Continuation from page 1

DAILY MIRROR
DAILYMIRROR.LK

Six ministers under bribery probe over their assets

Accordingly, the Commission informed the Chairman of Citizens' Power Against Corruption and Waste that the Illegal Assets Division of the Commission has decided to initiate investigations against Minister of Health and Mass Media and Chief Government Whip Dr. Nalinda Jayatissa, Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports, and Civil Aviation and Leader of the House Bimal Rathnayake, Minister of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Cooperative Development Wasantha Samarasinghe, Minister of Energy Kumara Jayakody, Minister of Industries and Entrepreneurship Development Sunil Handunetti, and Deputy Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs Attorney Sunil Watagala.

In a reply letter dated December 17, the Chairman was informed to appear before the Bribery Commission to record a statement to further clarify the facts regarding the complaint.

Accordingly, under Section 49(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act, No. 9 of 2023, the Commission has requested him to appear before the Commission at 9.00 a.m. today, along with relevant documents, to provide the statement.

Energy Minister Kumara Jayakody is already under investigation by the Bribery Commission in connection with alleged corruption involving the misappropriation of funds while serving at the Fertiliser Corporation in 2015.

This investigation is in addition to the ongoing probe in which the Commission to investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption has decided to institute legal action against Energy Minister Kumara Jayakody over corruption complaints related to the same matter.

That investigation was initiated following a complaint lodged by Sanka Chandima Abeywardena, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Haritha Sangvidhanaya (Green Organisation).

In September this year, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) has also lodged a complaint with the Bribery Commission regarding the assets of Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe.

Meanwhile, attempts by the Daily Mirror to contact the ministers concerned were unsuccessful.

Corruption allegations galore ahead of CMC budget to be presented second time

Responding to the accusations, Deputy Mayor Hemantha Weerakoon dismissed the claims and accused the opposition of attempting to block benefits intended for city residents. "The opposition is playing politics to prevent the bonanza being offered to city dwellers, though we have not yet presented our budget," he said. "Numerous popular proposed measures, including a reduction in crematorium charges, the construction of CMC-run funeral parlours to provide affordable funeral services, an allocation of Rs. 150 million to increase funding for midday meals for kindergarten children, and a reduction of the entertainment tax from 12 per cent to 7 per cent. There is absolutely no truth to the allegation that [illegible] opposition members," the Deputy Mayor added.

ID office system crashes, applicants asked to return

The DRP is in the process of transitioning to a fully digital system as part of its long-term plan to introduce a national Digital Identity (Digital ID) by April 2026. The initiative aims to integrate all citizen data into a centralised database to provide more efficient and secure services, including electronic National Identity Cards (e-NICs).

Ongoing improvements under the project include the introduction of one-day services and compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards for photographs. The new system is designed to enhance data security, ensure privacy, and enable seamless digital interactions for citizens, building on the department's existing e-NIC programme.

Several attempts to contact the DRP officials failed.

RE-ROUTE COLOMBO-KANDY RAIL LINE, SLSTL TELLS GOVT.

Sri Lanka's railway network, mostly built over 150 years ago

Globally, countries are linking major cities with modern rail lines operating at 100-160 km/h

Sri Lanka Society of Transport and Logistics (SLSTL) called for the development of an alternate rail route from Colombo to Kandy in the wake of Cyclone Ditwah which caused extensive damage to the current line.

In a statement, it said the recent Cyclone Ditwah has laid bare the longstanding vulnerability of Sri Lanka's railway infrastructure much like the devastating 2004 tsunami, which swept away sections of the coastal Line and sweeping away a train killing over 1,000 passengers in the world's worst rail disaster.

It said "Ditwah has caused extensive damage particularly along the Main Line rendering several sections impassable. The structural integrity of the key bridge near Peradeniya remains uncertain. Sri Lanka's railway network, mostly built over 150 years ago with limited consideration for environmental hazards, now increasingly at risk from extreme weather events, cyclones, tsunamis, landslides and floods. This is not just an infrastructure crisis, but a wake-up call to rethink our approach to national planning and resilience.

In 2017, the SLSTL and the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka (IESL) jointly proposed an alternative rail alignment to Kandy. Today, that proposal is more relevant than ever.

