

DAILY STOCK MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, 09 January 2019



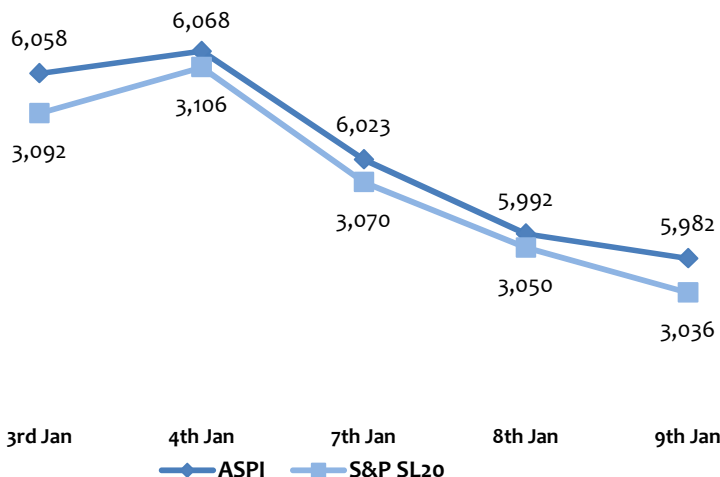
**ASHA PHILLIP
SECURITIES LTD**

Sri Lanka

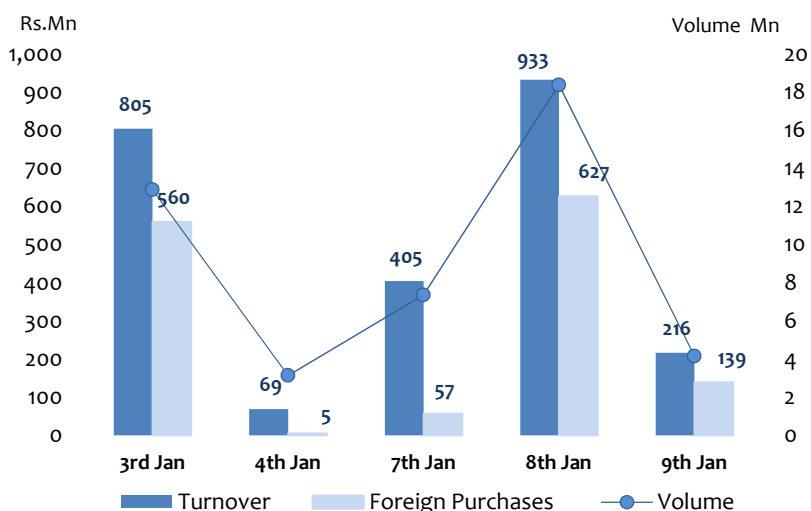
Daily Market Statistics

Index	9th Jan	8th Jan	Change	% Change
ASPI	5,982.19	5,992.36	↓ (10.17)	↓ -0.17%
S&P SL20	3,036.09	3,049.95	↓ (13.86)	↓ -0.45%
Market Stats (LKR, Mn)		9th Jan	8th Jan	% Change
Turnover		216.42	932.96	↓ -76.8%
Domestic Purchases		77.46	305.88	↓ -74.7%
Domestic Sales		73.15	181.10	↓ -59.6%
Foreign Purchases		138.96	627.08	↓ -77.8%
Foreign Sales		143.27	751.86	↓ -80.9%
Share Volume		4.15	18.39	↓ -77.5%
Market capitalization (Bn)		2,806.52	2,811.29	↓ -0.17%
PER		9.51	9.58	↓ -0.73%
PBV		1.15	1.15	↓ 0.00%

Market Indices



Turnover, Volume and Foreign Purchase



Performance of the Market

- Colombo Bourse continued to witness volatility due to lower investor participation. Investor sentiments improved, compared to the previous sessions. T-Bill auction yields witnessed slight decline. Government secured a US\$ 400Mn swap facility from RBI.
- Benchmark index ASPI moved between 5,973.28-5,999.08 points and settled the day at 5,982.19 with a loss of 10.17 points (-0.17%).
- Major contributors for the movement in ASPI were **MELS (+5.5)**, **CTCE (+2.9)**, **CONN (+1.2)**, **SINS (+0.7)**, **TILE (+0.4)**, **BRWN (-2.9)**, **SLTL (-2.7)**, **JKH (-2.7)**, **COMB (-1.6)** & **SPEN (-1.1)**
- S&P SL20 index also followed a same trend and settled the day at 3,036.09 with a loss of 13.86 points (-0.45%).
- The day's turnover was recorded as LKR 216.42Mn, down by 77% from its previously recorded LKR 932.96Mn. Foreign investors remained net sellers for the day.
- The total market capitalization stood at LKR 2.81Tn, indicating an YTD loss of 1.16%.
- The market PER & PBV were at 9.51x & 1.15x respectively.

