

A man and a woman are featured in a classic interior setting. The man stands on the right, wearing a long white coat with decorative floral embroidery and a white shirt. The woman sits on the left, wearing a white dress with a patterned jacket. The background includes a large arched window with a grid pattern and a large pendant light hanging from the ceiling.

pulse

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Just like that, we find ourselves in April, with the first quarter of 2025 already behind us. Time moves fast, but so do we at Pulse! The city has been buzzing with back-to-back events, fashion weeks, social gatherings, the Big Match season and Ramadan celebrations. Now, we step into the season of Avurudu. With that, we bring you the Pulse Magazine April issue, packed with stories that celebrate our island.

At Pulse, we take pride in showcasing outstanding Sri Lankans. Our country has faced its share of challenges, yet some choose to stay, believe and create something extraordinary. From artists and entrepreneurs to artisans and visionaries, in this edition we tell the stories that deserve the spotlight.

The cover story features LOVI Ceylon, with Founder Asanka de Mel and Co-creative Director Nanthalea Yahampath. From reimagining the humble sarong with built-in pockets to designing outfits that turned heads on the Olympic stage, LOVI has redefined Sri Lanka's fashion identity, seamlessly blending tradition with modernity while making waves on the global stage.

We also spotlight the remarkable journey of Jason Rajasinghe, a Chicago/Midwest Emmy-winning filmmaker whose work at RAD Productions is breaking new ground in storytelling. As a Producer, Director, Editor, and Cinematographer, Jason's innovative approach challenges traditional filmmaking and pushes creative boundaries.

Wildlife photography takes centre stage with Ravisara Jayamanna, whose breathtaking images of Sri Lanka's fauna have captivated audiences across social media.

This issue is packed with exclusive interviews and inspiring stories, including the rise of Culture by Ari, a fashion brand making waves with unique designs. We also explore the inspiring journey of Pulani Ranasinghe, the tech entrepreneur who revolutionised Sri Lanka's government hospital system by digitising patient records.

We bring you highlights from Raffealla Fernando's Celebrity Calendar launch, featuring some of Sri Lanka's biggest stars for a touch of glitz and glamour. Food lovers wouldn't want to miss our detailed review of Dragonfli, Colombo's latest dining hotspot.

Looking for travel inspiration? We've got you covered with must-visit destinations both local and international. And with Avurudu around the corner, we've put together everything you need to get into the festive spirit.

As we welcome the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, we wish all our readers a season of joy, prosperity and togetherness.

Here's to living it!

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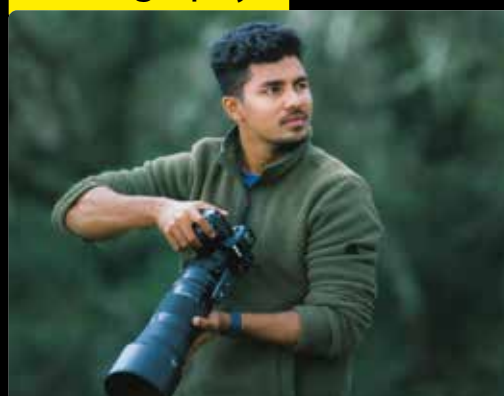
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From Island Charm to Global Glam:

Culture by Ari's Journey of Colour and Creativity

Culture by Ari was born from founder Shehan Ariyaratna's passion for vibrant fashion. The brand seamlessly blends Sri Lanka's rich cultural tapestry with bold, eye-catching prints. From captivating New York's Times Square to redefining island wear, the brand embodies a commitment to authenticity and artistry, resonating with adventurers and fashion enthusiasts alike.





By Naveed Rozais

One of the key fashion trends of our time is that of minimalism. But as an island nation in a world of screaming colour, it's a bit hard for the Lankan fashion zeitgeist to forget its colourful roots.

One brand that strongly embodies this love affair with colour is Culture by Ari. Founded by Shehan Ariyaratna in 2019, the brand has become synonymous with Sri Lanka's vibrant island vibe. It went viral last year when advertised in New York's Times Square—one of the island's firsts, showcasing itself in a distinct aesthetic setting.

Pulse sat down with Shehan Ariyaratna, founder of Culture by Ari, for a small chat on fashion and island living. Diving into the roots of Culture by Ari, Shehan shared that the brand was born out of a simple need (his own) for something colourful. "As someone who wanted to wear colour, shirt options were very plain and simple here, and I was like, let me do something about it," Shehan recalled. This gap in the market sparked the idea for Culture by Ari, a brand that would eventually become a hallmark of Sri Lankan fashion.

The name Culture by Ari reflects Shehan's deep appreciation for culture and his personal connection to the brand. "I'm Shehan Ariyaratna, so a part of my name needed to be somewhere in the brand," he explained. "And culture - I'm a big fan of culture in any country. I love to travel and learn about cultures—how they live, work, eat, and survive. It's all about culture at the end of the day, which inspired me. The philosophy of Culture by Ari is to make people smile when they think about the brand. I want the brand to feel like a friend—or at least make people laugh at our creativity."

Through a happy accident, the Brand's love of culture comes through in its choice of retail partner Thambili Culture Boutique at Ward Place, Colombo - 7. Culture by Ari also sells online through its website, app and social media.

Making it to Times Square

Over the years, Culture by Ari has evolved from a small startup to a well-established brand known for its bold prints and island-inspired designs. Thanks to his dedication and innovative approach, what began as a small venture in Shehan's bedroom quickly grew into a recognised brand. One of the brand's most notable milestones was its Times Square, New York feature. While this might not have been a significant event in the U.S. Shehan saw it as an opportunity to show case Sri Lankan talent globally.

"A friend said, 'You can pay to get a billboard and post it on your page,'" Shehan recalled. "I googled how to do it, made it happen, and immediately edited it and posted it." The move went viral, boosting brand awareness and sales. "It translated into sales and also into a bigger brand community. I didn't expect it to be like that. It was really nice, and a few other brands also followed us."

The Ari approach to fashion has also evolved over the years. Looking back, Shehan recalled that the first collection focused heavily on intricate details, such as matching pockets and fabrics. "If you go right to the bottom of the feed on Instagram, you'll see the very first collection," Shehan says. "I started it to do really different things—matched the pockets, matched the inside and outside fabrics, and a lot of little details."



Shehan introduced tropical and island-inspired prints as the business grew, reflecting Sri Lanka's vibrant culture. "I felt like the country was introducing the island vibe, and island wear became a big thing," he explains. "Our beaches were being heavily marketed, especially down south, so Culture by Ari became an island wear product that reminded people of Sri Lanka."

The Brand's bold prints, including a gum bottle design, have become a signature element. "One print I was scared of was a gum bottle—just printed all over the shirt," Shehan admits. "It looked a bit weird, but it was so different, and it sold out faster than the normal ones. That opened up a whole avenue for me to try new things—bold things, doodle prints, abstract art."

While going viral because of the spot in Times Square advertising, Shehan noted that being seen in global spaces is not enough for a brand to thrive, especially for a brand to represent Sri Lanka internationally. Authenticity, according to Shehan, is key to success. "Brands should be authentic, not try to be like a global sensation," he said.

Exploring Sri Lanka's Island Identity

Shehan believes Sri Lanka's fashion identity is deeply rooted in its love for colour and self-expression. "As a mass, if you take the whole of Sri Lanka, everybody—even if you open a newspaper—is exuding colour," he said. "It's never too much colour. At the very



Shehan believes Sri Lanka’s fashion identity is deeply rooted in its love for colour and self-expression. “As a mass, if you take the whole of Sri Lanka, everybody—even if you open a newspaper—is exuding colour,” he said.

least, someone will ensure their belt or shoes stand out. We like to show colour, be out there, and express ourselves at 100%.”

This vibrant identity is what Shehan aims to showcase to the world. “Sri Lanka has so much culture, and I wanted to show that in my pieces,” he says. “I want customers to see the culture and remember what we stand for and what this beautiful island offers.”

While Culture by Ari has already gained international recognition, Shehan believes there is immense potential for Sri Lankan brands to make a mark on the global stage. “We have so many brands that have the potential to go to the global market,” he says. “We’re right there—we just need a good platform.”

Shehan emphasises the importance of collaboration over competition. “Instead of thinking of everyone as competition, I actually speak to a few business owners here,” he says. “It’s about what benefits everybody, but not everyone sees it that way. Someone will do it soon if we all get on the same page and create this space to break out.”

Looking ahead, Shehan predicts a resurgence of vintage and retro styles in the global fashion industry. “I feel like 2025 will see the vintage era coming back,” he says. “The old-money thing was nice, and it is certainly timeless - pastel colours will never die, but with fashion, you never know what will happen. It changes daily, even hourly, and you can never be too sure which way it will go and when something entirely new will come in.”

For Culture by Ari, the future is about celebrating and taking Sri Lanka’s culture to the world. “The next chapter for Culture by Ari is to showcase what Sri Lanka is to the world—the talent, culture, colours, history, peace, and harmony that unite us all,” Shehan says. “I’m working on that and very excited to showcase that collection, which will be launched before this year ends. It will be different.”



EMPOWERING WOMEN, INSPIRING CHANGE!

Coffee, Cake & Craft with CAN Market

CAN Market celebrated International Women’s Day in style at Port City Mall, Colombo, bringing together creativity, conversation, and community. Guests enjoyed coffee and cake while engaging in hands-on crafting sessions with skilled artisans. The event honoured the strength and resilience of women entrepreneurs, providing a platform for over 50 talented women to showcase their unique products. Female celebrities and entrepreneurs graced the occasion, showing their support and appreciation for local women-led businesses.

Here’s a glimpse of the vibrant celebration!

Pictures by **Vihanga Kaveesha**



Rosh, Ramani & friend



Sangeetha



Ishadi, Ramani, Caroline & Rosi



Ramani



Shereen



Ishadi



Caroline



Rosi



Gayathri, Shreeren & Sangeetha



Chanika





Shanudurie



Mahendra Perera



Michelle

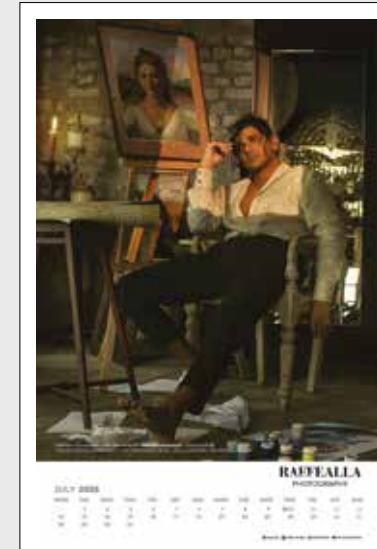
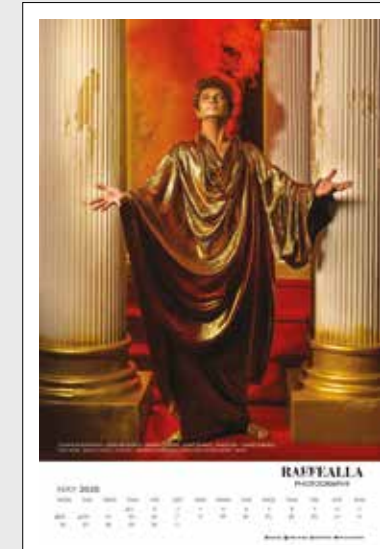
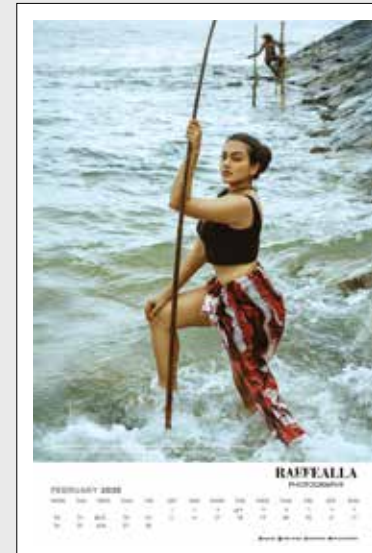
Raffealla Fernando UNVEILS RFCC 2025

Raffealla Fernando celebrated the grand launch of her 13th Celebrity Calendar, RFCC 2025, at the Ramada by Wyndham Colombo. This year's calendar was a masterpiece, featuring 27 remarkable personalities, including Bollywood stars and Sri Lankan icons, capturing the essence of diversity and creativity.

The evening was nothing short of spectacular, with celebrities and special guests gracing the red carpet in stunning ensembles. The night exuded glamour, elegance, and the signature artistic brilliance that defines Raffealla Fernando's work.

Take a look at some moments from the event!

Pictures by **Iraj Walisinghe**



Kumar



Senuri



Nadini



Nilushi



Tharindi



Saranga



Sade, Kumar & Anudi



Apzi, Supun, ADK & Chamel



Chiran & Eranjana



Dias & Amanda



Bhuvani



Chethana



Danu



Abhilashi



Piumi



Himali & Ruchira



Sachini



Nadeesha



Sheshadrie



Rashiprabha



Saasha



Teena



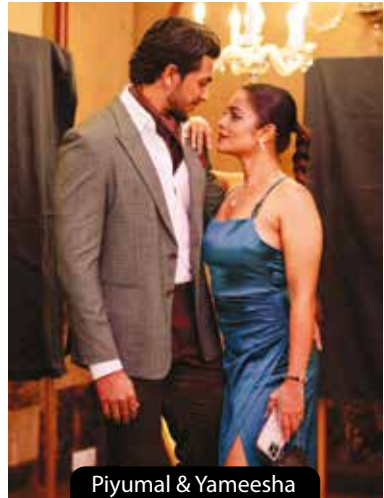
Nuwandika & Sangeetha



Anudi



Kalum



Piyumal & Yameesha



Treshan, Rosanna, Senuri, Sandun & Ayesh



Amanda & Reshalee



Shashini & Dr Cherry



Harini, Upul, Abhilashi, Damith & Nilushi



Rumali, Danu, Eshan & Teena

Jason Rajasinghe

By Haritha Athapattu

Sri Lanka-born Jason Rajasinghe, raised between the island nation and the USA, has spent his career straddling two worlds, blending cultures, techniques, and philosophies to carve out his unique space in the film industry. As a producer, director, editor, and cinematographer, his work spans commercials, documentaries, and innovative storytelling methods that challenges traditional filmmaking structures. His journey—from making fun YouTube videos to winning a Chicago-Midwest Emmy—has been anything but conventional.

Finding a Place in Film

For Jason, filmmaking is about finding belonging. Growing up between Sri Lanka and the US, he often felt like an outsider, never fitting into either place entirely.

"Constantly moving up and down between Sri Lanka and America made me feel like an oddball. I was trying to fit into either of the places, but all the time, I found my connection to the other place making it difficult," he shares. But films, he said, gave him a space where he belonged—a space

Bridging Worlds Through the World of Film

where he could immerse himself in. "Watching films did not just make me feel better, but also let me observe how directors crafted narratives that pulled audiences in."

His first steps into filmmaking were through fine art, sketching frames inspired by films he admired. However, drawing alone wasn't enough. He eventually picked up his mother's camera and began experimenting with videos, filming with his brother and posting content on YouTube. At the time, YouTube in Sri Lanka was gaining traction, and his videos quickly gained attention. Yet, monetisation wasn't an option then, pushing him to explore commercial filmmaking.

"While I was looking for opportunities to make an advertisement for a business, I got to work on a promotional video for a pizza advertisement for an Italian pizzeria run by a sweet lady in Sri Lanka. It was a leap of faith for her because I was just a kid with a camera, but she believed in me. The experience was worth more than any money we could have earned because it laid the first step in my professional career," Jason recalls.

A journey from YouTube videos to winning a Chicago-Midwest Emmy, bringing home accolades for its work through RAD Productions USA and inspiring the youth.



Building an Industry, Not Just a Career

Breaking into the film industry wasn't straightforward, especially in Sri Lanka, where opportunities were scarce, and local talent often went unrecognised. At just 20 years old, his first major project was with an airline company. He steadily built his portfolio from there, balancing commercial work with artistic integrity.

However, what makes Jason stand out in the cinema landscape is that unlike many who sought overnight success, he took a different approach. He focused on building a sustainable pathway, ensuring others could follow in his footsteps. Though he had opportunities to go viral—working on projects with prominent Sri Lankan and international YouTubers—he channelled that attention into establishing a production company that balanced artistic integrity with commercial viability.

"I remember some of our videos went viral back then, getting more than 70,000 views. It was when YouTube was getting traction in Sri Lanka, and though it might sound funny now, back then, 70,000 views was a huge achievement," Jason adds with a laugh.

His philosophy extended to mentorship. He recognised the lack of opportunities for young Sri Lankan filmmakers and launched an internship programme. Over the years, IFILM SRI LANKA has trained around 20 interns, many of whom have since built successful careers. His goal was simple: to give aspiring filmmakers the tools to succeed without forcing them to leave the country in search of opportunities.

Breaking Barriers and Winning an Emmy

One of Rajasinghe's most significant achievements came in 2024 when he won an Emmy at the 66th Annual Chicago-Midwest Emmy Awards. Recognised for his cinematography as part of the Discover Mediaworks team, he earned the award in the category of Outstanding Achievement for Nostalgia – Short and Long Form Content for Field of Dreams: AAGPBL 80th Reunion.

Reflecting on this latest milestone, Rajasinghe shares, "I am grateful for the opportunity to tell stories alongside my amazing team in the USA. It was an honour to have our work nominated alongside the region's best. This is just the beginning for us to share our stories and bring our Sri Lankan flavour and creativity to the world."

This marks Rajasinghe's second Emmy win, following his success with Farm to Table Pizzas, a documentary that earned his team a Chicago-Midwest Emmy. For him, filmmaking is not just about technical excellence but also about human connection.

"I believe the success of a film lies in capturing and portraying a straightforward story—like a farmer's daily life—in a visually appealing way that grabs the audience's attention. That's what I do as a filmmaker," Jason explains.

"I also must credit my success and power to create to my faith in God and my WowLife Church. Every creator knows it takes more than just yourself to make a film great," he adds.

Innovating Sri Lanka's Film Industry

Through IFILM SRI LANKA, Rajasinghe has championed guerrilla filmmaking, focusing on efficiency, adaptability, and resourcefulness. He challenges the traditional, bloated film set structures, favouring lean, well-prepared crews who can execute projects quickly and cost-effectively.

"Sometimes it's just the two of us on a shoot, and people on set will ask, 'Where's the rest of the team?'" Jason shares with a laugh. "We're so used to thinking that a massive crew is necessary for every production. Sure, it's fun, but what's the purpose? If you bring in a huge team for a small video, at the end of the project, the client is left wondering, 'Wait, all of that was just for this?'"

With this practice, his approach to learning isn't just about speed; it's about sustainability, ensuring filmmakers understand everything from managing energy levels on set to problem-solving across different terrains and conditions. He believes that it is pretty essential that crews are prepared, healthy, and efficient on set.

Speaking further, Jason shares how they have evolved regarding technology used in production. He recalls a time when Sri Lankan commercial productions shot on film had to be sent to Singapore for processing before editing could even begin. It was a costly and inefficient system. "It was such an exhausting process," he admits. "But now, with advanced technology and top-tier equipment in our studio, we've streamlined production to be both highly efficient and of the best quality."

Inspiring the Youth to Take on

Jason's philosophy extends to mentorship and training young individuals passionate about filmmaking. Recognising the lack of structured training in Sri Lanka, he launched an internship programme to fill the gap. With around 20 interns trained, the initiative focuses on hands-on experience and efficiency. He wants his interns to gain knowledge in all aspects of filmmaking, at least to a certain level, so they can confidently manage any issue on set. Through this programme, he inspires young talent in the country to shine. "However, I hope they give back to the industry by sharing their knowledge and contributing to its growth, rather than just going overseas to join a production team there," he explains.



To further support this vision, IFILM SRI LANKA recently opened a studio space equipped with updated technology and high-end equipment, available for rent to anyone looking to produce their content. The studio serves as an example of how even a tiny space, when utilised efficiently, can serve multiple purposes at an affordable cost. At the heart of all this, his ultimate goal remains to see Sri Lanka's film industry flourish.

Merging Cultures and Expanding Horizons

What's interesting about Jason Rajasinghe's work is that it isn't confined to one country. His newest venture, RAD PRODUCTIONS USA, is an extension of his vision, providing full-scale production solutions that merge Sri Lankan expertise with American industry standards.

In 2024, RAD Productions USA was nominated for Outstanding Achievement for Commercial – Single Spot / Campaign for Stoney Acres Farm Commercial and Outstanding Achievement for Branded Content – Short Form Content for Portage County Business Council Brand Film.

Beyond Emmy recognition, RAD Productions USA has also received accolades for its work. The company won two Telly Awards—Gold and Silver—for Stoney Acres Farm Commercial, further cementing its reputation for excellence in visual storytelling. These achievements reflect the company's ability to create high-quality content that resonates with local and international audiences.

His projects continue to carry a Sri Lankan essence, even in the US. He recalls how, in a recent commercial that he produced for an international Sri Lankan company, he brought Bharatanatyam and Kandyan dancers

into a Cybertruck giveaway, blending tradition with modernity in a way that felt natural rather than forced. "I always try to infuse my cultural experiences into whatever I produce," Jason says.

The trends he observes in the US often find their way into Sri Lanka's film industry. "Being there, I always try to catch the new trends and bring them down to my productions in Sri Lanka. Naturally, they filter into the larger industry as well. I can see some of the interesting things we did with our productions a few years ago now being commonly used in commercial videos. Of course, they may not credit IFILM SRI LANKA directly, but it makes me happy that we have been able to influence the industry in a positive way," Jason shares. His goal isn't just to lead the industry but to evolve it.

Looking Ahead

Looking at the future, Jason reveals many exciting plans—including the evolution of IFILM's internship programme. "Having trained a select number of individuals over the years, we are now looking to streamline and scale it to provide more structured opportunities for emerging talent," he explains.

Additionally, a long-awaited documentary project showcasing Sri Lanka is in the pipeline, along with several other exciting ventures that he's keeping under wraps.

For Rajasinghe, home will always be Sri Lanka. But with his feet firmly planted in both the US and Sri Lanka, he's proving that filmmakers don't have to choose between the local and the global—they can have both.

