulting in it being named as an Official Sport of Austria by the Austrian Volleyball Federation. Snow Volleyball was also introduced to the European Continental Volleyball Federations (CEV) Events Calendar in 2015.



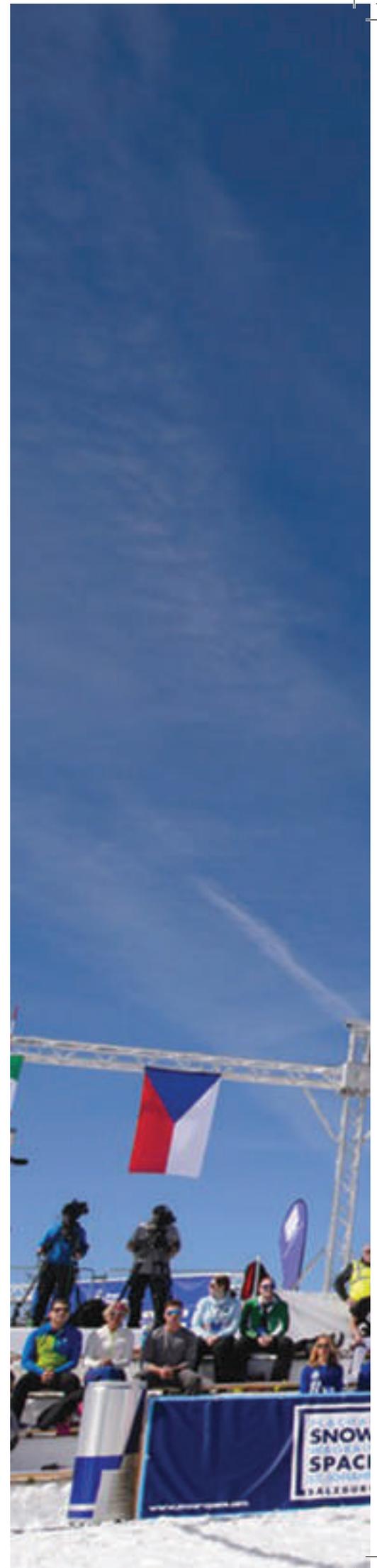
A Snow Volleyball Tournament was organised in Europe in the Year 2016 which was recognised as The first European Snow Volleyball Tour resulting in a CEV European Snow Volleyball Championship being held in Vienna – Austria in 2018. Also for the purpose of introducing Snow volleyball to the XXIII Winter Olympics an exhibition match was held in Pyeongchang - South Korea in 2018. Between 2017-2019, the FIVB aims to establish an eight-year plan and will test rules and regulations at various demonstration events. The FIVB vision is to offer opportunities to enjoy volleyball in all its forms which can unite people in a peaceful environment, with the goal of being the number one family sport in the world. The FIVB has recognized snow volleyball as one of its disciplines and hopes that all affiliated volleyball governing bodies will do the same in their respective countries. This will contribute to the growth of the sport at the grassroots and international level. The goal is to have a full-fledged World Tour from 2018/2019 season (minimum three stops within the territory of three different confederations), a World Championship in 2020 and a demonstration event at the 2020 Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne.

Although Austria is purported to have introduced Snow Volleyball it was in the Year 1955 that one of the Players testing their skills on snow in the Moscow Region. One of these players, VitaliKovalenko, would later become a member of the Soviet national team that won gold when Volleyball made its first Olympic appearance at Tokyo in 1964. He was a real pioneer and forerunner in every possible way.

