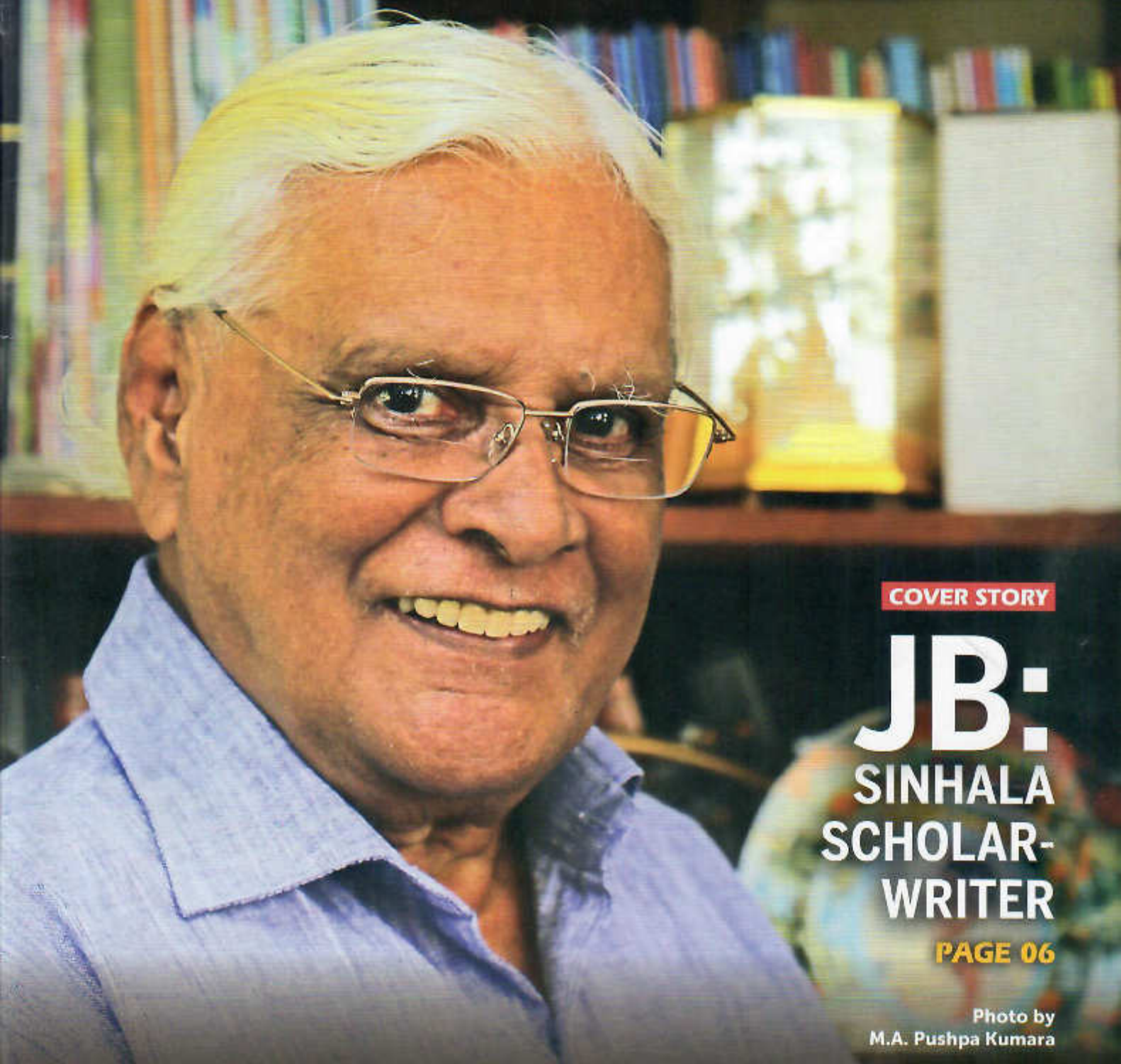


SUNRISE

The magazine for inspired seniors



COVER STORY

JB: SINHALA SCHOLAR- WRITER

PAGE 06

Photo by
M.A. Pushpa Kumara

CHARLES
IS KING

PAGE 24

FIRST AT THE
PEOPLE'S BANK

PAGE 30

DEATH OF
TINA TURNER

PAGE 34

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EDITOR

Ms. Kumudini Hettiarachchi

MOBILE

0714-897951

OUR ADDRESS

No. 30, Ameresekara Mawatha,
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka.

ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Saranya Raghavan

MOBILE

0766-694399

E-MAIL

sunrise-senior.foundation@gmail.com

WEBSITE:

www.sunrise-senior.lk

PHOTOGRAPHY

Mr. M.A. Pushpa Kumara

MAGAZINE DESIGN

Mr. Wasantha Siriwardena

LAYOUT

Mr. Ranga S. Udugama

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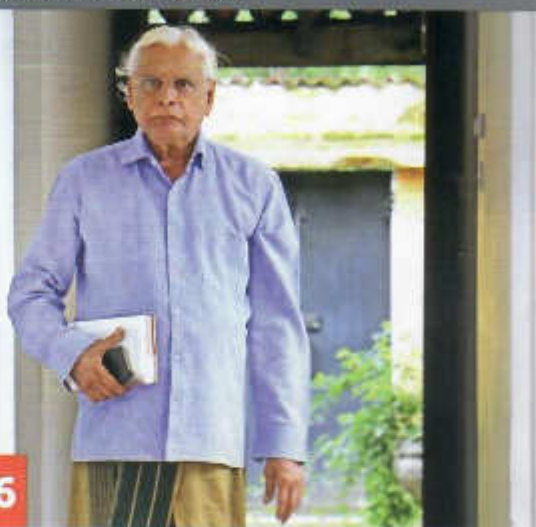
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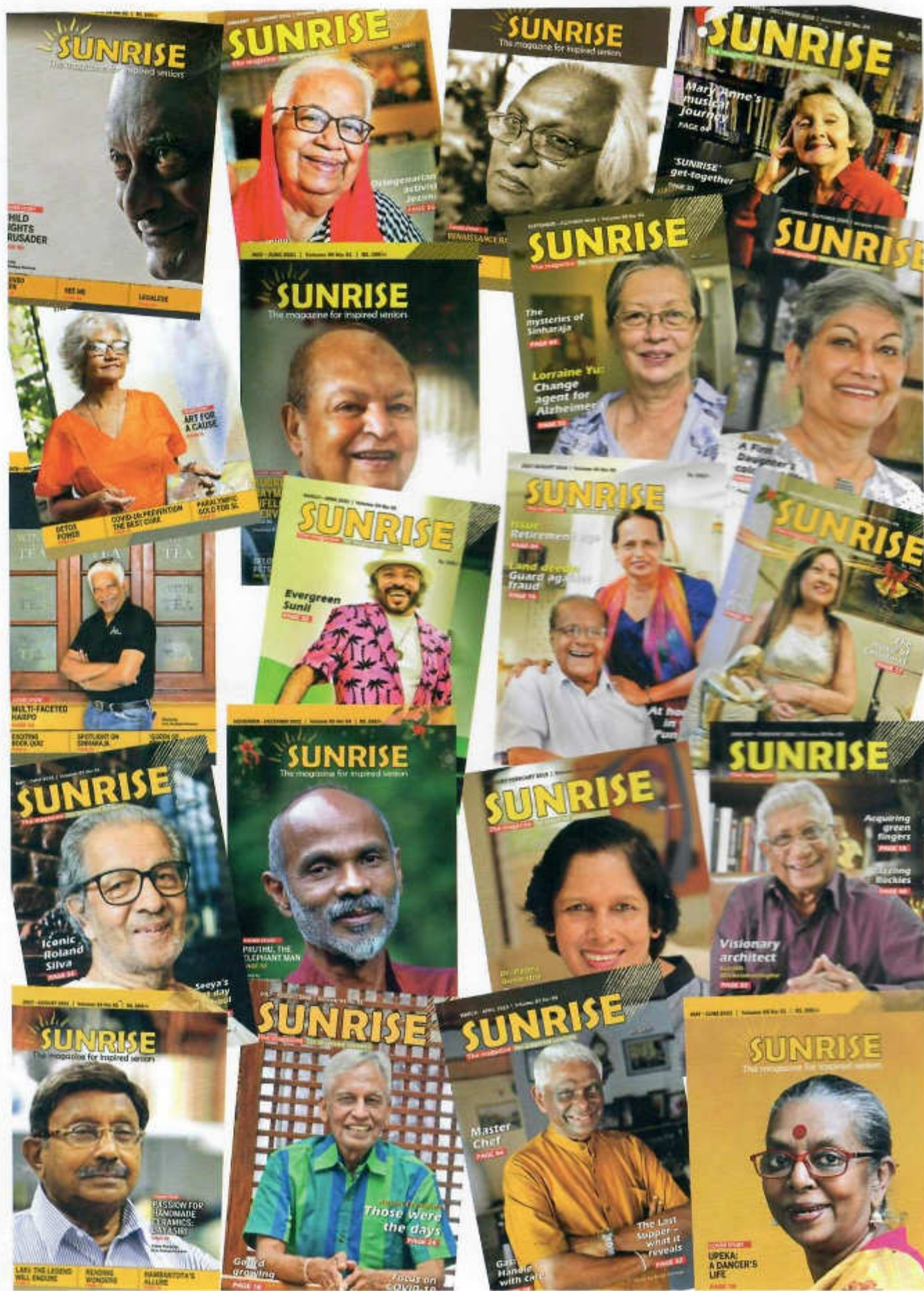


