



# Let's Unite to Preserve the Earth

## Presidential Environment Awards - 2024 Award Ceremony Today

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"The Earth is our mother. Whatever good or bad happens to the motherland also belongs to the children living there. When humans harm the Earth, they are essentially harming themselves. The Earth does not belong to man, but man belongs to the Earth," is a renowned declaration by Chief Seattle of the Red Indians that I have quoted. Only those who understand the value of a gem can truly appreciate it. Similarly, to understand the value of anything, one must have knowledge about it. Chief Seattle, possessing environmental literacy, made a timeless declaration about the importance of the environment.

We have transitioned from the hunting era, the agrarian era, the industrial era, to the information technology era. We must acknowledge that environmental safety has been significantly challenged since the advent of the industrial era. As a result, we now understand the impacts on humans due to environmental degradation. Therefore, the concept of development that we pursued in the past has now appropriately evolved into sustainable development. In this context, we are now compelled to consider the environment in every action we take, not effortlessly but by collectively enacting laws, regulations, conventions, and declarations worldwide. As a result of this process, institutions dedicated to environmental preservation have been established in our country as well. With the implementation of an open economic policy since 1977, numerous industries emerged, necessitating the regulation of potential environmental pollution from these industries. Consequently, the Central Environmental Authority was established as the premier environmental regulatory body in our country.

With the vision of "A clean and green environment through excellent service," the Central Environmental Authority has been operating for over four decades as the principal environmental regulatory institution in Sri Lanka. Its mission is "To be the forerunner in conserving and managing the quality of the environment through proper coordination, promotion, public participation, legal enforcement, appropriate technological interventions, and environmental education and awareness." Established on August 12, 1981, through the National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980, the Central Environmental Authority has made significant contributions to environmental conservation in Sri Lanka. Considering contemporary needs, the Authority is currently working on amending the National Environmental Act to further strengthen legal frameworks for ensuring environmental safety in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the Authority takes necessary steps to update national and international



Central Environmental Authority Chairman  
Venura Fernando



Central Environmental Authority Director General  
P. B. Hemantha Jayasinghe

policies, conventions, and agreements to ensure ongoing environmental protection.

### Presidential Environment Awards Ceremony

The "Presidential Environment Awards" is a major social-centered program implemented by the Central Environmental Authority, recognizing various efforts in environmental conservation. It aims to honor and facilitate the industries, businesses, institutions, and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to environmental conservation; to foster an environmentally friendly culture in industries and services; to encourage society towards sustainable practices; and to promote public participation in sustainable development. The "Presidential Environment Awards" for 2024 is organized as a special event in conjunction with the "World Environment Day" celebrations on June 5, 2024.

#### History

Originally started as the "National Green Awards" in 2011, this program has been known as the "Presidential Environment Awards" since 2016. The program was initiated to motivate industries and service providers to operate under best conditions to minimize environmental pollution and to recognize those committed to creating a green and clean environment. Over time, it has brought significant pride to Sri Lankan industrialists, government and non-governmental institutions, schools, and media personnel by honoring their contributions to environmental conservation.

#### Competition Categories

For the "Presidential Environment Awards - 2024," applicants had the opportunity to apply under two main categories: "Industry, Business, and Project Sector" and "Institutional, Media, and Social Sector." The "Industry, Business, and Project Sector" consists of 16 subcategories, including:

- Solid Waste Recycling/Processing/Disposal Industries
- Chemical Production Industries
- Vehicle Service Stations
- Food and Beverage Production Industries
- Hotels
- Textile Processing Industries

- Pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Production Industries
- Health Facilities
- Rubber-based Production Industries
- Livestock Farms
- Garment Production Industries
- Tea Factories
- Printing and Packaging Production Industries
- Mineral-based Production Industries
- Renewable Energy Production Projects (Small-scale Hydro Projects/Solar Projects/Wind Power Projects)
- Solid Waste Management Projects by Local Authorities

#### The "Institutional, Media, and Social Sector" includes eight subcategories:

- Schools
- Environmentally Friendly Government Institutions
- Environmentally Friendly Private Institutions
- Individuals with Outstanding Contributions to Environmental Conservation
- National-level NGOs Working on Environmental Conservation and Promotion
- Environmentally Friendly Innovations (Schools/Universities and Tertiary Educational Institutions/Open Sector)
- Media Sector (Individual and Print, Radio, and Television Channels)

#### Evaluation Process

The evaluations for the awards were conducted by experts relevant to each category, and the decisions of the expert committee are final. Participants have the opportunity to win Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Merit Awards at the "Presidential Environment Awards" ceremony. For the "Presidential Environment Awards - 2024" program, applications were accepted from February 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024. A total of 901 applicants representing all competition categories submitted applications, out of which 124 were selected as award winners.