As expressways now supplement Sri Lanka's road network, the railway must also evolve towards safer, more efficient, and future-ready routes that are competitive with road transport.

Recent landslides at Pelenda Kaluganwawa underscore the fragility of this stretch.

While urgent restoration is needed, long-term planning for an alternative route is equally essential. Globally, countries are linking major cities with modern rail lines operating at 100–160 km/h. Known as Intercity Express (ICE) in Europe and Superfast in India, such services are now the norm. In contrast, the Colombo–Kandy Main Line takes over 2.5 hours, with serious capacity constraints between Rambukkana and Kadugannawa precisely the area hardest hit by Ditwah.

Historically, alternative alignments were studied as early as 1846 by engineer Mr. Drane, including the Salgadoya–Hingula (Galewela), and Alagolla traces.

In 1857, Capt. Harrison favoured the Hingula trace. Yet in 1862, a new alignment, the Delundeniya trace was selected for cost reasons, despite its limitations. This is the alignment still in use today.

The SLSTL and IESL proposed two viable alternatives in 2017, both of which can build on the proposed electrified and dedicated tracks up to Rambukkana:

1. Galagedera Trail: Rambukkana to Kalugalaela and Kandy via Galagedera Pass
2. Pallegodera Trail: Rambukkana to Kandy via the Yatihawara Oya valley

These alternatives would enable:

- Faster travel (less than 90 minutes to Kandy)
- Decongestion of the Main Line from Polgahawela
- Safer alignment, with reduced landslide risk
- Expanded access to Kandy and the hill country, supporting tourism
- Double-track capability, allowing up to 50 trains daily (versus the current 20)
- Avoid double tracking the existing railway which will be both environmentally unsound and extremely expensive.

Crucially, Kandy's urban road network cannot absorb the traffic volume of a new four-lane expressway. A modern rail connection must be central to any sustainable transport solution.

In 2017, SLSTL and IESL also concluded that a new railway and two-lane road could be built at lower cost than the proposed Central Expressway. They urged a national policy shift prioritising intercity express rail as the 21st-century model for mobility. Many countries have already embraced this rail-first approach as a smart, sustainable alternative to road-heavy development.

The SLSTL now urges the Government to treat this proposal as a strategic infrastructure priority. We call for trace explorations to begin in 2026, laying the groundwork for a modern, disaster-resilient, high-capacity rail corridor to Kandy that would evolve to become a national network.

This is not just about repairing what was lost but about building something better. Let Cyclone Ditwah be the moment we choose to reimagine and rebuild smarter for a safer, faster, and more sustainable Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka the host destination after 21 years for Rotary Institute 2026

Sri Lanka will host the Rotary Institute 2026 from December 14–20, marking the country's return to hosting the event after a 21-year gap. The Rotary Zonal Institute is the year's leadership gathering for Rotary International Zones 4, 5, 6, and 7, covering India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives. This esteemed event brings together current, former, and incoming Rotary leaders and senior Rotary officials to discuss trending issues of humanitarian nature, latest trends and best practices in the region and feature outstanding personalities in leadership.

Singing sensation and former Rotaract President Yohani flew into Delhi to perform at the official launch of Rotary Institute 2026 in partnership with Cinnamon Life. Yohani personally invited the 1,400 Rotary leaders of India and visited delegates to attend the 2026 conference in Sri Lanka. The launch was held in the presence of Rotary International President Francis Assisses and was a highlight on Day 1.

Rotary International Director Mrinigandham se (MMS) and Convenor of the event, a top business personality from India, said, "We will be discussing some trending topics with eminent personalities being invited for the event, and we hope we make a greater impact on humanity."

Gowri Rajan, the first female Governor for Rotary Sri Lanka and the Maldives, has been appointed as the Chairperson of Rotary Institute 2026, which is another significant milestone in the History of Rotary Sri Lanka. The event will attract over 1,000 Rotary Governors across South Asia, which means that the contribution Sri Lanka Tourism will exceed 1 million dollars, said the Chair for Rotary Institute 2026, Gowri Rajan.

The Rotary Institute will be held at the Cinnamon Life, City of Dreams, the flagship property of John Keells.

[illegible]ware of Dengue [illegible] warns expert

Dr. Wijayawardene noted that influenza may [illegible] symptoms, including [illegible] and altered consciousness.