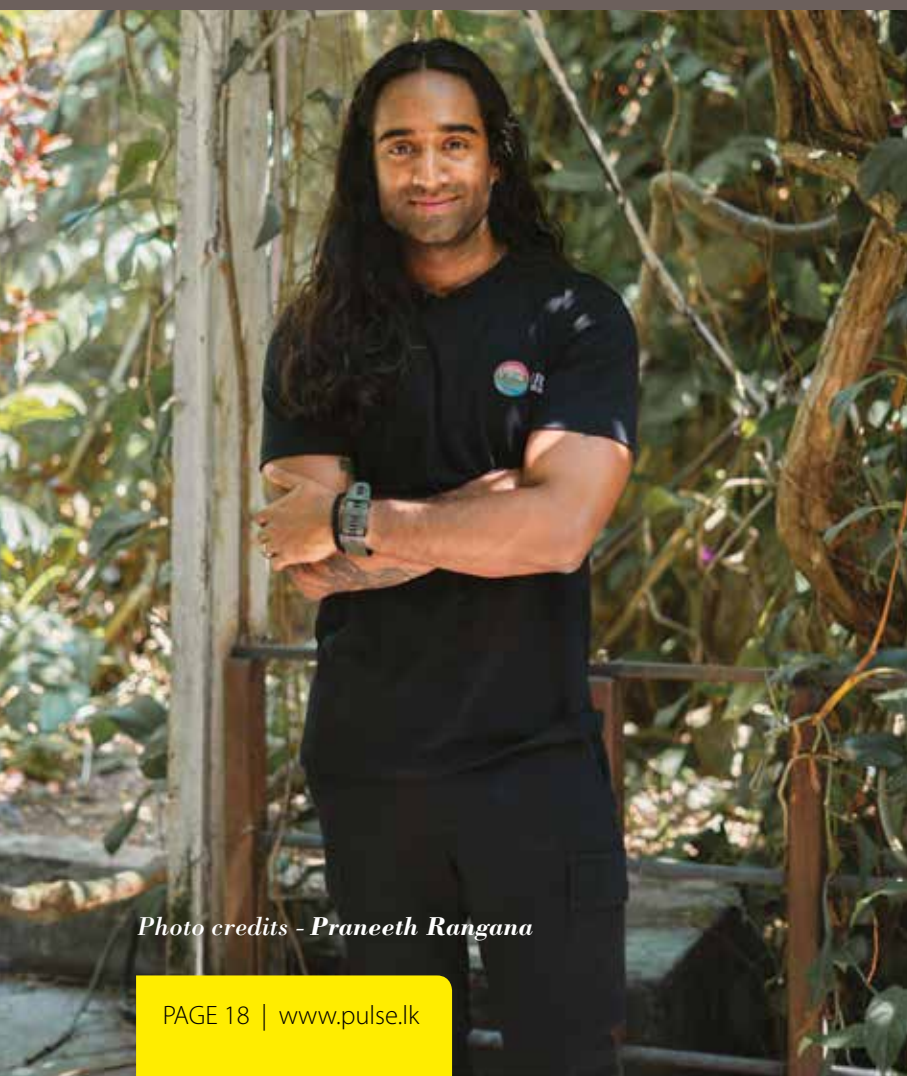


Photo credits - Praneeth Rangana





Behind the Bar with 'Drunken Lankan'

ART, CHAOS, AND CULTURE OF BARTENDING

By Nirma Kumarasiri

Some names are carefully deliberated, weighed, and analysed before debuting. Others, like Drunken Lankan, are designed to make waves. The brainchild of Ashwel Handy, fondly known as Ash, head bartender and founder, the brand is as bold as its name suggests.

"I thought it was catchy and naughty enough to get people interested," Handy says with a grin. "Happy it stuck."

But behind the playful moniker is a serious passion for Sri Lanka's untapped potential in spirits and mixology.

"'Source Local, Drink Local' isn't just a tagline for us. Sri Lanka's fruits and fresh produce are fantastic—so much variety that it seemed like a waste not to use it," he explains.

That philosophy is the foundation of Drunken Lankan, where every cocktail celebrates the country's rich flavours and uses what is grown, brewed, and distilled locally.

Bartending as Craft and Performance

Bartending is a technical skill and an art form. It balances precision and intuition, craftsmanship and showmanship.

"I think a lot of it comes from experience," Handy says. "For me, I've always been a bit naughty and loud behind the bar—that's helped me engage with people and keep them entertained. I learnt how to make a decent drink somewhere down the line, and it all came together, I guess."

His approach is rooted in personality as much as skill. The best bartenders, he believes, don't just mix drinks; they create experiences.

If Drunken Lankan had to be represented by a single cocktail, Handy doesn't hesitate. "The DL Sour. Nothing too fancy. Just a banging drink."

Beyond the classics, he thrives on experimentation. Unexpected ingredient pairings can yield surprising successes.

"We've been playing around with some weird stuff recently, but I think the Kiribath-inspired cocktail we did at Jungle Kade was one that just worked," he recalls.

While a great cocktail is about balance and creativity, the energy behind the bar is just as crucial.

"Bartending is a mix of showmanship and instinct. You have to read the room. Know when to pour, when to hold back, when to chat, when to disappear. It's all part of the experience."

The Drunken Lankan Experience: More Than Just Cocktails

Drunken Lankan is not just about making drinks; it's about creating a scene, a moment, a story that people will talk about long after the night. Their events are immersive, chaotic in the best way, and driven by an ethos of uninhibited fun.

"I think it's the vibes we bring to events," Handy says. "We're an unapologetically fun and slightly crazy company. Not to say we don't focus on making great drinks—but having a good time doing it is important. And it becomes contagious. Next thing you know, everyone's doing shots and singing Rocket Man."

That electric atmosphere is what sets Drunken Lankan apart. Whether they're consulting on bar menus, training up-and-coming bartenders, or simply serving a packed house, it's about more than just what's in the glass. It's about how it makes people feel.

When asked about the most unexpected or hilarious thing that has happened at one of his events, Handy pauses, smirks, and simply says, "Definitely no comment on this. Lol."

The Future of Sri Lankan Cocktail Culture

Sri Lanka's cocktail culture is rapidly evolving, and Handy sees an exciting shift on the horizon. He believes the return of Sri Lankan professionals who have honed their craft abroad will be a game-changer.

"There are a lot of Sri Lankans who've been very successful abroad in the industry, and they're coming back home. That's gonna be a big thing for us," he says. "We need people like that inspiring the younger generation, showing them what's possible."

Beyond the drinks, Handy has turned his attention to another passion project that illuminates the reality of working in hospitality. His upcoming hospitality-inspired merchandise brand isn't just about style; it's a statement.

"When it comes to the brand, I wanted it to reflect the not-so-glamorous side of hospitality," he says. "People think it's just waiting tables or serving drinks, but there's so much dedication and sacrifice. Long hours. Crazy shifts. I miss birthdays, Christmas, and New Year's. Late nights. Shit pay. Shittier bosses. Mental breakdowns. Finger-clicking customers. The works."

Though he rattles off these grievances with a mix of humour and frustration, his love for the industry is undeniable.

"I'm not complaining—I love this industry. But I just want people to be aware. Maybe they'll think twice before yelling at the barista who spelt their ridiculously long name wrong."

A Signature Cocktail for Sri Lanka? It Already Exists.

If Handy were tasked with creating a signature national cocktail, he wouldn't bother inventing something new.

"I don't need to create it. It already exists," he says with a knowing smile.

His pick? Gal Arrack and a Lion Strong at Sydney Hotel in Galle.

It's not something he came up with, nor has Drunken Lankan consulted for Sydney Hotel—he just thinks it perfectly captures Sri Lankan drinking culture at its best.

"It's simple, strong, and the kind of no-nonsense drink you'd expect to end the night with."

And, of course, the drink comes with a name every Sri Lankan has heard at the end of a long night.

"එහෙනම් කොල්ලෝ අපි ගියා," he says, laughing.

Translation? "Alright, it's time to leave now."

"It tastes like high school for me," he grins.

The Last Call on Bartending

Bartending is more than a job. It is an art, a skill, a culture, and, at times, a test of endurance. At its best, it is a craft that brings people together—strangers, friends, lovers, and those just looking for a place to be for the night.

Ashwel Handy and Drunken Lankan embody the best of what bartending can be. It's about skill, yes, but also attitude. It's about knowing when to serve, when to cut off, when to pour heavy, and when to send someone home.

So next time you're at a bar, remember the unwritten rules: tip your bartender, don't snap your fingers, and order something interesting.

And if you're looking for a night that's just the right mix of craft, chaos, and good times, there's a good chance Drunken Lankan is behind the bar.

You can find more on Ashwel Handy on his socials at drunkenlankanbar.com



REVOLUTIONISING EVENTS
WITH HAUT MONDE

TRESHAN WEERASOORIYA PEREIRA'S VISION

Haut Monde bridges the gap between traditional event planning and cutting-edge experiential marketing. It delivers bespoke events tailored to perfection, ensuring that every detail, from ambience to engagement, aligns flawlessly with the brand's vision and message.

By Naveed Rozais

The events industry is where creativity meets logistics to craft an unforgettable experience. Over the last four years, Treshan Weerasooriya-Pereira, the founder of Haut Monde Event Management & PR, has quietly carved out a niche by redefining what it means to plan and execute an event.

Moving away from the traditional supplier-based approach to event creation (think a basic flex backdrop or LED screen), Treshan has built a reputation for Haut Monde based on immersive, conceptualised experiences that leave his clients and guests entirely engaged across all senses.

Treshan officially launched Haut Monde four years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges of starting a business during a global crisis—and the unique economic and social challenges Sri Lanka has faced since—Haut Monde has carved a name for itself when creating insightful events, especially those that centre around launching a new product or idea.

Offering clients a 360-degree service across event management, PR, and marketing, Haut Monde provides PR campaigns in all three languages and extensively manages media and client relations at every stage—pre-event, during the event, and post-event. Beyond this, the company excels in conceptualising and executing unique experiential events that meaningfully integrate its clients' products and services into the event itself.

Some of Haut Monde's most significant achievements to date include launching the international makeup brand MAC in Sri Lanka and putting together one of Sri Lanka's biggest standalone shows by an individual designer, Indi Yapa Abeywardena. This is in addition to the diverse selection of lifestyle and consumer brands that Haut Monde regularly collaborates with on events and marketing.

The Value of an Experiential Event Planner

In today's competitive market, it takes a lot for a product to become successful, and a massive aspect of this is how that product is launched and introduced to customers. And yes, a big part of this is marketing,





but what about that first physical experience of a product? This is where brands need to engage an event planner—one who specialises in building experiences around new products and ideas.

“There are lots of businesses being launched. Do you see them becoming successful without an event planner? Back in the day, maybe a good idea was enough, but that doesn’t work anymore,” Treshan says, emphasising that while an event is just the beginning, it can still serve to make or break your brand. “You must come in with a bang but must also deliver after the event. If your product is subpar, it doesn’t work. It’s a team effort—social media, digital media, everything has to be managed properly.”

Getting into event planning was a journey in itself for Treshan. With a background in finance, he earned qualifications such as CIMA, a degree, and an MBA, and worked his way up to head Finance and Administration in the corporate sector. However, he soon realised that the corporate world was simply not his calling. This lack of fulfilment led Treshan to step out of the corporate world and take on a period of soul-searching to decide what to do next. During this time, a friend suggested he venture into event planning, which led to the birth of Haut Monde.

Treshan’s background in finance and management has also played a crucial role in his success as an event planner. “My marketing and finance knowledge from CIMA and my MBA has really come in handy. They teach you how to look at a business and sustain it. If a client wants a certain design beyond their budget, I know how to ensure the same quality is given in a different form. I’m quite resourceful and know how to cut costs without compromising quality,” he says.

What’s Trending in the World of Events?

Treshan has his finger on the pulse of the latest trends in the events industry. For corporate events, he emphasises the importance of creating the right ambience. “Corporate events don’t really matter unless you’re creating the right ambience. It’s not just about the logistics; it’s about the experience,” he says. And this doesn’t just apply to product launches.

While Haut Monde Event Management & PR primarily focuses on lifestyle and corporate events, they also offer wedding planning services. Treshan admits that weddings are a different challenge altogether. “We haven’t done too many weddings, but what differentiates us is that we do conceptualised weddings. If the client wants something out of the box, with a unique theme, we’re the ones to call,” he says.

Treshan notes that wedding trends evolve every year. “Last year, sage green and black-and-white themes were very popular. This year, it’s more about minimalistic designs and a focus on draping. That’s the look of the moment.” He also noted that clients are increasingly looking for unique, personalised experiences rather than cookie-cutter events.

“We want to focus on unique, conceptualised weddings. We can negotiate and work with the client’s vision to create something truly special,” he adds.

The ‘Haut Monde’ Experience!

At its core, Haut Monde Event Management & PR is about creating unique, personalised experiences. “Clients are often unsure about what they want when it comes to creating a unique event, and this is one of many places where we come in,” Treshan explains, “We specialise in event conceptualisation, designing, and curating the right guest list according to the event or product. We look into every meticulous detail, from media relations to influencer management. We provide a 360-degree solution.”

One of Haut Monde’s key differentiators is its ability to go beyond the traditional. While many event planners rely on basic elements like flex backdrops and uplighting, Treshan and his team focus on creating a cohesive theme that aligns with the client’s brand or product, and finding unique ways to integrate branding into the event experience.

“When a client comes to us, we do a lot of research into the product. We think about how the product’s branding could be incorporated into the event and how we can promote the product through the event,” he says. For example, for a client launching a herbal product, Treshan conceptualised a multi-sensory backdrop that featured elements of the product, leaving attendees engaged not just visually, but also through touch and scent.

This attention to detail extends to every aspect of an event. For example, for one beverage client, Treshan explained how a significant focus of the event itself was on curating a unique beverage experience that highlighted the client’s product while also interacting with the brand’s identity. “Everything was conceptualised from start to finish, and that’s what the Haut Monde Event Management & PR experience is - providing a 360-degree solution to a client—and That’s how we separate ourselves from the mainstream,” he says.

What truly sets Haut Monde apart is Treshan’s unwavering commitment to detail. “I’m very strict with my work. I’m very attentive to detail. If I want something a certain way, it has to be done that way—even down to a candle being positioned the way I need it positioned,” he shares, stressing that it is this meticulous approach that ensures that every Haut Monde event is executed flawlessly, leaving clients and guests impressed.

Haut Monde’s comprehensive approach to event planning is another key differentiator. “We provide a 360-degree solution. Clients get PR, event planning, concept development, guest list curation, press handling, and influencer management—all in one. That’s what sets us apart. Every event is a challenge but also an opportunity to create something truly special.”

To stay updated on their upcoming events and for inquiries, connect with them on social media at @hautmondeevents.

Location - 55TG Boutique Suites Colombo
Outfit - TG Colombo Waistcoat & LOVI Ceylon Shirt



A Blooming Workshop

Creativity flourished at the Lady Hilton 'Blooming Workshop', where members explored the art of floral arrangement with Oopsy Daisy Flowers Florals by Hafsah Cader. Surrounded by vibrant tropical blooms, participants honed their skills, picked up expert tips, and enjoyed a delightful afternoon of artistry and fellowship. The experience was perfectly complemented by a delicious lunch at Hilton Colombo.

Here's a glimpse of the elegant gathering!

*Pictures by **Kumara Bopearachchi***





ASA NATHAN de Mel of NATHAN ARLEATH of LOVI

From reimagining the humble sarong into a global fashion statement to dressing Sri Lankan Olympians in one of the most celebrated opening ceremony uniforms, LOVI Ceylon is pioneering a bold new aesthetic for Sri Lanka. Asanka de Mel and Natharlea Yahampath share their journey of fusing heritage with innovation, the evolution of LOVI’s signature designs, and what’s next for the brand as it enters its next creative era.

By Naveed Rozais

The Sri Lankan sarong has never been the same since LOVI. From redefining the sarong with built-in pockets to dressing Olympic athletes in outfits that turned heads on a global stage, LOVI Ceylon is a name that reigns supreme. Recently, LOVI took the world by storm with the uniforms it created for the Sri Lanka team at the 2024 Paris Olympics Opening Ceremony. This contemporary reimagining of Sri Lankan national clothing, inspired by the look of the 19th-century royal court, not only looked sleek but was also rated the third-best overall national costume at the Olympics by Sports Illustrated, one of the world’s leading sports magazines.

Locally, almost every fashion-forward Sri Lankan knows LOVI. Founded in 2016 by Asanka de Mel, an entrepreneur with a tech and public policy background, LOVI first garnered attention through its innovative sarongs, featuring built-in pockets, belts, and lining—making them incredibly practical for 21st-century living.

Part of what has made LOVI and its products so memorable is that it has transformed one of our most integral pieces of national clothing, the sarong, into a fashion statement. Despite a long history of over 300 years, until about 10 years ago, the sarong was mainly seen as a ‘fashion don’t’. Thanks to Asanka’s efforts to revolutionise the sarong through LOVI, the past decade has seen this paradigm shift entirely. The sarong, which was once hardly worn outside the home except as cultural clothing, suddenly became stylish. From casual settings to being worn by grooms and becoming unisex, the sarong has seen an incredible fashion comeback since LOVI entered the market in 2016.

Fast-forward, and LOVI set the cultural landscape on fire once again with the new collection ‘WILD’ at the Colombo Fashion Week Summer 2025. One of the most significant moves LOVI has recently made was asking acclaimed designer Narthalea Yahampath to join as Co-Creative Director of the company. Pulse sat down with Asanka and Natharlea to look back at LOVI as the brand moves into its tenth year.

Born from Love for Sri Lanka

Asanka’s path to founding LOVI was unconventional. After 20 years in the US tech sector, including roles in Silicon Valley and New York City, he returned to his island home, Sri Lanka, with a mission—to create a modern, unified Sri Lankan identity through fashion.

His vision when starting LOVI was clear—to transcend ethnic divisions and craft a universal aesthetic, honing Sri Lanka’s multicultural tapestry. “Every country needs a way to express its identity outside ethnic tropes. I wanted to create something universally Sri Lankan while paying respect and homage to each subculture here. We have a long history and a vibrant culture—I wanted to share that beauty and my love for my country with the world.”

ASANKA’S PROFILE

- BIRTHDAY: 6 May
- FAMILY
 - WIFE: Marguerite Richards
 - KIDS: Leo and Kavi
- BACKGROUND: An entrepreneur with a tech and public policy background
- ALMA MATER: Harvard Kennedy School of Government, University of Texas, Austin





From its inception, LOVI was a brand born from love for its country, driven by relentless creativity, and poised to redefine what it means to wear Sri Lankan clothing. Its mission was not only to modernise the sarong but also to promote pride in Sri Lankan roots. LOVI has been at the forefront of modernising traditional Sri Lankan fashion by blending tradition with innovation, while maintaining its cultural essence.

“LOVI started in 2016 and it’s been nine years now. The LOVI concept and values are still the same—trying to create a modern Sri Lankan clothing identity that is contemporary for today and the future. Full of hope, ambition, excitement, fun and being unapologetically Sri Lankan,” Asanka shares, adding that he doesn’t see LOVI’s offering as ‘ethnic clothing’. If anything, he says, Western clothing like trousers are what Sri Lankans should consider “ethnic,” as they reflect a culture that is not our own.

Contemporary Sri Lankan fashion is about much more than traditional attire. Despite this shift towards modern styles, traditional garments remain integral to cultural identity and are often worn on special occasions. “It’s not ethnic clothing to us. If you were Chinese, you wouldn’t consider Chinese food ‘Chinese’—it would just be food. That’s what our national clothing should feel like to us. LOVI is innovating and reviving a dormant culture of clothing—something that wouldn’t be possible if not for the work of so many people over generations to create a culture of Sri Lankan clothing that we can build from.”

Though sometimes used as a political tool to create division today, Sri Lanka’s national dress is, in fact, a testament to its history of diversity and inclusion. The sarong’s origins lie in Indonesia, while the kurta draws from Indian influences—particularly the Nehru style. Sri Lanka’s national dress shows how all the influences and cultures it has experienced over the centuries combine to create its visual identity and style.

LOVI’s first breakthrough came with its sarongs—functional, stylish, and designed for modern life. “Our catchphrase was ‘sarongs with pockets and belts.’ Until then, no one produced sarongs with pockets. How can you live in this century and not have a pocket? It’s an obvious usability problem,” Asanka recalls. LOVI has shared, trademarks globally, protecting its innovations.

ASANKA'S INSIGHTS

IMPORTANCE OF FASHION:

Everyone needs it. Everyone needs joy in their life.

PERSONAL STYLE:

Elegant and comfortable

BEST FASHION TIP:

Be confident. Feel confident in what you wear.

FASHION DON'T:

Not looking in the mirror before you leave the house.

FAVOURITE AVURUDU TRADITION:

Kiribath with the family is always a beautiful way to start the new year—lighting the lamp and sharing a meal together.

FAVOURITE GLOBAL TREND:

People respecting, appreciating, and embracing their own cultures. Sabyasachi is the ultimate example of this.

FASHION INFLUENCE:

There are too many to choose from. My top favourites are Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, Tom Ford, Tori Burch and Prada.

ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE:

Bill Gates said, “Most people overestimate what they can do in a year and underestimate how much they can achieve in ten years.” I follow this advice constantly. Building something meaningful generally takes ten years, but I like to think 20 - 25 years ahead. You really can change the world.

By addressing practicality, LOVI revived the sarong’s relevance. “70% of men wear sarongs at home because they’re comfortable. But, outside the home, they’re less functional, so people stopped wearing them outside over time. We made sarongs secure, exciting, and cool. When you wear LOVI, you feel confident.”

LOVI’s version of the sarong made it a garment that could be worn well beyond Avurudu—and helped make the sarong more unisex. Eventually, their line expanded to include a wedding range, luxurious formal pieces, and intricately crafted signature LOVI designs.

Nine Years of LOVI

The biggest challenge for LOVI has always been societal and in driving an alternative clothing culture centred around national clothing. “Over time, we have found ways of addressing and giving confidence to people that LOVI sarongs can be worn not just around the house, but in corporate life or to parties and other occasions. They can be worn anywhere, are beautiful in any setting and provide self-confidence. Eventually, this confidence and pride became an integral part of the experience of wearing LOVI,” Asanka shares. “A journalist once said to me that LOVI was more ‘penumata wadā hangimata’ which means that wearing LOVI invokes such feelings in you—which only heightens the experience.”

LOVI’s nine-year journey has been remarkable. Some of the more memorable recent milestones Asanka shared include:

- Partnering with international music sensation Yohani as its Brand Ambassador, who wears her Sri Lankan clothing by LOVI in her concerts all over the world.
- Dressing Sri Lankan Olympians and Commonwealth Athletes. The Olympic team was placed in the global top three for costumes, just behind Mongolia and Mexico.
- A LOVI groom featured alongside a bride in Sabyasachi, the world-renowned Indian brand—a testament a testament to LOVI’s growing visibility on the world fashion stage.
- Winning Gold in the SME Local Brand of the Year and Bronze in the overall Local Brand of the Year categories at the Brand Excellence Awards hosted by SLIM (Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing).
- Taking the LOVI sarong and other contemporary national clothing to over 40 countries.

Over the years, LOVI has used real-life personalities to showcase its brand on the runway, emphasising how the brand (and the sarong) can seamlessly translate off the runway as well. Its product range has expanded to include casual wear such as T-shirts, jackets, kidswear, womenswear and more—not to mention occasion wear for grooms and groomsmen.

LOVI also introduced a modern interpretation of the famed Nilame jacket, applying embroidery styles and techniques from the traditional Nilame costume on more contemporary silhouettes to balance antique grandeur and modern sensibilities. The brand also collaborated with Italian fashion designer Alberica Giorgi on the Two-Worlds collection, which was showcased in Budapest, Hungary.





On a personal level, Asanka shares that his most significant milestone has been seeing people fall in love with the sarong and using it to express their love for their country and culture. "It can be a vast spectrum of customers. I recall a 95-year-old lady who was excited to purchase a sarong for her grandson (they lived abroad), and she even sent us a picture afterwards of him wearing the sarong. She wanted to be the coolest grandmother and saw LOVI as a means of doing that. When you see your brand enjoyed across multiple generations like that, it is a mark of success," Asanka reflects.

Designer Narthalea Yahampath Joins LOVI

LOVI began a new creative chapter when acclaimed designer Narthalea Yahampath joined as Co-Creative Director. With a stellar career that includes showcases at Krakow Fashion Week and Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Sri Lanka, Narthalea brings her expertise, artistic vision, and deep commitment to local craftsmanship to this partnership.

Asanka shares that this evolution was natural and inevitable in many ways. "Any enterprise requires and needs talent, vision and direction. You always need more talent to do amazing things; the more talent you have on the team, the stronger your engine. LOVI is always open to talent; it is open to everyone. It's hard work, but if you're talented and want to do something great, this is the place." Today, many creative minds are collaborating with LOVI to drive a modern Sri Lankan identity, from photographer Calvin Chinthaka, Creative Director for the brand, to architect Ajantha Ranaweera, who plays a significant role in crafting LOVI's physical brand experiences.

Nartharlea's input as Co-Creative Director in design leads the fashion element of LOVI. With her talent and natural eye, she drives to elevate the garments that shape LOVI's vision of a modern Sri Lankan clothing identity. "Narthalea is a creative force—a designer, a beautiful soul, and my dear friend. This partnership, built on respect, will elevate our

NATHARLEA'S PROFILE

BIRTHDAY: 23 August

FAMILY
HUSBAND: Reshan Liyanage

KIDS: Revon

BACKGROUND: Fashion design all the way.

