

# UoR HIGHLIGHTS

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

The Role of Reproductive Biotechnologies in Transforming Livestock Production in Sri Lanka and Beyond

Dr. Lakshiitha Fonseka  
Department of Animal Science  
Faculty of Agriculture



## The 31<sup>st</sup> Convocation of the University of Ruhuna

*The 31<sup>st</sup> convocation of the University of Ruhuna was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 at the Rabin-dranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium.*

*Degree awardees from all ten faculties participated in the ceremony, where 268 postgraduate degrees and 2,280 (both external and internal) first degrees were conferred by His Most Venerable Dr. Akuratiye Nanda Thero, Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna. The convocation was conducted by the Competent Authority of the University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor R.M.V.S.K. Rathnayaka, while the Deans of the faculties announced their respective degree awardees.*



The degrees were awarded across six sessions over the two-day event. Each session commenced with the academic procession, which included the Chancellor, Competent Authority, Deans of the faculties, Librarian, Registrar, academic staff, and administrative staff of the university.

### Day 1: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024

A total of 1,296 graduates received their degrees during the three sessions held on the first day as follows:

Session 1: Conferred postgraduate degrees and degrees in the Bachelor of Business Administration (Honors) in Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Human Resource Management, and Marketing.

Session 2: Conferred postgraduate degrees and undergraduate degrees in the Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Agribusiness Management, Agricultural Resource Management and Technology, Green Technology, Fisheries and Marine Sciences, Marine and Freshwater Sciences, and the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.





Session 3: Dedicated to the Faculty of Science, conferring postgraduate degrees as well as the Bachelor of Science (General and Special Degrees) and the Bachelor of Computer Science (Special Degree).

## Day 2: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024

The second day featured three sessions, conferring degrees to 984 graduates in three sessions as follows.

Session 4: Awarded postgraduate and first degrees to 476 graduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in the followings: Bachelor of Arts Honors in Buddhist Studies, Buddhist Culture, Buddhist Philosophy, Economics, English, Geography, History, Pali, Political Science, Sinhala, Social Statistics, and Sociology.

Session 5: Conferred degrees upon 76 postgraduate students and undergraduates in: Bachelor of Arts (General, Special, and Honors), Bachelor of Science in Engineering Honors, Bachelor of Science Honors in Medical Laboratory Science, Bachelor of Science Honors in Nursing, and Bachelor of Pharmacy Honors.

Session 6: Awarded degrees to students of the Faculty of Technology in the followings: Bachelor of Engineering Technology Honors, Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology Honors, and Bachelor of Biosystems Technology Honors. Additionally, Bachelor of Arts (External) degrees were conferred on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.



## Vice-Chancellor's Gold Medal and Academic Excellence

Each year, the most outstanding undergraduate students, selected based on their academic performance and extracurricular achievements—including sports—are honored with the Vice-Chancellor's Gold Medal.

The Vice-Chancellor's Gold Medal recipients for the 31<sup>st</sup> Convocation were: Ms. M.S. Vishmila Harshani Priyashadhi (Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology), Ms. Sinali Dulara Kumarasinghe (Faculty of Medicine), Ms. Ruvini Karangoda (Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology), Mr. H.D. Malith Udara Wijesinghe (Faculty of Agriculture), Mr. R.R.M. Udara Nipun Bandara (Faculty of Science), Ms. M.G.G. Shashikala Dilhani Mahanama (Faculty of Science), Ms. R.M. Sashikala Sewwandi (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), Ms. Sandali Upseksha Gamage (Faculty of Technology), Mr. Silmaguruge Thavishka Ruchiranga Fernando (Faculty of Engineering), and Ms. K. Nirosha Rathnakumari (Faculty of Allied Health Sciences).

Additionally, subject-specific gold medals were awarded to students demonstrating exceptional academic performance. Among them, Ms. Sinali Dulara Kumarasinghe received the highest number of awards, earning eight gold medals. In total, 103 gold medals were bestowed by the Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna during this convocation.





## The Role of Reproductive Biotechnologies in Transforming Livestock Production in Sri Lanka and Beyond

The crowded markets of Asia are a vibrant demonstration of the region's accelerating demand for essential animal-based foods. With the population and income expansion in economically boosting countries like China, India, and even in Sri Lanka, the demand for these essential animal-based foods exaggerates. However, traditional livestock farming struggles to confront this increasing demand, highlighting an urgent need for novel and innovative solutions. This is where animal biotechnologies appear in the frame, offering exceptional tools that can significantly enhance both the quality and productivity of livestock production while upholding the food security needs for the future.

Imagine a large-scale dairy farm in Sri Lanka, India, or any other developing country, where farmers work tirelessly to increase production while meeting the demand for milk and milk products. This situation is very frequent among many Asian citizens, obsessed with the necessity to feed a growing population. Still, beef production in the Asian countries presents unique challenges. Despite the well-established poultry industry, beef production and pork production require more resources and time, resulting in fewer end products. This low effectiveness indicates the necessity of innovations and developments in the livestock sector to bridge this gap.

The agriculture sector is one of the keystones of the Sri Lankan economy, and the livestock sub-sector also plays a crucial role. Regardless of the milk and meat industry progressions, challenges such as low production efficiencies and extreme production costs persist in the livestock sector. The incorporation of advanced biotechnologies binds the potential to transform farming practices in Sri Lanka, enabling farmers to increase their production while lowering the cost of production. Most widely used reproductive techniques such as artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) can significantly enhance livestock genetics and farm efficiency. Furthermore, other biotechnological developments, including in vitro fertilization (IVF), genomic selection, sexed semen, and precision livestock farming (PLF) technologies, can boost and enhance productivity and sustainability in the dairy industry.

Boosting livestock production is crucial not only for economic development but also for improving nutrition within households. Nutritional security, crucial for public health and well-being, largely relies on the consistent availability of high-quality meat, dairy and other livestock products. Addressing the challenge of production efficiency is therefore not just an economic necessity but a public health priority. In countries like Sri Lanka, where nutritional



**Dr. Lakshitha Fonseka**  
Department of Animal Science  
Faculty of Agriculture  
University of Ruhuna

deficiencies are common, increasing the supply of nutritious animal products can have a profound impact on improving health outcomes and filling dietary gaps.

Digging into the realm of animal reproductive biotechnologies, we realize that methods like artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) are leading the way. These deep-rooted techniques have been adjusted and generalized to intensely increase livestock productivity in the world. Consider a lab where the best genetic material from top-tier animals is accurately chosen and spread or introduced to farms. AI makes this feasible, allowing farmers to progressively expand the genetic profile of their herds. Innovations such as sexed semen and minimal sperm quantities have made this process even more efficient. Embryo transfer, on the other hand, expedites the global distribution of superior genetics. Imagine a situation where the genetic materials derived from one elite cow could enhance the productivity and superiority of herds worldwide. Innovations and advancements in vitrification technology have made the transport and implantation of embryos more effective, increasing pregnancy percentages and genomic diversity while allowing farmers to progressively improve the genetic profile of their herds.

In Sri Lanka, where smallholder farmers are predominant and share the largest portion from the livestock economy, these technologies could lead to a substantial shift. By utilizing AI and ET, Sri Lankan farmers could approach superior genetics, resulting in advanced milk yields and better herds, thereby improving their financial gains and sustainability. Local research centers and academic institutions involved in livestock subsector could play a fundamental role in training farmers and offering the infrastructure needed to implement these sophisticated techniques.

On farms in developing countries like Brazil, scientists are operating and performing in vitro fertiliza-



tion (IVF) to produce embryos outside the natural reproductive process. This reproductive technique not only upsurges the number of embryos available for transfer but also enriches the genetic selection, leading to better livestock. Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), a technique which is initially developed for human medicine, is now used in livestock production. ICSI allows for the use of lower-quality sperm, increasing fertility rates and stipulating a good solution for farmers facing reproductive challenges in their herds. For Sri Lankan farmers, adopting IVF and ICSI techniques could help to overcome the limitations of low-quality semen samples and improve the reproductive efficiency of their livestock. Although this is a challenging task for farmers, it is not impossible to achieve. They require greater financial support and expert knowledge to successfully implement sustainable practices. In this regard, government involvement is crucial, as policies, subsidies, and incentives can significantly ease the burden on farmers. Additionally, academic and research institutions can play a major role by conducting research, offering training programs, and providing scientific insights to improve sustainability in the agricultural sector. Collaboration between farmers, stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers is essential to ensure long-term success in sustainable farming.

These biotechnological advances also hold great potential for wildlife conservation in Sri Lanka, specifically for critically endangered species and for elephants. The diminishing elephant population, mainly due to habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, and poaching, poses a significant risk to biodiversity. By applying IVF and ICSI, genetically superior creatures can be preserved, and their valuable genetic material can be used to enhance genetic diversity and improve reproductive success. This is exclusively important for isolated or aging populations with limited breeding opportunities. Furthermore, these technologies can help rescue and proliferate the genes of injured or deceased animals, preventing the irreversible damage of precious genetic traits. Executing these advanced reproductive techniques can contribute to the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations, safeguarding their survival for future generations while supporting conservation efforts in Sri Lanka.

Imagine a genetically modified pig producing organs suitable for human transplantation. This is the reality of transgenic and cloned animals, which are being developed to produce pharmaceuticals and organs for xenotransplantation. While the prospective benefits are immense, these technologies bring with them some ethical questions. The use of animals to produce human medicines and organs increases concerns about animal welfare and the ethical consequences of such practices. In Sri Lanka, the arguments on the ethical use of animal biotechnologies is gaining momentum, with an emphasis on ensuring that innovation is equalized with

ethical considerations.

In advanced technological labs, scientists use tools like CRISPR/Cas9 and PiggyBac technologies to edit the genomes of animals with precision. These technologies have altered genetic modification, enabling corrections of defects, insertion of beneficial traits, and creation of animals designed for explicit needs. From disease-resistant cattle to pigs that grow faster on less feed, genome editing offers endless possibilities. These technologies could also create livestock that are more resilient to climate change, diseases, or that convert feed more efficiently, addressing future agricultural challenges. In Sri Lanka, where climate change intimidates agriculture, genome editing could help to develop livestock that are more adaptable to the local environments. This adaptability would not only ensure food security but also back farmers' livelihoods among climate challenges. Collaborations between local universities, research institutes, and global research organizations could accelerate the development and use of genome editing in Sri Lanka.

Looking to the future, animal biotechnology will encounter ethical arguments and regulatory challenges. The welfare of the animals, cloning implications, and the boundaries of genetic modification are all topics of serious discussion. The recreation of upgraded biotechnological solutions continues, with researchers aiming to perfect in vitro techniques, enhance genome editing tools, and discover new methods that balance production efficiency with animal welfare. In Sri Lanka, constructing a resilient regulatory framework that encourages innovation while safeguarding ethical standards could help in the responsible growth of biotechnological applications in livestock farming.

Animal reproductive biotechnologies are creating new horizons for farms across Asia. These innovations can significantly improve livestock production with improved genetics and advanced breeding procedures. Financing in research and development is vital to overcoming inefficiencies and safeguarding a sustainable, healthy future for the livestock sector worldwide. For Sri Lanka, implementing these technological advancements could signify a flourishing and sustainable future for its agriculture industry and its people.



## International Conference on Management and Economics (ICME) - 2024

The Faculty of Management and Finance organized the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Management and Economics (ICME) on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024. This annual event provides a platform for academics, researchers, and practitioners to exchange knowledge in the field of Management and Economics. ICME 2024's theme, "Entrepreneurial Renaissance: Nurturing Innovation for Economic Revitalization," focused on innovation as a driver of economic growth. The conference offered a dynamic intellectual environment for discussing contemporary business challenges and opportunities.



The Business Forum brought together micro and small-scale entrepreneurs and undergraduates from the Faculty of Management and Finance. Four successful alumni, including graduates from the University of Ruhuna and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, shared their experiences, offering practical insights for aspiring entrepreneurs. Miss Madhavi Ariyasena, a Lecturer in the Department of Accountancy, coordinated the forum.



The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna attended as the Chief Guest, with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor serving as the Guest of Honour. The event featured participation from distinguished guests, faculty, and students, creating an engaging atmosphere. Professor Gideon Maas, the Executive Director of the International Center for Transformational Entrepreneurship at Coventry University, delivered the keynote address, discussing transformative entrepreneurial practices in challenging economic environments.

The Idea Cloud 2024: Business Idea Competition, themed "A Resilient Future: Creative Solutions for Economic Revitalization," gave school students and undergraduates a platform to present innovative solutions to contemporary environmental challenges. The event was coordinated by Mrs. M.G.M. Dilrukshi, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship.

The conference was held in a hybrid format, allowing both on-site and virtual participation. Six technical sessions covered diverse topics such as Accounting and Finance, Business Management, Human Resource Management, Information Technology, Marketing, and an Undergraduate Research Forum. These sessions facilitated rigorous academic discussions and knowledge exchange.

ICME 2024's success was due to the efforts of the organizing team, led by Professor A.C. Karunaratne, the Conference Coordinator, and Miss B.D.T.M. Kamalasena, a Lecturer in the Department of Marketing, as the Secretary. The commitment of the organizing team, along with contributions from faculty, students, and participants, ensured the smooth execution of the conference and associated events.

In addition to the main conference, two key events were held: the Business Forum and the Idea Cloud Competition.

## Āloko Udapādi – A Dhamma Discussion

The Āloko Udapādi Dhamma Discussion Program, guided by the Head of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Ven. Dr. Makola Mangala Thero, aims to enhance knowledge and foster innovative ideas in Buddhism.

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, Professor Thilak Kariyawasam led a discussion on "The Utility of the Abhidhamma in Judging Merit and Demerit," coordinated by Lecturer Ven. Parasangaswewa Sumana-tissa Thero. The session explored the teachings of the Abhidhamma and its relevance in evaluating moral actions, enriching participants' understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

This program continues to promote intellectual growth and scholarly engagement in Buddhist studies.

