

the  
**SUNDAY  
TIMES**

SUNDAY  
FEBRUARY 25, 2024



# FUNDA Y TIMES



**BC Reading Challenge Awards**

Pic. by Priyanka Samaraweera



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**(ONLINE)**



**New**

**IORA DAY 2024  
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**FROM THE EDITOR**

**Calling  
Funday Times  
Club Members  
and Readers**

IORA Day 2024 will be celebrated on March 10, 2024 at Galle Face Green in Colombo. Many interesting, ocean-related activities are being organized, leading up to that day.

Two-hundred (200) Funday Times Club members and readers will be selected on a first-come first-served basis to participate in the activities.

**If you would like to attend the main event, please call us or email us your full details.**

**If you are a club member, please state your membership number.**

**Telephone: 2479337 / 2479333**

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

**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.**

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

Full Name (including Surname),  
Date of Birth, Address,  
Telephone No. and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

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

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

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

**March 13, 2024**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

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



## IORA Day 2024 Essay Competition



Hey Kids, Funday Times is organising an English Essay Competition to create awareness about IORA Day 2024. This is apart from the IORA Day 2024 All-Island Art Competition (See Page 3 for more details).

Under the main theme for IORA Day 2024, 'Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations,' we give below three topics for the three age groups.

Please send in your essays (in English) with your full details to Funday Times by post or email. Remember to get your entries certified as your original work by a parent or teacher.

**A Family Dinner Buffet at Hilton Colombo will be awarded for the 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Winners.**

**The winner of the best overall essay will receive a Laptop.**

**Other exciting prizes and Book Vouchers will be awarded to all the winners!**

**Closing Date: March 1, 2024**

**Age group: 9 years and below**

**Topic:**

*Our Ocean – Our Life*

**Word count: 150**

**Age group: 10 – 12 years**

**Topic:**

*Protecting our ocean*

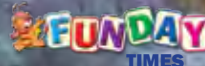
**Word count: 150 – 200**

**Age group: 13 – 15 years**

**Topic:**

*Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations*

**Word count: 200 – 300**



Or



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

## British Council Reading Challenge

British Council Reading Challenge Awards Ceremony was held for the children



who successfully completed the Reading Challenge programme at Colombo Library.

Certificates were awarded to all the participants who completed the programme successfully and also Achievement certificates of the Reading Challenge were awarded to 14 participants who read more than the required number of books.

The theme of the Reading Challenge was 'Ready, Set, Read!'



**Pix. by Priyanka Samaraweera**



British Council Library, Jaffna held their Reading Challenge Awards ceremony recently.

Forty-five children completed the Reading Challenge programme with the theme 'Ready, Set, Read'.

These children read 270 books within six weeks.

# Mangoes or nothing!

By Manoshi De Silva

A baby squirrel sat on the mango branch, crying. When Tin Tin the squirrel saw this, he stopped by to ask the small squirrel 'what was wrong?'

"I am hungry! I want to eat a mango!" sobbed the little squirrel. But it was not the mango season yet. Tin Tin looked at the mango twigs full of blossoms. He knew that it would take a couple of months for the flowers to turn into mangoes.

"He is hungry! I should get him something to eat," thought Tin Tin and he climbed down the tree trunk towards the bird-feeder. The people in the house below the mango tree always put food on the bird-feeder, for the birds and the squirrels. Tin Tin went to the bird-feeder plate and saw that there were pieces of bread and some fruits.

Tin Tin took a piece of bread and ran towards the small squirrel. "Here, eat this," said Tin Tin, offering the piece of bread to the small squirrel. The small squirrel sniffed it. "Is this mango?" he asked Tin Tin. "No, this is bread," replied Tin Tin and the small squirrel started crying again.

"But I don't want bread. I want a mango! I heard that it tastes very sweet. I have never eaten a mango!" cried the small squirrel. "See these mango flowers?" pointed Tin Tin, "they have to grow into mangoes and that will take some time. So till then, you will have to eat something else or stay hungry." "Then I will stay hungry!" cried the stubborn little squirrel.

Kindhearted Tin Tin didn't want to leave the small squirrel feeling hungry. So he went down to the bird-feeder again to see if he could get anything else for the little one. Tin Tin saw the pieces of fruit and he took a round slice of banana, which was also his favourite fruit. "The small squirrel will love this if he takes a bite from this," thought Tin Tin.

