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TMC Mt. Lavinia welcomes Jagath Manatunge as its new member. Manatunge is a Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Moratuwa with degrees in Civil Engineering from Moratuwa, Environmental Technology from Imperial College, UK, and a PhD from Saitama University, Japan. He is a Chartered Engineer and a member of various professional organisations, including the IESL and the Institute of Environmental Professionals in Sri Lanka.

He is the Chair of the Advisory Committee for the China-Sri Lanka Joint Research Centre and an Adviser on environmental policy at the Center for East Asian Development Studies in Tokyo. He is the Editor of the IESL Annual Transactions and is on

## Welcoming new member to TMC Mt. Lavinia



Jagath Manatunge

the editorial boards of the Journal of the National Science Foundation and IESL. Currently, he is the President of the Old Royalists Engineering Professionals' Association.

He has received the Chevening Award, Monbukagakusho Scholarship, fellowships from JSPS and JST, 14 Outstanding Research Awards, four Presidential Awards, and the prestigious CVCD Excellence Award.

His professional contributions, spanning more than 30 years, include work on projects for the World Bank and ADB, advising Sri Lankan Government agencies like the Ministry of Environment, UDA, and CEA, and involvement in infrastructure projects, policy formulation, and master plans for urban and institutional development.



By ATHULA JAYASEKERA

WE are a society that lacks direction and vision. It is no wonder that we produce mediocre people as the youth of this country lack the right role models to follow. We never encouraged world renowned people of the country to be in the limelight, for our youth to follow as role models.

Sri Lankan youth lacks contemporary role models to emulate. In business world too, we do not have Gates, Musks, Jobs, Bransons or Tatas. As there are no local figures to emulate our youth must study the lives of internationally known foreign leaders. They must draw inspiration from these personalities. As the country lacks and has a dearth of role models, people look for celebrities and sportsmen as role models.

A role model is someone others can look up to as a good example to follow. Most of them are known for their courage, confidence, definiteness of their purpose, belief, resilience, etc. They are accepted for their honesty, integrity and reliability. Some of those renowned role models have changed the course of the world for the better. People like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King have been instrumental in changing the direction of the world during their life time. Role Modelling at micro level can also inspire people to give good results. Role models at the workplace can motivate and give con-

## Lack of role models and promoting mediocrity

fidence to the others. Role models can be influencers in organisations.

Even in trade unions there are role models who can greatly influence their membership with their presence. People look up to these personalities for their accomplishments. Role models in organisations play an important part like inspiring others and setting examples for others to follow. They can be agents of change too. Therefore, role models play a big role at both Macro and Micro levels. Studying the lives of good role models will inspire a person in his course for success and we as a country should cultivate the culture of role modelling.

There is a serious issue in our country at present because even at school functions the politicians, actors, sportsmen are given preference over academics, intellectuals and professionals. The children see only these kinds of half-baked personalities very often at their school functions, being invited as special or chief guests. It looks like school authorities are also reluctant to invite the intelligentsia as they too are comfortable and happy to be with the mediocre people.

Not that we do not have people of such calibre, we have people to look up to like Dr. Sarath Gunapala, Dr. Asha de Vos, etc. but their achievements are not widely known in the country. Only a few will know who these world-renowned scientists are. Majority of Sri Lankans will have only few achievements during their lifetimes. Yet they are happy with those mediocre achievements not knowing the potential they have to reach greater heights. We produce mediocre people and the country promotes mediocrity. We are comfortable being mediocre in life.

Since we have not been conditioned to aim high and be competitive since we were small, we

are happy with mediocre success and to accept things as it is, and call it our destiny. As we were not exposed to the stories of people who have changed their destinies, we don't know that destiny can be changed or re-written by the person him/herself. Yet when this mediocre Sri Lankan leaves the shores and starts a career in a foreign soil his or her productivity improves, and he/she becomes competitive. There are many who have reached greater heights in their adopted country. Some have even reached world standards. These achievers are not heard of by many as this information have not been considered important in Sri Lanka.

It is the mediocrity that prevails in the society that prevents us from achieving more and limits our potential. Since childhood we are trained to move on one path. Even in vulnerable, chaotic and uncertain situations, people still tread on the linear path for success. That is how the minds have been conditioned. We are not prepared or maybe we are scared to take the road that less people have travelled.

Then there is the root cause of the problem, is it the system or the people which become the barrier. We had top class civil servants, academics, planters, etc. and respectable politicians of international repute in the past. Is it the system that keeps producing mediocre personnel or is it that people have become satisfied by achieving mediocre standards without aiming to reach their full potential in life due to the prominence given to mediocrity?

(The writer is a Founder Member, first Chairman of TMC Colombo and a Past President of the Board of Management of TMC.)

