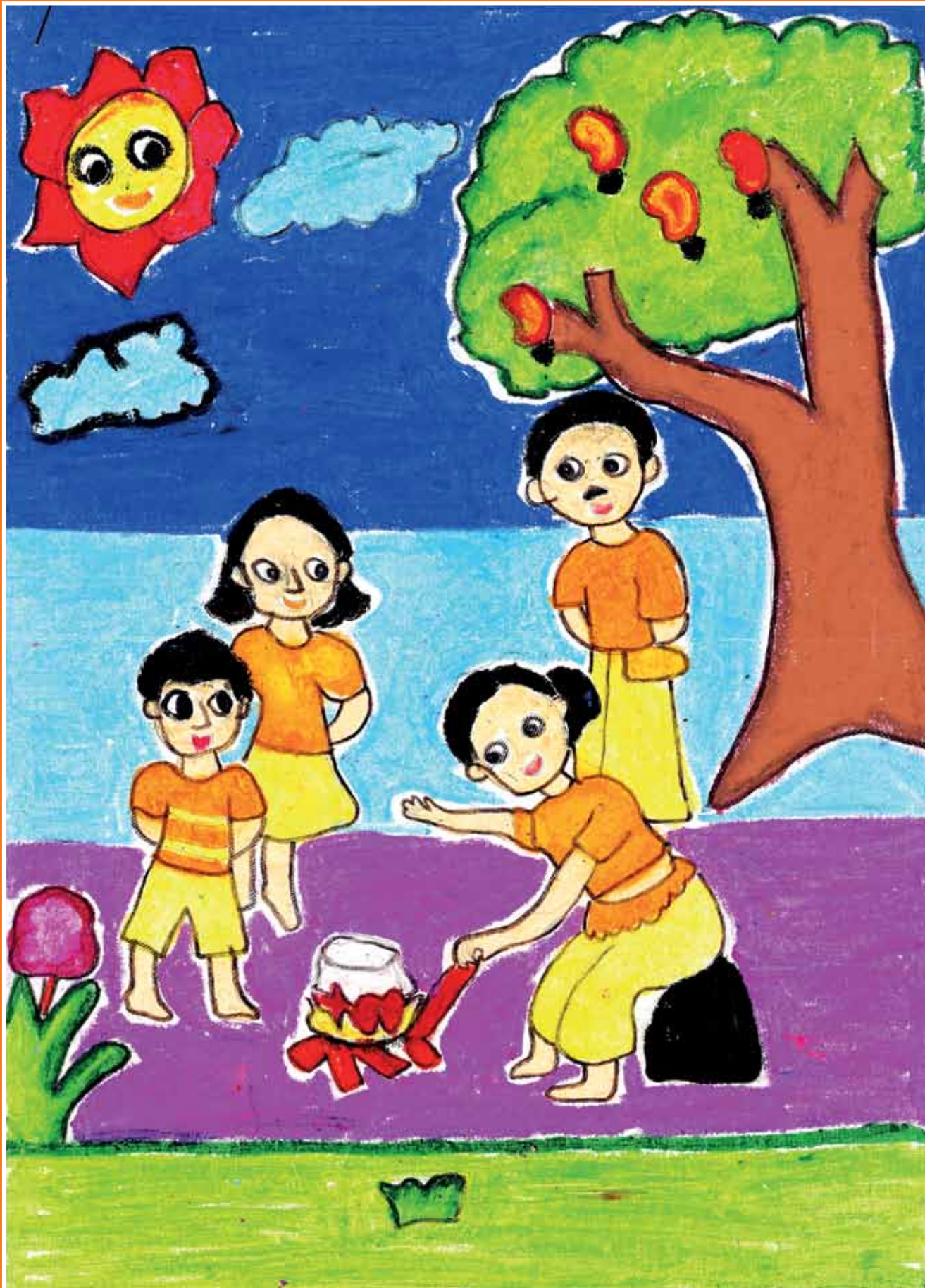


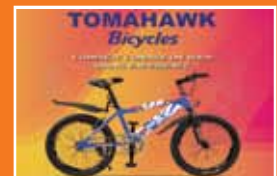


# FUNDA Y TIMES



Art by Seja Abeywickrama (9 years)

Happy  
Sinhala & Tamil  
New Year!



