

FEATURES



Roshan Mahanama seen planting a tree sapling

Cricket World Cup 2019

Played for a greener globe

By
Ralph
Gunawardena

The organisers of 'Green through Cricket' opined cricket could play a pivotal role in raising awareness on climate change. With that in mind for the first time, the game of cricket was linked to nature and environment during Cricket World Cup 2019. Global warming, considered as the disaster of a lifetime, has come to stay. Experts have warned of the consequences if precautionary measures aren't taken on time - we may be already late. It is not a public secret that cricketing material such as bats, balls and wickets come from trees that belong to nature. We as cricket fanatics have a moral duty to re-plant trees to counter global warming.

Since the birth of Cricket World Cup Tournament in 1975, interest in cricket world cup grew. The tournament has become more popular than the England-Australia Test series. Participating countries prepare well in advance, perhaps for years, to be champions of the most prestigious cricket tournament. Centuries scored are highlighted, bowling performances recorded and world cup heroes admired for years after the event. Sri Lanka won the tournament in 1998 and since then, the Sri Lankan cricketing landscape has changed. Winning team members are considered heroes even after 23 years - that is the power of the Cricket World Cup Tournament.

'Green through Cricket' added value to this year's World Cup when the organisers decided to plant trees in Sri Lanka according to performances of the tournament and to raise awareness on climate change. The environmental and plant science departments of national universities have already agreed to join the programme with local schools.



At the
DailyMirror

We believe that climate change is one of the greatest threats that we, as Sri Lankans, will face in the future. Therefore, we intend to provide our readers with local and international content with the objective to educate and inspire. We would also like to learn from our valued readers about any ongoing initiatives in making Sri Lanka a more sustainable nation.

We aim to explore sustainable ways of living that have the most positive impact on not just our natural environment, but also for humans and animals.

While topics such as global warming, pollution, and inequality are confronting, we believe it's time the media stopped shying away from these issues and became an active participant in finding solutions - and we hope you will join us.



New Zealand school cricketer Joe Bradley taking part in the event

The programme was planned in advance and organisers have projected a little more than one million trees to be planted with the expectation of high-scoring matches due to the warm climate of England's summer. Yet, when unexpected weather during the tournament washed away several matches, most of the encounters were low-scoring. The final tally of the number of trees was 723,510. Over the next four years - before the next Cricket World Cup Tournament in 2023 - these trees will be planted islandwide, especially in schools, temples and State land. In addition to national universities and local schools, the organisers expect the support of the tri-forces, Sri Lanka Police, Forest Department and Environment Ministry to achieve the goals.

The soft launch of the tree planting programme was held during the World Cup Tournament on June 15, 2019 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute where its Chairman Sarath Kongahage PC played a key role while Roshan Mahanama represented the cricketing community. Some of the academic staff and students of the environmental and plant science faculties planted the bulk of trees. The print media and television covered the event giving much publicity. The organisers will travel from district to district to conduct programmes at national universities with local schools.

Academic staff of universities will educate student leaders, members of nature clubs, scouts, girl guides and prefects, and through them, will send the message to the rest of the schoolchildren. Each school will be given 50-100 trees to plant and sustain for two years after which they will sustain on their own. There are 125 schools in the country working with UNESCO-Sri Lanka under its Associate School Programme (ASP). Its Deputy Secretary-General Ashwini Madanayake will coordinate tree-planting.

Professors Yapa, Deepthi and Ranawala, Dr. Sampath and Dr. Jinendra from Colombo University have already extended their support for 'Green through Cricket'. They will impart their knowledge and technical know-how to the participants, especially schoolchildren. The academic staff belonging to other national universities will follow suit. The programme is open to all sectors to join hands with Green through Cricket. Apart from national universities, UNESCO-Sri Lanka, Mahaweli Development and Environment Ministry, Forest Department, ECO 360 (an environment-friendly private company) and the tri-forces have shown their keenness to join the programme.

2019 - World Cup Cricket Green Team

	No. of Trees
01. Kane Williamson (NZ)	51,010
02. Ben Stokes (Eng)	45,210
03. Rohit Sharma (IND)	37,070
04. Johnny Bairstow (Eng)	29,220
05. Jos Butler (Eng)	28,230
06. Jason Roy (Eng)	23,910
07. Shabbir Ali Hassan (BND)	20,560
08. Ross Taylor (NZ)	20,010
09. Henry Nicholls (NZ)	19,880
10. Steven Smith (AUS)	17,840
11. Joe Root (Eng)	16,800

Contribution of Trees to the Nature from the World Cup 2019

	No. of Trees
01. England	220,960
02. New Zealand	179,340
03. India	92,050
04. Australia	69,090
05. Bangladesh	41,280
06. West Indies	28,190
07. Pakistan	26,750
08. South Africa	25,840
09. Sri Lanka	21,710
10. Afghanistan	21,310

Open defiance of judiciary and its facilitation by the executive will undermine confidence in the legal system

Competing ethno-religious claims require the issue to be resolved amicably



Lawyers protesting against lack of respect for judiciary by Sinhala Buddhist monks

UNDERMINING RULE OF LAW DETRIMENTAL TO SL

A number of lawyers and civil society activists along with the general public in the North and East have come out in protest against the flouting of a judicial decision by Buddhist monks and their associates in relation to the final rites of a prelate.

