

the  
**SUNDAY  
TIMES**

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 31, 2023



# FUNDA DAY TIMES

Best Wishes  
for 2024!



**A 'Menik' Dance**

Pic. by M. A. Pushpa Kumara

**KIDS'  
WORLD**

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**EVENTS**

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**(ONLINE)  
IORA DAY  
ART COMPETITION**

PAGE 5



**NEW YEAR  
PAGES 6 - 7**

Follow us on  
[www.fundaytimes.lk](http://www.fundaytimes.lk)



**Please send competition entries to:**



**Funday Times**  
C/O the Sunday Times  
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.  
Or  
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,  
Colombo 2.

**Please note that competition entries are accepted by email.**

**All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

**Email: [fundaytimes1@gmail.com](mailto:fundaytimes1@gmail.com)**

**Please write the name of the competition and the date clearly at the top of your entry and include the following details:**

Full Name, Date of Birth, Address, Telephone No. and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

**Closing date for this week's competitions:**

**January 17, 2024**



**In our online issue this week:**

- **Page 5** – IORA Day Art Competition
- **Pages 6 – 7** – New Year around the world
- **Page 8** – News in Pictures

Please log on to the Funday Times website on [www.fundaytimes.lk](http://www.fundaytimes.lk) or check out the Sunday Times epaper on [www.sundaytimes.lk](http://www.sundaytimes.lk) for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.

### Christmas Peace

It is time for Christmas  
It is very nice  
We can make sugar mice  
And eat on Christmas night.

Decorating the house  
With wreaths and socks  
And wait until midnight  
To meet Santa Claus.

My wish I will ask  
Is create peace in the world  
And stop crimes on streets  
And to greet happiness 'n joy.

Life is very short  
But peace is foremost  
My wish for everyone  
Is peace in the world on Christmas.

**Aysha Manaal (13 years)**  
**Ilma Int. Girls' School**

### Gifts

Gifts celebrate every moment of Christmas  
Being gifted during Christmas is special  
Gifts are colourful and glittery  
Gifts are not opened every day.

We have different types of gifts  
Gifts can be clothes or reading books  
Gifts should be wrapped before gifting  
Children enjoy remote-controlled toys as gifts.

Gifts should be kept under the tree  
Gifts can't be opened before Christmas  
In the night you cannot take a peek at your gift  
Gifts come with a hidden note.

**Tavenesh Nivethan (13 years)**  
**Wycherley Int. School**

### Perahera Elephant



**Taznin Booso**  
**Horizon College Int., Malabe**

### Village scene



**Umar Rushdie**  
**D.S. Senanayake College, Colombo**

### Education

Education is the tool that helps us understand life. It is the tool that keeps us happy. A child's education begins at home. Education is a fundamental right of every person. Educated people make educated societies. Only educated people can take a nation to progress.

In short, education is the key to success in life.

**Abdur Rahman Irshad (10 years)**  
**Vidyawardana Vidyalaya, Wellampitiya**

### My sister

My sister's name is Rashida. She is one month old. She is very cute and chubby. She is very fair. She likes to drink milk. She has a little toy. She likes to play with me. I love my sister.

**Rahma Riyasulkarnain (12 years)**  
**Muslim Ladies' College, Colombo**

### My favourite cricketer

My favourite cricketer is David Warner. He is an Australian cricketer. He is not an all-rounder but he is a very good batsman. He is batting in the top order.

He was born on October 27, 1986 in Paddington, New South Wales. He is 37 years old. He is a left-hand batsman.

He is the first Australian cricketer in 132 years to be selected to a national team in any format, without experience. He plays for South Wales and played for Sydney Thunder in domestic cricket. He is the best cricketer.

**Tenuka Samararatne (12 years)**  
**Royal College, Colombo**

### Celebrating Christmas



**Vidasna Pilippuheva (7 years)**  
**Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo**



A proud peacock



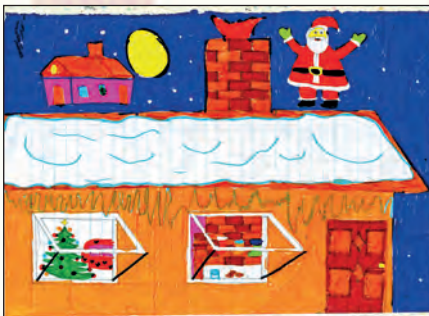
**Dinadi Hesanya (Grade 4)**  
Royal Int. School, Kegalle

The jungle



**Yenuri De Silva (Grade 1)**  
Royal Int. School, Kegalle

Christmas



**Thanumi Fernando (11 years)**  
Lyceum Int. School, Kurunegala

Christmas celebration



**Rannen Ondaatje (7 years)**  
Maris Stella College, Negombo

## A machine I would like to invent

There are lots of machines that would be useful for the world to invent. But in my opinion, the best one would be a teleportation machine. It will make transportation much easier and help to save time. We can travel all over the world in no time. It will be so much fun too. We will no longer have to face traffic or accidents that happen when travelling non-stop.

