



FUN DAY

TIMES



Fun making mud-pies

Pic. by Jayarathna Wickramaarachchi

KIDS'
WORLD

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FAMOUS PEOPLE

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(ONLINE)



EVENT

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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.

All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com

Please write the name of the competition and the date clearly at the top of your entry and include the following details:

Full Name, Date of Birth, Address, Telephone Number and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

Closing date for weekly competitions:

February 12, 2025



In our online issue this week:

- **Page 5** – Event/ Fun Stuff
- **Pages 6 - 7** – Kids News
- **Page 8** – News in Pictures

Please log on to the Funday Times website on www.fundaytimes.lk or check out the Sunday Times epaper on www.sundaytimes.lk for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.

Christmas at Bethlehem – Past, Present, Future

Past

A long time ago in Bethlehem, the Holy Bible says, Mary a God-fearing, faithful and kind young lady was chosen by God. She was married to Joseph and an angel told her that she would be blessed with a baby boy.

During this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken. So they too had to go to their hometown Bethlehem, City of David.

Mary was already pregnant by then. They found it hard to find a place to stay in Bethlehem as the town was immensely crowded. Eventually they ended up in a stable with the cows and donkeys.

This was where the Birth of Baby Jesus took place in a manger. Shepherds and Wise Men came to the stable to pay respects to Baby Jesus. The Wise Men followed a shooting star and they offered Jesus gifts. This is celebrated on December 25, as the day Jesus Christ our Saviour was born.

Present

It was telecast on television that Bethlehem which had once been a busy and crowded city is now destroyed and abandoned due to the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine.

Someone had left a tiny old doll with no proper clothing, in the manger, now a pile of stones, at the very place Jesus was born.

Today, the City of David is sadly deserted. Earlier the city was visited by millions of tourists but not anymore.

What a tragedy, that thousands of innocent children have died due to the ongoing brutal war. This is like a repetition of history, as when Jesus was born, King Herod ordered that every baby boy under two years be killed.

Future

As there is a rising trend of cruelty and wickedness among human beings, this has given rise to conflicts, endless fights and continuous war situations. It isn't clear what will happen in the future.

Christmas, a festive celebration has now become commercialized. But it isn't only about Santa Claus, candy canes, shopping and dancing. While celebrating, we also should acknowledge the true meaning of Christmas which is the kindness we put out into the world, sharing our joy with the poor, sick and needy.

In the upcoming years our Christmas will be brighter, if we share and care for one another and fill the world with peace and not war.

Sheneshi Silva (13 years)
Ladies' College, Colombo

A Chameleon



Thisuli Wanniarachchi (7 years)
St. Joseph's Primary School, NSW, Australia

Pinwheels



Aasiyah Mohammed (10 years)
Belvoir College Int., Colombo 5

A Moonlit Night



Yehara Peiris (Grade 3)
Lyceum Int. School, Nugegoda

My Favourite Sport



Julian De Sylva (8 years)
St. Peter's College, Colombo 4

Celebrating Thai Pongal Festival



Krishmi Fernando (8 years)
Holy Family Convent, Colombo 4

Elephants



Elisse Hayes (6 years)
Queen Ethelburga's College,
York, UK

My pet animal

My pet's name is Lassie.
It is brown in colour. It is very
cute. Lassie plays with me. It likes
to drink milk. It has a long tail.
It can run fast. I love my pet.



Thinula Gamage (Grade 2)
Royal Int. School, Kegalle

My leisure activity

My leisure activity is collecting stamps.
It is a very useful pastime.

I started collecting stamps two years ago.
Now I have collected about 300 stamps.
My father helps me in my hobby. He brings
me stamps. My pen-pal in Japan too sends me
stamps. When I get more than one stamp with
the same picture, I exchange them for new
ones with my friends.

I have two stamp albums. I have pasted all
the stamps in my albums. There are stamps in
different shapes.

We can learn more things about the culture
and history of countries through the stamps.
There are pictures of great persons, animals,
birds, buildings and flags on stamps. I can
spend my leisure well because of my hobby.

Thihama Zacky (11 years)
Muslim B.M.V., Kahatowita

People at work



Heesara Maddumage (Grade 5)
Royal Int. School, Kegalle

Save the Environment



Suganthan Labisashan (7 years)
Harvard Int. School, Matale

My hobby

My hobby is reading books. I think that
books are friends. Books give us knowledge
and happiness. I have lots of books. I have a big
library. There are about 60 books in my library.

