

PHOENIX

Monthly Newsletter

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Akkinip Paravaikal

“ *A mammoth yet rewarding journey
to liberation from re-imagination.* ”

Phoenix TNG

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21.03.2024: **Climate Summit** - According to Economy Next, SL's Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has announced that it will host a 'Climate Summit' from 07.05.2024-09.05.2024. The purpose of the summit is to gather key stakeholders to identify threats to SL's economy

and subsequent actions that businesses can take to address them. By adopting sustainable practices and innovative solutions, SL businesses can not only mitigate risks but also capitalise on green growth opportunities.

Uthayan, New Zealand's ambassador to SL met with the Northern provinces governor. They discussed the Tamil diaspora's investment in SL.

22.03.2024: **New Zealand** - According to

Bilateral

04.03.2024: **UNFPA** - According to Economy Next, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has donated 03 mobile clinics to SL's Ministry of Health, funded by the Japanese government at a total cost of USD 4.6 million. The project aims to ensure access to life-saving sexual and reproductive health interventions and provide services to women, girls and vulnerable groups to prevent and combat gender-based violence.

04.03.2024: **UK** - According to Economy Next, the British government is looking for winners of its Unicorn Kingdom: Pathfinder Awards (UKPA). Winners will receive support to develop their business in the UK. The awards are open to companies specialising in AI, connected and automated mobility (CAM) technology, cybersecurity and digital commerce solutions.

05.03.2024: **US** - According to Economy Next, SL will accept an invitation to participate in the US-led International Counter-Ransomware Initiative (CRI). The CRI was launched in 2021 as a joint-platform with a number of other

countries for international coordination to eliminate ransomware.

07.03.2024: **Energy** - According to Economy Next, the proposed purchase price for a wind power project by India's Adani Group in SL is below other renewable energy tariffs awarded without competitive bidding. The LKR equivalent of the Dollar tariff for the Adani wind turbines is LKR 27.65 a unit - which is below the rate set by a committee for feed-in tariffs, Wijesekera told SL Parliament.

12.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been proposed to be signed between the SL Standards Institute and the China Standardisation Administration to reduce technical barriers in trade between SL and China. The SL Attorney General's clearance and the approval of the SL Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been obtained for the draft MoU. SL's Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal to sign the MoU.

15.03.2024: **Thailand** - According to Economy Next, the Thai Foreign Minister, H.E. Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara, has agreed to work on an early implementation of the SL-SL Free Trade Agreement (SLSFTA) and a reciprocal visa-free arrangement between the 02 countries.

15.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, R. Wickremesinghe mentioned SL's immediate focus should be on developing relations with India. They intend to promote comprehensive relations between the 02 countries - particularly in the areas of transport and energy. There is also a deep religious and cultural bond between SL and India and they share a common heritage.

17.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, India's Adani Group will build a transmission line along with its 02 wind power plants in the occupied North as the state-run Ceylon Electricity Board continues to suffer from a shortage of funds. In the past, there have also been very long delays in CEB transmission projects. For example, a 410 kV line had to be built from Kilinochchi to New Habarana to transport electricity from the Adani power plants.

18.03.2024: **ADB** - According to Economy Next, the Manila-based Asian Development Bank has announced that it has approved a USD 100 million loan to SL to support small and medium enterprises. Of the loan, USD 50 million is a line of credit for "underserved" SMEs in the export, tourism, technology, agriculture and manufacturing sectors. SMEs play a crucial role in SL's economy, contributing 52% of SL's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing 45% of the population.

18.03.2024: **Japan** - According to Economy Next, Japan has provided SL a grant of JPY 600 million (LKR 3.3 billion) for oil spill management, health care and vocational training. Japan will provide 04 oil spill response vessels with necessary equipment, a generator and a truck with a crane to improve oil spill response and management by SL's coast guard.

18.03.2024: **UAE** - According to Economy Next, Global Conversions, a SL-based company now based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), claims to have performed the first conversion of a Hummer EV SUV to right-hand drive. Global Conversions is a company that specialises in converting US left-hand drive vehicles such as GMC, Ford, Lincoln, Dodge, Chevrolet, Cadillac and US Toyota and Nissan vehicles to right-hand drive.