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## Launching Ceremony of the Sammānanā Journal

The Sammānanā Journal was officially launched on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024, during a heartfelt ceremony that also honored the retirement of Ven. Professor Beligalle Dhammajothi Thero. This momentous occasion celebrated both the remarkable academic contributions of Professor Dhammajothi and a significant milestone for the Sammānanā Journal, which is dedicated to advancing scholarly discourse and innovation in the fields of Pali and Buddhist Studies.

The ceremony brought together distinguished scholars, faculty members, and students who reflected on the profound impact of Professor Dhammajothi Thero's work in the academic community. His leadership and dedication to promoting Buddhist studies have left an indelible mark, and this event served as a fitting tribute to his extraordinary career. Speeches throughout the ceremony highlighted the professor's invaluable contributions to the university and the broader field of Buddhist scholarship.

The launch of the Sammānanā Journal was celebrated as a major milestone, symbolizing the department's ongoing commitment to fostering intellectual growth, academic excellence, and global collaboration in Buddhist studies. The journal aims to serve as a platform for emerging and established scholars to share their research, engage with critical issues, and contribute to the ever-evolving field of Buddhist studies.



## Webinar on Dreaming for Postgraduate Opportunities Abroad

The Ruhuna University Mathematics and Statistics Society, in collaboration with the Department of Mathematics, University of Ruhuna, successfully conducted a webinar titled "Dreaming for Postgraduate Opportunities Abroad? Let Us Guide You on Your Journey" on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024, starting at 7:00 p.m. This program attracted a substantial virtual audience of over 250 participants.

The resource persons for the session were two distinguished alumni of the BSc. (Special) Degree in Mathematics, University of Ruhuna: Mr. Damith Nilanga Silva, a PhD student at the University of Louisville, USA, and Ms. Dureksha Thilakasiri, a PhD student in Operations Research at Southern Methodist University, USA. They shared their motivating academic journeys, experiences studying abroad, and practical advice for pursuing postgraduate opportunities overseas. The session included a dynamic Q&A segment providing participants with the opportunity to clarify doubts about applications, scholarships, and transitioning to international academia. The webinar proved to be an enriching experience, offering valuable insight and motivating students to achieve their academic goals beyond national borders.

### WEBINAR

## DREAMING FOR POSTGRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD?

LET US GUIDE YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY

**Q&A  
SESSION**

**August 24 2024**  
 @ 7.00 pm

**Conducted by**

**Mr. Damith Nilanga Silva**  
PhD student, University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA  
 MPhil Student, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka  
 BSc (Special) in Mathematics (Applied), University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

**Ms. Dureksha Thilakasiri**  
PhD student in Operations Research, Lyle school of Engineering,  
 Southern Methodist University, Texas, USA  
 BSc (Special) in Mathematics (Statistics), University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

Link: <https://learn.zoom.us/j/91219045472?pwd=rU5YbG9BdG9xYjQyTSmoHUR0ojV3>

Passcode: 9A0vD99Y

Meeting ID: 912 1904 5472

All are  
Welcome!

Organized by  
 Ruhuna University Mathematics and Statistics Society (RUMSS)  
 Department of Mathematics, University of Ruhuna



## The 9<sup>th</sup> Ruhuna Arts Students Annual Sessions (RASAS)- 2024

The 9<sup>th</sup> Ruhuna Arts Students' Annual Sessions (RASAS) took place on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024, hosted by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. The primary aim of the conference was to enhance undergraduates' research knowledge in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, fostering research across diverse disciplines.



The inaugural ceremony featured a keynote address by Ven. Dr. Walpole Piyananda Thero, followed by a special address from Vietnamese Bhikkhuni, Dr. Ven. Bodhicitta, the Guest of Honor. Distinguished guests included Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna; Senior Professor Saman Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Mr. Renuka Priyantha, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; and Ven. Dr. Makola Mangala Thero, Head of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies.

The conference was chaired by Ven. Dr. Koggalle Wijitha, Thero with Mr. Anuda Kanchana serving as Secretary. Over 300 students participated, presenting a total of 119 research abstracts, reflecting the vibrant academic exchange during the sessions. The event successfully provided a platform for students to showcase their research, sharpen their academic skills, and contribute to the intellectual growth of the university community.

## Bridging Academia and Industry for Sustainable Regional Development

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the Faculty of Technology hosted a collaborative meeting led by its Dean, Prof. P.K.S.C. Jayasinghe, with the participation of academic staff, the Divisional Secretary of Kamburupitiya, local representatives, and small-scale industrialists from the Kamburupitiya area.

The discussion focused on how innovative research and student-developed inventions at the Faculty of Technology could address challenges faced by local manufacturing industries. The exchange of ideas emphasized the potential for academic contributions to drive industrial growth and innovation. It was agreed to organize future visits to industrial sites to gain deeper insights into operational needs and develop practical solutions. This initiative underscores the Faculty of Technology's commitment to aligning academic research with real-world applications, playing a vital role in the country's economic development.



## Fisheries and Aquaculture Exhibition at Mahinda Rajapaksha College, Matara

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology at Mahinda Rajapaksha College hosted an exhibition highlighting key practices in ornamental fish cultivation and sustainable aquaculture, including, ornamental fish tank maintenance, safe fish transportation, Live feeds for fish, and aerial hydroponic-aquaculture integration. This exhibition enhanced awareness of aquaculture innovations and their role in sustainable fisheries, and the event was coordinated by Dr. W.S. Weerakkody of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.





## Ruhuna International Conference on Innovation and Technology (RICIT) - 2024



On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024, The Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna, successfully hosted RICIT 2024 under the theme “Advancing a Sustainable and Resilient Society Through Technological Innovations.” The conference featured Professor Xiaodong Yang from the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, as the keynote speaker. The event was graced by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, as the Chief Guest, and Senior Professor E.P.S. Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as the Guest of Honor.

A distinguished gathering of academics, researchers, industry experts, and students, including Professor Subash Jayasinghe, Dean of the Faculty of Technology, engaged in knowledge exchange and collaboration. Technical sessions covered Science and Agriculture, Engineering and Technology, Computer Science, and Management and Entrepreneurship.

Under the leadership of Conference Chair Dr. Wathsala Rajawatta and Secretary Dr. H.C.C.

De Silva, the event highlighted critical technological advancements addressing global challenges. Parallel events such as a Product Showcase featuring innovative projects and an Alumni Session launching the Faculty's alumni website reinforced the Faculty's commitment to networking and knowledge-sharing.

RICIT 2024 emphasized the transformative role of technology in fostering a sustainable and resilient society, leaving participants inspired and motivated to drive future innovations.

## A Motivational Lecture for the Advanced Level Students

An educational motivational speech for Advanced Level Buddhist Culture students of the Matara Educational Zone was held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024, at the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Ruhuna. The session was conducted by Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna





## The 10<sup>th</sup> Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (RUICHSS)

Continuing with Humanities and Social Sciences Research and Education in the South of the Nation, the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (RUICHSS) unfolded at the University of Ruhuna, Matara, on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. Organised by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Ruhuna with the Department of English and Linguistics and the Department of English Language Teaching bestowed with the coordination, the theme of the conference was "Emerging Avenues for Sustainability Literacy." RUICHSS 2024 served as a platform for the collective dissemination of knowledge under ten curated trajectories that encompass the diversely complex sphere of humanities and social sciences research with the central aim of outreach in aiding the scientifically oriented effective decision-making process as called for by sustainability literacy.



The Keynote Speaker of the 10<sup>th</sup> RUICHSS 2024 was Senior Professor (Chair) Maithree Wickramasinghe of the University of Kelaniya whose work in the fields of Gender and English Studies continues to inspire researchers and students both locally and internationally. Her Keynote address was titled "Sustainability Literacy: Challenges and Emerging Avenues," inspiring the researchers and students who attended the conference. With over 25 papers presented at the technical sessions, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Ruhuna was delighted to welcome researchers and students from across the island onsite on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2024.

## Embedding Carbon Education Into the HRM Curriculum

The Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Ruhuna hosted a transformative session entitled "Embedding Carbon Education into the HRM Curriculum in Sri Lankan Universities," held in collaboration with the University of Derby, United Kingdom. This esteemed session was led by Dr. Naznin Tabassum, Senior Lecturer and Program Lead at the University of Derby, and took place on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Tabassum's insightful presentation on the integration of carbon education into HRM curricula inspired the department to take significant steps toward enhancing environmental awareness both within the academic sphere and the broader community.

The session was met with enthusiastic participation, and the knowledge shared is poised to influence the future of HRM education in Sri Lanka, aligning efforts with global sustainability initiatives. This event was initiated by Dr. K.G. Priyashantha, Senior Lecturer in the Department of

**Invited Talk**

**Embedding Carbon Education into the HRM Curriculum for Sri Lankan Universities**

**Speaker**

**Dr. Naznin Tabassum**  
Senior Lecturer and Program Leader for MSc in Management Programme, University of Derby, United Kingdom

**07.00 PM Onwards** **30th August 2024** **Online**

**Moderator**

**Dr. K.G. Priyashantha**  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

**Organised by**

**Department of Human Resource Management**  
Faculty of Management and Finance,  
University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

Human Resource Management. The department extended heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Sakunthala Rathnayake, Head of the department of Human Resource Management at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, and her esteemed team of academics for their valuable participation and support. This event represented a significant milestone in our commitment to advancing sustainable HRM education.



## A Talk on Research Related to Medical/Health Data

The Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science, organized a talk on "Research Related to Medical/Health Data" on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. The objective of this event was to introduce undergraduate students to the research culture within the medical field and demonstrate how mathematical and statistical concepts are applied to solve real-world problems in the field.

The resource person of the event was Dr. Sithum Munasinghe, who is an alumnus of the Department of Mathematics, University of Ruhuna and an Associate Research Fellow and Health Data Analyst at the Western Sydney University, Australia. The talk was an excellent opportunity for students to learn how interdisciplinary research, combining mathematics and medical science, can lead to innovative solutions. It highlighted the importance of mathematical/statistical tools including software in analyzing health data and how such research can contribute to improving healthcare industry. Dr. K.D. Prasangika and Dr. N. Yapage pioneered in organizing this event.



## Zotero Workshop for Undergraduates

The Department of Human Resource Management organized a workshop titled "Mastering Zotero" to empower 3000-level HRM-specialized undergraduates with essential research skills. The session was held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Faculty Computer Lab. Dr. K.G. Priyashantha, Senior Lecturer attached to the Department of Human Resource Management expertly guided this valuable session. The session provided a comprehensive overview of Zotero by covering Zotero Fundamentals, Advanced Zotero Features, Citation Management & Integration, and Data Management and Collaboration.



## A/L Examination Preparation Seminars by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies

The Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Ruhuna organized a series of four seminars to assist Advanced Level students in preparing for the G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination. Held between August and October, the seminars covered key topics such as Buddhist Civilization, Pali Language, and Buddhist Teachings.

The first two seminars on Buddhist Civilization, held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024, provided students with valuable insights and academic guidance. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, a seminar on the Pali Language offered an in-depth understanding of its significance in Buddhist texts. The final seminar, held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024, explored Buddhist philosophy, history, and practice. Expert lecturers led engaging discussions and sessions, helping students enhance their knowledge and academic skills to ensure they were well-prepared for the examination.

These initiatives reflect the department's commitment to supporting students' academic success and fostering a deeper appreciation for Buddhist studies.





### Exploring the Importance of Buddhist Studies for Professional and Academic Development

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies organized a special discussion titled "The Importance of Buddhist Studies for Professional and Academic Development" from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

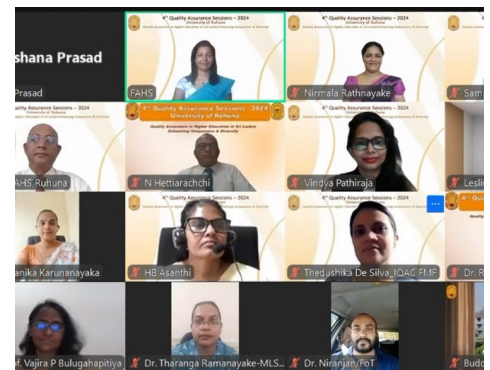
The session was honored by Venerable Wadigala Samitharathana Thero, the first Sri Lankan Buddhist monk to attend Oxford University in over 105 years. Venerable Thero shared invaluable insights into the importance of Buddhist studies in today's academic and professional landscape, offering practical guidance for students seeking higher education abroad. He discussed scholarship opportunities in the UK and Europe, provided strategies for improving English proficiency, and addressed the challenges faced by students in English-medium programs. In addition, Venerable Thero highlighted how Buddhist teachings like mindfulness and self-discipline can enhance personal and professional growth, making Buddhist studies relevant to contemporary issues. The event was organized under the guidance of Ven. Dr. Makola Mangala, Head of the



Department, and coordinated by Dr. Dilshan Manoj Rajapaksha. The Department expresses sincere gratitude to Venerable Wadigala Samitharathana Thero and all participants for making the event a success.

### Fourth Quality Assurance Session of the University of Ruhuna

The fourth Quality Assurance Session of the University of Ruhuna was successfully conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024, via Zoom. The session was conducted under the theme, "Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Sri Lanka: Enhancing Uniqueness and Diversity." Senior Professor. R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayaka, Competent Authority, University of Ruhuna, graced the event as the Chief Guest. The keynote speech was delivered by Senior Professor Udith K. Jayasinghe, Vice-Chancellor, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. "Enhancing the Uniqueness and Diversity of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Where Do We Go From Here?"



The Acting Director of the Center for Quality Assurance, Prof. H.B. Asanthi, presented an overview of the quality Assurance activities of the University. Chairpersons of the Internal Quality Assurance Cells of the faculties, units, divisions and the library of the University of Ruhuna presented their quality assurance activities over the year 2024 during the session and 13 oral presentations were conducted at two parallel technical sessions. The proceedings of the fourth Ruhuna Quality Assurance Session was published including 13 extended abstracts and made available on university's website. The event was organized by the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, chaired by Prof. Imendra Kotapola under the guidance of the Center for Quality Assurance (CQA), University of Ruhuna.