## COMPETITIONS

PAGES 2 & 4



STORY  
PAGE 3

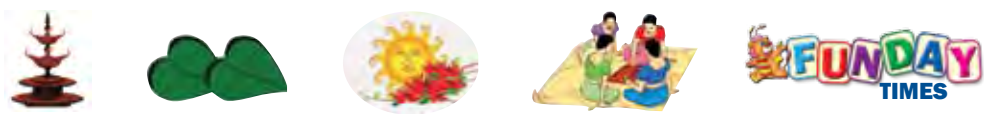
(ONLINE)



AVURUDU  
PAGES 5 & 6

## KIDS NEWS

PAGES 7 - 8



**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:**  
**April 24, 2024**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

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

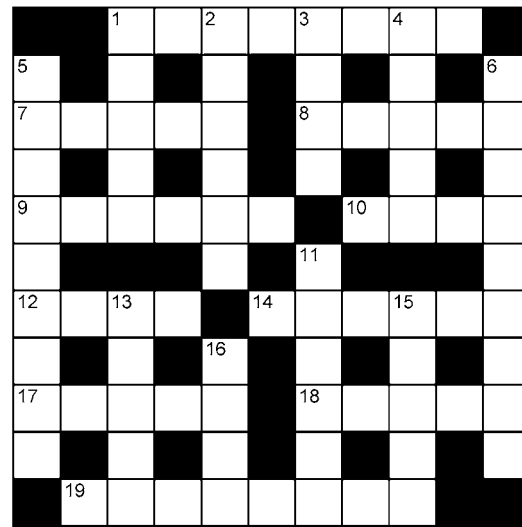


**In our online issue this week:**

- **Page 5** – Avurudu Art
- **Page 6** – Avurudu customs
- **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.

**Junior Crossword – No. 990**



- Across**
- 1 People from Japan
  - 7 Tiny
  - 8 Not ever
  - 9 Pathways between groups of seats
  - 10 Liquids used in printing
  - 12 Too
  - 14 Assisted
  - 17 A keyboard instrument
  - 18 Once more
  - 19 Sketches
- Down**
- 1 Denim trousers
  - 2 Tugged
  - 3 Not any
  - 4 Half of fourteen
  - 5 Moving stairway
  - 6 The leader of the United States
  - 11 Stay
  - 13 Use this for sweetening food and drinks
  - 15 Acted dramas
  - 16 Cold winter flakes

Please enter your full name, date of birth, home address, mobile number and school.

**All entries must be certified by a teacher or parent as your own work.**

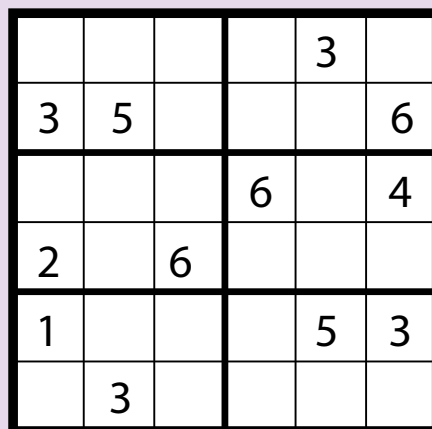


**Aransin Ashwin,**  
Rajawella

**Solution - No 988**



**Sudoku**  
349



Compiled by **Peter Fernando**

1. In the large square you can see three features:

**Vertical columns**

Six vertical columns with six small squares in each column.

**Horizontal columns**

Six horizontal columns with six small squares in each of them.

**Grids**

Six boxes or grids with six small squares in each grid

2. Insert Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the small squares in a way so as not to repeat the same number twice.

Now try to complete Junior Sudoku 349 using logic and reasoning. This is a good exercise for your mind.

**Solution – No. 347**

5	2	3	4	6	1
1	4	6	5	2	3
3	5	1	6	4	2
4	6	2	1	3	5
2	1	4	3	5	6
6	3	5	2	1	4

**Happy Birthday**



**Rayyan Saleem**  
15 years on April 10



**Shahzad Ghaneey**  
7 years on April 7

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.



