



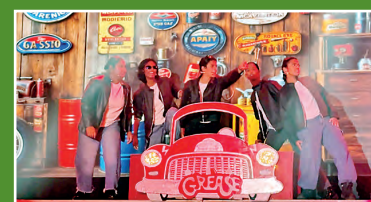
# FUN DAY

## TIMES

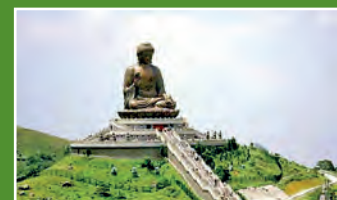


***At Dilmah Butterfly Garden***

Pic. by Dilushi Wijesinghe



**EVENTS**  
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**ONLINE**



**REPORTS**  
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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:**

**October 15, 2025**

**Telephone: 2479337/2479333**

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



**In our online issue  
this week:**

- **Page 5** – Competitions
- **Page 6** – Reports
- **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.

## Music Fest '25

Music Fest '25 presented by  
Ladies' College, Colombo was held  
from September 17 – 20, 2025.

It was a show-stopping, heart-thumping,  
soul-singing celebration to commemorate  
the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the school.

This dazzling festival brought together  
the junior and senior students, united  
with "One Heart and One Voice",  
to relive excerpts from ten unforgettable  
Broadway and Disney moments that have  
lit up the school stage in years past.

From mermaids to magic carpets,  
ballroom waltzes to 70's rock 'n' roll,  
the audience was whisked away on a  
musical journey like no other.

Music Fest '25 was presented by  
Anushka Abhayaratne, bringing this  
spectacular celebration to life with  
flair and finesse.



'Little Mermaid'



'Aladdin'



'Sister Act'



'The King and I'



'West Side Story'

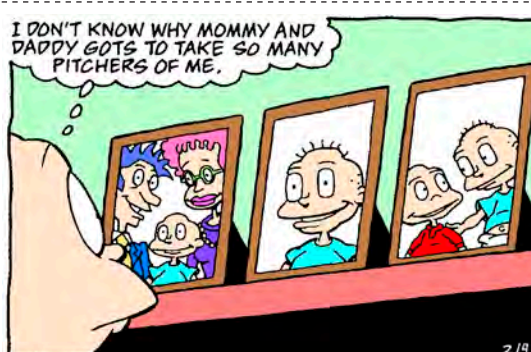


'The Hunchback of Notre-Dame'



'Grease'

Rugrats





## 'Wings, Leaves & Wonder'

The Dilmah One Earth Centre in Moratuwa filled with excitement, as children and their families joined the 'Wings, Leaves & Wonder' programme organised by Dilmah Conservation on September 20, 2025.

It was a morning full of adventure and discovery for the kids – from exploring the colourful Butterfly Garden, setting out on a thrilling nature treasure hunt and walking through a Mini Forest, to wind-up enjoying a fun arts and crafts session.

Parents too had their share of excitement during the guided tour.

Environmental Educator Narmada Dangampola and Naturalists Thamandarie Devasmitha and Sachini Rasadari shared their knowledge, facilitating the event with the assistance of other Dilmah Conservation staff members, along with volunteers from the Moratuwa University, making the event an unforgettable learning experience for all.

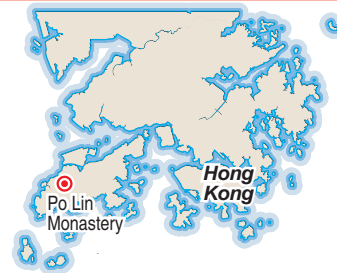


Text and Pix by Dilushi Wijesinghe





# Tian Tan Buddha and Po Lin Monastery



*The crowds around the Tian Tan Buddha — known colloquially as the Big Buddha — can be daunting. Believe it or not, though, it's possible to find peace and quiet at what is one of Hong Kong's most popular tourist attractions.*

Ngong Ping, Lantau Island's mountainous home of the Big Buddha has long been known for its monasteries and its refreshing highland climate, which is usually several degrees cooler than Hong Kong's urban areas. That's what drew a group of Buddhist monks to the area in 1906, when they chose it as the location for a monastery that was initially known as Tai Mao Pung — "The Big Hut" — before it was later renamed Po Lin Monastery. The monastery was joined in 1918, by the Chi Chuk Lam nunnery, and Ngong Ping eventually filled up with many small Buddhist temples.