#### Presidential Environment Awards Go Green

All awards presented at the "Presidential Environment Awards - 2024" ceremony, including Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Merit Awards, are made using environmentally friendly recycled materials. These awards are crafted from recycled aluminum cans, demonstrating a commitment to the circular economy by adding value to waste materials and creating new products. This initiative also provides alternative income opportunities for waste collectors and artisans. The awards are created under the guidance of the Central Environmental Authority through the "Melting Point Project" initiated in 2019.

The "Presidential Environment Awards - 2024" ceremony, organized by the Central Environmental Authority with the aim of preserving Sri Lanka's environmental safety, will be held under the patronage of His Excellency President Ranil Wickremesinghe on June 28, 2024, at 10:00 AM at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. The event is expected to be attended by Minister of State for Environment Janaka Wakkumbura, Minister of State for Environment Sadhasivam Viyalanderan, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment Prabhath Chandrakerthi, ambassadors or representatives from countries including China, Egypt, India, the United States, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Iran, Chairman of the Central Environmental Authority Venura Fernando, Director General P. B. Hemantha Jayasinghe, award winners, and many distinguished guests.

We know that our ancestors revered natural elements like the sun, moon, stars, trees, and rocks as gods. They believed that natural disasters were the repercussions of these deities. They understood that if nature was protected, it would, in turn, protect us. However, scientifically, whether these beliefs are true or false, we must accept that the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature has been broken at some point through the ages. This is the era to rebuild that relationship. Therefore, regardless of caste, creed, religion, boundaries, or age, it is our responsibility towards the environment, enhance environmental literacy, and work towards environmental protection.

(Based on a discussion with  
Central Environmental Authority  
Chairman Venura Fernando and  
Director General P. B. Hemantha  
Jayasinghe)



## Congratulations to all on your achievements

### Congratulatory Message



Today, our nation faces the adverse effects of climate change due to increasing environmental destruction. Protecting the environment has become an unavoidable responsibility, one that cannot be postponed any longer. Therefore, the government is committed to developing not only a competitive digital economy aimed at exports but also a green economy that will achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This commitment is reflected in our economic policies. I highly appreciate the annual Presidential Environment Awards ceremony organized by the Central Environmental Authority. This event honours industries, businesses, and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to environmental conservation. As we acknowledge our collective responsibility to foster an environmentally conscious society and achieve sustainable development, I extend my best wishes for the complete success of the "2024 Presidential Environment Awards Ceremony."

Ranil Wickremesinghe  
President  
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

### Message from the State Minister of Environment

There exists an inseparable relationship between humans and the environment, akin to the bond between a tree and its bark. This age-old relationship has faced significant threats since the Industrial Age. We must acknowledge that these threats arise from humans either knowingly or unknowingly disregarding environmental needs while fulfilling their own.

With the introduction of an open economy, various industries began to emerge in our country. Industries are essential for the development of a nation. However, any industry exerts some level of impact on the environment. Modern methods to minimize this impact have been discovered. By honestly employing these methods in our industrial activities, we can minimize environmental damage. This would be a commendable contribution to environmental conservation.

We can all contribute to environmental conservation not only as groups but also as individuals. Currently, the world is paying increased attention to climate change. We, too, signed the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2016. At such a critical juncture, it is essential to focus on this issue. By planting a tree in a suitable location and nurturing it until it can grow independently, we can help increase Sri Lanka's forest cover and reduce climate change. Moreover, we can easily become active participants in environmental conservation by minimizing the use of polythene and plastic and adhering to the related regulations.

As the principal environmental regulatory body in our country, the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) plays a significant role in properly fulfilling the task of environmental conservation through various initiatives. Another commendable step is recognizing individuals from various sectors, including industrialists and committed environmental journalists, for their contributions to environmental conservation. This recognition encourages their continued dedication to the cause. I extend my gratitude to the CEA for this initiative and offer my heartfelt congratulations to all who applied and won at the Presidential Environment Awards, contributing positively to environmental conservation from their respective fields.

Janaka Wakkumbura  
State Minister of Environment

### Message from the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment



As the Ministry of Environment, we are committed to formulating and implementing policies related to the environment. Environmental issues and its impacts are not confined to a single country but have diverse impacts worldwide, crossing boundaries. Therefore, it is essential to work in accordance with international conventions and declarations. For instance, the targets we need to achieve by 2030 are based on the Paris Agreement that we have signed. We have agreed to mitigate climate change impacts, including carbon emissions, in key sectors such as agriculture, electricity and energy, forestry, waste management, transportation, and industry.

