

# FUN DAY TIMES



**'The Wizard of Oz' on stage**

Pic. by Priyanka Samaraweera



**COMPETITIONS**  
PAGES 2 & 4



**EVENTS**  
PAGE 3

**(ONLINE)**



**FESTIVAL**  
PAGE 5

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**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 Number 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:**

**January 1, 2025**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

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



**In our online issue  
this week:**

- **Page 5** – Christmas Markets
- **Page 6** – Fun Stuff
- **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.

## Christmas Cover 2024

**Hey Kids! It is time once again to think about the Funday Times Christmas Cover. We invite our readers to send in their paintings for the Christmas Cover Competition.**

Entries for the Christmas Cover should be of a suitable Christmas theme. You could use any type of paints or crayons you like but try to make your picture colourful and creative. All entries should be on A4 size paper.

Please write 'Christmas Cover' at the back of your picture, along with your Full Name, Date of Birth, Address, Telephone Number and School.

**All paintings entered for this competition should be certified as your own work by a parent or teacher. Uncertified paintings will be disqualified.**

The best picture will adorn the cover page of our Christmas issue. The winner will also receive a prize. Good luck and happy painting!

**Age groups: 4 - 15 years**

**Closing Date : December 17, 2024**



Or



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

## Aravi's Fungi Guide

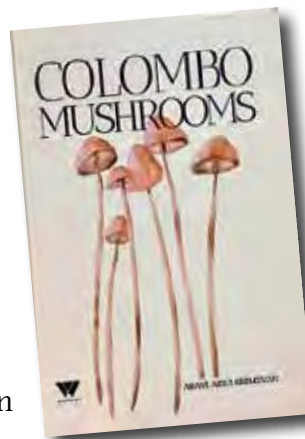
**By Yomal Senerath-Yapa**

Mushrooms sprout from old rotting logs in the Viharamahadevi Park, adorn ancient tree trunks at Independence Square or dot the gardens of hotels in Colombo. These ubiquitous fungi are often overlooked.

Homeschooled Aravi Arya Srimevan was barely five when two years ago, she suggested to her father that she wanted to go 'mushroom hunting', inspired by a BBC documentary. So Aravinda took Aravi to Viharamahadevi Park and the first mushroom she spotted was a rare Puffball, they would never see again in the city.

The hunt continued and now Aravi wants to spread the word about these beauties associated with the faerie-world, through 'Colombo Mushrooms: A guidebook for kids to discover and identify common mushrooms in Colombo'.

Lavishly illustrated with photos by Aravi and some experts, this pictorial guide captures the intricate gills, the colours from fiery orange to a lovely glowing Marrakech pink and the fairy rings which are classic toadstools. It deals with 35 fungi species, as the sub-species can only be identified through DNA testing and not their



**Pic. by Akila Jayawardana**

appearance. Aravi, Aravinda and Aravi's mom Pramodhi had been prompted to publish this guide because there were no guides for young mushroom-hunters, while even for adults there are only a few books.

The world of fungi the guide opens up is fascinating. The toxic Dead man's fingers, ranging from ashen white to a more yellow-orange, is in clusters; the Jelly fungus is in neon shades of luminescent yellow; the Sunheads have a rufous sunny pattern and the Carnival candy slime mould is like floss. The edibility is also given in the guide, from edible, edible but insignificant, inedible, mildly toxic to toxic.

The young browsers of her guide are encouraged to send over their own pictures of fungi via a QR code, for experts to help identify them.



KinderCare Montessori House of Children celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary along with their annual concert themed, 'The Wizard of Oz' and Graduation 2024, on November 30, at the Buddhist Cultural Centre in Colombo.



Pix by Priyanka Samaraweera



Kiddie Cove Annual Graduation and Concert was held on December 6, 2024 at the Buddhist Cultural Centre in Colombo.

