

# CNCI NEWS BULLETIN

## CONTENT

- “CNCI Achiever Awards 2025” - Launch
- SL strengthens protection for local products with GI Registry launch
- Govt rolls out export incentives as EDCM resumes after 28 years
- Damro Group unveils first AI Zone in partnership with Samsung
- CEAT launches 10th premium ‘Shop-in-Shop’ outlet
- Sri Lanka’s CBL takes Munchee and Ritzbury to Kenya
- Kelani Cables receives Authorised Economic Operator Tier I Certification
- 50% of small medium businesses will adjust IT budgets for AI by 2027
- Sri Lanka’s tourism revenue up 34.5-pct in January
- Sri Lanka to provide 50,000 acres of land for industry, expand tiny allocation



## CNCI OFFICE BEARERS

**Mr. Kevin Edwards**  
Chairman

**Mr. Pradeep Kahawalage**  
Deputy Chairman

**Mr. Mahinda Saranapala**  
Vice Chairman

**Mr. Amila Sugathapala**  
Vice Chairman

**Mr. Ravi Rupasinghe**  
Vice Chairman

**Mr. Samuditha Kumarasinghe**  
Vice Chairman

**Mrs. Gayani Jayarathne**  
Treasurer

**Secretary General**  
**Mr. Samantha Wickramasena**

## UPCOMING WEBINARS BY CNCI



## “CNCI Achiever Awards 2025” - Launch

The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries (CNCI) had its official launch and the media briefing of the “CNCI Achiever Awards 2025” for industrial excellence on 18th February 2025 at “Cinnamon Grands” Colombo. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Mrs. Thilaka Jayasundara, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Entrepreneur Development. This year’s awards ceremony will be held for the 24th consecutive time.

The CNCI has initiated the Achiever Awards scheme to promote industrial growth in the country by recognizing and rewarding those industrialists who excelled in their businesses. The contestant companies will be evaluated based on their performance in the areas of quality standards, productivity, corporate plan, research & development, employee benefits, labour relations, etc while paying concerns over the social and environmental obligations and encouraging these industries to reach further heights.

The Achiever Awards scheme is highly popular among the industrial sector and is considered a valuable opportunity for all industrialists of Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small & Micro categories, to be contested at National and Provincial levels.

Also “CNCI Achiever Awards” competition is open for state-owned organizations to compete under the Government Sector Category.

**Achiever Awards applications are available at:**

*Can be downloaded from the website - [www.cnci.lk](http://www.cnci.lk)*

**The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries (CNCI)**

*The Application closing date - 15 th May 2025.*

**No. 20, Galle Face Court 2,**

**Colombo 3**





# The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries (CNCI)



## SL strengthens protection for local products with GI Registry launch



Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe hands over the first GI application to EDB Chairman Mangala Wijesinghe

From left: Juan Pablo (UNIDO), Geethanjali Ranawaka (NIPO), Mangala Wijesinghe (EDB), Wasantha Samarasinghe, K.A. Vimalenthirarajah (Trade Ministry) and Dr. Jairo A. Villamil-Diaz (UNIDO)

The National Intellectual Property Office (NIPO), under the patronage of the Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative

Development Ministry, officially opened the Local Geographical Indications (GI) Registry, a landmark initiative to safeguard Sri Lanka's unique local products and enhance their global marketability.

The registry, formally declared open on February 27, 2025, marks a significant milestone in strengthening intellectual property rights in the country. By providing legal protection for products linked to a specific geographic origin, the initiative aims to preserve authenticity and increase the commercial value of Sri Lanka's renowned goods such as Ceylon Cinnamon and Ceylon Tea. Prior to this, local products lacked domestic legal safeguards, even if they had obtained international recognition such as Ceylon Cinnamon's European Union GI status. Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe emphasised the significance of the initiative, stating, "Opening the Local GI Registry is a crucial first step towards protecting Sri Lanka's geographic advantage, enhancing market access and contributing to the economic empowerment of local communities. We acknowledge the contribution made by the European Union (EU) and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), which have been working together since 2017 with the ministry and government to advance this initiative."

Speaking at the event, Trade Ministry Secretary K.A. Vimalenthirarajah emphasised the registry's role in Sri Lanka's economic growth.