### Industry Visit for Bachelor of Arts Honours in Information Technology Students

The second-year students of the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Information Technology program embarked on an industry visit designed to bridge their academic knowledge with practical industry experience. The visit offered them a unique opportunity to observe the latest technological advancements, understand industry workflows, and gain insights into the practical challenges faced by IT professionals. This enriching experience deepened their understanding of real-world challenges and innovations in the IT sector, equipping them with practical insights that will undoubtedly enhance their academic and professional development.





## Discussion on Buddhist Civilization and Buddhism With Southern Province School Teachers

A special discussion was held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024, at the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, bringing together officers from the Southern Provincial Education Office and regional subject teachers under the department's leadership. On the same day, a seminar for Advanced Level students studying Buddhist Civilization in the Southern Province took place at the main auditorium of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna.

The event highlighted the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies' significant contributions to advancing Buddhist Civilization and Buddhism as academic subjects. The department played a key role in organizing and providing resources for these initiatives, fostering discus-



sions to address both national and regional educational challenges. Various subject-related issues were explored from multiple perspectives, with a focus on developing practical solutions.

Representing the department in the discussion were the Head of the Department, Ven. Dr. Makola Mangala Thero, along with Lecturer Ven. Parasangaswewa Sumanatissa Thero, Professor Sirinama Bandara, Dr. Ravindu Priyanka, and Dr. Dilshan Manoj Rajapaksa. Special appreciation is extended to the Director of Religion and Ethics of the Matara Education Division in the Southern Province, as well as the regional school teachers, whose active participation contributed to the success of this collaboration.

## Workshop on Research Design for Undergraduates

### Research Design

**How to Conduct an Academic Research**

For the Undergraduates  
of the Department of Pali and Buddhist  
Studies

Session 1 - 17th July 2024

Session 2 - 19th July 2024

**At PB3 Hall**



Madushanka, D.M.T.  
Lecturer (Probationary)  
BSc (RJT, SL),  
Reading for MSc (Kel, SL)

Coordinated by Ven. Dr. K. Wijitha  
Senior Lecturer

Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies  
University of Ruhuna

A workshop on Research Design was successfully conducted for the undergraduates of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Ruhuna on 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024, aiming to enhance students' ability to understand methodologies of academic research.

Mr. D.M.T. Madhusanka, Lecturer from the Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management, University of Ruhuna, was the resource person of the event. He provided valuable insights into the essential aspects of research design, offering practical guidance and strategies for conducting academic research. The workshop was coordinated by Ven. Dr. K. Wijitha Thero of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies.

## 13<sup>th</sup> Undergraduate Symposium: Faculty of Engineering.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Undergraduate Symposium on Recent Advances in Civil Engineering, hosted by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society (CEES) and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (DCEE), was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024, at the Department of Marine Engineering and Naval Architecture,



Magalle. This annual event highlighted the research of final-year Civil and Environmental Engineering students from the University of Ruhuna, with 71 research papers presented through oral and poster sessions. Distinguished guests included Chief Guest Senior Prof. Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice-Chancellor, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Senior Prof. E.P.S. Chandana. The keynote address was delivered by Eng. Kamala Gunawardena, Vice President of IESL, followed by an interactive Q&A session with Eng. Mangala Silva, Chairman of the Civil Engineering Sectional Committee.

CEES extends its gratitude to faculty, research supervisors, and students for their contributions. Special appreciation goes to Tokyo Cement Company (Lanka) PLC for its continued sponsorship, strengthening academia-industry collaboration.



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Ocean and Freshwater Systems (SOFS)

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Ocean and Freshwater Systems (SOFS-2024), organized by the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna, was held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024, under the theme “Expanding Resilient Blue Horizons.”*

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amerasena, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, as the Chief Guest, alongside Senior Professor E.P.S. Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor K.H.M.A. Deepanada, Dean of the Faculty, and invited academic and administrative staff. The symposium also welcomed several key figures from government, semi-government, and private sector or-



ganizations, including representatives from the Ocean University of Sri Lanka, NARA, MEPA, and NWSDB. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Shamen P. Vidanage, Country Representative of IUCN, on Sri Lanka's prospects for a blue economy. The event received financial support from the China-Sri Lanka Joint Center for Education and Research (CSL-CER), and Professor Weiqiang Wang, Executive Director of CSL-CER, delivered the guest speech.

Additionally, four plenary speeches were conducted by Chinese scientists and Senior Professor T.P.D. Gamage during the technical sessions. Sampath Bank PLC served as the strategic collaborator, providing full logistical support for the symposium. The symposium's extended abstracts were reviewed through a double-blind peer review process. Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Dr. U.A.D. Jayasinghe, Co-Editor Dr. K.R. Gamage, and the editorial board, the proceedings were published under ISSN 3051-4657, featuring 30 abstracts across four technical sessions

namely Sustainable Fisheries, Aquaculture Development, Ocean and Lagoon Health, Ecology and Environmental Management.

The event concluded with an awards ceremony, where four Best Sustainability Research Awards and Best Presenter Awards were presented in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field. The success of SOFS-2024 was made possible through the leadership of Professor H.B. Asanthi (Chairperson), Dr. S.S. Hearsh (Secretary) and Professor P.B.T.P. Kumara (Act. Director Center for International Affairs) who played key roles in coordinating the symposium.



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சம்பத் வங்கி  
Sampath Bank



## Competent Authority for the University of Ruhuna

*An extraordinary gazette notification was issued appointing Senior Professor R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayaka as the Competent Authority of the University of Ruhuna, with effect from 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Senior Professor Rathnayaka was the former Vice-Chancellor of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.*

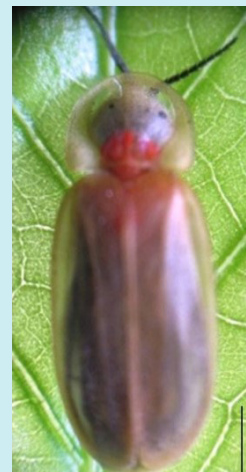


## Discovery of a New Endemic Firefly Species (*Diaphanes uvaparanagama*) From Sri Lanka

A new endemic firefly species of genus *Diaphanes* was discovered from Sri Lanka by the research team, comprising Dr. W. M. C. D. Wijekoon and Prof. H. C. E. Wegirya, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna.

This new firefly species was named as "*Diaphanes uvaparanagama*" by the research team using the name "Uvaparanagama" (Uva Province, Sri Lanka), where the first specimen was found in 2010.

This discovery was published in "Asian Journal of Conservation Biology" in December 2024, and available at <https://doi.org/10.53562/ajcb.70529>.



## Guest Lecture on Mathematics of Machine Learning by Prof. Rudolf Roemer, University of Warwick, UK

An enlightening talk on the Mathematics of Machine Learning aimed to unlock the secrets of Machine Learning by diving deeper into the mathematical concepts that power it was held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, at the Physics Mini-Auditorium, Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna. Prof. Rudolf Roemer from the Department of Physics, University of Warwick, UK was the esteemed resource person for the event, and he delivered a captivating talk on "The Mathematics of Machine Learning Applied to Three Examples: Percolation, Ising-Type Models, and Large Angle Convergent Beam Electron Diffraction".

The program provided an excellent opportunity for the undergraduates to enhance their knowledge in the field of Mathematics of Machine Learning and their applications. The event was coordinated by the Dr. E.J.K.P. Nandani, with the help of the BSc (Special) De-



gree in Mathematics Level I students and the Ruhuna University Mathematics and Statistics Society (RUMSS), Faculty of Science.



## Industrial Consultation Committee Meeting 2024: Faculty of Technology

The Industrial Consultation Committee Meeting 2024, organized by the Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna, was held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at Saegis Campus, Nugegoda. The event aimed to gather industry and academic insights for curriculum enhancement.

Prof. Subash Jayasinghe, Dean of the Faculty of Technology, opened the session, emphasizing the need to bridge academia and industry. Dr. V.H.P. Vitharana, Head of the Department, outlined departmental initiatives, while Senior Prof. W.G.D. Dharmarathna, the founder Dean, highlighted the importance of adapting to emerging technologies such as AI, Industry 4.0, VR, and Big Data.

Discussions, led by former Dean Dr. Harshadeva Gunawardana, focused on curriculum content. Industry professionals from electrical, electronic, mechanical, and materials engineering, along with graduates and undergraduates, shared insights on integrating technical expertise with practical applications and fostering a balanced academic environment.

Valuable recommendations from the meeting will be considered in the next curriculum revision, reinforcing academia-industry collaboration for continuous improvement in education and professional development.



## Library Training Program for SLA Students

A two-week training program was conducted from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024, at the Main Library, University of Ruhuna, for Diploma in Library and Information Science students from the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLA).

The program introduced participants to the functions of all major library divisions, including Acquisition, Cataloging, Classification, Reader Services, and Library Administration. The resource persons were Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi (Librarian), Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila (Deputy Librarian), Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi (Senior Assistant Librarian), Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna (Senior Assistant Librarian) and Mr. C.P.K. Edirisinghe (Deputy Registrar- Library Services) of the University of Ruhuna.





## Department of Computer Science Receives an 'A' Grade in the Program Review

*The Department of Computer Science is thrilled to announce that we have received an "A" grade for the Program Review (PR), and their scores were as follows:*

**BCS Degree: Overall Score of 80.7 - "A" Grade, Overall Rating : "Very Good"**

**BCS Honours Degree: Overall Score of 81.4 - "A" Grade, Overall Rating: "Very Good".**

Reviewers visited the department on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, during which they examined all relevant documents and engaged in discussions with both staff members and students. After a careful evaluation of documents and related activities, the panel awarded the above results. We are deeply grateful to all our staff members—academic, academic support, non-academic—as well as visiting academics, demonstrators, and others whose dedication and hard work contributed to this achievement.



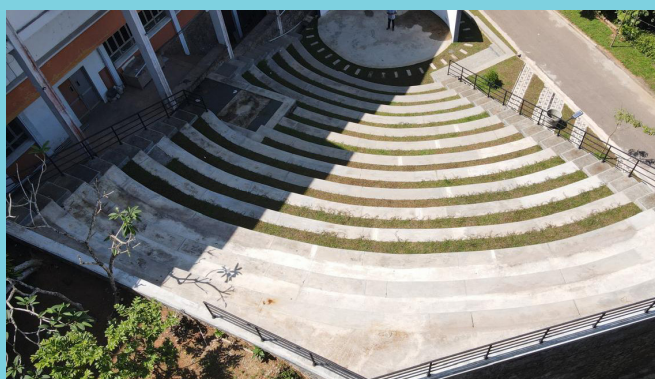
## Professorial Ward Complex of the Faculty of Medicine



The Professorial ward complex of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna is nearing its completion. This will upgrade the standards of existing professorial units situated at the National Hospital, Galle and will bring them together under one roof. This ten-story building is also composed of an auditorium and an examination hall, which will help the students carry out their academic work efficiently with minimal travelling to various places. The construction work has been completed and the interior design and infrastructure development are currently underway.

## New Open Theater Complex of the Faculty of Medicine

The construction process of the open theater of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna has been completed and will be available for hosting events organized by students from 2025 onwards. This is the latest addition to the faculty infrastructure and will help the students to showcase their talents through various events. Professor T.P. Weeraratne, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, was instrumental in bringing out the concept and guiding the project throughout.





## Cultural Center of the University of Ruhuna

*The Cultural Center of the University of Ruhuna aims to promote cultural awareness, preserve heritage, and foster artistic expression among students and the community. It collaborates with the Ministry of Culture to preserve and promote the region's unique cultural elements through research, conservation efforts, and by encouraging innovation and creativity among students.*

The Cultural Center provides services to nine faculties at the University of Ruhuna, excluding the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Over 550 students are actively involved. Additionally, the Center provides costumes, musical instruments, and dancing kits to all faculties.



### Digital Video Disk (DVD) of student songs



The Cultural Center of the University of Ruhuna is planning to produce a Digital Video Disk (DVD) of student songs. Veteran musician Mr. Naddeka Grugege will coach them to materialize this student-led initiative to life. The launching ceremony and Nadhdawni Grand Finale will be held in the second week of July 2025 at the Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Hall, University of Ruhuna.

### Provincial Level Inter-Cultural Center's competition – 2024

At the provincial level of the Inter-Cultural Center's "Prathibha" Competition 2024, the team representing the Cultural Center of the University of Ruhuna earned first place in the open group mixed dancing event in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Moreover, the Center also secured first place in the open group mixed music event in the Southern Province.



### National Level Inter-Cultural Center's completion – 2024

The Inter-Cultural Center's team in "Prathibha" Competition 2024 secured first place in the open group mixed dancing event nationwide. Additionally, the center achieved third place in the open group mixed music event in Sri Lanka.

The Certificate Award Ceremony recognized winners of the Intercultural Center's Music, Dance, and Art Talent Competition through a certificate award event.





## Professional Development of Library Information Assistants

A two-day workshop on "User Registration and Authority Control" was held on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024, for library information assistants at the University of Ruhuna Library. The session was conducted by Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi, Librarian of the University of Ruhuna, at the Main Library. The workshop focused on managing authority files in the Koha system and effectively utilizing them in cataloging.

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, Dr. Theja Kuruppu Arachchi conducted a workshop on database searching and installing VPN.

On 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024, the participants attended a session on "quality with checklists" conducted by Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila, Deputy Librarian of the University of Ruhuna. This session focused on introducing checklists and their importance in enhancing the efficiency of library functions.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, they participated in a session on quality control in book processing and binding, conducted by Ms. Sakunthala Senevirathna, Senior Assistant Librarian of the University of Ruhuna.



## One-Day Workshop on Drug Prevention and Counseling

The Center for Mindfulness, attached to the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, successfully conducted a one-day workshop on drug prevention and counseling on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024. This initiative, organized in collaboration with the National Drug Prevention Operation Unit, aimed to equip students with essential knowledge and skills to address and combat drug-related issues.