The media reported that over 2,000 protesters demonstrated in Mullaitivu over the controversy in which emotions have run high and people's sentiments been hurt. The dispute over the cremation site of the monk in the Northern District of Mullaitivu, which took place in defiance of a judicial order, has implications on the rule of law and confidence in the judiciary that needs to be resolved without delay. Prior to his demise, Venerable Colomba Medhalankarakitti Thera had established a temple on disputed land in front of an army camp in the former Northern war zone. The ownership of the land has been claimed by Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Temple and the Archaeology Department. There is fury that the military and governmental departments claim domination over Northern land and then vest it with people from outside to the detriment of Tamil inhabitants of those

areas. When this is done in respect to Buddhist temples sans a Buddhist civilian population, it is a cause for heartburn and misgivings in the North.

In the Hindu tradition, cremations are not permissible within temple grounds. Accordingly, the judiciary to whom the dispute was taken decided that the monk's mortal remains should be cremated elsewhere, in an identified public compound. However, Buddhist monks belonging to a nationalist organisation were instrumental in ignoring the court order and conducting the cremation within the temple premises. One of the monks involved in this act was Bodu Bala Sena General Secretary Galagodaaththe Gnanasara Thera who had previously been convicted for contempt of court and sentenced to imprisonment but granted presidential pardon.

The undersigned civil society organisations unreservedly condemn the flouting of judicial orders and disrespect shown to the judiciary. We call on other civil society organisations, Buddhist and other religious leaders and political parties to do likewise. We believe upholding judicial decisions, the rule of law and separation of powers between

presidency and State institutions as vital. The open defiance of judiciary and its facilitation by the executive branch of government will undermine confidence in the legal system. In particular, the State needs to be sensitive on minority cultures and to their perceptions. Unless people trust in the system of law and order as having finality rather than actions of the military and nationalist clergy, peace with justice will be a mirage.

Signed:

- Governing Council
- National Peace Council
- Dr Joe William
- Centre for Communication Training
- D.M.N. Dissanayake
- Citizens Committee, Anuradhapura
- P. Muthulingam
- Institute of Social Development, Katugastota
- T. Thayaparan
- Peace and Community Action, Batticaloa
- Chandani Herath
- Sunila Women and Children, Polonnaruwa
- Sachitha N. Hewage
- Truth and Reconciliation Forum - Western Province
- Vellayan Subramaniam
- Truth and Reconciliation Forum - Northern Province



NEERAVIYADI INCIDENT AND RECLAIMING OUR PLURAL HISTORY

The Jaffna People's Forum for Coexistence finds the incident which transpired at Neeraviyadi in Mullaitivu last week deeply disturbing. Since the last Easter attacks, inter-religious relations have become more fragile in Sri Lanka. In this context, what happened in Neeraviyadi might aggravate already-strained ethno-religious coexistence. We have a duty to prevent incidents of this nature from repeating by initiating mutually-supportive conversation among different communities that inhabit the island.

On September 23, a group led by Buddhist monks including Gnanasara Thera of Bodu Bala Sena cremated the remains of the late Ven. Colomba Medhalankarakitti Thera, Chief Incumbent of Gurukanda Rajamaha Viharaya, on a site in Neeraviyadi thus violating a court order. Local Hindus view this site as belonging to Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Temple. Since most Hindus consider the cremation of mortal remains within the premises of Hindu religious places a sacrilege, the locals protested against the cremation and obtained a court order which required the cremation to be held outside the disputed site in a location assigned by court. The police did not take any action against those who violated the court order; neither did they prevent them from attacking the locals who wanted the court order implemented.

When local Hindus protested against the construction of the present Gurukanda Rajamaha Viharaya after the end of

the war in a location which they consider as part of the premises of Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Temple, the Archaeology Department defended the construction claiming an ancient Buddhist Dagoba existed in that location some two thousand years ago. However, the Maritimpattu DS Division, within which the disputed site is located, observed that no Buddhist temple had existed in the land where Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Temple was situated and that there was no evidence to support that Buddhists lived in the neighbourhood. These competing ethno-religious claims require the issue to be resolved amicably and based on appropriate historical evidence; in a manner history is not used for legitimising exclusivist claims over territory and polarising the communities concerned.

The Jaffna People's Forum for Coexistence wants to place on record that for the past several decades, the Archaeology Department has been engaged in politicising the history of the island, especially its Northern and Eastern regions, in ways that favour the agendas of chauvinistic politicians and communal-minded Buddhist monks. The department has often ignored religious and ethnic realities observed in places where minorities live in large numbers and the political and cultural changes that have taken

place in those areas across the passage of time. The forum wishes to reiterate that the pluralist demographic history of the island spanning over 2,000 years is one of the constant movements of different communities which held multifarious political loyalties and regional habitation; that our intertwined and syncretic histories are well-established; to pit one community against another,

ON SEPT. 23, A GROUP LED BY MONKS CREMATED THE REMAINS OF THE LATE VEN. COLOMBA MEDHALANKARAKITTI THERA IN NEERAVIYADI

to emphasise difference and separatism rather than cultural overlaps, ethnic entanglements and religious cross-pollination in interpreting this rich history for modern political purposes will prove to be destructive.

While registering our strong opposition to the actions of the State that pose a threat to religious, ethnic and linguistic pluralism and the coexistence of cultures and communities, let us ensure that our actions in the future will acknowledge that historically this island and its various regions have been home to different cultures, languages and faiths. Let us also ensure that we give a central place to coexistence in our social and political initiatives. The Jaffna People's Forum for Coexistence recognises the strength of our diverse and inter-mixed past and calls for dialogue in resolving ethnic and religious disputes and to reclaim our plural history.

JAFFNA PEOPLE'S FORUM FOR COEXISTENCE