It will be nice to use a teleportation machine instead of a vehicle. Even though you will have to pay for the machine, it will be forever. I am planning to make this machine without much expense. So I will be able to sell them for a good and valuable price that is fair and affordable for everyone.

Well, it will take me some time to make this machine. But I am over the moon to get started. I promise that nobody will have bad mornings because of being late after I invent this awesome machine.

**Methuli Samaraweera (12 years)**  
Sri Rahula College, Anuradhapura

## My favourite subject

My favourite subject is English. And how do I learn English? I watch English films and English cartoons. I read Ladybird books, like 32, 40 books.

At school the English teacher gave dictation of 40 words. My marks were 39 from 40 words. My friend Sakidu, his marks were 39 from 40. We are the same.

At another race, my marks were 39 from 40. Sakidu's marks were 38 from 40. So I won. Everyone clapped hard. Then the English teacher knew I know English very well.

Every Tuesday I go to an English class. And I read Harry Potter books to develop my knowledge. When I was five years old, my father helped me to read Ladybird books. And I watch kids movies on all mornings.

I like to read English books and write English copywriting so much.

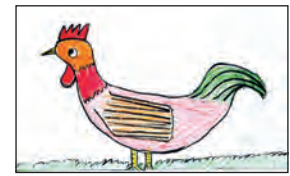
**Dulitha Warathanna (9 years)**  
Wariyapola Sri Sumangala College, Kandy

## My school

I love my school because it is very beautiful. We study English, Maths, Religion, Environment and Tamil. I like English more. I got 98, 99 in the first term and second term. In the third term, my marks were less. I love my school.

**Dithuli Nawagattegama (Grade 3)**  
Boswell College Int., Kalutara

## My rooster



My pet is a rooster. It has colourful feathers. It has a sharp beak. It has a red colour comb on the top of the head.

It wakes me up by crowing cock-a-doodle-doo every morning.

**Raveen Dissanayaka (Grade 1)**  
Royal Int. School, Kegalle

## My sibling

My sibling is a sister,  
Who is an idiot.  
She does stupid things,  
To make me cry always.

She pinches me,  
And hits me,  
She drags me from my hair,  
Thinking that I am an animal.

But whenever I am sad  
She is the only person near me,  
When I cry,  
She will wipe my tears,  
From her lotus-petalled hands.

Even though we fight,  
I love you so much,  
I wish you to be my sister,  
In my next life...

I will go wherever you go,  
And keep you safe,  
As an angel in this universe,  
No man can hurt you  
Till I save you, forever...  
I Love my sister.

**Sugee Amnulla (11 years)**  
York Int. School, Kadawatha

Please remember that **ARTICLES, POEMS and PAINTINGS** sent, will not be published unless they are certified as your own work by a parent or teacher. Also please mention the topic, your full name, date of birth and address in your entry. Articles should not exceed 200 words. Art should be on A4 size paper.





Vidura College Kelaniya Branch Annual Concert 2023, was held at Elphinstone Theatre on December 4, 2023.



Pix by M. A. Pushpa Kumara



Lots of fun, mystery and laughs filled the Main Hall of S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2023, when nearly 750 students between the ages of 6 - 10 years travelled through time, rediscovering the story of the Birth of Jesus and the joy of Christmas that ensued, as they staged their Christmas play, 'A Time Travelling Christmas'.

Pix by Helkamal Nanyakkara



## IORA Day 2024

The ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education have combined to commemorate IORA Day in March next year with a major programme for school children which will include an art competition that will showcase the importance of the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lanka took over the Chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in October 2023 for the period 2023/2025. There are 23 member states and eleven dialogue partners in IORA.

The theme for IORA Day will be a 'Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations' and will focus on educating and engaging future generations on the importance of ocean conservation and sustainable practices to preserve the oceans for the future.

Among the activities planned is a national level art competition for school children in association with the Ministry of Education and Wijeya Newspapers Ltd.

Entries will be accepted from school children in three categories: Primary (Grades 1 - 5), Junior (Grades 6 - 9) and Senior (Grades 10 - 13).

Details will appear in the children's publications of Wijeya Newspapers Ltd., and their online versions.

Several other ocean-related activities will be conducted with the participation of children island-wide, drawing awareness to the importance of ocean sustainability. These activities are also coordinated by the Sri Lanka Navy and other ocean-related agencies. Opportunities are to be provided for children to be taken out to sea on a short excursion.

