

{ CORPORATE/NEWS }

DocPhone Automated Health Services launched in Sri Lanka



From left: mobiOs (Pvt.) Ltd. CTO Ruwan Kumara, CEO Ravi Abeysekera, and consultant family physician Dr. Ananda Perera at the launch ceremony for docPhone

Software solutions provider mobiOs.lk recently launched docPhone Automated Health Services, a series of apps that aim to revolutionise community medical self-care through telemedicine. In recent years, medical self-care where individuals make informed decisions regarding diagnosis and treatment of health problems has been considered an essential skill for optimal health. Telemedicine is a convenient, cost-effective, and accessible technology that gives Sri Lankans the opportunity to receive consultations in their own preferred language at their own home, at their own pace. Given that there are limited opportunities to access telemedicine for medical self-care in Sri Lanka, mobiOs has converted smartphones into

medical advisors with docPhone. Dr. Ananda Perera, a specialist in the field of family medicine, provides medical advice for the entire project, the company said. MobiOs stated they've identified common illnesses Sri Lankans experience on a daily basis and designed a chatbot simulating a virtual consultation between a doctor and the patient, which ends with medical advice or prescriptions. DocPhone prescribes over-the-counter medications and non-drug therapies, and docPhone Automated Health Services is now available for the public free of charge for a limited time. Consultations are carried out in either Sinhala, Tamil, or English, allowing equitable access for all Sri Lankans.

14th 'Cargills Village to Home' programme to continue aiding SMEs

The "Cargills Village to Home" programme was established to support the country's small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) by providing them with a platform to engage with a larger network of customers, the company stated as it held the 14th instalment of the programme on 1 and 2 October 2022 at the Baudhaloka Mawatha Cargills Food City premises, with an interesting array of traditional Sri Lankan food and handicrafts.

Several local artisans and innovators took part in the initiative. Sasindu Thathsara from Bibile, also known as "MonaragalaSasindu", is the developer of a water filtering system known as "Mannussakama", aimed at providing the water filtering system at a reasonable price to those who struggle to find safe drinking water. Kandy handicrafts by Asanka Priyalal, another entrepreneur who was a part of the programme, markets a variety of coconut shell products as well as Batik fabric-covered notebooks. Saman Dhammika was another, who marketed his household cleaning products range "Derma Care" - including products such as bathroom cleaners, hand wash, and tile cleaners. Mauli Creations marketed products such as bedsheets, tablecloths, and

clothing made from batiks and handlooms. The rural township of Menikhinna Kalasirigama also participated in the 14th "Cargills Village to Home" programme, displaying their handicrafts made out of Hana plants including bags, table mats, pouches, wall hangings, and mats. "Earth and Fire" by Dumindu had several interesting types of pottery and jewelry to choose from, whereas Nalin Kumara's "Healyo" products included natural bees' honey and bottled food items made of kochchi, sesame, and garlic. "UNIQU" Ayurvedic cosmetic products by Naomi Perera showcased various types of unique ayurvedic cosmetic items. "Sugar Galaxy" by Dennis Thushanthani produces cakes, sweets, and traditional Tamil food items. "Rusteaks Wooden Décor" by Shehara



Fernando showcased decorations made out of scrap wood. And "Derani plants" by Himashi Ranasinghe had several types of flowers and vegetable plants, seeds, and organic fertiliser showcased at the programme.

Prima KottuMee announces promotions

Prima KottuMee announced their "Hot N Spicy Cricket" promotion, returning for the eighth year, from 1 October to 30 November. Prima KottuMee stated that their consumers can stand a chance to win prizes on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis during the promotion period. Consumers are simply required to SMS the unique code found inside each sachet



pack of Prima KottuMee single and five-packs, to 2343 in order to stand a chance to win various prizes. Ten daily winners will be selected throughout the two months

to win daily reloads worth Rs. 500 each, while two weekly winners will receive valuable smartphones. One lucky winner will receive a cash prize of Rs. 50,000 every week. Last but not least, two grand prize winners will walk away with an amazing prize of Rs. 250,000 each during the promotion extending from October to November 2022.

Dr. Keerthi Gunasekara receives National Apex Award for lifetime achievement

Former Sri Lanka Veterinary Association (SLVA) President Dr. Keerthi Gunasekara was awarded the National Apex Award for his invaluable service to agriculture and veterinary science during three decades of contribution to the profession's growth and service to the nation. "I am humbled and honoured to receive this rare lifetime achievement award," said Dr. Gunasekara, who is also a former Senior Sri Lankan Councillor for the Commonwealth.



