

Eighteenth Annual East-Coast Cricket Festival Organized by the Ananda College Old Boys - US East Coast Association

The annual East Coast Cricket Festival was held last Saturday in New Jersey, USA with the participation of old boys' teams representing Ananda, Nalanda, Royal, St. Thomas', Trinity, St Joseph's, Maris Stella, St. Peter's, Mahanama, and Thurstan. H.E. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the United States, and the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York Ambassador Jayantha Jayasuriya joined several hundred expats for an entertaining day of cricket and much more on a day of gorgeous early summer weather. The Sri Lankan Embassy also provided a booth with a mobile consular service that provided easy access to passport, dual-citizenship and visa applications to the attendees.

The spectators were treated to a day of enthralling cricket, fourteen matches in all. Old boys' teams from Ananda, Royal, Trinity, and Thurstan emerged as semifinalists. In the final, the old Royalists retained the Henry Steel Olcott Challenge Trophy winning a thrilling final against Thurstan by 7 runs.



The East-Coast Cricket Festival is much more than a cricket tournament. While the games take place in the middle, a plethora of activities dot the sidelines serving and entertaining expats from all ages and all walks of life. A special "Kids Area" kept the young tots entertained all day. Vendors provided authentic Sri Lankan food and groceries, and the local band, Sri Beats provided excellent entertainment to the dancing crowd.

Many local charities and organizations participated in the festival. The cultural group, Kalanikethanaya NJ showcased young local talents with traditional dances and drum beats. A group of local students working on eradicating period poverty in Sri Lanka spoke with hundreds of attendees raising over \$1000 to support under-resourced girls' schools in Sri Lanka. In addition, SLMANA, the Sri Lanka Medical Association of North America, has been a regular participant of the festival. This year, their physician volunteered to take various measurements including blood pressure and body mass index measurements and advise community members. Also, in aid of the famed Animal SOS Sri Lanka, a local group of children raised over \$3000 at a much-attended booth.

In an effort to create new branches of communication between professionals within the community, experts and enthusiasts across all STEM disciplines—including medicine, science,

engineering, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and finance, got together for a mission to break down silos between disciplines and to promote the exchange of cutting-edge knowledge while opening doors to new job opportunities for Sri Lankan professionals.

This year marks the 18th time the Ananda College Old Boys, East-Coast Association organized (ACOB-EC) the cricket festival. Old Anandians Lasitha Abeysekera and Kheminda Jayawardena once again led a dedicated group of their schoolmates while Dr. Thushara Diyabalanage, an old Rajan, served as the tournament referee.

Extra Info on community participation

Consular Services:

The Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York Conducts a Consular Mobile Service in New Jersey

The Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York conducted a Consular Mobile Service on the sidelines of the 18th Annual Cricket Festival organized by the Ananda College Old Boy's Association East Coast in the United States on 28 June 2025 in New Jersey. During the Consular Mobile Service, the Mission staff served more than 50 Sri Lankan community members residing in the Tri-states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut by accepting new applications for passports, dual citizenship, birth registrations, citizenship certificates, and visas. The Mission staff also provided information on the consular services extended to the Sri Lankan community in the Tri-State area.

The Ananda College Old Boys' Association East Coast in the United States and the US Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce assisted the Mission in organizing the Consular Mobile Service.

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka New York 30 June 2025

Pet Shelter:

This year at the Ananda Cricket Festival, we ran the 9th annual "Shelter Helpers" fundraiser, a cause aimed at supporting non-profit animal shelters in desperate need of funds. This year our beneficiary is the Animal SOS dog shelter in Sri Lanka, one of the largest unhoused dog sanctuaries in Asia. Our fundraiser mainly comprised of selling traditional Sri Lankan Dosa, a savory pancake, and Falooda, a sweet rose-based milkshake. We are proud to report that we have raised a grand total of \$3,133, the largest sum we have raised in all 9 years of operating. All funds will be donated to Animal SOS Sri Lanka. We thank the dedicated volunteers and their contributions, and the generosity of the Ananda College Old Boys' Association for allowing us to run our fundraiser every year.

Our Promise:

"Our Promise" is a youth-led initiative co-founded by Inulya Hettigamage, Gangulee Hettigamage, and Pamithi Samathuwa to help end the barriers that many girls in Sri Lanka face due to a lack of access to menstrual products. Our mission is to install pad dispensers and donate menstrual

products in under-resourced Sri Lankan girls' schools and create space for open, stigma-free conversations around menstruation. Through awareness, education, and direct action, we hope to ensure that no girl's education is interrupted simply because of her period. To support our mission, one of our co-founders, Gangulel, published a book called *After Dawn and Other Stories*, with all proceeds supporting OurPromise.

On June 28th, we had the incredible opportunity to have an OurPromise booth at the East Coast Cricket Festival organized by the Ananda College Old Boys Association (ACOBA). We spoke with hundreds of attendees, shared our story, and were blown away by the warmth and encouragement we received. Thanks to the generosity of the Sri Lankan community, we raised over \$1,000 in just one day, our most successful fundraiser to date! We're deeply grateful to everyone who supported us, and especially to ACOBA East Coast for giving us this platform. The donations we received and the connections we made left us feeling inspired and hopeful, and brought us one step closer to the change we're working to create!

SLAMANA:

About the SLMANA (Sri Lanka Medical Association of North America) tent at the cricket festival

Services provided by physician volunteers included Bollo pressure measurements & appropriate discussion & advice of the measurements

2. A sought after item was measurement of weight & body mass index calculation & advise on the values obtained on those measurements

3. in addition volunteer physicians provided first aid services to those who sought such services

4. SLMANA physicians were happy to provide this community service this year as well

STEM Meeting:

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medicine (STEM): New initiative on the East Coast of America:

The STEM Community Initiative aims to build an inclusive and dynamic network across STEM fields. It is intended to connect professionals, students, and innovators to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Regular events are planned to host, promote cutting-edge ideas and science to nurture innovation and support R&D and startups. The initiative breaks down barriers between disciplines to spark new opportunities and insights. Its diverse audience spans current and retired professionals, students, entrepreneurs, and researchers.

We, the STEM Community, extend our heartfelt thanks to the Ananda College Old Boys' Association (ACOBA) for their generous support and partnership in co-hosting the recent STEM Collaboration Meetup during the East Coast Annual Cricket Festival.

Book launch:

The East-coast cricket festival also featured the first leg of the US book launch tour of Danu Innasithamby, the author of Jaffna Boy - Colombo Diva thanks to the sponsorship of BytheGlass, importers of fine Sri Lankan spirits.

Extra photos