The small squirrel sniffed the banana piece for awhile. He liked the smell. "Is this mango?" he asked Tin Tin. "Well, it does taste as good as mangoes..." said Tin Tin, trying to get the small squirrel to like it, "but this is a piece of banana." The small squirrel started crying even louder.

"I don't want bread. I don't want bananas. I want a mango!"

Tin Tin went away feeling sad.

Tin Tin didn't know what to do. He was also feeling very hungry.

So he decided to go to the bird-feeder to eat something.

There was a crow sitting at the feeder enjoying the food. "Hey, Tin Tin," greeted the crow, "why do you look so upset?"

Tin Tin told the crow about everything that happened with the small squirrel. "He refuses to eat anything else other than mangoes."

The crow smirked and said, "Well, he sounds like a stubborn little fellow. Let him cry and stay hungry till he learns a lesson!"

"But we should be kind and help others, Mr. Crow!" said Tin Tin. The crow thought for a while. "Well, has he eaten mangoes before?" the crow asked Tin Tin.

"No he hasn't. Someone has told him that mangoes taste nice. So now he's refusing everything else and asking only for mangoes!" replied Tin Tin. The crow smiled, "Watch what I am going to do," he said as he took a piece of papaw and flew to where the small squirrel was.

"Hello, little one! Why are you crying?" the crow asked the small squirrel. "I am hungry and I want to eat a mango!" sobbed the little squirrel. "Oh you are lucky because I have a piece of mango with me," the crow lied. He winked at Tin Tin and gave the piece of papaw to the small squirrel.

"Is this really mango?" asked the small squirrel, sniffing the piece of papaw. "Of course it is!" said the crow. Both the crow and Tin Tin were surprised to see the small squirrel eat the piece of papaw in a couple of bites. "That was very nice! Mangoes taste so good and I am not hungry anymore," smiled the small squirrel.



The crow flapped his wings and flew away smiling slyly at Tin Tin.

"Do you know what you ate just now?" Tin Tin asked the small squirrel. "Yes, it was a piece of mango and I loved it!" replied the small squirrel and Tin Tin sighed. He felt bad the crow lied to the small squirrel. Tin Tin knew that lying to others was not a nice thing to do.

"You were being very stubborn and didn't want to even try anything else other than mangoes! But how would you know if you would like the other food or not, without even trying?" asked Tin Tin. "See the fruit that you ate just now and enjoyed was not even a mango. It's a fruit called papaw!" "Really?" asked the small squirrel in surprise widening his eyes. "But that tasted nice and I liked it!"

"You need to understand that although there are times that we want something badly, sometimes it's impossible to get it. At times like that we should be willing to find another good option. Crying and being stubborn and asking for something that is impossible to get, is not very wise!" said Tin Tin. And the little squirrel agreed.

"Come along, let's go to the bird-feeder and try out all the other food that is there. You might find something that you will enjoy as much as you enjoyed the piece of papaw. Once the mangoes grow and ripen, you can enjoy them. But till then you will have to find other food to keep your little tummy full," said Tin Tin and took the excited little squirrel to the bird-feeder.

From a Funday Times Young Reporter

## 'Let my country awake' - Students' Literary Festival 2023

'Let my country awake' - Students' Literary Festival is organized by the University of Peradeniya annually. It was held for the 28<sup>th</sup> time last year. There were many competition categories such as Poetry, Essay Writing, Art, Short Story and Debate in three languages - English, Sinhala and Tamil.

The Awards Ceremony of these competitions was held at the E.O.E Perera Hall of the Engineering Faculty of the University of Peradeniya on September 24, 2023.

I wrote an English poem called, 'Goodnight to everyone' and an English essay called, 'Let's protect trees' and a Sinhala poem call, 'Bodu Bathi Gee'. I thought I wouldn't win from this competition but I won third place for both English Poetry and English Essay under the Primary category.

When I stepped into the University, I looked around every nook and corner of it.

There were many buildings and an enormous crowd came for the awards ceremony.

We entered the hall at 9 o'clock but the ceremony started at 10 o'clock.

The chief guest was Dr. Mahesh Perera who was the founder of this literary festival in 1994.

First we stood up for the National Anthem and then for the 'Virusisu' song. After that the chief guest and other guests came and lit the traditional oil lamp. There were spectacular performances by the Medical Faculty students. Amidst the ceremony we got some food and a delicious drink from the students.



I received both my certificates from Mrs. Chandima Ratnayaka, Assistant Registrar at Student Services Division of the University of Peradeniya.

They gave a cup for the First Place only. I was sad that I couldn't take the first place but my mother told me to have courage and never give up.