Top Contributors – Turnover

1. Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC (COMB) contributed 39% (85.2Mn) of the turnover. COMB traded between LKR 113.00 & 114.90 and settled the day at LKR 113.20 with a loss of LKR 0.80 (-0.70%)
2. Hatton National Bank PLC (HNB) had contributed LKR 58.6Mn. HNB traded between LKR 203 & 204 and settled the day at LKR 203.40 with a loss of LKR 0.60 (-0.29%)
3. Ceylon Tobacco Company PLC (CTC) contributed LKR 10.79Mn. CTC traded between LKR 1,430 & 1,460 and settled the day at LKR 1,430 with a loss of LKR 0.30 (-0.02%)

Top contributors - Traded Volume

1. Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC traded a total of 0.75Mn shares.
2. Hatton National Bank PLC (0.29Mn shares)
3. Anilana Hotels and Properties PLC (0.27Mn shares).

Sectorial Overview

1. Bank Finance & Insurance (BFI) stood on top providing LKR 162.72Mn capturing 75% of the total turnover.
2. Hotels & Travels (H&T) provided LKR 14.62Mn to the daily aggregated turnover.
3. Beverage Food & Tobacco (BFT) provided LKR 12.04Mn

Daily Foreign Transactions

Net Foreign Purchases

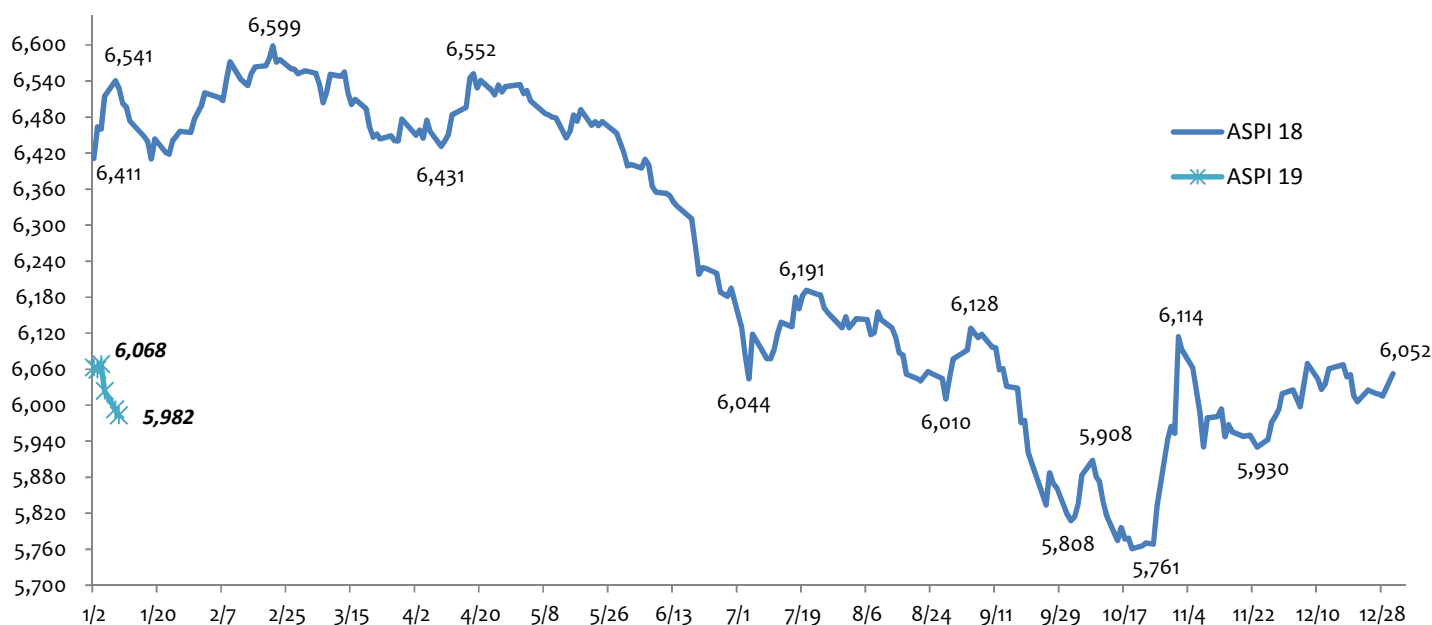
Company Name	Avg Price	Net change in Qty	Net Foreign Inflow
HNB (+)	203.40	81,328	16,542,115
COMMERCIAL BANK (+)	114.00	9,668	1,102,152
GRAIN ELEVATORS (+)	59.50	13,191	784,865
NAT. DEV. BANK (+)	104.00	6,524	678,496
RICH PIERIS EXP	221.30	1,215	268,880
HAYLEYS	185.00	1,400	259,000
HAYLEYS FIBRE	80.0	3,080	246,400
HAYLEYS FABRIC	9.20	18,300	168,360
TEA SMALLHOLDER	26.00	3,600	93,600
CIC[X.0000]	30.00	1,315	39,450