The chief speaker for the event was Mr. Nalin Ramesh Amarasinghe, a distinguished expert in the field of drug prevention and counseling. His presentation focused on the dangers of drug abuse and provided valuable insights into effective prevention strategies and counseling techniques. The program was coordinated by Lecturer Mr. Anuda Kanchana, who played a pivotal role in organizing the event and ensuring its smooth execution.



## A Motivational Speech on Reading Books

A motivational speech for the scouting students of the Rahula College Matara was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024. The speech on the value of reading books and library usage was done by Mr. U.A. Lal Pannila (Deputy Librarian) and Mrs. Sakunthala Senevirathna (Senior Assistant Librarian) of the University of Ruhuna.





## Student Exchange: Okayama University, Japan 2024

Four (04) Final-year students specializing in Soil Science in the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA), University of Ruhuna, participated in the prestigious 2024 Sakura Science Youth Exchange Program at Okayama University, Japan from 24<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

Senior Professor D.A.L. Leelamanie coordinated the event with Okayama University and also accompanied the students. This event provided an excellent opportunity for UoR students to engage with international scholars and experts in Japan. The program was funded by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Okayama University. It also strengthens the MOU between Okayama University and University of Ruhuna.



## Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Program

The Department of Human Resource Management had the distinct honor of participating in a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project organized by the Manchester Metropolitan University Business School. This event took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m, marking a significant milestone as the University of Ruhuna became the first Sri Lankan university to engage in such an innovative global learning experience. This is the second time in a row that the department has been involved in this project, after the inauguration ceremony held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. A selected group of students specializing in Human Resource Management, namely Dehan Randinu, Ranudi Uyangoda, Eranga Chathura, Ruvintha Zoysa, Jayaru Masakorala, Navodya Dissanayaka, Chamudi Wijesundara, Sachini Ayodhya, Pramodya Liyanapathirana, and Senal Wijesooriya, actively participated in this enriching program. Their dedication and engagement throughout the COIL experience were truly commendable.

Dr. K.G. Priyashantha, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management, initiated this event following an invitation from the Department of Operations, Technology, Events, and Hospitality Management at Manchester Metropolitan



University. This initiative was further enhanced through collaboration with Dr. Bhawna Swami from the University of New Delhi and involved the participation of five students from prominent Indian institutions, including the University of Delhi, XLRI-Xavier School of Management in Jamshedpur, and the Indian Institute of Management Sambalpur. This valuable collaboration has significantly broadened our international network and provided invaluable cross-cultural learning opportunities.

The Department of HRM extends its sincere gratitude to Dr. K.G. Priyashantha for initiating this project and to Mr. Chiranjeeva Atapattu, Senior Lecturer and lead of the Department of International Partnerships; Dr. Diane Connelly, Senior Lecturer; and Dr. Dario Tom Dieck, Deputy Head of the Department of Operations, Technology, Events, and Hospitality Management at Manchester Metropolitan University, for their invitation to participate in this exceptional initiative.



## Workshop on Internship Programs, Curricula, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the FOUNTAIN Project

The E4.1: Workshop on Internship Programs and Curricula and 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting on Fostering Sustainable University-Industry Techno-Entrepreneurial Collaborations and Innovations in Asian Universities (FOUNTAIN) project was hosted by Tallinn University of Technology from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Tallinn, Estonia. This event was focused on developing and enhancing internship programs and curricula, while also reviewing the progress and future plans of various work packages, including the establishment of a Center of Excellence. Key activities included sessions on internship curriculum development, bridging research innovation with industry, fostering industry cooperation, and exploring the Estonian innovation ecosystem.

Participants including the FOUNTAIN UoR team along with other partner institute teams engaged in dynamic sessions focused on internship curriculum develop-



ment, fostering industry cooperation, and bridging research innovation with industry needs. These discussions emphasized aligning academic programs with global and local industry demands, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to their respective fields.

Attendees explored Estonia's innovation ecosystem through interactive discussions and a field trip around Tallinn city, showcasing smart urban innovations and sustainable solutions. TalTech, a key partner in the project, has positioned itself as a global leader in smart city innovations through initiatives such as the TalTech Digital program. As part of the Fountain Project's international collaboration, the University of Ruhuna continues to build on its legacy of fostering global part-



nerships in education, research, and entrepreneurship. The Smart City Centre of Excellence, established at TalTech in 2020, serves as an inspiring model for transforming academic campuses into hubs of sustainable innovation.



## Worked Based Learning Program in Undergraduate Programs: Sharing Best Practices

On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the Center for Quality Assurance of University of Ruhuna, in collaboration with the FOUNTAIN project hosted a transformative event titled "Work-Based Learning in Undergraduate Programs: Sharing Best Practices" to strengthen the University – Industry Partnerships.

This pivotal workshop brought together a diverse group of experts, including academic leaders, industry professionals, and educational policymakers, to discuss and promote best practices in work-based learning (WBL). The event was strategically aligned with the objectives of the FOUNTAIN Project's Work Package 3: Development of University-Industry Transformation Platforms.



Key highlights of the event were Expert-Led Discussions including Panels and discussions that explored innovative strategies to enhance internships and industrial training programs, focusing on addressing challenges and fostering greater alignment between academic curricula and industry needs. Also, Roundtable Dialogues: Focused sessions provided an opportunity to identify gaps in current undergraduate programs and propose actionable solutions for integrating industry-relevant skills into academic learning pathways and Strategic Outcomes, the workshop concluded with the development of a strategic framework to improve work-based learning practices at the university, ensuring graduates are equipped to meet evolving industry demands.

This initiative not only highlighted the University of Ruhuna's commitment to bridging the gap between academia and industry but also marked a significant milestone in creating sustainable partnerships for future-ready education. The event's success reflects the university's dedication to fostering innovation and addressing challenges faced by students and industries in Sri Lanka.



## English Language Fellow Program

The English Language Fellow Program, organized by the Department of English Language Teaching (DELT), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and will conclude on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2025. This program is funded by the United States Embassy in Sri Lanka and is being conducted by Ms. Judith Cockrell.

The program began with a series of online sessions tailored to improve speaking proficiency among the academic staff of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Currently, Ms. Cockrell is conducting similar sessions for the students of the faculty, alongside the courses offered by DELT. In the coming months, the program will continue to offer additional sessions for staff members, further supporting their development of effective communication skills in English. This ongoing engagement provides a valuable opportunity for both staff and students to enhance their language capabilities in a structured and interactive learning environment.

Ms. Judith Cockrell, the resource person for the program, is an Adjunct ESL Instructor at Columbus State Community College, where she fosters a positive learning environment. Since 2021, she has served as Executive Director of Elevate Northland, leading initiatives to support community development. Additionally, she is the Managing Director of Marie Eloise LLC, a consulting firm focused on strategy and program management since 2009. Judith also taught English



communication at the Ohio State University in China, enhancing students' verbal skills and cross-cultural understanding. Her diverse experience reflects her commitment to education and community engagement. She is now acquainted with the people and culture of Sri Lanka.

The English Language Fellow Program is an immensely fruitful series of sessions that enhances the participants' understanding of the cultural diversity between two cultures while cultivating lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

## Donation by Ven. Dr. Bodhichitta

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies was honored to receive a generous donation of wooden chairs, tables, and various other materials for the lecture rooms. The contribution was made by Vietnamese Bhikkhuni, Ven. Dr. Bodhichitta, and her devoted team, with the guidance and support of Ven. Koggalle Wijitha Thero, Senior Lecturer attached to the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, whose leadership and dedication were instrumental in facilitating this donation.

The event was graced by the presence of several distinguished individuals, including Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor E.P.S. Chandana Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Renuka Priyanta, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Ven. Dr. Makola Mangala Thero, Head of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies.

Heartfelt gratitude is extended to Ven. Dr. Bodhichitta and her team for their thoughtful and generous support. This donation significantly enhances the academic environment of the department and serves as a testament to the spirit of collaboration and generosity that strengthens the academic community.





## Student Entrepreneurial Competency Workshop

This event was successfully held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna conducted by the FOUNTAIN UOR Team. The workshop was focused on enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of the students by blending theoretical learning with hands-on experience. The project empowered students to engage with real-world business scenarios. This initiative identified five core entrepreneurial competencies critical to bridging academia and industry: opportunity recognition, assessment, risk management, creative problem-solving, and value creation. Participants were also assessed on additional skills such as communication, time management, and teamwork through tailored evaluation forms.

The workshop blended theoretical knowledge with hands-on activities. A key feature was a business simulation game, where students worked in teams to manage fictional companies producing innovative products like heart-shaped soaps, candles, and porcelain pots. Participants assumed various roles, including top management, finance, purchasing, and quality control, enhancing their leadership, teamwork, and decision-making skills.

The workshop was assigned to undergraduates, with 45 participants divided into three groups representing first-year, third-year, and final-year students. By simulating real-world challenges, the activity showcased the students' creative and innovative potential, aligning with the FOUNTAIN Project's objective of preparing graduates for industry integration in Sri Lanka. The event demonstrated the University of Ruhuna's commitment to cultivating entrepreneurial talent and fostering sustainable university-industry partnerships, contributing to national economic development.



## Book Donation by the READ JAPAN PROJECT



The University of Ruhuna Library has received a book donation from 'The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research' as part of their READ JAPAN PROJECT. A total of 68 books covering Japan-related topics in English were donated during the ceremony held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024, at the Main Library of the University of Ruhuna.



## Empowering Future Leaders: Outward Bound Training Camp by UoR Career Guidance Unit

The Career Guidance Unit of the University of Ruhuna organized an inspiring two-day Outward Bound Training Camp under the theme "Today's Youth – Tomorrow's Leaders" on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024. This engaging event was specifically designed for the 2020 batch of students from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology. The training camp focused on equipping students with essential leadership skills and fostering their ability to work effectively as a team. Beyond skill development, the event emphasized cultivating positive attitudes and resilience, critical for shaping the future leaders and workforce of the nation. The students participated with enthusiasm and embraced the opportunity to learn through interactive and challenging activities. The event proved to be both educational and enjoyable, leaving a lasting impression on the participants.

The training was conducted by Career Guidance Counselors Mr. Nilanka Srinath and Mr. Nilantha Kalansuriya, who ensured a dynamic and engaging program. Distinguished figures also graced the occasion, including Senior Prof. E. P.S. Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna; Professor Thusitha Gunawardana, former Director of the Career Guidance Unit; and Dr. Kasun Banda-



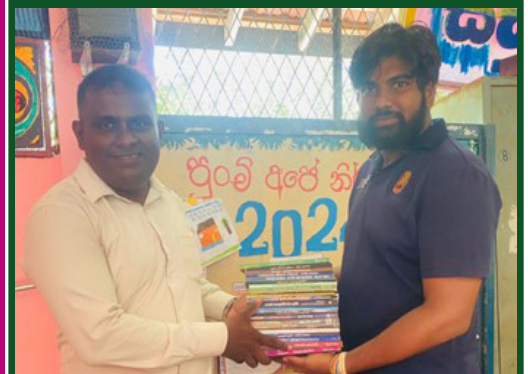
ra, the academic career advisor of the faculty.

The collaborative efforts of the organizing team and the active involvement of participants made the training camp a resounding success. Events like these reaffirm the university's commitment to shaping capable, confident, and compassionate leaders for the future.

## Book Donation to Godawa Kanishtha Vidyalaya

The Faculty of Technology Career Circle (FOTCC), in collaboration with the Career Guidance Cell, organized a book donation event on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, at the Library of Godawa Kanishtha Vidyalaya, Kamburupitiya. The initiative aimed to enrich students' reading experiences by providing a valuable collection of storybooks, fostering imagination and a love for literature.

The donation was warmly received by the school staff and students, with teachers expressing gratitude for the positive impact on the learning environment. The FOTCC extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to making this event a success.



## Digital Media Literacy Workshop

A misinformation awareness session was successfully held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024, at the Faculty of Technology in collaboration with Prathiba Media Network, Kamburupitiya. The session aimed to educate students on the dangers of misinformation and the importance of verifying facts before sharing information. Nearly 50 students actively participated, engaging in discussions on the impact of misinformation in today's digital world.

Seven dedicated undergraduate volunteers from the Faculty of Technology Career Circle (FOTCC) played a key role in organizing and facilitating the event, ensuring a well-structured and engaging experience for attendees. The session featured interactive discussions, real-world case studies, and practical strategies to identify and counter misinformation. The collaboration between academia and media professionals provided valuable insights, fostering the critical thinking skills essential for navigating the digital landscape responsibly.





## Pirith Chanting Program and Almsgiving - Faculty of Science

The Buddhist Association of the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, successfully organized the annual Pirith Chanting Program and Almsgiving to invoke blessings upon all faculty staff and students. After a six-year hiatus, the event was held on August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at the Professor Alawattagoda Premadasa Auditorium premises, marking a significant and spiritual milestone for the university community.

The Pirith Chanting commenced on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> August, following the ceremonious arrival of the Maha Sangha. The chanting continued uninterrupted throughout the night, filling the atmosphere with serenity and devotion, and concluded on the morning of 17<sup>th</sup> August. The Great Almsgiving Ceremony was conducted with reverence and devotion on the same morning. During this ceremony, alms were offered to 15 revered monks, with meticulous preparation and heartfelt dedication.

This auspicious occasion witnessed the active participation of the Dean of the Faculty of Science, Professor D.H.N. Munasinghe, along with senior professors, lecturers, members of the non-academic staff, and students from all academic years. The unity and collective effort demonstrated by the faculty community underscored the spiritual and cultural significance of the event.



