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## **HSBC Sri Lanka's first ever international student scholarship winner announced**

Last year, HSBC Sri Lanka announced its first ever International Scholarship Programme to support the ambitions of local students by giving one deserving student the opportunity to pursue their higher education with a USD 10,000 scholarship to a preferred university, anywhere in the world.

The scholarship programme was introduced after an extensive research was conducted both locally and overseas. It was established that parents have a shortfall in paying for their children's overseas education, especially the tuition fees. This was further addressed by parents during several webinars on overseas education which attracted over 2000 participants.

Entries opened from June 2021 received an overwhelming response in applications which were thereafter carefully evaluated and shortlisted by a panel of judges that included Dr. John Scarth - Principal of The British School in Colombo and Mr. D.P.C. Lawrence, Executive Deputy Chairman of Colombo International School, together with the senior management of HSBC. The 15 shortlisted candidates had to then face a strenuous round of interviews and the top 5 finalists were then selected and interviewed by Mark Surgenor, CEO of HSBC Sri Lanka and Maldives, James Rebert, Country Head of Wealth & Personal Banking HSBC Sri Lanka together with Dr. John Scarth.

The 5 finalists that made it through were Shakya Ranatunga (Australia), Vihan Fernando (Australia), Shamiq-Abdul Cader (Australia), Adheeb Hashim (UK) and Sharmane Surasinghe (USA). They were selected based on the ability to articulate their ambition, vision and presentation skills. As finalists the panel was impressed not only with their delivery, but how they can truly support the country to lead on key areas such as sustainability, technology and innovation, architecture and design.

After careful deliberations by the panel, Sharmane Surasinghe (John Hopkins University, USA) was selected as the winner of the USD 10,000 scholarship to further her education in the United States.

Sharing her thoughts on winning, Sharmane said, *"I was thrilled to be awarded this scholarship by HSBC and am incredibly grateful for the financial support it affords me as I continue my education at the Johns Hopkins University. I appreciate the help and support HSBC has given me during my transition from Sri Lanka to the USA, and am extremely grateful for their initiative in investing in the future by financially aiding international students. I am honored that I was selected out of the many worthy applicants, and am determined to prove myself deserving of the scholarship committee's faith in me. Thank you for helping me fulfil my ambitions."*

Sharmane is currently studying for a Bachelor of Science - Double Majoring in Neuroscience and Computer Science and Minor Computational Medicine at John Hopkins University, USA. Educated at

The British School in Colombo, she enjoys debating and mathematics as well as archery and playing the piano. She has won numerous awards including Cambridge International Education Awards 2019, World Scholar's Cup, Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, University of Melbourne Trinity College Essay Competition, South East Asian Mathematical Olympiad, University of Waterloo Mathematics Contests as well as the Open Junior Archery Nationals.

James Rebert, Country Head of Wealth & Personal Banking, further commented, "At HSBC our purpose is to open a world of opportunity for our customers and communities and we are delighted to be able to support Sharmane on her professional pursuits in the USA. As part of the panel, I was impressed by the sheer talent, depth and knowledge that was shown during the judging process. It augurs well for the potential that Sri Lankan students studying overseas have to develop and grow the country in future. We are committed to supporting them as the leading international bank in Sri Lanka that has been here for 130 years."

HSBC Premier will continue to support the growing aspirations of local students in pursuing higher education overseas through the banks' International Student Proposition that paves the way for a hassle free overseas education journey, offering international banking services across 64 countries where HSBC operates.

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