Pix by Eshan Fernando

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**



**Netana Krause**  
6 years on December 10



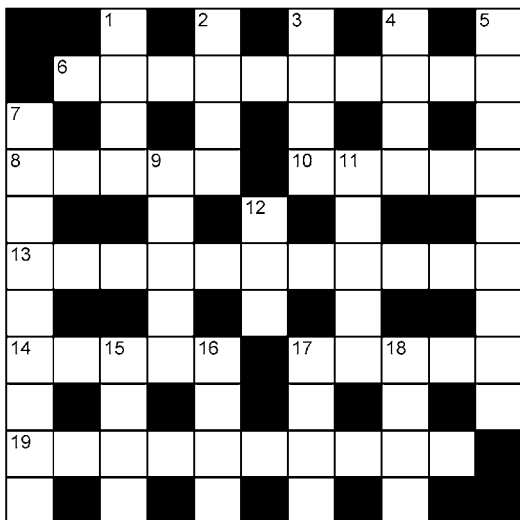
**Haya and Hanfa Nafas**  
9 years on December 5

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.





**LUMALA Crossword – No. 4**



- | Across |   | Down |                          |
|--------|---|------|--------------------------|
| 6      | The total number of people in a country | 1    | Connect together         |
| 8      | A meal                                  | 2    | Shove                    |
| 10     | A black-and-white animal                | 3    | Slightly wet             |
| 13     | A mountain climber                      | 4    | A large African wild cat |
| 14     | Find these on name tags                 | 5    | Not wed                  |
| 17     | Go by bike                              | 7    | A light metal            |
| 19     | Below                                   | 9    | A paddled boat           |
|        |   | 11   | Pester                   |
|        |   | 12   | A month                  |
|        |   | 15   | Manufactured             |
|        |   | 16   | Certain                  |
|        |   | 17   | A restaurant cook        |
|        |   | 18   | Animals that purr        |

**LUMALA BICYCLE COMPETITION**

You now have a chance to win a brand new **LUMALA bicycle** for your own. One lucky winner will receive a brand new Lumala bicycle each month.

All you have to do is fill in the Lumala Crossword No. 4, according to the clues given. Write the answers neatly on a postcard or paper, and send it to **Funday Times**.

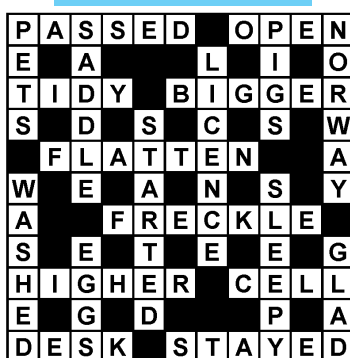
Cut the strip '**LUMALA Crossword No. 4**' seen at the top of the page and paste it on your entry.

**Age Group: 8 – 15 years**

*Closing Date: December 31, 2024*

Entries should be certified as your own work by a teacher or parent.

**Solution No. 3**



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**7 – 9 years**



- ▶ Shazad Ghaney, Colombo 2
- ▶ Seja Abeywickrama, Galle
- ▶ Mohamed Rayyan, Mahara
- ▶ Idrees Maryam, Dehiwela
- ▶ Randira Danthanarayana, Malabe

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

**7 – 9 AGE GROUP**

Spot 10 differences between the two pictures.



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



# Christmas Markets

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

Every year during the festive season, city squares transform into winter wonderlands, thanks to Christmas markets.

Featuring everything from artisanal crafts and seasonal foods and drinks to skating rinks and Christmas carols, Christmas markets offer a unique experience.

Given their cultural significance, historians have proposed that the cultural practice of Christmas markets should be preserved, with some suggesting that Germany's markets (some of which date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century) should be included in the UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

While the roots of Christmas markets are disputed, its origins are believed to be in Germany. However, today, Christmas markets can be found in dozens of cities across the world.



Christmas market in Monaco.

## Christmas markets around the world



### Dresden, Germany

The Dresden Striezelmarkt is Germany's oldest Christmas market, which began with a one-day market in 1434.