## Sarasavi Mithuro Youth Forum 2024

The Sarasavi Mithuro Youth Forum 2024, a two-day leadership development workshop, was successfully held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2024. Organized by the Career Circle of the Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna, the event was supported by the Career Guidance Unit (CGU), the Ministry of Justice, and the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation. This collaborative initiative aimed to cultivate student leadership, foster national unity, and emphasize the importance of reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

The forum brought together undergraduates eager to enhance their leadership skills through engaging activities and insightful discussions. Designed to promote teamwork, critical thinking, and effective communication, the sessions provided students with practical skills and perspectives essential for future leadership roles.

Guided by experienced mentors, participants embraced the opportunity to develop their potential and commit to making a meaningful impact on society. The event reaffirmed the Faculty of Technology's dedication to shaping compassionate leaders who advocate for unity and reconciliation.





## Blood Donation Camp at the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology

The Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology recently held its first-ever blood donation camp, organized by their student union in collaboration with alumni of the faculty. The event attracted over 70 donors, highlighting the generosity within the faculty community.

As a token of appreciation, each donor received a beautifully crafted glass bottle, symbolizing the faculty's gratitude. Special thanks were given to the dedicated team of doctors and nurses from Matara Hospital, whose expertise ensured the event ran smoothly. The Dean of the Faculty, Prof. K.H.M.A Deepananda, also expressed his deep gratitude to the alum-



ni who funded the initiative, making the project possible.

This inaugural camp not only emphasized the faculty's commitment to social responsibility but also strengthened the bonds within its vibrant community.

## Poson Palette 2024: Inter-Faculty Online Artwork Competition

The Circle of Human Resource Development (CHRD) of the Department of Human Resource Management organized Poson Palette-2024, an online art competition with the theme "Natural Radiance of Poson." This event garnered a diverse array of artistic submissions from undergraduates at the University of Ruhuna. The primary aim of the competition was to create a platform for students to exhibit their artistic abilities while fostering contemplation on the spiritual significance of Poson Poya and enhancing their mental well-being.

The competition was divided into two distinct categories: Most Creative and Most Popular. The Most Creative Category acknowledged submissions that demonstrated outstanding originality, artistic vision, and a distinctive interpretation of the theme. Conversely, the Most Popular Category celebrated the artwork that garnered the highest level of engagement from the online community, as indicated by the number of votes received from viewers. A panel of professional judges was responsible for evaluating



the submissions. Winners in each category were presented with cash prizes during the closing ceremony, which took place at the Faculty of Management and Finance.

## First-Aid Training Program for Hiking Enthusiasts

The Ruhuna University Mathematics and Statistics Society (RUMSS) successfully organized a comprehensive first-aid training program, "Trail to Summit," on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024, at the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna. Conducted in collaboration with the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Bopepoddala, Galle, this initiative aimed to equip students with essential first-aid skills and knowledge tailored to the unique challenges and emergencies encountered during hiking.





## The Battle of Greens: Inter-Batch Sports Meet 2024

Students from the 43<sup>rd</sup>, 44<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, and 46<sup>th</sup> batches of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, organized a friendly sports meet on the faculty premises during holidays and weekends from 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The event was conducted with the support of faculty staff and sports instructors from the Department of Physical Education.

The primary objective of this annual sports meet was to identify talented players from the latest batches and foster healthy competition among faculty members. The event featured a variety of sports, including football, volleyball, elle, chess, table tennis, scrabble, hockey, netball, carrom, cricket, basketball, and badminton. Students actively participated, cheering for their respective teams.

The 44<sup>th</sup> batch secured first place, while the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> batches won second and third places, respectively. The award cer-



emony took place on 13<sup>th</sup> December at the S.K. Chals Auditorium of the Faculty of Agriculture, with the participation of the Chairman of the Sports Advisory Board of the University of Ruhuna, along with academic and non-academic staff members.

## Intra-Faculty Sports Meet 2024: Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology

The much-anticipated Intra-Faculty Sports Meet 2024 of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology kicked off on 11<sup>th</sup> February, showcasing a dynamic blend of athleticism and camaraderie. The grand Opening Ceremony on 10<sup>th</sup> August was honored by Chief Guest Prof. K.H.M.A. Deepananda. Spanning two phases, the event featured Chess, Scrabble, Road Race, Taekwondo, Carrom, Elle, Cricket, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Netball, Table Tennis, and Badminton, highlighting intense competition and dedication.

The Closing Ceremony on 11<sup>th</sup> August saw the 17<sup>th</sup> batch emerge as overall champions. More than just a competition, the event celebrated unity, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of the faculty's students.



## Interbatch Sports Meet 2024: Faculty of Medicine

The interbatch sports meet 2024 organized by the sports club of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, was held in August. This event included many sport activities such as cricket, basketball, volleyball, power lifting..etc. Students of different batches participated actively in these events, and was a good opportunity to showcase their talents in extracurricular activities as well as improve the harmony among the students.





## Workshop on Ornamental Fish Farming for School Students

As part of an initiative to nourish the Sri Lankan school community with knowledge, a one-day workshop on “Ornamental Fish Farming” was successfully held in August 2024 at Uva College, Badulla. Organized by the Student Union of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, the event was guided by the Dean of the Faculty, Prof. K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda.

The workshop covered tank setup and maintenance, gender identification, fish breeding, common diseases, and livelihood opportunities in the ornamental fish industry. Hands-on practical sessions enriched students' learning experience.

A key highlight was the enthusiastic participation of over 150 students from grades 9 to 12. Special thanks go to the principal and staff of Uva College for their support, as well as to the Faculty Dean and academic staff for encouraging student involvement in social welfare programs.



Photography by  
NADEESHANI JAYAR  
KAVEESHA THARUS

## UNIFIARA 2024: English Day of the Faculty of Management and Finance

The English Club of the Department of Human Resource Management proudly hosted its first grand annual event, UNIFIARA 2024, on 5<sup>th</sup> December, marking a significant milestone since the club's inception. The event brought together students, academics, and guests to celebrate creativity, talent, and linguistic excellence under the theme “Unity and Environmental Consciousness.”

Inspired by the movie Avatar, the event featured stunning decorations that transformed the venue into an immersive experience, captivating the audience and earning widespread admiration. A major highlight of UNIFIARA 2024 was the vibrant group performances in Drama, Singing, and Role-Play, where students showcased their language proficiency, teamwork, and creativity while promoting themes of environmental sustainability and unity.

Winners of both group and online competitions, including Creative Writing (Poetry and Short Story), and Speech Competitions, were recognized with prizes and certificates. The awards were graciously presented by Dr. Jayarani, Head of the Department of Human Resource Management, along with academic staff and invited guests, adding prestige to the occasion.

The success of UNIFIARA 2024 was a testament to the dedication and meticulous planning of the organizing team, led by Ms. Nethmi Perera, President of the English Club, and other office bearers, under the guidance of Dr. Hemama-



li Ganewatta, the Senior Treasurer. Their collective efforts, along with the enthusiasm and commitment of many students, ensured the flawless execution of this remarkable event.

The English Club extends its heartfelt gratitude to LTL Galvanizers Ltd., the event's generous sponsor, whose support was instrumental in bringing UNIFIARA 2024 to life. With this inaugural event setting a high standard, the English Club eagerly anticipates continuing this tradition of excellence, creativity, and engagement in the years to come.



## CareerXpo 1.0: Faculty of Engineering

CareerXpo 1.0, held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024, at Trace Expert City, Colombo, was a groundbreaking event connecting engineering undergraduates with industry professionals. Organized by the IEEE Student Branch, the Electrical and Information Engineering Society (EIES), and the Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Students' Society (MMESS) of the University of Ruhuna, in collaboration with IESL Ruhuna Student Chapter and REFAA, the event provided career guidance, internships, and graduate training opportunities.



With approximately 250 students in attendance, CareerXpo 1.0 offered valuable networking opportunities. Dr. Harsha Subasinghe, President and CEO of CodeGen International (PVT) Ltd, was the Chief Guest, delivering an inspiring keynote on the importance of industry connections in shaping future careers.

A major highlight was a technical session by MAS Holdings, where students explored industry practices and emerging trends, gaining real-world insights. Following this, one-on-one interviews took place with leading companies, including MAS Holdings, Creative Software, Kodez, ZTE, CodeGen, Cut+Dry, IPD, Hayleys Fentons, ACCELRL, MIT, INSEE, Forbes Marshall, Future Fibres, and DIMO Lanka. These interactions helped students explore career prospects while companies identified promising engineering talent.

CareerXpo 1.0 concluded on a highly successful note, leaving students with renewed confidence and strong industry connections. The event set the foundation for future collaborations, ensuring ongoing opportunities for undergraduates to transition into professional careers.

The organizing committee was led by Mr. A.V.A. Malkith, Mr. Saranga Bandara, and Mr. Rajitha Bandara, under the guidance of Dr. Chatura Seneviratne (IEEE Student Branch Counselor), Dr. Krishan Wickramasinghe (Senior Treasurer, MMES), and Dr. Prabhath Weerasinghe (Senior Treasurer, EIES). With its resounding success, CareerXpo 1.0 has paved the way for future initiatives, strengthening the bridge between academia and industry for engineering undergraduates.



## Career Catalyst 2024: Preparing Students for Future Success

Career Catalyst 2024, organized by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society, took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, at the faculty premises, offering students valuable insights into career opportunities and industry expectations.

Industry professionals and experienced engineers shared their expertise on career planning, job market trends, and professional growth. Students actively engaged in discussions, networking sessions, and interactive workshops, gaining practical knowledge and confidence for their future careers. The Society remains committed to student development, organizing impactful events that foster learning, networking, and career readiness.

These initiatives strengthen the sense of community and provide students with opportunities to grow both professionally and personally.



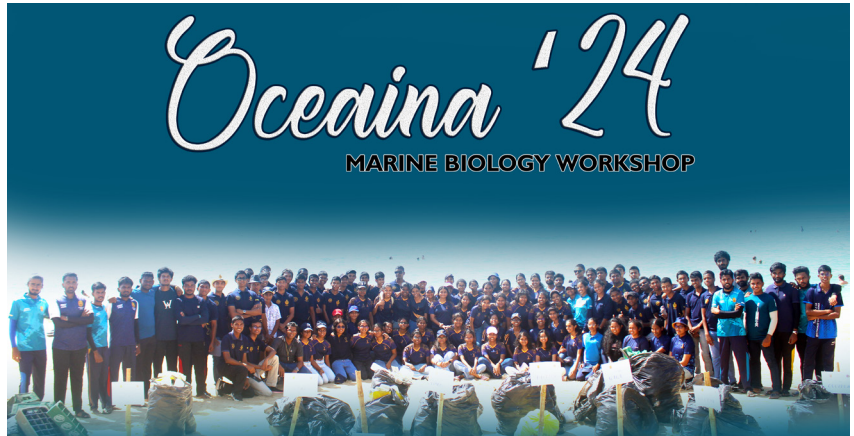


## Oceania '24

The University of Ruhuna proudly co-hosted Oceania '24, a landmark marine biology workshop held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024, further solidifying its position as a leader in oceanographic research and environmental conservation. Organized in collaboration with the Royal College Science Association and the Senior Science Society of Visakha Vidyalaya, the event brought together students, researchers, and marine enthusiasts to address critical challenges facing marine ecosystems.

A key contributor, the Society of Oceanography and Marine Geology from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, demonstrated the University of Ruhuna's academic and practical expertise in marine sciences. The workshop provided participants with a unique opportunity for interactive learning and hands-on activities aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of marine biodiversity and the urgent need for conservation.

Professor Terney Pradeep Kumara, a renowned figure in marine science and a driving force behind the initiative, emphasized, "This collaboration highlights our commitment to advancing scientific knowledge while addressing global environmental concerns.

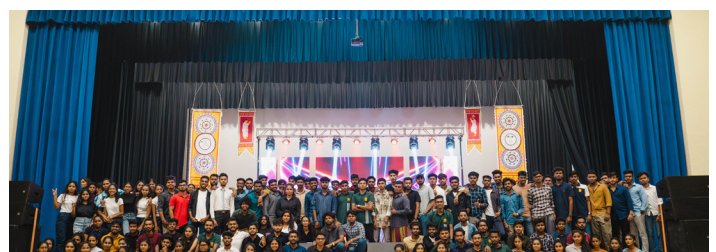


We are proud to lead marine conservation initiatives at Ruhuna."

The University's state-of-the-art facilities and its multidisciplinary approach to oceanography and marine geology were pivotal to the success of Oceania '24. The event served as a reminder of the university's dedication to raising awareness about marine sciences and nurturing the next generation of marine scientists and conservationists. With a legacy of excellence in marine sciences, the University of Ruhuna continues to inspire students and researchers, further reinforcing its reputation as a hub for innovation and environmental stewardship. Events like Oceania '24 highlight the university's ongoing mission to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development, both locally and nationally.

## Bhawa 2024: Talent Show of the Faculty of Technology

The Faculty of Technology proudly concluded the orientation program for the 8<sup>th</sup> intake of students, celebrating a successful transition into university life. As part of the program, the students organized and participated in the "Bhawa" Talent Show, an annual event designed to showcase the creative and artistic abilities of the newest batch. The event, held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024, was a vibrant display of talent and teamwork, highlighting the students' enthusiasm and potential. The event was entirely organized by the 8<sup>th</sup> batch of students, and it was a resounding success, setting a high benchmark for future events and reflecting the spirit and creativity of our students.





## Helping Corner: A Community-Driven Initiative to Support Students



University life comes with its fair share of challenges academic pressure, financial struggles, and the need for essential resources. Recognizing these hurdles, the Career Guidance Students' Society of the Faculty of Engineering has taken a step toward fostering a culture of mutual support and solidarity through a unique initiative: Helping Corner.

The Helping Corner, a first-of-its-kind initiative at the University of Ruhuna, was officially launched on 18<sup>th</sup> December at the Faculty of Engineering. This project, spearheaded by the Career Guidance Students' Society, aims to foster a culture of generosity and sustainability by providing students with a shared space to give and take essential items such as clothes, stationery, and other useful supplies.