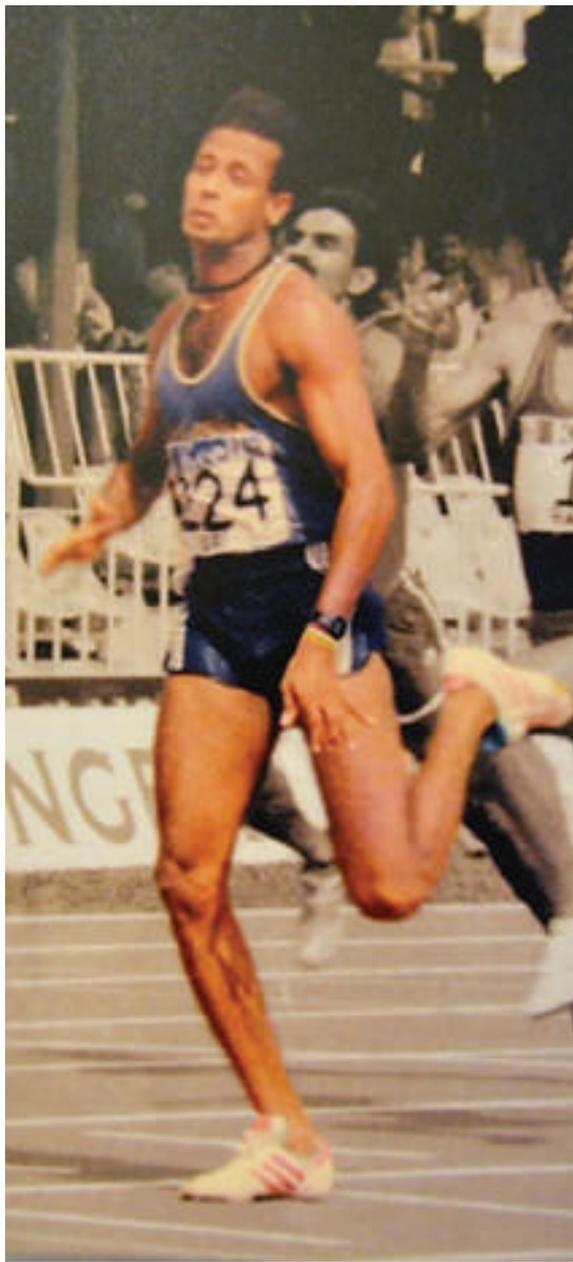
Snow Volleyball is the ultimate way to unite the summer and winter Olympics since it is a proof of Snow Volleyball being played in Moscow Russia in 1955; accessible all year round, from the summer to the winter, from the beach to the mountains, indoor and outdoor. Volleyball any time, any place, anywhere.

In addition to indoor, Beach Volleyball and Snow Volleyball sees the participation at present of Disabled Persons in sitting or standing positions to participate in this sports.

(Pix: Courtesy FIVB Snow Volleyball)







TURNING BACK THE PAGES OF LANKAN ATHLETICS

By Susil Premalal & Pictures courtesy
Saman Kumara Gunewardana

Sri Lanka's athletics history dates back to 20th September 1921 when the Ceylon Amateur Athletic Association held its first National Athletic Championship (NAC) at the CH and FC grounds.

Eventhough the history of sports in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) runs back into the mid 19th century, it regularized in 1921.

The first NAC, which was held with the participation of 63 sportsmen later developed in to a grand championship because of its affiliated members.

The Ceylon AAA which depended solely on a few sports clubs from Colombo and Kandy for the first 10-15 years started a journey beyond that after the end of the World War II when the AASL (Amateur Athletic Association of Sri Lanka) became the livewire of the athletics in Sri Lanka.

The National Athletics Championships organized by the AASL became a blue riband event. It has a 98-year-old history and made a significant contribution to uplift the Sri Lankan athletics to the international level.



Schools, government sector, private sector clubs and various departments became the members of the national association. In the '60s, sports clubs and athletes from outside major cities became members of the association. As a result the sports clubs became the strongest part of the AASL by the first half of the '70s.

The sports clubs produced many talented athletes whose talents were internationally acknowledged. However, this situation started to change after the Asian Games in 1978 as the Defence Services challenged the position of the clubs mostly with the athletes who joined the Defence Services from clubs.

