



REDEFINING RETAIL

Future Proofing the Forward Journey

 **Wednesday, 1st March 2023**

 **9.00 AM to 05.00 PM**

 **Cinnamon Grand Hotel**

FACULTY BOOK



SRI LANKA RETAILERS' ASSOCIATION
Driving Retail Excellence



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Driving Retail Excellence

SRI LANKA RETAILERS' ASSOCIATION

The Sri Lanka Retailers' Association (SLRA) was established in 2015 with the intention of being the apex body for organized retailing in Sri Lanka and with an ambitious vision of 'Achieving Retail Excellence' by being the 'Voice of the Retail industry in Sri Lanka'. The Association represents leading retailers in Sri Lanka as members from diverse retail sectors such as FMCG, Clothing, Fashion & Jewellery, Household & Consumer Durables, Footwear & Accessories, E-Commerce, Entertainment & SR and Healthcare & Wellness.

SLRA's purpose is to develop a forum where the retailers could work together to improve standards of the retail industry. The SLRA will also focus on improving consumer experience and service in all facets of retailing. In addition, the SLRA will also engage with the government in all matters impacting retailers in Sri Lanka. The SLRA aims to be inclusive in its approach.

The objective of this Association is to improve the standard of retailing in Sri Lanka in an inclusive manner by leveraging the resources of the Organized Retail industry. SLRA also aims to facilitate the growth of the retail industry through innovation and best sharing of global best practices.

The SLRA operates under the aegis of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

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SRI LANKA RETAIL FORUM

Redefining Retail: Future Proofing the Forward Journey

The Forum will address the challenges faced by the retail industry and foster constructive dialogue on leveraging emerging trends and navigating the economic crisis.

With the retail sector among the hardest hit by the current crisis, the Forum will facilitate urgent dialogue on charting a progressive course through current turbulent economic conditions, explore global macro trends and how they can be best leveraged in the national context, as well as discuss sustainable operations to ensure industry stability and growth.

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Message from the President



Dear Friends in Retail and Friends of Retail,

It is indeed a great pleasure to see the Retail Forum 2023 coming alive amidst challenges and testing times. At the outset, let me thank the Chairman of the forum organising committee Mr Dinesh Perera and his team for the splendid job done.

One cannot think of a better time to have a knowledge conclave given the extreme external conditions that we have witnessed over the past couple of years and the ongoing macro issues that have engulfed not just retail but the entire country. Times like this demand greater access to knowledge and thus can shape the future better. That's precisely what the SLRA has tried to achieve through this forum by bringing in overseas and local resource personnel in creating thought leadership that will aid in future decisions. It would also open links to hitherto unforeseen opportunities and activities which will help build a future-proof business.

The forum covers four broad areas that would be vital in making retail a sustainable and more future-centric business. The theme for the conference 'Redefining Retail – Future Proofing the Forward Journey' was floated with this in mind.

The first session would be 'Delivering value in Inflationary Times.' This is very apt given the current high inflationary status and rising costs having a major impact on businesses. This would be followed with a session on 'Leveraging Tech for retail.' Retail and tech have always shared an interwoven connection. With multiple channels including 'Phygital' and the increasing influence of AI-powered action and changing consumer preferences, this is a much-needed area to explore.

The 3rd session will focus on successful action by retailers to be ahead of the economic turmoil. Termed a 'rapid-fire experience', this is sure to throw in some practical ideas to be emulated by others. The final session will be a fireside chat with some best-known names in the local business arena. This session will focus on how leaders have navigated the crisis and what they see as possible trends for the future. The leadership diversity of the panellist is sure to bring a great pool of thoughts.

A very warm appreciation to the chamber secretariat, and retailers who supported this endeavour. Special appreciation to the sponsors, and all speakers and panellists who are here on our invitation from across the globe to impart their know-how.

It's an annual knowledge-sharing forum. I wish you all an enjoyable and fruitful session.

Murali Prakash

President

Sri Lanka Retailers' Association

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Message from the Chairman of Sri Lanka Retail Forum 2023



As we are all aware, the retail industry plays a vital role in driving the nation's economy forward and your participation here signifies your commitment and enthusiasm towards the development and growth of this industry. I would like to sincerely thank you all for joining the fifth Retail Forum organized by the Sri Lanka Retailers' Association.