Net Foreign Sales

Company Name	Avg Price	Net change in Qty	Net Foreign Outflow
SAMPATH (+)	219.10	(4,945)	(1,083,450)
SLT (+)	23.90	(28,622)	(684,066)
LANKA IOC	22.80	(19,995)	(455,886)
BAIRAHA FARMS	128.00	(3,223)	(412,544)
CIC	40.70	(3,350)	(136,345)
JKH	153.10	(781)	(119,571)
ALUFAB	17.00	(6,550)	(111,350)
RENUKA HOTELS	54.00	(400)	(21,600)

- **Aggregate foreign buying** for the day totaled up to **LKR 138.96Mn.**
- **Foreign sales** for the day amounted to **LKR 143.27Mn.**
- **Net foreign outflow** for the day was **LKR 4.31Mn**, **YTD net foreign outflow** presently stands at **LKR 477.69Mn.**
- **HNB** notched the “Top Net Purchasers” slot with a net inflow of **LKR 16.54Mn** whilst **SAMP** notched the “Top net Sellers” slot with a net outflow of **LKR 1.08Mn.**

Year-to-Date ASPI Movement - 2018 & 2019



Key Announcements

Trading suspension on The Finance looms as firm seeks more time

The Finance Company PLC (TFC) has sought further time from SEC to resolve the serious matters outstanding in its books marred by omissions and errors, which led the company auditor to issue qualified opinion on its financial statement, last year. The concerns ranged from failure to consolidate TFC's subsidiaries and associate companies in the books of accounts and the company's ability to remain in business as a going concern due to a large hole in the balance sheet, which is getting further widened with the continuous losses.

For the year ended March 31, 2018, TFC lost Rs.1.8Bn and had a negative net assets value of Rs.14.5Bn, making going concern a serious issue. The auditors have also failed to establish the ownership of the properties occupied by Ceylinco Sussex College, part of TFC, which has mortgaged those properties. The auditors had been unable to ascertain the adequacy of the amount of obligations. In 2010, the Central Bank converted 10% of the company's deposits worth Rs.2.0Bn in to non-voting shares and raised another Rs.1.6Bn through a public offer. ([dailymirror.lk](#))

Companies under Trading Suspension

Company	MIRA	CIFL	ESL	PCH	PCP	SING	CIFL	SFS
From	26-Feb-15	23-Nov-17	5-Jan-16	2-Apr-18			23-Nov-17	2-July 18.
Reason	SEC Directive	status	Weak position	as per CSE Listing Rules			CBSL	Listing Rules
Company	LCEM	MEL	HUEJ	AINV	CFT	LLMP	PCHH	
From	7-Sep 18.	25-Sep 18.	26-Nov-18.	10-Dec-2018 for Non-submission of				
Reason	Auditor's Qualified Opinion		***	Non-submission of Annual Reports				

***Non-submission of Interim Financial Statements 30th Jun 2018

Companies on WATCH LIST

Non Submission of Annual Reports, Financial Statements									Default Board
MIRA	LCEM	CIFL	PCH	PCP	SING	HDEV	LLMP	PCHH	SFS
SINH	LLMP	CFT	SFL						
Qualified Opinion in the Independent Auditor's Report									
AINV	ESL	RGEM	MEL	JANA	HVA	PMB	MBSL	ALHP	TFC
SIRA	MSL	CHOU	EAST						
Non-compliance of CSE Listing Rules, minimum public holding & Corporate Governance									
HUEJ	LOFC	ACAP	ARPI	ASPH	BBH	COMD	CPRT	DIST	CLC
ASPM	GOOD	HPFL	INDO	KAPI	LAMB	MADU	MORI	OFEQ	NIFL
PARA	PDL	SELI	MERC	SHAL	LHCL	SLND	AFSL	AMCL	ODEL
SFCL	TAP	MERC	TFIL						

Annual general Meetings (AGMs)

Company	Date
EAST	17-Jan-19
BLUE	28-Jan-19
RGEM	29-Jan-19

Company	Date
COMB	28-Mar-19
DFCC	28-Mar-19
SEYB	29-Mar-19

Company	Date
HASU	28-Mar-19
HNB	29-Mar-19

Company	Date
SAMP	29-Mar-19
PABC	29-Mar-19

EGMs

Company	Date
HPWR	18-Jan-19
AAIC	25-Jan-19
SAMP	25-Jan-19

Key Announcements

Cash Dividends

CODE	DIVIDEND PER SHARE (LKR)	TYPE	XD DATE	PAYMENT DATE	CODE	DIVIDEND PER SHARE (LKR)	TYPE	XD DATE	PAYMENT DATE
PLC	0.75	Interim	02.Jan.2019	11.Jan.2019	HEXP	3.00	Interim	14.Jan.2019	23.Jan.2019
CTC	19.00	4 th Interim	10.Jan.2019	22.Jan.2019	DIPD	1.00	Interim	14.Jan.2019	23.Jan.2019
HAYC	2.00	Interim	14.Jan.2019	23.Jan.2019					