The grand opening was graced by Senior Professor R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayaka, Competent Authority of the University of Ruhuna; Dr. H. Chithral Ambawatta, former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering; Professor H.C.P. Karunasena, the current Dean of the Faculty of Engineering; Senior Lecturer Dr. Prabath Weerasinghe, the senior treasurer of Career Guidance Students' society, and Mrs. Vindya Welihena, Career Counselor of the Faculty of Engineering, along with other esteemed senior lecturers. Their presence highlighted the significance of this initiative in building a supportive student community. The Helping Corner operates on a simple principle: Give what you can, take what you need. It not only assists students facing financial difficulties but also encourages sustainable living through donation and sharing. This concept was made possible by the vision and dedication of Dr. H. Chithral Ambawatte, whose guidance helped bring this idea to life.



What makes the Helping Corner even more special is the collective effort behind it. Donations come from students, lecturers, and past alumni, showcasing the strong bond within the engineering community. Their generosity ensures that essential resources are always available for those in need.

To ensure the longevity of the Helping Corner, students are encouraged to keep the space clean, organized, and accessible for everyone. This initiative has already made a positive impact, with many students benefiting from the donated resources.



## Spaghetti Bridge Competition 2024: Where Engineering Meets Creativity

The Civil and Environmental Engineering Society (CEES) organized a series of successful events, including the Spaghetti Bridge Competition 2024, held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in DO1 and DO2. This challenge, where students built load-bearing bridges from spaghetti and glue, tested innovation, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

**Celebrating the Best Builds:**  
**Champion: Team Greatest of All Time**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up: Team Oasis**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-Up: Team Load Lifter**

The competition went beyond testing strength; it was an opportunity for students to develop problem-solving skills, work as teams, and experience hands-on engineering. The event showcased the Society's commitment to creating meaningful experiences that foster growth, teamwork, and leadership, preparing students for future success.



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FACULTY OF ENGINEERING



SPAGHETTI BRIDGE COMPETITION 2024  
ORGANIZED BY CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING SOCIETY

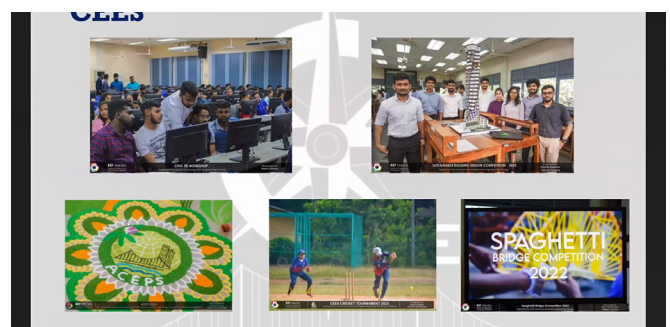
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DULANJANA YATA  
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## Awareness Session: A Guiding Light for Freshers

The Awareness Session for First-Year Undergraduates, organized by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society, was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. The session featured experienced speakers Eng. Miru Rupasinghe, Eng. Gayani Perera, and Eng. Naveen Parameswaran, who provided essential guidance to new students.

The discussion covered important aspects of university life, academic expectations, and career prospects in the engineering field. The speakers shared their experiences, offering valuable advice to help students make the most of their time at university. A Q&A session allowed students to seek clarity on various topics, making the session interactive and beneficial.

This initiative helped the first-year students gain confidence as they embarked on their academic journey. The Society remains committed to supporting students through informative sessions and mentorship opportunities.





## Y-Café Live Program

In collaboration with MBC Networks (Private) Limited, the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Ruhuna hosted the Y-Café Live Radio Program on 04<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This event provided undergraduates with a unique platform to engage in discussions, exchange insights, and gain practical experience in event organization.

The program also facilitated industry interactions, allowing students to develop essential skills, particularly in live presentations. Additionally, it served as an opportunity for the university to showcase its degree programs and inform the public about available higher education opportunities.



## ETABS Workshop: Faculty of Engineering

The ETABS Workshop, organized by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society, was successfully held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in the OBE Hall of the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. The session, led by Eng. Kaveesha Fernando, provided valuable insights into ETABS for structural analysis and design.

Participants gained hands-on experience with the software, exploring its real-world engineering applications. The workshop covered key topics such as model generation, load application, structural analysis, and result interpretation, making it an engaging and informative session.

This event marked a significant step in the Society's commitment to practical learning beyond the classroom. The enthusiastic participation and positive feedback from students reflected its success.



## Formation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> First Aid Team by the Career Guidance Unit

The third batch of the CGU First Aid Team was successfully formed by the University of Ruhuna's Career Guidance Unit. This program is run annually by a committed group of volunteers, and this year, the group includes 18 students. This team formally assumed their duties on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to facilitate and guarantee safety at significant university events. This team is made up of motivated and skilled volunteers who have volunteered to provide first aid assistance at various events organized by the university.





## University of Ruhuna Christmas Carol Service 2024

### Nativity of Hope

After a decade, the University of Ruhuna joyfully welcomed back its Christmas Carol Service on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024, at the Computer Science Auditorium. Organized by the Catholic Students' Society, the event embraced the theme "Nativity of Hope", fostering unity and renewal through music and reflection. Bringing together all ten faculties, the celebration showcased the university's spirit of inclusivity and teamwork. Senior Prof. R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayaka, the Competent Authority, attended as Chief Guest, while Rev. Fathers and Sisters from the Matara and Galle parishes led prayers and blessings.

A university-wide choir filled the auditorium with peaceful melodies, blending traditional hymns with modern tunes. The vibrant festive decorations added to the joyful atmosphere, making the evening both heartwarming and memorable. As the service concluded, attendees left with uplifted spirits, carrying a message of hope and togetherness—a beautiful start to a new tradition at the University of Ruhuna.



### Melodies of Joy

"The Melodies of Joy" vibrant Christmas Carol Service was organized by the Catholic Students' Society of the University of Ruhuna in collaboration with the Engineering Faculty Art Society and the Engineering Faculty Students' Union, took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at the Engineering Faculty Gymnasium. The event was graced by the Senior Professor R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayaka, the Competent Authority of the University of Ruhuna.

This joyous celebration brought together students, academic staff, and their families for an evening that embodied the true essence of Christmas. The dazzling handmade decorations, crafted by the Engineering undergraduates, showcased their creativity and dedication, adding a magical touch to the festive atmosphere. "The Birth of Jesus Christ" the Christmas drama, which captivated the audience with its heartfelt performances, intricate costumes, and beautifully designed stage props. The Nativity story was brought to life in a way that deeply moved everyone present. The event also featured an array of carols sung in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, celebrating the diverse cultures and languages within the university community.

Students and academic staff alike joined their voices in harmonious unity, while lively dance performances added energy and vibrancy to the evening. Beyond the music and celebration, "The Melodies of Joy" was a heartfelt testament to the spirit of togetherness, love, and hope. It left a lasting impression on the Faculty of Engineering, inspiring everyone to carry forward the true meaning of Christmas throughout the year.



### Christmas Wreath Designing Competition

In parallel with the above event, the Christmas Wreath Designing Competition was organized by the Catholic Students' Society, University of Ruhuna, under the theme "Melodies of Joy." There were 12 teams who showcased their innovative and artistic designs that beautifully captured the spirit of the season.

The competition was judged by a distinguished panel comprising Fr. Ruwan Prasad, Procurator General of the Diocese of Galle; Dr. J.M.R.S. Appuhamy, Senior Editor of Catholic Students' Society, University of Ruhuna; Dr. Krishan Wickramasinghe, Senior Treasurer of Catholic Students' Society University of Ruhuna; and Ms. Saumya Batuwatta, Instructor in English Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. Their expertise and keen eye for detail ensured that the most exceptional designs were recognized and celebrated, making this competition a memorable highlight of the university's Christmas festivities.



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PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
DULAN JANA YATAGAMA  
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## Outbound Training Programs: Faculty of Management and Finance

An outbound training event facilitated by Ms. Pubudu Malla-warachchi, Career Guidance Counselor from the Career Guidance Unit, was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, from 6:00 a.m to 10:00 p.m at the university premises. This event started with a morning physical activity session conducted by Ms. Dilupa Priyadarshani, Instructor in Physical Education, Physical Education Unit at the University of Ruhuna.



The second OBT program, held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at the university premises, was organized by the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Career Guidance Unit. This event was designed for 2000-level undergraduates in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship to enhance leadership skills and foster personal growth.

Utilizing an experiential learning approach, these trainings emphasized engaging activities and enjoyable experiences to promote learning. These programs focused on key organizational competencies, including building self-confidence, personality development, teamwork, and effective communication, equipping students with essential skills for their academic and professional journeys.



## Responsible Leadership Workshop for the 8<sup>th</sup> Batch at the Faculty of Technology Orientation Program

The Career Guidance Cell (CGC) and the Faculty of Technology Career Circle (FOTCC) organized a highly impactful Responsible Leadership Workshop on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, at the Faculty auditorium. Coordinated by Mr. W.G. Shashitha Lakal (CGC) and facilitated by Mr. A. Sampath (FOTCC), the session focused on leadership skills, ethical decision-making, and professional challenges.

With over 210 students in attendance, the workshop provided an interactive platform for developing leadership potential. Six dedicated FOTCC volunteers played a key role in ensuring the event's success, creating a dynamic and engaging learning experience that emphasized the importance of responsible leadership in career growth.





## Children's Day Event 2024 at Godawa Kanishta Vidyalaya

The Faculty of Technology Career Circle (FOTCC) organized a vibrant Children's Day celebration at Godawa Kanishta Vidyalaya, Kamburupitiya, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The event was designed to bring joy and excitement to the young students through a variety of games and engaging activities. Nearly 60 students eagerly participated, making the day lively and memorable. The event aimed to create a fun-filled environment while also fostering creativity, teamwork, and positive interactions among the children.

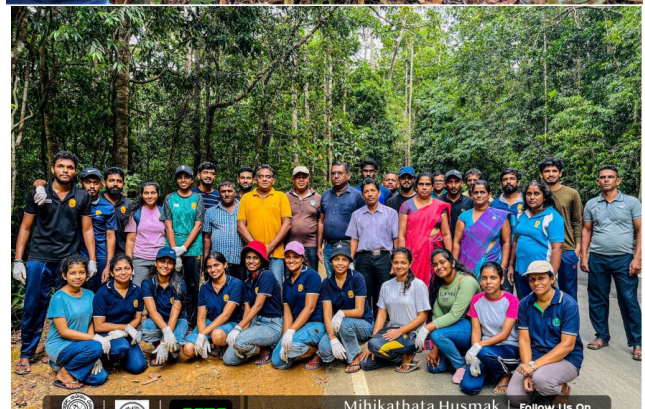
A team of five dedicated undergraduate volunteers from FOTCC played a key role in coordinating the activities and ensuring that every child had a delightful experience. Their enthusiasm and commitment contributed to the success of the event, leaving a lasting impact on the students. Through this initiative, FOTCC not only celebrated Children's Day but also reinforced the importance of community engagement and the power of education in shaping young minds.



## "Mihikathata Husmak": An Environmental Cleanup Program

Wilpita Forest is a protected natural reserve spanning 482 hectares, located along both sides of the Kamburupitiya-Akurassa main road. One side of the forest borders the Lenabatuwa tank. Despite numerous awareness programs conducted for nearby residents to prevent pollution in this ecologically rich area home to 163 plant species and endemic fish species, environmental degradation remains a significant concern. Non-degradable waste, including plastic and glass bottles, polythene, discarded garments, and electronic waste, continues to accumulate in the forest.

To address this issue, members of the Ruhunu Explorers Club, driven by a strong commitment to environmental conservation, organized a full-day volunteer cleanup campaign on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, with the support of the Forestry Department. Over 40 club members actively participated in the event, removing accumulated waste and clearing invasive plant species from the forest area. The program was coordinated by Dr. I.R. Palihakkara, patron of the Ruhunu Explorers Club.





### Fostering Climate Change Action Ambassadors: Empowering Youth for Climate Resilience

The “Fostering Climate Change Action Ambassadors: Empowering Youth for Climate Resilience” program was launched by the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Ruhuna in collaboration with Janathakshan GTE Ltd., with financial support from HSBC. This initiative aims to empower Sri Lankan university students as climate ambassadors by equipping them with knowledge and skills in mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies.

The first awareness program was held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024, featuring expert contributions from Professor Buddhi Marambe (University of Peradeniya) and Dr. Manoj Ranaweera (University of Moratuwa). Over 100 University of Ruhuna students participated, marking the first cohort of Sri Lanka's Climate Ambassadors.

The program will unfold in three phases, including further awareness sessions, a proposal development camp, and small grant projects. This initiative is a significant step toward fostering a new generation of climate leaders dedicated to environmental sustainability.



### Youth Conventional Program 2024

The Youth Conventional Program was conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at University of Vavuniya. It was organized by the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka in collaboration of USAID Sri Lanka. Mr. Umesh Anjana (Level 2 ET student) nominated by Faculty of Technology Career Circle participated representing the Faculty of technology, University of Ruhuna.



### The CEES Cricket Tournament: Faculty of Engineering

The CEES Cricket Tournament, organized by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society, was held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, at the Faculty and Hapugala School Grounds. The event featured intense matches, showcasing teamwork, strategy, and sportsmanship, while enthusiastic spectators added to the excitement.

Following the thrilling tournament, students celebrated at the DJ Night Party, enjoying music, dance, and a lively atmosphere. The event provided a perfect break from studies, fostering friendships and creating lasting memories. The Society appreciates everyone's participation and looks forward to more such events to enhance the university experience.





## Lakindu De Silva Won the World Finals of the Speak Out for Engineering Competition

Lakdinu De Silva won the world finals of the Speak Out for Engineering competition, organized by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) since 1964. After winning the Sri Lankan national heats against competitors from Moratuwa and Peradeniya, he triumphed in the South Asia regional finals in Nepal on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024, competing against India and Bangladesh.

