

What they say on

Sri Lanka's flagship English newspaper

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The Sunday Observer, the flagship newspaper in Sri Lanka which has rendered an invaluable service to the nation since its inception celebrated its 85th birthday on February 4 and it was a significant milestone of the Sunday Observer, ANCL Directors, past Editors and employees participated.

Here is a cross section of views expressed by some of the political party leaders, diplomats and some prominent personalities about Sunday Observer newspaper.

SUNDAY OBSERVER

85TH

ANNIVERSARY

1928-2013

Prime Minister – D.M. Jayaratne



I am happy to extend my greetings to the Sunday Observer at its 85th anniversary. The Ceylon Observer launched during the Government of Edward Barnes manifested an interest to liberate the country from the imperialist yoke. The Sunday Observer was at the forefront in defending the cause of the people, particularly after its take-over in 1972.

I wish its avowed mission, a complete success.

Senior Minister for International Monetary Cooperation and Deputy Finance and Planning Minister

Dr. Sarath Amunugama



I always wish it well for the Sunday Observer. After all, I was a former Chairman of Lake House. As a former Chairman of Lake House, I know the role that Lake House can play. It's a national institution and it is accessed by a large number of people. But my own view is that it should have more balanced reporting. Because today there are a multiplicity of channels.

Those days there were only one or two media institutions such as Lake House and Radio Ceylon. Media is changing. Therefore, a traditional and very venerable media institution such as Lake House must also change with that.

As an example, if we see News Week which is one of the world's famous journals, they have stopped printing. Because they say that the print medium is gone. So let us see how we face the future. In these circumstances, I believe the Sunday Observer will surely fulfil its mission in the interest of its readership.

Ajith Nivard Cabraal, Governor, Central Bank



I have observed that the Sunday Observer to be a very comprehensive paper which has sections for every type of reader and I must be thankful for the newspaper for providing diversified news features and other segments before the readers every week. I've enjoyed reading many stories as well as features and the news items and I always reach out for the Sunday Observer every week to read what the newspaper provides. The segments that cater to particularly trade and employment are quite useful to get the latest market information and employment opportunities. I wish the Sunday Observer all success in future too.

Anarkali Akarsha, film and teledrama actress

I believe so far the Sunday Observer has done a tremendous service for the country and every household. It is a paper without any age barrier and there are segments for children, young adults, adults and the elderly.

It is the paper which is committed to report the truth. Apart from the trustworthiness, the other main reason why the Sunday Observer could sustain as the market leader for the past 85 years is the unique identity that it carried so far.



Leader of the House and Irrigation and Water Management Minister - Nimal Siripala de Silva

Sunday Observer has been able to exist and win the hearts and minds of the reading public of Sri Lanka for eight and half decades. This is a very remarkable achievement as the Sunday Observer has served the reading public of Sri Lanka prior to the independence and within the post independence era as well. As a flagship newspaper, it has maintained its quality and never compromise that quality for short term gains or financial considerations. Therefore, reading public of Sunday Observer consists variety of social fabric such as lawyers, teachers, professionals, businesspeople as well as the ordinary English reading public. Therefore, we are very happy that even today Sunday Observer is a reputed newspaper which maintains its dignity and always respect to the norms of journalism.



Senior Minister of Human Resources, DEW Gunasekara

As a reader and a contributor to the Sunday Observer, I am delighted to send a message of greetings to the Sunday Observer on the occasion of its 85th anniversary.

From our student days, the Sunday Observer has been a source of knowledge and information. The role it played in the sphere of media for the cause of our country and its people has earned the love and admiration of its readers. The Sunday Observer has undergone a qualitative change keeping abreast with the changes in the economy and society. It has now turned out to be a people oriented newspaper with a broader vision.

It is my wish that it would be vibrant, dynamic and objective in its future role.