Capitalization of Reserves

Company	Proportion	EGM / Allotment	XC Date	Consideration (RS.)
Ceylon & Foreign Trades PLC (CFT)	1 for 1	To be notified	To be notified	4.00

Amalgamation [A]

Transferee	Transferor	Proportion	Offer Closing Date
[A] Browns investments PLC (BIL)	Browns Capital PLC (FLCH)	2 BIL for every 1 FLCH	To be notified

Consolidation of Shares

Company	Proportion	EGM & Entitlement Date	Dealings Suspension	Trading start
Asia Asset Finance PLC (AAF.N)	10 into 1	To be notified	To be notified	To be notified

Repurchase of Shares

Company	Price	Proportion	Entitle	Offer Open	Offer closing	Payment
John Keells Holdings PLC (JKH)	LKR 160.00	1 for 20	03 Dec 2018.	14 Dec 2018.	10 Jan 2019.	25 Jan 2019.

Rights Issues with pending dates

Company,	Issue Price	Proportion	Company,	Issue Price	Proportion
Agalawatte Plantations (AGAL)	LKR 15.3	21 for 4	Adam Investments PLC (AINV)	LKR 1.00	01 for 01
Adam Capital PLC (PCHH)	LKR 1.50	02 for 01	Blue Diamonds Jewellery (BLUE)	LKR 1.00	01 for 04
Asia Asset Finance PLC (AAF.N) - TR-1	LKR 10.00	03 for 10	Asia Asset Finance PLC (AAF.N) - TR-2	LKR 10.00	02 for 10

Upcoming Listings

Company	Issue Size	Coupon Rate	Price	Issue Opening	Tenure	Nature
Citizens Development Business (CDB)	LKR 1.25Bn	15%, 15.5%	100.00	17 - Jan - 2019.	5Y (6M & 1Y int pay)	Normal
Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC (COMB)	LKR 15Bn	To be notified	100.00	To be Notified	5 - 10 Years	BASEL III
National Development Bank (NDB)	LKR 6.5Bn	To be notified	100.00	To be Notified	5 Years	BASEL III
Seylan Bank PLC (SEYB)	LKR 5Bn	To be notified	100.00	To be Notified	5 Years	BASEL III
Sampath Bank PLC (SAMP)	LKR 7Bn	To be notified	100.00	To be Notified	5 Years	BASEL III
Bogawantalawa Tea Estates (BOPL)	LKR 0.85Bn	To be notified	85.00	To be notified	5, 6 & 7 Years	Normal

Market Highlights & Statistics

Market Capitalisation

Company Name	Symbol	Price	Issued Quantity	Market Capitalisation	(as a % of MKT Cap.)
CEYLON TOBACCO COMPANY PLC	CTC.No000	1,430.00	187,323,751	267,872,963,930	10.27
JOHN KEELLS HOLDINGS PLC	JKH.No000	153.10	1,387,528,658	212,430,637,540	8.15
COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON PLC	COMB.No000	113.20	945,709,403	107,054,304,420	4.11
NESTLE LANKA PLC	NEST.No000	1,700.00	53,725,463	91,333,287,100	3.50
DIALOG AXIATA PLC	DIAL.No000	10.00	8,143,778,405	81,437,784,050	3.12
HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC	HNB.No000	203.40	395,451,248	80,434,783,843	3.08
DISTILLERIES COMPANY OF SRI LANKA PLC	DIST.No000	16.50	4,600,000,000	75,900,000,000	2.91
CEYLON COLD STORES PLC	CCS.No000	729.80	95,040,000	69,360,192,000	2.66
SAMPATH BANK PLC	SAMP.No000	219.10	280,902,248	61,545,682,537	2.36
MELSTACORP PLC	MELS.No000	48.30	1,165,397,072	56,288,678,578	2.16

Highest Volume

Company Name	Turnover (Rs)	Share Vol.
COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON PLC	85,203,107	747,424
HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC	58,596,050	287,959
ANILANA HOTELS AND PROPERTIES PLC	329,908	274,923
RAIGAM WAYAMBA SALTERNS PLC	551,192	264,121
AGSTAR PLC	886,042	184,578
THE FORTRESS RESORTS PLC	1,619,553	177,881
SIERRA CABLES PLC	273,127	134,288
ASIRI HOSPITAL HOLDINGS PLC	2,920,141	132,741
TESS AGRO PLC [X]	48,522	121,280
ORIENT FINANCE PLC	1,475,628	102,847

