

HNB hails Sri Lanka Paralympic heroes as an inspiration to new generation of athletes

Sri Lanka's very first Olympic Gold Medallist together with the Bronze medallist and participant delegation to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, resonated a vibrant and inspirational example to new generation athletes and youth of the country, at a felicitation ceremony organized by the country's leading private bank, HNB.

Recognising their outstanding performances – which included securing Gold and Bronze medals and establishing a new world record – HNB's Sustainability Foundation presented plaques and cash rewards to the award winning athletes, coaches and officials who were part of the delegation.

The felicitation ceremony, held at HNB Towers, the Bank's head office was attended by HNB Managing Director /CEO – Jonathan Alles, Chief Transformation Officer/DGM – L Chiranthi Cooray, Deputy General Manager –Retail & SME Banking – Sanjay Wijemanne and HNB Sports Club President/AGM Hisham Ally, as well as National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Sri Lanka Honorary President, Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Herath and other officials.

“You have scaled mountains that others only dream of conquering,” HNB Managing Director/CEO, Jonathan Alles said, congratulating the members of the delegation. “We, at HNB draw inspiration from your achievements and hope that the country's youth and new generation of athletes too will do the same. Sports can help develop qualities which are essential for organizations, particularly teamwork and the country will benefit from youth taking a greater interest in sports activities.”

The highlight of the event was the felicitation of Dinesh Herath – who won Gold in Men's Javelin Throw F46 – and Samitha Dulan Kodithuwakku – the Bronze medallist in the Men's Javelin Throw F64. Herath is also the first Sri Lankan to win an Olympic or Paralympic Gold and set a new world record in his event.

“We applaud the dedication and commitment of our Paralympic athletes which enabled them to emerge victorious at the highest international level, a truly a remarkable and inspiring achievement,” HNB's Chief Transformation Officer/Deputy General Manager

and HNB Sustainability Foundation Trustee, L Chiranthi Cooray said. “As one of the country’s leading private sector establishments, HNB sees recognising, encouraging and nurturing Sri Lanka’s national heroes and being inclusive as part of our broader social agenda.”

The other Paralympic athletes who were felicitated at the ceremony are; Sampath Hettiarachchi, Palitha Bandara, Saman Subasinghe, Kumudu Priyanka, Mahesh Jayakody, Sampath Bandara and Suresh Dharmasena. The event also honoured six coaches and three officials who were part of the delegation.

“Such recognition by organisations of the calibre of HNB will no doubt serve as a great source of motivation for both existing and future Paralympic athletes,” Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Herath, the Honorary President of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Sri Lanka – which played a key role in achieving the victory – said. “This initiative is most timely, especially at a time when athletes face numerous challenges, since sports and sporting events have been severely hampered by the pandemic.”

He added that the NPC has initiated a long-term visionary programme that scouts for and nurtures talent, through structured development and training and evaluation – for both athletes and coaches. The success at the Paralympics was a validation of this initiative and was achieved as a result of the combined efforts of all who were involved, Herath noted.

HNB’s Sustainability Foundation, which aims to fulfil the Bank’s mandate as a leading corporate citizen, drives corporate citizenship through its strategic pillars, undertaking location-based CSR projects involving community and staff, leveraging its island-wide branch network. The foundation’s four strategic pillars are; education, healthcare, empowering entrepreneurship and the environment.

In its recent initiatives, the HNB Sustainability Foundation has prioritized addressing challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such initiatives include donating critical life-saving medical equipment and devices to key health institutions and providing grants to small pandemic-impacted businesses.

Photo Captions

Image 01: (front row) HNB DGM –Retail & SME Banking, Sanjay Wijemanne (third from left), HNB MD/CEO, Jonathan Alles (fifth from left), HNB Chief Transformation Officer /DGM, L. Chiranthi Cooray (fifth from right) and HNB AGM and HNB Sports Club President Hisham Ally (second from right) with Paralympic Bronze medallist, Samitha Dulan Kodithuwakku (second from right) and Paralympic Gold medallist, Dinesh Herath (fourth from left) and National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Sri Lanka Honorary President, Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Herath (fourth from right) together with the Sri Lankan Paralympic team, coaches and officials.

Image 02: (from left) HNB MD/CEO, Jonathan Alles presenting a cash reward to Paralympic Gold medallist, Dinesh Herath, in the presence of Paralympic Team Archery Coach, Maj Gen R. Wickramasinghe (Rtd), NPC Sri Lanka Honorary President, Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Herath, HNB Chief Transformation Officer, L. Chiranthi Cooray, HNB DGM –Retail & SME Banking, Sanjay Wijemanne and HNB AGM and HNB Sports Club President Hisham Ally.

Image 03: (from left) HNB MD/CEO, Jonathan Alles presenting a cash reward to Paralympic Bronze medallist, Samitha Dulan Kodithuwakku, in the presence of Team Archery Coach, Maj Gen R. Wickramasinghe (Rtd), NPC Sri Lanka Honorary President, Lieutenant Colonel Deepal Herath, HNB Chief Transformation Officer, L. Chiranthi Cooray, HNB DGM –Retail & SME Banking, Sanjay Wijemanne and HNB AGM and HNB Sports Club President Hisham Ally.