



MINISTRY OF  
SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY



NATIONAL  
SCIENCE  
FOUNDATION

# NSF Award Ceremony on Science Popularization 2026

## AI for Safety & Resilience

National Science Foundation



**MINISTRY OF  
SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY**



**NATIONAL  
SCIENCE  
FOUNDATION**

# **National Science Foundation Award Ceremony on Science Popularization**

**“AI for Safety and Resilience”**

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

**Organized by  
National Science Foundation  
47/5, Vidya Mawatha  
Colombo 7  
Sri Lanka  
2026**

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## Message from the Hon. Prime Minister



I am pleased to extend my greetings on the occasion of the NSF Award Ceremony for Science Popularization 2026, organized by the National Science Foundation (NSF) under the purview of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Since its inception in 2002, this annual ceremony has provided an important platform to recognize the achievements of schoolchildren, teachers, scientists, and media personnel who have made significant contributions to the advancement and popularization of science in Sri Lanka. Their dedication, creativity, and commitment reflect the growing capacity of our nation to embrace scientific inquiry, innovation, and technological advancement.

The theme of this year's ceremony, "AI for Safety and Resilience," is both timely and relevant. Artificial intelligence is transforming how we respond to challenges, with growing applications in disaster preparedness, public safety, environmental protection, and decision-making. Introducing young people to these technologies will help foster responsible innovation and equip them to apply AI for the benefit of the society.

I commend the National Science Foundation for its continued commitment in promoting scientific literacy, nurturing young talent, and fostering innovation across the country. I extend my congratulations to all the award recipients. Your achievements are a reflection of your dedication and an important contribution to building a scientifically informed, innovative, and resilient nation.

I wish the NSF Award Ceremony for Science Popularization 2026 every success and hope it will continue to inspire future generations of Sri Lankan scientists, innovators, educators, and science communicators.

**Dr Harini Amarasuriya**

*Prime Minister*

*Minister of Education, Higher Education, and Vocational Education*

*Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka*



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## Message from the Hon. Minister of Science and Technology



It is with great pleasure that I contribute this message to the proceedings of the Science Popularization Award Ceremony 2026, organized by the National Science Foundation (NSF). This annual celebration provides an important opportunity to recognize and honor the outstanding achievements of school students, teachers, scientists, and science communicators who have made valuable contributions to the advancement and popularization of science in Sri Lanka.

This year's theme, "AI for Safety and Resilience," highlights the growing importance of artificial intelligence in addressing the challenges of our rapidly changing world. Artificial intelligence is transforming the way we understand complex problems, predict and respond to disasters, improve public safety, protect ecosystems, strengthen communities, and develop innovative solutions for a more resilient future. Thus, I appreciate NSF for selecting this timely topic to ignite interest of our school community to learn and practice this upcoming technology to shape their future.

The achievements we celebrate today reflect the remarkable potential of our school students who have embraced science, creativity, and innovation. Their ideas, contributions, and performances demonstrate that the future of science in the country is bright. Further, I congratulate NSF for recognizing teachers, media personnel and scientists for their valuable contribution in popularizing science among public aiming to improve scientific literacy of the nation. As we recognize the accomplishments of this year's award winners, we also reaffirm our collective responsibility to promote science and technology for a safer, more resilient, and sustainable society. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the award winners for their outstanding achievements and commend their dedication and commitment.

I also express my sincere appreciation to the National Science Foundation for its continued commitment in the promotion of science, science education, and science popularization in Sri Lanka, in fulfilment of its national mandate. May this celebration inspire all of us to embrace the power of science and artificial intelligence to build a safer and more resilient future for generations to come

**Prof. Chrisantha Abeysena**  
*Minister of Science and Technology*



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## Message from the Chairman



It is with great pleasure that I extend my warm greetings on the occasion of the NSF Award Ceremony for Science Popularization 2026 and to the publication of these proceedings. The National Science Foundation (NSF) remains firmly committed to promoting scientific thinking, innovation, creativity, and the popularization of science as essential foundations for the socio-economic development of Sri Lanka. By fostering a culture that values curiosity, evidence-based thinking and decision making, and innovation, we can empower our younger generations to contribute meaningfully to the future of our nation.

This year's celebration, held under the theme "AI for Safety and Resilience," highlights the growing potential of artificial intelligence to address societal challenges. When developed and applied responsibly, AI can enhance disaster preparedness, strengthen public safety, support environmental protection, and improve decision-making. Its responsible use therefore offers significant opportunities to build safer, more resilient, and sustainable communities.

The achievements of today's award recipients are a testament to the remarkable creativity, dedication and potential that exist within our society. Their accomplishments demonstrate the value of nurturing scientific inquiry, innovation, critical thinking, and STEAM-based learning among our children and young people. These qualities are essential for preparing the next generation to navigate an increasingly complex and technology-driven world.

I warmly congratulate all the award recipients on their outstanding achievements and wish them continued success in their future endeavors. I also extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Saman Halgamuge, an expatriate scientist based in Australia, for accepting our invitation and generously sharing his knowledge, experience, and inspiration with our school students.

May this Award Ceremony continue to ignite curiosity, inspire creativity, and encourage innovation among our young generations, while strengthening our collective commitment to harnessing science, technology, and artificial intelligence for a safer, more resilient, and sustainable Sri Lanka.

**Dr Sudath Samaraweera**

*Chairman*

*National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka*



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## Message From the Director General



I am pleased to send this message on the occasion of the annual Award Ceremony organized by the National Science Foundation (NSF), recognizing the outstanding achievements of school students and teachers who have excelled in various STEAM-based programs and competitions conducted by the NSF.

This ceremony is not only about recognizing excellence but also about celebrating the curiosity, creativity, and enthusiasm that inspire young minds to explore, discover, and innovate. Through its programs, the NSF encourages students to think critically, engage in scientific inquiry, and develop innovative solutions while gaining valuable exposure to science, research, and emerging technologies.

This year's theme, "AI for Safety and Resilience," highlights the growing role of artificial intelligence in addressing challenges and building safer and more resilient communities. As AI continues to transform our world, it is important to equip the younger generation with not only technological knowledge but also creativity, critical thinking, and ethical awareness to use these technologies responsibly.

The achievements of our award-winning students demonstrate their remarkable potential to transform ideas into meaningful solutions. Teachers also play a vital role in guiding and nurturing these young talents, and their dedication deserves special recognition. I extend my sincere congratulations to all the award winners and wish them continued success in their future endeavors. May this celebration continue to inspire young minds to embrace science, innovation, and emerging technologies in building a safer, more resilient, and sustainable future for Sri Lanka.