UNP Chairman, Gamini Jayawickrema Perera

I am honoured to air my views on the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the Sunday Observer newspaper. Media bigwig D.R. Wijewardene had the courage to venture into this industry under the Colonial rule and prospered gradually and steadily with publications both in Sinhala and English. Sunday Observer saw the light of the day way back in 1928 and henceforth it had been the flagship English publication of the country. It had provided the English reader with a vast number of segments in addition to local and foreign news.

However, the paper had undergone difficult times, sometimes with the change of regimes but it had still managed to maintain its identity and achieve its objectives satisfactorily.

Although a number of English weeklies came into being subsequently, none of them could compete Sunday Observer in challenging the market share enjoyed by them mainly due to the professional standard adopted by the paper in satisfying its readers.

I am proud to send this message and wish Sunday Observer all success.

UNP National Organiser, Daya Gamage

Lake House was founded by Ranil Wickremesinghe's maternal grand father D.R. Wijewardene at the early part of the last century and Sunday Observer became the best English weekly publication among the English speaking public in the country from its very inception.

It had been providing reading material to all segments of the English speaking society and all ages of life in any family. Sunday Observer was venerated by not only the elite clans, but also the international community for its professional standard. However, after 1973 Sunday Observer became the State owned newspaper and since then all the successive governments in power patronised the newspaper for their propaganda activities.

Now that we have won the war against terrorism, it is the prime duty of this flagship weekly publication to use its professionalism to promote inter communal harmony and for prosperity of the nation irrespective of any differences. I wish Sunday Observer every success in its future endeavours.



Colombo Mayor, A.J.M. Muzammil



It's a privilege to send a congratulatory message to the Sunday Observer on its completion of 85 years in the public domain. The Sunday Observer was first published in this format in 1928 though the "Colombo Observer" was in existence since 1834 under the British Raj.

In 1923 press baron D.R. Wijewardene bought the Colombo Observer and effected many changes while restoring its name as the Ceylon Observer. He eventually established a media House and it was popularly

known as "Lake House".

The name Observer and the Lake House were synonymous in the post independent political development in Sri Lanka, while the Observer played a major role in shaping the political landscape of the independent Ceylon. In the post independent Sri Lanka the "Sunday Observer" became a household name. People in the city and the suburbs and in the plantation districts yearned to read the Observer every Sunday for its novelty and informative articles which it has maintained up to date.

A newspaper has to maintain its credibility right along to survive for so long in the public domain. As the Sunday Observer celebrates its 85th anniversary it must be noted that though it was taken over by the then government of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1973 it has not lost its objective as a newspaper, that keeps people abreast of the events unfolding in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in the world.

At a time when newspapers are mushrooming under various names it must be recalled that the 'Observer' had set standards for journalism in Sri Lanka from the very beginning. The number of people browsing through the archives of the Observer stands as stupendous testimony for this.

I will be failing in my duty if I don't mention the names of some of the eminent Editors who helped create a newspaper that disseminated a very healthy journalistic tradition in post independent Sri Lanka.

Some of them were H.A.J. Hulugalla, Earnest Corea, Tarzie Vittachchi, Denzil Peiris and Harold Peiris.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the present Editor and the staff of the Sunday Observer for their untiring efforts to be independent and report matters without fear or favour.

Acting High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Sri Lanka Anna Baloch



I am pleased to extend greetings and congratulations to our friends at the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon and to the entire team at Sunday Observer on their 85th anniversary.

The Lake House Group can take pride on having a vast array of the Newspapers in the three languages of Sri Lanka, projecting Sri Lankan life, culture, sports, economy, international affairs and politics to the Sri Lankan public and global audience. The Sunday Observer is one of the leading members of the Lake House family with impressive circulation figures in the weekly papers' category. The Sunday Observer allows myriad ideas to be expressed on their pages. It is through such freedom of debate that we get to learn more about Sri Lanka.

The Sunday Observer has maintained the quality of the journalism over the years. The untiring efforts of the Sunday Observer team led by their competent editors has made the publication a success. I am delighted to witness how Sunday Observer has evolved in response to the changing dynamics of the news medium with the introduction of web editions. The credit goes to the talented editor Mr. Dinesh Weerawansa, a seasoned journalist.