Representing Sri Lanka and Southern Asia, he won the world finals in Dubai on November 5, 2024, against contestants from six global regions. His presentation, "Engineering a World Without Fossil Fuels," highlighted the challenges of transitioning to renewable energy and the role of mechanical engineering. This marks Sri Lanka's first-ever victory in the com-



petition's 60-year history. Lakdinu credits his success to the unwavering support of his lecturers, the University of Ruhuna, and his batchmates.

## The University of Tokyo Summer Internship Program

The University of Tokyo Summer Internship Program (UTSIP) is a prestigious seven-week research internship for outstanding undergraduate students worldwide. This year, 18 participants were selected, including Mr. Thivin Abeywickrama (FM/FW/2019/121) from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna the only Sri Lankan chosen for UTSIP 2024.

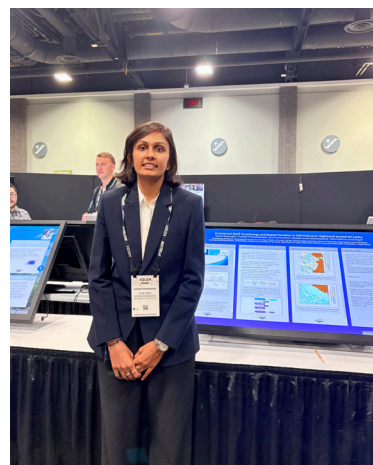
Specializing in Oceanography and Marine Geology, Thivin conducted research on "Water Quality and Ecosystem 1D Vertical Column Simulation in Tokyo Bay" under Prof. Jun Sasaki at the Department of Socio-Cultural Environmental Studies. His work focused on integrated modeling for water quality assessment and ecosystem management, laying the groundwork for future 3D modeling approaches. Alongside research, the program offered cultural experiences and technological field trips. Thivin continues his collaboration with Prof. Sasaki, further advancing his study in integrated modeling.



## University of Ruhuna Undergraduate Presents Research at the AGU24 in Washington, D.C.

The American Geophysical Union (AGU) Annual Meeting is the world's largest gathering of Earth and space scientists, bringing together 25,000+ attendees from 100+ countries. AGU24, held in Washington, D.C., from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024, provided a platform for cutting-edge research and global collaboration on pressing environmental challenges.

Ms. Gayani Kavindi Ranasinghe (FM/FW/2019/125) from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST), University of Ruhuna, represented Sri Lanka at AGU24, presenting her research titled "Continental Shelf Morphology and Spatial Variation in Mid-Holocene High-stand around Sri Lanka", where she was the first author.

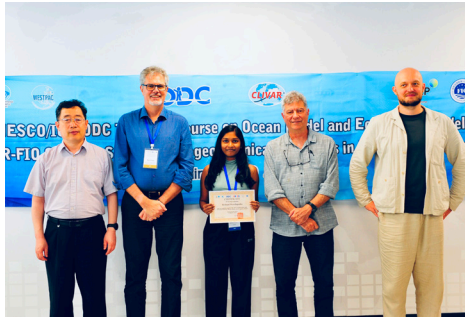




## UNESCO/IOC-ODC and CLIVAR-FIO Training in China

Ms. Heshani Werellapatha (FM/FW/2019/124) from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST), University of Ruhuna, specializing in Oceanography and Marine Geology, was selected for the 13<sup>th</sup> UNESCO/IOC-ODC Training Course on Ocean Model and Ecosystem Model and the 3<sup>rd</sup> CLIVAR-FIO Summer School on Biogeochemical Processes in Earth System Models. This program took place in Qingdao, China, from 8<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2024, hosted by the First Institute of Oceanography (FIO) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, China.

At the time, Ms. Werellapatha was a final-year undergraduate and the only undergraduate among the 35 trainees. The ODC training focused on the integration of marine ecosystems with ocean models, while the CLIVAR-FIO Summer School covered biogeochemical (BGC) processes, Earth System Models (ESMs), and climate interactions. She had



the privilege of working alongside world-renowned climate scientists, including Prof. P. N. Vinayachandran.

Additionally, she participated in a guided tour of FIO's research vessel, Xiang Yang Hong 01. This prestigious international training has significantly enriched her expertise in ocean and climate science, positioning her for future contributions to the field.



## First Place Awarded in UoR Highlights Photographic Competition

Mr. P.H.U. Jayamal (HS/2021/18577) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences secured first place in the photographic competition on "The Natural Beauty of the University of Ruhuna," organized by the Editorial Board of UoR Highlights. His exceptional photography skillfully captured the university's natural beauty, earning him a cash prize of 10,000 LKR and a certificate in recognition of his achievement.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Senior professor E.P.S. Chandana, presented the award during a special UoR Highlights committee meeting at the University Guest House on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The cash prizes were generously sponsored by the Students' Welfare Fund, established by Senior Professor E.P.S. Chandana.



## Short Video Competitions for World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024: Third Place

The Short video competition organized by Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization to commemorate World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024 was held in December 2024. This was organized as the national competition in parallel with other countries across the globe and all the medical faculties of the country participated in the event. The team representing the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, won third place and the team members were Ms. Hasini Wijewardana, Ms. Himashi Botheju, Mr. Roshan Jayarathne, and Mr. Sasindu Methnuwan. Dr. Subhodani Wickramasinghe of the Department of Microbiology coordinated the event.





## Team Aero-Sense Secures All-Island First Place in IEEE Innovations Nation 2024

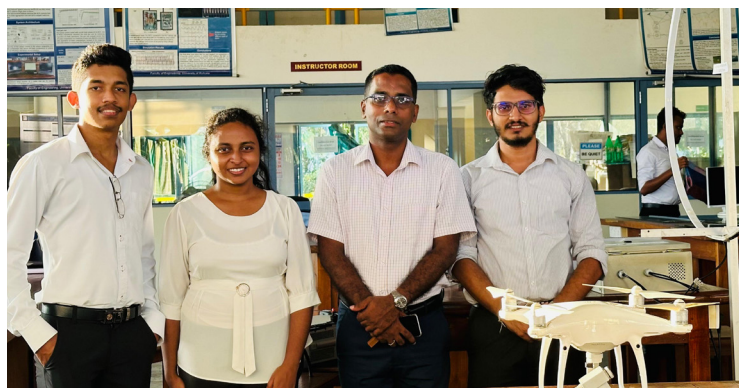


The team Aero-Sense from the Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna, won first place at the All-Island INSL Idea Stage Competition 2024, organized by IEEE Innovation Nation Sri Lanka (INSL). This prestigious competition was held over multiple stages, beginning with provincial rounds and culminating at the national level, where the top teams from across Sri Lanka showcased their innovations. Team Aero-Sense secured first place in the Southern Province before emerging as the national champion in the island-wide competition.

The project, titled "Joint Communication and Sensing at ELF Using AI-Enabled Radio Receiv-

ers," was developed by Dilshara Herath, Supun Ganegoda, and Sudeepa Ranasinghe as their final-year project in the Department of Electrical and Information Engineering at the University of Ruhuna. This project addressed the critical challenge of detecting Micro-UAS (drones), which are increasingly used in sensitive environments for unauthorized activities. By leveraging Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) sensing and AI/ML, the team developed a robust detection system capable of identifying drones effectively in low-frequency ranges.

The project was supervised by Dr. Chatura Seneviratne and co-supervised by Prof. Arjuna Madanayake from Florida International University, USA. The success of this project is attributed to the hard work, dedication, and exceptional teamwork of the project members.



## Champions: Intermedical Faculty Paediatrics Quiz 2024

The annual intermedical faculty paediatrics quiz organized by the Sri Lanka college of Paediatricians was held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna won the championship for the second consecutive year. Team members were Kalindu Wickramasinghe, Sinali Kumarasinghe, Dillon Hannibal, and Siluni Samaranyake. Prof. Pushpika Jayawardana, Dr. Imalke Kankanararchchi, and Dr. Thilina Munasinghe of the Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine guided and trained the students.



## Team Aero-Sense Secures All-Island 3<sup>rd</sup> Place at the Undergraduate Thesis Project Competition 2024

The team Aero-Sense from the Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna, won third place at the All-Island Undergraduate Thesis Project Competition 2024, organized by the IEEE Signal Processing Society Chapter Sri Lanka in collaboration with the SLTC Center of Telecommunication Research (CTR). This event brought together Sri Lanka's brightest minds in Signal Processing.

The project, titled "Joint Communication and Sensing at ELF Using AI-Enabled Radio Receivers," was developed by Dilshara Herath, Supun Ganegoda, and Sudeepa Ranasinghe as their final-year project in the Department of Electrical and Information Engineering. Addressing the critical challenge of detecting Micro-UAS (drones), which are increasingly used in sensitive environments for unauthorized activities, the team leveraged Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) sensing and AI/ML to develop a robust detection system capable of identifying drones effectively in low-frequency ranges. This achievement is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and exceptional teamwork. The project was supervised by Dr. Chatura Seneviratne and co-supervised by Prof. Arjuna Madanayake from Florida International University, USA.





## Inter-University Games – 2024

The Inter-University Games 2024 were held from September to December, organized by various Sri Lankan state universities. During the competition, the University of Ruhuna secured the championship in Men's Hockey, while Men's Volleyball, Men's Taekwondo, and both the Men's and Women's Rowing teams achieved third places. Overall, the University of Ruhuna ranked 8<sup>th</sup>, earning a total of 254 points.



## Empowering Innovation: FMST Student Represents University at Youth Foundry Network Event

The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University of Ruhuna, in collaboration with ICTA Sri Lanka, provided a unique opportunity for Mr. W. A. Yasiru Weerasinghe, a student from the 2020 batch of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, to participate in an entrepreneurship event. This event, part of Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023, marked the launch of the Generation ALPHA Youth Foundry Network.



The initiative aimed to bridge the gap between Sri Lanka's startup ecosystem and youth communities by fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within universities. The Youth Foundry Network introduced a structured framework and an ecosystem start-up map to support young innovators. Through this platform, Yasiru received tailored training to lead entrepreneurial initiatives at the University of Ruhuna, promoting a vibrant startup culture.

The event, held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024, at SquareHub (Pvt) Ltd, Colombo, served as an inspiring platform for youth to connect, collaborate, and engage with experts in entrepreneurship. This collaborative effort reflects the CGU's commitment to empowering students, providing real-world experiences, and contributing to Sri Lanka's growing startup ecosystem.



## All-Island First Place in University Category at SLESA 2024 for Innovative Engineering Project

Team SSJC from the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, University of Ruhuna, emerged victorious in the University Category at the prestigious SLESA (Sri Lankan Engineers in South Australia) competition.

The award ceremony was held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Competing against numerous university teams, Team SSJC distinguished themselves with their innovative final year project, "The Mushroom Grow Media Filling Machine with Automatic Bag Feeding Unit." This project aimed to enhance efficiency in mushroom cultivation by automating the grow media filling process, reducing manual labor, and improving productivity.

Under the guidance of Dr. P.G.C.R. Gallage, Head of the Department, and co-supervision of Dr.



SSJC TEAM

- Piyaarthna M.W.S.B (TL) – EG/2019/3701
- Gunawardana K.K.D.S.P – EG/2019/3593
- Kalhara M.H.C – EG/2019/3620
- Deshapriya S.K.J – EG/2019/3563
- Dr. P.G.C.R. Gallage & Dr. L.K.T. Simal

All Island

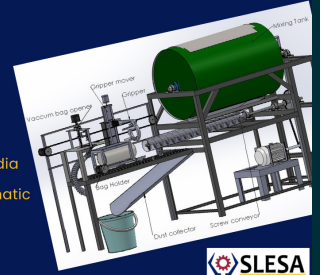
**First Place**



SLESA Bootcamp 2024

FINAL YEAR PROJECT

**The Mushroom Grow Media Filling Machine with Automatic Bag Feeding Unit**



L.K.T. Simal, the team successfully designed and developed a cutting-edge machine that integrates automation technology for precision and consistency. Their achievement highlights the University of Ruhuna's commitment to fostering innovation and technical excellence in engineering. M.W.S.B. Piyaarthna (EG/2019/3701) was the team leader while other members were K.K.D.S.P. Gunawardana (EG/2019/3593), M.H.C. Kalhara (EG/2019/3620), and S.K.J Deshapriya (EG/2019/3563).

## Achievements of Staff

### National Science Foundation Research Grant-2024 for a Dam Safety Research

With extreme climate changes posing growing challenges to dam infrastructure, ensuring dam safety management has never been more critical. Sri Lanka, home to over 300 medium to large dams and 12,000 small dams, must strengthen its disaster preparedness to mitigate risks.

Recognizing this urgency, Dr. S.W. Seneviratne (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Ruhuna) initiated the research project "An Integrated Framework Addressing Dam-Related Disaster Management Relevant to Earthen Embankment Dams in Sri Lanka" in 2023, in collaboration with Dr. A.G. Jayasinghe (Faculty of Engineering Technology, Open University of Sri Lanka). This study aims to develop a holistic and proactive dam safety management framework to safeguard communities near earthen embankment dams.

In acknowledgment of the project's significance, the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka (NSF) awarded a prestigious two-year research grant to Dr. Seneviratne and Dr. Jayasinghe in September 2024. This grant enables collaboration with the Irrigation Department of Sri Lanka and supports an MPhil student, currently



conducting research under their supervision.

Securing this NSF grant marks a major step forward in Sri Lanka's dam safety efforts, reinforcing the country's resilience against climate-induced disasters.



## Dr. Seneviratne and his team won the “Internet for All Competition”

Dr. Chatura Seneviratne, Dr. Thilina Weerasinghe, and Dr. Geeth Priyankara of the Department of Electrical and Information Engineering won the “Internet for All Competition” hosted by the IEEE Communications Society and IEEE Tech4Good. This competition was open to teams or individuals worldwide, and winners were selected region-wise from Europe, the Middle East and Africa, North America, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific. In this competition, only two projects from each region were selected for funding to support project implementation. Dr. Seneviratne and his team received US\$11,000 from IEEE to implement their project with the support of IEEE student members.