**Prof. Shiromi Perera**

*Director General*

*National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka*



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## Message from the Chairman of the NSF Working Committee on Science Popularization



It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of appreciation that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants of the NSF Award Ceremony 2026.

For several decades, the National Science Foundation, through its Science Communication and Outreach Division and with the guidance of the Committee for Popularization of Science, has been committed to nurture a culture of scientific inquiry, creativity, and science literacy within the school community and society at large.

One of our longstanding initiatives is the School Science Research Project Competition, which encourages school children to move beyond simply learning scientific facts and to engage actively in asking questions, investigating problems, generating evidence, and communicating their findings. Through this initiative, we seek to cultivate the curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and research skills that are essential for building a scientifically informed generation.

Recognizing that science communication must extend beyond conventional research activities, the NSF has also introduced and supported a variety of innovative programmes that enable young people to communicate science in creative and engaging ways. These include science drama, viridu, digital storytelling competitions, and other science communication activities. Such initiatives provide valuable opportunities for students to express scientific ideas through art, performance, technology, and storytelling, making science more accessible and meaningful to the wider community.

The contribution of School Science Societies is equally important in this endeavour. Their activities are assessed annually, and Star Points are awarded in recognition of their efforts. These societies provide an important platform through which students can develop teamwork, leadership, creativity, and a lasting interest in science.

The NSF Award Ceremony also recognizes the vital contribution of those who work beyond the classroom and laboratory to bring science closer to society. The Best Teacher in Science Popularization, the Scientist who has made a significant contribution to communicating science to the general public, and the Journalist who has made an outstanding contribution to science

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communication are honoured for their dedication and commitment.

To all the award winners, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. Your achievements represent an important contribution to the advancement of science literacy in Sri Lanka. The recognition you receive today is not merely an acknowledgement of an individual accomplishment; it is an appreciation of your commitment to inspiring others and strengthening the relationship between science and society.

At the same time, I believe that the greatest reward lies beyond the award itself. The true achievement is the personal and professional transformation that comes through wholehearted engagement in promoting scientific thinking and empowering others with knowledge. Every student inspired to ask a question, every teacher who encourages an investigation, every scientist who communicates research with the public, and every journalist who makes science understandable contributes to building a more informed, innovative, and resilient nation.

May your enthusiasm for science continue to inspire others, and may your collective efforts contribute to a scientifically literate, innovative, and empowered Sri Lanka.

**Dr Jayantha Wattavidanage**

*Chairman*

*NSF Working Committee on Science Popularization*

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## Introduction to the Keynote Speaker



Professor Saman Halgamuge is an internationally recognised Sri Lankan scientist, engineer and educator whose work has helped to advance the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, data engineering and intelligent systems. He is a Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, at the University of Melbourne, Australia, where he leads research at the intersection of AI, engineering, energy, medicine and emerging technologies. His current research includes explainable AI, machine learning for medicine, deep neural networks, large language models, AI for energy and mechatronics, and sustainable energy.

His own educational journey demonstrates the power of learning beyond boundaries. After his school education at Ananda College, Colombo, he obtained his B.Sc. Engineering degree in Electronics and Telecommunication from the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, and subsequently earned his Dipl.-Ing. and Ph.D. degrees in Data Engineering from the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany.

Professor Halgamuge has held significant academic and leadership positions, including Director/Head of the Research School of Engineering at the Australian National University and senior leadership positions at the University of Melbourne. He has also contributed to international research and higher education through visiting and honorary professorships.

He is a Fellow of the IEEE, IET, AAIA and the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka and has been recognised internationally for his contributions to computational intelligence. He was listed among the top 2% of highly cited researchers in AI and image processing in the Stanford-Elsevier database. He has also served as an IEEE Distinguished Lecturer and Distinguished Visitor.

Professor Halgamuge has published more than 300 scientific publications, attracted substantial competitive research funding, and supervised around 50 PhD students and 16 postdoctoral researchers to completion. His research has contributed to applications ranging from intelligent machines and energy systems to biology and medicine.

His career offers an inspiring message to every young person in this audience: great scientific discoveries begin with curiosity. A question asked in a classroom, an experiment conducted at home, or a problem that seems impossible today can become the beginning of a remarkable scientific journey. Professor Halgamuge's journey from Sri Lanka to the international scientific community demonstrates that our schoolchildren can dream globally, pursue science passionately, and create knowledge that benefits the world.

**Prof. Saman Halgamuge, FIEEE, FIET, FAAIA, NASSL**

*Professor of Mechanical Engineering, The University of Melbourne, Australia*

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## Summary of the Keynote Address

Our planet is facing more threats than ever before. Global temperatures are rising, and climate change is making it increasingly hard for people, animals and plants to survive. We are experiencing more frequent and severe heatwaves, floods, forest fires and other natural hazards. In November 2025, a landslide struck Sri Lanka following a week of heavy rains, strong winds, floods, and lightning, causing fatalities and widespread damage. In August 2026, Nepal experienced severe flooding that caused the loss of many lives, affected animals and communities, and damaged homes and other property.

These challenges require new ideas, far better technologies and, above all, highly responsible decisions and good governance. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to become an important tool in addressing some of these challenges.

AI is already transforming many aspects of everyday life, including education, healthcare, agriculture and the arts. It can help scientists develop better ways of detecting and treating diseases such as cancer, support doctors in making decisions, improve agricultural productivity, monitor environmental changes, assist with disaster prediction and response, and help communities become safer and more resilient.

For schoolchildren, AI can provide exciting opportunities for learning. It can help students understand difficult concepts, practise new skills, explore ideas, improve their language and writing, and develop creativity and problem-solving abilities. Used thoughtfully, AI can act like a learning assistant, helping students ask better questions, explore different perspectives and learn at their own pace.

To understand where AI may take us, we should first ask a much simpler question: Why do humans develop AI, and why have we developed technology throughout history? From learning to make fire, one of humanity's earliest technologies, to today's most advanced AI systems, humans have continually developed technologies to overcome limitations, solve problems, extend our capabilities and improve our chances of survival.

But just like fire, AI can also harm us if it is used carelessly or irresponsibly. This is particularly important for children and young people. Students need to learn how to use AI well, but they also need to learn how to work without AI.

We use calculators every day, but we still learn basic mathematics so that we can understand and solve problems ourselves. In the same way, students should use AI as a tool without allowing it to weaken their own knowledge, critical thinking, creativity and ability to learn independently. We, as humans, need to remain intelligent, curious and capable of thinking for ourselves. We should strive to remain the thinkers and decision-makers, rather than becoming dependent on machines to think for us.

AI can generate convincing but false information, including fake news, images, audio and videos. It can also be used to create scams, manipulate people or generate harmful content. Students

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therefore need to develop the ability to question what they see, recognise possible misinformation or manipulation, and verify important information using reliable sources.