“But Sri Lankan athletes hit rock bottom in the face competition from the Japanese, Chinese and Malaysian athletes who moved ahead with new technology and facilities. It increased to such a level by 1982 that our athletes faced a great setback before the athletes from those countries at the Asian Games of that year. Based on the decision of the one-man commission which was appointed to investigate about this, the Ministry of

Sports annulled the AASL and established an interim committee,” according to Saman Kumara Gunawardena, Director of Sports at Kelaniya University who is also the Honorary Recorder at AASL.

“In 1985 the AASL was re-established under a new methodology. However, the organization structure of the association was not affected by this re-alignment, as the affiliated clubs and associations remained without undergoing any change. The association decided that a proper methodology must be formed to increase the participation of as many athletes as possible in the National Athletics Championship and thereby to present the top athletes to the international level,” he said.

The turning point in Sri Lanka’s athletic history came when district associations were established spreading the sport and search for talent islandwide.

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Top:
Asian Games 1990
Right:
Susanthika at Jakarta 1995



“It was decided to establish district associations in addition to the existing affiliated members. At first 14 of the 25 districts in the island got the membership in the association and the participation of athletes also increased as expected. National records were broken regularly at the National Athletics Championships and selection competitions. This was directly and indirectly contributed by the National Sports Festival of the sports ministry and the National School Games conducted by the Education Ministry. Sri Lanka’s number of gold medals which was limited to two or three, increased to 15 medals at the 1991 South Asian Games making Sri Lanka champions of the region. By this time, the district associations had surpassed sports clubs in its contribution to the National championship. This positive condition continued to exist for another 15 years,” said Gunawardena.

“By that time, Sri Lankan athletes had started winning medals at the Asian Athletic Championship, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games as well. It reached zenith when one of our female athletes (Susanthika Jayasinghe) won a medal at the Sydney Olympic Games. We also obtained the opportunity of organizing the 2002 Asian Athletic Championship because of these achievements. District association officers and athletes made the most significant contribution for these achievements. The AASL which had 14 affiliates in 1980, developed to have 39 at the moment. This increase of the number of member associations directly contributed to increase the number of athletes achieving success internationally,” he said.



Photo:
Susanthika in action



Photo:
At the 1st South Asian Games 1984 Kathmandu, Nepal. Mr. Pinnawale, Ranjith Botheju (Silver medalist in 200m), Ramani Mangalika, Hemalal Priyankara (Gold Medalist in 200m) and Mr. Roy De Silva. Ramani also won the Gold in 200m with 25.2 secs.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS IN LANKA'S ATHLETICS

- First Athletics Championships was held from 9th to 11th June 1868 at Kandy Rifle Esplanade under the distinguished patronage of His Highness Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of Ceylon
- In September 1868, the first athletics club Colombo Athletics Club (CAC) was formed in Colombo. His Highness Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of Ceylon becomes the first President of CAC
- The first school Inter-House Athletics meet was held at Trinity College, Kandy in August 1883
- The Ceylon Amateur Athletics Association was formed in May 1896 with the fortitude of Col. G.R. Savage and Mr. Wilson Bartlett as the founders
- The first inter-schools athletics meet was held at Havelock race course on May 24, 1906. The competition named 'Empire Games Schools Championships'
- The first National Athletics Championships was held on 23rd and 24th September 1921 at Race Course (CH & FC) premises
- Ceylon Amateur Athletics Association acquire official affiliation with International Amateur Athletics Association on January 18, 1922. Col. T.Y. Wright became the first president while Mr. Robert R Commack elected as the first secretary
- In April 1924, Ceylon AAA went on their first foreign tour called 'Indian Olympic Trials' held at Delhi, India. G.H. Karunathilake (100 & 220 yards), G.L. Jayawardene (440 yards & Long Jump) and V.M. Joseph (220 yards) represented the Ceylon team and V.M. Joseph won the Bronze medal in the 220 yards event. This was the first ever medal obtained by Sri Lanka in an overseas competition
- First Olympic Games participation – C.T. Van Geysel competes in High Jump event at the Amsterdam Olympic

Games in 1928 under the British flag. A former Royal College athlete Van Geysel established an Asian record in the High Jump event of 6 feet 1 inch in 1925. Later Van Geysel became the President of Ceylon AAA from 1952 – 1966 for 15 years