As the apex body of organized retailers in Sri Lanka, SLRA has, since its inception in 2015, striven to bring value to our Members and the entire industry. We are confident that the Retail Forum, organized by the SLRA, will deliver significant value to all participants.

We ensured that we made our registration fees extremely attractive, Against the backdrop of current circumstances, the Forum aims to facilitate urgent dialogue on charting a progressive course through current turbulent economic conditions.

You will hear from an eminent set of speakers and panelists, including industry leaders, veterans, and expert strategists throughout the day who will, through their respective sessions, no doubt enhance participants' knowledge and understanding, as well as further the conversation on global macro trends in retail. In addition the Forum will explore adapting and leveraging global trends in the local context, and a roadmap to implement sustainable operations in order to ensure industry stability and growth.

I thank our speakers and panelists, as well as participants, for your presence at the Sri Lanka Retail Forum 2023.

This event would have not been possible without the generosity of our sponsors who have stepped in to support the SLRA, notwithstanding the economic crisis and challenging industry conditions. Our heartfelt appreciation to the Platinum sponsor – Keells Super, Gold sponsor – Abans PLC, and Bronze sponsors - Singer, Damro, DSI, Healthguard, Union Assurance, Daraz and Unilever, and also to the event partners Hameedia, Bata, Dankotuwa, SPAR supermarket, Celcius, Nestle, Ceylon Biscuits, Perera & Sons, and our insights partner Breakthrough and the Secretariat of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

I would also like to thank Mr. Murali Prakash, Chairman of the SLRA, and the Executive Committee for their commitment and the unstinting support in ensuring the success of the Retail Forum 2023. My sincere thanks to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce team, Shiran, Shehara, Niroshini, and Devni, for the support extended to organize today's event.

I wish the Sri Lanka Retail Forum 2023 all success, and am confident it will achieve its aim of furthering the growth and development of Sri Lanka's retail industry.

Dinesh Perera

Chairman

Sri Lanka Retail Forum 2023

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09.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Future Proofing the Forward Journey

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Murali Prakash

President

Sri Lanka Retailers' Association

Address by the Guest Speaker

Mr. Ganaka Herath

Managing Partner

McKinsey & Company in Sri Lanka

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Mr. Ganaka Herath

Managing Partner

McKinsey & Company in Sri Lanka

Ganaka Herath is a Partner at McKinsey & Company and the Managing Partner of the Sri Lanka office and oversees client service in the region. A leader in McKinsey's Digital and Analytics service line, Ganaka is also a core member of the Financial Services Practice, focusing on Corporate and Transaction Banking. In addition to financial services, Ganaka's expertise includes digital transformation, advanced analytics, and transformational change. Increasingly, he is focused on the power of digital and advanced analytics to transform operations and create value for clients.

A contributing author to "Unlocking Sri Lanka's digital opportunity," Ganaka has published research and perspectives on digital transformation and its implications for business and society. Ganaka's clients include global multinationals, as well as regional and local companies. Examples of his client work include: supporting a client in shaping the country-level digital strategy and priority project design for an economy in South Asia; helping a conglomerate build its capabilities in advanced analytics; collaborating with a large digital lending platform provider to develop its global strategy, and identify priority themes for the European market.

Ganaka first joined McKinsey's London office, from where he served financial institutions in Europe, Africa, LATAM, and the US, on topics ranging from market entry and product strategy to supply chain and digital transformation. For a number of years, he also co-led the firm's work on transaction banking in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Prior to joining McKinsey, Ganaka served as a relationship manager and a transaction banking product specialist at Citibank. Ganaka holds an MBA with honors from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor's degree with honors in Economics from the University of Nottingham.

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10.00 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.

SESSION 01

Delivering Value in Inflationary Times

The session will focus on how retail firms can continue to generate value to customers in a period where cost of living has surged. What strategies can retail firms adopt in pricing, managing consumer behaviour and catering to the emerging consumer during this time. The session will also discuss future consumer trends as the economy recovers from the current crisis period.