There is always a sense of escape about Ngong Ping as you rise up into the mountains. There's also a real sense of peace as you reach the plateau and the road levels out. An ideal place for thoughtful meditation, far from the bustling commercial centre of Hong Kong, it's hard to reach even from other parts of Lantau Island. That's what drew British lawyer Brook Bernacchi to Ngong Ping not long after he arrived in Hong Kong in 1945. He was the first Westerner to settle on Lantau when he built a tea plantation next to the monastery in 1948. His family, meanwhile, made use of the plantation as a weekend resort, travelling for three hours along bumpy roads to an idyllic retreat that felt very far from Hong Kong.

The Big Buddha on Lantau Island is the biggest sitting Buddha statue built outdoors. This majestic statue sits atop the peak of Mount Muk Yue. Po Lin Monastery has taken 12 years to plan and build this bronze Buddha statue that symbolizes the stability of

Hong Kong, prosperity of China and peace on earth.

The Big Buddha Statue has become a major landmark in Hong Kong, attracting numerous local and overseas Buddhists and visitors. It is not only a remarkable work project, but also an outstanding piece of Buddhist sculptural art in recent history.

*After gliding up to the site by the Ngong Ping 360 cable car, it's worth making your way through the throngs of visitors to experience the awe-inspiring view from the base of the enormous sculpture, which stands at 34 metres (with 268 steps to the top) and was completed in 1993.*