AI is an artificial tool, not a person. It does not have feelings, beliefs or consciousness, simply because it may sound human. AI can also make mistakes and generate false information with great confidence. It may present something false as if it were a fact. If you have never learned how to think, solve problems and find information without AI, how will you know when AI is wrong?

Privacy is another important concern. AI systems may process large amounts of information, including personal and sensitive data. Students should understand why protecting their personal information matters and should think carefully before entering private information into AI tools.

The most important principle is that AI should support human thinking, not replace it. When using AI, students should continue to contribute their own ideas, judgement, creativity and responsibility. The goal is not simply to produce an answer faster; it is to become better thinkers, better learners and better problem-solvers.

During my interaction with you as part of NSF Award Ceremony on the Science Popularization, I will explore about our shared future with AI technology.

**Prof. Saman Halgamuge**

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## The Role of the National Science Foundation towards Building a Scientifically Literate Nation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has been a leading organization in the country working in the areas of Science and Technology since 1968. The NSF is currently working under the purview of the Ministry of Science and Technology. As per Parliament Act No. 11 of 1994, NSF is mandated to popularize science and promote science education in the country. Accordingly, to facilitate the science popularization activities and promote science education in the country, the NSF has established Science Communication and Outreach Division (SCOD) in 2005. The Science Communication and Outreach Division (SCOD) of the NSF stand at the forefront of promoting scientific literacy and civic engagement across the nation in promoting science education. Guided by the principle of “Science for All,” SCOD is dedicated to democratizing access to scientific knowledge and fostering a culture of inquiry, innovation, and critical thinking among different levels of the community, especially targeting school community.

Through a dynamic portfolio of programmes and initiatives, SCOD actively bridges the gap between scientific research and public understanding. It champions STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education by nurturing grassroots science societies, organizing national competitions like the School Science Research Project Competition (SRPC), and curating year-round outreach activities that engage students, educators, and communities alike.

SCOD's mission is not only to inform but to inspire and empower individuals to participate meaningfully in scientific discourse and contribute to Sri Lanka's development through knowledge, creativity, and collaboration. Accordingly, the NSF conducts below mentioned programmes and competitions targeting school community annually and best performers of these competitions are felicitated at the NSF Award Ceremony on Science Popularization.

The School Competitions conducted during 2025-2026 include:

1. Kid Naturalist Programme (KNP)
2. School Science Competitions (SSC)
3. Science Research Project Competitions (SRPC)

Further, to recognize the contribution made by the Scientists, Media Personnel and Science Teachers in popularization of science among public to develop scientifically literate society the National Science Foundation is awarding the following 03 awards:

1. Science Popularization Award for Scientists
2. Science Popularization Award for Media Personnel
3. Science Popularization Award for Science Teachers



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## **Kid Naturalist Programme (KNP)**



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## Kid Naturalist Programme (KNP)

### Preamble

The Kid Naturalist Programme (KNP) is conducted annually by the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2020, with the collaboration of the Primary Section and Science Branch of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The programme targets students from Grades 1 to 6. The primary objective of the programme is to nurture students to observe and appreciate the natural environment they live in using scientific methodologies. It aims to ignite a lifelong interest in science and foster a generation both scientifically curious and nature-loving.

Participants of the programme are required to maintain a nature journal over a six-week observation period, following guidelines provided by the NSF. These journals are then evaluated by a panel of evaluators appointed by the Board of Management (BoM) of the NSF. In 2025, the nature journal programme received applications from students across the country. The most well-crafted and insightful journals were selected for awards, recognizing excellence in observation, creativity, and scientific accuracy.

### Evaluation Panel

|   | Panel Member              | Affiliation                                                                     |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dr Jayantha Wattavidanage | Deputy Director General (Academic), South Asian Center for Teacher Development. |
| 2 | Prof. R.M. Dharmadasa     | Director, Herbal Technology Institute, Industrial Technology Institute (ITI)    |
| 3 | Dr N. Karthikayen         | Senior Lecturer in Physics, Open University of Sri Lanka                        |
| 4 | Dr P.R.M.P Dilrukshi      | Head, Science Communication and Outreach Division, NSF                          |
| 5 | Mrs Dinesha Tharanganee   | Deputy Director of Education, Zonal Education office, Gampaha                   |
| 6 | Mrs J.S. Samanmalee       | Deputy Director of Education, Zonal Education office, Horana                    |
| 7 | Mr K.A.P.I Jayarathna     | Deputy Director of Education, Ministry of Education (Retired)                   |
| 8 | Mrs Chandi Wijesekara     | Deputy Director of Education, Western Province (Retired)                        |

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## Best 10 National Winners - 2025

### Grade 1

| No | Name of the Student                 | Name of the School                              |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | K.A. Disathmi Akenya Senarathna     | Ginigathhena Primary School, Ginigathhena       |
| 2  | Buvinu Gaganaka Wickramasinghe      | Deniyaya Central College, Deniyaya              |
| 3  | E.R. Lakindu Indusara Nirwan        | Sri Dharmaloka College, Kelaniya                |
| 4  | W.M.M. Sasdula Bandara Wanigasekara | Dudley Senanayake Central College, Tholangamuwa |
| 5  | M.B.Y. Visheksha Kulathunge         | Deniyaya Central College, Deniyaya              |
| 6  | D.P.M. Senuli Dehansa Thalerathna   | Sri Dharmaloka College, Kelaniya                |
| 7  | Buvin Ritheksha Wickramaarachchi    | Sri Dharmaloka College, Kelaniya                |
| 8  | Arudra Muralitharan                 | St. John Bosco's Vidyalayam, Jaffna             |
| 9  | Kirunika Kartheepan                 | J/Mallakam Visaladchi Viththiyasalai            |
| 10 | K.G. Sayumdi Thisanya               | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya             |

### Grade 2

| No | Name of the Student         | Name of the School                            |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Manuli Bihansa Rohanadheera | Dr. Richard Pathirana Primary School, Galle   |
| 2  | K.G.N. Nimansa Somasiri     | Mapota Vidyalaya, Mapota, Rathnapura          |
| 3  | P.H. Ranugi Akithma         | Sri Dharmaloka College, Kelaniya              |
| 4  | H.R.J. Sheyansa Gunathilake | St. Joseph's Balika Vidyalaya, Kegalle        |
| 5  | H.K. Suhas Dinsara          | Nakano International School, Kalutara         |
| 6  | Gauri Pahanya Wijesingha    | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya           |
| 7  | K.G. Thinula Diltaru        | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya           |
| 8  | I. Hasindu Emanda Lakshan   | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya           |
| 9  | M.S. Shezard Humaid         | Oddamavadi Dharul Uloom Vidyalaya, Batticaloa |
| 10 | M.M. Aayisha Adhn           | Oddamavadi Dharul Uloom Vidyalaya, Batticaloa |

