

IPS' Monthly Bulletin brings to you our work across an array of research themes. In this issue, we feature articles from our researchers on the themes of health and agriculture. We're pleased to share that an article written by IPS Research Fellow, Dr. Manoj Thibbotuwawa for Development Asia (DevAsia), the Asian Development Bank's knowledge collaboration platform on 'Why the Transition to Smart Farming Is Critical in Sri Lanka' is currently featured under Trending Topics on DevAsia's homepage. In this article, Dr. Thibbotuwawa cogently argues that Sri Lanka must continue to develop and adapt technological innovations for the agriculture sector to become a more productive contributor to the national economy.

We also have details of our recent webinar on challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic in apparel supplying countries organised in collaboration with CPD, Bangladesh and Southern Voice. IPS' Research Economist, Kithmina Hewage made the keynote presentation at this event alongside Research Director, CPD, Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem. This issue's 'Inside IPS' segment features Research Officer Chathurga Karunanayake who will be migrating overseas in June. IPS thanks Chathurga for her stellar contributions and wishes her the best of luck! As always, we hope you find this issue insightful and welcome your feedback to make our content even more engaging.

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Inside IPS



Special interview featuring:

Chathurga Karunanayake

Research Officer at IPS working on behavioural economics, labour economics, infrastructure development and regulatory governance

Q: Tell us about yourself and your role at IPS:

I conduct research in multidisciplinary areas such as behavioural, health and labour economics, and provide evidence-based solutions to socio-economic issues. This entails analysing problems, making forecasts, and working closely with national and international experts in the field. The main purpose of my work is to create better social and economic conditions for all Sri Lankans.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work?

On any given day, I wear many hats: researcher, mathematician, writer, listener, and advisor, and with each role, I learn something new. Being able to influence the policymaking process through evidence-based research is intrinsically satisfying.

Q: What drew you into the field of economics?

As a child, I was curious about how an economy worked. As I grew older, I realised that economics plays a part in almost every aspect of our life, impacting even day-to-day decisions. My parents also strongly encouraged me to pursue a career in this field as they could see it was close to my heart.

Q: What is your advice to someone who is looking at a career in economics?

You need to be a good reader, an independent thinker and to a sense of curiosity. In addition, developing your analytical and writing skills together with your number-crunching and networking abilities will be beneficial. This requires consistent practice and perseverance!

Q: What are you currently researching?

I am working on tobacco control policies, repositioning social protection schemes in the private sector during crises, and improving urban public transport in Sri Lanka.

Q: What is the one book you recommend to an aspiring economist?

'Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered' by Economist E. F. Schumacher. This book is more relevant today than it was at the time of publication, as it offers a crucial message for the modern world struggling to balance economic growth with the human costs of globalisation, and modern economics' failure to address human wellbeing and its detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Q: Something your colleagues may not know about you:

I always wanted to be a professional Latin American Dancer!

Event



Webinar – Recovery of the Apparel Sectors of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka from the COVID-19 Crisis

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh and the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS), in partnership with Southern Voice, hosted a webinar on 20 April 2021 focused on solutions to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has created in apparel supplying countries, in particular Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Introductory remarks were made by Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, CPD and a joint keynote presentation was delivered by Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, CPD, and Mr. Kithmina Hewage, Research Economist, IPS.

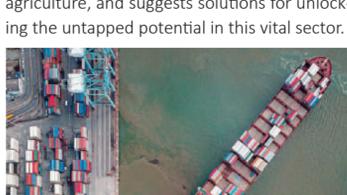
This webinar was an opportunity for the global apparel value chain's key stakeholders, particularly those based in Europe, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to provide insights into how to implement solutions for the recovery of the apparel sector.

[See more >>>](#)

Bridging the Gap: Unlocking Untapped Potential in Sri Lanka's Agricultural Exports

By Nimesha Dissanayake

Before the 1970s, agriculture exports accounted for more than 75% of Sri Lanka's total exports while industrial exports were around 15%. But since the liberalisation of the economy in the late 1970s, industrial exports have grown more rapidly than agriculture exports. In 2019, export earnings from agriculture accounted for USD 2,523 million equivalent to just 15.9% of total export earnings. This blog highlights gaps in the international market which the agriculture sector can target, identifies factors impeding export-sector growth in agriculture, and suggests solutions for unlocking the untapped potential in this vital sector.



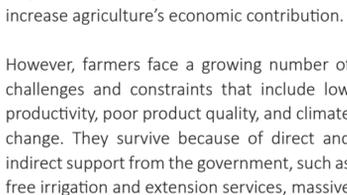
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Why the Transition to Smart Farming Is Critical in Sri Lanka

By Manoj Thibbotuwawa

New blog for Asian Development Bank notes that leveraging technological innovations can help overcome growth constraints and increase agriculture's economic contribution.

However, farmers face a growing number of challenges and constraints that include low productivity, poor product quality, and climate change. They survive because of direct and indirect support from the government, such as free irrigation and extension services, massive fertilizer subsidy, support prices, and ad hoc trade protection measures. The economic costs of these measures reflect the unsustainable and misdirected ways adopted by successive administrations. Sri Lanka must continue to develop and adapt technological innovations for the agriculture sector to become a more productive contributor to the economy.



[See more >>>](#)

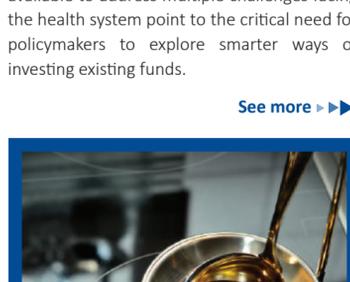


Sri Lanka's Health Financing Challenge: Why Smarter Spending is Key

By Ashani Abayasekara

Across the globe, the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked a new urgency around healthcare systems and universal health coverage – the access to high-quality and affordable healthcare services for all, as and when needed. The limited resources available to address multiple challenges facing the health system point to the critical need for policymakers to explore smarter ways of investing existing funds.

[See more >>>](#)



Palm Oil Ban in Sri Lanka: Is it Sustainable?

By Erandathie Pathiraja

Sri Lanka's edible oil market has garnered considerable attention in recent weeks due to a series of events including the banning of palm oil imports and the detection of aflatoxins in imported coconut oil.

Oils and fats are a major constituent of the typical Sri Lankan diet and a raw material in manufacturing, the food manufacturing industry in particular. According to the latest available data, there are around 5,057 establishments employing 332,828 workers in the formal food manufacturing sector which generate an annual output of approximately LKR 1.4 billion.

[See more >>>](#)

Featured Videos

Webinar on Recovery of the Apparels Sector of Bangladesh & Sri Lanka Is a Value Chain Based Solution Possible?



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Special Event Video on Post-COVID-19 Recovery of the Apparel Sectors in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka



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