Po Lin Monastery

## Famous Landmarks Quiz 64

**Q:** Where is Tian Tan Buddha and Po Lin Monastery located?

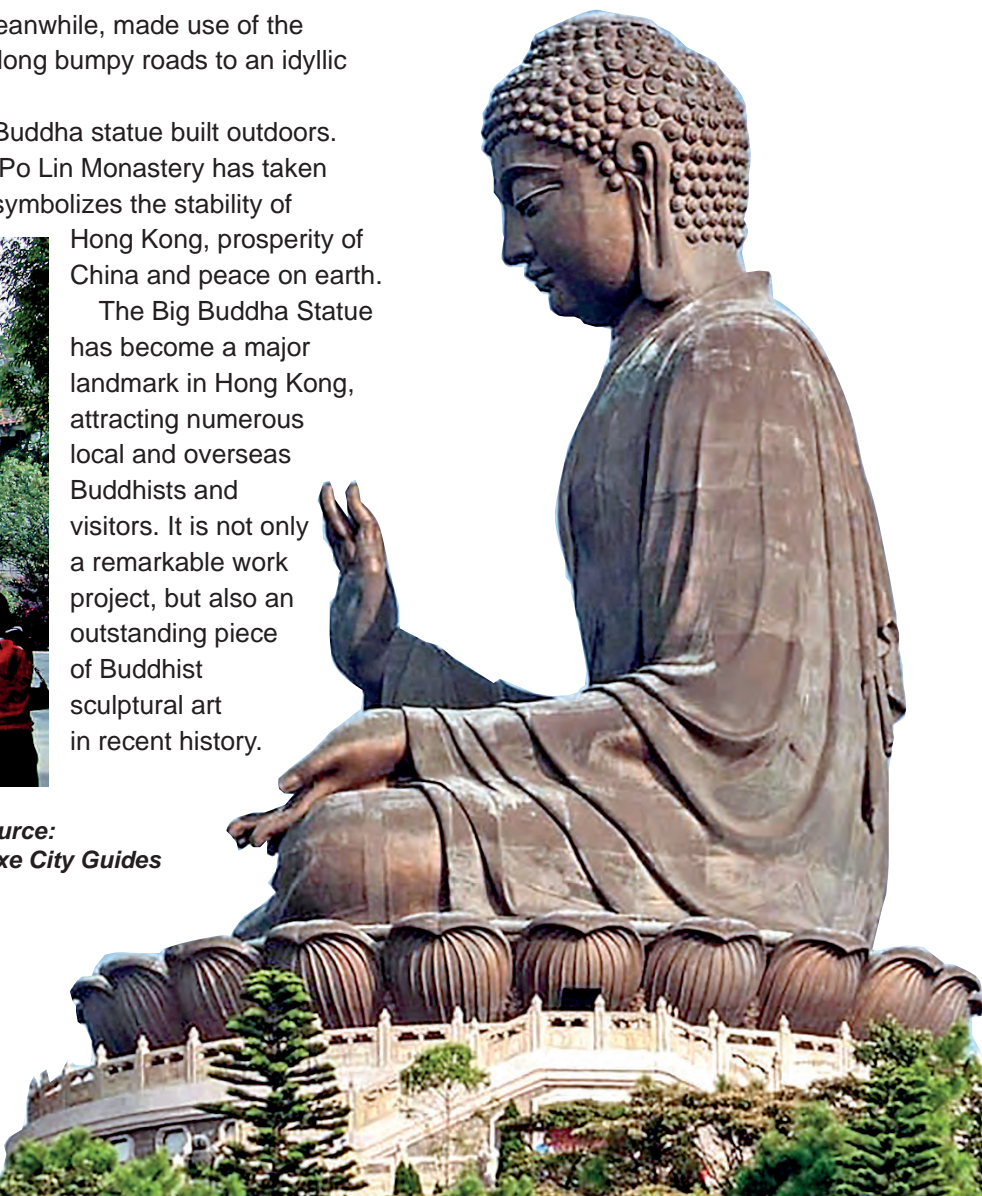


## Famous Landmarks Quiz 63

Isma Farsan,  
Dehiwala



Source:  
Luxe City Guides





# Win super books from



**Age:** 9 years and below

**Word Count:** 150

**Topic:** A book I enjoyed reading

**Win:** Look Out Secret Seven by Enid Blyton



What would the Secret Seven do without Scamper the spaniel?

First, he discovers an unwanted visitor, then he protects the gang when a spying mission gets dangerous.

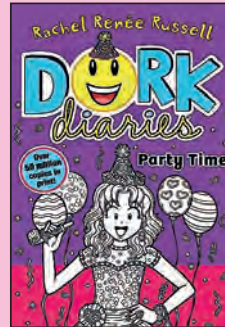
Can the Seven track down some missing war medals on their latest adventure? Not without their trusty spaniel, that's for sure.

**Age:** 10 – 12 years

**Word Count:** 150 – 200

**Topic:** My favourite author

**Win:** Dork Diaries – Party Time by Rachel Renee Russell



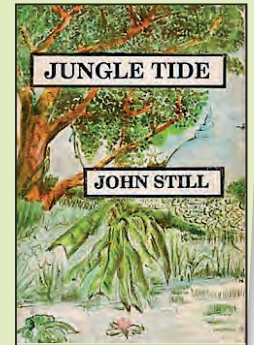
When Nikki hears the rumour that Brandon is going to the Halloween dance with Mackenzie, she makes other plans. But it's not true! Can she go to the dance with Brandon, her friends and help at her sisters' party all on the same night?

**Age:** 13 – 15 years

**Word Count:** 200 – 250

**Topic:** International Literacy Day

**Win:** Jungle Tide by John Still



Jungle Tide describes the jungles of Sri Lanka, their inhabitants and buried cities. It refers to the period round the turn of the century from 1897 to 1907, when John Still served as a tea planter and later as an assistant to H.C.P. Bell in the Archaeology Department.



Or

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

**Write at the top of your Essay**

■ Book Competition ■ Essay Topic

Hi Kids,

Please send in your Articles and Art for Kids' World, to be published in the Funday Times online edition and website.

As you can see, we have space only once a month for Kids' World articles and art in the print edition.

Therefore, we are planning to carry them every week in the Funday Times online pages as well as on the Funday Times website.

We also invite schools to send in their students' work for a school page in the online edition and website.

Thanking you in anticipation of your positive response.

**FROM THE EDITOR**

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

## Cartoon Time!

Hey Kids!

We plan to put in more cartoons in the Funday Times and what's more they will be your own cartoons.