Highest Turnover

Company Name	Share Vol.	Turnover (LKR)
COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON PLC	747,424	85,203,107
HATTON NATIONAL BANK PLC	287,959	58,596,050
CEYLON TOBACCO COMPANY PLC	7,548	10,794,025
JOHN KEELLS HOLDINGS PLC	56,062	8,622,503
HUNAS FALLS HOTELS PLC	52,350	8,139,363
SAMPATH BANK PLC	24,591	5,393,468
AMAYA LEISURE PLC	63,778	3,155,955
ASIRI HOSPITAL HOLDINGS PLC	132,741	2,920,141
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC	21,163	2,206,053
SEYLAN BANK PLC [X]	38,302	1,686,345

Top Gainers

Company Name	VWA Days Close	Change (LKR)	Change %	Turnover (LKR)
AMAYA LEISURE	50.00	10.00	25.00	3,155,955
SERENDIB ENG.GRP	7.00	0.60	9.38	270,434
EDEN HOTEL LANKA	13.40	0.80	6.35	2,670
ROYAL PALMS	16.10	0.90	5.92	2,408
HUNAS FALLS	156.40	8.40	5.68	8,139,363
LANKA TILES	77.00	3.90	5.34	8,932
RAIGAM SALTERNS	2.10	0.10	5.00	551,192
SINHAPUTHRA FIN	8.70	0.40	4.82	870
MELSTACORP	48.30	2.20	4.77	483,567
HAPUGASTENNE	16.60	0.70	4.40	2,075

Top Losers

Company Name	VWA Days Close	Change (LKR)	Change %	Turnover (LKR)
TESS AGRO [X]	0.40	(0.10)	(20.00)	48,522
MULLERS	0.60	(0.10)	(14.29)	190
PEOPLE'S MERCH	10.20	(1.30)	(11.30)	95,657
BROWNS	54.50	(6.50)	(10.66)	10,878
THE FINANCE CO. [X]	0.90	(0.10)	(10.00)	86,856
BANSEI RESORTS	5.60	(0.40)	(6.67)	560
AMANA TAKAFUL	6.00	(0.40)	(6.25)	69,036
ELPITIYA	18.00	(1.10)	(5.76)	54,277
BALANGODA	11.90	(0.70)	(5.56)	6,538
THE FINANCE CO	1.90	(0.10)	(5.00)	13,714

Crossings

Name	Symbol	Price	Trades	T.Volume	Turnover
Nil					

Market Highlights & Statistics

Sector Wise Summary

Sector	Price Index		Turnover			Sector	
	Today	Previous	Value (Rs)	Volume	Trades	P/E	PBV
BANK FINANCE AND INSURANCE	16,189.31	16,223.60	162,721,561	1,676,058	818	5.20	0.90
BEVERAGE FOOD AND TOBACCO	24,516.52	24,537.27	12,042,853	300,783	57	17.30	6.20
CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING	1,350.06	1,362.13	1,242,726	107,996	113	16.00	0.50
CHEMICALS AND PHARMACEUTICALS	5,204.03	5,265.38	156,674	4,196	17	5.70	0.70
DIVERSIFIED HOLDINGS	1,536.76	1,536.57	11,316,586	202,458	196	10.70	0.90
FOOTWEAR AND TEXTILE	884.17	888.21	765,929	82,294	37	85.30	0.90
HOTELS AND TRAVELS	2,662.11	2,660.80	14,624,545	731,071	622	80.20	1.70
HEALTH CARE	799.80	799.80	3,000,787	136,748	18	16.30	1.80
INVESTMENT TRUSTS	9,469.63	9,473.78	95,183	1,817	15	30.70	0.40
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	25.52	25.52	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
LAND AND PROPERTY	547.88	551.09	663,684	67,477	78	5.40	0.60
MANUFACTURING	2,838.64	2,828.69	6,282,501	463,195	346	7.70	0.90
MOTORS	12,873.44	12,862.31	175,197	1,656	13	12.00	0.50
OIL PALMS	49,942.23	49,942.23	9,215	10	5	28.40	1.00
POWER & ENERGY	103.03	103.08	1,579,304	153,179	120	77.40	1.20
PLANTATIONS	728.87	733.15	529,387	20,906	70	10.00	0.70
STORES SUPPLIES	28,408.28	28,408.28	1,163	1	1	13.10	0.50
SERVICES	15,788.07	15,929.68	16,648	1,300	10	10.90	1.20
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	139.31	140.72	1,101,437	63,612	43	7.40	0.90
TRADING	11,683.72	12,158.02	93,642	132,513	35	28.80	0.80