19.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo has lodged a strong protest against SL's decision to allow a German research vessel to visit the port. The protest came after SL authorities rejected a request from Beijing for a research vessel in February 2024. It was not immediately clear how the German research vessel had been granted permission despite the ban.

20.03.2024: **ADB** - According to Economy Next, the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) will support SL's bond markets and public-private partnerships as SL recovers from their economic crisis. This is according to a new aid strategy for the period 2024-2028. The main objective of the new strategy is to promote a sustainable recovery, build resilience and revitalise growth in SL.

20.03.2024: **IMF** - According to Economy Next, SL's Finance Minister told Dr Krishnamurthy Subramanian - IMF Executive Director for India, SL, Bangladesh and Bhutan, that an election would not disrupt the ongoing reforms. During the discussion, it was ensured that the reforms being implemented would not be interrupted by the announcement of elections and the government is ready to make the ongoing reforms a law of the land, showing commitment to stability and sustainable growth.

20.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, all of SL's districts, including the occupied Tamil homeland, will sign a "sister districts" agreement with China's Chongqing province to generate investments and improve production capacity. There are 40 districts in Chongqing Province. SL has tentatively signed an agreement with one of the districts and the Kalutara district. If the project continues, SL's other 24 districts will also sign agreements with other districts in Chongqing.

22.03.2024: **Israel** - According to Economy Next, SL's Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment, Manusha Nanayakkara, said that he had signed several agreements for the employment of SL workers in the warring state of Israel. There are many employment opportunities for SL labourers in the fields of nursing, hotels, restaurants, construction and infrastructure, he said. But Israel is currently involved in a war directed against the Palestinian group Hamas, which the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has categorised as genocide.

22.03.2024: **Japan** - According to Economy Next, Japan has promised to resume its suspended projects and provide financial support to SL after it

signed an agreement with bilateral creditors. Diplomatic relations between the 02 countries suffered a major blow when genocidaire G. Rajapaksa unilaterally cancelled the Light Railway Transit (LRT) and East Container Terminal (ECT) projects in 2021. Japan was supposed to finance the 02 projects.

25.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, SL Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena has arrived in China for a state visit where he will attend a conference as the chief guest and also meet President Xi Jinping. He will discuss bilateral relations and development co-operation.

26.03.2024: **South Korea** - According to Economy Next, SL's Cabinet of Ministers has approved a proposal to train workers going to South Korea. A grant of 1.5 million dollars has been provided by the Korean Export-Import Bank to improve courses for workers going to Korea.

27.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, SL has been assured of continued support from China to restructure its debt and develop its economy. SL is aiming to complete the debt restructuring by mid-2024. SL has already reached an agreement in principle on the bilateral debt with the Export-Import Bank of China.

27.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, the Indian High Commissioner in SL, Santosh Jha, said that India will assist in the creation of a digital public infrastructure for SL. It is a set of common digital systems that are secure, interoperable, and built on open technologies to enable equitable access to public and private services at the societal level.

27.03.2024: **Germany** - According to Economy Next, the German-SL Friendship New Women's Hospital, a six-storey hospital with 640 beds, six operating theatres, infant intensive care units, paediatric wards and state-of-the-art facilities, opened in the southern city of Galle. The German government contributed EUR 25 million (LKR 3,570 million) to the project in addition to medical equipment.

28.03.2024: **Projects** - According to Economy Next, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with D. Gunawardena. The Chinese President pledged China's continued support for SL's efforts towards political and socio-economic progress. Meanwhile, Beijing expressed its interest in the development of SL's Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA), for which Japan has promised the second terminal. An Indian company is to be commissioned to manage the project.

28.03.2024: **Germany** - According to Economy Next, officials from SL's Ministry of Agriculture and representatives from private companies visited a technology fair in Germany to learn about the latest advances in the food sector. The Anuga FoodTec trade fair in Cologne, Germany, showcased cutting-edge technology in food production, processing, packaging and storage, said AHK SL, representing the German chamber network.

