



Chief guest and The Sunday Island's Chief Editor Manik de Silva, receiving a memento from Editors' Guild President and Lankadeepa Editor-in-Chief Siri Ranasinghe (right) and Chairman Board of Directors SLPI Kumar Nadesan (left).



Rekha Tharangani Fonseka of Lankadeepa receiving the Best Environmental Reporter of the Year Merit Award from Kelum Kulathunga, Manager Activations, Sri Lanka Telecom.



Daily Mirror columnist D. B. S. Jeyaraj was awarded the D. R. Wijewardene Award for Earning the Recognition of Peers and the Public. Susitha Raju Fernando, Associate Editor, Daily Mirror receives the award on his behalf from Ranjit Wijewardene, Chairman, Wijeya Newspapers.



The Weekend FT Design Team receiving the Best Designed Newspaper of the Year Award (English) from Lasantha de Silva, Convener - Free Media Movement.

Night of the journalists

The 23rd edition of the Annual Journalism Awards for excellence was held on Tuesday, December 13 at the Mount Lavinia Hotel's Empire Ballroom. The Sunday Island's Chief Editor Manik de Silva was the chief guest at the event.

The event was organised by The Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka in partnership with the Sri Lanka Press Institute and its affiliated unions; the Newspaper Society of Sri Lanka, the Free Media Movement and the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association.



The Lifetime Achievement Awardees (L-R): Mr Daya Lankapura, Mr. A. D. Ranjith Kumara, Mr. P. Manikavasagam, Ms. Chitra Weeraratna and Mr. P. B. Elangasinha.



Ms Chitra Weeraratna receiving the Lifetime Award from The Island Editor Prabath Sahanbandu.



Thisari Nadisha Athukorala of Irida Lankadeepa receiving the Prof K Kailasapathy Merit Award for Reporting Under Special Circumstances from Vindya Amarasekara, Editor, Ceylon Today.



Muthuthantrige Heshani Amandika Cooray of Anidida receiving the Denzil Peiris Young Reporter of the Year Award from Mr. Kumar Nadesan.



Opening ceremony: Mr. Siri Ranasinghe lights the oil lamp while Mr. Ranjit Wijewardene and Mr. Manik de Silva look on.



An entertainment act during the evening.



Supatham Asiri Fernando of The Sunday Morning receiving the Mervyn De Silva Journalist of the Year Award from Mr. Manik De Silva while Mr. Kumar Nadesan looks on.



Eshan Fernando of The Sunday Times receiving the Photojournalist of the Year Award from Duminda Sampath, President - Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association.



Tharushi Weerasinghe of The Sunday Times receiving the Denzil Peiris Young Reporter of the Year merit award from Mr Kumar Nadesan.



The event was co-organised by the Sri Lanka Press Institute Team. Pix by Indika Handuwala

Colourful language has similarities

Swear words in different languages have one thing in common

BY SCOTTIE ANDREW

What's in a swear? The world's filthiest words typically refer to something vulgar or taboo, for one.

But there's something else swears across the world's languages have in common. They're all missing the more melodic consonant sounds you're more likely to hear in a lullaby than in a colourful reaction to a stubbed toe.

Swear words lack the consonant sounds l, r, w and y across several languages – including Chinese, English and Spanish, according to a new study from researchers at Royal Holloway, University of London. The team set out to find “phonetic patterns” in profanity in several disparate dialects.

“Swearing – like religion, or music – is a ubiquitous phenomenon across cultures,” study co-author and psychology professor Ryan McKay told CNN. “Our work suggests that it's not just the semantic content of words that gives them their potency, but that the sounds in these words may also play a role.”

Understanding the ‘sound symbolism’ in swearing

Growing up in Western Australia, McKay was exposed to “quite colourful language,” he said. He noticed that swear words in English contain “a preponderance of plosive” sounds – p, t and k – in which the mouth completely closes after forming the sound. (Try it out with your favorite English-language curse word and notice how it feels.)