## The Village Avurudu Tour

By Manoshi De Silva

**A**ththamma fried oil cakes and put them in a basket to drain the oil. The basket was full to the brim with fresh hot oil cakes. A big oil cake right on top, slipped out of the basket and rolled under the table. It stopped near the nose of 'Thambili' the ginger cat who was sleeping under the table.

Thambili got up and sniffed the oil cake. He was hungry, but the smell of the oil cake didn't interest him at all. The oil cake looked around.

"Where am I?" he asked the cat. Thambili yawned and stared at it lazily. "Under the table," he said looking at Aththamma, who put all the other oil cakes on a clay plate and carried it away from the kitchen.

The oil cake looked around in confusion. "I am Thambili," the cat introduced himself.

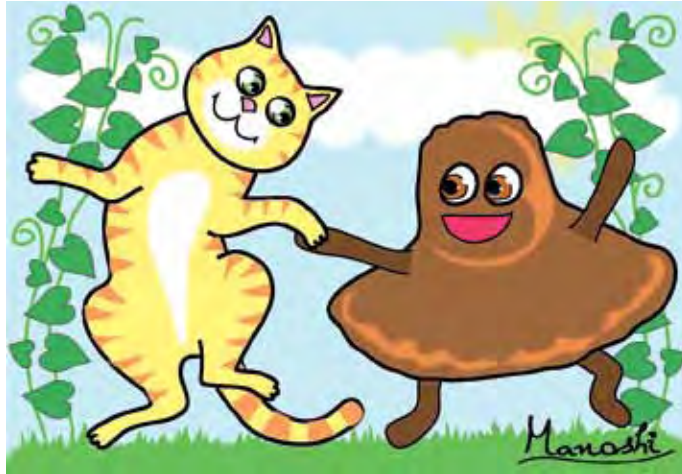
"Who am I?" the oil cake asked and Thambili laughed. "Well, Aththamma calls you 'kevum'. So I'll call you Kevuma!"

"Ok," said Kevuma "nice to meet you." They both watched Aththamma working busily in the kitchen. "What's all this rush about?" Kevuma wanted to know.

"Oh, it's Avurudu!" said Thambili. "Who is that?" asked Kevuma and Thambili laughed rolling on the ground. "You don't know much, do you?" he asked the oil cake. "Well, you have come to the right person to learn about these things. You see, in this village, I am the wisest there is!" Thambili loved to boast about himself and this was a good opportunity for him because Kevuma was clueless about everything.

Thambili didn't know much about Avurudu himself but he pretended like he knew everything. "You see Kevuma, Avurudu is a time to celebrate and eat nice food," he said but he didn't have much to say when Kevuma asked him more questions. So, he quickly invited Kevuma to go on a tour around the village to show him what Avurudu was all about and Kevuma agreed at once.

Thambili and Kevuma stepped out of the house and saw children playing outside. Some were playing on a swing, some others were playing a board game



called 'Pancha'. "Those are the games they play during Avurudu," explained Thambili. "But why are those people hitting that poor animal?" asked Kevuma and Thambili giggled. "That is not an animal! That is a drum known as the 'Rabana'. They play different beats by tapping on it."

"Oh, an oil cake!" a crow flew towards Kevuma and tried to grab him. "Shoo...shoo..." hissed Thambili. "He is with me. Don't you dare try to eat him!" "Where are you two going?" the crow wanted to know. "He's a tourist and I am his guide!" boasted Thambili, "I am taking him on a village tour to show him Avurudu traditions." "Oh how exciting! May I please join you two?" asked the crow and Thambili agreed.

So the three of them walked around the village and saw people dressed in new clothes enjoying themselves. Children and even grownups were playing Avurudu games. "Everyone looks so happy!" said Kevuma. "Of course, you see Avurudu is celebrated by everyone because it was introduced by us cats!" lied Thambili, trying to sound all important.

"Lies! Lies!" shouted the crow. "Avurudu has nothing to do with cats! People believe that on Avurudu Day the sun moves from one house to another. Also in the olden days, this was the time farmers harvested their crops. So they celebrated it by engaging in different traditions." Thambili was very surprised to learn all this, but he kept quiet.