"The Local GI Registry will drive sustainable economic development by reinforcing the unique attributes of our local products through GI-based initiatives. We must now leverage this momentum to establish the superiority of local products such as Ceylon Tea, Ceylon Cinnamon and other produce in the international marketplace and take action against the misuse of the 'Ceylon' name."

The establishment of the registry is a continuation of the UNIDO's technical assistance under the 2017–2021 EU-funded Trade-Related Assistance (EU-TRA) project. The UNIDO provided expertise to support the NIPO in amending the Intellectual Property Act and developing regulations for GI registration. This support has been further strengthened through the BESP-FOOD project, which enhances Sri Lanka's trade-related institutional capacity in the food sector. Further highlighting the significance of the initiative, NIPO Director General Geethanjali R. Ranawaka stated, "GI serve as a powerful tool in protecting the authenticity and reputation of our local products, ensuring they maintain their distinct identity in global markets. With this initiative, Sri Lankan producers will gain stronger legal protection against misuse and misrepresentation, allowing them to compete on a level playing field. By securing GIs, we not only uphold quality and tradition but also open new avenues for economic growth and fair trade." The opening of the Local GI Registry is expected to play an integral role in enhancing Sri Lanka's trade capacity and increasing its competitiveness in the global marketplace.

This initiative will raise awareness about the importance of geographical indications in improving market access, increasing product recognition and fostering rural economic development. It also highlights the essential role of international collaboration in advancing Sri Lanka's trade capacity and securing its place in the global market.



## Govt rolls out export incentives as EDCM resumes after 28 years

The government has announced a series of export incentives and policy reforms aimed at boosting Sri Lanka's export sector, following the resumption of the Export Development Council of Ministers (EDCM) after 28 years.

According to a statement issued by the President's Media Division (PMD), the announcement was made at a meeting held at the Presidential Secretariat last week, marking a renewed commitment to strengthening the country's export-driven economy.

Among the key decisions was the introduction of a VAT refund system at the airport for goods purchased by tourists, aimed at stimulating demand for locally manufactured products. The government also approved export incentives for gems and jewellery, ensuring proper valuation mechanisms to maximize revenue. Additionally, the manual inspection system for export products will be replaced with an automated scanning system at Katunayake Airport, improving efficiency and compliance with international standards.

To further support service exports, the government increased bank guarantee limits, providing greater flexibility for exporters. Discussions also focused on digitalizing export-related data systems to enhance transparency and operational efficiency.

The EDCM, established in 1980 but largely inactive since 1992, plays a crucial role in formulating national export development policies.

Export revenue, which stood at USD 16.1 billion in 2024, is expected to rise to USD 18.2 billion this year, with a long-term goal of reaching USD 36 billion by 2030 through a comprehensive action plan, the PMD release said.

The meeting was presided over by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and attended by Industry and Entrepreneurship Development Minister Sunil Handunnetti, Transport, Highways, Ports, and Civil Aviation Minister Bimal Rathnayake, Plantation and Community Infrastructure Minister Samantha Vidyaratne, Trade, Commerce, Food Security, and Co-operative Development Minister Wasantha Samarasinghe, Rural Development, Social Security, and Community Empowerment Minister Dr. Upali Pannilage, Sri Lanka Export Development Board Chairman Mangala Wijesinghe, secretaries of relevant ministries, and a group of state officials.

## MEMBER NEWS

### CEAT launches 10th premium ‘Shop-in-Shop’ outlet

CEAT Kelani Holdings, Sri Lanka’s leading tyre manufacturer, has kicked off 2025 with the opening of its 10th premium Shop-in-Shop (SIS) outlet, marking a significant milestone in its retail expansion strategy. The company unveiled three new SIS outlets in December and January, located in Colombo 7, Miriswatte on the Colombo-Kandy Road, and Batticaloa, offering vehicle owners an exclusive and premium purchasing experience.

The new outlets—Serendib Tyre and Battery City in Batticaloa, Ajith Tyre Service in Miriswatte, and Universal Tyres in Colombo 7—provide a wide range of CEAT tyres, attractive discounts, and expert tyre care services. Customers can also access additional services such as wheel balancing, alignment, nitrogen and air pumps, alloy wheels, and automobile batteries.