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### Grade 3

| No | Name of the Student              | Name of the School                              |
|----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Kawini Nihinsa Menon             | Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy                  |
| 2  | W.A. Ashelee Nimnara Werahara    | St. Joseph's Balika Vidyalaya, Kegalle          |
| 3  | H.R.L. Samedi Ohansa             | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya             |
| 4  | A.M.T. Utheja Mahishin Adhikari  | Sri Dharmaloka College, Kelaniya                |
| 5  | Avanthika Ealdemensan            | Holy Family Convent National School, Jaffna     |
| 6  | M.D. Thiseni Keya Maddumage      | Ranjan Wijerathne Primary School, Eheliyagoda   |
| 7  | I.G. Imandi Sahansa Jayathilaka  | Ranjan Wijerathne Primary School, Eheliyagoda   |
| 8  | H.G. Irusha Gangamina Hapurugala | Ranjan Wijerathne Primary School, Eheliyagoda   |
| 9  | P.S. Diyansa Sayumli Silva       | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 10 | B.G.D. Thural Weerawardhane      | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 10 | M.L. Dewmi Jayawickrama          | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |

### Grade 4

| No | Name of the Student              | Name of the School                              |
|----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | H.M.W. Prabashwara Bandara       | St. Sylvester's College, Kandy                  |
| 2  | M.A. Aayisha Zainab              | Oddamavadi Dharul Uloom Vidyalaya, Batticaloa   |
| 3  | Inuki Lithumsa Bandara           | Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy                  |
| 4  | Kirusanthan Jasmiya              | Vivekanantha Vidyalayam, Kilinochchi            |
| 5  | K.A.D.D. Sethun Damsika Jayasiri | Bomaluwa Rajasinghe Primary School, Dehiowita   |
| 6  | K.H.D. Hirundika Wickramasinghe  | Bomaluwa Rajasinghe Primary School, Dehiowita   |
| 7  | W.K. Chenul Nethmika             | Siddhartha Primary School, Deniyaya             |
| 8  | D.M. Himanka Mihidum Bimsara     | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 9  | R.A. Gagana Bimsara Rupasinghe   | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 10 | N. Nethmika Tharun Darshana      | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |

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## Grade 5

| No | Name of the Student              | Name of the School                              |
|----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | K. Dulanya Yapa                  | Musaeus College, Colombo 07                     |
| 2  | M.N. Aayisha Athla               | Oddamavadi Dharul Uloom Vidyalaya, Batticaloa   |
| 3  | Sanchana Rajkumar                | Holy Family Convent National School, Jaffna     |
| 4  | B. Chathumi Akarsha Perera       | Bomaluwa Rajasinghe Primary School, Dehiowita   |
| 5  | W.D. Nethuli Sahanya Kulathilake | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 6  | W.D. Senuji Ranulya Kumari       | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 7  | S.P. Pubushi Dahammaya Priyalal  | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 8  | W.D. Hithaishi Dahamya           | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 9  | A. Sasvida Vihansa               | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |
| 10 | W.M. Yenuli Akshari Mudalige     | Pahala Maniyamgama Primary College, Avissawella |

## Grade 6

| No | Name of the Student             | Name of the School                      |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1  | Poongkuzhalii Sarveswaran       | Chundikuli Girls' College, Jaffna       |
| 2  | D.G. Ethushi Onara              | Ihalagoda Sumangala Vidyalaya, Galle    |
| 3  | Kamsiha Gowresan                | Periyapulam Maha Vidyalayam, Jaffna     |
| 4  | W.M.D. Hasaral Bandara          | Ranabima Royal College, Kandy           |
| 5  | A.M. Thidas Deepya Dewthilina   | Ranabima Royal College, Kandy           |
| 6  | H. Idushan Uthisala Weerasinghe | Ranabima Royal College, Kandy           |
| 7  | G.M. Hiviru Minsitha Gamlath    | Ranabima Royal College, Kandy           |
| 8  | W.M. Tharusha Kasuntha Wijekoon | Badulla Central College, Badulla        |
| 9  | W. Sethumi Vinudini Thimethma   | Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy          |
| 10 | Lingarajah Aradhana             | Pandateruppu Girls' High School, Jaffna |

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## **School Science Competition (SSC)**

**Theme: “AI for Safety and Resilience”**



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## School Science Competition (SSC)

School Science Competitions (SSC) are annually conducted by Science Communication and Outreach Division of the NSF to popularize science among the school community. Accordingly, six (06) competitions under the theme “AI for Safety and Resilience” were conducted in 2026. First round of the competitions such as drama song, viridu and role play were conducted through recorded submissions, and final round was conducted in person with performance on stage in the Auditorium of the Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA) on 6-9 August 2026.

The Science Competitions conducted on the Theme in 2026

1. Digital Storytelling
2. Viridu Competition
3. Short Science Stories (fiction)
4. Song Competition
5. Roleplay Competition
6. Drama

**Theme: “AI for Safety and Resilience”**

### Evaluation Panel of the School Science Competitions 2026

|   | Name                        | Affiliation/ Designation                                                                                                                |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dr Jayantha Wattavidanage   | Deputy Director General, South Asian Centre for Teacher Development, UNESCO Category II Center                                          |
| 2 | Dr Seetha I. Wickremasinghe | Former Acting Director General and Additional Director, National Science Foundation                                                     |
| 3 | Prof. Mangala Senanayake    | Senior Professor of Drama, Oriental Ballet and Contemporary Dance, Faculty of Dance and Drama, University of Visual and Performing Arts |
| 4 | Prof. R.M. Dharmadasa       | Director / Research Professor, Herbal Technology Section, Industrial Technology Institute                                               |
| 5 | Dr P.R.M.P. Dilrukshi       | Head, Science Communication and Outreach Division, National Science Foundation                                                          |
| 6 | Dr N. Karthikeyan           | Senior Lecturer, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, The Open University of Sri Lanka                                            |
| 7 | Mr Maneesha Dugannarala     | Lecturer, Department of Drama, Cinema and Television, Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya                                     |
| 8 | Ms Chathuri Gamage          | Deputy Director of Education, Ministry of Education                                                                                     |

## Winners of the School Science Competitions

### 1. Digital Storytelling Competition 2026

| No. | Name of the Student          | School                                         | Place           |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | P. Senitha Rashminda Thisera | Ranasinghe Premadasa National School, Hasalaka | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2   | J.W. Nathari Aanya           | Highway International School, Homagama         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3   | Sithun W. Senanayake         | Mahinda College, Galle                         | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