"Oh, you seem to know a lot!" said Kevuma who was impressed by the crow's knowledge. "Whatever!" Thambili shrugged his shoulders, "I only told you about the cat version of traditions." Both Kevuma and the crow laughed but they didn't want to

tease Thambili because he was a good sport to take them both on a village Avurudu tour.

"Uh oh!" said Thambili, seeing a man walk towards the house where he lived. "That's our neighbour! He's on bad terms with Aththamma's family." "Why is he angry?" asked Kevuma. "Well, their dog 'Dumburu' bit Aththamma one day and Aththamma's son scolded him." "So why is he going to

Aththamma's house then, if they are all angry with each other?" asked the crow.

Thambili started to panic. "This can't be good," he said almost shivering. "He is a very hot-tempered man. He will start a fight now!" "Oh no!" sighed the crow and Kevuma too felt very scared. The three of them watched the man walk very fast towards Aththamma's house and knock hard on the door. "This is not going to end well!" said Thambili closing his eyes with his paws.

Aththamma walked out and the man handed her the plate he was carrying and worshipped her, after handing her some betel leaves. Thambili, the crow and Kevuma stared at them unable to understand what was going on. Aththamma touched the man's head and smiled and said, "Avurudu is a time to forgive and forget," and invited him in for a cup of tea.

"Oh, so there's more to Avurudu than food and games," said Kevuma and the crow agreed, saying, "I think they show respect to the elders and also forget the bad things that happened in the past and start afresh!"

"Oh I knew all that!" boasted Thambili, "I never told you two about these things because I wanted you to learn about these on your own." Both Kevuma and the crow tried not to laugh.

"Okay then, so may I invite you two to my place to celebrate Avurudu with me?" asked the crow. "We can have something to eat and maybe play some Avurudu games like the villagers." Thambili and Kevuma thanked the crow and agreed to end their village Avurudu tour with some food and fun Avurudu games.



# Tomahawk

## Quiz No. 218

Questions for the Tomahawk Quiz No. 218 are based on articles appearing in the Funday Times print issue and e-papers of March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

All you have to do is to find the answers to the questions given here. Write the answers neatly on a postcard, cut the strip 'Tomahawk Quiz No. 218' seen at the top of this page and paste it on your postcard. Please get your entries certified as your own work by a teacher or parent.

One lucky winner will receive a brand new Tomahawk Mountain Bike with the compliments of Tomahawk Bicycle Mall

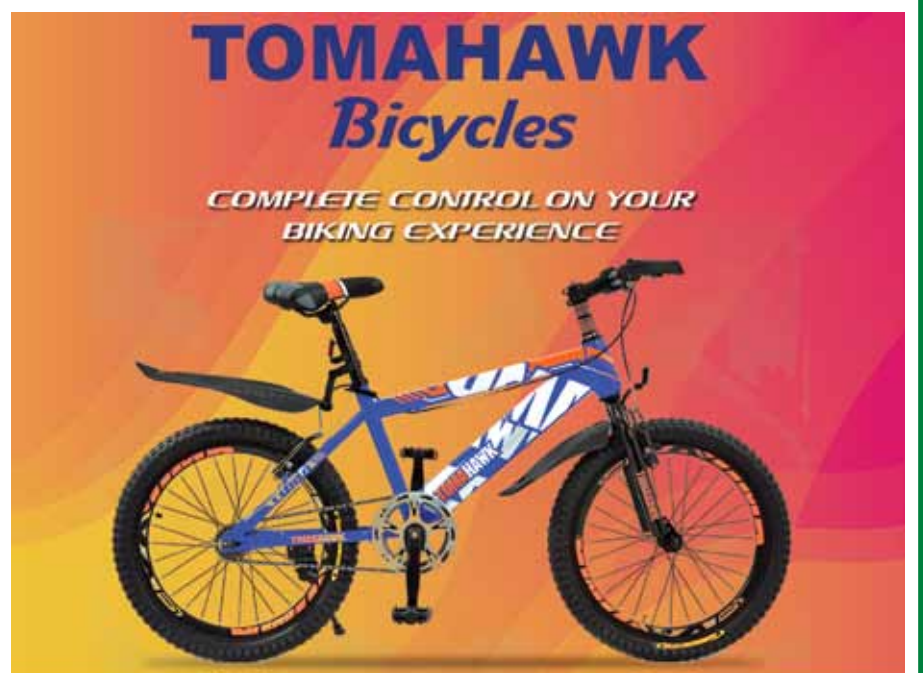
All Funday Times readers between 8 – 15 years are eligible to participate.