The SIS concept, part of CEAT’s distribution channel expansion strategy, involves creating dedicated spaces within multi-brand dealer premises to showcase CEAT products. The company enhances these spaces with branded interiors, illuminated signage, and innovative display racks, boosting brand visibility and partner revenue.

These premium outlets focus on passenger cars and SUVs, featuring high-performance radial tyres engineered in Germany. CEAT’s retail expansion includes flagship Customer Invested Dealer Operated (CIDO) outlets in Etul Kotte, Madampe, and Mirihana, alongside SIS outlets in key locations like Borella, Pamankada, Malabe, and Kurunegala.

CEAT Kelani Holdings, which manufactures half of Sri Lanka’s pneumatic tyre requirements, has invested over Rs 8.5 billion in the past decade. The company exports 20% of its production to 16 countries, contributing significantly to foreign exchange conservation. With its Italian origins and German technology, CEAT continues to lead Sri Lanka’s tyre sector through innovation, quality improvements, and customer-centric retail experiences.



### Damro Group unveils first AI Zone in partnership with Samsung



Damro Group, in collaboration with Samsung, has launched its first AI-powered smart zone at Marino Mall, Colombo 3, marking a significant step in advancing Sri Lanka’s technological landscape. The Samsung AI Zone aims to redefine smart living by offering immersive experience with cutting-edge AI-powered products.

The zone was inaugurated by key representatives from both companies, including SangHwa Song, Managing Director of Samsung Sri Lanka, and Nalaka Gunathilaka, Joint Managing Director of Damro. Their presence highlighted the shared commitment to innovation and excellence.

The AI Zone features a wide range of Samsung products, including Smart TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, Galaxy smartphones, and home automation systems, catering to tech-savvy consumers. This initiative aligns with Damro’s vision of providing state-of-the-art showrooms and empowering customers to make informed, smart decisions.

Nalaka Gunathilaka said, “This partnership with Samsung is just the beginning of pioneering projects that will set new standards in smart living.” SangHwa Song added, “The AI Zone reflects our shared aspiration to lead technological revolutions and enhance the lives of Sri Lankans.”

## MEMBER NEWS

### Sri Lanka's CBL takes Munchee and Ritzbury to Kenya



Sri Lanka's CBL group, makers of Munchee and Ritzbury, biscuits and chocolates said it has up a distribution hub in Kenya, which will serve the local and African markets.

"We are in the midst of a global expansion drive, focusing on taking our confectionery business to international markets," Shea Wickramasinghe, Group Managing Director of CBL said in a statement.

"We see significant potential for growth in emerging markets, and these are the regions where we can drive innovation forward."

Expolanka Freight Limited (EFL), which has a supply chain network in Kenya, will oversee the distribution of Munchee and Ritzbury products, to supermarkets, local retail outlets, and wholesale markets.

EFL is to also the products across East Africa with the launching of Kenya.

"Our expertise in logistics will ensure that consumers across the country have access to these high-quality snacks," Wasantha Ranasinghe, Director of Expolanka Freight East Africa said in the statement.

Kamal Geeganage, CEO of CBL Foods International, a unit of CBL Group said Kenya had a "dynamic, youth-driven market and the growing demand for high-quality snacks".

Founded in 1968 to combat malnutrition in Sri Lanka, CBL Group has now grown in group to the global market.

### Kelani Cables receives Authorised Economic Operator Tier I Certification

Kelani Cables PLC, a leading manufacturer and exporter of electrical cables, has been awarded the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Tier I status by Sri Lanka Customs.

This certification is a recognition of the company's strong commitment to maintaining high levels of legal and operational compliance, as well as ensuring robust supply chain security.

The AEO certification, which adheres to the criteria and recommendations set forth by the World Customs Organisation, is internationally recognised and serves to enhance the Company's operations in the global marketplace.



With exports to over ten countries, Kelani Cables PLC will benefit from streamlined customs processes, reduced inspections and expedited clearance procedures, all of which contribute to enhanced efficiency in international trade.

The Tier I status will provide the company with several operational advantages, such as faster clearance through customs channels and ensuring that both the company and its trade partners maintain the highest standards of security and compliance.

