



Famous South Indian writer Satharkulan S M Abdul Jabbar's book titled '*Irai Toothar Muhammed*' was launched at Zahira College Colombo recently. Here, All Ceylon Muslim Youth League Federation president Attorney-at-Law Rasheed M Imthiyaz receives a copy from Prime Minister D M Jayaratne who was the chief guest. Justice Minister Rauff Hakeem, author S M Abdul Jabbar, Zahira College Principal Ahamed Jiffry and Muslim Media Forum president N M Ameen are also in the picture.



First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa unveiling the plaque to inaugurate the Muslim Ladies College, programme for 2012-2020 titled 'Our School MLC' at the school premises recently. Principal Dr. Hajarjahn Mansoor and Provincial Councilor Ajmal Mowjood were also present.



The Samadhi Community Development Foundation in Matara in collaboration with the 'Janasarana Foundation' and EAP Media Group has started a project for heart patients in the Matara District. Here, EAP Media Group Chairperson and president of Janasarana Punarjewa Foundation Dr. Soma Edirisinghe offering the first sponsorship to the Chairman/Managing Director of Samadhi Community Development Foundation, parliamentarian Buddhika Pathirana.

Room to Read mission to make children lifelong readers

'The two main pillars of work *Room to Read* emphasizes in the ten Asian and African countries they work is namely the Literacy pillar and Girls' Education or Gender Equality pillar. Under the literacy pillar we have four programmes, all of which we implement in Sri Lanka: school construction, reading and writing programme to support children's literacy development, a library programme and a book publishing programme. On the girls' education side, we support girls in secondary schools to complete their secondary education, whilst acquiring valuable life skills to negotiate life decisions', explained Chief Programme Officer of *Room to Read* Cory Heyman.

Heyman is in Sri Lanka on a brief visit to review the progress of *Room to Read* work in support of promoting children's education in several districts of the country and for meetings with high government officials and members of the Presidential Task Force.

Room to Read in Sri Lanka since 2005, today



Chief *Room to Read* Programme officer Cory Heyman at a school in Vavuniya

works in eight districts of the country.

It sets up multi-lingual libraries for primary grades, establishes dedicated and child friendly spaces in schools promoting the culture of reading, seeks to curb the high drop-out rates amongst girls, endeavours to increase the variety and quality of local language picture and story books for children and develops reading skills and the reading habit among children.

Room to Read global pro-

gramme officer, sees Sri Lanka as being different from most other countries *Room to Read* works in 'because literacy levels are often so high...I think what is often missing in literacy support is the promotion of children's habit of reading. Children develop literary skills but they don't appear to have resources to practice and they really love to read.

'One of RR's objectives work is to increase the habit of the children's love of reading - with our library

books, story books, produced in the local languages and our focus on the habit of reading as an equal partner to the development of reading skills'.

On the girls' education side, *Room to Read* also had a lot of success in promoting more than 2000 girls in schools, not only to stay - on in schools, but also to have a high-level of understanding of themselves to be able to negotiate their relationships to succeed in schools, and be able to transition successfully to the next phase of their lives.

Referring to *Room to Read* success, Heyman emphasized that 'first of all our mission is for children to become lifelong independent readers. And we believe that through the combination of programmes that are implemented by us, we receive the full cooperation of host country governments and communities, teachers and school staff, so that we really can support children in this way.

'We are very pleased with the support of the Sri Lankan government - in fact we

were one of the first NGOs asked by the government to work in Mannar two years ago and are fully supportive of the reconstruction of schools and education in the North'.

Referring to the importance of training for *Room to Read* programmes, 'Within our literacy pillar, we provide two kinds of training, one is to provide support for teachers ability to teach children how to read, helping teachers to improve children's reading skills and we also support training through our library services and that's both library management as well as engaging children more actively in the use of library usages.

'In our girls education programme, we also do teacher training to help teachers understand gender responsiveness in the class rooms, so that teachers can treat each child in the same way, whether he is a boy or she is a girl, where everyone can gain from the classroom experience and transition effectively to the next phase of their lives,' Heyman concluded.



World Vision Lanka recently signed MoUs with the Central Provincial Council and Local Government to upgrade water sanitation and hygiene facilities in two Divisional Secretariats in the Central Province. Here World Vision Lanka National Director Suresh Bartlett and Ministry Secretary P G Amarakoon exchange copies of the MoU while CP Chief Minister Sarath Ekanayake looks on.



The Mattegoda Executive Entrepreneurs' Society presented a stage play '*Hunuwataye Kathawa*' at Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Kottawa as a fund raiser to help the poor, disabled persons living in and around Mattegoda and Kottawa. Lecturer Upul Shantha Sannasgala, Machine Tek chairman Raja Mannagoda, Mattegoda Sampath Bank Manageress Nishanthi Jayakodi and English lecturer Chinthaka Usgodaarachchi were the chief guests. Here members of the Mattegoda Executive Entrepreneurs Society distributing wheelchairs to needy families to mark the occasion.