Foreign Speaker

Mr. Karthik Hebsur

Partner

McKinsey & Company India (Bangalore Office)

Speaker

Ms. Dilini Jayasuriya

Founder/Executive Director

Breakthrough Business Intelligence (Pvt) Ltd

Panellist

Mr. Kamal Dole

Founder/Managing Director

Celcius Luxury Bedding and Affiliated Companies

Panellist

Mr. Kumar de Silva

Chief Executive Officer

SPAR Sri Lanka

Moderator

Mr. Channa Gunawardana

Chief Executive Officer

Dankotuwa Porcelain PLC

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Mr. Karthik Hebsur

Partner

McKinsey & Company India (Bangalore Office)

Karthik Hebsur is a Partner at McKinsey & Company of the India office. He is one of the core leaders in consumer practice in Asia. Karthik works primarily with retail and consumer goods clients in India and Southeast Asia. He supports clients on a range of issues related to strategy, revenue growth management, digital and advanced analytics, sales-force transformations, and supply chain.

Examples of his client work include- Leading end to end Analytics transformation for leading Asian grocery retailer, supported a leading fast-moving consumer-goods company in optimizing trade budgets and driving growth through assortment optimization in general trade channel. Karthik has also led development of multiple accelerators and Analytics assets to help clients fast track business impact.

Prior to McKinsey & Company, Karthik has spent 5+ years in the industry focusing on analytics and business intelligence for consumer and financial services. Karthik holds an MBA from Indian school of business and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering



Ms. Dilini Jayasuriya

Founder/Executive Director

Breakthrough Business Intelligence (Pvt) Ltd

Dilini Jayasuriya has been involved in the market research industry for over 25 years. Post her tenure as the CEO of a leading multinational research agency, she founded Breakthrough Business Intelligence, a boutique marketing research agency, 14 years ago. She currently serves as a board member at the MRSSL – The Market Research Society of Sri Lanka.

Breakthrough is a market research agency committed to providing insightful partnership that drive bottom line results for clients. Today, it has expanded its operations beyond local shores to Bangladesh and Maldives.

She has completed her post graduate studies in the field of Business Management, Marketing and Psychology. She's an alumnus of the Post graduate institute of Management

Dilini considers herself to be a student of human nature and takes immense pleasure in understanding the human psyche. She lives in suburban Colombo with her husband and their daughter and 10 dogs.

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Mr. Kamal Dole

Founder/Managing Director

Celcius Luxury Bedding and Affiliated Companies

He had an early start to his career at the age of 19 joining a multinational company in apparel accessories sector. He has remained in the field of textile Charguers Group of France, then continued be in the apparel industry with likes of Teejay Lanka Ltd/ MAS Holdings, Lanka equities/Lankathermo until he became an entrepreneur in 2009 admits height of war in Sri Lanka.

Since, Kamal has maneuvered the company through thick and thin conditions in the market not only to make Celcius the number 1 brand of home textile products in Sri Lanka amongst multiple sectors. Celcius has served the country to minimize large imports of bedding and linen in the country and creating many direct and indirect employment.

Kamal holds a post graduate diploma in marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK. He was recognized as a 100 most influential and innovative young leaders by Echelon Magazine and chosen as the Most dynamic entrepreneur by the CEO magazine for the year 2022.

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Mr. Kumar de Silva

Chief Executive Officer
SPAR Sri Lanka

Kumar De Silva is currently the Chief Executive Officer of SPAR Sri Lanka which is a partnership between SPAR South Africa and Ceylon Biscuits Limited. SPAR, which has its origins in the Netherlands, is the world's largest voluntary food retail chain, with more than 13000 stores across 48 countries.

A graduate of Ceylon Hotels School and School of tourism, he has 7 years of hospitality experience, commencing his career with Hilton Hotels, specializing in Food & Beverage Operations. He was a key member of the pioneering team of JAIC Hilton Residence.

Having gained his MBA in London, Kumar embarked on his retail journey in one of the largest conglomerates in Sri Lanka. There he gained 14 years of significant exposure and experience, having played key roles in the organization such as Head of Operations and Category Management, having specialized in the function covering range/space management and pioneering retail planograms with software driven solutions in store, and as Chief Operating Officer of the organization, mastering customer decisions in store, thereby optimizing returns to both retailer and brand owners whilst satisfying customer needs.