ALMA MATER: AOD (Academy of Design)

mission to build a modern Sri Lankan identity. Our clothing has evolved significantly since LOVI began, and will continue to evolve in leaps and bounds as we grow our capabilities and bring more talent into the company," says Asanka.

Nartharlea's vision aligns with LOVI's ethos: celebrating artisanship while pushing boundaries. "LOVI works with Sri Lankan craftsmen and artists who appreciate our history. That's what makes us unique," she shares.

Some of LOVI's pieces take months to make. "Asanka and I work with a team of local artisans and craftsmen to bring these pieces to life. The beadwork and embellishments are all hand-done—a true labour of love. Our pieces are art and couture. It's not as simple as it may look," Natharlea explains. "Sometimes a piece cannot make it to the final collection. It's trial and error. It doesn't come out the way you envisioned, and you have to redo it. It's all part of perfecting the final outfit."

NATHARLEA'S INSIGHTS

IMPORTANCE OF FASHION:

Fashion is about telling a story. It's a way to express yourself or convey a message. Fashion is an integral need of life.

PERSONAL STYLE:

A lot of details and textures. I also believe in the power of craftsmanship, especially embroidery and embellishment.

BEST FASHION TIP: Going wild with it.

FASHION DON'T:

Copying other people. Don't. Always be authentic.

FAVOURITE GLOBAL TREND:

I don't really believe in trends. They should come from within rather than from somewhere else. It's more important to be a trendsetter than to follow a trend.

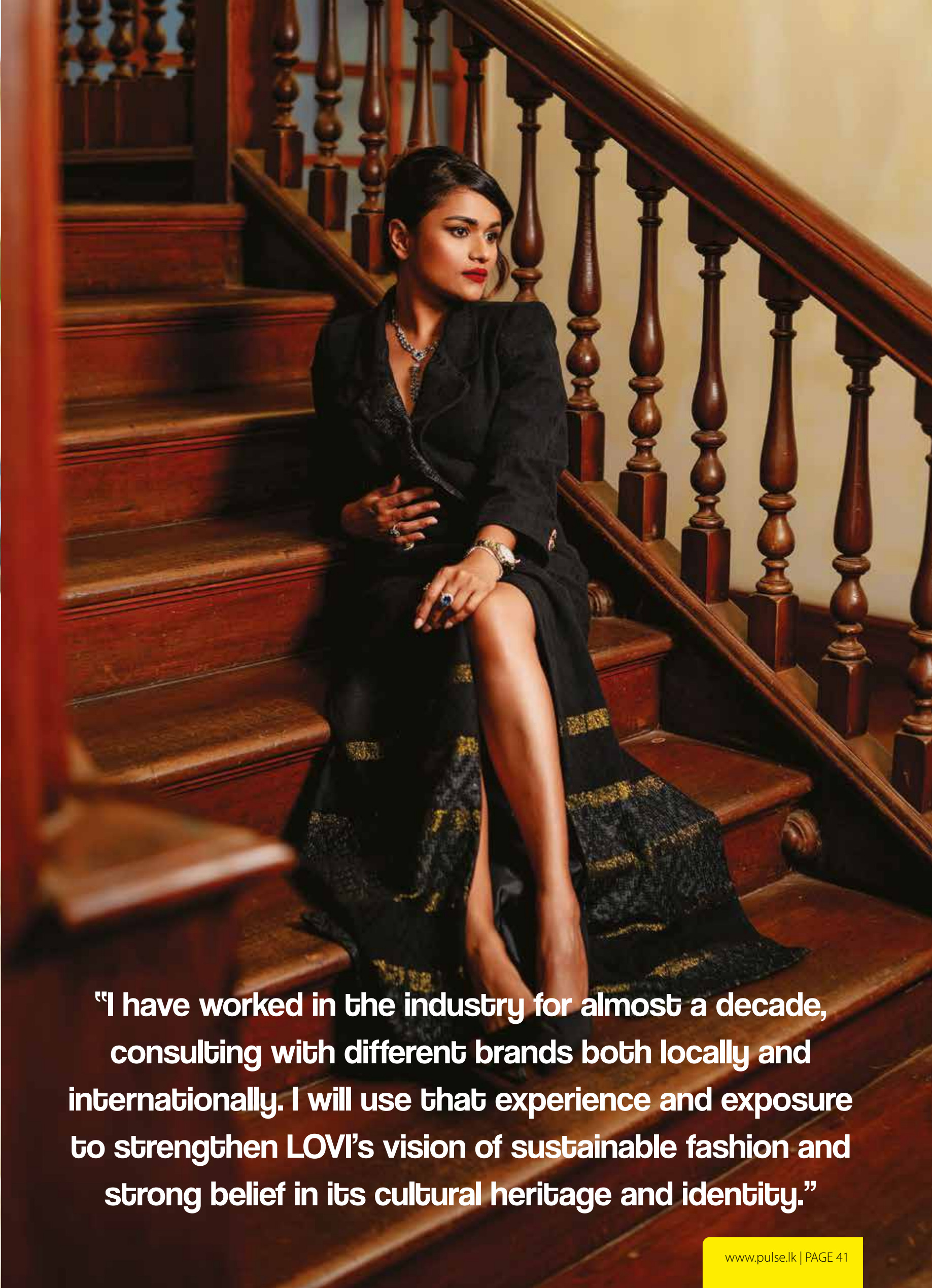
FASHION INFLUENCE: Karl Lagerfeld

LIFE ADVICE:

Wake up and embrace your dreams every day. Believe in yourself and follow that dream until you achieve your goal.

FAVOURITE AVURUDU TRADITION:

Boiling milk is the perfect way to start the year. I wish everyone luck and blessings.



"I have worked in the industry for almost a decade, consulting with different brands both locally and internationally. I will use that experience and exposure to strengthen LOVI's vision of sustainable fashion and strong belief in its cultural heritage and identity."

Her PhD in Design Engineering fuels her approach to innovation and the continued evolution of the LOVI DNA. "We're merging handloom weaving, sustainable fabrics, and new techniques to show Sri Lanka's capabilities. My goal is to blend technical advancements with LOVI's aesthetic. We've added flowers, textures, and nature-inspired motifs—Sri Lanka's environment is our palette."

Nature as muse comes through in LOVI's newest collection, 'WILD,' which took the runway at Colombo Fashion Week Summer 2025 this February. "The 'WILD' collection uses millions of beads and so many intricate details. It takes inspiration from the idea of Sri Lanka as the Garden of Eden." This collection is about feeling wild, passionate, and alive. Wear these clothes, and you'll feel inspired. The palette focuses on shades of white, blush, and red, combining traditional techniques with bold, contemporary designs."

On how she hopes to drive LOVI's vision forward, Natharlea adds, "I have worked in the industry for almost a decade, consulting with different brands both locally and internationally. I'm bringing that experience and exposure to strengthen LOVI's vision—its commitment to sustainable fashion and deep-rooted belief in cultural heritage and identity. I'm also reading for my PhD in Design Engineering and experimenting with innovative fabrics and techniques. I plan to build some of these techniques into LOVI's garments and show the world what we're capable of—as a brand and as a country."



Nature as muse comes through in LOVI's newest collection, 'WILD,' which took the runway at Colombo Fashion Week Summer 2025 this February. "The 'WILD' collection uses millions of beads and so many intricate details. It takes inspiration from the idea of Sri Lanka as the Garden of Eden."



LOVI FACTS

FOUNDED:	2016
MISSION:	To create a modern Sri Lankan clothing identity.
BIGGEST MILESTONE:	Being recognised in the top 3 at the Olympics among 180 other top global designers.
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE:	To become a rich, developed country that appreciates the full potential of every Sri Lankan.





LOVI started in 2016 and it's been nine years now. The LOVI concept and values are still the same: trying to create a modern Sri Lankan clothing identity that is contemporary for today and the future.

The book 'A Speech to Sri Lanka from 2048' is a visionary roadmap penned by Asanka - a manual for developing Sri Lanka dedicated to its youth. It begins in 2020 and concludes in 2048 - the centenary of our independence from British rule.

Beyond LOVI: Envisioning 2048

Pulse also chatted with Asanka about his passions outside of LOVI. This year, Asanka brought to life a vision he's held since 2020—a book and a short centred around about his hopes for the future, and a platform on which to build a rich future Sri Lanka.

The book 'A Speech to Sri Lanka from 2048' is a visionary roadmap penned by Asanka—a manual for developing Sri Lanka dedicated to its youth. It begins in 2020 and concludes in 2048—the centenary of our independence from British rule. Accompanied by a short film titled 2048, which imagines events unfolding in February 2048, both pieces of media aim to inspire a richer Sri Lanka. The book presents a prosperous future for Sri Lanka, known as "The Indian Ocean Miracle," a wealthier richer than it is today, with a per capita GDP of US\$40,000. The book also outlines three core principles for transforming Sri Lanka into an economic powerhouse and a leader in the Asia-Pacific region over the next 25 years.

It details key milestones and strategies leading to this future, offering a roadmap for achieving national progress and environmental harmony. Intended for a broad audience, the book aims to inspire critical thinking about Sri Lanka's future and encourage active participation in shaping its destiny. "It essentially lays out a solution for how to get there in fictional novel form," Asanka explains.

Based on the book, the film is produced by Asanka, directed by Jason Rajasinghe, and written by Asanka and Rehan Mudannayake. It stars Tracy Jayasinghe, Rohan Ponniah, Indira Jonklaas, Biman Wimalaratne and Chandram Rutnam, among others. "It's an intense experience," Asanka quips, "I feel people will need to spend about 10 minutes figuring out what happened." Both 'A Speech to Sri Lanka from 2048' and the film '2048' are available at srilanka2048.org.

Of course, outside professional and creative pursuits, come the personal and the familial. "On a personal level, the last nine years have been incredibly momentous. I got married and had two kids. I launched LOVI, a book, and a movie. My wife Marguerite has also recently launched a book. Each of these markers is a huge milestone. There has been so much growth."

To Infinity and Beyond

Reflecting on his biggest win over the last nine years, Asanka said, "It's not always about one particular milestone, but about recognising its meaning. We have created a way for people to enjoy being Sri Lankan. The sarong is now accepted anywhere. You see many people, especially young people, embracing the sarong—from wearing it as grooms to wearing it in boardrooms as CEOs—whether paired with Western suits and jackets or even pants. The biggest LOVI milestone shows how the sarong can be an acceptable clothing norm."

Now that the sarong has cemented its position in Lankan fashion, Asanka and Natharlea look to the future. "As always, the Sri Lankan identity will be what drives LOVI, and we will be continuing to work with local artisans as well as everyone who appreciates the power of our Sri Lankan heritage—from our history to our craft, to our art, to our people—our heritage is what makes us so unique. That is always what will define LOVI," Natharlea concludes.

Location
Galle Face Hotel

Jewellery
Tiesh

Hair and makeup
**Chalana Munasinghe from
Ramani Fernando Salons**

Wardrobe
LOVI Ceylon

Photography
**Iraj Walisinghe
Trevon Perera**

WINLADS APP LAUNCHES IN SRI LANKA

The launch of the Winlads App at Tiki Bar, Shangri-La Colombo was a night of excitement, fun and games! Winlads offers users amazing savings and thrilling giveaways, partnering with top brands to bring the best deals. From discounts on favourite products to exciting prize draws, Winlads is set to change the game in Sri Lanka.

Check out the highlights!

Pictures by **Thenuka Perera**



Mykeal



Izuru & Nimna



Caroline



Chishini



Piyumal & Yameesha



Sandali & Radeesha



Dewmi



Shalu



Romaine & team performing



Tharushi



Shanelle

citrus

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Roshan, Kushlani & Mineth



Gayathrie



Thilini



Vidarshi

CHILL COLOMBO LAUNCH PARTY

Chill Colombo has officially opened its doors at The Mall at Port City Colombo! This stylish two-storey restaurant, bar, and café promises an exciting mix of local and international flavours, and a refined culinary and nightlife experience. The exclusive launch event was a night to remember—with a fantastic crowd, delicious food, and expertly crafted signature cocktails. Guests took in the vibrant atmosphere, celebrating the arrival of this new hotspot in the heart of Port City.

Here's a look at some of the best moments from the night!

Pictures by **Sassanda Liyanaarachchi**



Fahad & Rinosha



Rozanne & friend



Rossana & Treshan



Narmadha



Harini



Danielle



Johan & Darshi



Thushen



Angel Beach Unawatuna

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TikTok Trending

By Haritha Athapattu

Khannabliss is not just a TikTok creator; she's a force of nature. Her presence cannot be missed with her unapologetic authenticity, infectious energy, and knack for turning everyday experiences into hilarious and thought-provoking content. Whether she challenges beauty standards, calls out absurdities, or simply makes her audience laugh, Khanna does it all with a signature charm that keeps her followers coming back for more. In this issue's TikTok Trending, she opens up about staying true to herself, handling negativity, and the exciting plans she has in store.

Describe yourself in three adjectives.

Happy, curious and empathetic.

What are your top five favourite things to do in life?

- Love all beings
- Surf
- Sing
- Laugh with the ones I love
- Explore nature with Charlie

Your content is all about breaking societal norms and celebrating natural beauty. What inspired you to focus on this?

It all started with my mum, to be honest! When I was around 20 or 21, I moved to Mirissa and started spending loads of time in the sun, which made my skin get pretty dark. My mum—who is absolutely stunning with her fair skin—was always a bit concerned. Every time I visited her in Colombo, she'd say, "Oh my God, what happened to you? Why do you look so dark?"

Back in Colombo, our neighbours said the same thing. But in Mirissa, it was a different ball game. I met many foreigners and Sri Lankans living abroad, and they kept complimenting my skin, telling me how beautiful it was. That's when it clicked for me. I didn't need to stress about my skin colour. Fast-forward to today, and now I'm getting love from all over the world for it!

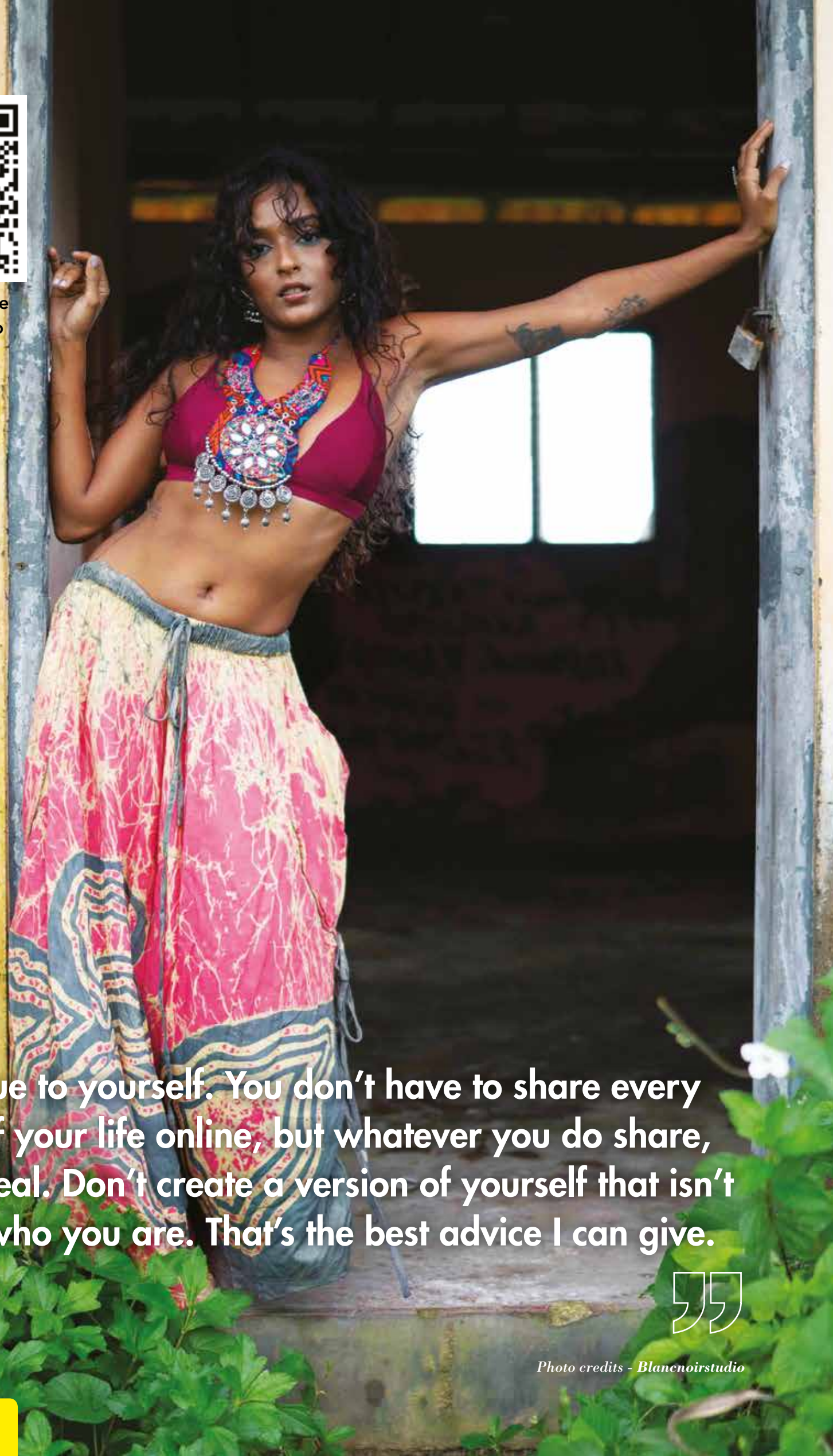
So, I embraced my skin, and I really wanted to share that message. That's how those videos started—encouraging others to embrace their natural beauty, too!



TIKTOK TRENDING Khannabliss



Scan the QR code
for the full video



“

Stay true to yourself. You don't have to share every detail of your life online, but whatever you do share, let it be real. Don't create a version of yourself that isn't true to who you are. That's the best advice I can give.

”

Photo credits - *Blancoirstudio*

Can you share a memorable moment when a follower reached out to you about how your videos impacted their life in one way or the other?

I often receive messages from my followers, especially women, sharing how my videos have impacted them. Many of them used to feel insecure about their dark skin, thinking they weren't beautiful because of it. But they began to feel differently after watching my content and hearing me talk about embracing natural beauty. They started to realise that their skin was beautiful just as it was—without the need for makeup or trying to change it.

One of the most rewarding things is when they meet me in person and say, "I'm just rocking my natural, dark skin with confidence". It's a fulfilling feeling to know that I've helped them break free from their insecurities and find the strength to love themselves just as they are.

What challenges have you faced in breaking online and offline stereotypes, and how have you overcome them?

It's not so much about consciously trying to break stereotypes—I'm just being true to myself, and I guess that ends up challenging them. But that comes with its own set of challenges. One of the biggest hurdles I face is when brands reach out to promote beauty products. It's tough because it could be a good opportunity for personal growth, but it goes against everything I believe in. So, I say 'no' every time because staying authentic to myself is more important than anything else.

Another challenge is keeping up with emerging trends. The pace is fast; sometimes, it feels like a lot to handle. Of course, dealing with different people and their perspectives can be challenging at times, too. To overcome all this, I remind myself to stay true to myself, stick to my beliefs, and do what feels right for me—not what others expect or want from me.

Your energy is always so uplifting. How do you keep that positivity going, especially when discussing sensitive topics?

People who know me well can vouch that I'm usually pleasant. I don't think many of my friends—except maybe one of my closest ones—have ever seen me cry. I do have those moments of breakdowns, but I've always believed in looking at the brighter side of things. If I can make someone smile or lift their spirits, that means everything to me. At the end of the day, we're all here to be happy, right?

I truly believe happiness can be found in anything. Even on a bad day, if you pause for a second and think, "Wow, I'm alive, I'm breathing," that's already something to be thankful for. Happiness is within you—you just have to find it. That's the philosophy I live by, and it's what helps me stay positive and keep the vibe light, even when I'm talking about tough topics.

How do you handle negative comments or backlash on your content, and what advice would you give to others facing similar situations?

When I get a negative comment, I honestly think, "Okay, this person watched my video, listened to what I said, and then took the time to comment. The point is, they engaged. I want people to watch my content, and if they're commenting, it means they've paid attention, even if they disagree. The people who love me will keep watching, and the ones who don't will still engage—which is ultimately good for my reach.

My advice for anyone facing the same situation is simple: don't sweat the negative comments. Instead of getting upset, appreciate that someone took the time to comment. If someone says something bad, just let it go in one ear and out the other, and keep focusing on your life and goals.

Can you walk us through your creative process—from conceptualising a video to posting it online?

Unless I'm working on a specific project, collaborating with a brand, or finally getting around to something I've planned, I don't have a strict structure for my videos. Most of the time, my content is just me reacting to everyday life. If something ridiculous happens on the street—someone acting unreasonably or just being a complete character—I take a mental note of it.

When I get home, I think back on the situation, process what actually happened, and maybe jot down a few pointers. Then, I just start talking. I don't script too much because I want my content to feel natural. A big part of why I do this is to share experiences that others might relate to—things people have gone through, but might not discuss. If someone watching my video thinks, "Oh my God, I'm not the only one!" and laughs, then I've done my job. It's all about creating that connection, sharing the humour in life's weird moments, and making people feel seen.

How has your approach to content creation evolved since you first started on TikTok?

When I first started on TikTok—well, actually, back when it was still Musically—I saw people dancing and thought, "Hey, I should try this too!" That was a disaster because I'm not a dancer! Then, I moved on to singing—well, not original songs, just parodies where I'd change the lyrics and have some fun with it. People either laughed at it or absolutely hated it, but I was enjoying myself, so I kept going.

Then came the talking. I realised people found my random rants hilarious. That's when it hit me—if people are laughing at things I didn't even intend to be funny, what if I actually talked about things that annoyed me, but did it in a way that made people laugh? That's when my content really started evolving.

Over time, I shifted from just making people laugh to also making them think. I started talking about real experiences. My goal has always been to create a space where people can connect, empathise, and most importantly, laugh.

If you could collaborate with any celebrity, who would it be and why?

David Dobrik! I've been a fan of his content for the longest time—way before he became as famous as he is now. I find his videos hilarious and love the energy he brings to everything he does. His content has this crazy, unpredictable vibe that would be so much fun to work with.

What advice would you give aspiring creators wishing to use their platforms for positive change?

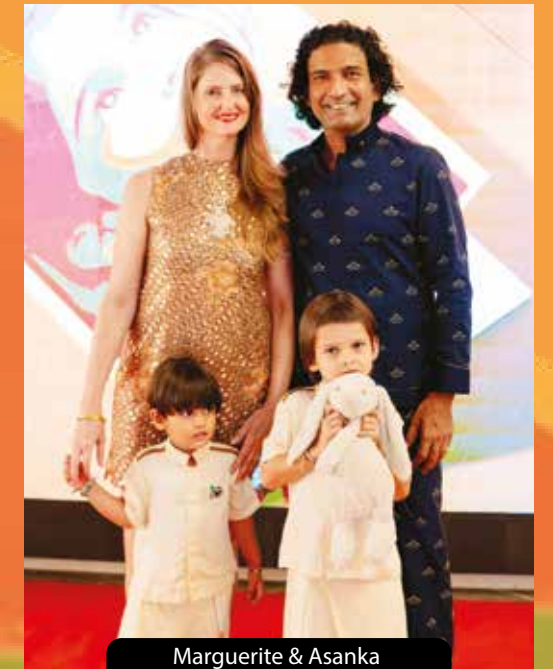
Stay true to yourself. You don't have to share every detail of your life online, but whatever you do share, let it be real. Don't create a version of yourself that isn't true to who you are. That's the best advice I can give.



