



FUN DAY TIMES



Clowning around

Pic. by Akila Jayawardena



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COMPETITIONS
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(ONLINE)



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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:

March 19, 2025

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com



Sussex College, Kirbathgoda held their annual concert recently.



Pix by Akila Jayawardena

In our online issue this week:

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- **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.

Discover the Magic of Montessori at KinderCare



On February 22 and 23, KinderCare AMI Montessori House of Children, located at No. 26, Elibank Road, Colombo 5, hosted a special Open Day for parents to experience the Montessori Method first-hand.

KinderCare provides a nurturing learning environment for children aged 2½ - 6 years, with mixed-age classrooms that encourage peer learning, leadership and independence.

During the event, parents explored the Montessori curriculum, guided by certified AMI Montessori teachers. They witnessed children confidently engaging in Practical Life exercises, Sensorial activities, Arithmetic, Language and Culture, developing essential life skills through hands-on learning.

Visit: www.kindercaresl.com

Pix by Priyanka Samaraweera



“I don’t like that animal!”

By Manoshi De Silva

“A crocodile!” Sadhini’s little brother shouted, looking out of the window. Sadhini stopped what she was doing and ran near the window.

“Where? Where?” she looked around, but all she could see was Rosy their cat, snarling and hissing angrily at something hidden in the tall grass.

When Sadhini looked more carefully, she too saw an animal that looked like a crocodile!

“A crocodile is trying to eat Rosy!” she screamed. Their grandmother, who was there, also hurried to the window. “Oh no,” she shouted and ran outside, shooing it away while keeping her distance.

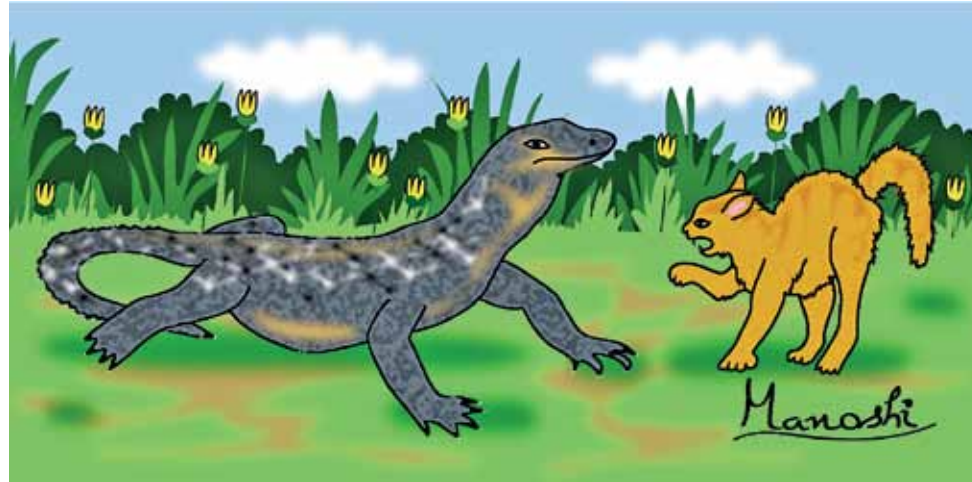
Sadhini also came out holding her little brother’s hand tight. But she was careful not to go anywhere near it. Their grandmother clapped and made loud noises and chased the animal away. Watching it slowly crawl away, towards their fence, Sadhini took a stone to throw at it.

“No! No! Stop, don’t hit it!” shouted their grandmother and the girl dropped the stone to the ground.

“But the crocodile might come back,” said Sadhini. “It’s not a crocodile. It’s a water monitor lizard. It must have wandered into our garden from the nearby paddy field,” said Sadhini’s grandmother, who picked up Rosy, their cat.

“But why did it come here? Will it bite us?” asked Sadhini, watching the water monitor crawl out, through their fence. “No, they don’t bite us,” said Sadhini’s grandmother, “But we must be aware of their long tails! They sometimes hit with their tails and there are sharp spikes on it. And those can cause injury and hurt us!”

“I wonder if it will be back,” said Sadhini, following her grandmother back inside their house with her little brother. “If it comes again, it might eat Rosy’s babies in the garden shed. We’ll have to bring the kittens in and keep them safely inside the house till they get bigger,” said Sadhini’s grandmother, walking near the door again.



“Oh no, Achchi!” shouted Sadhini feeling very scared and angry at the same time. “I didn’t know they eat small animals. Then why didn’t you let me hit it and teach it a good lesson, so that it never comes back this way again?”