Kumar's love for the food industry prompted him to join Fonterra, one of the world's largest dairy exporters based in New Zealand, as Associate Director of Fonterra Brands Lanka, providing leadership to the Foodservice Division for Sri Lanka and the Indian subcontinent. He was instrumental in launching the brand in new markets such as India and Pakistan whilst also driving the Fonterra business in Mauritius, Maldives and the Seychelles, in both consumer and Foodservice businesses.

Kumar is a true 'people person', with the ability to motivate and inspire his team and all those who work with him, to bring out the best in themselves and the desired results for the organization.

Hailing from St Peter's College Colombo, Kumar is an accomplished Badminton player, having captained his school team. Apart from his love of this sport, food is one of his greatest passions which he continues to indulge in, by cooking for friends and family and honing his culinary skills!

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Mr. Channa Gunawardana

Chief Executive Officer
Dankotuwa Porcelain PLC

Channa has extensive experience in overseas operations, as the Country Manager of Ernst & Young - Maldives, and with apparel operations in Bangladesh as the Chief Financial Officer. Further, he was instrumental in setting up one of the pioneering manufacturing plants, in the emerging market in Africa, in 2015. Channa served in Hirdaramani Group for long 12 years and was the Chief Operating Officer of Knit Cluster towards end of his Hirdaramani years. He was responsible for operations of 10 manufacturing plants for leading buyers and was responsible for Sales and Marketing for a product category. He joined Dankotuwa Porcelain PLC, from Aitken Spence Group, where he was the CEO/Directors of Aitken Spence Garments Ltd.

Channa Gunawardana, CEO of Dankotuwa Porcelain PLC, is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (UK) and also a fellow of the Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, with an MBA from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. He holds a First Class degree from the Department of Accountancy and Financial Management of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. He is reading for his PhD with Management and Science University in Malaysia.

He is recognized as the country's leading CIMA Case Study lecturer and conducts leadership programs for youth in his spare time.

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11.30 a.m. - 01.00 p.m.

SESSION 02

Leveraging Tech for Retail Excellence

The session will explore how is Sri Lanka's retail industry is utilizing global trends in running their local operations in a data and technology driven world and discuss some of the applications and technologies that are relevant for local retail. The session will also analyse several case studies of how firms have leveraged tech to improve their marketing, operations, talent, and service delivery.

Foreign Speaker

Mr. Lu Yao

Chief Commercial Officer
Daraz Group

Panellist

Mr. Chalinda Abeykoon

Managing Partner
nVentures

Panellist

Mr. Ahamed Ur Rahman

Chief Operating Officer
DHL Global Forwarding Sri Lanka

Panellist

Mr. Janik Jayasuriya

Chief Executive Officer
Celeste Daily

Moderator

Ms. Sanjini Munaweera

Regional Head - South Asia
ADA Sri Lanka

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Mr. Lu Yao

Chief Commercial Officer
Daraz Group

Lu Yao is the Chief Commercial Officer of Daraz Group, South Asia's leading e-commerce platform. He oversees the growth and profitability of e-commerce business across Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar. He leads the region-wide commercial strategy and implementation through category management, cross-border, retail, private labels, marketplace operations and others. Lu is passionate about empowering businesses to digitalise and scale online within a rapidly-growing e-commerce world in our region.

Prior to joining Daraz, Lu held management roles in Shopee's marketplace, retail and operations and was a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. He also holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania.



Mr. Chalinda Abeykoon

Managing Partner
nVentures

Chalinda is the Managing Partner for nVentures, an early-stage VC fund, licensed under the Monetary Authority of Singapore. He has been working with startups for almost 15 years and helped launch over 50 startups across South & Southeast Asia. He is a recipient of the prestigious Chevening Fellowship from the University of Oxford.