The proposal of Dr. Seneviratne's team was aimed to bridge the digital divide by establishing a smart classroom with high-speed internet access via Starlink, developed by SpaceX, to deliver reliable internet access, particularly benefiting remote and underprivileged areas in Sri Lanka.



The project is proposed as a pilot initiative at Dellawa Maha Vidyalaya (DMV), located in the Galle District, Southern Province, Sri Lanka.

## Govi-Nena Team Won the Shared Task Competition for Sinhala/Tamil Chatbot Development at the ICTer 2024

The Govi-Nena Team emerged as the winners of the Shared Task 02: Developing a Chatbot System with Q&A Support using the RAG Model for Sinhala/Tamil in the Shared Task Competition Towards Building a Sinhala/Tamil Large Language Model. This event, held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024, was collaboratively organized by UCSC and IIT in parallel with the ICTer 2024 conference.

This competition primarily aimed to advance the development of Large Language Models (LLMs) for low-resource languages like Sinhala and Tamil, focusing on two main tasks:

Task 01: Developing a Tokenizer and a Word Embedding Model for Sinhala/Tamil Language.

Task 02: Developing a Chatbot System with Q&A Support Using the RAG Model for Sinhala/Tamil.

The Govi-Nena Team, consisting of Prof. Anusha Indika (Team Leader, University of Ruhuna), Mr. Aruna Lorensuhewa (University of Ruhuna), Mr. Kishan Fernando (University of Ruhuna), Mrs. Shyama Wilson (Uva Wellassa University, Western Sydney University), and Mr. Shamika Tissera (University of Kelaniya), successfully competed in Task 02, developing two



innovative solutions: a code-based solution and a low-code solution. Both solutions demonstrated remarkable accuracy, exceeding 80% based on human evaluation.

With their outstanding performance, the Govi-Nena Team emerged victorious in the Task 02 competition.

A special appreciation goes to the University of Ruhuna and the “WIDYA-Ruhuna-Govinena” Team for their invaluable encouragement and financial support, which played a crucial role in this achievement.



## Academic Staff

### Recruitments

Mr. K.L.J Hasaranga (Lecturer, Probationary), Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences Faculty of Allied Health Sciences.

### Promotions:

#### Chair Professor

Prof. G.P.T.S. Hemakumara. Department of Geography, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Prof (Mrs.). K.A.P.W. Jayathilake, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine

#### Associate Professor

Associate Prof. P.P. Jayawardena. Department of Paediatrics Faculty of Medicine

#### Senior Lecturer (Grade-I)

Dr. K.B. Gunawardana, Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

### Retirements



**Associate Professor M. Rathnayake**  
Department of Geography  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Department of Geography at the University of Ruhuna extends its heartfelt appreciation to Associate Professor M. Rathnayake for his outstanding service and dedication to the academic community over the past four decades. As he embarks on his well-deserved retirement, we take this opportunity to honor his invaluable contributions to the department and the university at large.

Associate Professor M. Rathnayake joined the Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna, in 1983 as a Probationary Lecturer. His academic journey began by completing his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Colombo in 1979, followed by a Master of Arts degree from the same institution in 1989. His expertise in regional development and surveying has been instrumental in shaping the academic direction of the department and mentoring generations of students.

Throughout his distinguished career, Associate Professor Rathnayake played a pivotal role in the university's academic and administrative spheres. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade-II in 1989 and further advanced to Senior Lecturer Grade-I in 1996. Recognizing his academic excellence, he was promoted to Associate Professor in 2014.

Beyond his teaching and research commitments, he served as the Head of the Department from 2012 to 2015, demonstrating exemplary leadership and fostering academic growth within the department. His commitment to student welfare and extracurricular engagement was evident through his long-standing service as the Senior Treasurer of the Geographical

and Environmental Science Society and his 12-year tenure as Senior Treasurer of the Geographical Teachers' Association. Additionally, in 2010, he undertook responsibilities as an Academic Sub-Warden and later as a Student Counselor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, further exemplifying his dedication to student development.

Associate Professor Rathnayake's contributions have left an indelible mark on the Department of Geography and the University of Ruhuna. His unwavering commitment to education, research, and student mentorship has been truly commendable. As he steps into retirement, we extend our sincere gratitude for his immense contributions and wish him a fulfilling and joyous retirement ahead.



**Mr. Punchi Hewage Wimalasiri**  
Department of Sinhala  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

After 33 years of dedicated service to the academic community, particularly in the Department of Sinhala at the University of Ruhuna, we bid a fond farewell to our esteemed senior lecturer, Mr. Punchi Hewage Wimalasiri, as he embarks on a well-deserved retirement. His contributions to the Department of Sinhala have been transformative, leaving an indelible mark on countless students and colleagues alike.

Mr. Wimalasiri earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sinhala (Special) from the University of Ruhuna with second-class (upper division) honors in 1990 and was awarded the Wijewardana Prize for Sinhala in 1985. He joined the university as a temporary tutor in 1991 and quickly established himself as a con-



stant presence in the classrooms, guiding students through challenging concepts and fostering a love for learning. In 1994, he became a probationary lecturer, and in 2002, he completed his Master of Philosophy in Sinhala at the University of Ruhuna. He swiftly advanced, being promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade-II in the same year, and to Senior Lecturer Grade-I in 2011.

Mr. Wimalasiri dedicated his academic career to the study and preservation of Sinhalese culture and language. His research interests included Sinhalese culture and folklore, where he explored the rich traditions, myths, and customs of Sri Lanka's indigenous heritage. He has also made significant contributions to the field of Sinhalese grammatical tradition, offering insights into the evolution and structure of the language. His expertise extended to classical Sinhala prose and poetry, where he examined the literary masterpieces of ancient Sri Lankan authors, shedding light on their cultural and historical significance. Additionally, his work on Indian poetics has provided a comparative analysis, enriching the understanding of regional poetic traditions. Through his extensive research, he has made a lasting impact on the academic community, fostering a deeper appreciation of Sri Lanka's literary and cultural heritage.

In 2021, he took on the responsibility as the course coordinator of the Sinhala department for Distance and Continuing Education Unit (External) of the University of Ruhuna. He also became a distinguished member of the Sanskruthi Academic Journal Publishing Society - Boralasgamuwa, further demonstrating his commitment to education.

His dedication extended beyond the classroom. From 1995 to 1997, he served as sub warden at the Wallamadama boys' hostel, maintaining discipline while fostering strong relationships with students. As a student counselor from 1995 to 1999 and again from 2012 to 2016, he mentored many students, encouraging both their personal and academic growth. Additionally, he was entrusted with the role of Senior Treasurer for the Sinhala Society (1996, 2007, 2015) and the Socialist Students' Union (2001, 2002, 2008) at the University of Ruhuna. Mr. Wimalasiri demonstrated exceptional skill in managing financial affairs during these critical periods, with strategic budgeting and financial planning that contributed significantly to their growth and success.

As Mr. Wimalasiri transitions into retirement, we wish him all the best in his future endeavors. We are confident that he will continue to thrive in this new chapter, pursuing passions and interests that bring joy and fulfillment. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for his years of service and wish him a happy and fulfilling retirement.



**Ms. D.A.B.N. Amarasekara,  
Department of Crop Science,  
Faculty of Agriculture**

The Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, is honored to recognize the remarkable career and invaluable contributions of Ms. D.A.B.N. Amarasekara. With an exceptional 41-year tenure, she has served the Department of Crop Science with unwavering dedication, devotion, and distinction. She has been a great source of inspiration and a guiding light to students and the academic community, not only at the Faculty of Agriculture but also across the University of Ruhuna. Ms. Amarasekara's journey at the University began in 1983 when she joined as a Probationary Assistant Lecturer. She was later promoted to the position of Probationary Lecturer and subsequently to Senior Lecturer (Grade II) in 1988. Her academic qualifications include a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Ruhuna (1982), an M.Sc. in Plant Nutrition from KU Leuven, Belgium, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Statistics from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

She is widely recognized in the academic community as a biostatistician and has played a pivotal role in developing numerous statistics courses for the agriculture curriculum at the Faculty of Agriculture. For many years, she has provided dedicated service as a statistician, supporting undergraduate and postgraduate research work at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, as well as at other institutions.

Ms. Amarasekara has also contributed significantly beyond the university. She was an active member of the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka, and a founding member of the Statistics Olympiad Competition. Her passion for guiding students and her contributions to agricultural research and statistical counseling are truly commendable.

The Department of Crop Science extends its heartfelt appreciation to Ms. D.A.B.N. Amarasekara for her unwavering commitment and profound contributions and wishes her continued success in all her future endeavors.



# Tribute to Prof. Anton Perera: A Remarkable Journey of Wisdom, Kindness, and Dedication

*It is with profound sadness that we announce the untimely passing of Prof. Anton Perera, a beloved educator, researcher, and mentor from the Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna.*

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Professor Perera tragically passed away after being hospitalized due to a sudden illness while commuting to the university for work. His passing is an immense loss to the academic community and to all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Professor Anton Perera was a distinguished academic and an eminent researcher in the fields of Livestock Production and Waste Management. His enduring commitment to education was evident through his contributions to national curriculum development committees under the National Institute of Education and his role as Chief Examiner for the G.C.E (Advanced Level) Examination for many years. His tireless efforts helped shape Sri Lanka's education system and agricultural sector.

Professor Perera joined the University of Ruhuna in August 1998 as a gold medalist, having been recognized as the best student of his batch in the final examination of the B.Sc. Agriculture degree program. He later earned a Master of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Colombo and a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Zhejiang University, China. His academic journey was further enriched by prestigious postdoctoral research fellowships from NORAD and the Endeavour Program, strengthening his global reputation as a scholar and researcher.

Throughout his illustrious career, Professor Anton Perera held several key positions, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to academia, student welfare, and national development. He served as the Head of the Department of Animal Science from 2019 to 2022 and as the Deputy Senior Student Counselor of the Agriculture Faculty from 2008 to 2013, offering invaluable guidance and support to students. As the Senior Treasurer of the Agriculture Faculty Student Union, he played a crucial role in fostering student engagement. His leadership extended beyond the university, serving as the President of the Alumni Association of the Faculty of Agriculture and as a founding member of the Ruhuna University Bird Club.

Professor Perera also made significant contributions to the scientific community, holding the esteemed position of President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (Section B – Agriculture and Forestry). His passion for student welfare was truly remarkable. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Viru Sisu Scholarship Fund, ensuring continuous support for students in need. Beyond the



university, he was a driving force in national policy-making, environmental conservation, and curriculum development, making significant contributions to Sri Lanka's agricultural and environmental sectors.

Professor Perera was widely respected for his research excellence. He authored over ten peer-reviewed publications in reputed journals and contributed extensively to national and international conferences. His work on livestock production, waste management, and environmental sustainability has left a lasting impact on the academic and scientific communities. Additionally, he authored books, book chapters, monographs, and edited volumes, further enriching the academic landscape in his field.

Beyond his academic and professional achievements, Professor Anton Perera was deeply cherished by his students, colleagues, and friends. His warm personality, kindness, and dedication made him not just a professor but a mentor and a role model for generations of students. His passion for teaching and research earned him the admiration of the scientific community and made a lasting impact on the Faculty of Agriculture.

Though Professor Anton Perera is no longer with us, his contributions, values, and the lives he touched will forever keep his spirit alive. His legacy will continue to inspire students, educators, and researchers for years to come.

May he rest in peace.



## **Non-Academic Staff**

### **Retirements:**

Mr. T. Ranjith, Library Assistant Main Library

Mr. W.G. Karunathilaka, Security Guard Faculty of Agriculture

Mr. D.G. Sunil Shantha, Lab Attendant, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science

Mrs. G.L. Wasantha Manel, Full Time Sub Warden, Faculty of Medicine

Mrs. D.W.P. Manel, Telephone Operator/Receptionist, General Administration Division

Mr. H. P. Dhammika, Works Aide, Maintenance Unit, Faculty of Medicine.

Mrs. G.U. Nagoda, Management Assistant., Finance Branch, Faculty of Agriculture

Mr. P. Anil, Works Aide, Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science

Mr. W. Sudath Perera, Groundsman, Physical Education Unit

Mr. T.H.G. Chandana, Milker, Faculty of Agriculture

Mrs. W.G. Ariyawathie, Technical Officer, Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture

Mr. H.H. Kamal Pradeep, Plumber, Maintenance Unit



## 22<sup>nd</sup> Academic Sessions and 21<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chancellor's Awards Ceremony

The Academic Sessions and Vice Chancellor's Awards is a distinguished platform organized by the University of Ruhuna to showcase the research outcomes of academics, academic support staff, administrative and non-academic staff, as well as postgraduate and undergraduate students. It also serves to recognize and award scholars for their outstanding achievements.

The Faculty of Agriculture will host the 22<sup>nd</sup> Academic Sessions and the 21<sup>st</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards Ceremony on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the Faculty of Agriculture, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya, under the theme "Innovating Across Boundaries: Bridging Knowledge for Global Impact."

For more details, please visit: [https://ageng.agri.ruh.ac.lk/?page\\_id=5824](https://ageng.agri.ruh.ac.lk/?page_id=5824).

### Acknowledgment:

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Senior Professor E.P.S. Chandana, Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University, for his continuous guidance and encouragement. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Directors, Coordinators, and Administrative Officers for providing relevant information from their respective Centers, Units, and Divisions. We would like to express special thanks to the University's Media Unit for providing photographs.

#### Editor-in-Chief

Dr. U.G.A.M. K.S.S. Atapaththu  
Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences &  
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Dr. Dananjali Gamage

#### Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Mr. T. U. W Abeygunasekara

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#### Language Editor

Mrs. H.M.T.M.H.Molagoda

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



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Contact Us:

Tel: +94412222682 : Fax:+94412222683

Email: [newsletter@admin.ruh.ac.lk](mailto:newsletter@admin.ruh.ac.lk)

Web: [www.ruh.ac.lk](http://www.ruh.ac.lk)