Held in the Altmarkt Square, its main attractions every year include the 48-foot Christmas pyramid, as well as a giant Christmas tree and Ferris wheel.

### Salzburg, Austria

Salzburg, better known for being the hometown of Mozart and the setting for 'The Sound of Music', has been having Christmas markets since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which have changed little over the centuries.



### Cologne, Germany

Cologne hosts a variety of Christmas markets, from traditional ones to ones dedicated to gnomes and even maritime history.

The largest Christmas market is held in the shadow of the Cologne Cathedral.



### Prague, Czech Republic

Prague's annual Christmas market is held in the square between the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Church of Our Lady Before Tyn and the famous 15<sup>th</sup>-century astronomical clock.



### Bruges, Belgium

During the festive season, Christmas markets spring up in two city squares of Bruges: 'Markt' Square and Simon Stevinplein.

### Edinburgh, Scotland



With the impending arrival of both Christmas and Hogmanay (the Scottish New Years' Eve), the picturesque city of Edinburgh

comes alive with festivities, including Christmas markets featuring wooden toys, skating rinks and seasonal drinks.

### Shanghai, China

Held in the historic Rockbund area, Shanghai's Christmas market features artisanal creations, seasonal snacks and live performances.



Sources: National Geographic / Smithsonian Magazine / The Times





## Strawberry and Cream Santas

### Ingredients

- 150 ml thickened cream
- 1/2 tsp vanilla essence
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 2 punnets fresh strawberries
- Chocolate icing

### Method

1. Whip cream with the vanilla and sugar until very stiff. Place in a freezer bag, or piping bag and snip off the end.
2. Wash strawberries and pat dry with a paper towel. Slice the stalk end off, so that the strawberry sits flat. Slice across each strawberry about halfway up.
3. Pipe cream onto the cut strawberry and place the 'hat' back on. Pipe a little dot of cream onto the top. Use the chocolate icing to make the eyes.



### Notes

- ✦ Larger strawberries will be easier to handle in this recipe, but as long as they're fresh and in season, they will work beautiful.
- ✦ The cream needs to be whipped until very stiff to hold up the Santa hats. Be careful not to overdo it and turn the cream to butter!

Source: Internet

## RECIPES

## Christmas Stars

### Ingredients

- 125g butter, softened
- 1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
- 1 Egg
- 1 1/2 cups (225g) plain flour
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 1 tsp orange rind (finely grated)
- 1 tsp almond extract

### Method

#### Step 1

Use an electric mixer to beat the butter, sugar and egg in a large bowl until just combined. Add flour, vanilla, orange rind and almond extract. Beat until the mixture just comes together.

#### Step 2

Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface. Gently knead until smooth.

Divide into two portions and shape into discs. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 30 mins to chill.

#### Step 3

Preheat oven to 180°C. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface until 3mm thick. Use star-shaped cutters to cut shapes from the dough. Arrange on lined baking trays.

Bake for 10-12 mins or until light golden. Cool on the trays.



Taste.com

## CRAFTS

## Mini Canvas Ornament

This super easy craft lets you explore your inner artist and create mini masterpieces that make a great addition to any tree.

Simply use acrylic craft paint and paint pens to decorate mini canvases. Once dry, attach a ribbon hanger to the back with glue and then add to your tree.



Source: Good Housekeeping

## Popsicle Stick Wreath

Stock up on small and large craft sticks, then paint them three different shades of green.

Glue the sticks to a 12" foam wreath, overlapping and mixing the shades of green as you go. A red ribbon finishes off the look.





# Student-built rocket breaks 20-year-old Amateur Space Altitude Record

December 9, 2024

A rocket built by students at the University of Southern California (USC) Rocket Propulsion Lab (RPL) has shattered a 20-year record.

Aftershock II, launched from Nevada's Black Rock Desert on October 20, 2024, reached an altitude of 470,000 feet (143.3 km). This was 90,000 feet (27.4 km) higher than the previous amateur rocket altitude record of 380,000 feet (115.8 km) set by the Civilian Space eXploration Team's GoFast rocket in 2004.