Every week, I go to the library and borrow
books. My father always tells me that reading
is a good hobby. I read short stories, novels,
children's stories, newspapers and translations
of English books.

My favourite book is 'Harry Potter'. It is
written by J.K. Rowling. I can improve my
knowledge by reading books. I don't like to
watch TV always. I love my hobby.

Geethavi Saubhagya (11 years)
C.W.W. Kannangara C.C., Matugama

I love to fly kites



Ranaya Abeywickrama (6 years)
Galle Int. College

**Flowers bruised
by the conflict**

From the sparks under the ashes
Flashed intermittently
Iran-Israel, among middle eastern
countries
Burning everyday, burning always
a huge tragedy.....

Little kids like us
May be looking at the sky
Not to enjoy
Collapsing comets, sun, moon and
stars
Afraid of missile attacks

They must have woken up in the
middle of night
Not to study
Afraid of gunfire
Ready to run-away

Hurting little hearts of offspring
Young hearts are crushed
The flowers fade, flowerbuds are
faded
The whole world is crying
filling eyes with tears

I see a wonderful brotherly love
that burns inside everything
Over dead bodies of parents
A strong girl carrying
her younger sister
Kept on her little shoulder

Keep your mind strong
This land doesn't belong to us
So why these conflicts?
For a land we do not own

Big or small, the same red blood
flows in veins
So why this war to this
peaceful and calm world?
I can't understand.....

Thenuri Keerthisena (Grade 9)
Maliyadeva B.V. Kurunegala

Please remember that **ARTICLES, POEMS and PAINTINGS** sent, will not
be published unless they are certified as your own work by a parent or teacher.
Also please mention the topic, your full name, date of birth and address in your
entry. Articles should not exceed 200 words. Art should be on A4 size paper.





A.A. Milne

A.A. Milne was an English writer best known for his children's books based on his character 'Winnie the Pooh.'

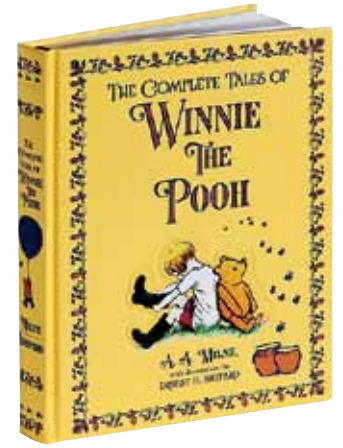
Alan Alexander Milne was born on January 18, 1882, in London, England, to John Vince Milne, a private school headmaster, and Sarah Marie Milne. He had two older brothers.

A.A. Milne was educated at Henley House School, then Westminster School in London, and eventually the University of Cambridge's Trinity College. While at Cambridge, he realized that he wanted to pursue a writing career and began writing for the magazine 'Punch'.

He served in World War I, and after returning to London he met and married Dorothy de Selincourt. They had a son, named Christopher Robin.

Interesting Facts

- One of A.A. Milne's teachers at Henley House School where his father was headmaster was H.G. Wells, the famous author who went on to write 'The War of the Worlds'.
- While at Cambridge, A.A. Milne edited and wrote for 'Granta', the student magazine.
- A.A. Milne played on an English cricket team with two authors who also became famous: Arthur Conan Doyle and J.M. Barrie.
- A.A. Milne became a contributor to 'Punch' magazine after graduating from Cambridge and also became assistant editor.