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Mr. Ahamed Ur Rahman

Chief Operating Officer
DHL Global Forwarding Sri Lanka

Ahamed-Ur Rahman is currently the COO and Head of Marketing and Sales at DHL Global Forwarding Lanka Pvt Ltd. DHL is the largest Logistics company in the world with a footprint in more than 220 countries and territories. Ahamed also serves as a Director at the European Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka (ECCSL)

He has more than 15 years of experience in marketing, Logistics and supply chain management in both manufacturing and service sectors industries. He is a former visiting lecturer at the University of Moratuwa & University of Peradeniya for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain Management.

Ahamed was primarily educated in Sri Lanka and completed his undergraduate and postgraduate courses in India and UK.

Prior to Joining DHL Ahamed has had experience in working for Apparel manufacturing and also was based in UK as a consultant working on projects for Royal Mail, British Petroleum and Homeserve.

Ahamed is interested in acquiring new information and knowledge while he loves travelling and rugby.

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Mr. Janik Jayasuriya

Chief Executive Officer
Celeste Daily

Janik, in 2020 took the leap of faith after Sri Lanka was highly affected by the Covid19 pandemic to move out from his bread and butter being hospitality management to a completely new business model being retail in order to ensure the daily essentials of family & friends were delivered right to their doorstep during trying times. This raised the demand coming not only from family & friends but others too who were unable and deprived of their daily essentials during some of the most difficult times. With this Janik brought in the On-Demand Grocery concept which was not something Sri Lankans were familiar with, but happened in many western and developed countries around the world. This also did not only benefit the consumers but also opened up job opportunities for many. The impressive growth of Celeste Daily was highly recognized by the World Bank & IFC for being a revolutionary start-up and Janik's entrepreneurship during times of trial.

Celeste Daily by the Jaysons Group of Companies opened up on UberEats & PickMe Market and now is Sri Lanka's premier on demand grocery platform with a wide range of items from fresh fruits and vegetables to the finest gourmet goods. With the backing of its holding company the Jaysons Group who are the proud developers of the iconic Little England Cottages in Nuwara Eliya, Celeste Daily has now topped a customer base of 35,000 plus.

Proudly, Janik has brought Celeste Daily to be a well-known and premier brand within many in Colombo with many more ventures and continues to grow each day.



Ms. Sanjini Munaweera

Regional Head - South Asia
ADA Sri Lanka

With over three decades of experience across multiple industries, including both agency and client side, Sanjini is a seasoned professional, well-versed in FMCG, Telco, Technology, BFSI, Travel, Retail and Manufacturing industries both locally and globally. She is currently the Country Director of ADA in Sri Lanka, leading a team of energetic young professionals with a vision to deliver the future of marketing by combining the best of data science, technology, creativity, and content to deliver stellar results. One of her main passions is yoga, as she enjoys both the physical and mental relaxation of the exercise.

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02.00 p.m. - 03.00 p.m.

SESSION 03

Rapid Fire Experience Sharing Session- “What we did?”

The 1-hour Rapid-fire session will consist of 5 panellists from 5 different retail sectors who will be sharing their experiences and insights gleaned over the past two years with their answers to the questions ‘What was the key lesson learnt in the last two years?’ and ‘What was the one that worked over the last 2 years and how?’

Panellist

Mr. Fouzul Hameed

Managing Director
Envoy London & Hameedia Group

Panellist

Mr. Infiyaz M. Ali

Chief Executive Officer
Healthguard Pharmacy Ltd.

Panellist

Mr. Charitha Subasinghe

President-Retail
John Keells Holdings PLC

Panellist

Mr. Rajiv Meewakkala

Chief Executive Officer
Lion Brewery (Ceylon) PLC

Panellist

Mr. Shanil Perera

Director-Marketing
Singer Sri Lanka PLC

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Mr. Fouzul Hameed

Managing Director

Envoy London & Hameedia Group

U.S certified Image Consultant and a prominent figure in the Fashion Industry in Sri Lanka. Over 4 decades of experience in Men's Fashion and the creator of Four unique brands Envoy London, Le Bond, FH and Signature.

Simultaneously a pioneer in initiating social activities and charities that aims to uplift society. His most notable charity foundation is "My Friend" which aims to uplift underprivileged children in school. Since its inception, the My friend foundation is a beacon of hope for over thousands of less fortunate children in Sri Lanka.