Dilanjan, Yohani, Janik & Sandun



Asanka & Jason



Marguerite & Asanka



Ajay



Dayasiri



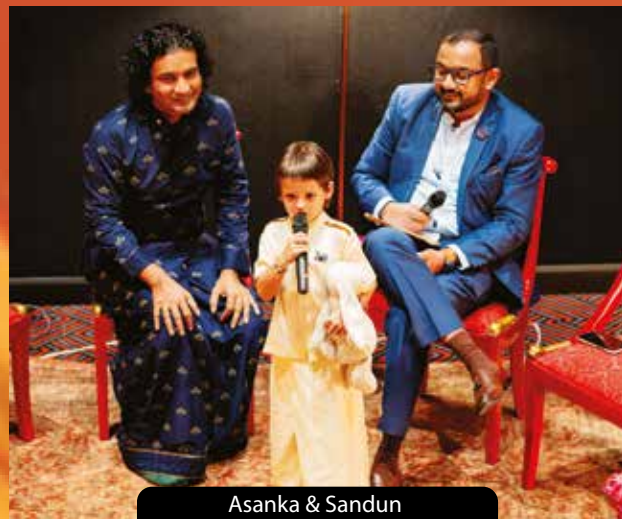
Harsha



Chandran Rutnam



Amandha



Asanka & Sandun



Gowrie & Rohan



Orlando Edwards, Emma de Silva,
Randhula de Silva & Linda Ehrichs



Adhissha



Sujeewa & Shavendra



Natharlea & Reshan



Onita

'2 0 4 8' SCREENING & BOOK LAUNCH

Scope Cinemas at Havelock City Mall was buzzing with excitement as guests gathered for the exclusive screening and book launch of 2048, produced and written by Asanka De Mel. Directed by award-winning filmmaker Jason Rajasinghe, the film brought a bold vision of Sri Lanka's future to life. The event also featured a captivating panel discussion, where the creators shared insights into the journey behind both the book and the movie.

Here are some highlights from the evening!

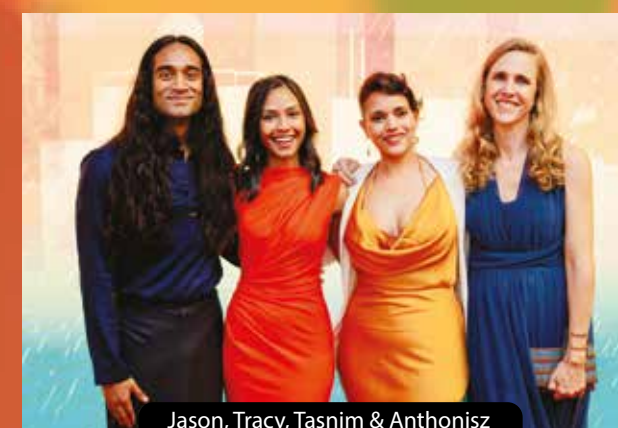
Pictures by Iraj Walisinghe



Yohani



Danu, Ramali & Janik



Jason, Tracy, Tasnim & Anthonisz



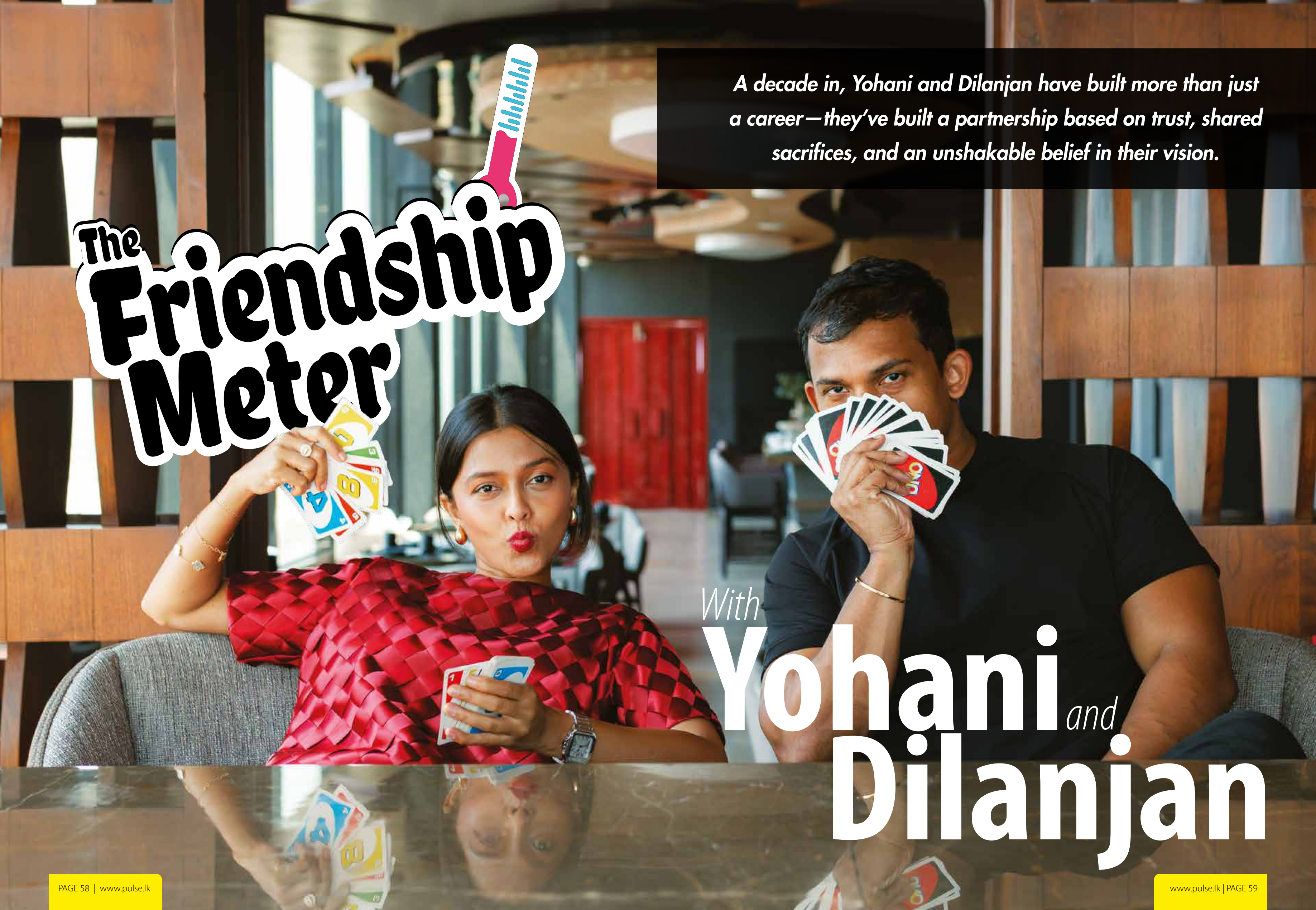
Tai & Ajantha



Asanka & Bhatiya



Bhanuka & Minoli



The Friendship Meter

A decade in, Yohani and Dilanjan have built more than just a career—they've built a partnership based on trust, shared sacrifices, and an unshakable belief in their vision.

With
Yohani *and*
Dilanjan

By Venessa Anthony

Some partnerships in the music industry are purely professional. Others are deeper, built on trust, shared struggles, and a vision that goes beyond business. Yohani and Dilanjan's relationship as artist and manager is deeply intertwined with their friendship.

A decade in, Yohani and Dilanjan have built more than just a career—they've built a partnership based on trust, shared sacrifices, and an unshakable belief in their vision. We managed to drag the duo away from their hectic schedules to chat about their first impressions of each other, their biggest career challenges, and what it really takes to build a global music brand while staying true to themselves.

And if this conversation is anything to go by, their story is far from over.

How has your friendship influenced the way you work together? Does it give you an advantage?

Dilanjan: One hundred per cent. Our partnership has lasted over ten years because our friendship comes first, and business comes second.

When Yohani first signed with me, she had every reason to be sceptical. Although her past experiences weren't great, she was able to look past those concerns and see my vision because she saw me as a friend first. That changed everything.

Yohani: What helps is that we don't just talk about music or business. We talk about the bigger picture—where we want to be, what we want to achieve, and how we want to grow.

Because of that, we're already aligned when a big decision arises. We don't have to 'convince' each other. We both know the other person's values and trust the process.

What was your first impression of each other, and how has it changed?

Yohani: Oh my gosh, he was so quiet! I remember thinking, "Does this guy even talk?" But that changed over time.

What really surprised me was how clear his vision was. Initially, I didn't always understand why he was so particular. Why did he make me redo

things a hundred times? Why did every tiny detail matter so much? But then I realised, it was because he knew exactly what he wanted. That's made me better too.

Dilanjan: My first impression? Oh, it was love at first sight! But jokes aside, Yohani was stubborn, headstrong, and incredibly driven.

She was intense and tended to take everything, whether compliments or criticism, personally. If she wanted something, she would make it happen. She wasn't waiting for opportunities; she was creating them.

What changed over time was seeing her grow into that drive. In the early days, she would get frustrated when something didn't go her way. Now, she understands the long game.

Was there a moment when you truly felt the weight of your success? How did you handle it?

Yohani: Moving to India was overwhelming. Everything changed so fast.

In 2019, I was just starting out in Sri Lanka. By 2021, we were in an entirely industry—new people, new expectations, and everything. I had no idea what was coming.

I remember feeling completely lost at one point. It felt like too much, too soon. But having Dilanjan there helped because he always had a plan.

Dilanjan: Success doesn't feel like success when you're in it. You just keep moving.

But for me, the real weight came when we started losing control over our narrative. The world saw Yohani as an 'Indian artist,' which was tough. We weren't just building a career—we were also fighting to maintain our Sri Lankan identity while expanding globally.

Have you ever completely disagreed on a major career decision? How did you work through it?

Yohani: Every day! No, but seriously—we argue about everything.

We have different instincts, from which songs to release to which projects to take on. But that's a good thing. If we always agreed, one of us wouldn't be needed!

Dilanjan: Exactly. I handle strategy, business, and logistics, while Yohani focuses on creativity.

If she focused too much on business, she would lose her artistry. Similarly, we would have no structure if I focused too much on art. So, we constantly challenge each other.



"We're just doing the work, making the right moves, and playing the long game. One day, when people look back at what we built, I hope they realise we didn't just chase success; we redefined what success looks like."

How do you balance commercial success with staying true to your creative vision?

Dilanjan: It's tough. The industry demands hits, but we don't chase trends.

For us, the goal isn't just about short-term success. It's about building something lasting. That's why we don't make every decision based on what's popular right now; we consider the long-term impact.

Yohani: Right. I could do back-to-back shows in Sri Lanka and make a lot of money. But that's not the goal. The goal is to build a body of work that will last beyond a single viral hit.

Music isn't about quick success. It's about creating something meaningful.

If someone wanted to understand the essence of Yohani as a brand, what's the one song or moment that defines it?

Yohani: 'Aaye.' Without question.

That song represents everything I stand for.

When I started, people said, "You're just a cover artist." They doubted whether I had my own sound. So, I locked myself in a room, taught myself music production on my laptop, and devised a melody. I went to Dilanjan with it and a few ideas for the lyrics, and together, we wrote 'Aaye' from scratch.

It was the first time I felt like a real artist—not just someone singing other people's words, but someone creating my own story.

Dilanjan: 'Aaye' was a moment of realisation for both of us.

It wasn't about numbers or views. It was about proving that Yohani wasn't just a one-hit wonder.

Yohani, any business side of music that you've learnt from Dilanjan? And Dilanjan, anything about the artistry that you've learnt from Yohani?

One of the biggest lessons I've learnt from him is that music alone isn't enough. You could create the best song in the world, but it won't go anywhere if you don't know how to market it, distribute it, and build a brand around it.

Dilanjan: She's shown me you can't always approach creativity with a structured mindset. Some of the best ideas come from spontaneous moments. I've learnt to trust the artistic process, even when it doesn't make immediate sense.

Years from now, when people look back at your work together, what do you hope they say about what you built?

Yohani: I want to be so big that people think it's a conspiracy theory!

No, but seriously—I want people to look at my career and ask, "How did she do it?" I want it to get to a point where it's so massive, so global, so unstoppable that people refuse to believe it happened naturally.

I want to push the boundaries of what's possible for artists from our country to the point where the success feels almost unreal.

Dilanjan: And honestly, if we did it right, then in a few years, people shouldn't even be talking about us anymore. They should discuss the next wave of Sri Lankan artists taking over the world.

We're just doing the work, making the right moves, and playing the long game. One day, when people look back at what we built, I hope they realise we didn't just chase success; we redefined what success looks like.



Scan the QR code
for the full video

Credits

Pictures by Trevon Perera

Location - The Kingsbury Colombo

What's my favourite place in the world?
Sri Lanka, anywhere with the sea or beach.

Who is my favourite artist?
Yohani!

If I had to delete one contact from my phone, who would you bet it is?
The credit card recovery number from the bank.

If I had to go on a date with a celebrity, who do you think I'd pick?
Jay-Z

What would I take if I had to survive a month with only three items?
Laptop (as long as there's internet), an induction cooker, and a pan.

If I wasn't a singer, what career would I be in?
A 4x4 racer, for sure.

What's one food I refuse to eat?
Pol sambol

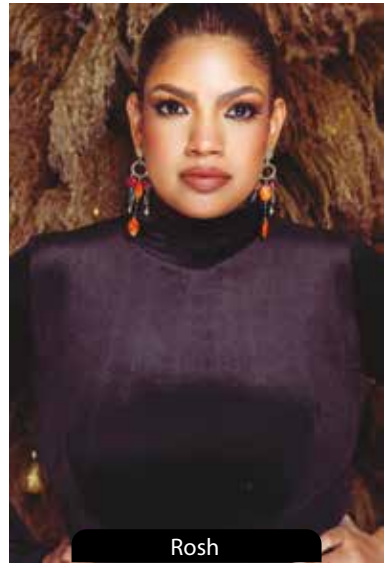
What's the most impulsive thing I've ever done?
I bought two pairs of Prada boots!

If I could bring someone famous back to life, who would it be?
Freddy Mercury.

Where do you think I'd be if I suddenly vanished for a week?
Sydney, playing PS5 with my cousins.

How Well Do You Know Me

In this segment, we bring together a famous duo to interview each other in a round of intimate, never-before-asked questions that reveal sides of your favourite personalities you've never seen before.



Rosh



Ameerah



Amilani



Anisha



Anudi



Kamil & Rosh



Christina



Deirdre



Binu & Grace



Jaish



Kalpanee



Maloney



Tarja



Yasodhara



Malsha

Beauty by Rosh World Series in Sri Lanka

Beauty by Rosh is the visionary brainchild of Rosh Kumarasinghe. Her signature Beauty by Rosh World Series made its way to Sri Lanka with an exclusive masterclass and cocktail soirée at the Galle Face Hotel grand ballroom. Known for its mission to create makeup and skincare products that cater to underrepresented communities, especially brown women, Beauty by Rosh has become a global name in inclusive and ethical beauty.

The Masterclass World Series has toured London, Sydney, Bangkok, and Paris, bringing expert beauty techniques and industry insights to audiences worldwide.

Here's a glimpse of the glamorous moments from the event!

Pictures by Lasantha Perera



Natharlea, Anuki, Rosh, Thiyasha & Adhisha



Nilmi



Onita & Friend



Ramani & Harris



Yohani & Raini



Rosy Senanayaka



Rossana & Chrisanthi



Rosh & Rozanne



Shanelle



Soraya



Shan



Shaamil



Sonali



Rozanne



Noary & friend



Caroline & Rosh



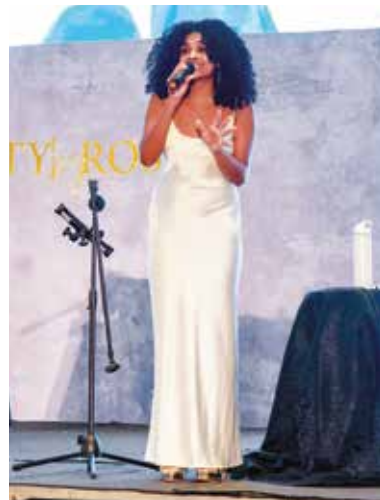
Shevanthi & friend



Brian & Rosh



Rosh & Ranga



Sharon



A symphony of spices, fresh ingredients, and bold new flavours collide at

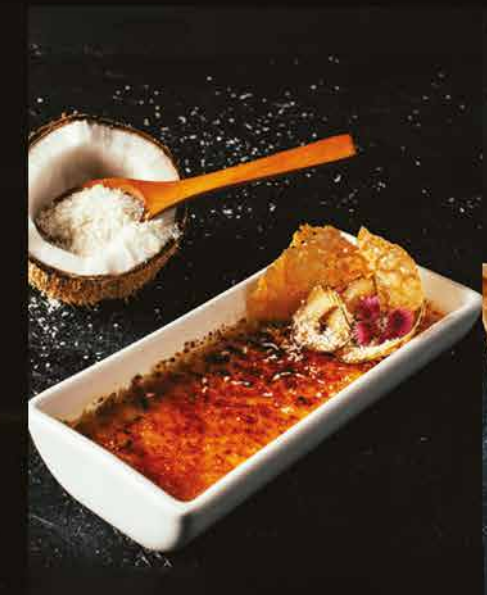
Ceylon Curry Club.

offering a dining experience that's as nostalgic as it is exciting.

From fragrant curries simmered to perfection to street food favourites with a twist, each dish is a tribute to the diverse flavours of Sri Lanka.

Step into a space where tradition seamlessly meets modernity, and every bite tells a captivating story of the island's vibrant food culture.

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"That's when I realised technology wasn't just about writing code—it was about solving real-world problems."

Pulani Ranasinghe

DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Endeavouring to Shape Sri Lanka's Digital Landscape

By Nirma Kumarasiri

For many, the path to success follows a carefully planned trajectory. But for Pulani Ranasinghe, Founder and CEO of Loons Lab, the journey into technology was anything but predictable.

Her initial dream was to study genetics or medicine, but when her A/L results didn't secure a place in medical school and private education wasn't an option, she had to rethink her future. Technology was simply the next best option available.

What began as a practical decision quickly evolved into a lifelong passion. Even in school, she had an intuitive grasp of technology, driven more by curiosity than academics. It wasn't until she participated in hackathons—high-energy, problem-solving competitions—that she realised the real power of tech was in solving real-world problems.

"That's when I realised technology wasn't just about writing code—it was about solving real-world problems," she says.

That realisation led her to build Loons Lab, a company now driving digital transformation in Sri Lanka's healthcare, education, disaster management, and tourism sectors.

Turning Ideas Into Impact

Pulani says entrepreneurship is a balancing act involving triumphs and doubts. Some days, she feels born for it, while other days, the thought of a corporate job seems tempting.

One of the defining moments that cemented her belief in technology's power came through Loons Lab's first significant digitisation project in collaboration with UNDP. At the time, she and her team had little experience managing large-scale projects, yet they delivered a solution that became one of UNDP's top-rated initiatives. This project was a turning point, proving that even a young and relatively inexperienced team could create impactful solutions at an institutional level.

Another milestone was digitising a hospital system, which streamlined patient record management, reduced waiting times, and made healthcare more accessible. These projects helped her understand that technology is not just about efficiency but also about improving lives.

"That's when I truly understood the power of technology—not just for efficiency, but for improving lives."

Today, Loons Lab has helped Sri Lanka save billions by developing cost-effective, locally designed digital solutions. For Pulani, innovation isn't just about disruption; it's about creating meaningful, lasting impact.

Beyond One Industry: A Problem-Solver at Heart

Rather than focusing on a single sector, Loons Lab operates under a simple philosophy: identify and solve inefficiencies.

What began with healthcare soon expanded into education, disaster management, trade, and tourism. Across industries, the same fundamental issue arose—inefficiencies in systems that technology could address. The more sectors she explored, the more she saw how digital solutions could improve processes, streamline operations, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for everyday Sri Lankans.

Overcoming Challenges in Leadership

Like any entrepreneur, Pulani has faced moments of doubt, questioning whether she was on the right path. But every time she considered stepping away, a message from a grateful client or a young entrepreneur looking up to her reminded her why she started.

"The messages from clients saying, 'Thank you for making our work easier.' The young entrepreneurs who tell me they look up to me. My family's belief in me. These moments remind me why I do this."

She believes that trusting the process and taking risks is essential. Waiting for the perfect time only slows progress, and failures are simply lessons that shape more decisive leadership.

Technology for Public Good

Some of Loons Lab's most impactful work has been in public sector digitalisation, tackling large-scale challenges.

One of the most critical moments came during Sri Lanka's COVID-19 crisis, when hospitals struggled to manage testing. Loons Lab built and launched a COVID-19 test management system that helped reduce delays and improve decision-making. Recognising the urgency of the situation, the team donated the system to Sri Lanka.

Beyond the pandemic, another significant achievement has been the Medical Supplies Information Management System, a large-scale digital platform to streamline the country's medical supply chain.

The system operates across 2,900 healthcare institutions and has over 16,000 registered users. It enables hospitals to update and track real-time medicine availability. More importantly, it allows the public to check which hospitals have the medicines they need—an innovation that has significantly reduced unnecessary hospital visits and ensured a more transparent, efficient supply of medical resources.

"Before, if a hospital ran out of medicine, patients would only find out after arriving. Now, they can check online beforehand. It sounds simple, but it makes a huge difference."

Breaking Barriers for Women in Tech

Despite the growing presence of women in the tech industry, the sector remains male-dominated. Pulani is committed to changing that by fostering greater inclusivity and opportunity for women in STEM fields.

As part of SLASSCOM's Women in Tech Forum, she has worked on numerous initiatives to support young female technology professionals. Among these was a women-only hackathon, which resonated deeply with her. Her journey began with a similar event that instilled the belief that she could succeed in tech.

"My journey started with a women-only hackathon that gave me the belief that I could do this. At SLASSCOM, we've done many programmes, but this particular initiative was one that I found most impactful."

This was just one of many programmes under SLASSCOM's efforts to empower women in technology, but for Pulani, it stood out for its impact. Six of the 15 finalist teams went on to build real businesses—a clear sign of the untapped potential among women in the industry.

Beyond Work: A Leader, a Learner, and a Mother

Pulani describes herself as both an optimist and a realist. Optimism drives her to take risks and believe in the power of innovation, while realism keeps her prepared for challenges. This balance helps her stay resilient in the face of setbacks.

Her father has been one of her biggest influences, shaping her ability to navigate challenges with intuition and logic. Although their perspectives often differed, his resilience, work ethic, and belief in her significantly shaped who she is today.

When it comes to work-life balance, she believes in a work-life blend rather than strict separation. Some days, work takes priority; on others, family comes first. The key is being intentional about where time and energy are invested.

Despite the demands of her work, her family remains her reset button. Holding her newborn daughter or listening to her son's stories puts everything into perspective.

A Vision for the Future

For Pulani, success isn't just about growth, revenue, or innovation—it is about purpose.

Her journey proves that impact doesn't come from having a perfect plan, but from taking the first step, embracing uncertainty, and lifting others along the way.

"Success isn't just about individual wins—it's about lifting others as you climb."

She believes true success is not measured by individual achievements but by the ability to create opportunities for others. As she continues shaping Sri Lanka's digital landscape, her mission remains clear: ensuring that more people, especially women, have access to the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to succeed in the technology space.

"Success isn't just about individual wins—it's about lifting others as you climb."