(Those who have already won a bicycle are not eligible to participate.)

**Closing Date: April 30, 2024**

### Tomahawk Quiz No. 217

► M. Suranya, Ratnapura



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### QUESTIONS – QUIZ NO. 218

1. Name three species of animals in Sri Lanka that are categorized as Vulnerable.
2. Name the coastal areas in Sri Lanka that are well-known for whale and dolphin watching.
3. Which film won seven awards including 'Best Picture' at the Oscars 2024?
4. When is World Water Day observed and what was the theme for 2024?
5. Name four famous landmarks that plunged into darkness to mark Earth Hour?



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4 - 6 years



- Amhar Nafees, Gampola
- Wehane Jayaratne, Malabe
- Ahdaa Abdul Malik, Colombo 2
- Tharunithhari Mohan, Kandy

Winners please call Funday Times on 2479333/2479337 and arrange to collect your prizes.

**4 – 6 AGE GROUP**

Colour the picture.



Or



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



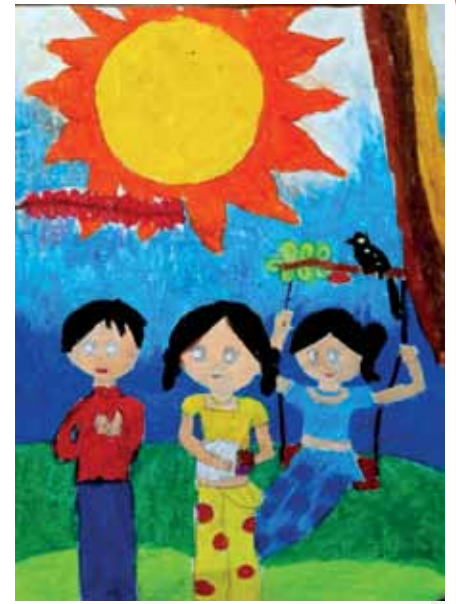
# Avurudu Art



**Nipunika Tharangani (14 years)**  
Swarnapali Girls' College, Anuradhapura



**Dinithi Silva (Grade 7)**  
Our Lady of Victories Convent, Moratuwa



**Vidasna Pilippuheva (Grade 3)**  
Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo



**Kaveen Gnanaweera (9 years)**  
Brisbane Int. School, Nugegoda



**Thihansi Sawindya (8 years)**  
Vidura College, Kurunegala



**Sandasi Weerawardana (9 years)**  
Bishop's College, Colombo



**Senadi Dulithna (8 years)**  
Our Lady of Victories Convent, Moratuwa



**Nabeela Shamil**



**Shevoni Fernando (Grade 2)**  
Our Lady of Victories Convent, Moratuwa



**Vithesh Sanalka (6 years)**  
Vidura College, Kurunegala



**Nimshi Deman (11 years)**  
St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo



**Meera Chand (11 years)**  
Logos College



## Sinhala and Tamil New Year Customs and rituals

**The Sinhala and Tamil New Year or as we all call it 'Avurudu' in Sinhala, and 'Puththandu' in Tamil has become an important national holiday for both Sinhala Buddhists and the Tamil Hindus of Sri Lanka. It is unique because it is not celebrated in any other country as a national festival.**

**There is greenery everywhere; fresh leaves on trees, flowers in bloom, vegetables and fruits in plenty and the songs of birds in the air. The aroma of sweetmeats,**

**the sound of raban and the koha's cry, symbolise that the entire country is ready to celebrate this national festival.**

**Sri Lankans begin celebrating 'Aluth Avurudu' and 'Puththandu', in the month of Bak when the sun moves from the 'Meena Rashiya' to the 'Mesa Rashiya'. The name 'Bak' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'bhagya' meaning 'fortunate'. The month of Bak corresponds to April in the Gregorian calendar, which is commonly used in Sri Lanka as in other parts of the world.**

### Sinhala Avurudu customs

The Aluth Avurudda signifies the reaping of the harvest and social customs especially of the farming community. After the Maha harvest, farmers celebrate the occasion giving thanks. These customs and rituals portray the beliefs and thoughts of these people whose life is centred around agriculture.