## About TMC

THE Management Club (TMC) formed in 2001 under the auspices of the Chartered Management Institute - UK Sri Lanka Branch is a forum dedicated to uplift management practices in Sri Lanka on par with the best international standards and strives to achieve this by providing constant opportunities for member interaction and par-

ticipation at appropriate business and personal enhancement programs in the varied disciplines that make up the field of management.

The Corporate Sponsors of TMC are: UB Finance and First Capital, Support Sponsors are Kleen Park, Airtel and Sponge, Servicer sponsors: Sign Tech advertising Services (Signage),

Nine Hearts Colour Labs (Paper), Sharp Graphic House (Printing), Studio Sri - 3G (Photography), Singer Sri Lanka (Electronic equipment), Soft Logic IT and Office Automation. TMC's media sponsors are - Daily Financial Times and MTV/YES FM.

TMC operates its Principal Club at the Galadari Hotel

(011 5860000) Suite 206. Its associate Clubs are based at the Berjaya Mt Royal Beach Hotel, Camelot Beach Hotel Negombo, Hibiscus Kalutara and Ramadia Ranmal Holiday Resort Moratuwa. Inquiries for membership to the Management Club by email to: tmcsecretariat2012@gmail.com/fs@marietimesl.com.

## Inauguration of TMC Moratuwa Club set for Sunday

THE much-anticipated TMC Moratuwa Club will officially open its doors this Sunday, 5 May, at 7:30 p.m. at the esteemed Ranmal Ramadia Hotel in Panadura.

The newly appointed chairman, Pravin De Silva, expressed his enthusiasm about the launch, noting that the establishment of the club had been delayed due to numerous holidays. "We are thrilled to finally bring this project to fruition," he said.

Members of the club, alongside potential members and

their families, are expected to attend the inauguration. "This will be more than just a formal event; it will be a delightful evening where guests can enjoy themselves following the official proceedings," De Silva added.

Board of Management President Kaushal Rajapaksha will officiate the ceremony. His pivotal role in founding the club has been instrumental to its realisation. The Ranmal Ramadia Hotel, the venue for the event, will also serve as one



TMC Moratuwa Chairman elect Pravin De Silva

of the host hotels for the club.

All TMC Moratuwa members will enjoy the same exclusive benefits available to members of other TMC clubs in Colombo, Mount Lavinia, Negombo, Jaffna, and future locations.

For those interested in join-

ing TMC Moratuwa or seeking more information, contact the TMC Secretariat at 071 586 0000.

Join them for an evening of celebration and community spirit as they mark a new chapter in the TMC network.



## Chamber of Marine Industries charts new course; appoints leadership, outlines ambitious goals

THE maritime landscape of Sri Lanka witnessed a momentous occasion on Wednesday, 13 March, as the Chamber of Marine Industries of Sri Lanka convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM). This gathering marked a significant milestone in the nation's maritime journey, uniting industry leaders, experts, and visionaries.

Representing the State sector, the AGM was graced and addressed by Sri Lanka Standards Institute (SLSI) Director General Dr. Siddhika Senaratne, Export Development Board (EDB) Chairman Dr. Kingsley Bernard, Ministry of Industries Additional Secretary Chaminda Pathiraja, and Director General of Merchant Shipping (DGMS) Ajith Wijesinghe.

Port Authority Director Marketing Nirmal Fonseka, MOI Director Elapatha, MOI Assistant Director B. Kunalini, and EDB Asst. Directors Mangala Maduwanthi and Diani Maduka participated.

### Leadership and expertise

At the heart of this pivotal event were the appointments that will shape the Chamber's trajectory. Indhra Kaushal Rajapaksa, a seasoned industry stalwart, assumed the mantle of Chairman for the term 2024-2025. His leadership promises to steer Sri Lanka's marine sector toward prosperity. Accompanying him are two distinguished advisors: Dr. Sarath Obeysekera and Gamin Herath—both luminaries in their own right.

The newly constituted board boasts an impressive lineup of directors, each contributing their wealth of experience. Among them are:



- Rear Admiral (Rtd) D.K. Dassanayake, Managing Director, Seven Sails Shipping & Maritime Ltd.
- Shiran Dissanayake, Chairman ABC Shipping Ltd.
- Akalanka Rathnayake, Managing Director International Marine Services Ltd.
- Sumithra Fernando, President of Kalutara & Galle Boat Manufacturer's Association
- Adityavikram More, Executive Director, Morex Lanka
- Sharzan Perera (Shan), Director/CEO Neil Marine
- Isuru Gunatilaka, Managing Director, Ascentra Oceanic Corporation Ltd.
- Professor Terney Pradeep, Department of Oceanography, University of Ruhuna
- Mario Stubbs, Managing Director of Sail Lanka Charter
- Ricky Barnett, Director, Hemas Mobility
- Sanjeeva Jayatilake, representing Colombo Dockyard PLC
- Jagath Adipola, Technical Director, Solar Impulse Ltd.

