



**On Sirasa TV:
Thursdays
at 10.45 pm**

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TVE Asia Pacific



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Sri Lanka 2048 to look at coastal challenge: Saving ecosystems and species under pressure

The coastal regions of Sri Lanka contribute a significant 44 per cent of the national GDP, derived from sectors as diverse as manufacturing, trade, tourism, banking, insurance, agriculture and fisheries. Meanwhile, 25 per cent of the total population lives in Divisional Secretariat divisions with maritime boundaries.

This concentration of people and economic activity exerts many pressures on coastal and marine ecosystems. As most of our coastline recovers from the devastating 2004 tsunami, there is renewed interest in balancing economic activity with proper natural resource management. But as the post-tsunami experience showed, implementing scientifically based regulations will succeed only if there is community involvement and support.

With new harbours and airports coming up, and offshore oil exploration getting underway, are we paying enough attention to reducing adverse impacts on coastal and marine biodiversity? What is the current status of ecosystems such as mangroves, lagoons, river estuaries and coral reefs? How and where do marine protected areas support habitat and species conservation in Sri Lanka?

These questions will be raised in this week's programme in *Sri Lanka 2048*, the series of TV debates exploring Sri Lanka's prospects for a sustainable future in the Twenty First Century. This one-hour debate, to be shown on **Sirasa TV at 10.45 pm on Thursday 10 July 2008**, brings together representatives from academic, civil society, government and private sectors to talk about issues, choices and alternatives.

This week's panel comprises: **Dr Mala Amarasinghe**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Botany, University of Kelaniya; **Anil Premaratne**, Additional Director, Coast Conservation Department; **Dr Ranjith de Silva**, expert on coral reefs; and **Wasantha Ratnayake**, Deputy Director, Department of Wildlife Conservation. The debate is moderated by Sirasa TV's versatile presenter **Kingsly Rathnayaka**.



The debate explores how a multitude of local, national and global factors impact on coastal and marine life, including: pollution of the coastal land areas as well as ocean waters from inland sources, coastal activities and shipping; tourism and other economic activity in the coastal zone; destructive fishing practices; sand mining in major river beds and estuaries; climate change and El Nino phenomena; shrimp farming; and ornamental fish trade.

As the interface between land and sea, the coastal regions will play an even greater role in the coming decades in our harnessing resources from the marine exclusive economic zone - nearly seven times the extent of Sri Lanka's landmass. In search of sustainable solutions, the panel and audience discuss the right responses through legal, regulatory, economic and educational approaches.

Sri Lanka 2048 debates are co-produced by TVE Asia Pacific, an educational media foundation, and IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, in partnership with MTV Channel (Private) Limited. This editorially independent TV series is supported under the Raising Environmental Consciousness in Society (RECS) project, sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands.

For more information on ***Sri Lanka 2048*** series, visit: www.srilanka2048.com

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