Mr. Infiyaz M. Ali

Chief Executive Officer

Healthguard Pharmacy Ltd.

Infiyaz Mohamed Ali is the CEO of Healthguard Pharmacy. A subsidiary of Sunshine Holdings PLC. He has worked in various capacities in the retail field for over 25 years. Since 2022, he has also taken on the role of Chief Digital Officer for Sunshine Holdings PLC



Mr. Charitha Subasinghe

President-Retail

John Keells Holdings PLC

Charitha is the President of the Retail Sector and has been with the John Keells Group since 2003. He was the Sector Financial Controller of the Retail sector, before being appointed as the Chief Executive Officer in 2005. He was employed at Aitken Spence Hotel Management as the Sector Financial Controller before moving to John Keells Group. He is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (UK) as well as a Diploma Holder of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), and he also holds an MBA from the University of Colombo.

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Mr. Rajiv Meewakkala
Chief Executive Officer
Lion Brewery (Ceylon) PLC

Rajiv's management experience spans across both private and public sector organisation and his core expertise are in marketing and general management. His career commenced in the private sector, working for a multinational group for 19 years, post which, he lead three large State sector businesses in retail, construction and banking.

In the private sector, Rajiv was the Marketing Director of Ceylon Tobacco Company (fully owned subsidiary of British American Tobacco [BAT]) where he managed a diverse brand portfolio. His responsibilities included building both global and local brands by strengthening brand values through targeted communication, innovation in product and packaging whilst being responsible for the trade marketing and sales function.

He was a member of the South Asia Marketing Leadership team of BAT, and was also Head of Brand Marketing for BAT Cambodia and Laos. Post-BAT, Rajiv worked as a Brand Consultant with Interbrand, a global brand consultancy group.

Currently, he is also serving as a Non-Executive Director at Ceylon Beverage Holdings and Lion Brewery (Ceylon). In his tenure in the public sector, he was appointed as CEO of Lanka Sathosa, Chairman of State Development Construction Corporation and Chairman of Housing Development Finance Corporation (public quoted, specialised housing bank of the Government).

Rajiv holds a PhD. (Management) from the University of Honolulu, MSc in international marketing from the University of Strathclyde (Glasgow) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK).

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Mr. Shanil Perera
Director-Marketing
Singer Sri Lanka PLC

Shanil Perera is a senior strategic Marketing professional with over 16 years of experience working in both Sri Lanka and Singapore for local and multinational FMCG, Apparel and Consumer Durable companies. Specializes in Brand & Marketing management with experience in Global Marketing, B2B Business development & Sales.

A Bsc. (Biotechnology) graduate from the University of Adelaide and possesses an MBA (Marketing Management) from the University of Southern Queensland.

Shanil is currently the Marketing Director at SINGER (SRI LANKA) PLC and Board Member of REGNIS (LANKA) PLC

Passionate about building brands, unlocking the true potential of digital marketing and driving consumer engagement. Shanil loves leading teams. A people person with a strong work ethic fueled by hard work and integrity.

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03.15 p.m. - 04.30 p.m.

SESSION 04

Fireside Chat on Future of Retail in Sri Lanka

Fireside chat on the future of retail in Sri Lanka will delve into insightful topics to offer a roadmap for the industry's future and sustainability by capitalising on growth and investment potential, and mapping the transformation to export readiness. Session will focus on:

- How are retailers in Sri Lanka managing within the existing crisis?
- Where do retailers see opportunities for growth and investment?
- Can Retail brands go global and become export brands?