GICS Industry Group Statistics

Industry Group	Price Index		Turnover			Sector	
	Today	Previous	Value (Rs)	Volume	Trades	P/E	PBV
Automobiles & Components	478.55	478.55	0	0	0	4.80	0.60
Banks	804.51	808.46	155,405,744	1,213,833	378	5.70	0.80
Capital Goods	828.03	835.02	13,073,353	426,338	371	10.70	0.80
Commercial & Professional Services	710.55	710.55	0	0	0	0.00	0.90
Consumer Durables & Apparel	802.27	802.10	2,202,654	147,845	118	38.30	1.00
Consumer Services	252.99	252.63	14,624,545	731,071	622	84.00	1.60
Diversified Financials	770.23	773.00	4,257,095	375,258	278	5.30	0.80
Energy	582.00	585.58	1,072,280	47,479	82	0.00	0.90
Food & Staples Retailing	1,234.05	1,241.50	132,574	131,779	19	15.00	2.20
Food, Beverage & Tobacco	940.04	937.21	14,085,727	402,319	181	15.80	2.50
Health Care Equipment & Services	859.04	859.54	3,000,977	137,048	21	16.40	1.80
Household & Personal Products	1,017.43	1,017.43	116	10	2	13.90	1.90
Insurance	2,143.61	2,129.06	3,165,859	88,939	188	4.30	1.70
Materials	540.64	539.51	3,124,688	225,144	212	7.10	1.00
Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology & Life Sciences	1,807.58	1,807.58	0	0	0	4.70	1.40
Real Estate	745.08	749.48	392,894	28,607	31	5.10	0.60
Retailing	770.20	764.40	202,394	3,837	28	15.20	0.70
Technology Hardware & Equipment	0.00	-	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Telecommunication Services	727.85	735.24	1,101,437	63,612	43	7.40	0.90
Transportation	685.99	702.71	44,220	11,030	3	19.80	0.70
Utilities	737.14	732.25	507,023	105,700	39	8.70	0.70

Economic Indicators & Other Statistics

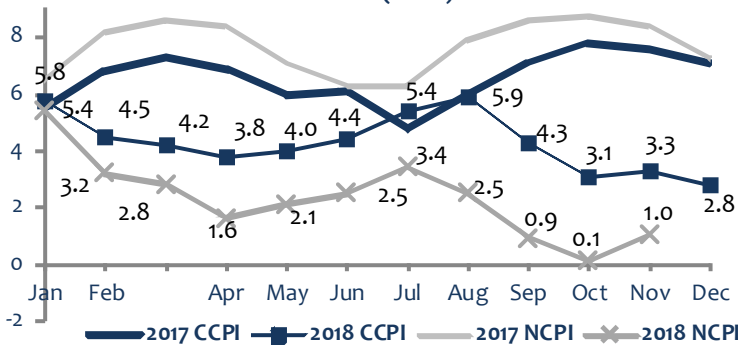
Exchange Rates

Currency	9th Jan		8th Jan	
	Buying	Selling	Buying	Selling
Dollar (USA)	180.37	184.35	180.12	184.10
Pound (UK)	228.65	236.11	228.95	236.41
Euro (EU)	205.31	212.55	204.97	212.20
Dollar (Australia)	127.87	133.33	127.35	132.78
Dollar (Canada)	135.40	140.44	134.67	139.68
Franc (Switzerland)	182.53	189.38	182.39	189.24
Renminbi (China)	26.06	27.30	25.98	27.22
Yen (Japan)	1.6464	1.7069	1.6478	1.7083
Dollar (Singapore)	132.30	136.82	132.14	136.65

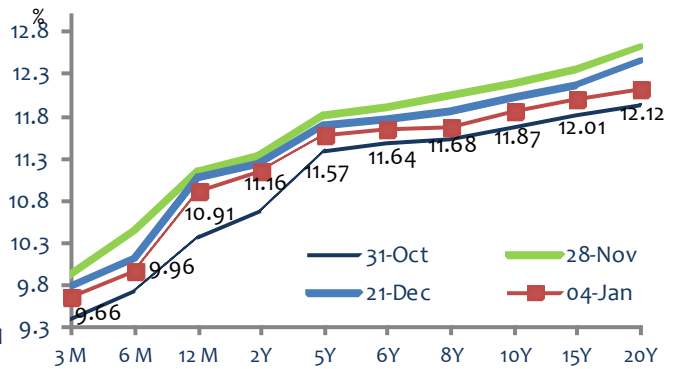
Indicative Rates

Currency	9th Jan	8th Jan
	Ind: Value	Ind: Value
Yuan (Offshore)	26.6647	26.6379
Rupee (India)	2.6024	2.6152
Won (Korean)	0.1628	0.1628
Dinar (Kuwait)	602.0642	602.2535
Ringgit (Malay)	44.3313	44.3840
Rial (Oman)	473.8926	474.0501
Riyal (Qatar)	50.1181	50.1255
Riyal (KSA)	48.6431	48.6536
Dirham (UAE)	49.6761	49.6868

Inflation Colombo Consumers' Price Index (CCPI) & National Consumer Price Index (NCPI)