Ayesh



Gayantha, Natharlea, Anuki, Thiyasha, Reshan & Treshan



Thiyasha



Jyothee



Jacque



Prithiva



Nishi



Shevan



Ranshan



Sajeira & Chinthaka



Rinosha & Fahad

Tiesh Unveils 'For Him' Men's Jewellery Collection

Renowned for its exceptional artistry and dedication to timeless design, Tiesh reaffirms its status as a leader in jewellery innovation with the relaunch of its iconic 'For Him' men's jewellery collection. First introduced in 2016, the collection caters to the modern man, celebrating the understated elegance of silver, gold, and natural gemstones. The 'For Him' collection introduces an array of meticulously crafted accessories, including sterling silver bracelets, gemstone-encrusted gold cufflinks, lapel pins, tie pins, and statement rings. Each piece reflects Tiesh's hallmark sophistication, fused with contemporary elements to suit the discerning tastes of today's men.

Here are some highlights from the gathering.

*Pictures by **Malshan Wijayathilaka***



Maya



Natharlea



Deepak & Ayesh



Danu



Rosanna & Treshan



Nalaka



Indula



Kosh



Sharine & Nishan



Sonali, Ayesh, Thiyasha, Sharine & Yadushika



Wasim & Shamaali



Reshalee & Taveesha



Mikail



Zanita



Thiyasha, Sandun & Ayesh

mogo

MEDIA ACADEMY

ELEVATING

Sri Lanka's

CREATIVE

FUTURE



By Nirma Kumarasiri

In a world where digital media, animation, and gaming are rapidly reshaping global entertainment, Sri Lanka's creative industry stands on the brink of transformation. At the heart of this shift is Mogo Media Academy, a dynamic institution reimagining education—equipping students with industry-ready skills, global exposure, and direct career pathways.

Mogo was founded on the belief that Sri Lanka's undeniable creative potential needed a structured, professional space to flourish. "We saw a clear gap in the industry," shares Arvinth Dillruckshan, Mogo's Game Development Instructor. "There was incredible raw talent but few avenues for structured, industry-driven training. We aim to bridge that gap—giving students the tools, technology, and mentorship they need to compete on a global stage."

A New Standard in Creative Education

At Mogo, the emphasis is on learning by doing. The Academy's approach goes beyond traditional classroom lectures, immersing students in practical, project-based experiences from day one. Students are encouraged to experiment, create, and build their portfolios through real-world animation, game development, or VFX assignments.

For many students, this hands-on approach has been transformative. "Enrolling here has been one of the best decisions I've made for my artistic growth," says Nethmi, an animation student. "The Academy doesn't just teach technical skills—it fosters creativity, storytelling, and problem-solving. The lecturers genuinely care about our progress, always pushing us beyond our limits."

For students in the Game Development programme, the experience is just as impactful. "Before joining Mogo, I struggled to find structured game development education in Sri Lanka," shares Faraj. "This was the best decision I ever made. Not only did I learn game mechanics, but I also realised my true potential in the industry."

Leading the Way in Learning and Career Growth



Learning from the Best: A Global Perspective

One of Mogo's greatest strengths is its international faculty, who bring real-world experience from leading global studios. These professionals provide mentorship that aligns with global production pipelines, preparing students for careers beyond Sri Lanka.

"What Mogo is doing is remarkable," shares Viru Sohal, Mogo's Animation Lecturer and international faculty member. "They are not just training students but shaping future professionals who will elevate Sri Lanka's creative industry. The talent here is outstanding, and with the right training, these students will be globally competitive."

For students, learning from industry professionals makes a tangible difference. "We're being trained by someone who works in the film

industry," says Pasindu, an animation student. "That changes everything. We're not just learning concepts but being prepared to function at international standards."

Beyond the classroom, Mogo also ensures students gain global recognition. Students are exposed to worldwide networking and career opportunities by participating in international competitions, industry showcases, and collaborative projects, allowing them to step confidently onto the world stage.

Empowering Students with Cutting-Edge Tools and Technology

Education at Mogo goes beyond textbooks and theory—students have direct access to industry-standard tools and technology. From high-end animation software to motion capture technology and professional game development engines, the Academy ensures its students train with the tools major studios use worldwide.

For Iruraj, a game development student, this exposure was a game-changer. "Before Mogo, I was self-taught, learning from YouTube tutorials. But something was always missing—a community and professional mentoring. At Mogo, I found both. Now, I know exactly how to build a career in game development."

The Academy's internationally recognised affiliations with the TVEC (Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission), MES (Media and Entertainment Skills Council), and NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) further strengthen its reputation. These accreditations provide students with globally accepted qualifications, enhancing their employability locally and internationally.



For aspiring animators, game developers, and digital artists, Mogo is not just a place to learn—it is a place to launch careers.



production, post-production, and journalism, broadening career pathways beyond animation and gaming and catering to the expanding demand for digital content creators in the media landscape.

Recognising the importance of nurturing talent from an early stage, Mogo is also developing an Under-15 Programme designed to introduce young students to animation, gaming, and digital media, ensuring that creativity is cultivated from the ground up.

Perhaps the most ambitious step yet is the transition towards becoming a full-fledged university, offering internationally recognised degree programmes that will solidify Mogo's standing in Sri Lanka's education sector and provide students with globally competitive qualifications. These expansions reflect Mogo's commitment to empowering the next generation of media professionals and cementing Sri Lanka's position in the global creative economy.

A Driving Force in Sri Lanka's Creative Economy

Mogo Media Academy is shaping individual careers and actively driving Sri Lanka's emergence as a global player in animation, gaming, and digital content production.

Mogo is positioning Sri Lanka as a competitive hub for media outsourcing and creative content development by fostering highly skilled talent and industry collaborations. "By developing top-tier talent and forming global partnerships, we're creating a foundation for Sri Lanka to thrive in the digital economy," says Arvinth Dilluckshan.

This vision is supported by direct collaborations with media studios, production houses, and industry leaders, ensuring that students graduate with real-world experience. For many, this connection to the industry has been life-changing.

"The Academy hasn't just helped me improve my skills," says Harsha, an animation student. "It has given me real connections in the industry—something most institutions don't offer."

The Road Ahead: What's Next for Mogo?

With a vision to continuously expand opportunities for Sri Lankan creatives, Mogo is already laying the groundwork for its next growth phase. The Academy is set to introduce new programmes in TV

A Legacy in the Making

Mogo Media Academy is more than just an educational institution—it is a movement shaping Sri Lanka's creative future. Through world-class training, international exposure, and industry-aligned education, it is setting the foundation for a new generation of media professionals.

For aspiring animators, game developers, and digital artists, Mogo is not just a place to learn—it is a place to launch careers.

As Sri Lanka continues its ascent in the global creative industry, one thing is certain; the future is bright, and Mogo Media Academy is leading the way.





**BREAKING
BOUNDARIES
OF
COMEDY**

From
Lawyer to Stand-Up
THE
HILARIOUS
JOURNEY OF

Sashi Perera

"I think it's a great time to be a female comedian. There are so many more of us in the industry and so many to look up to. I'm walking in the footsteps of everyone who broke ground before me, and I hope to continue doing what I do."

By Ravini Wathsala

A comedian, writer, and former lawyer (or 'recovering lawyer', as she puts it), Sashi Perera's uniquely humorous and witty personality has taken the world by storm. Born in Sri Lanka and having moved to Australia, her experiences serve as a rich source of laughter and insight into the cultural clashes in a foreign world. From funny episodes about growing up in Sri Lanka to stories about her early experiences with womanhood, Sashi is building a space for herself in comedy by sharing stories relatable to the global South Asian community.

Always with a notebook in hand, she gathers inspiration from her everyday life—much to the terror of her husband, Charlie, who often says, "Please don't write this down." However, he has now become accustomed to the impromptu joke-writing sessions and remains one of her biggest supporters.

Her latest show, 'Boundaries', explores how she balances her Sri Lankan heritage with her Australian upbringing. After touring Australia, the UK, and Amsterdam, she's ready to bring her comedy back to Asia this year. Catch her at the NADA Auditorium Colombo on 25 April for an amazing show!

Sashi might be 'recovering' from her law days, but she's rising to fame in the world of comedy. She blends her witty comments and impressive storytelling skills to bring laughs to audiences worldwide.

In a recent interview, Sashi talked about how she traded law books for punchlines and found success in the most unexpected places, one joke at a time.

Who is Sashi Perera? Describe yourself in three words.

I'm a comedian, writer and recovering lawyer. Oh no, sorry, that's four words. Ex-lawyer—is that one word?

What's the most memorable place you've ever performed?

I love every show I do for different reasons, but I had four sold-out shows in London last year, which was utterly surreal. To have so many people show up to see me on the other side of the world from where I live was reality-shifting.

How has growing up in Sri Lanka shaped your comedy style?

I'm a Sri Lankan Australian comedian who jokes about my life and what I see. Although my upbringing was outside Sri Lanka, I was inside the Sri Lankan migrant community in Australia, and there are many funny stories from the aunty and uncle network that operates there. I have been surprised at the personal stories that have resonated globally. I think it shows that most human experiences are much more alike than we think.

What is your favourite city in the world to perform?

Melbourne is where I spend most of the year performing, and it will always be my favourite because it's where all of this began.

What's one moment on stage where you realised that comedy was your calling?

I tend to doubt myself a lot, so I still can't confidently say that comedy is my calling. Offstage, I struggle with nerves and anxiety and often wonder if I'm even funny. But when I'm on stage telling jokes, there's no better feeling than when the whole room laughs together.

Tell us about your podcast.

I do the podcast 'Can We Be Friends?' with Anisa Nandaula, a Ugandan Australian comedian. I never know what to expect from her; I just know that most things she says will make me dissolve into laughter.

How do you blend your Sri Lankan roots into your stand-up in a way that resonates with your Lankan audience and surprises your global fans?

I was born in Sri Lanka, and even though I've lived outside it for many years, anything that I write about myself or my life will always include being a part of Sri Lanka. It's not a conscious formula to blend my Sri Lankan Australian identities into my stand-up. It happens naturally because my stories are all about my life.

What's the most hilarious/awkward thing that's happened to you on a show?

My second miscarriage began half an hour before I was to go on stage for a really big show. The timing of it was so completely absurd. Sometimes, real life writes the comedy—you just have to roll with it. I did the show, and after I got off stage, my husband was so excited and said we had to celebrate. I said that we could, but in the emergency room.

How do you keep your content fresh, especially in the age of trends?

I have never kept up with what's in fashion in any aspect of my life, so I can't start now. I'll keep telling stories of my experiences for as long as people are interested—and probably long after they're not and are forced to tell me to please stop.

How did you first go viral on social media?

My first clip that went viral on social media was when I said that in three different jobs on my first day as a refugee lawyer, they thought I was the refugee—not the lawyer. And on three different dates, I was earnestly asked, "Oh Sashi, what is the cultural significance of that band around your wrist?" And I had to awkwardly say, "Oh, that's my hair tie." And that seemed to have resonated with so many people around the world. I'm still very, very chuffed.

As a female comedian, how do you feel about being in this industry?

I think it's a great time to be a female comedian. There are so many more of us in the industry and so many to look up to. I'm walking in the footsteps of everyone who broke ground before me, and I hope to continue doing what I do.

How do you stay connected with your fans while maintaining the authenticity of your comedy?

The irony is that the bigger my profile grows, the harder it is to reply to everyone. But I'm trying! I run all of my accounts and set aside time to respond to messages and emails. It's important to me to stay connected—it's because of their support that any of this is happening.

You've been nominated for Best Newcomer at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. What was that experience like?

Awards are not the be-all and end-all, but that nomination felt validating because most of the time, it feels like I have no actual idea what I'm doing and that I've fluked all this. But I'm Sri Lankan, so you can imagine how much it felt like failing to not win! Just the nomination opened so many doors for me. From that one show, my career has branched to so many different paths—radio, television, acting, and writing.

What advice would you give young women aspiring to break into comedy?

Pick up the mic and get out there—there's a lot of fun to have! The biggest obstacle will be yourself telling you that there's no space for you—ignore that part and do it anyway.





Rob Collier, Dr Punarjeeva, Minister Vijitha Herath & Sabina



Lou Chandler, wife, Anjela & daughter



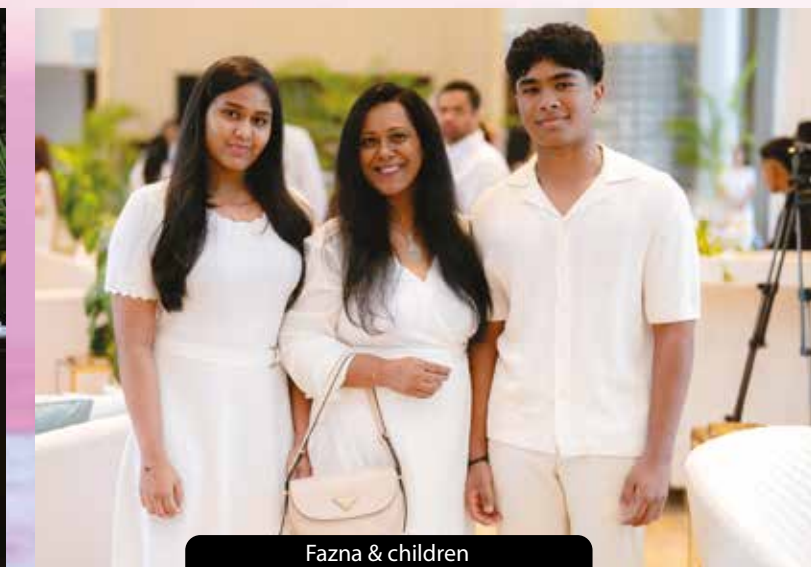
Dinesh Subasinghe



Saskiya, Radesh, Chanaka, Anika, Bathiya, Sujana, Krishan & Varini



Nishani & Savithri



Fazna & children

GRAND OPENING OF RADISSON COLLECTION RESORT, GALLE

The Radisson Collection Resort, Galle, recently hosted a spectacular grand opening with a dazzling evening. The event-themed 'Southern Riviera,' set the stage for an unforgettable celebration, marking a new chapter in luxury hospitality in Galle. Guests and invitees enjoyed an elegant evening of fine wine, bubbly, and curated cocktails. Live music and mesmerising performances created a vibrant atmosphere while a stunning fireworks display lit the night sky. The festivities continued with an exquisite dinner, adding a perfect touch to the celebration.

The grand opening of Radisson Collection Resort, Galle is a significant milestone for the resort and the region's tourism industry, promising exceptional luxury and hospitality.

Here are some highlights from the evening.

*Pictures by **Ayesh Danushka***



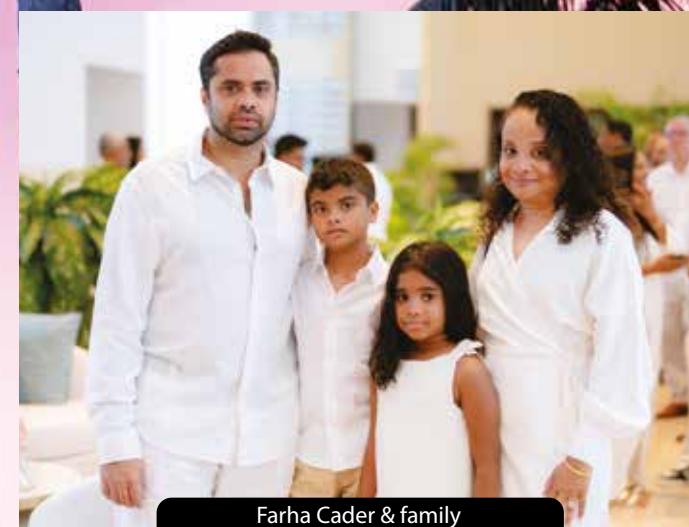
Rob Collier, Dr Punarjeeva, Sabina & Xavier Masson



Alison



Iman



Farha Cader & family



Savin, Lakindu, Angela, Rumali, Bhanu, Binmi & Sehara



Anjelina & friend



Ravi Karunanayake



Dhara



Joyce & Aelian



Rakhitha & Shiyangi



Eva & Sabina



Shanil & friend



Sanka & Chandi



Battle of the BLUES

More Than Just a 'Big Match'

By Shanuka Kadupitiyage

The Battle of the Blues – the annual cricket encounter between Royal College and S. Thomas' College—recently concluded. For those from the two schools, the three-day-long event is a highlight of the year and one never to be missed.

From the outside, it can sometimes be hard to see what all the fuss is about. After all, many schools have their annual cricket encounter during the month. What makes this particular event so special? Some may argue that the encounter can sometimes be overhyped, and maybe even a nuisance, especially with some of the traditions that surround the game.

But the 'Boys' have their reasons, and with a bit of perspective, it's easier to understand the beauty in the 'Madness' that sets in when March comes around. As many have said before, the Battle of the Blues, of course, is more than just a 'Big Match'.

History and Tradition

It's no surprise that there's a lot of history behind the world's second-oldest uninterrupted cricket encounter with this year marking the 146th match. This includes the man behind the inception of the clash between the two colleges, Ashley Walker, who also played

an integral role in popularising the sport in the country, and is even regarded as the father of Ceylon Cricket. It was his letter to S. Thomas' College, proposing an inter-collegiate encounter, that started it all.

For nearly a century and a half, the Battle of the Blues has continued to make history. It was the first inter-school cricket encounter in the country to take place over three days—a privilege granted by then-President J.R. Jayewardene.

This unbroken continuation of the game has helped the event reach its cultural and historical weight. Over the years, traditions have formed and stood the test of time. For example, when the match shifted to the old Sinhalese Sports Club grounds, Royalists would cycle to the grounds after meeting their Principal to witness the game. This practice eventually led to the 'Cycle Parade,' which continues to this day. The Battle of the Blues was the first ever 'Big Match.' It is the Big Match and the very reason why 'March Madness' even exists.

A Time for Youth

Regardless of which school you may be from, both Royalists and Thomians make each encounter into a spectacle of pageantry and pride. Flags bearing the respective school colours, lavishly decorated tents, massive flags being paraded on the ground, and 'Baila' playing from each tent all add colour to the enthusiastic cheers of the schoolgoers, while more inebriated voices join in from the tents with those who have since left school. Both groups jeer and throw taunts at the opposing side, using language that could make even the most foul-mouthed sailor blush—all for good laughs, of course.



S. Thomas' College defeated Royal College by five wickets in the 146th Battle of the Blues



The 1969 Victorious Royal Team



The S. Thomas' College First XI Cricket Team in 1979, marking 100 years since the inaugural Royal-Thomian encounter.

For the schoolboys, the three-day match is a reprieve from the routineness of school life—a time to let loose without disapproving eyes watching their every move. For the 'Old Boys', the match holds even greater meaning.

As work, responsibilities, and obligations take each person on their individual journey, the Big Match acts as a North Star, guiding each wayward traveller back home. It is a place to reconnect with old friends, to see faces that might have gone unseen for decades. It is a time to forget the world and relive one's youth—even if only for a fleeting moment—while a new generation follow the same path they did not so long ago.



Old ticket

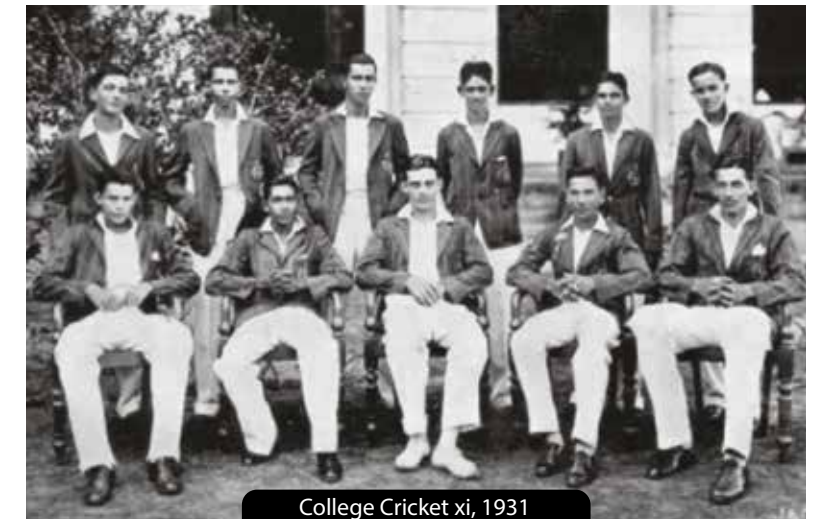


There is comfort in knowing that no matter what will happen tomorrow, the Royalists and Thomians will always have the 'Big Match' to return to. There is beauty in that 'Madness,' and I, for one, can't wait for March to come around again.

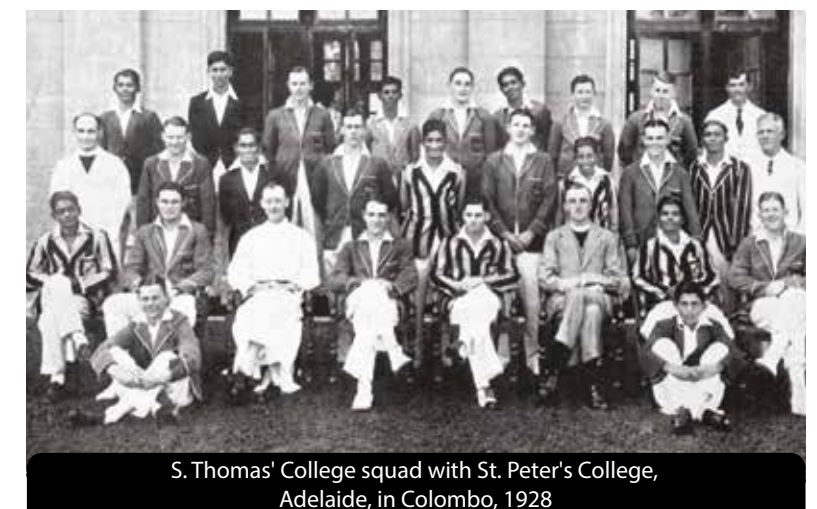
Some Things Never Change

Perhaps this is why the Battle of the Blues continues, year after year, with its recurrence and traditions defended so fiercely. As others have said before, the magic of the match has endured colonialism, world wars, independence, nationalism, a pandemic and even terrorism. Its endurance serves as a reminder that no matter what happens in the world, some things never change. The same taunts, boyish antics, and unwavering school pride endure—despite how much the world, and even cricket itself, has changed.

There is comfort in knowing that no matter what will happen tomorrow, the Royalists and Thomians will always have the 'Big Match' to return to. There is beauty in that 'Madness,' and I, for one, can't wait for March to come around again.