Panellist

Mr. Rakhil Fernando

Managing Director
Daraz Sri Lanka

Panellist

Ms. Avanthi Colombage

Country Manager - Sri Lanka and Maldives
Visa Inc.,

Panellist

Mr. Dimantha Seneviratne

Director / Chief Executive Officer
National Development Bank PLC

Panellist

Mr. Shalin Balasuriya

Co-Founder
Spa Ceylon

Panellist

Mr. Shamal Gunawardene

Director – Sales and Commercial
Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka Ltd

Moderator

Mr. Murali Prakash

President
Sri Lanka Retailers' Association

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Mr. Rakhil Fernando

Managing Director
Daraz Sri Lanka

Rakhil Fernando is the Managing Director of Daraz in Sri Lanka and the Founder of KOKO, one of Sri Lanka's first-ever buy now pay later applications. Under his leadership, the Daraz online marketplace has grown into a household name that supports over 80,000 sellers and 5 million consumers in Sri Lanka. Prior to joining Daraz, Rakhil held various leadership roles in the technology, banking and finance space. In particular, he co-founded Kashmi in Singapore, a social mobile neo-banking product designed to fit seamlessly into the lifestyle of Southeast Asia's banked and unbanked millennials, and he also held different roles at leading financial institutions like Credit Suisse and Coutts.

He is also passionate about building and improving places people call home, and in recognition of his commitment to improving housing in Sri Lanka, he was named a Goodwill Ambassador for Habitat for Humanity in 2020.

Rakhil holds a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, in the United States and is a former student of Eton College in the United Kingdom.



Ms. Avanthi Colombage

Country Manager Sri Lanka and Maldives
Visa Inc.,

Avanthi has over 2 decades of experience in the Banking and Finance Industry. She has worked extensively in all key areas of Digital Payments & Cards Business, Digital Banking, Business Development, Consumer Risk and Branch Banking.

Avanthi is the Country Manager for Visa in Sri Lanka and Maldives and leads Visa's business across Sri Lanka and Maldives. Avanthi has been with Visa for over 5 years.

Prior to Visa Avanthi spent 17 years of her career at HSBC where she covered Cards Products, Corporate Cash Management, Digital Banking & Channel Distribution, and Consumer Risk roles. During her tenure at HSBC Avanthi not only worked in Sri Lanka but also spent part of her career in the Maldives within the Corporate Cash Management vertical.

Given Avanthi spend most of her career in the Payments and Cards roles, she is very adept in all aspects of the digital payments business and represented the Payment and Cards Industry Association executive committee in the capacity of the Head of Issuing for Sri Lanka.

Avanthi holds a Master of Business Administration from the Edith Cowan University of Australia.

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Mr. Dimantha Seneviratne

Director / Chief Executive Officer
National Development Bank PLC

Mr Dimantha Seneviratne is the Director/ Chief Executive Officer of the National Development Bank PLC [NDB]. He counts over 30 years of experience in the Banking industry, and is widely known as a transformational leader. Having joined NDB in 2017, he transformed it to one of the most agile and fastest growing banks, which is now the fourth largest listed bank in Sri Lanka. Prior to joining NDB, he was the Director/ Chief Executive Officer of the Pan Asia Banking Corporation PLC [PABC] for three years leading it to a high performing mid-sized Bank. He had spent over 15 years with the global giant, HSBC Group, where he held several senior leadership roles including Chief Risk Officer position in several jurisdictions covering Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Thailand.

In addition to holding several Board Director positions in NDB Group companies, Dimantha functions as a Director of the American Chamber of Commerce. He was also re-appointed to serve as a Director of Sri Lanka Banks' Association (Guarantee) Limited [SLBA] in December 2021. He is the Immediate past Chairman of the SLBA, a past President of the Association of Professional Bankers [APB] Sri Lanka and a former Director of the Credit Information Bureau of Sri Lanka and LankaClear (Pvt) Ltd.

He is a Fellow Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants - FCMA (UK), CGMA and a Senior Fellow Member (FIBs) of the Institute of Bankers of Sri Lanka. He holds an MBA from the Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and B.Sc. from the same University. He is also a Post Graduate Diploma Holder in Computer System Design from the National Institute of Business Management. He successfully completed the High Potential Leadership Programme at the Harvard Business School, Boston, USA, in 2016.

His strong strategic focus, ability to develop people and drive them towards sustained results have led NDB to be recognized as the Best Bank in Sri Lanka in numerous occasions at prestigious local and international awards. Dimantha is also the recipient of multiple accolades as the Best Banking CEO as adjudged by a number of international and local awards programmes.

He is a strong proponent of digitization in financial services, financing renewable and clean energy generation, financial inclusion, women empowerment and environmental sustainability.