- While working at 'Punch', A.A. Milne wrote a total of three novels and 18 plays.
- In 1913, A.A. Milne and Dorothy de Selincourt married and had a baby boy in 1920. Christopher Robin Milne would become the inspiration for A.A. Milne's 'Winnie the Pooh' series.
- In 1924, A.A. Milne published a collection of his children's poems titled 'When We Were Very Young'. The poems were illustrated by a cartoonist from 'Punch' magazine.
- In 1925, A.A. Milne moved his family to a country home in Hartfield, East Sussex, named Cotchford Farm.
- A.A. Milne created the character 'Winnie the Pooh' after his son's stuffed bear and a swan. The stuffed bear was originally named Edward, but was renamed after the Canadian black bear Winnie that was left in London's zoo after World War I. The name Pooh came from the swan.
- All the characters in A.A. Milne's 'Winnie the Pooh' books were inspired by toys that his son Christopher Robin played with including Tigger, Roo, Kanga, Eeyore and Piglet.
- The stuffed animals that belonged to Christopher Robin, and which inspired the 'Winnie the Pooh' books, are on display in New York.
- 'Winnie the Pooh' was first published in 1926. In 1928, 'The House at Pooh Corner' was published.
- In 1958, 'Winnie the Pooh' won the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award.
- A.A. Milne published a variety of works including novels, non-fiction, magazine articles, short story collections for children and adults, poems, poetry collections and many plays and screenplays.
- A.A. Milne died on January 31, 1956, at the age of 74. In 1952, he had suffered from a stroke, and brain surgery had left him an invalid up until the time of his death.
- The rights to the 'Winnie the Pooh' book characters were eventually sold to Walt Disney Company and 'Winnie the Pooh' went on to become one of their most valuable, fictional characters. By 2005, 'Winnie the Pooh' had generated more than \$6 billion in that year alone.



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FROM THE EDITOR

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.

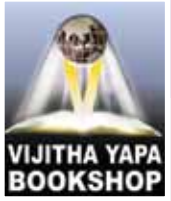


Or

fundaytimes1@gmail.com



Students got a first-hand experience of Tamil culture and Hindu religious beliefs as Vidura College, Kurunegala City Unit held Thai Pongal Festival celebrations on January 16, 2025.



Read-a-Book and win a voucher from Vijitha Yapa Bookshop

Read any book of your choice and write briefly about it.

What we want is not just a summary of the story but your views on the book.

The best account in the three age groups will be awarded book vouchers of

Rs. 500 each from Vijitha Yapa Bookshop. Three winners will be selected each month.

Your account should not exceed 200 words.

Please indicate word count, fill in the coupon and attach it to your entry.

Read-a-Book Competition

Name :

.....

Date of birth :

.....

Address :

.....

.....

.....

School:

Tel:

Finished book on :

.....

.....

FUNDAY TIMES 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 Coupon

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

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Telephone:

School:

Parent's approval: **Date:**

.....

Young Reporters who have already enrolled with us, please send in new reports for publication.



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Trump takes office, signs orders

January 21, 2025

Donald Trump, a Republican, was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States of America on January 20, 2025. He returned to the White House after being voted out four years ago. Trump's inauguration marks a huge change in US politics and leadership after four years with Democrat Joe Biden as president.

Because of cold weather, the swearing-in ceremony took place inside the US Capitol Building. It's the first time that has happened in 40 years. Usually, there is a parade after a president is inaugurated, but that was changed to an indoor celebration as well.

Once Biden's term as president had ended at noon, J. D. Vance was sworn in as vice president. After that, Trump took the oath of office. He was sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts.

The inauguration marks a big comeback for Trump, who first served as president from 2017 to 2021. The event is also historic, since Trump is the first president ever elected who has been found guilty of a crime.

In a speech after the inauguration, Trump said, "the golden age of America begins right now." He promised to "completely and totally reverse" the actions Biden has taken over the last four years.

Trump says one of his main goals is to stop people from coming into the country illegally. He says he plans to send soldiers to the US border with Mexico.



Donald Trump delivers a speech after being sworn in.

Another focus is to encourage oil and gas companies to produce more fossil fuels. He has also said that he will cut back on government programs meant to promote fairness and equal opportunities.

Trump said he wanted to work for peace and bring people together.

But some of Trump's planned actions are likely to upset some people. Trump says that he wants to expand the US's territory. He says that this includes taking the Panama Canal away from Panama.

In a sign that Trump plans to work closely with big businesses, several billionaires – and the leaders of some of the world's largest tech companies – sat near Trump's family during the inauguration ceremony.

One of them was Elon Musk. Musk is the world's richest man, and strongly supported Trump during the election. Musk, who owns SpaceX and several other companies, cheered when Trump announced that he



Vance and Trump during the ceremony.

hoped to send American astronauts to Mars.

Later in the day, Trump signed several "executive orders". These aren't the same as laws, but can still cause major changes.

In one of these orders, Trump once again took the US out of the Paris Agreement – an agreement between the world's countries to work together to fight the climate crisis.

After losing the 2020 election to Joe Biden, Trump refused to accept the election results. He told his supporters to march on the US Capitol. The result was a violent attack, which left five people dead. Since then, many of those who attacked the Capitol have been put in jail. Yesterday, Mr. Trump pardoned around 1,500 of these people, releasing them from jail.