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SUNRISE

P Samitha, Anur

Saving n e Sunrison
from

30.6.23

Consumer resistance is what we need

We are thrilled because as we get on a steady course to provide your favourite magazine, the response and interaction from our readers have been immense.

The calls, the articles, the poems and the participation in the Crossword competition and the Book Quiz have been very good.

Keep sending your pieces and also any suggestions and ideas on how we may take 'SUNRISE' from strength to strength. Please tell your friends and relatives too about "our" magazine so that our readership can increase.

The situation in the country, of course, does not seem to have improved much, even though the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has come in and we have been tightening our belts more and more, while those of us who are working are facing taxation too. The electricity bill has become a shocker every month.

The much-awaited local government elections have not taken place, with talk now of a Presidential Election.

Just today, I saw numerous queues at fuel stations, soon after the rates were slashed, while the price of food has not come down yet. It was such a shock to hear a few weeks back that ginger, that humble spice, had hit Rs. 2,300 a kilo in Colombo, while those in the outstations who do grow ginger for sale cannot even get Rs. 200 for a kilo.

Like always, there needs to be a system change within the country where the middle

man or broker cannot exploit both the cultivator and the consumer.

Another grouse is that trishaws keep charging exorbitant rates of Rs. 120 or Rs. 100 after fuel prices have come down. The other day, I was at Hospital Square, near Odel, and attempting to hail a trishaw, when the 'mafia' there got involved. They were insisting that they would not be going to the meter but charging or should we say fleecing me of Rs. 300 for a distance which would usually cost Rs. 100. I stoically refused though there was some aggression on their part and hailed one independently.

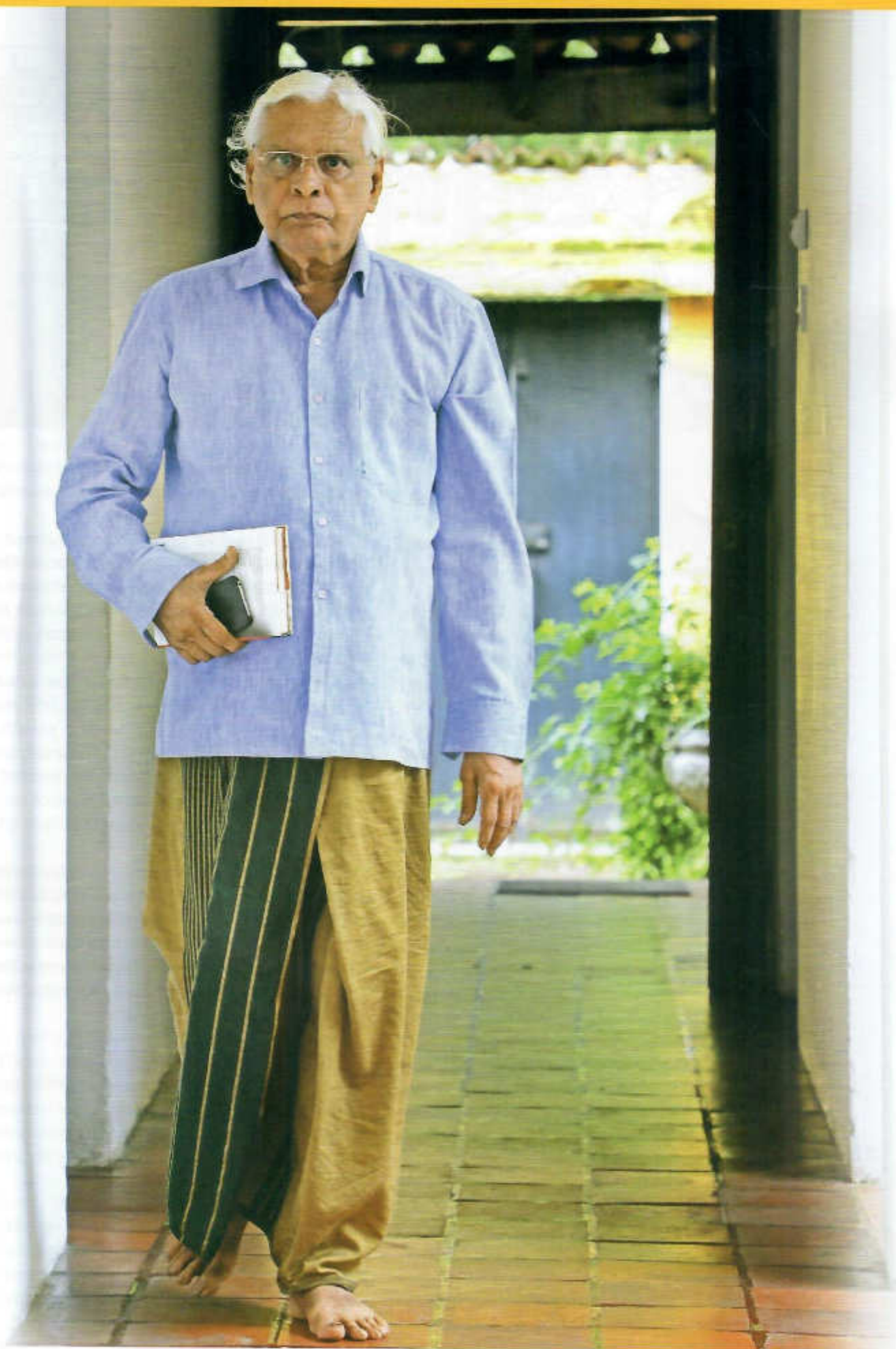
I feel this is what Sri Lanka needs – consumer resistance in every form and not seeking favours or out-of-turn privileges that are not our due. If we resolve to do this and also teach our children to do the same, maybe in a few years Sri Lanka would be a better place to live in.