29.03.2024: **Energy** - According to Economy Next, SL's Attorney General has endorsed the new Electricity Sector Reform Bill. Accordingly, the new Electricity Sector Reform Bill will be published in the next two weeks and presented to Parliament in the last week of April 2024. Suggestions and issues raised by the development agencies and stakeholders have been incorporated as

amendments in the draft bill which was published by the office of the legal draftsman in December and the inconsistencies in the Sinhala and Tamil translations have also been resolved.

30.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, R. Wickremesinghe's Chief of Staff Sagala Ratnyaka and Indian Foreign Minister Vinay Kwatra discussed the timely implementation of projects during a visit to New Delhi. It was agreed to conduct this review process of bilateral projects on a quarterly basis, demonstrating the commitment to ensure effective progress in bilateral economic cooperation.

30.03.2024: **China** - According to Economy Next, SL's port development has taken a new turn with China's support. The SL port of Colombo will become a hub, a newly-developed port with financial instruments to meet the new demands that are growing on development and investment, which is crucial. Looking at the expansion of Colombo Port and Hambantota Port as well as Colombo Port City, the new financial centre of Colombo, this could be a major financial hub enabling rapid progress not only for SL but also for other countries in the region.

31.03.2024: **RCEP** - According to Economy Next, SL has submitted a letter of intent to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) and met with representatives of the member states in Jakarta. SL is keen to join the group as it allows the country's exporters to source inputs from multiple RCEP member countries and process them into products, which is more flexible than the traditional value-added requirements in bilateral trade agreements.

Military News

12.03.2023: **TRINEX24** - According to SL's Ministry of Defence's(MoD's) website SL's Navy and Airforce held a joint-exercise named TRINEX from 05.03.2024-08.03.2024 in Trincomalee.

12.03.2023: **US Training** - According to Newswire, the US is providing Air surveillance training to SL. This training program will continue

until 14.03.2024. This training program's intention is to enhance SL's maritime Domain awareness.

13.03.2024: **Recruitment** - According to Uthayan, 250 individuals from Jaffna intend to join SL's Air Force.

14.03.2024: **EODE** - According to SL's MoD's website, China has donated several Explosive Ordnance

Disposal Equipment (EODE) to SL.

25.03.2024: **Indonesia** - According to SL's MoD's website, the Indonesian ambassador to SL has met with SL's Defence Secretary Kamal Gunaratne. Military training, strategic partnerships and security initiatives were the discussed topics at this meeting.

Domestic News

11.03.2024: **Ferry service** - According to Economy Next, a multi-destination passenger ferry service considered as an earlier attempt for a journey between 02 points was not financially viable. It had been hoped that a ferry service from Nagapattinam in India to Kankesanthurai in occupied Tamil Eelam would commence from February 2024, but regular operations have not yet commenced. The main issue is very high ticket prices.

12.03.2024: **Solar Power Plant** - According to Economy Next, SL has awarded contracts to Mahawa Solar (Pvt) Ltd, Hayleys Power Ltd and Capital City Holdings (Pvt) Ltd to build and operate solar power plants for Matara Substation and Vavunathivu Substation. International tenders have been invited for solar photovoltaic power plants for Matara (10 MW) and Vavunathivu (8 MW) substations.

18.03.2024: **East** - According to Economy

Next, SL's Department of Archaeology will continue to claim land in the east of the occupied Tamil homeland to promote archaeological understanding, Buddhist, Religious and Cultural Affairs Minister Vidura Wickremnayake said. Wickremnayaka was speaking at a press conference to announce a new bill to officially regulate the discovery and preservation of SL's antiquities and archaeological heritage.

19.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, India has pledged

a grant of USD 61.5 million for the development of the Kankesanthurai harbour of the Jaffna peninsula. As part of the project, a new breakwater will be built and the harbour will be dredged to a depth of 30 metres to accommodate deep-draft vessels. The ferry terminal of the harbour suburb connects Kankesanthurai with the port of Karaikal in Puducherry in the south-east of Tamil Nadu.