- The First All Island Inter-School Athletics Championships (Public Schools Athletics Championships well known John Tarbat meet) was held at Police Grounds, Bambalapitiya on 3rd and 4th October 1930
- In March 1934, Ceylon participated in the first international athletics competition held at Delhi, India called 'West Asian Games'
- Four athletes (W.W. Thambimuttu, Duncan White, H.A. Perera and A.C. Dep) represented Ceylon for the first time at the Commonwealth Games in 1938 held in Sydney, Australia
- The first Indo-Ceylon athletics meet was held at Police Grounds, Bambalapitiya on October 25, 1940. India secured the



Photo:
Col. T.Y. Wright - 1st President AASL 1922



Photo:
P. Jullian Greero

championships with 88 points. Ceylon team secured 79 points with nine gold medals, including two relays

- First Olympics Games participation and medal: Duncan White, G.D. Peiris and John de Saram represented Ceylon for the first time in the Olympic Games held in London in 1948. White won the Silver medal in 400 metres hurdle event clocking 51.8 seconds. It was the only medal in Sri Lankan Olympic history for the next 52 years until the year 2000
- First Commonwealth Games Medal: Duncan White won the Gold Medal in 440 yards Hurdle event with a record time of 52.5 seconds at the Commonwealth Games (British Empire Games) held in New Zealand in February 1950
- First Asian Games Medal: M.A. Akbar won the Silver medal in Pole Vault event at the first Asian Games held in Delhi, India in 1951
- Sri Lanka's first Relay Carnival: The first ever first Relay Carnival was held at Peradeniya University grounds in March 1954 (Inter halls of the University hostels)

- The first Sri Lankan women participation at an international competition: June de Kretser competes in 100 & 200 metres at the 2nd Asian Games held in Manila, Philippines in 1954
- In April 1958, the Ceylon Athletics Association inaugurates the Junior National Athletics Championships
- Nagalingam Ethirweerasingham won the first Gold medal for Sri Lanka at the Asian Games held in Tokyo 1958 in High Jump event
- In September 1960, the Education Department introduced the All Island Schools Athletics Championships
- Nirmala Dissanayake secured a Bronze medal in the 200m at the 4th Asian Games, Jakarta in 1962 and became the first Sri Lankan woman medallist at the Asian Games
- S.L.B. Rosa secured double Gold medals for 5,000 and 10,000 metre events at the Asian Games held at Bangkok 1970
- K.G. Badra became the first female athlete to represent Sri Lanka at the Commonwealth Games held at Edinburgh in 1970

- In September 1972, the Ministry of Sports inaugurated the National Sports Festival
- Sri Lanka won the first medal in a relay event at the Asian Games held in Tehran in 1974
- Sri Lanka entered the Asian Athletics Championships for the first time held in Seoul, South Korea in 1975 and won the Bronze medal in the men's 4x400m relay event
- In 1976, Sri Lanka couldn't compete in an event at the Olympic Games for the first in history since 1948
- In 1978, Sri Lanka wasn't able to win a medal in Asian Games history for the first time since 1954
- Sri Lanka compete in a Relay event for the first time in Sri Lankan Olympic history at the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980
- In January 1983, AASL dissolved by the Sports Ministry due to the huge flop at the 1982 Asian Games and formed an Interim Board for the next three years

Photo:
S.L.B. Rosa



Left:
Robert Cammack

Right:
Duncan White



Photo: 01. Sir John Tarbat **02.** P Don Victor **03.** N Ethirweerasingham **04.** Saman Kumara **05.** SMG Banda & Sriyantha Dissanayake at AG 1990