This was an unforgettable day for me and I wish to become a student in this university one day.

**Seja Damsuwi Abeywickrama (9 years)**  
Southlands College, Galle



### Young Reporters

If you are interested in joining as a Funday Times Young Reporter please fill in the coupon given and send it in to us along with a recent report or interview not exceeding 300 words. Photographs or illustrations would enhance the report.

**Young Reporters who have already enrolled with us, please send in new reports for publication.**



Or



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



### Young Reporters Coupon

Name: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

School: .....

Parent's approval: .....

Date: .....

### In our online issue this week:

- Page 5 - IORA Day Social Media Challenge (New)
- Page 6 - Animals
- Page 7 - Kids News
- 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.

## Happy Birthday

Photographs of members and non-members between 4 - 15 years, for the birthday page, should reach us at least ten days before the birthday, along with a letter from a parent giving full details.

## ***IORA Day 2024 Social Media Challenge***

Sri Lanka has assumed the Chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for 2023 to 2025. Sri Lanka, as the current Chair of IORA, invites you to participate in showcasing the beauty and importance of our oceans. Join us as we embark on a journey towards a ‘Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations’.

Mark your calendars for March 10, 2024, as we gather at Galle Face Green for a day filled with ocean-related activities!

Together, let’s create a sustainable Indian Ocean for future generations.



**#IORADay2024 #SustainableOceans #OceanConservation**

# THE BIG BLUE THROUGH THE LENS IN 30 SECONDS!

Let’s create an amazing movie that shows how awesome and special our oceans are! Show off your suggestions on how we can keep them safe for the future. It could be by coming up with cool new ideas, working together with our community, or how kids like you can help protect the sea!

Are you between 13 to 15 years old (Category A) or 16 to 18 years old (Category B) and living in Sri Lanka? This competition is just for you! Just make sure your folks are cool with it, and you’re good to go!

Here’s the scoop:

- Keep your video exactly 30 seconds long. Too short or too long, and you’ll miss out on the fun.
- Film in portrait or landscape mode with a sharp high resolution (at least 720p).
- Grab whatever camera you’ve got, whether it’s a smartphone or a fancy camera.
- Feel free to jazz up your video with edits, but don’t lose sight of the message!
- Your video must be all yours, no borrowing from others!
- Send in your masterpiece using Google Forms before the deadline.
- Only one video per person, so make it count!
- Stick to the theme: "Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations".

You can speak your mind in Sinhala, Tamil, or English – just make sure to submit before 5th March 2024.

And guess what? There are awesome prizes waiting for the winners! So get filming and show us what you’ve got! Winners will be announced on social media, and they’ll be invited to a special event on March 10, 2024, which is IORA Day!

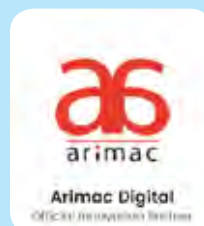
You’ll get to see your amazing videos showcased during the event, so mark your calendars!



**SRI LANKA’S CHAIRMANSHIP OF IORA 2023 - 2025**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdAlnrpuxEhNrTo3VynEzquDWIEjZICSwNmbfpCbjE8z2pGnQ/viewform?pli=1>

**IORA Day 2024  
Digital Competition  
Partners**



# Caracal

**Caracals live on rocky hills or grasslands in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. The animal is one of more than 30 species of small wild cats.**

A caracal crouches in the tall grass, eyeing a bird perched on a nearby shrub. Suddenly the wild cat bursts from her hiding spot and bolts toward the fowl. As the bird takes off, so does the caracal. She leaps up six feet and swats her prey with her paw, causing it to fall to the ground. Then the cat scoops up the bird in her mouth. It's dinnertime.

### Solo Cat

Most caracals grow about three feet long and can weigh over 40 pounds. The feline is usually most active after sunset. And this cat likes its me-time — adults spend much of



their days alone, hunting for birds, rodents, rabbits and gazelles.

### Hunting and Hugging

The body of a caracal is built for sneak attacks. Caracals are superfast, and with footpads cushioned by stiff fur they make practically no noise as they sprint toward targets.

The animals' strong hind legs allow them to jump six feet in the air — the height of a tall adult human. Tufts of hair on the tips of a caracal's ears may enhance their hearing, making it easier for the cat to listen for prey.

These hunters have a softer side too. Mom caracals (usually have three babies in each litter) cuddle with their young. And the babies cuddle each other too. See, even ninjas need to snuggle sometimes.

