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## SriLankan Board decide to resign: Minister not aware

(FT.LK) - State Enterprise Development Minister Kabir Hashim is unaware of the decision taken by members of the Board of Directors of national carrier SriLankan Airlines to tender their resignation to clear the way for the restructuring of the organisation, despite the expectation of new appointments being made early next year. A letter communicating the offers of six of the seven members of the board to resign along with the minutes of the board meeting where the resolution was reached has already been handed over to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's office. However, the Minister is yet to be informed of the decision, Hashim told the Daily FT. "I have not been told nor has the secretary to my ministry. I learnt of the issue from social media but no official intimation has been given regarding the matter," the Minister said. The letter with the offer to resign was handed over to the Prime Minister's office as he is now heading the Ministerial Committee on SriLankan Airlines, its chairman, Ajit Dias, told the Daily FT. He also explained that the Board was appointed by the Secretary to the Treasury, not by the line ministry. However, according to normal practice, the resignation is first handed over to the relevant

ministry secretary, who then communicates the matter to the respective minister for further action. The move to resign may have stemmed from an earlier discussion within the officials' committee appointed to lead the restructuring of the carrier, suggesting that it would be more appropriate to appoint a new board to carry out the changes, a member of the committee told the Daily FT. The suggestion was included in a brief report presented by the committee during the first few sittings. "It was only a suggestion, it wasn't a decision taken at the time. However, this may have instigated the action taken by the Board," the official said. However, the current Board will function until a new one is appointed, which is expected to happen during the first few weeks of 2018. "The whole Board has to function till the new Board is appointed as the company has to run till then," Dias explained. The two committees were also tasked with the selection of a suitable strategic partner and investor to operate the national carrier. SriLankan has been able to earn a net profit of Rs.4.4 billion during the management of the airline

by Emirates Airlines at the time. However, in 2008 the government of Mahinda Rajapaksa removed Emirates Airline CEO Peter Hill and redeemed 40% of its stake. The management agreement between Emirates and SriLankan Airlines ended in 2008. After the termination of Emirates management, the national carrier incurred losses and the loss for the airline from 2008 to 2014 was Rs 107 billion. Recently, the Board, has been in conflict with the unions. The Alliance of Unions of SriLankan Airlines in a letter addressed to its Chairman Ajith Dias had claimed that they had no confidence in both him and the Board to be in charge of the National Carrier. "For the first time in the long history of our National Carrier, you as a Chairman, having enjoyed all the benefits of your position for the last 3 years, have made an unprecedented statement that the lives

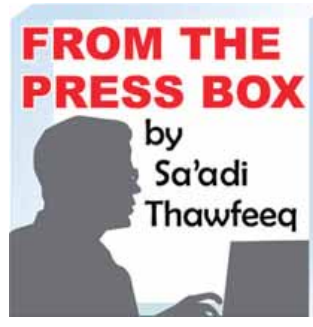
and sustenance of nearly 7000 employees and their families is now in jeopardy, through no fault of their own" the letter stated. The letter was a response to a recent communique sent to the employees of the national carrier by the SriLankan Chairman. The Communique warned that SriLankan Airlines was facing closure and that this was inevitable and "in the larger interest of the country's economy" if "tangible and sustainable restructuring cannot be achieved." In response, the letter signed by the Pilots Guild, Aircraft Engineers' Association, Executives' Association, Flight attendants' Union, Aircraft Technicians' Association and the Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya of the National Carrier said that the communique substantiates previous assertions. "Your communique on the present status of the Airline now serves to substantiate what has been echoed on many occasions ... **CONT ON P14**



**NEWSLANKA WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

(DailyNews.lk) - If the comment made by Sanjay Manjrekar is to be taken quite seriously then it more or less defines what Sri Lanka cricket has gone through during 2017. The former India cricketer turned international cricket commentator said during the third and final T20 international at Mumbai that the Indian team no longer enjoyed the success they had against Sri Lanka and the fielders and the bowlers hardly reacted to dismissing a Lankan batsmen because the contest has got to a stage of being a foregone conclusion. "What we see here is cricket of a past era where players didn't run into congratulate or hug each other and traded high fives at the fall of a wicket which is the present trend," said Manjrekar. "Capturing the wicket of a Sri Lankan batsman has become no longer a thrill for the Indians who have been so dominant in the two one-day formats." India completed another triple series victory over Sri Lanka in back to back contests winning the Test series 2-0, the ODI series 3-0 and the T20I series 3-0 to go with their 3-0 (Tests), 5-0 (ODI) and 1-0 (T20I) victories three months ago. It is unfortunate that Sri Lanka had to be pitted against the top ranked Test, number 2 ranked ODI and number 2 ranked T20

**2017 a terrible year for Sri Lanka cricket**  
team in the world twice in such a short space of time when they are struggling to build a team that could compete and win consistently. If the defeats they suffered at the hands of India have not mentally defeated them then they stand to gain a lot from playing one of the top most teams in the world, if not, the results could have a detrimental effect on the future career of the players. Where the Lankans have erred is their lack of consistency in building an innings to give their bowlers a chance to get at the opposition. There have been one or two individual contributions in each match but such returns don't build partnerships to give a side a competitive total. The batting has to a great extent contributed to the downfall of the Lankan side that with new coach Chandika Hathurusingha taking over, chief selector Graham Labrooy expects it to be put right. Although Sri Lanka has a team batting coach in Thilan Samaraweera, Labrooy feels that Hathurusingha taking overall charge would have a bigger impact and expects to see a big improvement.



When Hathurusingha was head coach of Bangladesh he roped in Samaraweera as the batting coach and the combination worked very well for the Tigers who feared nothing and took on the opposition toe to toe without feeling inferior. What Hathurusingha brought to the Bangladesh team was self-belief and mental toughness which they lacked to compete with the best. Hathurusingha is renowned to work on the mindset of the cricketers and there is no better person to validate that than Samaraweera himself. Samaraweera was such a defensive batsman in the early part of his Test career that he hardly made the scoreboard tick despite the many hours he spent at the crease. Such defensive plays also saw him lose his place in the national team. A meeting with Hathurusingha who was then the coach of the Sri Lanka 'A' team changed all that. "In 2005 when I went through a bad patch I met Chandika, he changed a few things

then my mindset got better and better," recalled Samaraweera. "He is very good in all three departments tactically, mentally and technically the main thing is he clears the mindset of the batsman he gives them the freedom to play. That has been the reason for his success as coach from 2009 to 2010 with the Sri Lanka team. That's the biggest ability for him." Sri Lanka's dismal record for 2017 is: TESTS - Played 13, Won 4, Lost 7, Drawn 2; ODIs - Played 29, Won 5, Lost 23, No Result 1; T20Is - Played 15, Won 5, Lost 10. One hopes that 2018 will be a better year for Sri Lanka cricket. A lot of emphasis has been laid on the success of Hathurusingha taking over as head coach. You don't need rocket science to understand what is required to get the Sri Lanka team up and running. It's just that Hathurusingha should be allowed to do what he thinks is right and given time to make Sri Lanka a competitive and consistent nation across all three formats. He is no magician so let's give him the courage and the backing to put the team back on track without throwing obstacles in his path and hinder the progress that the entire nation is eagerly waiting for.

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