Then all those who are fleeing this beautiful land will return.

This is the thought I leave you with.



– Kumudini Hettiarachchi
(kumudini.sunrise@gmail.com)





Photos by M.A. Pushpa Kumara

VISION TO IMPART AND CREATE NEW KNOWLEDGE

Much-sought-after Sinhala linguist Emeritus Prof. J.B. Disanayaka

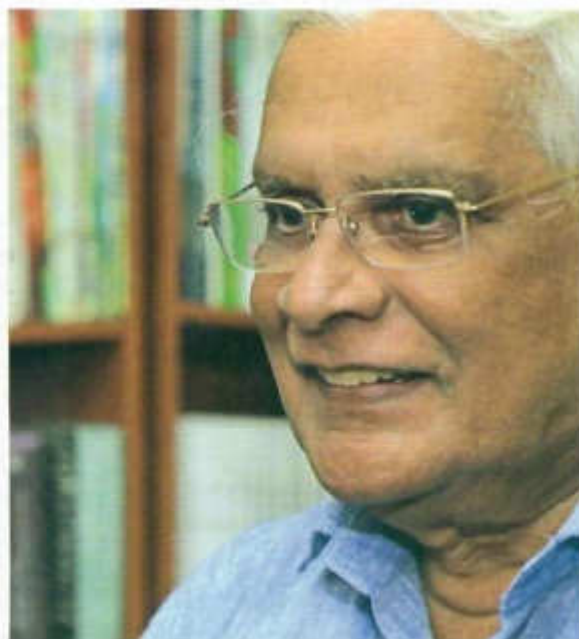
By Kumudini Hettiarachchi

Books, books and more books. Amidst all the books both downstairs and upstairs in his home in Kohuwela is Emeritus Prof. J.B. Disanayaka.

We meet this Sinhala linguistic scholar and prolific writer on a rainy Monday for a long and leisurely chat, starting off on a warm hospitality note – healthy and tasty *diya-buth* sprinkled with crunchy red onion slices washed down by strong cups of milk-tea.

JB as he is fondly called by his peers has just turned 86, celebrating his birthday on April 16, "*hisa thel gapu davase* (the day of oil anointing) after the Sinhala *Avurudda*", he smiles.

And it epitomizes his childhood in the village of Puwakmote in Rambukkana, set amidst lush paddy fields and undulating





JB as a student at Ananda College, Colombo.