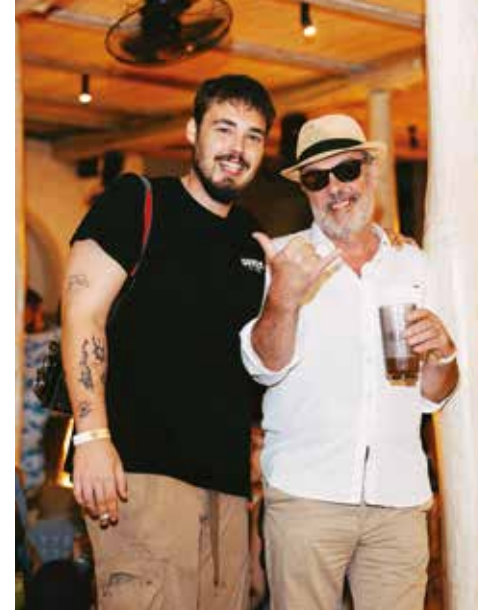
College Cricket xi, 1931



S. Thomas' College squad with St. Peter's College, Adelaide, in Colombo, 1928



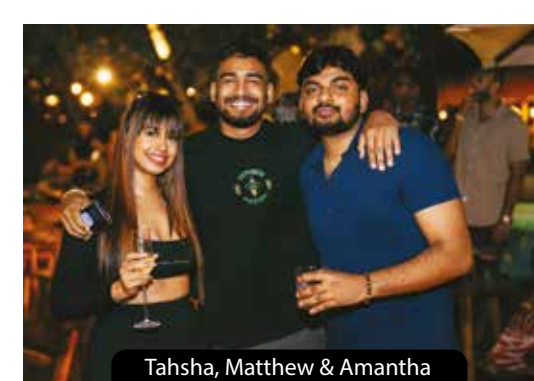
The 1986 Cycle Parade



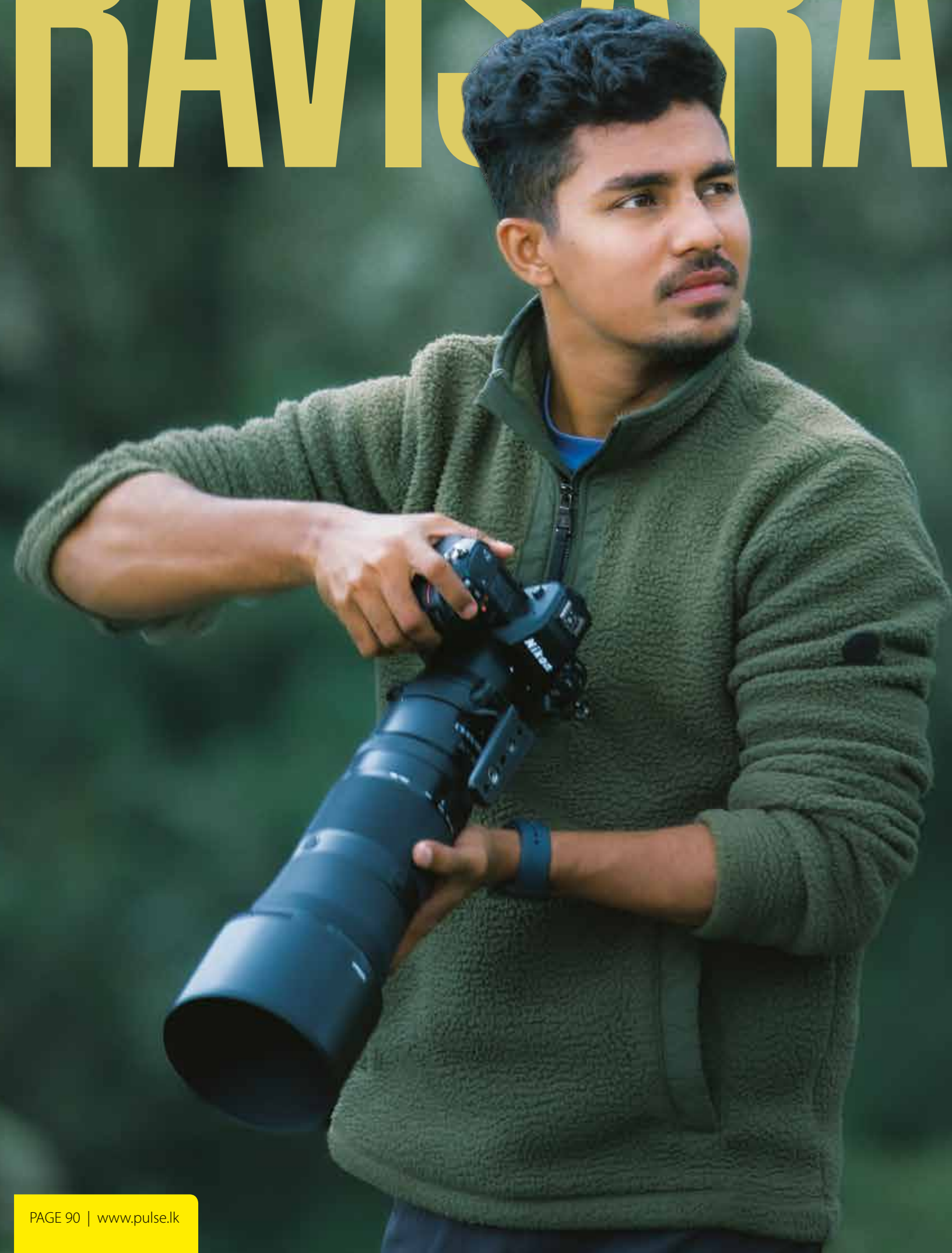
Petti Petti Mirissa kicked off the launch of its brand-new bar with an unforgettable day of music, cocktails and tropical vibes. The crowd was treated to an electrifying performance by Magic Box Mix Up, setting the perfect mood for an epic celebration. With its stylish ambience, creative cocktails, and top-notch entertainment, Petti Petti has cemented itself as a must-visit hotspot on the southern coast.

Featured here are some highlights from the event!

Pictures by Ayesh Danushka



RAVISARA



JAYAMANNA'S GUIDE TO WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

"For me, a day is successful if I capture a unique moment that tells a story and moves people."

By Shanuka Kadupitiyage

Wildlife photographer Ravisara Jayamanna rose to popularity on social media for his vast collection of wildlife images; each one is a painting in its own right, capturing some of the most iconic moments in the wild on camera. As wildlife photography is his hobby, he regularly frequents national parks, including Wilpattu National Park. Pulse had the opportunity to speak with Ravisara about making the most of a visit to a national park and mastering the art of wildlife photography.

Preparation is Key

Like many things, preparation is the key to a successful national park visit. Whether you're looking for elusive leopards, majestic elephants, or every unique bird in the park, having the correct information can be the deciding factor.

"What I always make sure of is checking the weather on the days that I'm going and also investigating whether there have been any sightings of the animals I'm looking to photograph," Ravisara explained. "For example, if it's predicted to rain, and I'm looking to take leopard pictures that day, then the chances are that I probably won't see any

of them because they prefer to avoid coming out in that weather. Also, there are times when you hardly ever see a sighting; other times, sightings are noted back-to-back, and the chances of seeing a leopard in the park are much higher."

He usually gets his information by talking to the network of park visitors who enter the park daily. However, following a community of wildlife photographers on social media also helps him stay updated with animal sightings.

"Many people make a post when they see a leopard on that day itself," Ravisara shared. "Seeing many of them usually implies that sightings are more frequent."

Tracking to Photograph

Once inside the park, Ravisara explained that there were many ways to attempt to find the animal you're looking to photograph. "Eagles and birds of prey, for example, roost close to our eye-level in the mornings and evenings when they are most active, and with experience, you can train your eye to spot them quickly. Once you can do that, it's only a matter of pointing and clicking."



“As for leopards, paw tracks and animal alarm calls are the best way to know if there’s a leopard nearby. Monkeys and deer have a specific call to alert the others in their group when they spot leopards, and we can use those to track them down easier.”

More Than Just Leopards

Leopards and elephants are Ravisara’s favourite animals to photograph. “Taking pictures of them is usually my goal when going into the park. In Wilpattu’s case, elephants aren’t as common, but you see them occasionally. Leopards are also exciting to take pictures of. They have this captivating feel to them, especially through the camera lens,” he shared.

However, that doesn’t mean that not spotting a leopard or elephant is a failure. “There’s so much to enjoy and see in national parks besides them,” Ravisara continued. “Even when it rains, birds and other animals in the park, such as deer, crocodiles, and other animals, are just as exciting to photograph. You don’t need to spot a leopard or elephant in the national park for a good experience. If you stop tunnel-visioning on them, there’s more left behind for you to enjoy.”

He added that one of the reasons he loves visiting Wilpattu so much is the sheer diversity that the park offers visitors. The park has a lot to offer, from elephants to leopards, bears, eagles, owls, and more, on top of the picturesque vistas and sights.

What is a Successful Day?

For Ravisara, a successful day spent in the national park isn’t about photographing an elephant or a leopard. “But I still want to take pictures of them whenever I can,” he laughed. “For me, a day is successful if I capture a unique moment that tells a story and moves people,” he shared. “For example, although green bee-eaters are relatively common to see, being able to photograph one while it’s catching a butterfly or another flying insect is indeed a rare shot, and taking something like that would make my day feel like a successful one.”



A Beginner’s Guide to Wildlife Photography

A lot has changed since Ravisara first picked up photography as a hobby. What once was a niche has become one of the most significant enthusiast communities in the country. Ravisara’s shift in interest towards wildlife photography has yielded a positive result.

“Before, the barriers of entry into photography were so high,” he said. “Equipment was expensive, and learning skills and building the expertise necessary was difficult. But now, technology has matured, equipment is more affordable, and skill levels are much more forgiving. If there’s anything you need to learn, the internet can help you with that too.”

Ravisara added that those interested in wildlife photography should begin their journey as one from home. “Start from where you are. For example, I started taking pictures of birds and other small animals in my garden. I would also travel in the morning to wetland areas like Attidiya and Beddagana Wetland Park to take pictures of birds. I used to take pictures with my phone, and I slowly grew my ability from there on to where I am today,” he advised.

Ravisara began his journey in photography when he joined his school’s photography society. “My mother disapproved of my staying at home and playing video games, which I did a lot when I was a student, and when I joined, she got me a camera,” he laughed.

“I’m truly grateful for her unwavering support when I started the hobby, travelling to various locations and continuing my work. That support has meant the world to me and helped me grow confidently in who I am.”

Making a Difference!

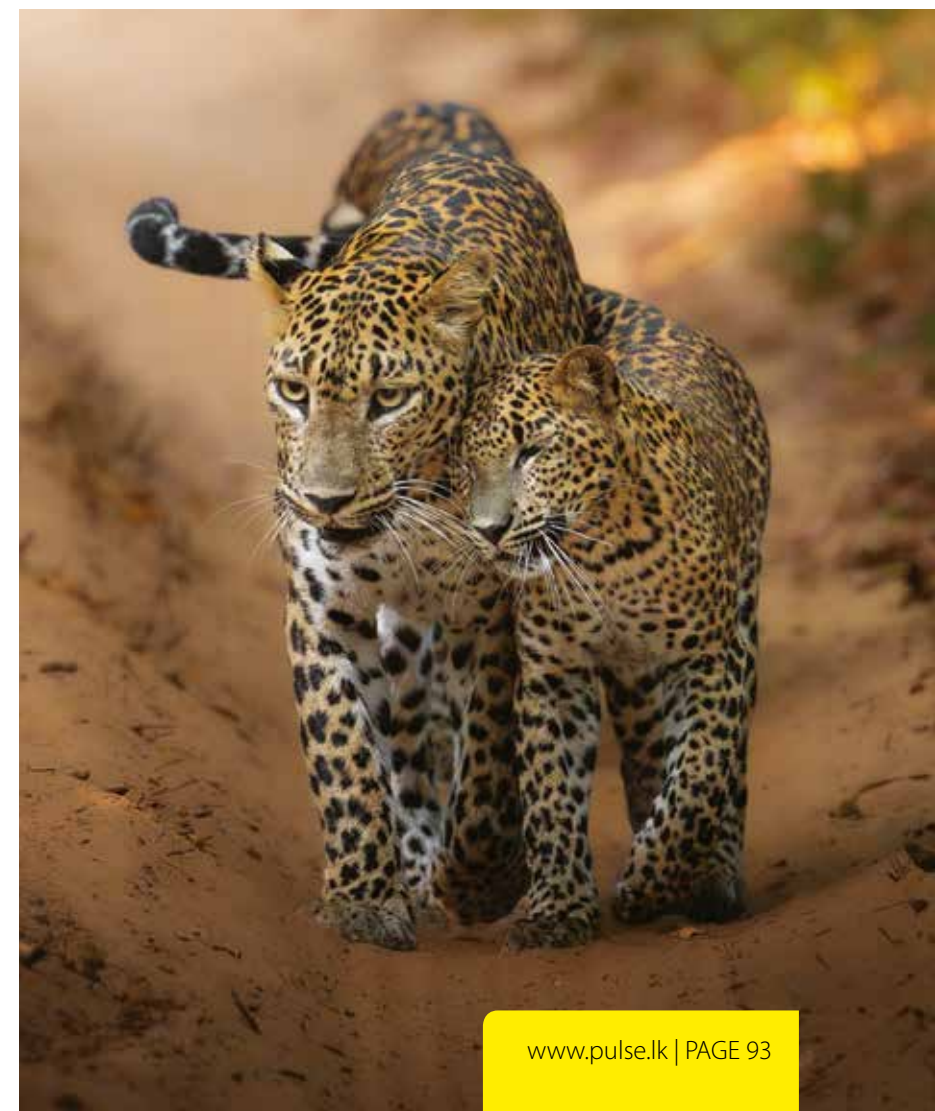
Ravisara has built a significant presence online by publishing travel and wildlife content on social media, which has helped him rise to prominence among nature photography enthusiasts. Expressing his happiness at having such a platform, he shared his enthusiasm for



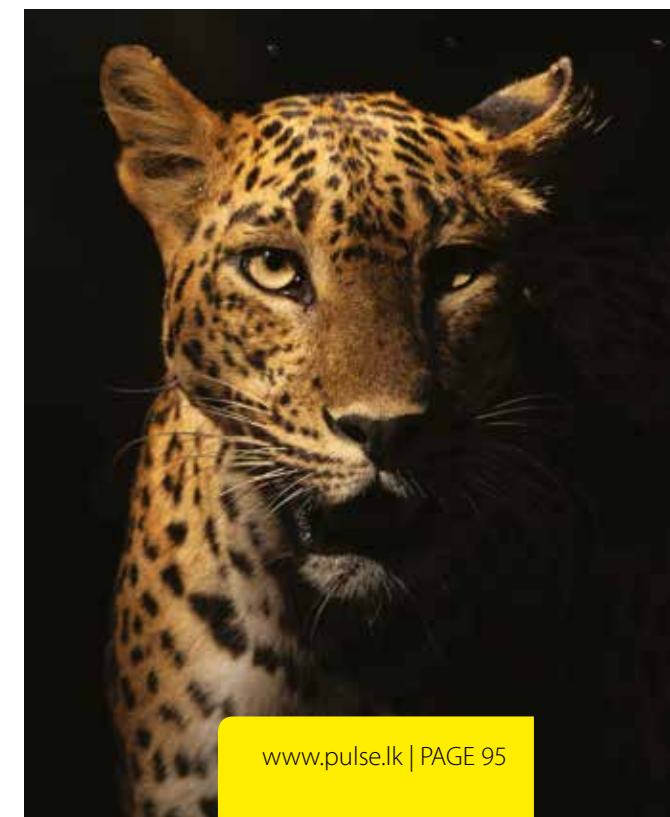
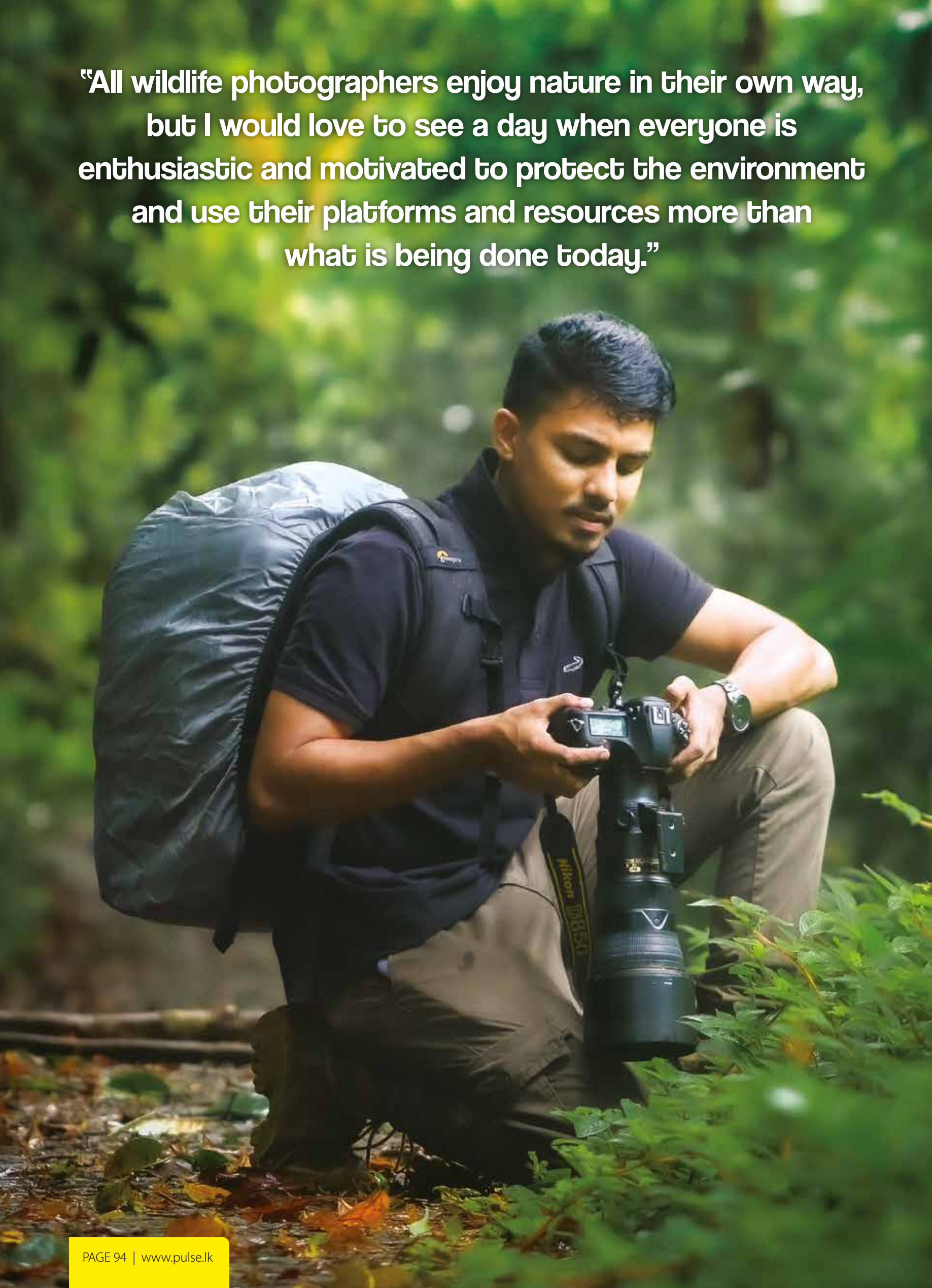
using wildlife and nature photography to educate the public and raise awareness of the importance of conservation.

“All wildlife photographers enjoy nature their own way, but I would love to see a day when everyone is enthusiastic and motivated to protect the environment and use their platforms and resources more than what is being done today,” he shared.

Building towards that day, Ravisara hinted that he is working on several exciting projects to be announced in the near future. We look forward to seeing what lies in store for Ravisara and can’t wait to see more of his captivating pictures shared and appreciated by more people in Sri Lanka and worldwide.



"All wildlife photographers enjoy nature in their own way,
but I would love to see a day when everyone is
enthusiastic and motivated to protect the environment
and use their platforms and resources more than
what is being done today."



House of Ramadhan

Rosewood Ceylon and Eventive Colombo hosted a dazzling House of Ramadhan Iftar gathering, bringing together guests for an evening of celebration and togetherness. Eventive Colombo transformed the venue into a breathtaking Arabic-style Eid gala, with elegant table settings and grand food displays, creating a warm and festive ambience.

Rosewood Ceylon presented a lavish Iftar and dinner buffet, featuring their signature biryani, tandoori, pani puri, live jalebi stations, kebabs, Arabic desserts, chai station and more. The evening was further elevated by a soulful performance from The Muslim Choral Ensemble (MCE) Sri Lanka and an inspiring speech by guest speaker Irfana Shabry. Adding to the charm, leading henna artist Mehendi by Farhath adorned guests' hands with intricate designs.

Featured here are some highlights from the evening!



Aaliya



Joel



Sakina & Zainab



Azzam & Ishraq



Resha



Ashara & friend



Shaziya



Rush & husband



Irfana & Shabry



Farhath's Mehendi team



Joel, Fariq & Uzmaan



Asma & Shazna



Aysha & Katheeja



Shabira & Shahila



Zeilah & friend



Shama & Ameerah



Rush, Shazna, Farhath & Bushra

From Spreadsheets to Spice Blends

How Shadi built a GlobalFO

By Venessa Anthony

Fathima Yusuf (Shadiya), globally known and recognised as Shadi Faleel didn't always see herself as a content creator. For years, she worked in the structured, number-driven banking world – a far cry from the warm, fragrant kitchen she now calls her creative space. But sometimes, passion has a way of steering us towards the unexpected.

Today, with over 1.2 million followers on Instagram, Shadi has carved out a space where food isn't just about recipes; it's about stories, tradition, and creativity. As a recipe developer, food stylist, and digital creator, she brings a unique blend of cultural influences to the table, creating both nostalgic and fresh dishes.

"Transitioning from banking to content creation and recipe development was a leap of passion," she says. "While my corporate career provided stability, my love for cooking and sharing recipes was always a driving force. What started as a creative outlet quickly grew into something much bigger, and I realised that inspiring others in the kitchen brought me far more fulfilment than crunching a keyboard."

What sets Shadi apart is her ability to marry traditional recipes with modern twists, making dishes feel nostalgic yet exciting. With roots in India, Sri Lanka, the Middle East, and now the UK, she brings a truly global approach to food. Whether she's recreating a family recipe passed down for generations or

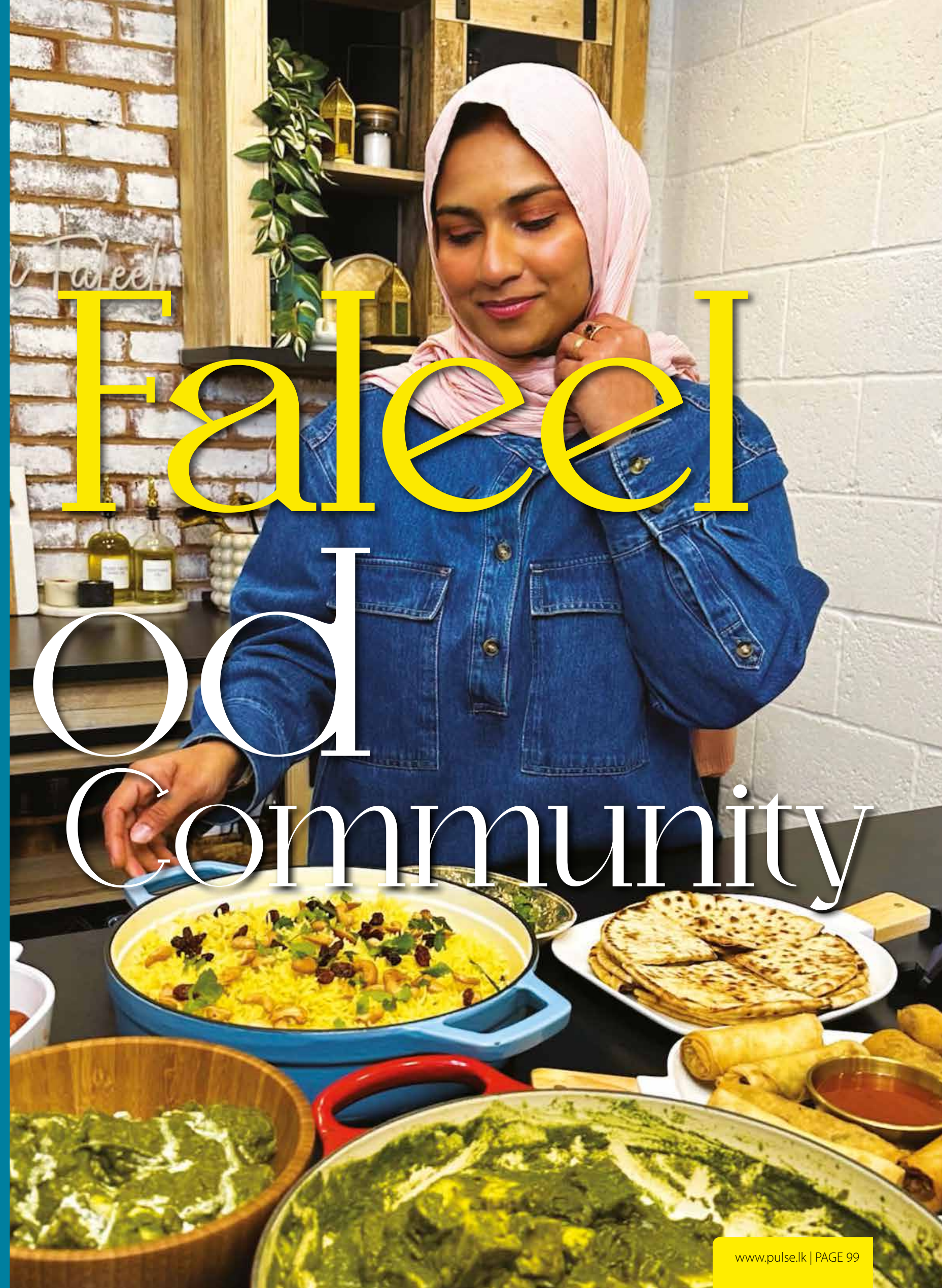
experimenting with a new take on a classic, her content resonates because it is personal, engaging, and, most importantly, delicious.

