

## Sri Lanka High Commission in London celebrates Ifthar



(ft.lk) The annual Ifthar was celebrated at the High Commission of Sri Lanka in London on 2 June with the participation of a large gathering of Sri Lankan Muslim community living in London. Moulawi Mohamed Rafeek Mohamed Mousoon led the Ifthar prayers and blessed the country and the people of Sri Lanka while recalling the significance of Ramazan.

Welcoming the guests, High Commissioner Amari Wijewardene said, "Ramazan reminds us to appreciate the many blessings we often take for granted, give back to the community and put the needs of others before our own." She also stated that Ramazan is a time of intense devotion and reflection. The High Commissioner also called on the Sri Lankan community living in the UK to come together in supporting those affected by the recent floods and landslides in Sri Lanka during this holy month.

The breaking of the fast and prayers were followed by an Ifthar dinner.

The community members who participated thanked the Sri Lanka High Commission for organising the Ifthar event.



## Protests stepped up after Elephant attacks vehicle

Anoma Sriyakanthi Wickremesinghe, a teacher attached to Galnewa Central College, would have perhaps never imagined that last Monday (June 12) would have been an ill-fated day for her and her little daughter since she had been driving safely along the Talawa-Moragoda road as usual during the past five years. The area is however notorious for rampaging wild jumbos which she herself had witnessed very often.

"Normally I take care when I am driving the vehicle. That day I was taking my three-year old daughter Umeli too to drop her at our Maha Gedera as she could not be left alone at home which made me take extra care. It was at 5.45 in the morning and my daughter was in the rear seat

of the vehicle. "As we passed Moragoda and moved ahead a rampaging elephant came forward; though I applied brakes but in vain. The vehicle knocked against the jumbo instantly which fell on my car causing extensive damage to it," a nervous Anoma said, heaving a sigh of relief when she was surrounded by villagers.



(Contd: on P4)

## SATYAGRAHA FOR NEARLY 100 DAYS

**A.T.M. Gunananda** (dailynews.lk) Some of the relatives of missing persons engaged in a Satyagraha campaign for nearly 100 days opposite the Governor's office in Trincomalee protesting over the failure by the authorities to provide information about their loved ones jumped into the sea saying it was pointless for them to live any longer but they were rescued by another group engaged in the Satyagraha yesterday morning.

The group of relatives waded into the water and began to hurl abuse against the government for its failure to heed their request. But the other group insisted that they should continue living for the sake of their remaining children. Sandya Eknalgoda, wife of

missing journalist Prageeth Eknalgoda were among the group which jumped into the sea with the objective of ending their lives. Some Intelligence officers who were taking video photographs of the relatives' association secretary Mrs. Nagendran Jeyalakshmi alias 'Asha' left the scene when she abused them. She said they objected to outsiders covering the event other than media personnel.



## PRESIDENT JOINS YOGA DAY CELEBRATIONS



(sundayobserver.lk) President Maithripala Sirisena, Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Minister of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages, Mano Ganeshan joined thousands of yoga enthusiasts at the Independence Square in Colombo yesterday to celebrate the International Day of Yoga 2017.

High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu highlighted the efforts led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the United Nations declaring June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, and the world now recognizes yoga, as a human treasure - a key to good health.

## Cop, monk among 14 arrested for anti-religious violence

**Amali Mallawaarchchi** (dailynews.lk) A Police Constable and a Buddhist Monk are among the 14 persons arrested in connection with the recent incidents of violence targeting places of religious worship, business enterprises and houses, Police media spokesman DIG Priyantha Jayakody said.

"There are 11 Sinhalese, a Tamil and a Muslim among the arrested. There is a Buddhist monk and a police officer among the arrested Sinhalese." DIG Jayakody also said. He was speaking at a media brief held at the Department of Government Information in Narahenpita.

It is revealed that almost all the arrested Sinhalese have close connection with Bodu Bala Sena organization, DIG Jayakody confirmed.