19.03.2024: **Oil Refinery** - According to Economy Next, SL has decided to explore the possibility of relocating the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation's Sapugaskanda oil refinery to Trincomalee. SL's Cabinet of Ministers approved a proposal to transfer the refinery as a separate company to raise capital from local and foreign investors and modernise the 1969 structure.

21.03.2024: **Wind power plant** - According to Economy Next, the purchase price for a wind power plant in Mannar, which is being built by the Indian company Adani, has been reduced to 8.85 US cents in the latest negotiations. The

private power plant was controversial because it was not awarded through a tendering process and the original asking price is said to have been 15.20 US cents per unit.

21.03.2024: **India** - According to Economy Next, Indian carrier Indigo Airlines will fly to Jaffna International Airport from Chennai. Currently, India's Alliance Air flies once daily from Chennai to Jaffna.

21.03.2024: **Mahaweli** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to commence the development of Mahaweli A and B zones in 2026 - covering 70,000 hectares in the formerly war-torn Eastern Province. R. Wickremesinghe said GoSL plans to distribute part of the land to locals and part to agricultural companies to develop agribusiness. The Mahaweli project is the largest national multipurpose development programme in SL's history.

23.03.2024: **Jaffna** - According to Economy Next, the land owned by the occupational Jaffna Security Force Headquarters in Jaffna

was released to the people in a ceremony attended by R. Wickremesinghe. It is 63,000 hectares of land that was owned by both the state and the private sector. As per the agreement, 234 hectares of land from 05 Grama Niladhari divisions in Valikamam North were returned to the local people.

31.03.2024: **Kachchathivu** - According to Economy Next, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has criticised a decision by India's Congress party to give up claims to Kachchathivu island ahead of the April elections. The Times of India quoted a legal opinion by an Indian Attorney General which spoke of zamindari rights given by the East India Company to the Raja of Ramnad over the island, fisheries and other resources around it. SL, on the other hand, had claimed that Katchchathivu belonged to the Jaffna kings and was also shown on Dutch and British maps.

01.03.2024: **Corruption** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to pass a Public Commercial Business (PCB) law to improve governance of state-owned enterprises by May 2024 as part of anti-corruption efforts following an assessment by the International Monetary Fund. According to critics, state-owned companies have been used by politicians to give "jobs to the boys", use vehicles for personal use and fill boards and key positions with henchmen and relatives.

10.03.2024: **Nuclear energy** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to complete work on a legal structure for nuclear energy by 2025, supported by international expertise. SL also requires capacity to manage nuclear waste and skills in assessing projects.

11.03.2024: **Places of worship** - According to Economy Next, SL plans to conduct raids on places of worship not registered with the authorities. According to the law, all religious institutions, be it Buddhist, Hindu temples or mosques, must be registered. This is because there are some unregistered religious

establishments that cause religious disharmony.

12.03.2024: **Gender Equality** - According to Economy Next, SL's Attorney General has approved a draft law on gender equality, which is now to be published in the Official Gazette. The bill, which was approved by the Cabinet in September 2023, is one of 02 legislative proposals aimed at reducing the gender imbalance in socialisation.

13.03.2024: **Police** - According to Economy Next, Sri Lanka's Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) has filed a petition in SL's Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the appointment of Deshabandu Thennakoon as SL's Inspector General of Police (IGP). Article 41C of the 1978 Constitution of SL provides that such an appointment cannot be made by SL's President without the approval of the Constitutional Council of SL. Thus, the appointment of the IGP is unconstitutional.

15.03.2024: **House Arrest Act** - According to Economy Next, SL spends LKR 04 billion

annually on detaining prisoners and now plans to enact a new *House Arrest Act* in 2024 as a solution to prison overcrowding. Changes to laws such as the *Bail Act* are being considered to address this issue.