"Receiving the AEO Tier I certification is a tremendous milestone for Kelani Cables PLC," said CEO Dr. Anil Munasinghe. "It is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence, compliance and delivering outstanding service to our customers worldwide. This certification further strengthens our partnerships with customs authorities, enhances our operational efficiency and underscores our vital role as a key exporter contributing to the nation's economy."

The AEO Agreement was signed by Kelani Cables PLC, CEO Dr. Anil Munasinghe, on behalf of the Company, marking a significant achievement in its continued growth and success in the global market.

# 50% of small medium businesses will adjust IT budgets for AI by 2027

IDC highlights key predictions that AI, automation, and digital transformation will reshape SMBs in Asia/Pacific driving innovation, cybersecurity investments, and cloud adoption to enhance competitiveness by 2027

According to the IDC report, IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Small and Medium-Sized Business 2025 Predictions — Asia/Pacific (Excluding Japan) Implications, by 2027, 50% of SMBs will significantly adjust their IT budgets to factor in AI as the technology improves, vendors solidify their AI pricing strategies, and as AI becomes essential to compete.

Our latest Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending (FERS) Survey results shows that 65% of midmarket companies in the Asia/Pacific region agree that AI/GenAI is a new corporate workload, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) or ecommerce, that will require an incremental increase in technology spending in the upcoming years. In 2025, 53% of such companies plan to spend up to US\$1 million on GenAI-related spending.

For SMBs and midmarket companies embracing digitalization, AI has become a game changer, driving efficiency and innovation at an unprecedented scale. No longer a “nice-to-have,” AI is now essential for businesses of all sizes to remain competitive in the evolving digital landscape. IDC’s predictions show that AI-as-a-Service (AlaaS) providers will continue to innovate, delivering tailored solutions for SMBs. The growth of accessible AI with pretrained models will be a key driver of SMB success, enabling new opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Below are some of the other key AI-driven predictions for the region:

**Demand for AI Use Cases:** By 2025, 70% of APEJ-based SMBs will demand clear use cases from vendors or managed service providers marketing AI capabilities before they invest in and implement new AI/GenAI technologies. **AI Investments Impact Hiring:** During 2025, 30% of SMBs will prioritise tactical AI use cases and investments that break the correlation between business expansion and headcount growth and help them mitigate internal skills shortages.

**SMB-Focused AI Solutions:** By 2026, 80% of AI-as-a-service technology vendors in APEJ will provide dedicated SMB solutions with pretrained models, limiting their need for heavy investments in dedicated infrastructure. **Cybersecurity Investments Contradict Sentiment:** By 2027, due to an increase in cyberattacks, 35% of APEJ-based SMBs will deploy sophisticated, AI-enabled cybersecurity solutions, including endpoint and network security solutions.

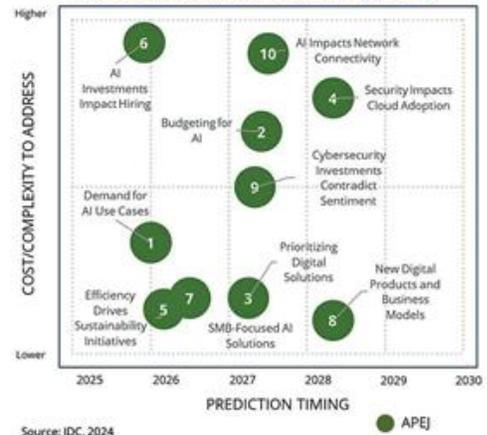
“Technologies like AI, cloud, and security are reshaping business operations, and SMBs must strategically invest in innovations that drive growth and resilience. AI in particular is no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity. It is emerging as a key enabler, transforming workflows, optimising decision-making, and unlocking new opportunities. SMBs that align their long-term technology roadmap with their business goals will gain a significant edge in the digital economy,” says IDC Asia/Pacific research manager, SMB, Midmarket, and Digital-Native Business Program Supriya Deka.

Each year, IDC releases its top technology predictions at worldwide, regional and country levels through its IDC FutureScape Reports and offers strategic and data-driven insights into what is ahead for the rapidly changing IT industry. These predictions have been used to shape the strategies and business objectives of technology leaders and business executives in the next 1-5 years. All the predictions stated here cover Asia/Pacific implications.

