

# SP TLIGHT ISSUE 10

A newsletter by the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

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## Sri Lanka Red Cross Rings in 2024 with Traditional Spirit



The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society embarked on the journey of 2024 by honoring time-honored traditions across all 25 district branches. With an unwavering commitment to community service, each branch celebrated the advent of the New Year with special programs that brought together volunteers, staff, and members of the branch governance board.



Sri Lanka Red Cross Society kicked off the new year with an Overnight Pirith Chanting Ceremony and heartfelt alms giving at our National Headquarters.



## DREF Operation Extends Support Amidst Adverse Weather Challenges



In response to the pressing needs of communities affected by Dengue and Floods, the Sri Lanka Red Cross, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), launched a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation in June 2023. Initially targeting Colombo, Gampaha, Kegalle, Kandy, Kalutara, Galle, Batticaloa, Trincomalee for Dengue and Matara for Floods, the operation was later extended in October to include Matara, Gampaha, and Galle for floods relief. In December, support expanded to Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, and Puttalam Districts, addressing the escalating flood crisis. As adverse weather conditions persisted into January, the situation in Ampara District reached critical levels, prompting another extension of the operation. The efforts encompassed Dengue prevention campaigns, community cleaning initiatives, distribution of school packs, and provision of essential cash grants, underscoring the commitment of the Red Cross to alleviate suffering and support resilience amidst ongoing challenges.



## The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society launched the National Assessment Report on Migration and Displacement in Colombo

The event garnered attendance from numerous national and international stakeholders, partners, and our dedicated staff. With over a million outbound migrant workers, the report illuminates crucial humanitarian issues. Mr. Mangala Randeniya, Additional General Manager of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, graced us with an insightful keynote address. Additionally, Professor Mallika Pinnawala from the University of Peradeniya and Mr. Anisa Ismaili, Senior Officer from Migration and Displacement at the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, joined the discussion as special guests, sharing their insights.



## Three-Day Training on SGBV for the Red Cross staff members and volunteers

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society recently conducted a comprehensive three-day training program in Colombo, focusing on Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Violence Against Children. This initiative aimed to equip Red Cross staff members and volunteers with essential knowledge and skills to effectively address and respond to these critical issues in their communities. Through interactive sessions and practical exercises, participants gained valuable insights into identifying, preventing, and supporting survivors of SGBV and violence against children. By investing in such training opportunities, the Red Cross reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding vulnerable populations and promoting a culture of safety, respect, and dignity for all.



## Partnership for Progress



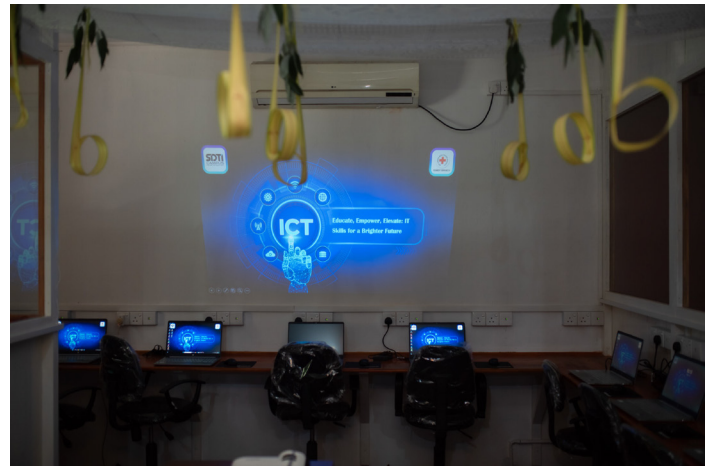
In a remarkable display of collaboration and dedication to community welfare, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing's Department of Building have joined forces to construct a new Outpatient Department (OPD) for the residents of Nainativu Island in Jaffna. This initiative, made possible through the generous support of L.B. Warrendorf and the Local Committee of the German Red Cross Society, represents a significant step towards enhancing healthcare infrastructure in the region. With the invaluable assistance of the Sri Lanka Navy, the construction of the hospital is underway, promising improved access to essential medical services for the people of Nainativu Island.

## Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Inaugurates the First Computer Lab and IT Training Centre for the Marginalised Children and Youth

The Country's Largest Humanitarian Organisation, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) Kandy Branch, keeping with motto 'Empower, Educate, Elevate: IT Skills for a Brighter Future', is pleased to inaugurate the first Computer Lab and Information Technology (IT) training centre with the generous donor support of Dr. Suresh Lopez, an IT professional and Businessman in the United Kingdom (U.K) in partnership with the Skill Development and Training International Institute (STDI). The inauguration session was held at the Kandy District Branch office premises.

In response to the economic crisis, SLRCS Kandy Branch is taking innovative steps beyond traditional humanitarian relief. SLRCS is aiming to enhance skills and employability among school leavers and the youth in the district through quality IT education. This project acts as a beacon of hope for the marginalised and disadvantaged children and youth in the Kandy District.

Speaking at the the Inaugural Ceremony, the First Vice-President of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, Jagath Abeysinghe, remarked, "In challenging times, empowering the most vulnerable is imperative. The IT Training Centre stands as a testament to our dedication to uplift marginalised youth and children, arming them with essential skills for a brighter future. Our gratitude extends to Dr. Suresh Lopez and STDI for their vital role in bringing this impactful project to life."



Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Kandy Branch shared, "This initiative transcends immediate challenges, setting a foundation for long-term development. By offering free IT education, we aim to bridge the digital divide and unlock new opportunities for these deserving individuals". Their enthusiasm towards the project reflects a commitment to sustainable development and community empowerment.

## Outstanding Dedication Recognized

Milaxshan and Tharshan, Livelihood Field Officers from the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Vavuniya Branch, have been deservedly recognized with appreciation awards organized by both community and government stakeholders.



### Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Gampaha Branch Offer First Aid Support at Duruthu Maha Perahera



### Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Vavuniya Branch Youth Wing Delivers First Aid Support at St. Anthony Church Annual Feast



### Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Vavuniya Branch Youth Wing Promotes Reconciliation and Unity Through Thai Pongal Celebration



### Blood Donation Camp in Trincomalee

In order to support medical professionals, the dedicated volunteers and staff from our Trincomalee branch, along with the Orr's Hill Vivekananda College Old Students Association, organized a blood donation campaign at its premises last Saturday. The drive was supported by Victory Agencies (Shipping) in Trincomalee and almost 50 individuals participated in the initiative.



### First-Aid Training for the staff members



## Sri Lanka Red Cross Advances Disaster Preparedness: Capacity Building at IFRC CE Training in Kuala Lumpur

Demonstrating their commitment to enhancing disaster response capabilities, Sri Lanka Red Cross was proudly represented at the IFRC CEA (Community Engagement and Accountability) Training held in Kuala Lumpur. This participation underscores the organization's proactive approach to staying abreast of the latest developments and best practices in humanitarian aid. By engaging in such training sessions facilitated by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Sri Lanka Red Cross reaffirms its dedication to fostering community engagement and accountability in disaster management efforts, ultimately strengthening resilience and saving lives in times of crisis.



## Spreading Joy



In a heartwarming collaboration aimed at brightening the lives of young students, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Puttalam Branch, in partnership with the Sri Lanka Youth Association in France, brought smiles to over 65 students at a Dabakele school in Chilaw by providing them with brand new shoes. This initiative not only ensures that the students have essential footwear but also signifies the power of global partnerships in making a positive impact at the local level. By nurturing such connections and fostering a sense of community care, these organizations exemplify the spirit of compassion and solidarity, enhancing the well-being of the students and spreading joy throughout the community.

## Celebrating Service and Education: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Mullaitivu District Branch's Annual Gathering 2024

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Mullaitivu District Branch's Annual Gathering for 2024 was a momentous occasion held at the Branch Conference Hall on 20.01.2024, presided over by the Honorary Branch Chairman, Dr. K. Sudarsan. The esteemed presence of Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Honorary President, Mr. K. Balakrishnan, as Chief Guest, added to the significance of the event. This gathering served as a platform to honor Red Cross volunteers for their unwavering dedication to humanitarian service. Additionally, a new initiative in collaboration with the Kanagamah Foundation (United Kingdom) was launched—the Scholarship Award Ceremony for economically disadvantaged university students.





## Volunteer Spotlight: Serving the Community in Sri Lanka's Flood Affected Areas

Sri Lanka's adverse weather conditions have had a lasting impact on the lives of our people. Amidst the havoc caused by continuous rainfall, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society has been at the forefront supporting the people with the flood operations, extending support to those affected across the island. Ampara District has been an area with the most profound effects and we extended our ongoing flood operations along with our long standing partner, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to the area.

At the forefront of our relief efforts are our volunteers and as always their continuous support has been the backbone of the organisation's services. Representing the hard work of our volunteers, for this month's issue of Spotlight, we were in conversation with Jayani Thimanka (23), a volunteer from Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's Ampara Branch. Jayani is from the Nawagampura Area of the Ampara District. Her journey as a volunteer began a few months ago when she participated in a First-Aid Training Programme, inspired by the Principles and the work of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, Jayani stepped in and became a part of our family as a volunteer.

In the wake of the devastating floods in Ampara, Jayani was on the ground, along with the team supporting the relief efforts. She saw and heard how people in the area were suffering due to the dire economic situations faced by the people, many struggling in fulfilling the basic necessities like food. Despite the challenges, Jayani and her fellow volunteers worked tirelessly to provide assistance, going door to door to identify and support the most vulnerable individuals and families.

"We are still working on recovering and uplifting these lives", Jayani shared. "Our efforts extend beyond immediate relief to long term solutions for those affected by the floods. We cleaned homes, public spaces and offered support without hesitation, driven by our commitment to serving our community".

"I feel fortunate to be part of an organisation dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of others. Together with my fellow volunteers, we are united by a common goal: to serve our people and bring out the best in our communities", added Jayani, emphasising that being a volunteer for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, is not just an opportunity, but a privilege.



**“ We are still working on recovering and uplifting the lives of our people ”**

In the face of adversity, volunteers like Jayani exemplify the spirit of compassion and resilience, demonstrating that even in the darkest times, there is hope and humanity prevails.

Jayani concludes, extending an invitation to others to join the cause, she emphasises the profound sense of fulfilment that comes from serving others. "I invite you all to give volunteering a shot," she said. "The experience is rewarding, and the impact we can make together is immeasurable. Let's come together to serve our communities and make a difference."



# OUR SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

## HUMANITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

## IMPARTIALITY

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## NEUTRALITY

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## INDEPENDENCE

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain. service.

## UNITY

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## UNIVERSALITY

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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