Photo:
Nirmala Dissanayake

- In September 1984, the Interim committee sent 17 athletes to the inaugural South Asian Games which was held at Kathmandu, Nepal. Sri Lanka were ranked second behind India with 5 Gold medals
- In October 1984, the Ministry of Education inaugurated the 'National School Games'
- In September 1986, 51 year-old Sarath Wijesinghe won the Shot Putt event at the National Athletics Championships held at Police Park. Wijesinghe won this event also in the 1956 Nationals and repeated this feat after 30 years
- Padmakumara Amarasekara represented Sri Lanka at the 1st IAAF World Junior Athletics Championships held in July in Athens, Greece
- 16 Junior Athletes represented Sri Lanka at the 1st Asian Junior Athletics Championships held in Jakarta in December 1986
- V.K.L. Samarasinghe won the 1st South Asian Marathon held in Kathmandu on 31st December, 1986
- Three marathoners (V.K.L. Samarasinghe, K.A. Karunaratne and Bandula Samarasinghe) represented Sri Lanka at the inaugural Marathon World Cup held in Seoul, South Korea in June 1987. In the team championships, Sri Lanka secured 27th position
- In August 1987, AASL sent two athletes for the first time to the IAAF World Athletics Championships held in Rome, Italy

- Thilaka Jinadasa became the first female athlete to represent Sri Lanka at the Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea in 1988
- Benildus Fernando won the first Asian Junior Championships medal in Singapore 1988 in the Long Jump event (Bronze)
- After 16 years Sri Lanka returns to the medal tally at the Asian Games when 21 year-old Sriyantha Dissanayake secured two medals in sprint events in Beijing, China in October, 1990
- Most National Records at a single meet: 14 new National Athletic Records were established at the National Athletics Championships held on 10th-12th November, 1991 in Colombo
- In December 1991, Sri Lanka beat India with a haul of 15 Gold medals at the 5th South Asian Games held in Colombo
- In July 1994, Susanthika Jayasinghe and Damayanthi Dharsha won the first Asian Junior Gold with a Championship record in 100 and 200 metres respectively. Susanthika ranked World Junior No. 1 in 200m (23.16) and Dharsha No. 6 in 100m (11.42)