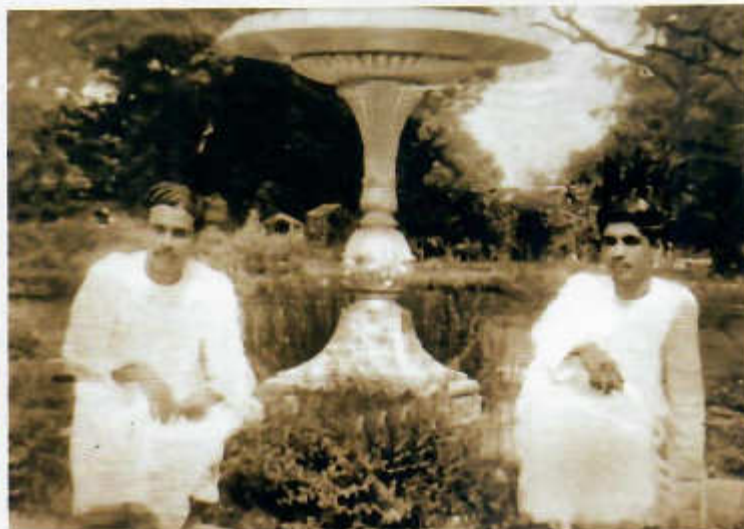
kandu dense with *pol* (coconut) and *kos* (jak) where there was no starvation among the people.

For JB's *Appachchi* was a *Veda Mahattaya* from Eladetta in Udunuwara who in a *binna* marriage (where the husband comes to live in the wife's ancestral home) settled down in Puwakmote. There were five *kollas* (boys) in the family, with JB as the fourth. Now four are no more.

JB's early education was at Dharmaraja College in Kandy. Three years in the hills and then onto Ananda College, Colombo, as his older brother was based in the city to pursue a career in law.

For JB, school life came to a close in 1957, followed by entry into the beautiful campus of Peradeniya of the University of Ceylon, passing out in 1961 with a First Class, having come under the powerful influence of greats such as Prof. D.E. Hettiarachchi and Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra.

Immediately recruited thereafter, JB's first job was as an Assistant Lecturer of the Department of Sinhala at Peradeniya where he imparted his knowledge to students for three years. In 1963, having secured a Fulbright Scholarship, he headed to the United States of America and the University of California, Berkeley,



JB (on the right) with a relative at the Victoria Park (now Viharamaha Devi Park) in Colombo 7.



JB at his convocation.

to study Modern Linguistics, inspiration being sparked by Prof. Sugathapala de Silva back home.

JB says that there are two schools of linguistics – the American School and the British School and armed with his Master of Arts (MA) from the former after two years of study, he spent another year at University College London under Prof. Michael Halliday who developed the internationally influential systemic functional linguistics (SFL) model of language.



JB and Kusum on their wedding day.

On his return home, JB went back to Peradeniya but when the University of Ceylon split into two and Prof. M.B. Ariyapala became the Head and first Professor of the Department of Sinhala in Colombo and requested JB to join him, he left Kandy's cool climes for good. Soon after JB completed his doctorate (PhD), Prof. Ariyapala had established the first-ever Department of Linguistics in any Sri Lankan university at Colombo and invited him to be its Head.

In his personal life, by the late 1960s, JB had taken his pretty student at Peradeniya, Kusum Ramyalatha Hemachandra home as his wife.



JB, Kusum, daughter Madhubhashini and son Samitha.



JB and Kusum with their granddaughters Suvinya and Savera (Samitha's daughters) and Mithahasini and Sajani (Madhubhashini's daughters).



Kusum's mother with her friend Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike.



JB's mother



JB with the King of Cambodia.

When the country was gripped by the 1971 youth insurrection – which Prof. Osmond Jayaratne, who headed the Committee of Inquiry believed was “all because of the education system being wrong” – the Department of Linguistics had been moved to the University of Kelaniya, but JB opted to remain in Colombo.

The reasons were simple. He did not want to spend about six hours on the road both ways, from home to Kelaniya and back, as it would have put him under stress as well as bringing about *kaenthi* (anger). To Colombo was just 20 minutes and it was a fun ride. The other was more a personal one, as he wanted to make way for Prof. S.L. Kekulawala, his teacher at Ananda College, to take up that post.

Kusum who had armed herself with a Diploma in Education in addition to her degree, had begun her teaching career at Visakha Vidyalaya, later moving to Thurstan College, Colombo.

They have a son, Samitha, and daughter, Madhubhashini.

And so, JB taught and mentored students of the Sinhala Department of the University of Colombo, researched and wrote books, retiring from the University of Colombo after 41 years in 2002 but still going to campus for lectures till 2007.

In 2006, JB was appointed to the Official Languages Commission which had as its Chairperson Raja Collure, to draw up regulations linked to the state languages of Sinhala and Tamil.