Moreover, the recently adopted "Green Public Procurement" mechanism can be introduced as an environmentally friendly method beneficial to the country. However, to implement such mechanisms, the contribution of entrepreneurs and industrialists is essential. It is crucial that they operate their industries in an environmentally friendly manner. As the foremost environmental regulatory body in our country, the Central Environmental Authority enforces various legal actions to ensure environmentally friendly industrial practices and conducts programs such as the "Presidential Environment Awards" to encourage entrepreneurs to adopt sustainable practices.

On the other hand, the recognition gained through such awards adds prestige to their commercial brands, contributing to their business growth. Furthermore, the state institutions cannot accomplish environmental conservation efforts alone. Support from the private sector, in terms of investments and services, and their engagement in sustainable industries are necessary. Additionally, the "Presidential Environment Awards" ceremony appreciates the contributions of not only various business representatives but also NGOs, government institutions, schools, individuals dedicated to environmental causes, and the media. This encourages different sectors of society to engage in environmentally friendly practices and sets a model for others to follow.

Only those contributing to environmental conservation efforts can apply for such awards, highlighting their importance. Therefore, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the award recipients and participants of this awards ceremony.

Prabhath Chandrakerthi  
Secretary  
Ministry of Environment

### Message from the State Minister of Environment



I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the awardees ...

Sathasivam Viyalanderan  
State Minister of Environment

The awards presentation will take place at the BMICH today at 10 am under the patronage of President Ranil Wickremesinghe

### Message from the Chairman of the Central Environmental Authority



The anthropologists Kluckhohn and Kelly have described "culture as a screen between man and nature," asserting that culture is built through the interactions between humans and nature. We've heard various definitions of culture, and it is evident that there is a strong relationship between culture and development. Often, development goals have negative impacts on nature, a reality the world currently faces at its most extreme and alarming level. As a result, the entire world is now dealing with the severe environmental issues of "climate change," "environmental pollution," and "biodiversity loss," collectively known as the "triad of environmental problems." The world is working together through various conventions, laws, agreements, and understandings to find solutions, and it is crucial that we, as a country, contribute to these efforts. Therefore, just as our ancestors worked with dedication to protect the environment, it is now time for us to adopt an "environmental conservation culture" in every task we undertake in a manner suited to this era. I invite all of you to join in this effort, free from differences of age, religion, race, or caste, to contribute to environmental conservation. The Central Environmental Authority, as one of the leading institutions in Sri Lanka for environmental regulation, is committed to providing guidance and support. We are taking steps to amend the National Environmental Act to align with the needs of the new era and to support entrepreneurs and industrialists in adopting environmentally friendly industrial practices. As a result of these efforts, we are hosting the "Presidential Environment Awards - 2024" this year, recognizing those who have contributed to environmental conservation in various capacities. I extend my congratulations to all the individuals and organizations who have participated and won awards in this program.

Venura Fernando  
Chairman  
Central Environmental Authority

### Message from the Director General of the Central Environmental Authority



At present, we are undertaking numerous actions for environmental conservation. However, it is a well-known fact that the greatest damage to the environment is caused by human activities. Recognizing this paradox, people are working to introduce laws and regulations to mitigate human-induced environmental damage, as they understand the value of the environment.

The Central Environmental Authority is one of the foremost institutions in Sri Lanka for environmental regulation. Operating under the National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980, we take every possible step to protect both humans and the environment within our jurisdiction. We have already made significant progress in various areas, including the environmental permit process, the environmental impact assessment procedures, controlling pollution from polythene and plastics, and managing natural resources.

In all these efforts, we ensure not to hinder national development and aim to guide development projects to be environmentally friendly. This approach supports our national goal of achieving sustainable development. Accordingly, the "Presidential Environment Awards" program is another initiative introduced to encourage and guide entrepreneurs who contribute significantly to the country's development while adopting environmentally friendly practices.

I extend my best wishes not only to the winners of this awards ceremony but also to all those who applied. Their participation itself signifies their commitment to environmental conservation.

The time has come for all of us to contribute to environmental conservation. We cannot fulfill this task effectively by fearing some law or relying solely on an institution. Hence, I earnestly request everyone to consider it our duty and responsibility to participate in environmental conservation at all times.

P. B. Hemantha Jayasinghe  
Director General  
Central Environmental Authority

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