Ahead of IORA Day, several awareness programmes are planned.

The main event of IORA Day 2024 will be held at an ocean-front site in Colombo on March 10 with stalls displaying various ocean-related activities.



## IORA DAY ART COMPETITION 2024

### 'SUSTAINABLE INDIAN OCEAN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS'



Currently, Sri Lanka holds the Chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and, plans are underway to hold the next IORA Day 2024 commemoration on 10th March, 2024.

As part of the activities, an Island-wide Art Competition among school children under different topics on the theme "Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations" will be held as indicated below, in association with the Ministry of Education and Wijeya Newspapers Ltd.

### CALLING ALL BUDDING ARTISTS ISLANDWIDE!

Express your creativity and concern for the Indian Ocean through art!

We are inviting artists from all schools to participate in our art competition centered around preserving our beautiful Indian Ocean.



### PARTICIPATION

Participation rules are categorized as follows:



**Primary (Grades 1 - 5)**  
Theme: Our Ocean - Our Life  
(Certificates/Prizes for Participation)



**Junior (Grades 6 - 9)**  
Theme: Protecting Our Ocean  
(Certificates/Prizes for Winners)



**Senior (Grades 10 - 13)**  
Theme: Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations  
(Certificates/Prizes for Winners)



Prizes to be won and selected Artwork will be showcased in the IORA Day Art Exhibition



Showcase Your Talent and share your message with a wide audience



Be an advocate for Sustainability and Inspire Positive Change



### CONDITIONS

- Open for all school children in Sri Lanka
- Must be done on size A3 Paper
- All submissions should be certified by the School Principal
- Each entry should be accompanied by an entry form as below.

### SUBMISSION

Submit your entry by registered post to reach before **16th February, 2024** with the completed entry form to:

Director (Aesthetic Education)  
Ministry of Education,  
Isurupaya,  
Pelawatte, Battaramulla.

Please indicate following on top left corner of the envelope:

IORA Day Art Competition 2024,  
Category :.....  
Province :.....



Selected artwork may be used for future programs both locally and internationally.  
Organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Wijeya Newspapers Ltd.

## IORA DAY ART COMPETITION 2024

### Entry Form

Full Name: .....

Category: Primary (Grades 1-5)  Junior (Grades 6-9)  Senior (Grades 10 - 13)

School: .....

Province: .....

Home Address: .....

Name of the Parent/Guardian: .....

Contact Number of the Parent/Guardian: .....

Certification by the School Principal:

I certify that the above student is studying in Grade ..... of this school.

Signature of the School Principal



# New Year's Traditions from around the world in 2024



Everyone has their own special New Year's traditions that they practice year after year. Maybe you prefer a low-key evening at home watching the ball drop with your loved ones. Or maybe you like to kick it up a notch with karaoke and dancing.

The best thing about customs like these is that it's never too late to start a new one. That's where these New Year's traditions from around the world come in. Although most of us cross our fingers and hope that the next year will only bring good things, there are people in countries like Germany, Scotland, Denmark and Brazil who carry out specific customs, most often at the stroke of midnight, to secure that good luck. Anything from wearing symbolic colours to sprinkling salt on your doorstep are said to encourage good fortune, abundance and financial success for the coming year.

### Banging bread on the walls

In Ireland, it's tradition to bang on the doors and walls of your home with a special Christmas bread to drive out bad luck and invite in good spirits. It's a symbolic way of starting the New Year with a fresh, clean slate.



### Baking a coin into a cake

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, people from Greece celebrate St. Basil's Day with a special cake known as "Vasilopita," which contains a single coin. The person who finds the coin is believed to be blessed with good luck for the New Year.



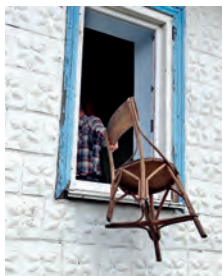
### Carrying empty suitcases

Hoping for plenty of travel in the upcoming year? Then do as they do in Columbia and carry an empty suitcase around the block. It's a practice that's thought to encourage lots of travelling in the New Year.



### Throwing old furniture out the window

In Johannesburg, South Africa, there's a New Year's Eve tradition of throwing old furniture out of windows to symbolize letting go of the past and welcoming new blessings. This custom is often accompanied by celebrations in the streets as people bid farewell to the old and embrace the new.



### Dropping ice-cream on the floor

A fallen ice-cream cone usually isn't a good thing. But in Switzerland, dropping ice-cream on the floor at midnight on New Year's Eve is believed to bring abundance.



### Grapes for Good Luck

You may see people in Spain eat 12 grapes at midnight, a tradition that started back in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The custom was originally thought up by vine growers to sell more grapes at the end of the year, but it stuck! Spaniards eat one grape with each bell strike, which is believed to result in good fortune.