Government Securities - Secondary Market Yield



Central Bank's Policy Rates

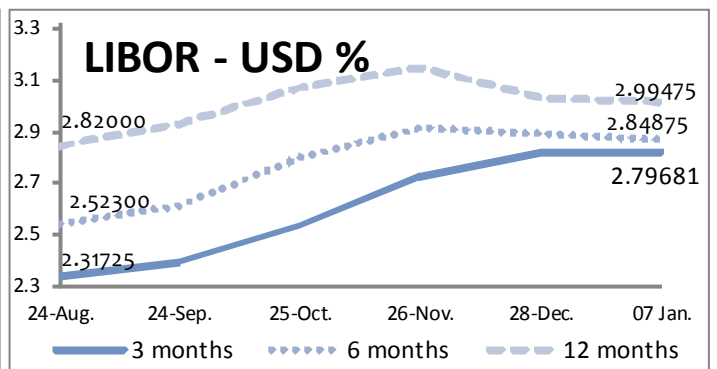
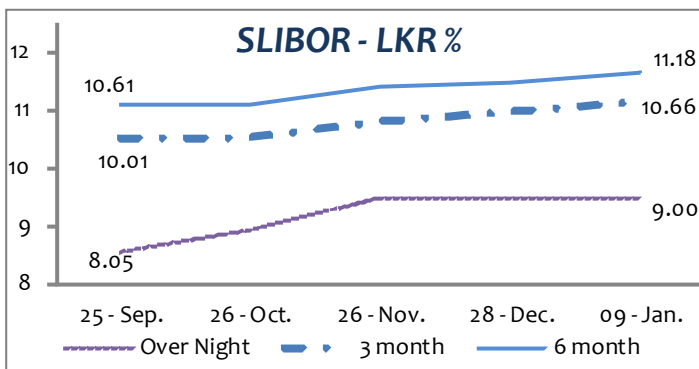
Description	Present	Previous		09.01.2019	02.01.2019	19.12.2018	12.12.2018
Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)	8.00%	7.25%	91 Days %	na	na	na	na
Standing Lending Facility (SLF)	9.00%	8.50%	182 Days %	9.94	9.95	9.99	10.03
Bank Rate	15.00%	15.00%	364 Days %	10.85	10.99	11.20	11.24
Statutory Reserve Ratio (SRR)	6.00%	7.50%	Amount	20Bn	18Bn	18Bn	23Bn

Treasury Bill Issuance

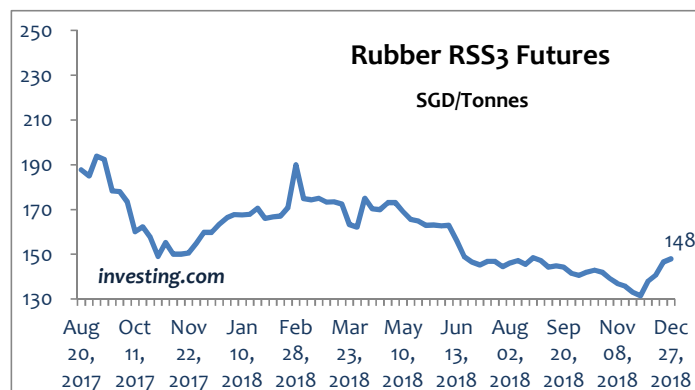
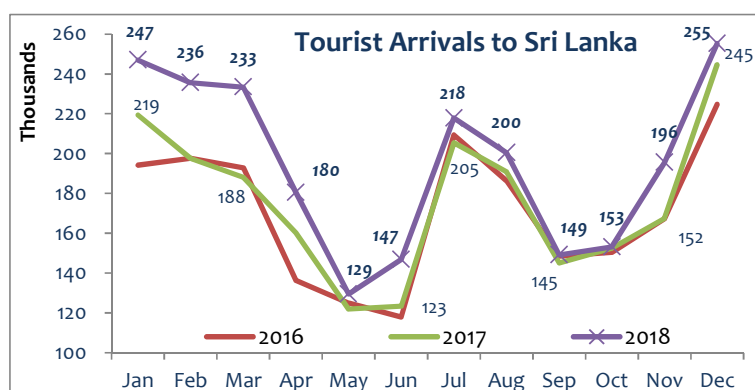
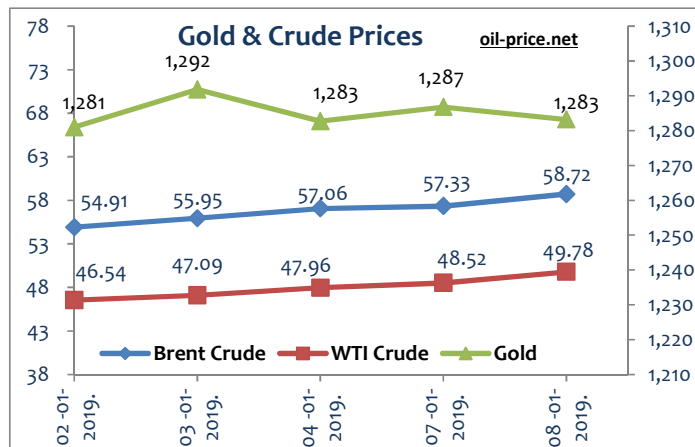
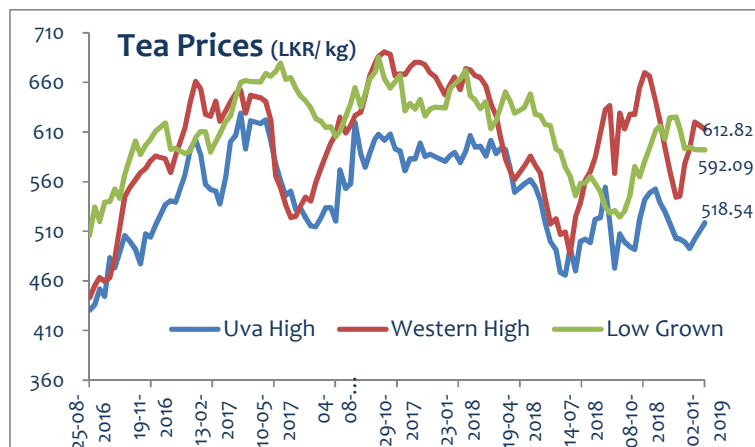
Date	13.12.2018	17.07.2016	15.10.2018	17.07.2016	17.09.2018	13.12.2018	15.08.2018	15.10.2018
Maturity	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years	10 Years	15 Years
Current Yield	11.88	11.14	11.69	11.21	10.32	12.23	10.20	11.90
Previous Auction	17.09.2018	15.06.2017	15.08.2018	15.06.2017	16.07.2018	02.01.2018	01.06.2018	16.07.2018
Previous Yield	10.03	11.37	9.91	11.38	10.53	10.06	10.72	10.88