19.03.2024: **Archaeology Act** - According to Economy Next, SL has identified flaws in the *Archaeology Act* and is working on amendments to address them. The minister made the remark during an exchange of views between government and opposition members after Tamil-speaking MPs drew attention to a series of unlawful arrests. The MPs were referring to an incident in which 08 people were arrested during a Mahasivarathri festival at a temple in Vedukkunarimalai in Nedunkerny, Vavuniya. According to the MPs, the chief priest of the temple was among those arrested.

20.03.2024: **Vessels** - According to Economy Next, SL will source supplies despite a one-year ban on foreign research vessels in its ports, This is the first time SL has officially admitted that foreign research vessels will be allowed for supply

deliveries since R. Wickremesinghe's government imposed a one-year ban on offshore research vessels in December 2023.

28.03.2024: Sentencing

- According to Economy Next, the General Secretary of the Bodu Bala (BBS), Galagodaaththe Gnanasara Thero, was sentenced to 04 years in prison for an allegedly defamatory comment

made in 2016, according to a media report. Other reports stated that the controversial monk was convicted for making an Islamophobic statement at the Kuragala Buddhist temple.

29.03.2024: Abuse - According to Economy Next, an international child sexual abuse reporting portal (CSAM) has been launched in SL jointly by the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA),

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), Save the Children and ChildFund SL. Each report processed through the reporting portal is manually assessed by highly trained IWF analysts who use technical internet tracing techniques to detect criminal content and determine the geographical location of the server hosting the content at the time of assessment.

ECONOMIC PROFILE – March 2024

Remittances	February 2024	↓ to USD 476,2 million
Gross FOREX Reserves	February 2024	↑ to USD 4,517 million
Credit Private credit	January 2024	↓ LKR 52.2 billion to LKR 7,268 billion
Trade Exports Imports Trade deficit	January 2024	↓ by 0.8% to USD 971 million from a year ago ↑ by 6.2% to USD 1,512 million from a year ago ↑ to USD 541 million
GDP Agriculture Industry Services	Fourth quarter of 2023	↑ by 4.5% ↑ by 0.6% ↑ by 7.9% ↑ by 2.8%
Inflation	March 2024	↓ to 0.9% in in the 12 months to March 2024
Tourism earnings	November 2023	USD 342 million

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Economic News

04.03.2024: **CEB** - According to Economy Next, SL's state-run Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) has reported a profit of LKR 61.2 billion for the year to December 2023, reversing from a loss of LKR 298 billion rupees in 2023, with all profits made in the last year which was marked by heavy rains and price hikes, interim accounts show.

06.03.2024: **Businesses** - According to Economy Next, SL created 1,995 new businesses in January 2024, in addition to the 4,500 businesses registered in 2023, as it emerged from the economic crisis. The economic recovery has boosted the creation of new businesses.

11.03.2024: **Net assets** - The Central Bank of SL's net assets fell to LKR 11.1 billion in December 2023 from LKR 25 billion rupees in the previous month, according to the valuation method used, official data shows.

14.03.2024: **Tax** - According to Economy Next, the tax losses due to investment concessions granted through a law on

strategic development projects amount to LKR 1,085 million. The taxes are calculated for 14 strategic projects.

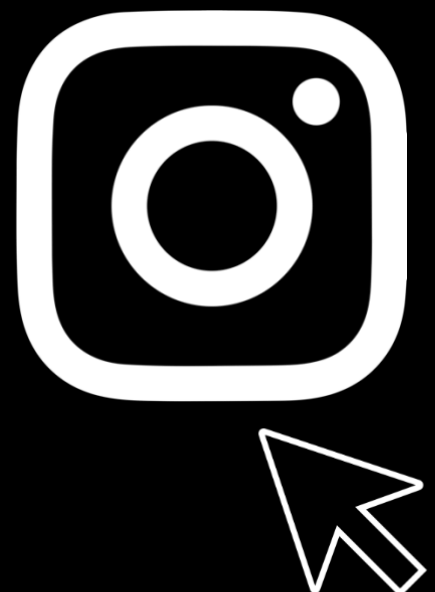
21.03.2024: **IMF** - According to Economy Next, SL has reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the next phase of the programme. Once approved by the board, SL will have access to USD 337 million in funding.

