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NEWSLINE

The e-Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Press Institute



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Our 11th issue of **NEWSLINE** is packed with stories of reconciliation, right to information and finding out the truth via **The Catamaran** and our **RTI & Fact Checking** work at Sri Lanka Press Institute.



Cartwheel Friendships

Mohideen and Raja are mechanics who share their lives together in a garage space shared between bicycle and motorcycle repairs. The two friends run the garage near the Youth Centre in Kada Dolaha junction in Anuradhapura.

Raja says that he started motorcycle repair work over forty or fifty years ago in the 1980s when there were only a very few motorcycles in Anuradhapura.

Both Raja and Mohideen have been occupied in the cycle repair job since childhood and have an avid instinct of all the faults and repairs needed for the bicycles and motorcycles in town. They take their job seriously and earn what they earn with absolute honour and responsibility towards the job.

“We were content with the service we delivered, and we did not want to grow as big businesses. We are happy even today. The entire town loves us. The kids who came to get their bicycles repaired then wave at us as they pass our shop in luxury vehicles now” Mohideen recalled the olden days.

Buddhist philosophy says that sorrow and happiness rotate like a cartwheel and Mohideen and Raja have shared their partnership for decades along their cartwheel of a life.

An extract from
“Rotating Like a Cartwheel;The Bicycle Friends”
written by Sarath Manula Wickrama
originally published in thecatamaran.org



Right to Information Assists Farmers in Uva Wellassa to Obtain Land Rights

In the 1980s when the then government in Sri Lanka was launching a series of development projects under the Mahaweli project, Uva Wellassa was proposed with an irrigation scheme for a large scale farming project. Accordingly, thousands of acres of land in Wellawaya and Buttala Divisional Secretariat Divisions were used for sugar-cane farming. The Bukertate company signed an agreement with the government as an investor to start the plantation project.

The terms and agreement promised provision of land for cultivation for the company and the ongoing farming. Thereby, the residents and the farmers were distributed land for house building and cultivation. Thousands of farmer families were resettled in a number of what came to be called as blocks, without a certified guarantee of ownership of the land.

People's protests against losing freehold land rights began since this time and struggles have continued over decades. Ms. K.P. Somalatha, chairperson of the Uva Wellassa Women Farmers' Association sought help from RTI to compile sufficient information that was lacking for the official legal procedure.

Awareness of the Right to Information Act diverted the decade-long struggle to a new direction and quite unexpectedly the Pelawatta Sugar Company that had been avoiding declaring ownership of the land and the Moneragala District Secretariat provided information requested through RTI. This new development has provided a systematic approach to take necessary legal action to sort their land issue.

A story written by provincial journalist Lasantha de Silva for SLPI RTI forum. Visit www.rti.lk for more RTI stories.

RTI

In striving to maintain and promote good governance and freedom of expression SLPI's advocacy in spreading awareness and training on the Right to Information Act has been dominant. SLPI continues to broaden their programmes in this area for its greater dissemination.

CATAMARAN

The Catamaran is a tri-lingual portal of SLPI, publishing work on transitional justice and reconciliation by journalists from all over Sri Lanka. The stories provide background and add analysis to the most interesting topics in the country.

SLPI

Sri Lanka Press Institute is a not for profit organization advocating media freedom and professionalizing journalism in order to nurture an informed and discerning public committed to democratic ideals.

SLPI FACT CHECKS

More fact-check stories from SLPI's Fact-checking unit articles of which are available at their official Facebook Page FactSeeker.

Resignation of the Central Bank Governor is a lie - Governor, Central Bank

lankanewsweb.net
18.06.2020



Central Bank Governor Prof. W. D. Laxman confirmed that the news about him resigning from the post of Central Bank Governor is completely false. He said this in response to the news reported in 'lankanewsweb' reading "The Central Bank Governor sends his resignation letter". He also stated that he has no intention of doing so.

Galagodaatte Thero has made no comment on Karuna's statement - Media Secretary

personal facebook profile
23.06.2020



A statement claiming to be made by Ven. Galagodaatte Gnanasara Thero regarding the controversial statement made by former LTTE leader and deputy minister Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan (Karuna Amman) circulated widely on social media.

The posts read "Don't blame Karuna Amman, the dead soldiers will not come back. He is now with a democratic party and has mended his mistakes. Forget all this and support the government" as was said by Gnanasara Thero

Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) media secretary Eranda K. Nawaratne said that it was completely untrue and that Gnanasara Thero made no statement regarding the incident.



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