Blending Cultures in the Kitchen

For Shadi, food is a way to bridge cultures and celebrate heritage. Her recipes are deeply rooted in her Indian and Sri Lankan ancestry, shaped by her experiences growing up in the Middle East and now living in the UK. This rich background has given her a perspective that resonates with a global audience.

"My cultural background plays a huge role in my approach to recipe development," she explains.

Bringing a unique blend of cultural influences to the table, she offers something for everyone.



Faleel Food Community



"I love blending traditional flavours with modern twists, creating nostalgic yet fresh dishes. My paternal side is Indian, my maternal side is Sri Lankan, and I spent much of my life in the Middle East before moving to the UK. That mix of influences allows me to create approachable dishes for a global audience."

Her content reflects this unique fusion, offering something for everyone. A comforting Middle Eastern-inspired dish sits alongside a fragrant Sri Lankan curry, while an Indian street-food classic might come with an unexpected yet delightful twist. Her audience spans continents, and her recipes celebrate the shared love for home-cooked meals across cultures.

The Challenges Behind the Perfect Dish

Scrolling through Shadi's feed, one might assume that every dish comes together effortlessly. But behind the perfectly plated food and engaging videos, there's an entirely different reality – one filled with trial and error, persistence, and, occasionally, a few phone calls to her mother.

"One of the most memorable challenges I faced was recreating a beloved family recipe that had never been written down," Shadi recalls. "It took multiple attempts, a lot of trial and error, and countless phone calls to my mum to get it right. But when I finally nailed it, the emotional response from my audience made it all worth it."

This experience reinforced her belief that food is deeply personal. It's not just about getting the measurements right; it's about honouring tradition, capturing the essence of a dish, and passing it down to future generations.

Moments like these highlight why Shadi's audience connects with her content so profoundly; she isn't just sharing recipes; she's sharing a piece of herself.

Building a Global Food Community

With over a million followers, engagement could quickly feel impersonal. Yet, for Shadi, community is at the heart of everything she does.

"Despite having a large following, I prioritise engagement by responding to comments, sharing personal stories, and asking my audience for their input on new recipes," she says. "I also love interacting via direct messages when possible, though it's quite difficult to attend to all of them. My goal is to make everyone feel like they're part of a close-knit community."

This interactive approach makes her platform feel less like a one-sided broadcast and more like an ongoing conversation. Followers share their cooking successes, recipe tweaks, and cultural insights, turning her comment section into a melting pot of ideas and inspiration.

Her audience isn't just watching; they participate, learn, experiment, and celebrate food together.

Balancing Content Creation and Real Life

Behind the polished photos and well-edited videos is a demanding schedule. As a content creator, food entrepreneur, and social media figure, Shadi has a lot on her plate – literally and figuratively.

"Balancing content creation with personal life is a constant challenge," she admits. "Now that I've also started a small takeaway, it's even more demanding. But I'm learning to navigate it by setting boundaries and scheduling downtime. Batch-creating content, staying organised, and allowing myself to take breaks when needed help me maintain a healthy work-life balance."

There's no magic formula—just discipline, passion, and the willingness to adapt. Whether filming multiple videos in one go or carving out time for self-care, Shadi constantly finds ways to juggle her growing career without losing the joy that started it all.

Exciting Ventures on the Horizon

Shadi's journey is far from over. In fact, she's just getting started.

"I have some exciting projects in the works," she revealed. "One is my campaign with META, which went live recently. There's also a collaboration with a well-known worldwide brand and a potential cookbook in the making! Plus, I'm working with one of Europe's major online shopping portals. While I can't share all the details yet, I'm incredibly excited about what's coming next."

A cookbook would be a natural next step, allowing her to translate her digital success into something tangible. Meanwhile, her brand collaborations highlight how far she has come—from experimenting in her kitchen to working with some of the biggest names in the industry.

Advice for Aspiring Creators

Shadi offers practical yet powerful advice to those hoping to follow in her footsteps.

"Stay consistent, be authentic, and find your unique voice," she says. "The digital space is crowded, but if you focus on creating content that truly connects with you, your passion will shine through. Don't be afraid to experiment, and most importantly, engage with your audience; they are your biggest supporters!"

The journey from banking professional to digital food entrepreneur was never part of the original plan, but it's clear that Shadi Faleel was meant to do this. Through food, she has built a brand and a community united by a love for home-cooked meals, cultural heritage, and the simple joy of sharing a good recipe.

She will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact as she inspires, creates, and connects through her story and dishes.

Sri Lanka's Eastern Province

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO BE EXPLORED!

By Haritha Athapattu

For a long time, Sri Lanka's Eastern Province has been overshadowed by its counterparts, such as the southern coast and the misty hill country, and is seen as a place to visit only during the surfing season. Still, it is pretty rare for the Eastern Province to come to mind when people think about travel or tourism. However, the truth is, this region has so much more to offer than just surfing!

If you visit the Eastern Province, you definitely get to enjoy the best experience package, varying from stunning beaches, fascinating history, and diverse wildlife to a rich cultural mix. While it may not yet be as famous as the South or the Hill Country, that's precisely what makes it unique. Whether you're looking for a quiet escape by the ocean, an adventure in nature, or a glimpse into Sri Lanka's past, the East welcomes travellers all year round. Let me tell you more about it.

**From Stunning Beaches, Fascinating History and
Diverse Wildlife to a Rich Cultural Mix**

Arugam Bay

The Eastern Province is home to some of Sri Lanka’s most stunning beaches, each with its own distinct charm. Among them, Arugam Bay stands out as a world-famous surfing destination, attracting wave riders from across the globe. Known for its consistent swells and long right-hand breaks, it has become a haven for surfers of all levels. But beyond the surf, Arugam Bay has a laid-back coastal atmosphere that makes it just as inviting for those looking to relax and unwind.

With its golden shores, swaying palm trees, and a welcoming beach-town vibe, it’s the kind of place where time slows down. Whether it’s watching the sunrise over the ocean, taking a boat ride through the nearby Pottuvil Lagoon, or enjoying fresh seafood at a beachside café, there’s a sense of tranquility that makes it special. For those who want more than just sun and sand, Arugam Bay also serves as a gateway to wildlife and cultural attractions, making it an ideal stop for a mix of adventure and relaxation.

Sun, Sea, Surf



Nilaveli, Uppuveli and Pigeon Island

For those drawn to the wonders of the deep, Nilaveli and Uppuveli are must-visit destinations. These two coastal gems, located near Trincomalee, are known for their pristine beaches and thriving marine ecosystems. The highlight, however, is Pigeon Island National Park, one of Sri Lanka’s most treasured marine sanctuaries. Here, vibrant coral reefs teem with tropical fish, sea turtles, and even blacktip reef sharks, offering an unforgettable snorkelling and diving experience. Whether you’re an experienced diver or a first-time snorkeller, the clear waters and abundant marine life make these beaches a paradise for underwater exploration.



Lush, Lively and Lingering Moments

Lagoons

Though it might be what it is popular for, the Eastern Province isn’t just about golden beaches. Its many lagoons, like those in Batticaloa and Kokkilai, add another dimension to its natural beauty. These tranquil waters are brimming with biodiversity, drawing both birdlife and travellers looking for a peaceful escape.

Batticaloa Lagoon, famous for its mysterious ‘singing fish’, is the perfect spot for an evening boat ride, where the water mirrors the colours of the setting sun. Kokkilai Lagoon, tucked away from the usual tourist routes, is a haven for migratory birds, making it a paradise if you are a nature lover or a bird photographer.



Elephant Rock

Tucked just 4 km south of Arugam Bay, Elephant Rock is a serene escape that offers both adventure and breathtaking scenery. True to its name, the rock formation is said to resemble an Elephant, standing majestically at the edge of a secluded cove. Despite its popularity as a beginner-friendly surf spot, Elephant Rock remains one of the least crowded beaches in Sri Lanka, owing to its slightly challenging access. Getting there involves a short tuk-tuk ride, a walk, a bit of scrambling, and sometimes wading through shallow waters, adding to the sense of discovery. The golden sands, turquoise waves, and panoramic coastal views make it a perfect retreat for nature lovers and photographers.



Pasikuda

Further up the coast, Pasikuda welcomes visitors with its calm, shallow waters and powdery white sand, making it an idyllic spot for a leisurely swim or a peaceful boat ride.

Unlike many other beaches in Sri Lanka, Pasikuda’s Bay remains tranquil throughout the year, offering a safe and inviting atmosphere for families and those looking to float in the warm embrace of the Indian Ocean.



Kumana

Beyond its stunning beaches and lagoons, the Eastern Province is a haven for wildlife and breathtaking natural landscapes. Kumana National Park, nestled in the Ampara District, is another paradise for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Known for its rich biodiversity, the park is home to a vast array of flora and fauna, including elephants, leopards, deer, and crocodiles. However, Kumana’s true highlight is its thriving birdlife. The park’s wetlands, lagoons, and scrublands provide the perfect sanctuary for various bird species, including rare migratory birds that flock here during the winter months. This makes it one of Sri Lanka’s most sought-after destinations for birdwatching, offering a rare chance to witness nature’s rhythms undisturbed. Whether exploring its wild terrain or simply soaking in the serenity of its untouched landscapes, Kumana offers an immersive escape into the heart of Sri Lanka’s wilderness.



Huddled Histories

If you travel further inland, the East reveals another side full of scenic trails, ancient temples hidden within the landscape, and quiet villages where life moves at its own unhurried pace. It’s here, away from the coastline, that the region’s true essence comes to life, inviting travellers to step off the beaten path and discover a world untouched by time.



Muhudu Maha Viharaya

Muhudu Maha Viharaya, nestled near the shoreline, is steeped in both history and myth. According to legend, this ancient Buddhist temple marks the very spot where Queen Viharamahadevi was washed ashore after being cast into the sea as a sacrifice. Today, its weathered ruins stand as a silent witness to the deep-rooted Buddhist heritage of the region.



Dutch Fort of Batticaloa

A testament to colonial influence, the Dutch Fort in Batticaloa dates back to the 17th century. Its sturdy walls and bastions, once a stronghold for European powers, now echo with history. Overlooking the lagoon, the Fort offers visitors a glimpse into a time when trade and conquest shaped the island’s destiny, making it a compelling stop for history enthusiasts.



Koneswaram

Perched on a rocky promontory overlooking the Indian Ocean, Koneswaram Temple is one of the most sacred Hindu shrines in Sri Lanka. With its intricate carvings and serene atmosphere, the temple is not only a place of worship but also a site of legend, believed to have been a centre of devotion for thousands of years. The panoramic views from its cliffside setting add to its spiritual allure.



Catering to Everyone

The Eastern Province is a beautiful blend of Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhalese cultures, creating a unique identity reflected in its festivals, cuisine, and traditions. The region showcases a rich cultural harmony from the vibrant Hindu festivals at Koneswaram to the Ramadan celebrations in Muslim-majority towns.

The Eastern Province is an adventure waiting to be explored. With waves that welcome surfers year-round and waters perfect for kayaking, paddleboarding, and jet skiing, the coast is a playground for thrill-seekers. Beneath the surface, vibrant coral reefs and historic shipwrecks create a mesmerising underwater world for divers and snorkelers.

On land, the wild beauty of the region offers endless possibilities. Towering rock formations and jungle-clad trails lead to breathtaking viewpoints, while hidden monasteries and ancient paths invite quiet discovery. Cycling through lush fields and villages reveals a slower, more immersive side of life, where travellers can experience traditional crafts, farming, and fishing firsthand. Whether riding the waves, exploring the wilderness, or connecting with local culture, adventure is never far away.



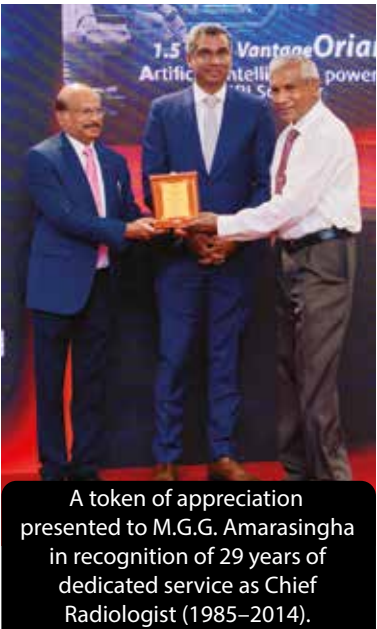
Address by the Chief Guest, Koh Yamada.



Dr. Jayantha Dharmadasa, Chairman of Nawaloka Hospitals PLC, welcomes the Chief Guest, Koh Yamada.



Address by Dr. Janaka Rajapakse, Consultant Radiologist.



A token of appreciation presented to M.G.G. Amarasingha in recognition of 29 years of dedicated service as Chief Radiologist (1985–2014).



Janith, Ravindra & Preethi



Pubudu & Mashi

NAWALOKA HOSPITALS UNVEILS SOUTH ASIA’S FIRST AI-POWERED MRI SCANNER

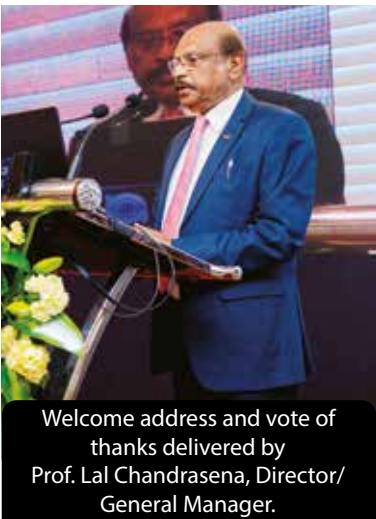
Nawaloka Hospitals has set a new benchmark in medical innovation by introducing South Asia’s first AI-powered MRI scanner. This cutting-edge technology enhances diagnostic accuracy, offering faster and clearer imaging for early disease detection. With this USD 4.5 million investment, Nawaloka continues to lead the way in advanced patient care, bringing Sri Lanka’s radiology services up to international standards.

Here are some highlights from the launch!

Pictures by Iraj Walisinghe



A token of appreciation presented to Dr. Wilfred Wijesinghe in recognition of his contributions.



Welcome address and vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Lal Chandrasena, Director/General Manager.



Sujeeva, Ashley & Shammi



Dinakshie

TÜRKIYE: OFFERING MORE THAN PICTURE-PERFECT VIEWS

By Haritha Athapattu

Türkiye is a land where history, culture, and breathtaking landscapes intertwine, offering travellers an experience like no other. Its famed landmarks captivate millions, from the majestic Hagia Sophia and Cappadocia's fairy chimneys to Antalya's sun-kissed beaches. Yet, beyond these well-trodden paths lies another Türkiye—one filled with hidden gems waiting to be discovered.

In addition to the Turkish landscape's beauty, the excellent hospitality of the welcoming locals stands out. They are eager to share a cup of tea or spill a little bit of tea about their stories. As we explore the mesmerising landscapes and rich culture of Türkiye, Chamri Deegodagamage of the iconic 'Travel with Wife' duo shares her first-hand experiences from their recent trip.

“One of the most fascinating aspects of Turkish culture was the incredible hospitality. The warmth and friendliness of the people made us feel truly welcome. We also loved the rich food culture, especially the traditional Turkish breakfast. It's an experience on its own! Another unexpected highlight was the deep connection between history and daily life, from ancient ruins to vibrant bazaars, making every moment feel like a journey through time,” Chamri shared. “From the moment we arrived, we felt genuinely welcomed—whether it was locals offering us tea, shopkeepers sharing stories, or strangers going out of their way to help. Their kindness and generosity made our travels even more special. We always felt safe, supported, and embraced by the culture, which made Türkiye feel like a home away from home.”

Cappadocia: A Surreal Dreamscape

Cappadocia is one of the must-visit sites in Türkiye. It is known for its otherworldly terrain, which includes rolling valleys, whimsical fairy chimneys, and ancient cave dwellings carved into soft volcanic rock. While hot air balloons floating over this dreamlike landscape at sunrise are well-known, the region offers far more than its postcard-perfect views. Venture beyond the bustling town of Göreme, and you'll find secluded villages like Uçhisar and Mustafapaşa, where life moves at a slower pace.

Wandering through these quiet streets, you'll stumble upon centuries-old churches tucked into rock faces, hidden frescoes whispering stories of the past, and warm-hearted locals eager to share a cup of Turkish tea.

A captivating travel experience as narrated by the adventurous couple behind 'Travel with Wife,' revealing Türkiye's rich culture, breathtaking landscapes, and heartwarming hospitality.

"One moment that stands out was in Cappadocia when a local shop owner invited us in for tea after we admired his handmade pottery. He shared stories about his family's craft and even let us try making our own ceramic piece," Chamri shared her memorable experiences during their visit to Cappadocia.

Kaş: A Coastal Haven of Serenity

Nestled along Türkiye's Turquoise Coast, the town of Kaş is a paradise for those seeking crystal-clear waters, charming cobbled streets, and an authentic Mediterranean atmosphere. Unlike the bustling resorts of Antalya, Kaş retains a laid-back charm. Whitewashed houses adorned with bougainvillea line the hills, and small cafés spill onto the streets, inviting travellers to linger over a glass of raki.

The true magic of Kaş, however, lies beyond the town itself. For Chamri, a spontaneous boat trip led her to Kekova, an island where the ruins of an ancient sunken city lie beneath the shimmering sea. She described snorkelling above the submerged walls of history as an experience unlike any other—one where nature and antiquity blend seamlessly.

Istanbul: The Intersection of Old and New

Istanbul is a city where time folds in on itself, blending centuries of history with a modern, electric pulse. Towering over the cityscape, the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque stand as testaments to Istanbul's

layered past, their domes and minarets silhouetted against the Bosphorus sky. Yet, beyond these iconic landmarks, the city reveals a different kind of charm in its lesser-explored neighbourhoods.

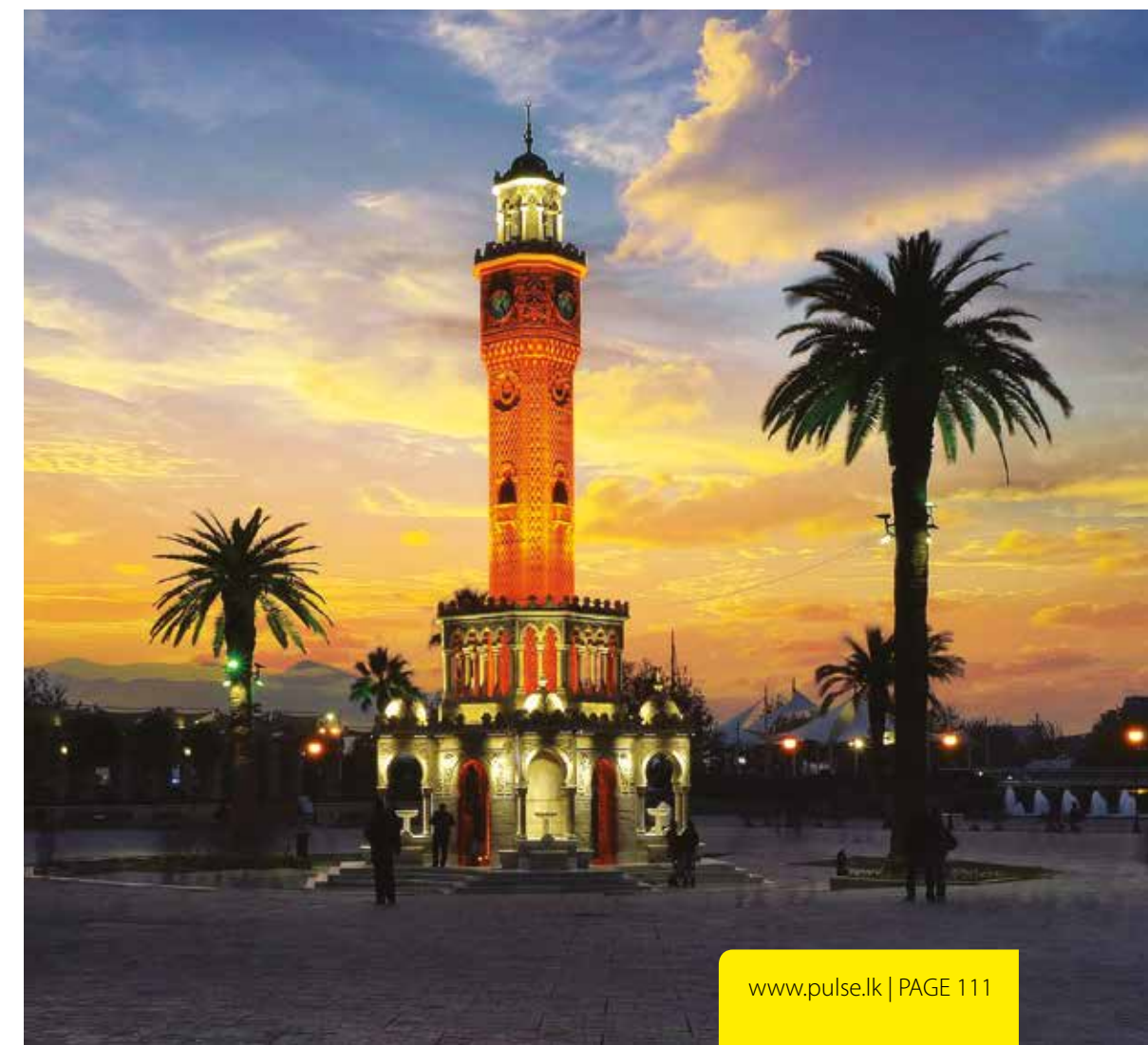
Balat, once the heart of Istanbul's Jewish and Greek communities, has transformed into a vibrant, bohemian enclave. Here, colourful facades line the hilly streets, their pastel hues interrupted by bold murals and hidden courtyards where locals sip çay under ivy-covered archways. Wandering through Balat feels like stepping into a living, breathing artwork where history whispers from the stones while street art shouts in bold, modern colours. This contrast, this coexistence of old and new, is what makes Istanbul endlessly fascinating.

The Cat Cafés of Istanbul

In a city where street cats reign supreme, it's no surprise that Istanbul has embraced the charm of cat cafés. More than just a quirky trend, these cafés offer a glimpse into Turkish café culture—where leisure is an art, and every moment is meant to be savoured.

The moment you step inside, you're greeted by the soft hum of conversation, the rich aroma of Turkish coffee, and the gentle presence of feline companions weaving between tables. Some curl up beside customers, others lounge on window sills, watching the world drift by. The café doesn't just serve coffee; it creates an experience where visitors can unwind, connect with the resident cats, and momentarily escape the city's rush.

Hot air balloons floating over this dreamlike landscape at sunrise are well-known, the region offers far more than its postcard-perfect views.





SAMSUNG UNVEILS THE GALAXY S25 SERIES

Samsung recently hosted an exclusive Galaxy Unpacked at the iconic Lotus Tower, unveiling the highly anticipated Galaxy S25 Series. Designed to be the ultimate AI companion, the Galaxy S25 Series blends intelligence and power, setting new standards in smartphone innovation.