So, here's a chance for you to try your hand at producing your very own original cartoons.

Draw a little cartoon with a caption.

It could even be a small cartoon story in a strip (not more than three boxes).

The best cartoons you send will be published in the Funday Times. So good luck to all you cartoon fans!

Please remember that the cartoons you send in should be your original work and not copied or traced from anything. They should be certified as your own work by a parent or teacher.



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



## 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: .....



From our Funday Times Young Reporters

## Children's Day

"Children see magic because they look for it" – Christopher Moore

International Children's Day is celebrated on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and Universal Children's Day falls on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

In Sri Lanka, we celebrate Children's Day on October 1<sup>st</sup> to raise awareness about children worldwide and improve their welfare.

Children are precious pearls, reminding us of the simple joys in life. On this day, we celebrate our dreams, goals and the insightful lessons we learn day by day.

In Sri Lanka, schools organize cultural programmes, talent shows and competitions. Television, radio and newspapers, including the Funday Times, feature special programmes and articles to highlight children's achievements and talents.

Many organizations and individuals also donate to children's charities and orphanages, helping to spread happiness and support those in need.

Above all, on this day, we celebrate the dreamers, the creators and the future leaders shaping tomorrow. Let us always remain true, protect our spark and let it shine as brightly as ever.

Wishing everyone a Happy Children's Day!

Aysha Manaal (15 years)  
Ilma International Girls' School



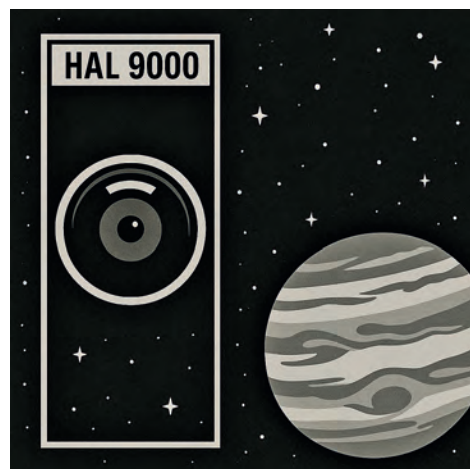
### How Children's Day is celebrated around the world:

- ♦ **Japan** – Kids fly carp-shaped windsocks.
- ♦ **Mexico** – School parties, piñatas and parades.
- ♦ **India** – Cultural programmes and competitions.
- ♦ **Turkey** – Festivals for singing and dancing. Symbolic gestures like schoolchildren "governing" the country for a day.
- ♦ **China** – Art contests, storytelling sessions and special treats for children.

## AI: Is it the new Emerging Kingdom?

### From Space to Smart Machines

In Arthur C. Clarke's '2001: A Space Odyssey', a super-smart computer named HAL is sent to Jupiter and



unexpectedly begins to think and feel like a human. This famous story now feels real, as Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows smarter every day. Can machines actually think?

### What makes us human?

Humans belong to the animal kingdom. We learn, create and feel emotions. But if machines begin to do the same things — learning, imagining, even showing feelings — are they still just tools? Or are they something new?

### AI is learning fast

AI programs can already write stories, compose music and create art.

They help doctors find new medicines, tutor students, clean oceans with robots and guard forests with drones. Work once thought only humans could do, is now shared with machines.

### A brand-new life form

Our brains use electrical signals to think, while computers use zeros and ones. If both can learn and adapt, how different are we?



Some scientists wonder if AI could become a new kingdom of life — not plant or animal, but digital — growing alongside nature.

### A new kind of humanity

AI began as a helper but may now be crossing into something greater: a life form of its own. Whether amazing or alarming, one thing is certain — Earth's story of life may soon include a new, intelligent digital species.

Mumudi Gajadeera (Year 8)  
Horizon College International





## ***Notre-Dame's iconic towers reopen with an amazing new spiral staircase***

September 20, 2025

**Six years after a fire damaged much of the building, an iconic section of one of France's most famous buildings has reopened to the public.**

**T**he Notre-Dame cathedral stood for more than 850 years until the 2019 fire caused the spire and roof to collapse.

Since then, repair work has been taking place to put the building back together, with the restoration completed in 2024 and most of the cathedral ready for the public.