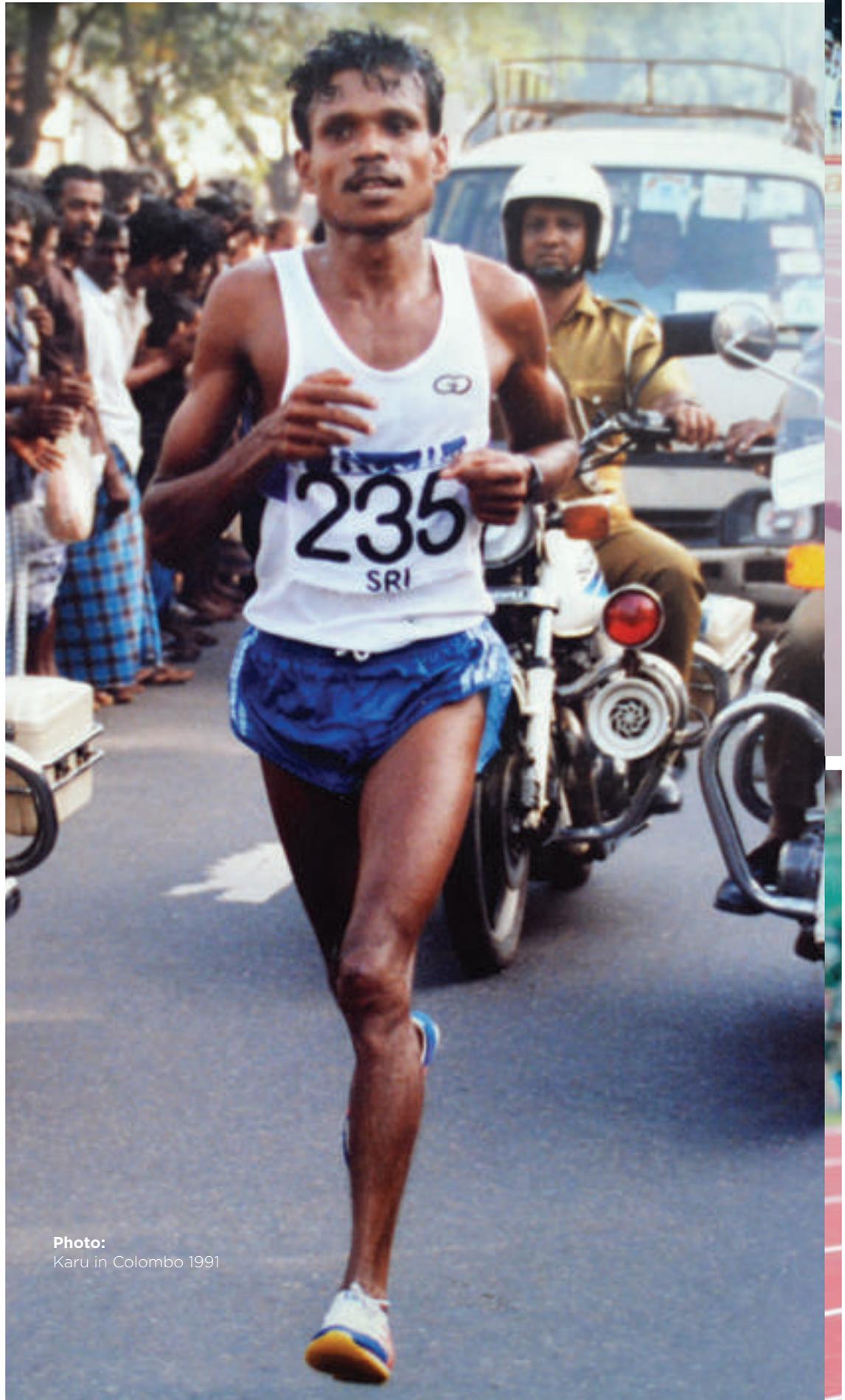


Photo:
Karu in Colombo 1991



Photo:
Damayanthi Dharsha



- Asian Athletics Association selected Jayamini Illeperuma and Sugath Thilakaratne to the Asian Continental team to compete at the Athletics World Cup which was held at Crystal Palace in 1994
- In October 1994, Sri Lankan female athletes gained a medal after 32 years at the Asian Games. Susanthika and Dharsha bagged Silver and Bronze medals in the 200m at the Asian Games held in Hiroshima, Japan
- Susanthika secured the first Asian Athletics Championships Gold in 200m in Jakarta in 1995
- Susanthika won Silver medal in the 200m with an unbelievable performances of 22.33 at the World Athletics Championships held in Athens in 1997
- Sugath Thilakaratne clocked a magnificent and unbreakable 44.61secs in the 400m at the Asian Athletics Championships held in Fukuoka, Japan in July 1998
- In December 1998, Sri Lanka repeated history after 24 years with three Gold medals at the Asian Games. Damayanthi Dharsha won two Gold medals with a Games record in both events

Photo:
Rohan Pradeep in Colombo 2006



Photo:
Manjula Kumara

- Sriyani Kulawansa won a medal after 48 years at the Commonwealth Games with magnificent performance in the 100m Hurdles (Silver) and Sugath Thilakaratne secures Bronze in 400m in Kuala Lumpur in 1998
- In September 1999, Dharsha dazzled with three medals - Gold in 100m, 200m and 400m - with three new Games records at the 8th South Asian Games held in Kathmandu, Nepal
- After 52 years, Sri Lanka gained her second medal at the Olympic Games held in Sydney in 2000. Susanthika crowned as the first female Asian Athlete to win a medal in Sprint events at the Olympic Games. Meanwhile Sri Lanka were represented by record number of 15 qualified athletes in Olympic Games history

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Ranjit Weerasena - former Olympic Committee President and President AAASL

The Last Shot

Ranjit laments state of affairs in athletics

By Susil Premalal - - - - -

Sri Lanka has a good history in athletics; not only in South Asia but in several Asian countries. In 1948 at the London Olympics Duncan White won the 400 metres hurdles. Sri Lanka kept on winning international medals after that. The journey ended after 52 years with Susanthika Jayasinghe winning the 200 metres Silver Medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. But, since we are still groping in the dark, we are still to a major senior International medal”

“Taking a glorious trip backwards, I feel sad that there is no future in sports. Taking a look at the present situation I would like to ask what has happened to Sri Lanka athletics?” this question was posed by Ranjit Weerasena, the veteran athlete.