McKay said he wondered whether the plosive sounds “allow an especially emphatic expression of emotion.” He sought the expertise of psychology department lecturer Shiri Lev-Ari, an expert in “sound symbolism,” in which words have sounds that suit their meanings. Think words like “glass” or “glisten,” whose sounds suggest something shiny and smooth, with the definitions to match.

McKay said the pair expected to find evidence of the “plosive” sounds across languages or a “universal phonetic template for swearing,” with sounds dictating the evolution of swear words in different tongues.

What they found, though, was that in several languages, swear words



A new study finds that swear words are missing certain consonant sounds across several languages.

are missing the l, r, w and y sounds. Those four consonant sounds are known as approximants – sounds that only slightly restrict the vocal tract but otherwise allow air to flow freely when they're uttered.

There was one swearing similarity across languages

For their first study, they recruited speakers of Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Korean and Russian and asked them to list their languages' most vulgar and filthy words. They analyzed those words and compared them to “control words” – that is, neutral words that aren't considered swears in each language – and broke down their consonant sounds.

The only discernible pattern they could find among the swear words were the missing sounds throughout: the approximants l, r, w and y. They enlisted Arabic, Chinese, Finnish, French, German and Spanish speakers for their second study. The subjects were presented with two words in a language they didn't speak and asked to pick out which words they thought was the swear. (The researchers made up many of the words for this part of the study, based on existing words in different languages.)

The participants were “significantly less likely” to select the words with approximants when asked to identify swear words, McKay and Lev-Ari wrote.

Stand-ins like ‘frick’ and ‘darn’ use those missing sounds

Curse words across languages are

often missing those approximant sounds and therefore are less sonorous when they're spoken. A profane example lies in the f-word, which in English ends abruptly, restricting air flow when the “k” sound is made.

Curiously, when people are trying to clean up their language or replacing swear words with similar clean ones like “frick,” or “darn,” they reintroduce those missing consonant sounds, McKay and Lev-Ari found.

Those almost-but-not-quite-curses are called “minced oaths,” words that sound similar to, but still notably different from, swear words.

“We found that people tend to introduce these sounds into swear words when seeking to soften them for polite company,” McKay said.

As for why the approximants are unsuitable for curse words, McKay said he can only speculate. He noted, though, that humans and other animals make “harsh, abrasive sounds when distressed” and smooth sounds when they're safe and content.

“It may be that people associate sounds like l, r, w and y with calm, and so perceive them as unsuitable for expressing anguish or frustration,” he said.

Swear words are powerful, Lev-Ari and McKay wrote: They're used for emphasis, for shock value, even for pain tolerance. It makes sense that speakers of swears would avoid more fluid consonant sounds, which lend themselves better to more melodic words than curt curses do.

- Courtesy CNN

2022: The year in science

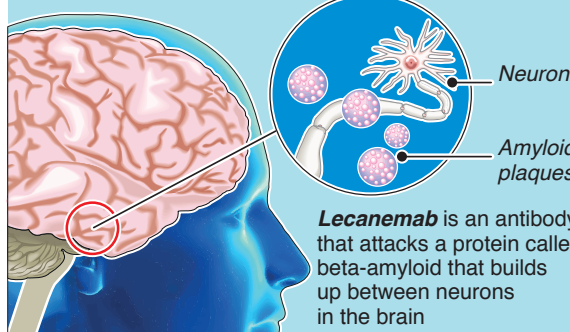
IMAGES OF AN UNSEEN UNIVERSE

JULY: NASA releases the first images from the James Webb Space Telescope, a partnership with the European and Canadian Space Agencies.

This landscape of glittering stars is the edge of a young, star-forming region called NGC 3324 in the Carina Nebula

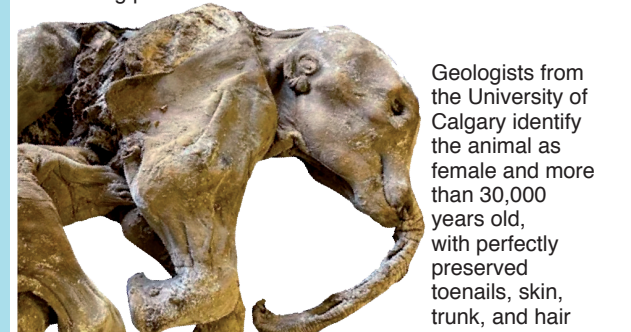
ALZHEIMER'S BREAKTHROUGH

NOVEMBER: An experimental drug slows the destruction of the brain in Alzheimer's, the most common form of dementia.