“I’ll tell you why, after I bring the kittens inside the house,” said the children’s grandmother, walking back into their garden shed.

After arranging a place inside their house for the kittens, their grandmother came near Sadhini, who was still very upset. “I can’t believe that you didn’t let me hit that water monitor!” she said angrily. “Now tell me, why do you want to hit it?” asked Sadhini’s grandmother.

“Because it eats other animals and also because it’s very ugly!” replied Sadhini.

“So, do you think that only good looking animals should live on this planet and that ugly animals like the water monitor and crows shouldn’t be here?” asked Sadhini’s grandmother, looking surprised. “Yes, I don’t like them!” replied Sadhini frowning. “This world would be beautiful with nice looking animals, like our Rosy!”

“Well, animals like the water monitors and crows are scavengers. They eat the decaying flesh of dead animals and also certain types of rubbish and by doing that they provide benefits to the ecosystem. You see, they remove germ causing, infectious things and clean our surroundings.” “Ew!” said Sadhini wrinkling her nose, “but I guess that’s important to our environment!”

“Of course,” agreed her grandmother. “But that’s not all. Because they also feed on small animals, water monitors and other big lizards control the population of serpents and certain pests.

So not only do they keep our environment clean, but they also balance the ecosystem. They are especially important to the wetlands like marshes and paddy fields!”

Sadhini thought for awhile. “Well, it sounds like they are very important after all!” she said shrugging her shoulders.

“Of course, scavengers are an essential part of our ecosystem. If they are not here, the population of pests will grow. And that will lead to the spread of many diseases. We should understand the importance of all animals and remember that this world also belongs to them, whether they are nice looking or not!” said Sadhini’s grandmother.

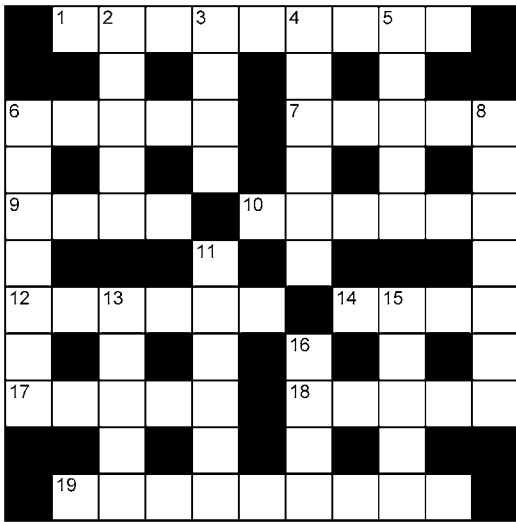
Sadhini nodded her head in agreement. “I didn’t like them because they are ugly. But now I understand their importance to our environment!”

Sadhini’s grandmother smiled and said, “We must also remember that we have no right to hurt or kill any animal unnecessarily. We are humans and we are much more intelligent than animals, because we know what is right and wrong. So we must act responsibly!”

“It is our duty to protect all animals and not to interfere with nature and cause harm to the ecosystem. So we should protect ourselves and our pets from animals like the water monitor. But that doesn’t mean that we should hurt and harm animals unnecessarily, just because they look ugly,” explained Sadhini’s grandmother.

“Wow! I never realized that scavengers are this important to the environment!” said Sadhini. “I am going to write an essay about the importance of them and share it at school. I am sure that most of my friends don’t know about this too, as they also don’t like ugly looking animals. I am going to create awareness about the importance of animals like them to our environment!”

LUMALA Crossword – No. 7



Across

- 1 Dirtying of the environment
- 6 There are 52 of these in a year
- 7 Lift up
- 9 Small hotels
- 10 Fair-haired woman
- 12 From Germany
- 14 Small round mark
- 17 A large bird of prey
- 18 Rubbed with a cloth
- 19 People not known to you

Down

- 2 Sea
- 3 Final
- 4 An animal with a shell
- 5 A smelly vegetable
- 6 Twist and squirm about
- 8 Voted into power
- 11 Take photos with this
- 13 Correct
- 15 Write on this
- 16 A small branch

Solution No. 6



Yhogeeshaan Mohan,
Kandy

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. 7, 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. 7**' seen at the top of the page and paste it on your entry.