Rituals associated with the Aluth Avurudda begin with bathing on the last day of the old year and viewing the moon on the same night. The pealing of the bell accompanied with the beating of drums (*hewisi*) in the village temple announces the times to perform the different rituals.

The custom of offering betel to parents and elders symbolises the act of paying gratitude. The children in turn receive blessings from parents. The sense of goodwill and friendship among relatives and friends is also seen during the festival time.

Something unique about Avurudu is the celebration of the beginning of the new year as well as the conclusion of the old year as specified by astrologers. There is a period of time in between, which is called the *nonagathe* (neutral period). During this time, people keep away from all types of work and engage in religious activities. It is for this reason that it is also called the 'Punya Kalaya'.

Before Avurudu, it is customary for every housewife to give a new look to her house. Preparation of sweetmeats, such as *kevum*, *kokis*, *athirasa*, *aggala*, *aluwa* and *asmi* takes place at least three days before the New Year.

The customary bathing for the passing year is equally important. A herbal bath gives physical purification. In most villages, the temple is the venue for applying the 'nanu' before bathing and is usually done by an elderly priest, with blessings for health and longevity.

Another prominent feature of Avurudu is the respect paid to elders and the strengthening of relationships with neighbours. Usually, visiting relatives and friends, exchanging presents and greeting them with a sheaf of betel is the order of the day.

Avurudu involves some interesting games as well. During this period many engage in playing outdoor games. Famous national games are *olinda keliya*, *eluvan keliya*, *mevara sellama*, *raban upatha*, *buhu keliya*, *muthu gesilla*, *muthu keliya*, *onchili varam* and *mee sellama*. Avurudu Kumari and Kumaraya are chosen at Avurudu festivals.

There is an auspicious time for the women folk to commence work at their respective homes. Facing the specified direction, they light the hearth to prepare the traditional *kiribath*. Prior to this, milk is boiled in a new earthen pot and allowed to boil over, symbolising prosperity. The *hathmaluwa* with seven different flavours which is considered a delicacy, is a specialty dish prepared during Avurudu. Other festive sweetmeats are generally made in advance to serve visitors and send to neighbours as a sign of goodwill. Meals too are taken at an auspicious time.

Avurudu, which is rich in culture and tradition could be celebrated by all as a national festival and its unique features made use of to promote friendship among people.

### Tamil Puththandu customs

The Hindus also celebrate the New Year, commonly known as 'Puththandu', by observing the traditions and rituals practised by ancestors over the years. However, they are slightly different to those of the Sinhalese.



Homes are cleaned and made ready prior to the event. On the day of the Avurudu, during the auspicious time, *Maruthu Neer* – clean water boiled with various herbs, selected flowers and leaves, milk, saffron and other ingredients are made by the priests in temples. The *Maruthu Neer* is then applied on the heads of all family members prior to bathing. New clothes are recommended according to the colours mentioned in the almanac. A sweet rice is made if possible, with new raw red rice, jaggery, cashew nuts, ghee and plums.

The area in front of the house is cleaned and sprinkled with saffron water and cow dung. A decorative design 'Kolam' is done with raw white rice flour. The hearth is made a little distance away facing the East, and a new pot is used to cook the 'Pongal'.

Lamps are lit by the housewife, and the head of the household arranges the *Mangala Kumbam*. A pot with five mango leaves and a coconut, lit joss sticks, a tray of flowers, betel leaves, arecanuts, comb of bananas and the sweet rice are offered to the Sun God and Lord Ganesh to complete the pooja. A coconut is broken by the head of the household and incense is burnt. The elders in the family bless the children, who worship them and seek their blessings and good wishes.

A visit to the temple is a must. Customarily alms should be offered to the poor. During the auspicious time, the sweet rice is partaken by the family. Later the head of the family gives money, betel leaves, paddy and flowers – 'Kai Vishesham' to the family members and wishes them good luck.