Take a look at the moments from the grand launch!

Pictures by Iraj Walisinghe



SangHwa Song



Thushara, Dusheni, Sachin & SangHwa Song



Bathiya & Santhush



Lahiru, Umara & Manuranga



Sanuka



Romaine



Thushara



Fahad



Dino & Gehan

A Feast of Flavours: Turkish Cuisine

"Turkish Cuisine was absolutely amazing! One of the standout experiences for us was the traditional Turkish breakfast. There are so many delicious varieties of cheese, olives, bread, and, of course, endless cups of çay. Another favourite was the famous testi kebab in Cappadocia, where the dish is cooked in a sealed clay pot and dramatically broken open before serving," Chamri shared with much enthusiasm.

Moreover, she shared that dining out in Türkiye was generally affordable, even in more touristy areas. While upscale restaurants or dining at tourist hotspots could be pricier, they found that local eateries and street food offered incredible value. "Dishes like kebabs, pide, and mezes were not only delicious but also very reasonably priced, even in popular areas like Istanbul and Cappadocia. Street food, such as simit and döners, were also budget-friendly options, offering an authentic taste of Türkiye without breaking the bank," she said.

Budget-Friendly: Pre-Planning Makes it Affordable!

"Overall, we found Türkiye quite affordable for travellers," Chamri stated. "Regarding accommodation, food, and activities, there were plenty of budget-friendly options without compromising quality. Local restaurants and street food, like simit and kebabs, were delicious and inexpensive. For travelling between cities, like from Istanbul to Cappadocia, we opted for domestic flights, which were quite affordable and saved us a lot of time. Booking in advance through local airlines often gave us the best deals. Once in the cities, you can use a combination of public transport, like buses and metros, for budget-friendly travel. For shorter distances, local taxis or rideshares were very reasonably priced. A great tip for future visitors is to always check for local transport passes or travel cards that offer unlimited rides within a certain period, as they provide great value for money!"

However, she noted that certain tourist spots, like hot air balloon rides in Cappadocia, horse-running shoots, or high-end hotels, can be a bit pricey. "Still, with careful planning, it's easy to stick to a budget while enjoying the country's rich culture and beauty," she added.





Sipping,
Savouring,
and
Soaring:

the dragonfli

From Fiery Cocktails to Sumptuous Plates and Sweet Endings...



fli experience

Tucked into the heart of Colombo 07, Dragonfli isn't just another restaurant. With its sleek, modern design softened by cascading greenery and hidden dragonflies, every inch of this space invites you into an experience that blurs the lines between fine dining and immersive storytelling. Beyond its aesthetic charm, the bold, inventive cocktails and fearless fusion dishes set it apart.



By Venessa Anthony

Dragonfli, Colombo's newest hotspot for modern Asian dining, is more than just a restaurant; it's an experience. Nestled in the heart of Colombo 07, the space exudes contemporary elegance, seamlessly blending urban sophistication with Sri Lankan charm. The sleek, modern interiors are softened by lush greenery, while little faux dragonflies gather on the walls and ceiling, hidden among delicate vines. This whimsical touch reflects the restaurant's playful yet polished vibe.

While Dragonfli's food is undoubtedly impressive, the real showstopper is the bar. It is a crimson-lit enclave that feels like stepping into a different world.

If Colombo's nightlife were a playlist, Dragonfli's Kura Bar would be the sultry, slow-burning track that keeps you hooked long after the song ends. Tucked away within the restaurant's strikingly modern interior, the bar glows in an almost otherworldly red, like stepping into a Wong Kar-wai film, where everything feels a little more mysterious and intoxicating.

But it's not just the lighting that's heady. The cocktails here aren't for the faint-hearted. They're bold, complex, and occasionally eyebrow-raising—case in point: the Jasmine and Oolong Tea Old Fashioned. Infused with jasmine Japanese whisky, palm sugar, Sri Lankan green orange, and tea bitters, it's a smoky, floral punch to the palate. Not for everyone, but if you're the type who likes your drinks enigmatic, this one's calling your name.

More crowd-friendly was the Toasted Sesame and Miso Negroni. Sesame-infused Japanese gin meets house-made miso bitter bianco and orange vermouth, creating a savoury, umami-laced twist on the classic. It's smooth, rich, and dangerously drinkable—the kind of cocktail you sip slowly, pretending you're pondering life's great mysteries when you're really just eyeing the next round.





For something playful, the Tropical Boba was an instant hit. White rum, coconut milk, and Hill Country pineapple combine to create creamy, tropical bliss, with chewy boba pearls adding a satisfying bite. It's basically a beach vacation in a glass—no passport required.

Spice lovers, meet your new fling: the Japanese Narang Spicy Margarita. Tequila, house-made narang triple sec, narang juice, and oleo-saccharum (yes, it's as fancy as it sounds) combine for a citrusy, fiery cocktail that leaves a pleasant tingle on the lips. Meanwhile, the Broken Orange Pekoe Martini offers a more refined experience. House-made estate tea liqueur, cardamom vodka, and cold brew tea create a layered, aromatic sipper.

For those who like their drinks Instagram-ready, the Pinky Blossom steals the show. It's strawberry essence gin topped with a cloud of strawberry foam. It's sweet, flirty, and boozy enough to keep things interesting.

From Bar to Plate

Of course, you'd be remiss to leave without sampling Chef Malin de Silva's creations. With a resume that includes stints at Michelin-starred restaurants and a semi-finalist



spot in MasterChef UK: The Professionals, Chef Malin brings a fearless approach to Asian fusion. He seamlessly blends classic techniques with bold flavours and unexpected textures. His menu reads like a culinary travelogue, drawing inspiration from across Asia while weaving in distinctly Sri Lankan elements that ground each dish in a sense of place.

Start with the oysters, dressed in nam jim sauce with apple, dill, and caviar. The briny freshness of the oysters meets the sharp, citrusy punch of the nam jim, while the apple adds a crisp sweetness and the dill a whisper of herbaceousness. The delicate and indulgent caviar rounds out each bite, making it an experience as luxurious as it is refreshing.

The pork belly was another standout, featuring a perfect trifecta of crispy skin, melt-in-your-mouth meat, and a spicy apple sauce that beautifully cut through the richness. Each bite delivered a satisfying crunch, followed by silky, fatty pork, while the apple sauce added just enough heat and acidity to keep things interesting.

Seafood lovers, don't skip the tuna sashimi, served with a black vinegar dressing, nashi pear, and pickled cucumber. This dish is

equal parts delicate and punchy. The sashimi is buttery and fresh, while the black vinegar provides depth. The nashi pear offers a subtle sweetness, and the pickled cucumber ties everything together, adding a final note of brightness that lingers on the palate.

The poached half chicken delivers if you're after something hearty yet satisfying. Tender, succulent chicken is paired with a crunchy salad, Shanghai sauce, and cashew crumble, creating a dish that's as texturally satisfying as it is flavourful. The salad adds a refreshing crunch, while the cashew crumble brings an unexpected richness that elevates the entire plate.

But the real showstopper? The grilled Norwegian salmon. Glazed in teriyaki and served alongside spicy morning glory, wasabi mayo, and citrus gel, it's a dish that feels both luxurious and comforting, like putting on silk pyjamas after a long day. The salmon is perfectly cooked, with crispy skin giving way to buttery, flaky flesh. The teriyaki glaze adds a glossy sweetness, while the wasabi mayo provides a gentle heat that builds without overwhelming. The citrus gel cuts through the richness, balancing each bite and preparing you for the next.

Sweet Endings

Dessert here is less of an afterthought and more of a grand finale. The chocolate mousse with yoghurt sorbet strikes a delicate balance between rich and tart. The mousse is decadently smooth, while the yoghurt sorbet provides a refreshing contrast that cleanses the palate between bites. Meanwhile, the cheesecake with mango topping is pure sunshine on a plate. Creamy, indulgent cheesecake meets bright, tropical mango, creating a dessert that's as vibrant in flavour as it is in presentation.

Whether you're here for the cocktails, the food, or just to soak in the crimson glow of Kura Bar, Dragonfli makes good on its promise. It offers an evening that lingers, much like the last sip of an expertly crafted drink. Cheers to that!

Pictures by Ayesh Danushka

UNITED MACHINERY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

United Machinery (Pvt) Ltd marked a major milestone with its 20th-anniversary celebration at Grand Monarch. The event brought together employees, partners, and well-wishers to reflect on the company's journey and achievements. It was a night filled with joy, gratitude, and unforgettable moments.

Here are some highlights from the celebration!

Pictures by Sassanda Liyanaarchchi



Dhammika, Sunethra, Sarindi & Menuka



Emil



Menuka & Chameesha



Chinthaka & Kanchana



Aubrey & wife



Sapumal



Muditha, Damith, Sanjeeva & Suranga



Suresh, Dileep, Erantha & Aravinda



Clifford



Rookantha



Sapna



Dhammika



Ranjan & Vajira

New Beginnings, Lasting Connections

A Corporate Avurudu Package at Galle Face Hotel

Avurudu marks a time of renewal, reflection, and shared traditions—a season that embraces the spirit of togetherness and new opportunities. In today’s corporate world, where strong relationships drive success, there is value in stepping away from the usual and celebrating in a way that fosters genuine connection.

At Galle Face Hotel, where heritage and hospitality have long converged, the Corporate Avurudu Package offers a refined yet immersive way for teams to engage in tradition while strengthening bonds. Designed for organisations that appreciate both culture and camaraderie, this carefully curated gathering blends meaningful experiences with the warmth of Sri Lankan hospitality.

Speaking on the initiative’s inspiration, Athila Mendis, Head of Banquets and Events at Galle Face Hotel, explains, “We wanted to create something beyond the standard office event. Avurudu is deeply embedded in Sri Lankan culture, and it’s a time that celebrates new beginnings and togetherness. We aimed to translate that into a

corporate setting—allowing teams to bond, unwind, and connect meaningfully.”

A Celebration of Tradition in a Timeless Setting

Avurudu has always been about gathering, sharing, and celebrating together, and Galle Face Hotel provides a setting that effortlessly reflects that sentiment. Against a backdrop of historic grandeur, the event captures the essence of a traditional Avurudu festival while ensuring a refined experience suited for corporate teams.

Mendis elaborates on what makes this event distinct from a personal Avurudu gathering. “Typically, Avurudu is celebrated with family and close friends, but we saw an opportunity to extend this tradition into the corporate world. We’ve structured this experience so colleagues can engage with one another outside of their usual work environment while immersing themselves in the cultural richness of Avurudu.”

Where teams bond, unwind, and connect meaningfully



At the heart of the celebration is the Avurudu Mesaya, a beautifully arranged table filled with traditional Sri Lankan sweets and delicacies that symbolise prosperity and abundance. The buffet is designed to offer an authentic Sri Lankan dining experience, featuring a selection of time-honoured dishes. “Food plays a huge role in Avurudu, and we wanted our guests to experience the festival’s flavours in the best way possible,” says Mendis. “From kiribath to kavum and kokis, every dish is prepared carefully, ensuring it stays true to its traditional roots.”

Bringing People Together Through Play and Participation

A key aspect of Avurudu is the traditional games that bring communities together. At Galle Face Hotel, these activities are reimagined for corporate teams. “We wanted to ensure the event wasn’t just about food and celebration but also about engagement,” Mendis explains. Avurudu games are fun, competitive, and team-driven, making them the perfect way for colleagues to bond outside the workplace.”

Among the carefully selected activities are 'Vee Bissa' (a traditional rope-pulling game), a test of teamwork and coordination; 'Kopi Kade' (a coffee shop-themed activity), a challenge inspired by Sri Lanka’s iconic street-side coffee shops; and 'Raban' (a traditional drum game), where rhythm and tradition come together. The balance-based 'Onchillawa' (a Balance game) and the ever-popular 'Kotta Pora' (Pillow fighting) add an element of friendly rivalry and skill, ensuring that there’s a role for everyone.

Reflecting on the significance of these games, Mendis notes, “The beauty of these activities is that they require communication, quick thinking, and teamwork—all qualities that are essential in a corporate setting. It’s a great way for teams to interact naturally and enjoyably, rather than in a forced or overly structured manner.”



A Thoughtfully Designed Experience for Corporate Teams

Beyond the festivities, the event is meticulously planned to ensure a seamless experience that aligns with the expectations of corporate clients. “We understand that corporate events need to strike a balance between being structured and allowing people to relax and truly enjoy themselves,” Mendis explains. “That’s why we’ve ensured that everything—from the timing of activities to the overall flow of the event—is well thought out.”

The experience suits organisations with diverse teams, including international employees, offering them an engaging introduction to Sri Lankan traditions. It is also ideal for remote teams or departments that rarely interact in person, providing an opportunity for them to reconnect in a way that is both enjoyable and meaningful.

“We’ve had companies tell us that this was one of the most memorable corporate events they’ve attended,” Mendis shares. “It’s refreshing, immersive, and allows people to genuinely enjoy themselves while also taking away a deeper appreciation for Avurudu.”



A Fully Immersive Corporate Avurudu Experience

This package’s comprehensive and fully immersive approach to corporate Avurudu celebrations sets it apart. As one of the first hotels to offer this experience, Galle Face Hotel carefully considers every detail, from cultural authenticity to professional execution.

Priced at LKR 7,000 nett per person, the Corporate Avurudu Package at Galle Face Hotel offers a fully immersive experience that celebrates tradition while fostering team spirit. Guests can indulge in a traditional Sri Lankan buffet, thoughtfully curated to showcase the finest local flavours of the season. At the heart of the celebration is the beautifully crafted Avurudu Mesaya, an elaborate table adorned with festive sweets and delicacies that symbolise abundance and togetherness.

A professional sound setup enhances the vibrant atmosphere and ensures the festival’s energy is felt throughout the event. The celebration extends beyond food and music with a lineup of exciting traditional games, each thoughtfully selected to encourage team bonding through friendly competition. Adding to the festive spirit, winners of these activities are awarded gift vouchers, creating moments of recognition and excitement that make the occasion even more memorable.

Reflecting on the significance of offering such a culturally rich experience in a corporate setting, Mendis shares, “Avurudu is about



unity and fresh beginnings, which are values that also align with the corporate world. Our package allows teams to embrace these traditions and have an unforgettable experience together.”

Carrying the Spirit of Avurudu Forward

As the event draws close, its impact lingers far beyond the day’s festivities. The conversations, the shared laughter, and the moments of friendly competition create bonds that carry into the workplace, strengthening team dynamics and fostering a sense of unity.

At its core, Avurudu is about stepping into the future with optimism, gratitude, and a renewed sense of togetherness. By bringing this tradition into the corporate space, Galle Face Hotel ensures that teams not only celebrate the occasion, but also carry forward its deeper values into their professional lives.

Mendis sums it up best: “At Galle Face Hotel, we take pride in preserving and celebrating Sri Lanka’s heritage. This Corporate Avurudu experience reflects that, allowing teams to honour tradition while creating lasting memories together.”

For reservations and inquiries about the Corporate Avurudu Package at Galle Face Hotel, please contact 0741 066 783. Celebrate tradition and foster meaningful connections with your team at one of Sri Lanka’s most iconic locations, where heritage meets hospitality in a setting designed to inspire unity and new beginnings.





Hameedia Unveils 'CELEBRATING HERITAGE' Festive Collection

Hameedia, Sri Lanka's leading menswear brand synonymous with style and quality, marks this festive season with its 'Celebrating Heritage' campaign. A tribute to timeless elegance, cultural richness and the evolving spirit of tradition. Embracing the essence of 'Celebrating Heritage', Hameedia introduces a festive collection, where every outfit reflects the beauty of heritage, craftsmanship and sophistication.

This festive collection is designed to bring tradition to life through intricate tailoring, rich fabrics, modern silhouettes, and attention to detail. Inspired by the warmth of Ramadan gatherings and the joy of Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrations, the collection represents family, community, and unity. From classic ensembles that honour the culture to contemporary styles redefining festive elegance, the collection caters to individuals who wish to celebrate tradition while expressing their unique personal style.

This season also marks the introduction of HUSN, Hameedia's new ethnic brand for ladies that encapsulates the essence of heritage with a modern touch. Featuring Shalwars, Kurtis, Indo-Western fits, Dupattas, Pashminas, Silk Hijabs, and Ethnic Jewellery, HUSN blends cultural

authenticity with contemporary elegance, offering a refined selection for those who appreciate tradition in a modern context.

Managing Director of Hameedia, Fouzul Hameed shared his thoughts on the campaign; "Heritage is more than history, it's a living tradition that connects us through celebrations, fashion, and shared experiences. Whether it's Ramadan, Sinhala, or Tamil New Year, this season reminds us of the people, moments, and bonds that make traditions meaningful. Our collections embody this connection by bringing together culture, elegance, and individuality."

With a legacy of more than 75 years, Hameedia continues to evolve while staying true to its roots. The brand's diverse representation of style spans timeless outfits for fathers and sons, modern elegance for mothers and daughters, and contemporary looks for friends, redefining tradition in their own way.

Hameedia invites customers to explore and shop the festive collection at all Hameedia showrooms, Envoy Mansion, and online at www.hameedia.com, with the added convenience of island-wide delivery.



Auntie D. is a full-time mom working a little magic in the kitchen whenever she's got time on her hands. She brings to you, easy and fast recipes with a twist of Sri Lankan spices and cooking techniques. Get cooking!

Narang Kavum

We know you can't resist this bite-sized Avurudu treat. It's crispy on the outside and filled with sweet coconut on the inside.

You'd be surprised how easy it is to make! Here's how.

Method:

- Grate one coconut before grinding cardamom and cinnamon together.
- Heat a pan and start toasting the grated coconut.
- Mix coconut treacle, salt and ground spices into the toasted coconut.
- Shape the sweet coconut mixture into bite-sized balls.
- Soak, grind and sieve raw white rice to make rice flour.
- Add turmeric, salt, an egg, and coconut milk to your rice flour.
- Dip the coconut treacle balls into your batter before frying them in heated oil until golden brown.
- Serve it up for your family at the Avurudu table and enjoy!

Ingredients:

- Coconut 1 no.
- Cardamom 4 nos
- Cinnamon 1/2 inch
- Grated coconut
- Coconut treacle 1 1/2 cups
- Salt 1/2 tsp
- Raw white rice 2 cups
- Turmeric 1/4 tsp
- Salt 1 tsp
- Egg 1 no
- Coconut milk 1 cup

Chocolate Coated Kokis

Ditch the plain old kokis and try out this recipe for chocolate-coated kokis. It's sweet, salty, crispy, and oh-so-satisfying!

Ingredients:

- Raw white rice 2 cups
- Turmeric 1/4 tsp
- Salt 1 tsp
- Egg 1 no.
- Coconut milk 1 cup
- Chocolate chips

Method:

If you're making your rice flour and coconut milk at home,

- Soak, grind and sieve raw white rice.
- Extract the milk from grated coconuts.
- Add turmeric, salt, an egg, and coconut milk to your rice flour.
- Mix it all together to form a velvety batter.
- Coat the mould in hot oil to prevent the batter from sticking.
- Then dip the mould in the batter and fry until golden.
- Melt down your preferred kind of chocolate and dip the fried kokis in it.
- Let the kokis cool for a few minutes, serve it up and enjoy!



Scan the QR code



Scan the QR code

Where to Buy AVURUDU KEVILI *in Colombo*

Avurudu celebrations are incomplete without a delightful spread of kevili! From perfectly crispy kokis to delicious kavum, we've curated the ultimate list of places where you can stock up.

No time to make kevili at home due to your busy schedule? Don't worry — Pulse has you covered with a list of traditional Sri Lankan sweetmeats available for purchase!



Scan the QR code for
the complete list!

AVURUDU LITHA 2025

As the Sinhala and Tamil New Year approach, families eagerly anticipate the release of the Avurudu Litha, a guide to observing time-honoured traditions and rituals. From lighting the hearth to commencing work in the new year, these auspicious timings help ensure a harmonious and prosperous year ahead.

Here are the Aluth Avurudu Litha 2025 details to help you celebrate the new year at the right time.

Punya Kaalaya (Auspicious Period)

April 13 – April 14
8:57 PM – 9:45 AM

Dawn of the New Year

April 14 – 3:21 AM

Lighting of the Hearth

April 14 – 4:04 AM
Direction: **South**
Colour: **Copper**

Commencing Work, Exchanging Gifts, and Sharing the First Meal

April 14 – **6:44 AM**
Direction: **South**
Colour: **Pearl and White**

Anointing of Oil

April 16 – 9:04 AM
Direction: **North**
Colour: **Green**

Leaving for Work

April 17 – 9:03 AM
Direction: **North**
Colour: **Gold**

As we welcome another year filled with new beginnings, may these traditions bring joy, prosperity, and good fortune to all!



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The Chinwag

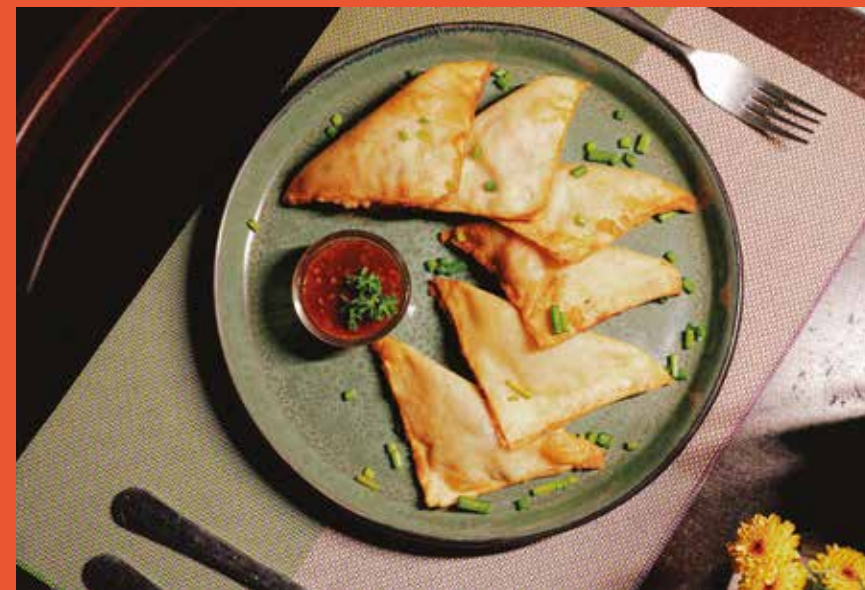
Tucked away in the heart of Colombo, The Chinwag is an open-air spot serving a fantastic fusion menu! You can watch the chefs in action with their open kitchen experience as they whip up everything from Sri Lankan favourites like yellow rice with black pork curry to Turkish mutton dumplings. Whether you are here for a laid-back meal, live music, or a game of Uno or chess, The Chinwag is all about good food and great company. It gets busy, so book ahead!

MUST-HAVES:

- SHRIMP AND MANGO NACHO BOWL
- CREAMY CURRIED PRAWN DUMPLINGS
- YELLOW RICE AND BLACK PORK CURRY



Pictures by **Ayesh Danushka**



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隆涛 LOON TAO

Located on Mount Lavinia Beach, Loon Tao lives up to its motto, 'Seafood on the Beach.' Their Chinese-inspired menu serves everything from prawns to cuttlefish to lobster and sea snails—all fresh and right by the waves, with tiki torches lighting up the shore. Evenings here are all about good food and a laid-back romantic vibe. Whether it is date night or a family dinner, Loon Tao is the spot for seafood, sea breeze, and stunning views.



MUST-HAVE DISHES

- MANGO PASSION LAVINIA
- GOLDEN FRIED PRAWN BALLS
- CHINESE HONG KONG-STYLE STIR-FRIED TOFU

Pictures by **Kumara Boppearachchi**