He cautioned that influenza is often confused with dengue, explaining that while viral fever and uncomplicated dengue improve after fever subsides, severe dengue worsens at that stage.

The expert warned against unnecessary antibiotic use, noting influenza is viral, and fever may last up to a week. Parents were advised to ensure adequate fluids, rest, surface cleaning and correct use of paracetamol, while avoiding NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and diclofenac due to bleeding risks if dengue is present.

"Influenza can be diagnosed through PCR or rapid antigen tests, with treatment mainly symptomatic. Parents are urged to keep sick children at home, practise hygiene measures and seek immediate care for warning signs. A yearly influenza vaccine is also available to reduce risk and severity.

Thanksgiving Service to Celebrate the Life of

ANNE KENNEY ATAPATTU KAZI

Safely in the Presence of God since the 18th of December, 2025

Wife of Pervaiz.
Ever loving mother of Romesh and Malaika.
Mother-in-law of Nushara.
Grandmother of Tiana, Arielle, Rien, and Ray.

Monday, January 5, 2026 at Six O'Clock in the Evening
Calvary Church, 123, High Level Road, Kirulapone

Obituaries

ROZAIRO - MAXI, passed away peacefully on 27th December 2025. Beloved husband of Yasmin, loving father of Keith and Mure and daughters-in-law Mandhira and Tani, adored grandfather of Mikhal, Anya and Kayana, loving brother of Caryl, Noel, Kenneth, Joan, Jerry late Jean, late Pauline and his in-laws Ian, Rosanna, Trissette, Arlene, Phil, late Nesan, late Anton and late Tyronne. **Funeral service will be held at A.F. Raymond's Funeral Parlour on Tuesday 30th December at 3.00 p.m. followed by burial at 4.30 p.m. at the General Cemetery, Borella (Roman Catholic Section). 'In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety' – Psalm 4:9. 112811**

DEATH NOTICES
CLASSIFIED
First 25 words - Rs. 300/-
Additional word - Rs. 25/-
Inquiries :
0112479583
0112479584/5

68 PER CENT LANDMASS OF BADULLA DISTRICT PRONE TO LANDSLIDES

The NBRO carried out an inspection of the landslide-affected areas. Fewer landslides had been reported from Haldummulla, Haputale, Ella, and Bandarawela divisions

"However, between 50 and 60 landslides were in the surroundings of residential houses. In addition to the major landslides, several earth slips and erosion of embankments had occurred. Heavy rain caused fissures in the slopes, posing a landslide threat to a large population. The NBRO carried out an inspection of the landslide-affected areas. Fewer landslides had been reported from Haldummulla, Haputale, Ella, and Bandarawela divisions."

"About 650 houses, including the line-room houses in the estate sector, have been extensively damaged, while individual houses were the worst affected. The NBRO is carrying on further inspections with the help of the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau, Faculties of Geological Science in Universities, and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board," Geologist Harshani Perera said.

She said she carried out an inspection of the fissures in Alagolla hill top and issued red notices warning the people of the imminent danger.

Sri Lanka not healthy enough, falls into bottom 40 healthiest countries in the world

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) leading causes of death in Sri Lanka are stroke and ischemic heart disease. However, in Sri Lanka, life expectancy at birth (years) has improved by 5.72 years from 71.5 years in 2000 to 77.2 years in 2021.

Some war-torn nations in sub-Saharan Africa find themselves at the bottom of the health rankings. "Interestingly, even picturesque destinations often seen as tropical paradises, have received low health scores. This is largely attributed to poor dietary habits and a lack of physical activity. It's a reminder that paradise isn't always synonymous with health," the website says.

RIGHT OF READERS
DAILY MIRROR This Newspaper supports the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka
The Editor and the journalists of this newspaper respect the "Right of Readers" and endeavour to follow the code of professional practice of the Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka, which is implemented by the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka. If you have a grievance against us, you are welcome to contact us directly and we will strive to provide redress to you.
If you are not satisfied, you could complain to: The Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka
For further information contact: 96, Kinsla Rd, Colombo 5. T: 5 353 635 F: 5 335 500 E: pccsl@pccsl.lk W: www.pccsl.lk
Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka