

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) continued to play a catalyst role in not only developing the professionals' standards across the country, but by also spearheading a range of new initiatives aimed at supporting Small and Medium Enterprises in the Jaffna region.

In fulfilling this important objective, the CA Sri Lanka SME Task Force recently took the initiative to organise two events in Jaffna to support Small and Medium Sized business owners in the region.

The first programme was held at the Jaffna Public Library in collaboration with the State Ministry of Rattan, Brass, Pottery, Furniture and Rural Industrial Promotion, as well as the National Chamber of Commerce where 100 SME owners were invited during which a road map for SME sector development in the North was unveiled.

The event was held under the patronage of Assistant District Secretary Mr. M. Pradeepan, CA Sri Lanka President Mr. Manil Jayasinghe, CA Sri Lanka SME Task Force Chairman Mr. Lakshman Abeysekera, Chairman of the National Chamber of Commerce Mr. Nandika Buddhipala as well as CA Sri Lanka Council Members Mrs. Anoji De Silva, Mr. Saman Sri Lal and Mr. Chaaminda Kumarasiri.

The main objective of this initiative is to kick off the SME sector development in Jaffna in collaboration with the SilkPorts, CAN Market and Good Market who are supporting this important initiative to develop the local and global market connectivity, while SLT Mobitel has extended support to develop technology and the Sri Lanka Standards Institute has come onboard to provide the SMEs with the necessary assistance in relation to ensuring all products developed are in line with the required standards.

The second programme focusing on SME development was part of the CA Sri Lanka and SDB Bank larger national initiative where a sizable number of SME owners is provided with the necessary guidance and skills to help them become successful entrepreneurs.

This event was held at the Jaffna Valampuri Hotel under the patronage of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna Prof. S. Srisatkunaratnam, Mr. Manil Jayasinghe, Mr. Abeysekera, and SDB Bank CEO Mr. Thilak Piyadigama.

Having understood the important role small and medium business owners play in contributing to the economy, CA Sri Lanka kicked off the mentoring initiative last year to help transform business owners in the SME sector into successful entrepreneurs.

As part of the programme, CA Sri Lanka will provide small and medium businesses with better access to finance and essential business skills for their long-term success thereby ensuring that SMEs will continue to be an integral part of Sri Lanka's development.

The mentoring initiative aims to select and develop a total of 500 entrepreneurs at the initial phase, covering a minimum of 20 SMEs from each district in Sri Lanka. So far, the programme has been launched in Galle, Kandy, Western Province and the latest being in Jaffna.

#### CAPTIONS □

064A9752.JPG: Small and Medium Sized business owners from Jaffna at an event initiated by the CA Sri Lanka SME Task Force

IMG.4995: SME owners from Jaffna at an event initiated by the CA Sri Lanka SME Task Force