At the age of 78, Ranjit Weerasena, former President of the Olympic Committee and the AASL is a veteran to the word. In 1958 he came to the forefront from St. Peter’s College, Bambalapitiya. He represented the Public Schools as the Discus Champion. Until

1970 he continued with the Discus Throw. During that time, a period of 12 years, he was National Champion in the Discus Throw. His Sri Lanka record existed for nine years, from 1964 to 1975. He also proved himself as a good administrator. He was the youngest Athletic Association President and National Olympic Committee President. He was Athletics President when he was 37 years. When he was 39 years he became the National Olympic Committee (NOC) President.

He functioned as Athletics President in 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1996. He was NOC President in 1980 and 1981. He was also a Council Member of the Asian Athletics Association for nine years (1998 to 2007). Other than that he was President of the Ace Athletic Club, a premier athletic club for 25 years.

He was also Chairman of the Sri Lanka Athletics Association’s Selection Committee and was President of the Sri Lanka Veterans Athletics Association.

Ranjit Weerasena is known for having spent his money for athletics and not having taken funds from it!

He has been bedridden for over a decade now. Presently he is living in Colpetty, Galle Road, house number 368, as an invalid.

At the 2016 Presidential Sports Awards Ceremony he received a Lifetime Achievement Award of Excellence ‘Kreedha Bhushana’ from President Maithripala Sirisena at the Bandaranaike International Conference Hall.

“It is important to value an individual on his performances. And his importance must be valued when the individual is living. Not when he is dead and gone. I have not won such an award before. I felt a great gratitude when I got this award from the President himself.

“There was an award for Derwin Perera as well. Derwin Perera has done a great deal for athletics as well. But he was unable to receive it as he was not amongst the living. If he was there that day, he would have been elated as myself. I feel our time was the best in Sri Lankan athletics. There was Duncan White, S.L.B. Rosa, W. Wimaladasa, Wimalasena Perera, Sunil Gunewardena and a large number of athletes existed.

They won international medals with a lot of setbacks.

“The next best period was 1991 after the Colombo South Asian Federation (SAF) Games. This period remained until 2000. During this period, from time to time, Sri Lanka won international medals. When one athlete gave up, two or three other athletes emerged. Sugath Tillekeratne, Damayanthi Dharsha, Sriyani Kulawansa, were there to win medals. SAF, Asian Athletics Championships, Asian Games, World Athletic Championships, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games. We were in the forefront.

“After Susanthika’s Silver Medal in Sydney (2000), Sri Lanka has been unable to win a top level medal. I feel that there is no fault among the athletes. There are talented athletes coming forward almost every day. There is no proper planning for them. If our athletes are to shine, they should take part in events constantly. Specially the Thai Open, Singapore Open, Malaysian Open and Brunei Open. If a large contingent can take part in these events, our talents are bound to come forward.

“Currently only athletic events, which are held every four years such as the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and the Olympics, are given priority. This is not so good!. Another reason why our athletes are not doing well is that there is no unity among our coaches.

“Leading athletes in the provinces are languishing there and not coming to the town. The coaches are trying to win their own laurels.

“I have not seen our athletes doing well after training abroad. Some go abroad and do not return. Some athletes train with top level foreign athletes and sustain injuries.

“The best remedy is to get top consultant coaches to the island so that everybody can gain,” said Ranjit Weerasena.

In conclusion Ranjit said that he had a lot of friends in the past and they have now dwindled. But my wife, who is always with me, drives me around Colombo almost every day to keep the boredom away.

Ranjit’s wife is Asoka Samarawickrema, a national level netball and hockey player from Kegalle. She is a business woman.

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