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Mr. Shalin Balasuriya

Co-Founder
Spa Ceylon

Shalin is the co-founder of Spa Ceylon, Sri Lanka's leading luxury lifestyle brand, which launched in 2009, and has since witnessed exponential growth both locally and internationally. The brand that repositioned Ayurveda is now the largest Luxury Ayurveda brand in the world, with over 106 locations in 27 countries.

Under the leadership of Shalin and co-founder Shiwantha Dias, the brand continues to do exceedingly well and is recognized with several awards for its extensive product range and signature spa concept.

Shalin also serves as a group director and the head of marketing for the Janet group of companies and oversees the marketing operation of several of the largest categories in the Sri Lankan personal care industry, encompassing multiple brand portfolios and market segments.

With over a decade and a half of experience in the personal care industry and the success of his brands both locally and internationally Shalin has been recognized among the forty under 40 most influential professionals in Sri Lanka by the Echelon 40 under 40 Listing and was also awarded as one of the 10 outstanding young Sri Lankans at the TOYP awards in 2017, he was also the recipient of the business today top 30 passionate award and listed as one of the LMD, A list business people of 2018 and also awarded as one of Asia greatest brand leaders in 2019.



Mr. Shamal Gunawardene

Director – Sales and Commercial
Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka Ltd

Shamal Gunawardena is a seasoned marketer with 20+ years of Marketing and Sales management experience in the Food and Beverage industry. Further, he has significant expertise in leadership roles with 11 years of Country Leadership level reporting to the Managing Director. Shamal has served as both Director Sales and Commercial and Country Commercial Manager at Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka Ltd. (CCBSL) for 11 years cumulatively. He had previously taken on the roles of Portfolio Band Manager and Channel Development Manager at CCBSL. Shamal was also the Country Business Manager - Sri Lanka and Maldives at Cadbury Plc. and Brand Manager for the Pizza Hut and Delifrance Chain in Sri Lanka. Shamal is a Certified Management Accountant and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) together with a Master's degree in Business Administration and Management from the University of Wales.

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Mr. Murali Prakash

President

Sri Lanka Retailers' Association

Mr. Murali Prakash is currently the Managing Director of Ashnip Global Pvt Ltd, Sri Lanka and Smaay Global Pty Ltd, Australia, engaged in business consultancy with a core focus on business transformations, strategic restructuring, corporate / brand repositioning, building agile action and Leadership transformational action.

He also serves as a Non-Executive Director on the Boards of several private and public quoted companies

With over three decades of experience handling key management positions, some of his core areas of exposure and expertise are in general management, strategic restructuring, mergers & acquisitions, corporate repositioning, change management, technology realignment, investments/credit management, manufacturing, marketing/sales, retail, and business consultancy. Some of his previous roles include serving as Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Ambeon Holdings PLC/Ambeon Capital PLC, Executive Director of Laugfs Holdings Group, Group Managing Director/CEO of Browns Group of Companies, Chairman of Galoya Holdings (Pvt) Ltd and Sales Director of Singer (Sri Lanka) PLC. He has also served on the Boards of Singer Group, Browns Group, Ambeon Group, Laugfs Group of companies, and several other public and private companies.

Murali holds an MBA from the University of Southern Queensland Australia and is a Certified Professional Marketer (Asia Pacific), a Certified Management Accountant (Australia), and a Chartered Manager (CMI- UK). He is an Alumnus of the National University of Singapore and the Asian Institute of Management, Manila. He is also a Companion Member of the Chartered Management Institute (UK) and a Fellow of Certified Management Accountants (Australia) and Chartered Professional Managers, Sri Lanka. He is the current President of the Sri Lanka Retailers Association and Past President of CMI(UK), CMA(Australia) Sri Lanka branch and The Management Club Sri Lanka.

He was awarded 'outstanding entrepreneur for 2012' under the Asia-Pacific entrepreneurship awards by Enterprise Asia, Malaysia, with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce as the Event Manager. Was also recognised by LMD as one of the top 100 business and professional personalities under the hall of fame A-team corporate captains during two consecutive years: 2019 and 2020,

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