ICE AGE WOOLLY MAMMOTH

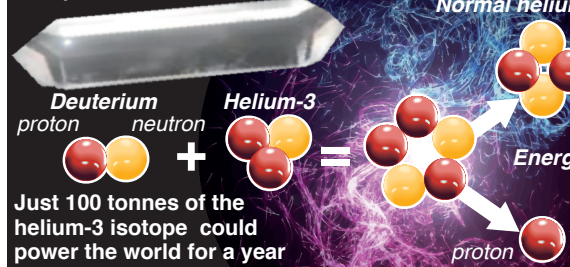
JULY: Miners working in the Yukon in northwestern Canada uncover a frozen baby mammoth while excavating permafrost.



Geologists from the University of Calgary identify the animal as female and more than 30,000 years old, with perfectly preserved toenails, skin, trunk, and hair

MINING THE MOON FOR HELIUM-3

SEPTEMBER: Chinese scientists announce the discovery of Changelite-(Y), a new mineral found in lunar samples that contains helium-3, widely seen as a potential fuel for fusion reactors



Just 100 tonnes of the helium-3 isotope could power the world for a year

WORLD'S SMALLEST MICRO-ROBOT

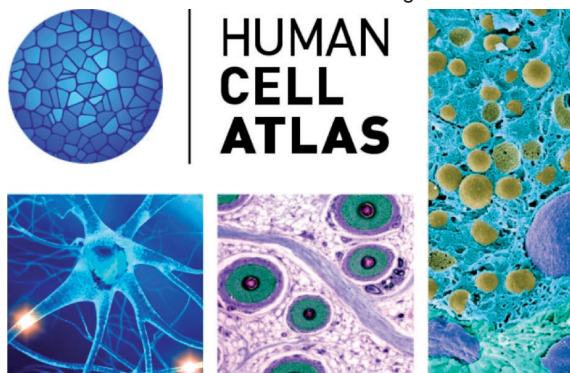
MAY: Engineers at Northwestern University in Chicago demonstrate the smallest-ever walking robot, just 0.5mm wide and resembling a crab.



Their research brings the field of robotics one step closer to performing practical tasks within tight spaces. Micro-robots could repair small machines or act as surgical assistants to clear clogged arteries or eliminate cancerous tumours

LIFE SCIENCES GET BIG DATA

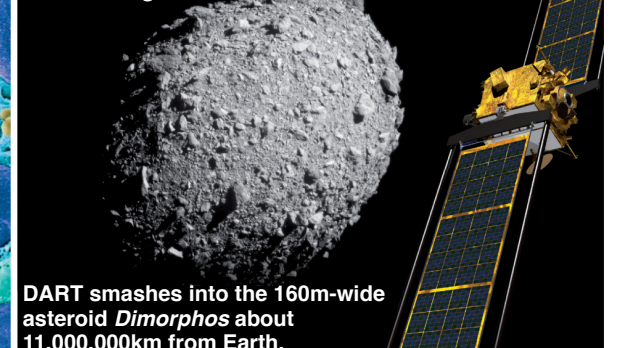
MAY: More than 2,300 researchers across 83 countries compile a Human Cell Atlas, mapping the positions of over a million cells across 33 different organs.



The international HCA aims to map every cell type in the human body to transform our knowledge of human health and disease

PROTECTING OUR HOME PLANET

SEPTEMBER: NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) – the world's first planetary defence demonstration – successfully impacts its asteroid target.



DART smashes into the 160m-wide asteroid Dimorphos about 11,000,000km from Earth. The craft slams into the space rock at 22,530km/h, pushing it off its previous orbit

Sources and pictures: Government of Yukon, Human Cell Atlas, NASA, Northwestern University, People's Daily

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