### 2. Viridu Competition 2026

| No. | Name of the Student                                                                                                                            | School                                        | Place           |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | H. P. T. Gimsara Hiripitiya<br>W. D. S. Pranandu<br><br>Lyricist – Ms H.N.D. Dissanayake<br>Teacher in charge – Ms I.W.G.S.S. Rathnasiri       | Thoranakada Dharmaraja Vidyalaya, Eheliyagoda | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2   | W M U N Hasarel<br>A.J.S. Sathisra Chandrasekara<br><br>Lyricist – Ms K.P. Deepika Prasangi Kudapelpita<br>Music teacher – Ms Ayoni Weerasinha | Agrabodhi Maha Vidyalaya, Vavuniya            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3   | R.R.G.S. Priyankara Rajapaksha<br><br>Ms Sriyangani Rajakaruna (Art teacher)<br>Teacher in charge – Ms Akila Samaradiwakara                    | Padiyapelella Maha Vidyalaya, Padiyapelella   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

### 3. Short Science Stories (fiction) Competition 2026

| No.                               | Name of the Student      | School                                    | Place           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Sinhala Medium (Grade 6-8)</b> |                          |                                           |                 |
| 1                                 | K.G. Sithumi Prasanthika | Kiripedda Kanishta Vidyalaya, Karandeniya | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                                 | G.M.M.D. Onadi Moras     | Thopawewa National College, Polonnaruwa   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                                 | Manuki Thambavita        | Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

|                                    |                                    |                                                            |                 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Appreciation Certificates</b>   |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | K.B. Sathya Dilrukshi Gunathilaka  | Kiripedda Kanishta Vidyalaya, Karadeniya                   |                 |
| 2                                  | M.D. Dulangana                     | Thopawewa National School, Polonnaruwa                     |                 |
| 3                                  | Kodiarachchige Dinadi Manulya      | Thopawewa National School, Polonnaruwa                     |                 |
| <b>Grade 9-12 - Sinhala Medium</b> |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | A.A. Dilani Navodya Alahakoon      | Ihalagama Sri Seelarathana Kanishta Vidyalaya, Nelundeniya | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                                  | Gayuni Thambavita                  | Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya                         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                                  | Y.K.H.K. Yatiwella                 | Padiyapelella Maha Vidyalaya, Padiyapelella                | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Appreciation Certificates</b>   |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | B.H. Jayani Lakshika               | Kiripedda Kanishta Vidyalaya, Karadeniya                   |                 |
| 2                                  | H.H.A. Sithumini Bagya             | Harischandra College, Negombo                              |                 |
| 3                                  | J.M.D. Ruvisha Dinithi Yogya       | Harischandra College, Negombo                              |                 |
| <b>Grade 6-8 -Tamil Medium</b>     |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | Amirtharanjan Delakshany           | Jaffna Hindu Ladies College, Jaffna                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                                  | S. Makarishan                      | Thambiluvil M.M.V., Thambiluvil                            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                                  | Geolyn Rino Yogatheepan            | Vembadi Girls' High School                                 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Grade 9-12 -Tamil Medium</b>    |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | Thayakumaran Keshika               | Chavakachcheri Hindu College, Jaffna                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                                  | Thayakumaran Abisangar             | Chavakachcheri Hindu College, Jaffna                       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                                  | Sethuja Satheersan                 | Victoria College, Chulipuram                               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Grade 6-8- English Medium</b>   |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | Chagi Abeypala                     | Gateway College Dehiwala                                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                                  | Ashmi Methusari Bandara            | Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy                             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                                  | Haroon Ayra Mehrish                | Akkaraipattu Muslim Central College, Akkaraipattu          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Appreciation Certificates</b>   |                                    |                                                            |                 |
| 1                                  | Senuli Rashwitha Menon             | Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy                             |                 |
| 2                                  | Chanuga Rithmitha Manamperi Korala | Royal College, Colombo 07                                  |                 |
| 3                                  | Sandali Yashodhya Wickramarathne   | Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya, Colombo 07                |                 |

| Grade 9-12 English Medium |                            |                                                   |                 |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1                         | Vinudi Ruvithma Ramanayake | Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya, Colombo 07       | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2                         | G.K. Saheli Himansa        | Highway International School, Homagama            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3                         | F.R.F. Rimaza              | St. Anthony's Girls' College, Kandy               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Appreciation Certificates |                            |                                                   |                 |
| 1                         | Vikasini Muhunthan         | Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna                |                 |
| 2                         | K.M. Dewmi Maleesha        | Harischandra College, Negombo                     |                 |
| 3                         | S.F. Afeeq Areej           | Akkaraipattu Muslim Central College, Akkaraipattu |                 |

#### 4. Role Play Competition 2026

| No. | Name of the Student                | School                                 | Place           |
|-----|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | J.W. Nathari Aanya                 | Highway International School, Homagama | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2   | G.I. Aeshan K. Fonseka             | Kingswood College, Kandy               | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3   | O.A. Nimesha Thathsarani Kandepola | Harischandra National College, Negombo | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

#### 5. Science Drama Competition 2026

| No. | Award                  | Name of the student, School            | Place           |
|-----|------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | Science Drama on Stage | Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5   | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 2   |                        | Harischandra National Collage, Negombo | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 3   |                        | Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna     | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

| Award                   | Name of the winner                                                         | School                                       |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Best Actor              | O.A. Nimesha Thathsarani Kandepola<br>(performed a male character -Doctor) | Harischandra National College, Negombo       |
| Best Actress            | H.H.A. Sithumini Bhagya<br>(performed Mother's character)                  | Harischandra National College, Negombo       |
| Best Supporting Actor   | J. Johndishan                                                              | Meesalai Weerasingam Central College, Jaffna |
| Best Supporting Actress | S. Piruththika                                                             | Meesalai Weerasingam Central College, Jaffna |

| Award             | Name of the winner                     | School                                       |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Best Music        | Mr R. Jeyakanthan (Music Teacher)      | Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna           |
| Best Choreography | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana (Drama Teacher) | Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5         |
| Best Set Design   | S. Apoorvapalan,                       | Meesalai Weerasingam Central College, Jaffna |
|                   | C.K. Shavishkan,                       | Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5         |
| Best Costumes     | H.K.D Nimeshika Ishani                 | Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5         |
| Best Drama Script | M.M. Sithumi Vihara                    | Harischandra National College, Negombo       |
| Best Director     | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana,                | Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5         |

**Drama Team: 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Dudley Senanayake College, Colombo 5**  
**(Sinhala Medium)**  
**Title : Anora**

| Actors        | Name                          | Role Name          | Grade    |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Student 1     | B.N. Vishmi Theshila Fernando | Maali              | Grade 9  |
| Student 2     | H.K.D. Nimeshika Ishani       | Teacher/ Nimeshika | Grade 11 |
| Student 3     | H.K.D. Iruni Meththara        | AI & Hiruni        | Grade 7  |
| Student 4     | N.P. Githmi Vihanga           | Githmi             | Grade 9  |
| Student 5     | T. Navodya Pabasara           | Navodya            | Grade 11 |
| Student 6     | T. Lakshan                    | Lakshan            | Grade 9  |
| Student 7     | J.D. Thenuri Kamini           | Thenuri            | Grade 11 |
| Student 8     | P. Vigneshwaran               | Stage Manager      | Grade 11 |
| Student 9     | G.D.D.I. Pieris               | Stage Manager      | Grade 11 |
| Music Team    | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana        | Music Director     |          |
|               | Dumindu Lakshan Bandaranayake | Instrument player  | Grade 12 |
|               | C.K. Shavishkan               | Instrument player  | Grade 12 |
|               | A. Anuhas Pradeep             | Instrument player  | Grade 7  |
| Choreographer | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana        | Instrument player  |          |
| Stage Setup   | C.K. Shavishkan               | Instrument player  | Grade 12 |
| Script Writer | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana        | Instrument player  |          |

|                   |                               |          |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Costumes Design   | H.K.D Nimeshika Ishani        | Grade 11 |
| Director          | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana        |          |
| Drama teacher     | Ms Yeshmi Jayawardhana        |          |
| Teacher in charge | Ms Amali Kalpani Perera       |          |
| Assisting         | B.N. Vishmi Theshila Fernando | Grade 9  |
|                   | T. Lakshan                    | Grade 9  |
|                   | Dumindu Lakshan Bandaranayake | Grade 12 |
|                   | N.P. Githmi Vihanga           | Grade 9  |
|                   | T. Navodya Pabasara           | Grade 11 |
|                   | J.D. Thenuri Kamini           | Grade 11 |

**Drama Team: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Harishchandra National Collage, Negombo**  
**Title: Nihada Daththayaka Herda Shakiya**

| Actors            | Name                         | Role Name       | Grade    |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Student 1         | E.M. Isurindi Nuwandara      | Nurse (green)   | Grade 11 |
| Student 2         | O.A. Nimesha Thathsarani     | Doctor Asanka   | Grade 11 |
| Student 3         | J.M.D. Ruvisha Dinithi Yogya | Doctor Wickrama | Grade 11 |
| Student 4         | H.H.A. Sithumini Bhagya      | Mother          | Grade 11 |
| Student 5         | W.D. Hashen Radeesha Costa   | Vimal (Patient) | Grade 11 |
| Student 6         | N.H.G. Sheshan Nideshara     | Mr Rathnayake   | Grade 11 |
| Music Team        | K. Panchali Swetha           |                 | Grade 11 |
|                   | R.G. Dineth Thathsara        |                 | Grade 11 |
|                   | R.J.K.D. Sadew Prabashwara   |                 | Grade 11 |
| Choreographer     | Ms M.M. Sithumi Vihara       |                 |          |
| Script Writer     | Ms M.M. Sithumi Vihara       |                 |          |
| Drama teacher     | Ms M.M. Sithumi Vihara       |                 |          |
| Teacher in charge | Ms A.T. Nelka Munasinghe     |                 |          |

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**Drama Team: Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna****Theme: AI's view**

| Actors             | Name                            | Role Name | Grade    |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Student 1          | Thivya Varatharajah             | AI        | Grade 11 |
| Student 2          | Bavatharani Saravana            | Dr.Elara  | Grade 11 |
| Student 3          | Sayera Kirubakaran              | Jeeva     | Grade 11 |
| Student 4          | Pavisha Balamurali              | Tree 1    | Grade 11 |
| Student 5          | Shaindhavie Muralidas           | Narrator  | Grade 11 |
| Student 6          | Shassanki Shutharson            | Hari      | Grade 11 |
| Student 7          | Luckshika Jeevarajan            | Karnan    | Grade 11 |
| Student 8          | Nithiyasri Vithiyatharakkurukal | Police    | Grade 11 |
| Student 9          | Vaishalini Umapalan             | Tree 2    | Grade 11 |
| Student 10         | Evanchalin Lawrence Culas       | Sameera   | Grade 11 |
| Student 11         | Sirushdika Muguntthan           | Krish     | Grade 11 |
| Student 12         | Abenaya Ramanan                 | Viyana    | Grade 11 |
| Student 13         | Ashwini Visitharan              | Anuruthra | Grade 11 |
| Student 14         | Nethra Mangaleswaran            | Dr.Sri    | Grade 11 |
| Student 15         | Kirushanika Sasikumar           | Vishwa    | Grade 11 |
| <b>Music team</b>  |                                 |           |          |
| Student 1          | Manasvini Sivakanthan           |           | Grade 11 |
| Student 2          | Ahrabi Sivapathamoorthy         |           | Grade 11 |
| Student 3          | Thadshayini Thushyanthan        |           | Grade 11 |
| Student 4          | Cherinaa Thuvaragan             |           | Grade 11 |
| Student 5          | Shalini Selvanithilingeshwaran  |           | Grade 11 |
| Choreographer      | Shaindhavie Muralidas           | Students  | Grade 11 |
| Stage Setup        | Abenaya Ramanan,                | Students  | Grade 11 |
| Script Writer      | Shassanki Shutharson            | Students  | Grade 11 |
| Drama teacher      | Mrs Manoranjini Logeswarasarma  |           |          |
| Teachers in charge | Mrs Thatpara Kunatheepan        |           |          |
| Music Director     | Mr R. Jeyakanthan               |           |          |
| Assisting          | Sirushdika Muguntthan           | Students  | Grade 11 |
|                    | Kirushanika Sasikumar           | Students  | Grade 11 |
|                    | Thivya Varatharajah             | Students  | Grade 11 |

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## Science Research Project Competition (SRPC)



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## Science Research Project Competition (SRPC)

### Preamble:

To inculcate a research culture among the school community, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has been conducting the School Science Research Project Competition (SRPC) annually since 2008. The SRPC 2025 was initiated in June 2025, and students whose project proposals were selected carried out their research under the supervision of senior scientists from universities or research institutions for a period of six to eight months. Following continuous progress monitoring by the NSF, eligible projects advanced to the competition stage, which was conducted in two phases, Step I and Step II. Step I was held to select the best twenty (20) projects, and the final evaluation (Step II) took place on 04<sup>th</sup> May 2026, where ten (10) national winners were selected.