"The CEO of Bodu Bala Sena Dilantha Witanage challenged the police asking how we are to prove that BBS is behind many religious violent acts. Now we have proved it," DIG Jayakody also said.

The arrested police constable is an officer attached to Keselwatta police, Colombo, DIG Jayakody further said. The said officer has been arrested along with three more, including a Buddhist monk and two civilians, who have been the architects behind the petrol bomb attack aimed at the mosque in Panadura last 17 May 2017.

"A Cab, two swords, a hockey stick and equipments used to make petrol bombs were taken into custody along with the suspects." DIG Jayakody also said. "The arrested police officer had withdrawn himself from police service for a period of time due to his medical conditions and was absorbed back to the service only recently." The Police media spokesman said. "The arrested Buddhist monk has close connections to the Bodu Bala Sena organization." DIG Jayakody said. Asked to comment of statements made by various politicians regarding the anti-religious violence, DIG Jayakody said investigations are already in order. DIG Jayakody also said that certain statements which say that Bodu Bala Sena leader

Gnanasara theras is under the protection of certain ministers is merely 'political talk'. When asked about the developments to arresting Gnanasara theras, DIG Jayakody said investigations are underway. He also said, if any complaints are lodged against posts circulating in social media that instigate ethnic-religious disharmony, a special police unit will investigate on them.

"We don't monitor or do surveillance on social media. If and when we receive a complaint regarding anti-social material spread using social media, we will look into those. Recently we received a complaint on a Facebook post written by a Muslim young man insulting Lord Buddha.

The young man was arrested recently. There was another case regarding distribution of lunch packets containing drugs leading to impotence, in the Narammala area. The police are currently investigating on the matter as well." DIG Jayakody explained. Asked if the military will be deployed to prevent the instigators of religious and ethnic violence, DIG Jayakody said, if the need arises, the relevant authorities

will take a decision on it.

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Incidents of violence targeting places of religious worship and business enterprises during the months of May and June

\* May - Arson committed on four business establishments at Nugegoda, Maharagama (main suspect arrested)

\* May - Place: Mosque attacked at Panadura Eluwila

\* Petrol Bomb thrown into Mosque in Panadura town

\* Two business establishments burnt down

\* Four arrested in connection with the above incidents

\* May - Kurunegala Mallowapitiya Mosque attacked (Two arrested)

\* Weeraketiya - pasting posters bearing slogans that trigger communal disharmony (Three arrested)

## Sri Lanka's country image is being tarnished: Survey

(ft.lk) The latest islandwide poll conducted for business magazine LMD, by research firm Kantar TNS, reveals that more than half the people (55%) believe that factors such as 'inappropriate activities by politicians' and the 'increasing crime rate' are tarnishing Sri Lanka's image.

According to LMD, only 35% dispute this view, stating that the island has an impeccable reputation due to 'religious reconciliation' as well as its 'cultural background'.

Nearly six in 10 of survey respondents feel that the country's image has not improved despite the change of government in January 2015 - they assert that Sri Lanka's image 'is being tarnished day by day' and that while it hasn't been long since the new Government was elected, 'some people hold the same positions without changing their policies'. However, a majority (80%) believe that our image has improved since 2009 when the prolonged civil war ended. They attribute this to the 'peaceful environment in the country' - 11% oppose this view and the rest (9%) are undecided.

Tea and cricket continue to be the nation's 'image leaders,' going by what 75% of those consulted by the pollsters say.

Citizens point to bribery and corruption, lawlessness and disorder, the calibre of politicians, the political landscape, lack of discipline and poor infrastructure as factors that undermine our country's image. LMD's publisher, Media Services, says the June edition of the pioneering business magazine has been released to leading supermarkets and bookstores in Colombo and the outstations.

Its Cover Story features a comprehensive analysis of the exclusive Great Place to Work in Sri Lanka study, which recognises the '25 Best Workplaces in Sri Lanka' (for the full story, log onto www.LMD.lk).

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