It was at a meeting of the commission at Temple Trees that then President Mahinda Rajapaksa took him to a side and told him to expect a call from



The King & I – JB presenting his credentials to the King of Thailand, while the Queen looks on.



JB at the Thai Palace signing the book after presenting his credentials.



JB addressing the convocation of the prestigious Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand.



JB and Kusum at a Thai alms-giving.

Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama. The call did come with the news that the President would be happy to appoint him as an Ambassador and when JB said it would "depend" on the country, he had been informed that it was to Thailand.

The four years as the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia and Laos from 2007 to 2011, he "really enjoyed". Many were the important occasions he was invited to grace while also being on the Board of Trustees and Vice Chair of the prestigious Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

JB recalls how Ambassadors from Sri Lanka usually go laden with richly-caparisoned elephant ornaments from Laksala to be presented as gifts to dignitaries.

He, however, wanted to give them something unique. These three countries are like Sri Lanka with ancient kingdoms and it was an endearing gift he presented, 'Lanka, the Land of Kings' which he penned in the short span of three months.

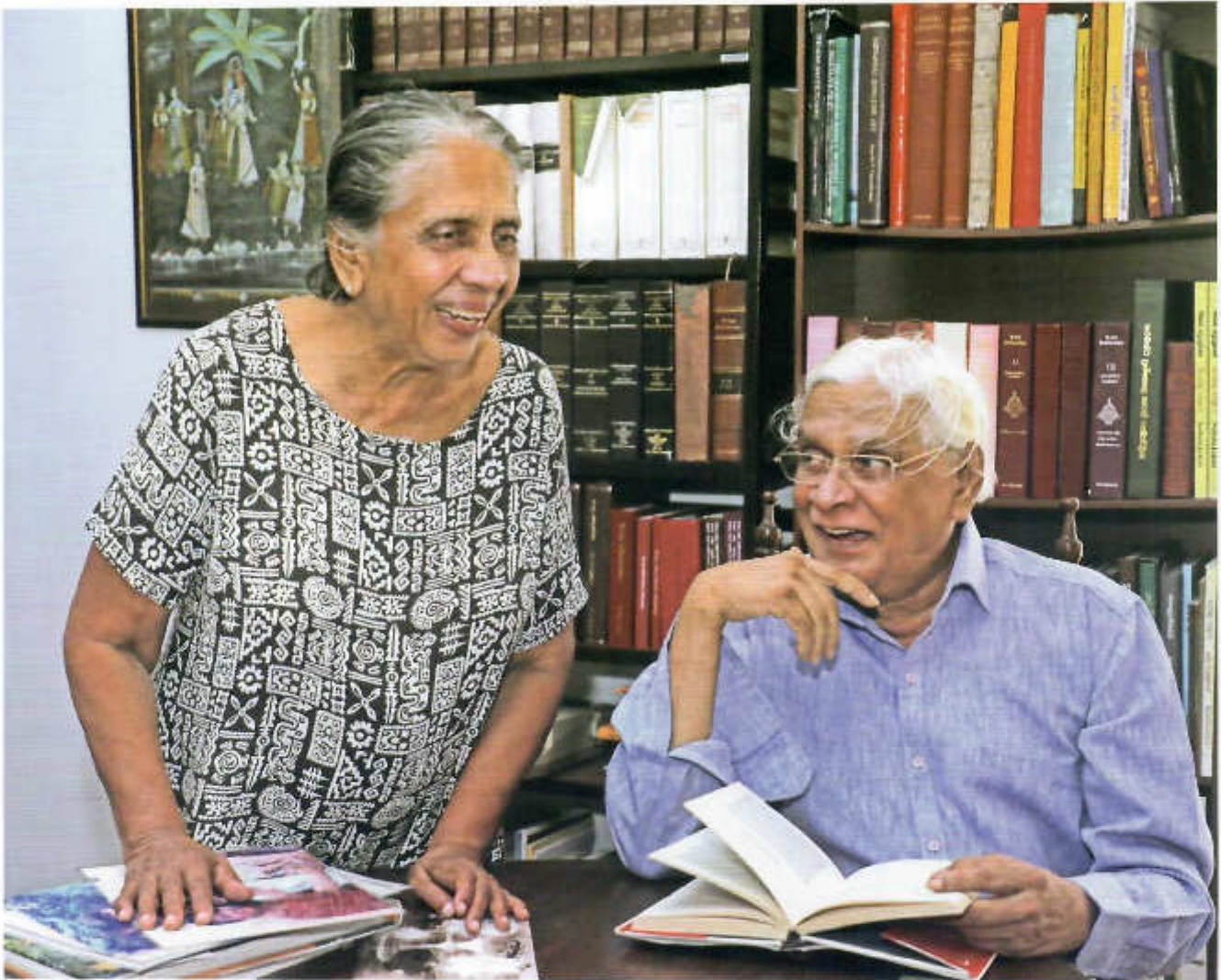
HONOURS

Emeritus Prof. J.B. Disanayaka has been showered with the following:

- **Deshamanya** – the highest national honour of Sri Lanka at that time.
- **Deshanetru** – a national honour awarded by the Department of Cultural Affairs.
- **Sahitya Ratna** – the highest honour of the Department of Cultural Affairs awarded by the President of Sri Lanka.
- **Doctor of Letters (D.Litt)** – awarded by the University of Colombo.
- **Professor Emeritus** – offered by the University of Colombo.
- **Keerthi Sri** – awarded by the University of Sabaragamuwa
- **Bhasha Shastra Shiromani** – awarded by the Vidyalandkara Pirivena, Kelaniya.
- **'Friend of Thailand'** – offered by the Tourism Authority of Thailand.
- **The 'Fritz Kunz Challenge Cup'** – presented by Ananda College for 'The Best Young Citizen'. This had been awarded in 1957 for his production of 'RAWANA', the second musical opera after Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra's 'MANAME' which had been produced in 1956.



'Friend of Thailand' award



Still excited over what he had uncovered, he says that when he met the King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni and mentioned that there was no sculpture of Sri Lanka's King Rawana, he had been told that there indeed was one at Angkor Wat, the temple complex dubbed the 'largest religious structure in the world' by the Guinness World Records.

"I am so happy that 'Lanka, the Land of Kings' with a photograph of the Angkor Wat sculpture of Rawana is in all the other embassies in Thailand," he smiles.

Throughout, Emeritus Prof. J.B. Disanayaka has had one vision: "As a university teacher, my purpose is to impart as well as create new knowledge, while telling the world about our culture."

"I am so happy that 'Lanka, the Land of Kings' with a photograph of the Angkor Wat sculpture of Rawana is in all the other embassies in Thailand."



A paper clipping of an article.

This is what he is doing – sitting at his computer and writing not only books, he has nearly 300 to his name, but also articles to newspapers and magazines, while fielding numerous calls seeking help with semantics.

JB's first book nearly 50 years ago had been 'Bashawaka Rata Samudaya' (Set of patterns of a language) and the last on 'Maldivian Language Today and Yesterday'.



King Rawana whose only picture being that of a sculpture at Angkor Wat.



Interesting snippets on language

At a recent meeting where doctors were gathered to discuss serious medical matters, Emeritus Prof. J.B. Disanayaka was the Guest-of-Honour to talk about 'The evolution of Sinhala'.

Keeping the audience in stitches with his presentation liberally laced with humour, he said that language is like an amoeba (unicellular organism) which splits into two – Bengali splitting into two resulting in the mother language of Bengali and the daughter language of Sinhala. Similarly, Sinhala splitting into two resulting in Sinhala and the Maldivian language of Dhivehi bas.

This Sinhala scholar went on to point out that language changes in three ways – by dropping (like a snake shedding its skin) or adding and due to functional changes (like a girl reaching puberty and becoming a woman). However, it is the same language.

Focusing on the influence of Portuguese, Dutch and English on Sinhala, he picked up what children say when playing....."kang-kang-booru, sing-sing-noru" and said that in Portuguese when there is a group of people, the leader was known as *singo*. *Singnore* was also Mr.

So, what was actually being said by the leader was: 'Kane, kane, boorro', with the group answering: 'Si Singnore' (Yes, sir).

From Dutch, JB picked out food such as *kokis* (cookies) and legal language including *notharis* *kanthoruwa* (notary office), *perakadoru* (lawyer)



and *advakaat* (advocate), while a 'burgher' was one who comes from the city.

He then pointed out that Sinhala has no 'f' sound in it – for use in words such as 'telephone', 'Ferial' or 'Feizal'. There was also a need to create two vowels (to pronounce such words as Ernest and colonel), otherwise how would one say: 'Much Ado About Nothing'.

Proud that there was a Sinhala real-time Unicode and that the Sinhala alphabet was one of the "most creative" with four *sannaka* and two vowels *ae* and *ae*, JB said tongue-in-cheek that he could teach any foreigner Sinhala in one minute.