### Evaluation Panel of the Science Research Project Competition 2025

|    | Name                          | Affiliation/ Designation                                                                                   |
|----|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Prof. Inoka Perera (Chairman) | Professor ,Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo                                |
| 2  | Prof. Janitha Liyanage        | Senior Professor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya                      |
| 3  | Prof. A.D.L. Chandani Perera  | Dean, College of Chemical Sciences                                                                         |
| 4  | Dr N. Karthikeyan             | Senior Lecturer ,Department of Physics, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka          |
| 5  | Prof. Manuj C. Weerasinghe    | Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo                    |
| 6  | Prof. R.M. Dharmadasa         | Senior Deputy Director<br>Biotechnology Unit, Industrial Technology Institute                              |
| 7  | Dr P.R.M.P. Dilrukshi         | Head, Science Communication Division, National Science Foundation                                          |
| 8  | Eng. Neil Abeysekera          | Senior Professor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya                      |
| 9  | Dr Iresha Ratnayake           | Visiting Lecture/ Researcher in Mathematics Education and Teacher Educator, PGIS, University of Peradeniya |
| 10 | Dr Pradeepika Saputhanthri    | Senior Lecturer, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Colombo,                                      |

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## Science Research Projects Competition - 2025

### Best 10 National Winners

- 1. Project Title:** Dual-Anchor Distance Features: An Interpretable Feature Engineering Framework for Species Distribution Modeling  
**School:** Harischandra National College, Negombo  
**Students:** K.G.G. Kavisha Nethsara Daham Amarasinghe  
**Teacher In Charge:** A.T. Nelka Munasinghe  
**Principal Supervisor:** Prof. Sampath Seneviratne, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo
- 2. Project Title:** Graphene-based nanotechnology in the Internet for sensing and controlling purposes  
**School:** Mahanama College, Colombo 3  
**Student:** K.G. Navindu Obhasa Jayawardhane  
**Teacher In Charge:** D.M.T.D. Dissanayake  
**Principal Supervisor:** Prof. Dilushan R. Jayasundara, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo.
- 3. Project Title:** Sustainable Hydrophobic Fibre Materials for Composite Applications  
**School:** Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya, Colombo 07  
**Student:** P.A. Thewmali Piyadasa  
**Teacher In Charge:** K.H.B.B. Jayasekera  
**Principal Supervisor:** Dr. Madhubhashini Maddumaarachchi, Faculty of Applied Science, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.
- 4. Project Title:** Assessment of awareness and knowledge of triggering factors of Eczema among patients attending Polonnaruwa Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka  
**School:** Royal Central College, Polonnaruwa  
**Student:** D.W. Hasandi Himara Dahanayake  
**Teacher In Charge:** S.I.W. Samaranayake  
**Principal Supervisor:** Prof. Janith Warnasekara, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University.
- 5. Project Title:** Physical activity and functional constipation in school children aged 14-16: A comparative study  
**School:** Girls High School, Kandy  
**Student:** Sunehri Suchetha Hettiarachchi  
**Teacher In Charge:** Lakshmi Athapaththu  
**Principal Supervisor:** Dr Sachini Arunarathne, Senior Registrar in Pediatric Surgery, Sirimavo Bandaranaike Specialized Children's Hospital, Peradeniya.

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6. **Project Title:** The Role of Classroom Thermal Comfort in Shaping Students' Cognitive Engagement: Evidence from Sri Lanka.  
**School:** Muthur Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya, Muthur, Trincomalee  
**Students:** B.B. Edirisinghe  
M.M. Malika  
M.S.F. Samrah  
**Teacher In Charge:** D.M.S. Dasanayake  
**Principal Supervisor:** Eng. I.P.T. S. Wickramasooriya,  
Department of Mechanical Engineering,  
The Open University of Sri Lanka.
7. **Project Title:** Eco-Friendly Packaging  
**School:** Saiva Mangaiyar Vidyalayam Colombo 6 (Hindu Ladies College)  
**Students:** Kaarunya Dharshan  
Harisnani Premachanthiran  
**Teacher In Charge:** R. Piriampillai  
**Principal Supervisor:** Dr T.M. Sampath U. Gunathilake,  
Faculty of Applied Sciences,  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
8. **Project Title:** Synthesis of modified table salt using moringa leaves  
**School:** Paddiruppu MMV, Kaluwanchikudi  
**Students:** P. Abinaya  
V. Pirunthika  
J. Tharshalini  
**Teacher In Charge:** Selvarajah Thevakumar  
**Principal Supervisor:** Prof. M. Sithambaresan, Department of Chemistry,  
Eastern University
9. **Project Title:** Internal Factors Influencing Air Quality of the classrooms among National Schools in the Jaffna education zone  
**School:** Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College, Jaffna  
**Students:** Rubaseelan Jayamitha  
**Teacher In Charge:** Jeyaruby Karunananthan  
**Principal Supervisor:** Dr Mathanki Sooriyakanthan, Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Jaffna.
10. **Project Title:** Effects of live and dried azolla on growth and yield of paddy variety (*Oryza sativa*) 'Bg-352' under controlled pot condition  
**School:** Royal Central College, Polonnaruwa  
**Students:** R.R. Siheli Thuhansa Ranabahu  
T.R. Pahan Pramodya  
R. Pasangi Malshakya Rathnayake  
**Teacher In Charge:** S.I.W. Samaranayake  
**Principal Supervisor:** Dr Udeni Dewasinghe, Department of Plant Sciences,  
Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.
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## **NSF Science Popularization Awards**



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## The NSF Best Performed School Science Society for the Year 2026

The National Science Foundation (NSF) felicitates the best performed School Science Societies under the NSF School Science Society Network by evaluating their performance on the previous year by giving “star ratings”. The awards are given to the Schools Science Societies that received 5-3-stars at the evaluation. The school, Teacher in-charge of the Science Society, President and Secretary of the School receive awards and certificates at the Ceremony.

|   | Winners of Star Ratings for the best Science Society 2026 |                                            |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|   | Award                                                     | Name of the school                         |
| 1 | Five Stars                                                | Paddiruppu National School, Kaluwanchikudy |
| 2 | Four Stars                                                | Harischandra National College, Negombo     |
| 3 | Four Stars                                                | Mathurata Maha Vidyalaya, Mathurata        |