Aftershock II broke the amateur rocket space altitude record.

Aftershock II's success can largely be credited to technological innovations developed by the 100-person team at RPL. The rocket's titanium-coated fins and a new heat-resistant paint enabled

it to endure the extreme temperatures generated at high speeds. Student-designed computer systems allowed real-time tracking of the rocket's position and sent back live data throughout the flight.

"We're just college students who have homework and dishes and groceries to do, and we just sent a rocket to space. We broke the world record and sent a rocket higher than anyone ever has."

RPL was founded in 2005 to launch student-designed and built rockets into space. The student-led group first made history in 2019 when their Traveler IV rocket became the

first student-built rocket to cross the Kármán line. This imaginary line, 328,083 feet (100 km) above Earth's surface, marks the internationally recognized edge of space.

RPL's next goal is not to build rockets for higher altitudes as such launches would require special permissions. Instead, the team plans to focus on developing "sounding" rockets — vehicles designed to carry scientific instruments into space for research purposes.

"Actually, 470,000 feet is just shy of the limit for amateur rocketry, which is 490,000 feet," said RPL Executive Engineer Ryan Kraemer. "Unless we want to get special clearances, we are going to have to stay under that height, but we are going to move forward in the sense of flying research payloads. We're excited to use, essentially what is a sounding rocket at this point, to gather data for whoever wants it."



The rocket's nose cone deploys its parachute and returns to Earth.

"This was probably the

coolest thing we had ever gotten the opportunity to do," said Operations Lead Jayna Rybner.

The 14 feet (4 m) tall Aftershock II broke the sound barrier within two seconds of launch. It reached a maximum speed of 3,600 mph (5,800 km/h) — 5.5 times the speed of sound — just 19 seconds after launch. This slightly exceeded the speed record set by GoFast in 2004.

While its engine burned out shortly after launch, Aftershock II continued its ascent. It left Earth's atmosphere in about 85 seconds after launch and reached its peak altitude in 92 seconds. At this point, the rocket's nose cone detached and deployed its parachute for a safe landing in the desert. Here, it was retrieved by the eagerly waiting student scientists.



USC students retrieve the nose cone from the desert.

Source : DOGO News





December 10

## News in Pictures

**Antakya, Turkey**

A Turkish gendarme helps a young girl with belongings as Syrian families wait to cross from Turkey into Syria at the Cilvegözü border gate near the town of Antakya.

**Masnaa border, Syria**

Children sit in a vehicle as they attempt to cross into Lebanon at the Masnaa border crossing between Lebanon and Syria, after Syrian rebels announced that they have ousted Syria's Bashar al-Assad, as pictured from the Syrian side.

**Damascus, Syria**

Syrians gathered at Umayyad Square to celebrate the collapse of the Assad regime.

**Tempuran, Indonesia**

An overflowing river flooded villages after torrential rain in the Mojokerto area of East Java.

**England, UK**

William, the Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Mercian Regiment, visits the regiment for a Christmas event for families at Picton Barracks, Britain.

December 9

**Lo Vásquez, Chile**

Christians make their pilgrimage to a shrine near Valparaíso, walking up to 70 km (43 miles) to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and pay homage to the Virgin Mary; some walk the last kilometres barefoot or on their knees.

**Paris, France**

The choir of the Maitrise de Notre-Dame, sing next to priest and clergy members during the inaugural Mass as part of ceremonies to mark the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral's reopening after its restoration, five-and-a-half years after a fire ravaged the Gothic masterpiece.

**Antalya, Turkey**

Competitors in the women's senior race surge uphill during the 30<sup>th</sup> SPAR European Cross Country Championships.

**York, UK**

The River Ouse overflowed its banks after Storm Darragh, which brought strong winds to many parts of the country over the weekend.

Sources : Reuters &amp; The Guardian