The High Commission of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and I, would continue to maintain our longstanding friendship and association with the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon and especially the Sunday Observer in the days to come.

Very best wishes for many more years of success to The Sunday Observer.

Kishu Gomes, Country Chairman, Chevron Sri Lanka



As a businessman I truly appreciate the support that the Sunday Observer has given me. As one of the leading businessmen, I wake up every Sunday with the Sunday Observer on my mind, and Sunday won't be complete unless I read the Sunday Observer. Therefore it is a norm in my life to read the Sunday Observer every Sunday morning. My association with Sunday Observer has a long history which is over thirty years. During my school days too I used to read Sunday Observer.

There have been so many English newspapers that have come and gone, but as the pioneer English newspaper of the country, Sunday Observer has sustained its readership by maintaining a high market position continuously. Most of the government institutions provide services without really caring about profitability. However, Sunday Observer is one good proven example that, while serving the nation it still is commercially successful and could sustain as the market leader in weekend newspaper industry. Unlike most of the other papers, Sunday Observer is always on a moderate position and covers almost every aspect of the society, and it targets not only a selected segment of the society but almost every citizen of the country.

Fouzul Hameed, Managing Director Hameedia Group

First I would like to congratulate the Sunday Observer for being in the market as the market leader for over 85 years. It is not an easy task to continue quite successfully for 85 years. Sunday Observer has served the country so well, being the pioneer English Newspaper. It is a paper which people have trusted for so many decades. As a person who's quite addicted to the Sunday Observer the paper has become a tradition in my life. Therefore, I wish Sunday Observer success for many more decades and hope it will move ahead with changing trends.



Ashoka Serasinghe, Chairman National Film Corporation

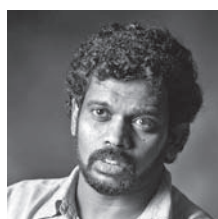


The Sunday Observer is the only English newspaper that has been continuously successful for 85 years in the country. It covers almost every segment and it is more a magazine than just a newspaper. So far the Sunday Observer has fulfilled every necessity of trade and all other segments. I have been buying Sunday Observer for many years and I'm much interested in reading the analytical art features it carries every week. The main characteristic that I wanted to highlight is, this paper is always conscious about the quality and the unique identity of the paper. Because

of this unique characteristic the Sunday Observer could create a tradition in print media industry.

Ashoka Handagama, Sri Lankan award winning filmmaker

The Sunday Observer is one of the milestones in the English print media industry. It always maintained a good standard and class. Even though there are so many English newspapers on board, the Sunday Observer remains as one of the leading newspapers of the country. I used to read especially the Sunday Observer art features and it has done a tremendous service to enhance the art and culture in the country. Therefore, I would like to wish Sunday Observer all success.



Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India



I would like to congratulate the Sunday Observer as it steps into its 85th year of publication.

The Sunday Observer, one of the prominent publications in Sri Lanka founded under the guidance of visionary D.R. Wijewardene, had played a leading role in Sri Lanka's independence struggle and has continued its mission of disseminating news through insightful reporting. It has evolved with the times, adapting and innovating to meet the demands of its readers.

I am happy to learn that the Sunday Observer was one of the first newspapers in South Asia to publish a web edition in 1995.

One of the unique features of print journalism in Sri Lanka is the Sunday editions of the newspapers containing round up of the weekly news, analyses and interviews and supplements catering to the needs of the various segments of the society such as employment, education, business and advertisements. The Sunday Observer is firmly entrenched in the Sri Lankan media landscape in print and online; has remained steadfastly committed to its readership and gone from strength to strength.

I am also pleased to learn that many journalists attached to the Sunday Observer have received training in India.

I would like to once again congratulate the Sunday Observer as it passes this significant milestone. I wish the Sunday Observer success in all its endeavours and hope that it will continue the hallowed traditions of journalistic excellence.