### Certificates Awarded for Office Bearers of the Science Societies

#### Five Stars Awards: Paddiruppu National School, Kaluwanchikudy

Principal : Mr M. Sabeskumar

Presidents (Student) : Jeevanayagam Rukshanth

Secretary (Student): Matharathanathan Nivithan

Teacher Coordinator of the Science Society : Mr T. Yutharsan

#### Four Stars: Harischandra National College, Negombo

Principal : Mr U.G.V.D. Siriwardana

Presidents (Student) : R.J.K.D. Sadew Prabhashwara Ranathunga

Secretary (Student): H.H.A. Sithumini Bhagya

Teacher Coordinator of the Science Society : Mrs A.T. Nelka Munasinghe

#### Four Stars: Mathurata Maha Vidyalaya, Mathurata

Principal : Mr Y.S.M. Nawarathne

Presidents (Student) : R.G. Heshan Rashmika

Secretary (Student) : H.M. Chiraji Nawodya

Teacher Coordinator of the Science Society : Mrs N.G.H.M.N.K.D. Herath

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## **NSF Science Popularization Awards: Celebrating the Champions of Science Communication**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) of Sri Lanka has instituted the Science Popularization Awards as a prestigious initiative that honors the personnel who have made outstanding contributions to the dissemination of scientific knowledge. These awards are designed to bridge the gap between complex scientific ideas and the everyday lives of citizens, ensuring that science becomes a shared cultural resource rather than a distant academic pursuit. The objective of this Awards are to encourage individuals and institutions to communicate science in ways that are clear, engaging, and relevant. By rewarding excellence in science communication, the NSF seeks to foster a culture where scientific literacy is valued and promoted. The awards highlight the importance of making science understandable to schoolchildren, policymakers, and the general public, thereby strengthening the foundation for a knowledge based society. They also serve to motivate professionals to adopt innovative methods of teaching, reporting, and presenting science, ensuring that the next generation grows up with a strong appreciation of scientific inquiry. The awards are presented across three major categories: scientists, media personnel, and teachers. Each category reflects a unique dimension of science communication and acknowledges the different ways in which knowledge can be popularized.

### **NSF Awards for Teachers in Science Popularization**

NSF Awards for Teachers in Promoting Science acknowledge the, pivotal role of educators in nurturing scientific curiosity among students. Teachers are often the first point of contact between young minds and the world of science, and their ability to inspire can shape future generations of scientists, engineers, and innovators. The Science Education Popularization Award honors teachers who have successfully integrated science into everyday classroom experiences, while the Innovative Teaching they utilized highlights those who employ creative methods, such as experiments, projects, or technology enhanced learning to make science learning engaging. By recognizing teachers, the NSF emphasizes that science popularization begins at the grassroots level, within schools and classrooms.

These awards comprise one Lifetime Award, up to two Commendation Awards, and Appreciation Awards. However, in 2026, a Lifetime Award for Teachers was not presented, as no applicants met the required criteria.

#### **Certificate of Commendations:**

Ms N.G.H.M. Nirmala K.D. Herath - Mathurata Maha Vidyalaya, Mathurata

#### **Certificate of Appreciation**

1. Ms Nirosha Kumari Weerasekera - Lihiniyawa Kanista Vidyalaya, Lihiniyawa, Kalutara
2. Ms Sutharshiny Amirtharanjan - Jaffna Periyampulam Maha Vidyalayam, Jaffna

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## **NSF Award for Media Personal in Science Popularization 2026**

For media personnel, the awards celebrate journalists, broadcasters, and digital communicators who bring science into newspapers, television programs, radio shows, and online platforms. In an era where misinformation can spread rapidly, the role of the media in presenting accurate, accessible, and engaging science stories is more critical than ever. Awards in this category include recognition for the Best Science Communicator in print, television, radio, or digital media, as well as special honors for Creative Science Storytelling. These accolades encourage media professionals to use innovative formats, such as documentaries, podcasts, or interactive digital the content to make science appealing and relatable to diverse audiences.

### **Lifetime Award in Science Popularization 2026**

**Mr Asoka Dias**

#### **Certificate of Commendations:**

- 1. Mr S.P. Kulathunga Arachchi**
- 2. Mr Malaka P. Rodrigo**

## **NSF Award for Scientists on Science Popularization**

For scientists, the awards recognize those who go beyond their research duties to actively engage with the public. This may include writing popular science articles, delivering public lectures, participating in outreach programs, or developing educational resources. Within this category, distinctions such as the Lifetime Achievement Award honor individuals who have dedicated to science popularization, while Commendation Awards and Appreciation Awards highlight mid career and emerging scientists who show promise in communicating their work to society. By honoring scientists, the NSF underscores the idea that research gains its true value when it is shared and understood by the wider community.

These awards comprise one Lifetime Award, up to two Commendation Awards, and Appreciation Awards. However, in 2026, Certificates of Commendation and Appreciations were not presented, as no applicants met the required criteria.

### **Lifetime Award in Science Popularization**

**Dr Ruchira Nalinga Wijesena - Institute of Technology, University of Morotuwa**

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## International Competitions

### Sri Lankan Delegation to the 10th Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camp & Teacher Workshop 2026, Guangxi, China

The 10th Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camp & Teacher Workshop 2026 provides an international platform for outstanding students and teachers to engage in science, technology, innovation, and cross-cultural exchange. The Sri Lankan delegation comprises five students selected from among the best national winners of the NSF Science Research Project Competition (SRPC) 2025/26 and two teachers recognized for their exceptional contribution to promoting school-based research and mentoring young researchers.

The student participants were selected based on their outstanding performance in scientific research and innovation demonstrated through the SRPC. The teacher participants were selected in recognition of their long-standing commitment to fostering a research culture in schools, guiding student research projects, and supporting the implementation of the NSF Science Research Training Programme and Science Research Project Competition (SRPC) over many years. A review of school performance in the SRPC over the previous five years identified these teachers as having supervised the highest number of winning projects among the top national awardees. Their participation in the programme reflects Sri Lanka's commitment to promoting scientific excellence, innovation, and international collaboration among students and educators.

#### Students

| Name of Student                           | School                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| K.G.G. Kavisha Nethsara Daham Amarasinghe | Harischandra National School, Negombo    |
| K.G. Navindu Obhasa Jayawardane           | Mahanama College, Colombo                |
| P.A.T. Thewmali Piyadasa                  | Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya, Colombo |
| D.W. Hasandi Himara Dahanayake            | Royal Central College, Polonnaruwa       |
| Sunehri Suchetha Hettiarachchi            | Girls' High School, Kandy                |

#### Teachers

| Name of Teacher          | School                                 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Ms A.T. Nelka Munasinghe | Harischandra National School, Negombo  |
| Mr S. Thevakumar         | BT/PD/Paddiruppu Madya Maha Vidyalayam |

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Committee Members: Prof. Janitha Liyanage

Prof. Manuj Weerasinghe

Eng. Neil Abeysekara

Prof. R.M. Dharmadasa

Prof. Sudeera Ranwala

Dr N. Karthikeyan

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Prof. Samantha Hearth

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Ms Maduka Senarathne -Senior Scientific Officer (SSO)

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Ms Apeksha Hearth -Scientific Officers (SO)

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