Asia/Pacific Excluding Japan FutureScape Reports come with a complimentary report that provides specific recommendations for tech vendor sales and marketing leaders.



**Worldwide Small and Medium-Sized Business Predictions (Asia/Pacific excluding Japan)**



## Sri Lanka's tourism revenue up 34.5-pct in January

Sri Lanka's foreign exchange revenue from tourism rose to \$362.1 million in January, rising 34.5 percent compared to the same month last year, the central bank said, quoting tourism promotion authorities.

The revenue in January last year was \$269.3 million.

The island nation witnessed \$3.17 billion revenue in 2024, with a 53.2 percent jump compared to \$2.07 billion in the previous year, the data showed.

The arrivals also have picked up in the first 44 days of this year with the number of foreign visitors to Sri Lanka rose 19.9 percent to 367,804 through February 13 compared to a year ago.

The arrivals jumped 38.1 percent to 2.05 million in 2024 compared to the previous year. Sri Lanka missed its ambitious 2.3 million tourist arrival target and \$5 billion revenue in 2024.

Sri Lanka's peak tourism has started and will go until early March. Tourism accounted for nearly 5 percent of Sri Lanka's economy when the sector was at its peak in 2018. Since then, it has been hit by violent Easter Sunday suicide attack in 2019 and Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 followed by an unprecedented economic crisis.

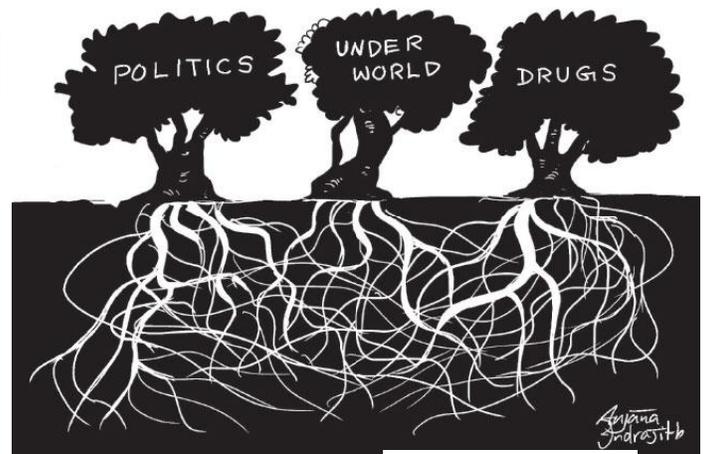
The tourism earnings figure is estimated from a survey conducted by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority. Sri Lanka's imports and the merchandise trade deficit have gradually picked up as tourism earnings came in and people in the sector spent the wages and other earnings. (Colombo/February 15/2025)

ECONOMYNEXT - February 15, 2025



Daily FT 12.02.2025

## Cartoons



Daily News 21.02.2025

## Sri Lanka to provide 50,000 acres of land for industry, expand tiny allocation



Sri Lanka will provide 50,000 acres of land for industries in a country where land allocation for is far below international norms, Secretary to the Ministry of Industries Thilaka Jayasundara said.

“We have only 0.4 percent of land allocated for industry,” Jayasundera told an economic forum organized by Sri Lanka’s Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

“Actually, the international norm is around 3 percent.”

By 2030 Sri Lanka wanted to increase land allocated for industry up to 1 percent, she said.

“For allocating the lands, we identified 50,000 acres for allocating industries, and we identified these lands with the support of all the government institutions, which are responsible for the allocation for the industries,” she said.

“I feel, as the Secretary-Minister of Industry, we can fix this land for the investment, and within 22 working days, not working days, 22 days, within 22 days, we can allocate the land for the specific industries.”

“Within another 62 days, we can give the long-term lease agreement to the investors to start their businesses.”

Private investors say getting land for industries, including private land is next to impossible in Sri Lanka.

Though free hold developed gradually in Sri Lanka under colonial rule, large tracts free hold land was expropriated to the state after independence and private ownership was limited to 50 acres.

Most lands are also fixed for agriculture by several lands by several laws, mostly for agriculture.