<b>Common Name:</b>	Caracal
<b>Scientific Name:</b>	<i>Caracal caracal</i>
<b>Diet:</b>	Carnivore
<b>Size:</b>	Two feet to 3.5 feet long
<b>Weight:</b>	25 to 40 pounds



National Geographic Kids

### Ginger Meggs



## New artefacts from Titanic to be displayed

February 19, 2024

Rare and “never seen before” items from the Titanic shipwreck have been put on display, including part of a deckchair and a foghorn.

It’s part of a special Titanic Exhibition in Bristol being held from February 10 - 25.

The show has been put together by White Star Heritage, connected to the White Star Line who owned the Titanic.

Its job is to collect and preserve artefacts from the Titanic and other White Star Line ships.

The RMS Titanic sank in April 1912 after it struck an iceberg on its first voyage from Southampton to New York.



The items in the exhibition were collected and preserved by White Star Heritage.

The iconic vessel sank within hours and now lies 3,800 m (12,500 ft) down in the Atlantic Ocean. More than 1,500 people died when the ship sank.

It remains one of the most famous shipwrecks in history that had its story turned into an Oscar award winning film.

### What special items will be on display?

The artefacts on display include sheet music that was played by the ship’s band as the vessel sank.

Director Tom Rudderham said that the sheet music belonged to Wallis Hartley, who was the band leader on board, whose briefcase and violin were both recovered.

He explained: “Interestingly enough the violin was sold at auction for £1 million, the sheet music was found inside his briefcase, sandwiched with a leather case.”

Other artefacts on display include a fragment of a deck chair that had been thrown overboard, collected by a rescue ship and later stored in a warehouse in Canada.

Although the chair was in one piece when it was first found, it was “blown to smithereens” in 1916 after two ships collided in a nearby harbour and exploded - and now only a small piece is left to view.

The exhibition also showcases a foghorn used during the rescues.



Sheet music found with the body of a musician who was part of the ship’s band is also a part of the collection.



A foghorn that was used during the rescue operations after the Titanic sank has been put on display.

## Fastest-growing black hole discovered by scientists

February 20, 2024

Some pretty big space news has come out of Australia and it’s only getting bigger.

A team has discovered the fastest-growing black hole ever recorded.

Black holes are places in space where the pull of gravity is so strong that not even light can escape from it.

This one is taking in a sun-sized amount of matter every day.

The black hole exists within a special quasar, which is a galaxy with a very active and energetic core.

The black hole at the centre of this galaxy is pulling matter towards itself at a phenomenal rate.

As the matter approaches the core of the black hole it is torn apart, releasing

a huge amount of light, creating what scientists believe could be the brightest thing in the universe.

The Australian-led team worked on observations of the quasar, known as J0529-4351, captured by the Very Large Telescope in Chile.



The bright core of J0529-4351 is powered by a supermassive black hole, as shown by this artist’s impression.

Though hard to imagine, the team says the quasar shines around five hundred trillion times brighter than our sun.

**February 20**

# News in Pictures



**Jieyang, China**  
Villagers raise dragons for the Torch Festival, which has been held for more than 300 years, during Lunar New Year.



**Niagara Falls, USA**  
The Falls in New York state partly freeze after a winter storm hit much of the Midwest and northern US.



**Wakefield, UK**  
Daniel Arsham's 'Unearthed Bronze Eroded Melpomene' is installed for his 'Relics in the Landscape' exhibition at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

**Singapore**  
The South Korean Air Force's Black Eagles aerobatic team performs during the first day of the Singapore Air-Show.



**February 19**

**Paris, France**  
A notice informs visitors that the Eiffel Tower is closed as staff go on strike. The CGT and Force Ouvrière unions say the city, which owns 99% of the tower, has underestimated its costs and overestimated its revenues.



**Bangkok, Thailand**  
Star tortoises sit in a box at Suvarnabhumi airport after being found in the luggage of a man attempting to travel to Mongolia. The man was arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle komodo dragons, pythons, tortoises and 24 live fish, out of the country.

**February 18**

The British Academy Film and Television Arts Awards (BAFTA) ceremony was held at the Royal Festival Hall in London.



Emma Stone, at the BAFTA dinner, with her award for Best Leading Actress for 'Poor Things.'



Cillian Murphy poses with his award for Best Leading Actor for his role in 'Oppenheimer'.



**Nanjing, China**  
People enjoy the sight of plum blossom trees in flower in the country's eastern Jiangsu province.

Source: The Guardian