24.03.2024: **Public Debt** - According to Economy Next, SL's central government debt to GDP ratio was largely unchanged at 105.49 % in December 2023, up from 105.45 % in September, but lower than at the end of 2022. Rolling GDP for the 04 quarters to December 2023 was LKR 27.629 trillion, up from LKR 26.636 billion in September as the economy began to recover.

26.03.2024: **Investment** - According to Economy Next, SL is preparing an economic transformation bill to establish an economic commission, investment zones and an international trade office. The bill includes

structural, quantitative and qualitative changes to support future economic development.

28.03.2024: **Export** - According to Economy Next, SL will import onions from China after an export ban by India and Pakistan pushed up domestic prices. SL grows onions under import tax protection and domestic production is seasonal and imports supplement demand.



Oppression & Resistance

08.03.2023: **Chulipuram** - According to Tamil Guardian a Buddhist statue erected in Chulipuram, Jaffna, was removed due to protest.

11.03.2023: **Land Release** - According to Uthayan, 109 acres of private land from Jaffna and Kilinochchi grabbed by SL's Military, were handed back to the owner.

11.03.2024: **TID** - Former LTTE cadre Selvanayagam Anandhavarman (Aravindhan) has been summoned by SL's TID for investigations on 12.03.2024 regarding a Facebook post, reports Lanka Files.

12.03.2024: **Land** - SL military's occupation of 171 acres of land belonging to over 60 Tamils in Keppapulavu, has not been earmarked for release in the list provided by occupational SL defence authorities, reports Lanka Files.

12.03.2023: **Vedukkunaari** - According to Uthayan, the Vavuniya Court has ordered the continued remand of the priest and 07 devotees of Vedukkunaari until 19.03.2024.

12.03.2024: **Protest** - Priests, religious leaders, Tamils MPs, Civil Society members and locals staged a protest in Nallur against the brutal assault on devotees at Vedukkunari temple on 08.03.2024 during Sivarathri prayers by occupational SL Police. The protestors called for the immediate release of the 08 Tamils who were arrested during the assault. Further reports indicate that a protest was also held in Nedunkerni against SL's Police brutality.

18.03.2024: **National Harmony** - According to Uthayan, SL's Education Ministry has ordered an inquiry related to a program at the Jaffna university. SL's Education Ministry received information that statements were made against its national harmony.

19.03.2024: **Release** - According to Tamil Lawyer K. Sugash, Tamils who were assaulted and arrested by occupational SL Police at Vedukkunaarimalai were released by Vavuniya Court as the SL Police had not filed a charge sheet.

20.03.2024: **Protest** - Following several days of protests on land and sea in demand of the cessation of poaching by Indian trawlers in occupied Tamil waters, Tamil fishers in the north launched a hunger strike in Jaffna. This came a few days after occupational SL Navy Commander Priyantha Perera claimed an inability to interfere due to 'political implications'.

22.03.2024: **Palaly HSZ** - According to SL's MoD's website 235 acres of private land was redistributed to the Tamils by SL's occupational Army.

23.03.2024: **Thaiyiddi** - According to Uthayan, a protest was staged against the construction of a Buddhist Temple in Thaiyiddi. This protest will continuously be held at each full moon of the month.

24.03.2024: **Bombings** - SL's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is to record a statement on 25.03.2024 from former SL President M. Sirisena regarding his claim of being "well aware" of the real perpetrators behind the 2019 Easter Sunday Bombings.

SIGNS OF STRUCTURAL GENOCIDE

Any occurrence which reflects the implementation of Tamil genocidal ideology in a structural manner.

12.03.2024: **Land** - SL military's occupation of 171 acres of land belonging to over 60 Tamils in Keppapulavu, has not been earmarked

for release in the list provided by occupational SL defence authorities, reports Lanka Files.



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