"One just has to affix '*eka*' to an inanimate noun, '*kenek*' to an animate noun (computer-*eka*/car-*eka* or doctor-*kenek*) and '*karanawa*' to a verb (present-*karanawa*, type-*karanawa*)," he added.

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SRI LANKA

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Disanayaka Mudiyanselage Jayarajna Banda Disanayaka*

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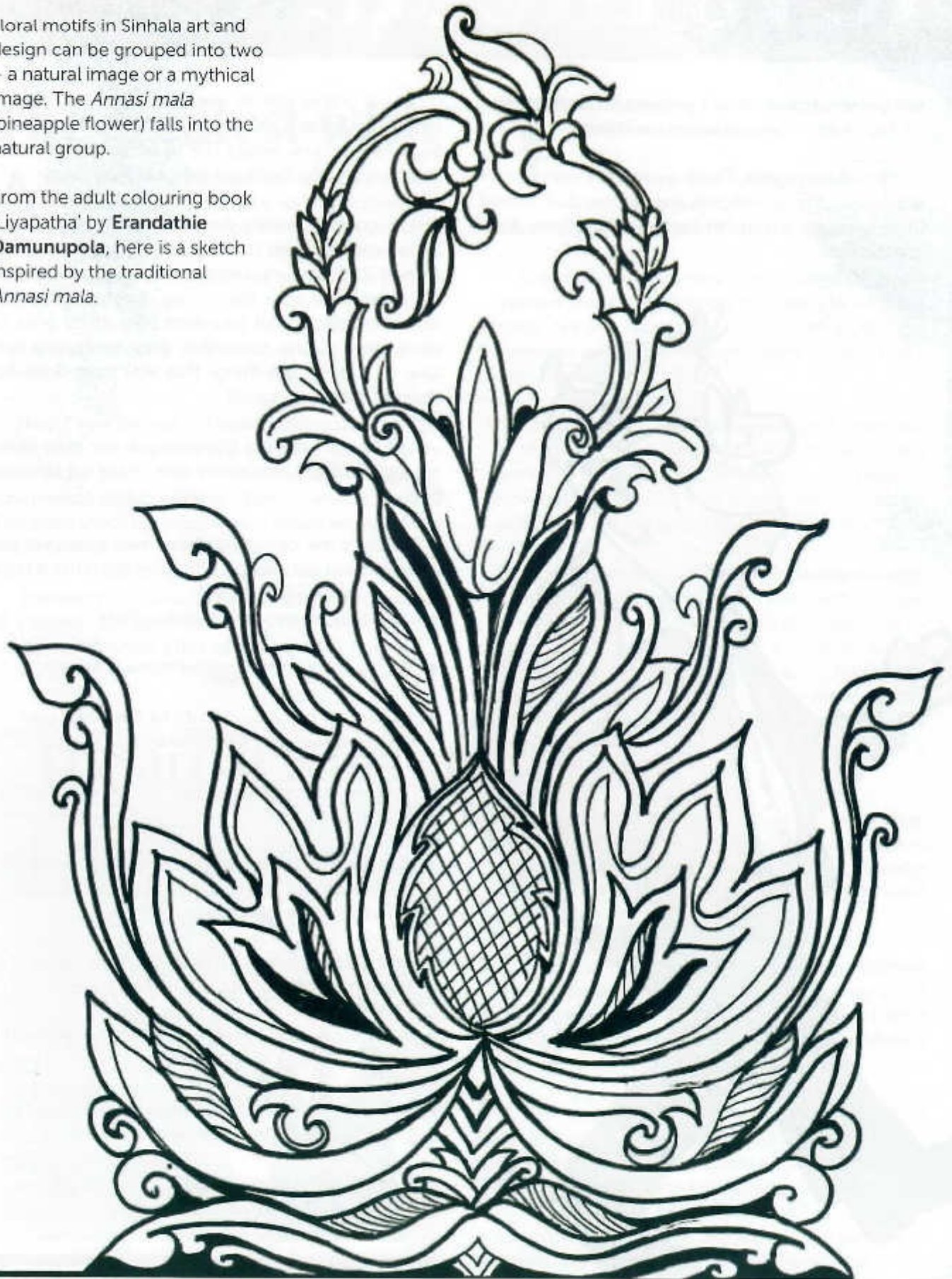
Doctor of Letters

(June 2023)

Annasi mala

Floral motifs in Sinhala art and design can be grouped into two – a natural image or a mythical image. The *Annasi mala* (pineapple flower) falls into the natural group.

From the adult colouring book 'Liyapatha' by **Erandathie Damunupola**, here is a sketch inspired by the traditional *Annasi mala*.



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