



Taking its flight



Entrance to the park



Checking the territory



White lotus



Newborn facing the world



Baby birds waiting for Mama

Wilpattu National Park

One of the main national parks situated in the North Central Province is the Wilpattu National Park. The Park which was closed for several years owing to the North-East war is now opened to the public and tourists. Wilpattu is the biggest national park in Sri Lanka covering around 500 sq. miles.

Around thirty sand-rimmed freshwater lakes surrounded by grass and high forest are where the animals and birds are best seen.

There are many Villu (small type of lakes) and lakes at Wilpattu. This is identified as the main topographical feature of the park. They are often flat and basin like while

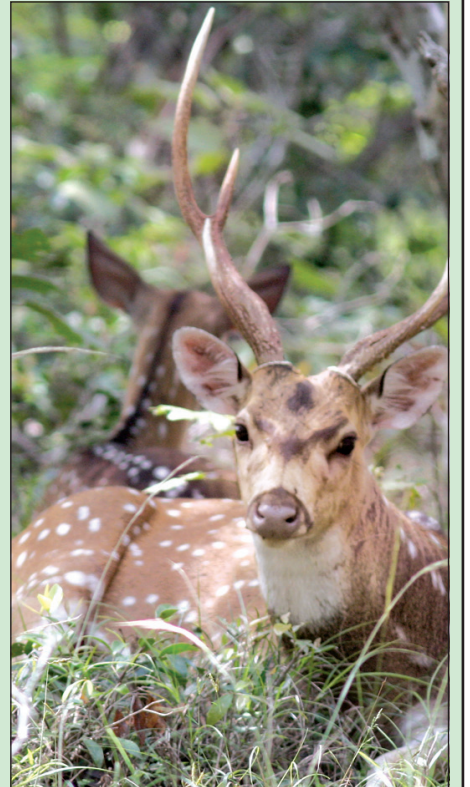
containing purely rain water. Wilpattu national park is the oldest and perhaps the most important protected area in Sri Lanka. It's fauna and flora are representative of the dry lowland zone. It is unfortunate that many species living in the park are threatened species. The park is located 30 km west of Anuradhapura (approximately 180 km north of Colombo) and spans the border between the North Central and North Western Province. It is bordered by the Modaragam Aru in the south of the Kala Oya in the north and is bordered by the Indian ocean in the west. The Wilpattu National Park is the largest national park

in the area with an acreage of 131,693 hectares. It is situated ranging from sea level to 152 metres above it.

Thirty one species of mammals have been identified within the Wilpattu National Park. Mammals that are identified as threatened species living are the elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*) and water Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*). Sambhur, spotted deer, mongoose, mouse and shrew are more of Wilpattu's residents. These are some of the beauties captured by our photographer Mahinda Vitanachchi



The future generation preserving nature



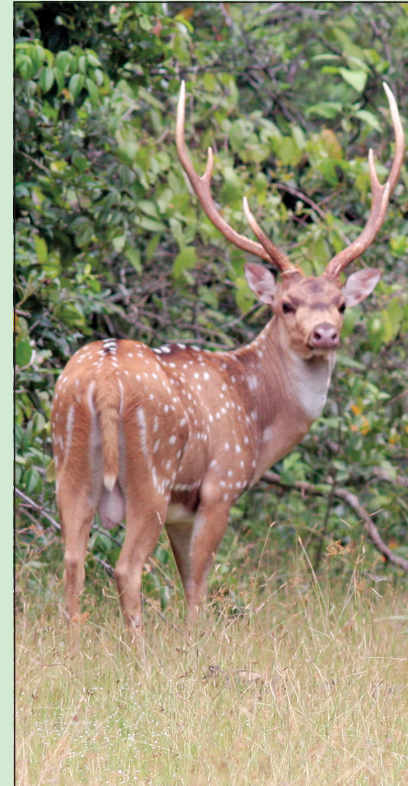
Future leader of the herd resting



Park warden Danushka showing some red clay



Drying watering hole



King of the deer herd



Quenching her thirst



Having her milk



Sitting pretty for the camera



A family all cuddled together



Mama holding her baby close to her

Monkeying around

Talking Monkeys were seen loitering around the Getabarua Raja Maha Viharaya, Kottapola in Deniyaya with their families eating the rice that were given as blessings and other fruits thrown away. Pictures by Daily News staff member Anura Priyantha.



Mother protecting her child from intruders



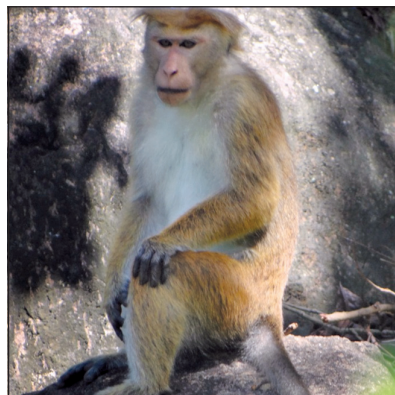
Picking head lice



Enjoying a meal



"I'll just hang out here..."



Wondering who's stepping into his territory

SriLankan Airlines now in Jaffna



Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development Minister Douglas Devananda receiving the first ticket. Pictures by Sulochana Gamage

SriLankan Airlines expands its operations in the North of Sri Lanka, opening its newest Sales Office in the heart of the Jaffna Peninsular last week.

The branch office will facilitate travel formalities to a large clientele in the Jaffna and Kilinochchi areas, being fully equipped to handle reservations, ticketing, Prepaid Ticket Advices (PTAs), requests for special services, information on fares, schedules and packages - essentially offering the same sales activity carried out by any city office of the airline. SriLankan Airlines has appointed Metro Travels & Tours as its Passenger Sales Agency (PSA) to spearhead the operation. The ceremony began with the blessings of the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamic clergy and was officially opened by the Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development Minister Douglas Devananda.



Ground staff ready to welcome the chief guest



Opening the new office



Traditional Hindu welcome