Age Group: 8 – 15 years

Closing Date: March 31, 2025



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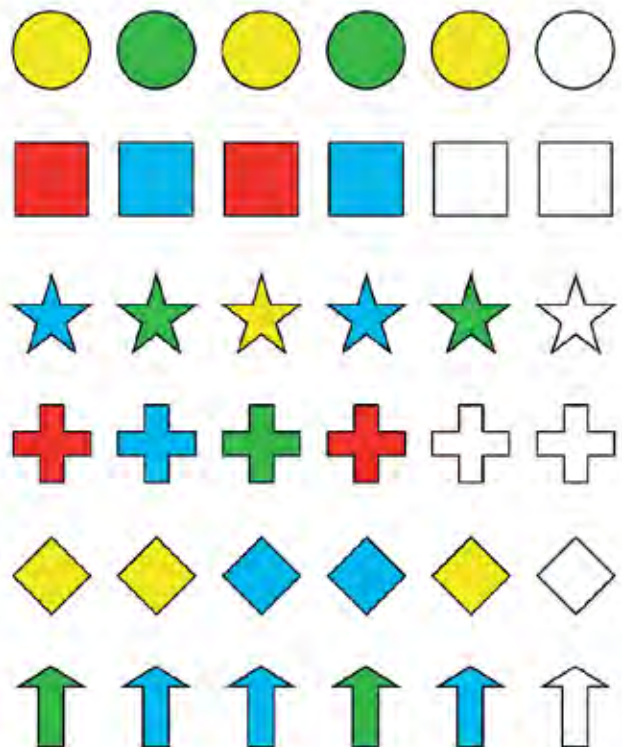
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4 – 6 AGE GROUP

Colour the blank shapes to continue the pattern.



4 – 6 years



- ▶ Azmat Thanish, Colombo 3
- ▶ Fathima Zeeva, Dehiwala
- ▶ Haashit Mishriff, Rajagiriya
- ▶ Faliha Juhar, Colombo 2
- ▶ Habeeba Hussain, Dehiwala

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

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World Wildlife Day 2025

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

World Wildlife Day (WWD) is observed annually on March 3, to celebrate the world's wild fauna and flora and raise awareness about their importance to humans and the issues they face.

Background

March 3 was declared as World Wildlife Day at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), because it is the day that the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** was signed in 1973.

CITES is an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the species' survival.

Currently, CITES is responsible for providing protection (of varying degrees) to over 40,000 species of animals and plants, regardless of whether they are traded as live specimens, fur coats or dried herbs.



How important is wildlife to humans?

Every human on the planet directly or indirectly depends on wild species to meet their needs through their uses for food, energy, medicine and material. In addition, more than 50% of the world's GDP depends on nature.

Living Planet Report 2024

The World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet Report assesses the scale of the loss of nature across the world, based on population trends of 5,495 species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. These are some of the 2024 report's key findings:

- The average size of monitored wildlife populations has declined by an average of 73% in just 50 years (1970-2020).
- The greatest decline has been for freshwater species, at 85%.
- The greatest regional loss has been to Latin America and the Caribbean (95%).
- The most widely reported threats to wildlife populations are habitat loss and degradation, overexploitation, invasive species and disease, primarily due to our food and energy systems.



African Forest Elephant (78-81% decline in population)



Chinstrap Penguin (61% decline in population)



Amazon River Dolphin (65% decline in population)



Hawksbill Turtle (57% decline in population)

WWD 2025 Theme

The theme for WWD 2025 is 'Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet', to raise awareness about the need to finance wildlife conservation in a more effective and sustainable manner.

Currently, government's financial flows are not sufficient to meet the national biodiversity targets, especially in low-to-middle-income countries which are home to biodiversity hotspots.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity has reinvigorated efforts to reverse the loss of biodiversity. Consequently, interest in innovative financial solutions is growing. Some examples include Debt-for-Nature swaps (which involve converting national debts into conservation funds), Wildlife Conservation Bonds (which are aimed at attracting private investment for wildlife protection), and payments for ecosystem services (PES), such as wildlife credits (which create income for landowners and communities who are responsible for managing wildlife resources).



WWD Poster Design: Marc Petrelis

Sources: un.org / wildlifeday.org / cites.org / livingplanet.panda.org

Seahorse

Seahorses are tiny fish that are named for the shape of their head, which looks like the head of a tiny horse. There are at least 50 species of seahorses.

You'll find seahorses in the world's tropical and temperate coastal waters, swimming upright among seaweed and other plants

Seahorses use their dorsal fins (back fins) to propel slowly forward.

To move up and down, seahorses adjust the volume of air in their swim bladders, which is an air pocket inside their bodies.

Tiny, spiny plates cover seahorses' bodies all the way down to their curled, flexible tails. The tail can grasp objects, helpful when seahorses want to anchor themselves to vegetation.