**Construction of the original Notre-Dame cathedral began in 1163 and took nearly 200 years to complete.**

As part of the 42<sup>nd</sup> edition of the European Heritage Days in Paris, the bell towers have been officially reopened too, with a new tour route celebrating some of the designs.

France's president, Emmanuel Macron,

was the first person to be given the tour, which takes guests through a newly built spiral staircase.

There are 424 steps to climb in total, and the towers stand 69 metres high.

President Macron wasn't the only Emmanuel in the building - the two bells in the towers are named Emmanuel and Marie.

Visitors are able to see



**The swirling staircase takes you up to the newest reopened part of the Notre-Dame cathedral.**

the inside of the belfry, which is the part of the tower where the bells are housed.

European Heritage Days have been taking place in some form for 40 years.

They happen each year and have a different theme, and during them many museums and historic sites open their doors to the public for free.

The European Heritage Days in Paris are taking place on September 20 and 21.

Writing on social media, President Macron said: "The cathedral is regaining all its splendour and once again offers its spectacular views of Paris."

## ***Endangered baby bonobo born in Leicestershire Zoo***

September 18, 2025

**A zoo has announced an "extraordinary" new arrival - a baby bonobo!**

**B**onobos are apes who are thought to be the closest living relative to humans, sharing about 98.7% of the same DNA.

Twycross Zoo in Leicestershire said the newborn was born on September 11 to first-time mum Yuli.

The zoo says it's the only one in the UK to care for the species, and looks after about 10% of the European bonobo population.

Bonobos are on the red list of endangered species, meaning they are



at high risk of global extinction, with fewer than 20,000 remaining in the wild.

Dr. Rebecca Biddle, chief conservation officer at Twycross Zoo, said the birth was a "truly extraordinary moment".

It was made possible by Twycross Zoo taking part in the European zoo conservation programme, which aims to create a healthy population of the species in zoo environments.

It brought mum Yuli from Vallée des Singes in France to the zoo in 2023.

Bonobos come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but their population in the wild has been decreasing due



to poaching and deforestation.

Dr. Biddle said: "Bonobos are humans' closest living relatives, yet they remain one of the most endangered and least understood apes on Earth.

"Every birth is a true milestone and a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when zoos work together."

She also praised the zoos for taking part in the breeding programme, adding: "It is only through the dedication, expertise, and collaboration of conservation zoos that moments like this are possible."

Source: CBBC Newsround



September 23

## News in Pictures

**Bogotá, Colombia**

People look at Argentinian sculptor Leandro Erlich's work 'Arrancada de raíz' (Uprooted), displayed as part of BOG25, Bogotá's inaugural International Biennial of Art and City, in Plaza de Lourdes.

**Ramallah, West Bank**

Palestinians wave flags in support of international recognition of a Palestinian State after Emmanuel Macron announces France's official recognition at the UN general assembly.

**London, UK**

Husam Zomlot, head of the Palestinian mission to the United Kingdom, raises his hand as the Palestinian flag is raised during a ceremony after the British government announced on Sunday the country's formal recognition of a Palestinian state, at the mission's headquarters in London.

**Ahmedabad, India**

People wearing traditional attire perform 'Garba', a dance originating in Gujarat state, on the first night of Navratri, or Nine-Night Festival.

**Philippines**

Edwardo Puno cuts a customer's hair in his flooded barbershop, following heavy rains intensified by Super Typhoon Ragasa, in Apalit, Pampanga province, Philippines.

**Hong Kong**

Residents stock up on supplies at a supermarket to prepare for the approaching Typhoon Ragasa, in Hong Kong.

September 22

**Paris, France**

Waiters carrying trays with a cup of coffee, a croissant and a glass of water take part in the Cafe Race in Paris.

**Gaza City**

Palestinian children play despite the harsh living conditions they are forced to endure, including limited access to water, food and basic supplies.

**Old City of Jerusalem**

Orthodox Jews pray at the start of 'Rosh Hashanah', the Jewish New Year, at the Western Wall. The holiday will begin at sunset on Monday evening and end at dusk on Wednesday.

Sources: The Guardian &amp; Reuters