The head of the family performs, 'Er Mangalam' – during this time. Being an agrarian community, ploughing becomes the traditional act on New Year's day. Likewise, a teacher would start a lesson, a trader starts a new account, a craftsman starts his craft and so on.

Visiting relatives and entertaining relatives and friends are also important features of the New Year celebrations.



# India prepares for elections

March 26, 2024

In most democratic countries, voters go to the polls on a single, predetermined day. However, that is not true in India. The world's largest democracy, with about 970 million registered voters, conducts its elections in seven stages over six weeks. Held every five years, the elections will occur from April 9, 2024 to June 1, 2024. The results will be announced on June 4, 2024.



## What is at stake?

The general elections allow residents to select their representatives for the lower house of parliament. Known as the Lok Sabha, or House of the People, it comprises 545 members. The leader of the party that wins the most votes is named the country's prime minister for the next five years. Political parties can form a joint government if there is no clear winner.







Similar rules apply in other democratic countries. However, India's election process is more complex due to the large number of people standing for election. In 2019, there were over 8,000 candidates, representing 2,660 political parties.

The two largest parties are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is seeking his third term, and the Indian National Congress, led by Manmohan Singh. In most elections, neither party wins the 272 seats needed to form a single-party government. However, the BJP is expected to win by a landslide this year.

## Why are the elections held over six weeks?

A six-week-long election may sound long. But it is the only way poll workers can get to all the eligible voters. The exercise is even more complicated because the electoral rules stipulate that polling booths must be within 1.2 miles (2 km) of every voter. This year, organizers have set up over one million polling stations and hired 15 million people to help with the elections.

## Why do the ballots have symbols?

 *ELEPHANT Bahujan Samaj Party	 LOTUS Bharatiya Janata Party	 EARS OF CORN & SICKLE Communist Party of India
 HAMMER SICKLE & STAR Communist Party of India (Marxist)	 HAND Indian National Congress	 CLOCK Nationalist Congress Party

India's voting ballots feature emoji-like symbols alongside each candidate's name. The drawings include everyday objects like a broom, belt or flashlight. The icons were introduced at India's first election in 1951 to help the country's population, which was about 80 percent illiterate, recognize which candidate they were selecting.

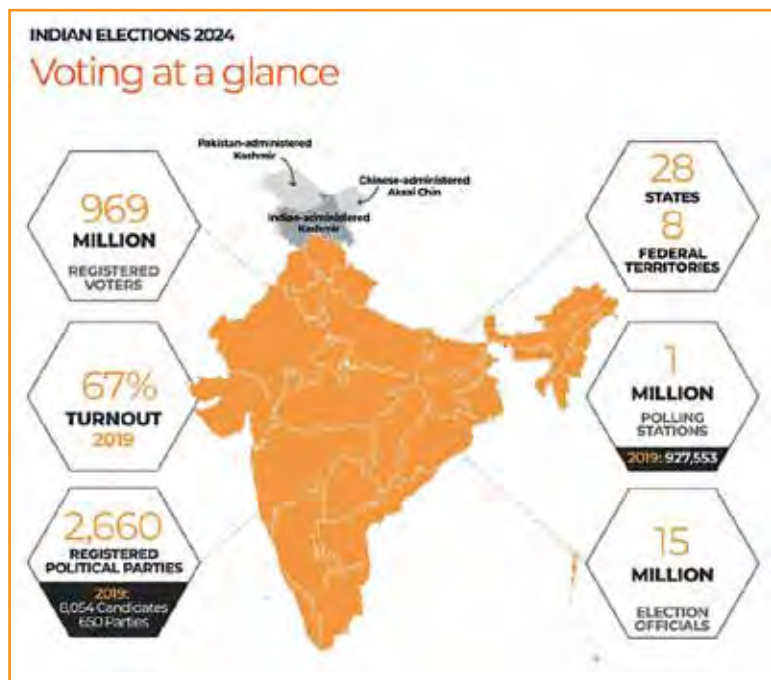
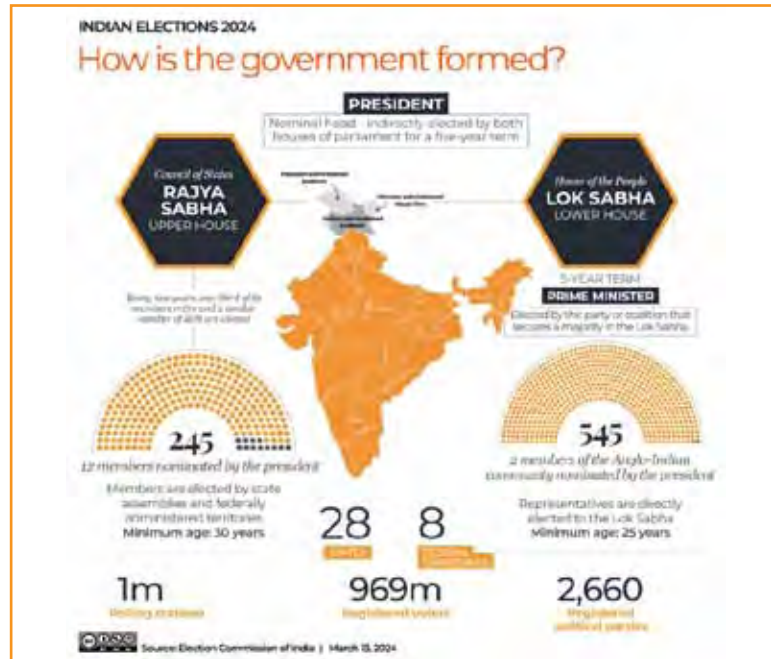
The country's literacy rate has risen sharply since. But the drawings remain an essential part of the election process. They appear prominently in the political party's publicity materials.

