

UPDATE JUNE 2022



Current social/economic crisis in Sri Lanka

People across Sri Lanka are struggling to get hold of daily essentials as the country faces its worst economic crisis in decades. Sri Lanka is mired in public debt after revenue from tourism evaporated in the wake of the corona-virus pandemic. With the country's foreign currency reserves dwindling and foreign debt payments around the corner, it can barely pay for imports of staple foods, fuel and medicines.

Acute shortage of essential items, including food, medicines and fuel- many of which are being rationed - has turned Sri Lankans' daily lives into an endless cycle of waiting in lines. Due to power cuts, accessibility to drinkable water, emergency health services are seriously restricted. The government has approached international and national agencies including WHO, Sri Lankan Red Cross, and World Vision for drugs and medical equipment supplies.

The deepening debt emergency is touching nearly every facet of daily life in Sri Lanka. The ruling party-led coalition government's decision to devalue the rupee while imposing strict limits on imports has pushed up prices of many key items. Authorities have imposed power cuts. Bakeries have shut down due to a lack of cooking gas. Education authorities recently called off exams indefinitely for school students after printing paper ran out.

A recent \$1bn credit line from India to buy food and medicine – part of \$2.4bn in assistance from Sri Lanka's neighbor since January – has given ruling party a little breathing space. But Sri Lanka is still well short of the money needed to service about \$4bn in outstanding debt this year. It has only about \$2.3bn in its foreign currency reserves and is now looking to China and the International Monetary Fund for additional help.

The current government led by Rajapaksa family has done little to placate critics, and they remain under pressure from thousands of protesters supported by the opposition, United People's Force. Tens of thousands of people joined one demonstration in the capital Colombo, with many demanding that the president resign.

ISURU and the progress of Extension Building

Non-essential petrol and diesel sales have been halted for two weeks again in Sri Lanka.

Only 10% of the public transportation is in service due to the fuel crisis. Fortunately, all the ISURU kids live in walking distance of the school so we can stay open and teach till the summer holidays.

The work on the extension building finally is making good progress despite a big shortage in materials. All the brick work has been finished up to roof level. Floor concrete and wall plastering starts this Friday 1 July. Roof timber and windows are getting ready at the carpenter shop.

We had to make our own bricks at the school due to the cement shortage in the country. We have replaced more than 3700+ new bricks and rest is being made at the school.

We hope to finish by August 2022 but will keep you updated if the situation changes again in Sri Lanka.

Our thoughts are with all our kids, staff and friends in Sri Lanka!

Mr. Krishantha
Mirjam Gelink
On behalf of Isuru Preschool

Talpe/Amsterdam 30 June 2022