President Ranil Wickremesinghe presenting the National Apex award to Dr. Keerthi Gunasekara

nutritional deficiencies experienced by children in Sri Lanka," he explained. Dr. Keerthi Gunasekara is an accomplished veterinary surgeon and was the first veterinarian to receive an MBA from the University of Peradeniya. He even completed his further studies at Cornell University, New York, USA. He is a founding

member of the College of Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya, a Fellow of the Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons, and currently serves as the Regional Country Director of Asia and Pacific regions for Quadragen VetHealth, a multinational research-based animal nutrition pharmaceutical company.

LankaQR launches webinar series to educate public on QR payments

LankaQR, a project initiative from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), recently launched its inaugural webinar series to educate the public on how LankaQR intends to transform Sri Lanka into a less-cash society. Moderated by the Working Group of LankaQR Implementation Deputy Chairman Randil Boteju, the first webinar was held in September, enlightening the general public on how LankaQR will soon transform the digital payment ecosystem in the country.



CBSL Assistant Governor D. Kumaratunge was one of the change-makers who participated in the session to deliver a general overview of LankaQR, and how it functions along with the benefits of LankaQR, such as reduction of the cost of cash, convenience and the transparency of transactions, and many more. Kumaratunge also made comparisons with other countries in the Asian region that have implemented such technology. Speaking of the technology behind LankaQR and how it will pave the way for the digitalisation of Sri Lanka, LankaClear CEO Channa De Silva, who was a panellist at the seminar, explained that LankaQR's main objective is to facilitate contactless and

cashless payments within the payment ecosystem using QR technology in Sri Lanka and ensuring that the technology behind QR is built in line with global standards along with the best security and interoperability. Given that LankaQR functions as a new way to make payments without the exchange of physical cash, CBSL Director of Payments and Settlements

Department K.V.K. Alwis provided insight on the importance of LankaQR adaptation from a regulatory point of view. Alwis stated that mobile applications by financial institutions and telecommunication companies have been certified with LankaClear (Pvt.) Ltd. as the network service provider in order to facilitate LankaQR transactions.

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Soft liquor...

Minister Fernando also applauded the introduction of the fuel pass for tourists - a foreign currency-based prepaid fuel card system - and the efforts made by the Ministry of Power and Energy along with Dialog Axiata, Sampath Bank, and Millennium IT in this regard.

New...

"Based on the assessment, if there is a capital requirement needed, we will have to opt for recapitalisation," she said, adding that the CBSL has allowed banks to use their capital buffers to stagger certain impacts to the balance sheet due to interest rate changes. In a statement, the IMF said that one of the key elements of the programme agreed upon with Sri Lanka was safeguarding financial stability by ensuring a healthy and adequately capitalised banking system, and by upgrading financial sector safety nets and regulatory standards with a revised Banking Act. In 2020, former CBSL Governor Prof. W.D. Lakshman tried to implement a new Banking Act in 2021, to include provisions to extend regulations for banks, which are to be established in Colombo Port City. However, a few weeks ago, high-level sources at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) disclosed to *The Morning Business* that the Central Bank was planning to proceed with the draft of the Central Bank Act prepared by former Governor Dr. Indrajit Coomaraswamy, during whose tenure incumbent CBSL Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe functioned as Deputy Governor.

Following the interim Budget 2022's pledge to bring in a new Central Bank Act, sources revealed that the same draft would be implemented with a few amendments.

Import...

Meanwhile, earnings from exports increased in August 2022, continuing its growth trend observed since April 2022. As a result, the merchandise trade deficit recorded a notable contraction in August 2022 compared to the previous year. Workers' remittances increased in August 2022, compared to July 2022. Earnings from tourism recorded an increase in August 2022, compared to the same period in 2021. During August 2022, foreign investments in the Government securities market recorded a marginal net outflow, while such investments in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) recorded a marginal net inflow. The Central Bank continued to provide forex liquidity to finance essential imports, exhausting the liquid level of gross official reserves. Meanwhile, the weighted average spot exchange rate in the interbank market remained at

around Rs. 361 per US dollar during the month.

NDBIB...