Trump shows an executive order he has signed to a crowd of his supporters.

Source: NewsForKids

Israel-Hamas ceasefire ends fighting in Gaza

January 20, 2025

Israel and Hamas have agreed to a ceasefire, bringing a temporary end to the fighting between the two sides.

The ceasefire began on Sunday, January 19, and will last for six weeks. As part of the ceasefire, Hamas will release Israeli hostages, and Israel will release Palestinian prisoners.

The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is a big step toward peace for the two groups, which have been at war for 15 months. The fighting began after Hamas brutally attacked Israel on October 7, 2022, killing about 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages.

Israel sent soldiers into Gaza and has continued to pound the area with bombs since the war began. Close to 70% of Gaza's buildings have been destroyed, and over 46,000 people in Gaza have been killed, many of them civilians.

There have been many efforts to stop the fighting. But this time, with the help of diplomats from the United States, Egypt and Qatar, the two sides reached an agreement that seems to be working.

The agreement has three separate stages. The six-week ceasefire is the first stage. During this stage, Hamas has agreed to let 33 Israeli hostages go. This will include all women and children, as well as men older than 50. In exchange for each hostage, Israel will release between 30 – 50 of the Palestinians they have been holding prisoner.

On Sunday, Hamas released the first three women, who were taken to safety in Israel. In exchange, Israel later released 90 Palestinians that it had been holding, including 69 women and 21 teenage boys.



A view of the area near one of the camps in Gaza for people forced from their homes.



People in Gaza City walking toward their homes on Sunday.



People gathered in Tel Aviv, Israel react as they learn that the first Israeli hostages have been released.

Another important part of the first stage is for Israel to remove its soldiers from areas where people live in Gaza. Roughly 90% of Gaza's people have been forced from their homes. This will allow them to return.

The first stage of the deal also requires Israel to allow more aid – at least 600 supply trucks a day – to come into Gaza.

If the ceasefire continues to work, the two sides will begin to discuss the second stage. The goal of this stage is to end the war permanently. All of the people taken hostage by Hamas will be released, and Israel will release roughly 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israel must also remove all of its soldiers from Gaza.

The final step will include rebuilding Gaza. This will be a huge challenge. Because so much of the area has been destroyed by Israel's attacks, the effort could take years.

Perhaps an equally big challenge for the third stage is to reach an agreement on who will be in charge of Gaza. Israel has already said that Hamas can't lead Gaza. Israel has also said "No" to the Palestinian Authority, which was in charge of Gaza until Hamas took control.

Both Israelis and Palestinians are happy a ceasefire has been reached. Gaza is experiencing calm and quiet for the first time in a long time.

But the ceasefire is just the first step toward peace. There are many problems still to be solved, and despite the progress, the deal could still break down.



Aid trucks drive through southern Gaza on Sunday.

Source: NewsForKids

January 21

News in Pictures



Spišská Nová Ves, Slovakia
A woman and her two children explore the Siklava Skala icefall.



Gran Canaria, Spain
Spain's Princess Leonor of Borbon (centre) arrives in port Gran Canaria onboard the Juan Sebastián Elcano training ship.

January 20



Dublin, Ireland
Children from the Hill Street family resource centre, Kate Wang, Kai Xin Zheng, Ayla Zheng and Leo Yi Ye, chat while dressed in the traditional clothing of the Miao ethnic group of China to welcome the Year of the Snake.

Piedras Negras, Mexico
Asylum seekers look out of the window of a migrant shelter after receiving emails from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), informing them that their appointments with CBP were cancelled.



Delhi, India
India's Border Security Force 'Daredevils' motorcycle riders perform during a rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day parade.



Nansha, China
Colourful lantern displays are illuminated for the 2025 Greater Bay Area Lantern Festival.



San Sebastián, Spain
Participants in the Tamborrada Festival play their drums. About 22,700 adults and 4,600 children took part in the festivities, which take place every year on January 20 to honour the town's patron, Saint Sebastian.



Damascus, Syria
An aerial view of the destroyed statue of Syria's former president Hafez al-Assad, the father of Bashar al-Assad, the leader of the 61-year Baath regime that has collapsed in Syria, in Deir Atiye.



Tokyo, Japan
An immersive digital artwork at the teamLab Planets Tokyo Museum.

Source: The Guardian