### Celebrating milestones

A crowning achievement was the

resounding success of the Boat and Marine Show 2023 at the Port City Marina in October along with which drew numerous visitors from various countries. With around 100 exhibition booths, it was a testament to the global interest and participation in the marine industry.

The conference, themed "Boating as a Lifestyle" held in partnership with the Sri Lanka Export Development Board, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Industries, highlighted the potential, vibrancy, issues, and regulatory solutions to promote the recreational boating sector, nationally and internationally.

The chamber is working closely with the Export Development Board, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Tourism, Port Authority, and Fishery Harbors Corporation to implement the above points.

The CMISL attended the International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA) conference on 23 and 24 April in Singapore where the Chairman, Indhra Kaushal Rajapaksa, presented Sri Lanka boating industry's current situation and potential. The conference was followed by a visit to the Singapore Yachting Festival from 25 to 18 April. This event provides an excellent platform for showcasing Sri Lanka's marine industry prowess and fostering international partnerships.

The Chamber of Marine Industries of Sri Lanka sets sail toward a new horizon, guided by visionary leadership and a shared commitment to a thriving maritime future.



By VARUNA RATNAWEERA

THIS is something that happened to me on a rainy evening. The day had been a tiring one in office, yet I decided to attend a funeral house to pay respect to my friend's father who had passed away the previous day.

As I was driving back from the funeral house it was already dark and it started raining heavily. The vision through my windshield became so blurred that I could hardly see the road although the two wiper blades were trying their best to keep the heavy downpour away from it.

## We are here to serve

As the area was not so familiar I turned to a narrow lane to get connected to the main road as fast as possible and I saw a trishaw that was approaching me from the opposite end. And it was then that disaster struck. The sound of the trishaw knocking something on to the driving side of the car was so loud that I thought it would have caused a big damage to my car. I stopped the car right in the middle of the road and put the shutter down, peeped out of the car window and saw that the front wheel of the trishaw had fallen right into a manhole, already overflowing without its lid. The trishaw driver started trying his best to reverse it out of the manhole but it didn't move an inch even after several attempts and then he got out of the trishaw leaving the two lady passengers inside, who I thought were a mother and a daughter.

The rain had turned to a light shower by

then and I got out of the car leaving it right where I had stopped. In fact it was such a narrow road there was hardly any space to take the car to a side. The Prado jeep behind me started to toot the horn as if I had committed a serious crime. That driver was actually using the typical courteous greeting that Sri Lankan drivers are well known for, in situations such as these! I also heard him addressing me with some rude terms, which I decided to ignore at that time, thinking he will realise that my intention was to help another. I told the trishaw driver that it will not be possible to take it out by reversing it as his front wheel was right inside the manhole.

Then I rolled up the sleeves of my long sleeved shirt, and much to his surprise tried to help him lift it. He had requested his passengers, the two ladies to alight the vehicle

to reduce the weight and got the driver of the trishaw just behind him to jerk it to help in the process.

But as there was still no movement the man started trying to lift the trishaw with his hands placed inside the man hole which was over flowing with all the dirty water and the smell emanated from it was stinking to the level that no one could even breathe.

There was no success even after several attempts like this.

Then came a trishaw driver from another one that had just stopped behind the Prado and he kind of shrugged me away and told the man already seated in the driving seat of the trishaw, "This won't do brother, put it to the neutral gear and lets lift it and push it back," and with the help of two others while the owner of the trishaw was still lifting it with his hands we succeeded in pushing it out on to the road again.

I being the first one to get off the car and offer him help, the look on his face was filled with so much gratitude and he started thank-

ing me profusely. Then I asked whether he had any water to wash his hands, and when he replied in the negative I took out the big plastic bottle of tap water I have in my car just for a situation like this, opened the lid and poured the water on his hands for him to wash away the dirty water. Before he got back to the trishaw to continue his hire, he said, Sir you are such a kind hearted gentleman and I have never in my life come across a person like you, who would go out of the way to help a stranger on the road.

Having patted him on the shoulder I got into my car to continue my journey back home.

That night as I was driving home I was reflecting on some lessons that I learnt from the incident.

- 1) Never have second thoughts in helping a person in trouble even if he hasn't reached out to you for help.
- 2) We should extend our assistance to any one irrespective of his stature or whether he is known to us or not

3) Expertise can come from a person whom you least expect it from and at certain instances that can be the most important piece of advice

4) It is always useful to be ready for unexpected occurrences

5) It will always be safer to use familiar terrain when in doubt

6) The time will always be right to do the right thing, whether it is raining or not, whether it is day or night

7) Sometimes you have to ignore those who come in your way, in your quest to do a helpful deed

8) Life gives us opportunities to serve mankind and it is our duty to take them with both hands!

(The writer is a founder member of TMC and a former Chairman of TMC Colombo and former President of Chartered Management Institute, SL Branch.)