A female seahorse lays dozens, sometimes hundreds, of eggs in a pouch on the male seahorse's abdomen. After seahorse moms make their eggs, they pass them over to the males to carry until the young are released.

When it's time to give birth, the dad pumps water through the pouch, releasing hundreds of 'fry', or baby seahorses, in just a few minutes. Called a brood pouch, it resembles a kangaroo's pouch for carrying young. Seahorses young hatch after up to 45 days in the brood pouch.

The baby seahorses, each about the size of a jelly bean, find other baby seahorses and float together in small groups, clinging to each other using their tails. Unlike kangaroos, baby seahorses do not return to the pouch. They must find food and hide from predators as soon as they're born.



COMMON NAME: Seahorse

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Hippocampus*

TYPE: Fish

DIET: Carnivore

GROUP NAME: Herd

AVERAGE LIFE SPAN

IN THE WILD: 1 to 5 years

SIZE: Body: 0.6 to 14 inches



Fun Facts

- Seahorses use their tube-shaped snouts like powerful vacuums to scoop up hundreds of tiny meals in a single day. These fish don't have true stomachs, just a digestive tube, so they need to eat all day to get their nutrients.
- There are about 50 species of seahorses, ranging in size from 0.6 inches to 14 inches. One seahorse species is the size of a grain of rice...
- Seahorses can move their eyes independently of each other!
- Seahorses can change their colour to match the corals and plants that their tails wrap around.



Source: National Geographic Kids

World Nature Photography Awards 2025

February 24, 2025

The winners of the World Nature Photography Awards 2025 have been revealed, and the photos are truly out of this world. There was some tough competition this year, with thousands of entries from 48 countries across six different continents.



The overall winner was Maruša Puhek's ▲ beautiful black and white photo of two deer running through a vineyard blanketed in snow in Slovenia.



The blue-spotted mudskipper is also known as *Boleophthalmus pectinirostris* and the one above was photographed leaping out of the water in Australia.



This blue-tailed damselfly was snapped while it perched on a daisy in Cotswold Water Park in Gloucestershire. The bright yellow background really makes the insect's huge green eyes pop.



This great grey owl looks truly majestic. Photographed in California as it flew past a big red car, the bird looks incredibly relaxed as it soars through the air.



This black and white photograph taken in Tanzania shows a tiny reptile getting up close and personal with a huge sleeping lion!



This brightly coloured guinea fowl is certainly not camera shy. It was photographed close up in Tanzania. The birds, which are native to Africa, are known for their dark grey feathers and the white spots that cover their bodies.



These little creatures, known as paper nautilus, are actually a type of octopus. This image was taken in the Philippines. Female and male paper nautilus can look quite different. In fact, females can be eight times as big and up to 600 times heavier than males.



This sea turtle looks like it's having a brilliant time gracefully gliding through the waters in Egypt.



This huge polar bear swimming through the cold water, was photographed in Finland. Polar bears have a high percentage of body fat which helps keep them warm in the super cold conditions.



This adorable baby fox was snapped as it took a giant leap in Alberta, Canada.

Source: CBBC Newsround

February 25

News in Pictures



Prayagraj, India
A child dressed as Hindu deity Shiva asks for alms on the eve of the annual Maha Shivaratri Festival.



Bangkok, Thailand
Visitors view digital art installations inspired by the 1940s book 'The Little Prince' by the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.



Paris, France
The Eiffel Tower is lit up in blue and yellow, the national colours of Ukraine, to mark the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Vatican
Faithful gather at St. Peter's Basilica to pray for Pope Francis, who remains critically ill with pneumonia, at Gemelli Hospital.



February 24

California, USA
Jane Fonda (left) and Demi Moore at the 31st Screen Actors Guild (SAG) awards in Los Angeles. Moore won the award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role for her role in 'The Substance', while Fonda was presented with the Lifetime Achievement award.



Kathmandu, Nepal
A Buddhist monk performs a traditional dance as part of rituals to celebrate the Sherpa community's New Year.



Kyiv, Ukraine
European leaders attending the international summit on the support of Ukraine.



Gaza City, Gaza
Palestinians queue to purchase bread outside a bakery in Gaza City.

Catania, Italy
Mount Etna has become active again after a brief period of apparent calm. A fracture located at approximately 3,000 metres (9,800 feet) above sea level, at the base of the Bocca Nuova crater, has once again started feeding a vigorous lava flow that is slowly advancing along the volcano's south-western flank.



Sources: The Guardian & Reuters