Industrialists who have succeeded in setting up factories outside Board of Investment zones, privately describe nightmare scenarios of getting approval, according to analysts.

Sometime gazettes and parliament approval is required, which is beyond the ability of independent entrepreneurs to do.



**TRANSFORMATIONAL  
HUMAN CAPITAL  
MANAGEMENT**

**CNCI  
SEMINAR**

**CONTENT**

- Why Human Capital Management
- Current HC Challenges
- Skill Matrix & Competency Mapping
- Talent Management to meet organizational Goals
- Enhance Personal Effectiveness to Transform Organizations
- Q & A

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

**Directors, Managers, Executives, Supervisors and Those Who interested in Human Capital Management**

**FOR REGISTRATION**

Please fill and submit the Google Form or Email your duly filled registration form to: [cncihrd.training@gmail.com](mailto:cncihrd.training@gmail.com) | [cnci@sl.lk](mailto:cnci@sl.lk)

Contact For More Details:  
0112 339 200 / 0112 452 181 / 077 1777 115 (Sumudu/ Nilanthi)

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**9.00 am - 4.00 pm**

**Taj Samudra**

**RESOURCE PERSON**

**Dr. Jeewantha Perera**  
Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA), UWTSD  
MBA, Cardiff Metropolitan University, London, UK  
Life Coach, Corporate Trainer, Business & Skill  
Development Consultant, Motivational  
Speaker, Chairman of "Be the Best" Foundation

**INVESTMENT**

**Members: Rs. 13,000/-**  
**Non Members: Rs. 14,000/-**  
(Inclusive of Lunch, Refreshments, Handouts & Valid Certificate)

**LANGUAGE**

Sinhala / English (Notes in English)



**CNCI  
SEMINAR**

**Customs  
Procedures  
with Economic  
Impact**



**CONTENT**

- Introduction and Role of Sri Lankan Customs
- Mechanism & Services
- Imports & Exports (Procedures to follow)
- Preferential Trade / Tariff Agreement
- Multi Country Consolidation
- Inco Terms
- Trade Documentations
- TIEP Scheme
- Bonding & Entrepot Trade
- Q & A

**Target Audience:**

**Directors, CEOs, All Managers, Executives, Accountants and All Others Involved in Imports / Exports & International Trade**

**Language**

Sinhala / English (Notes in English)

**FOR REGISTRATION**

Please fill and submit the Google Form or Email your duly filled registration form to: [cncihrd.training@gmail.com](mailto:cncihrd.training@gmail.com) | [cnci@sl.lk](mailto:cnci@sl.lk)

Contact For More Details:

0112 339 200 / 0112 452 181 / 077 1777 115 (Sumudu/ Nilanthi)

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**9.00 am - 4.30 pm**

**Hotel Taj Samudra**

**Resource Persons**

- Mr. A.W.S.I. Silva**  
Additional Director General of Customs (Regional)
- Mr. C.S.A. Chandrasekara**  
Additional Director General of Customs (Corporate)
- Mr. C.L. Ambagahawatta**  
Senior Deputy Director of Customs (Export)
- Ms. S.U. Lokubalasoorya**  
Superintendent of Customs (Industries & Services)
- Mr. R.H.R.W. Kamalsiri**  
Director of Customs (Industries and Services)

**Investment**

**For Members: Rs. 13,000/-**  
**For Non Members: Rs. 14,000/-**  
(Inclusive of Lunch, Refreshments, Handouts & Valid Certificate)

## EXCHANGE RATES AS AT 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025

Date	Buy Rate (LKR)	Sell Rate (LKR)
Australian Dollar	179.1000	188.3050
Canadian Dollar	200.2139	208.7104
Swiss Franc	321.2786	336.1744
Renminbi	39.1391	41.6704
Euro	300.5823	313.0080
British Pound	364.9673	378.8199
Yen	1.9399	2.0156
Singapore Dollar	214.1655	223.9488
United States Dollar	291.1925	299.7397

Source: <https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/rates-and-indicators/exchange-rates/daily-buy-and-sell-exchange-rates>

## Sri Lanka Economy SNAPSHOT



Source : <https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/en/Economy-Snapshot>