...and restructuring of distressed companies for multiple clients in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. He also had a brief stint at EY Singapore during this period and subsequently moved to Acuity Partners (Pvt.) Ltd. Thereafter, he moved to Asia Capital PLC where he served as Chief Strategy Officer and spearheaded capital raising for several projects. Prior to joining NDBIB, he held directorship positions at Acquest (Pvt.) Ltd., New Anthony's Farms (Pvt.) Ltd., and Kasper Global (Pvt.) Ltd., where he contributed immensely to the operations and growth of these entities whilst gaining experience in multiple business sectors. He is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) charterholder and is also a Fellow Member of Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (UK). NDBIB Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Darshan Perera stated: "We are excited to expand our team with the addition of Saminda who is undoubtedly a seasoned strategic and financial professional with a proven track record. We are optimistic that Saminda's vast experience in this domain will help us further establish our position within the market."

Senaka Kakiriwaragodage, CEO of NDB Capital Holdings Ltd., the holding company of NDBIB, said: "Saminda comes with significant experience in capital raising, M&A, and advisory. His wider knowledge, experience and relationships will help to provide innovative solutions to clients of NDBIB." Saminda Weerasinghe, commenting on his latest appointment at NDBIB, said: "I am excited to join the esteemed team of investment bankers at NDBIB. Looking forward to working with the investment bank and the NDB Capital Group to continuously deliver innovative investment banking solutions to our clients domiciled in and out of Sri Lanka. I know these are challenging times in the country, but we at NDBIB are of the firm belief that adversities bring about the best of opportunities."

Managing Director Susantha de Silva said: "CPC takes pride in having been able to energise the tourism industry by timely initiating the Tourist Fuel Pass in collaboration with all stakeholders. It has been a challenge but a joy to explore practical and user-friendly avenues to make tourists feel unburdened and carefree during their stay in our beautiful island. We are grateful to all the entities which held hands with Ceylon Petroleum Corporation in this journey to launch a Tourist Fuel Pass. I sincerely wish that this measure will drive the future tourism industry into a new phase and open new doors to uplift the country's economy."

Commenting, LIOC Managing Director Manoj Gupta said: "We are delighted to collaborate with Dialog Axiata PLC, Sampath Bank PLC and Dialog's Technology partner Millennium IT ESP for this much-awaited launch of Tourist Fuel Pass, that offers tourists fuel assurance at all LIOC sheds. As the travel and hospitality sector is witnessing increasing demand once again, we believe this Tourist Fuel Pass is coming at the right time for tourists looking at resuming their travel and enjoying their holidays in our island nation."

Speaking about the initiative, MillenniumIT ESP CEO Shevan Goonetilleke said: "We are pleased to be a part of this great initiative in facilitating the Tourist Fuel Pass, which will contribute towards encouraging travelers to visit Sri Lanka despite the ongoing crisis. This platform launch was made possible by the incredible partnership between public and private sector companies, the Ministry of power and Energy, the Ministry of Tourism and Lands, Dialog Axiata PLC, Sampath Bank PLC, CPC, and LIOC. And this is just another example of how technology can rapidly create ecosystems to mitigate a national crisis." Dialog Axiata was licensed by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka as an issuer of payment cards to facilitate issuance of single-purpose stored value Tourist Fuel Pass cards. The solution is available across 300 CPC and LIOC outlets, and will be expanded to over 500 outlets by end-October 2022. Tourists can purchase the Tourist Fuel Pass for \$ 5 at any of the 229 Sampath Bank branches islandwide.

Dialog...

We have deep-seated confidence in this platform as it is powered by Dialog Axiata and Sampath Bank, two of the leaders in new technology and innovation. I must also acknowledge the efforts taken by MIT, CPC, and LIOC for facilitating the launch of the Tourist Fuel Pass. We must all come together to showcase the beautiful nation that we all love as the accommodating, hospitable, ultimate travel destination that it is, and I am grateful to all those present on this occasion who have done so." Expressing his thoughts, CPC

Managing Director Susantha de Silva

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Nadika...

She is an accomplished strategic leader in the field of financial services with more than 25 years of progressive experience of which 20 years was in the field of insurance in Sri Lanka and North America. She is well-versed in financial services, having obtained her Bachelor's degree (BSc.) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Colombo. She also holds a Diploma in Investment Funds, Sales and Advice from the Institute of Canadian Bankers Association. Opatha was an accomplished Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) achiever in 2007 and 2008 - one of the highest global qualifications in life insurance.