### 'First Footing'

For New Year's in Scotland, they observe something called "First Footing." Scots believe that the first person who crosses the threshold of a home after midnight should preferably be a dark-haired man, which can bring about a lucky New Year.



### Tossing white flowers in the ocean

Brazilians have a custom of throwing white flowers into the sea each New Year. Doesn't that sound so romantic? Residents will toss flowers and candles into the Atlantic Ocean as offerings to Yemoja, a god of water who can pass along good things in the upcoming year.



### Soba Noodles

In Japan, they welcome the New Year by eating bowls of soba noodles, or noodles made from buckwheat flour. They're nicknamed "year-crossing noodles," and while the origins of this tradition aren't exactly known, generally, people believe that the long noodles represent a long life.



### Lucky Pig

Pigs? And New Year's? There's actually a connection between the two, at least in Germany. Germans call this custom "Glücksschwein," which translates to "lucky pig." Pigs appear as marzipan treats, and noshing on them can foster good fortune in the New Year.



### New Year's Feast

Food is certainly a big part of New Year in the United States, but in France, it's an event all on its own. Called "le réveillon de la Saint-Sylvestre," the meal celebrates the "awakening" of the patron saint of New Year's and features delectable gourmet foods, like oysters and lobster.



### Red for Good Luck

Red is a colour that denotes good fortune and happiness, and in China, it's a hue that's often attached to New Year's. You'll spot decorations, fans, gift packets and lanterns in shades of red.



### Smashing pomegranates

No matter what time of year it is, pomegranates are very important in Greece. In Greek mythology, the fruit represents abundance and life, things that are tied to New Year's there. Just after midnight, Greeks will crush pomegranates against their doors — the number of seeds that fall to the ground symbolize how much good luck you can expect in the New Year.



### Cleaning streets, cars and more

At the start of the New Year, Puerto Rico just might be the cleanest country around, since their tradition is to clean their homes and cities top to bottom, from indoor spaces to cars to streets. It's a way to start out with fresh energy in the New Year.



### Cutting apples

While we might be used to cutting up apples for a pie, in the Czech Republic, cut-up apples hold unique significance when it comes to New Year's. On New Year's Eve, residents will cut apples in half and the shape inside denotes what one can expect in the coming year. For instance, while a star is good, a cross can foretell a future illness.



### Lucky lentils

Italy is almost always known for dishes like spaghetti and linguini, but during New Year's celebrations, it's all about the lentils. Italians see lentils as mini, edible "coins," and if you include them in your New Year's Eve dinner, they'll bring some luck into your life.



### Sprinkling salt

In the United States, spilling the salt can represent bad luck, but in Turkey, sprinkling salt is encouraged. Turks will sprinkle salt on their doorsteps at midnight, something that can generate success in the New Year.



### Three potatoes

On New Year's Eve, Columbians place one peeled, one unpeeled, and one half-peeled potato under their beds. When the clock strikes midnight, they pull out the first potato their hand touches, and the potatoes symbolize different things: a peeled potato means financial ruin. An unpeeled potato promises a good year all around. And a half-peeled potato is a mix of good and bad for the year.



### Jumping off chairs

Perhaps back in the day, you and your friends jumped off chairs at parties for fun, but in Denmark, it's a real New Year's tradition. There, people try to jump off their chairs in unison at midnight, a symbol of jumping forward into a New Year.



The Pioneer Woman



December 27

# News in Pictures

**County Antrim, UK**

Tourists at the Dark Hedges near Armoy. The tunnel of trees became famous when it was featured in 'Game of Thrones' and now attracts significant numbers of tourists from around the world.



**Bintaro, Indonesia**  
People ride sleighs on artificial snow at Trans Snow World Bintaro, an indoor snow park with a Japanese theme.



**Scheveningen, Netherlands**  
In The Hague it is a tradition to build wood piles around New Year's Eve, which are set on fire at the start of the New Year. The largest bonfires are on the beaches near Scheveningen and Duindorp.



**Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
People dressed as Santa Claus abseil down a building.

December 26



**Folkestone, UK**  
Swimmers take part in the Folkestone Lions' Boxing Day Dip at Sunny Sands beach in Kent.



**Kryvorivnia village, Ukraine**  
Men in traditional dress play on trembitas in front of a church during Christmas celebrations.

**Beijing, China**  
A woman walks past images depicting the late Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong at a stall in an antique market marking the 130th birth anniversary of communist China's founding father.



**Kathmandu, Nepal**  
Girls from Newar people dressed as the living goddess Kumari during the Yomari Punhi Festival.



**Delhi, India**  
Goats wearing sweaters are tied next to a hut on a cold winter morning.

Source : The Guardian