Political parties, however, do not get to design their own symbols. Instead, they pick three symbols, in order of choice, from a general pool of images maintained by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Once a logo has been assigned, it cannot be given to anyone else. This is true even if the political party it represents no longer exists.

## How much do the elections cost?

Elections in the world's largest democracy are expensive affairs. This year's polling exercise is expected to cost a record \$14.4 billion, about twice the estimated \$7.2 billion spent in 2019.

A large part of the funds will be spent on travel and advertisements. However, candidates will also try to lure voters, especially in rural areas, with delicious food, fireworks shows, and dance performances. Rural voters are also often bribed with cash, household items like refrigerators, and even livestock like goats!



India's secret ballot system makes it hard to gauge the effectiveness of the illegal gifts. However, over 90 percent of candidates have confessed to using them to stand out in the crowded field.



April 3

## News in Pictures

April 2

**Hualien, Taiwan**

Taiwan's strongest earthquake in 25 years has killed four and injured at least 50, causing building collapses, power outages and landslides on the island, and sparking initial tsunami warnings in southern Japan and the Philippines. The 7.7 magnitude quake struck close to the popular tourist city of Hualien.

**Manila, Philippines**

Students use umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun as they wait for their classes to begin. More than 100 schools in the Philippine capital shut down as the tropical heat hit danger levels.

**Athens, Greece**

Athens is shrouded in haze, as persistent southerly winds carry waves of dust from Africa.

**Chinon, France**

Poplar trees are submerged during flooding from the Vienne River, in western France. More than 100 people were evacuated from their homes in Indre-et-Loire and Vienne, and a kayaker was reported missing in Haute-Vienne, after heavy flooding in west-central France.

**Dorchester, England**

A woman poses by 'Leaf Spirit' by Simon Gudgeon at the FORM 24 show at 'Sculpture by the Lakes'. The show runs until June 1, with works by more than 35 leading contemporary sculptors exhibited throughout 9 hectares of lakes, rivers, gardens and woodlands.

**San Clemente, USA**

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket flies above the Pacific Ocean carrying a payload of 22 Starlink internet satellites into space after launching from Vandenberg space force base.

April 1

March 31

**Samut Prakan, Thailand**

A performer places his head inside a crocodile's mouth at a crocodile farm and zoo, which has reopened three years after being closed because of the COVID pandemic.

**Old City, Jerusalem**

Clergymen walk in a procession around the Edicule during Easter Sunday Mass led by the Latin Patriarch at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where many Christians believe Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and rose from the dead.

**Rafah, Gaza**

Palestinian children fetch water in the southern Gaza Strip.

Source : The Guardian