Treasury Bond Issuance

Date	13.12.2018	17.07.2016	15.10.2018	17.07.2016	17.09.2018	13.12.2018	15.08.2018	15.10.2018
Maturity	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years	10 Years	15 Years
Current Yield	11.88	11.14	11.69	11.21	10.32	12.23	10.20	11.90
Previous Auction	17.09.2018	15.06.2017	15.08.2018	15.06.2017	16.07.2018	02.01.2018	01.06.2018	16.07.2018
Previous Yield	10.03	11.37	9.91	11.38	10.53	10.06	10.72	10.88



Economic Indicators & Other Statistics



Local News

Reserve Bank of India agrees to provide USD400mn to Central Bank as SWAP

(LBO) – Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has agreed to provide 400Mn US dollars to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka under its SAARC SWAP facility which will boost the reserves in the country. Sri Lanka’s Central Bank said in a statement that they have also requested a further bilateral SWAP arrangement of 1Bn US dollars between the RBI and CBSL which is under consideration. “The CBSL acknowledges the very active role played by the Government of India, the Sri Lankan High Commission, in Delhi, and the Indian High Commission, in Colombo, in facilitating these arrangements,”

Sri Lanka’s youth unemployment remains high

ECONOMYNEXT – Youth unemployment in Sri Lanka, which has suffered three insurgencies led by educated youth, remains high with almost one-fifth of those in the 15 – 24 year age group out of work, the latest labour force survey shows. “Youth unemployment rate corresponding to the third quarter 2018 is 19.6%, the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups,” the survey report by the Census and Statistics Department said. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), tracking the labour force population - expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over – was 51.8% for the third quarter of 2018. But the unemployment rates for males and females for the 15—24 year age group was 16% and 26.1%.

Sri Lanka migrant worker outflows flat in 2018, housemaids up

ECONOMYNEXT - Migrant worker departures from Sri Lanka have fallen marginally but women going abroad as housemaids have seen double-digit growth in 2018, data released by the state foreign employment bureau shows. Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment said 211,502 persons left for work abroad in 2018 against 211,992 a year earlier, and female workers had fallen to 66,971 from 68,319. But official departures as housemaids have risen to 64,965 in 2018 from 55,884 a year earlier. It is not clear why there was a spike in housemaid departures, but there were fears in recent years about restrictions being brought by the state including family certificates, which may have forced women to go abroad without officially registering.

Sri Lanka to police exporters, tighten capital account to maintain soft-peg

ECONOMYNEXT - Sri Lanka said will police exporters through a hi tech surveillance system and will also tighten a capital account relaxation after triggering balance of payments trouble by operating a soft-pegged exchange rate regime with multiple convertibility undertakings. The central bank said it intends set up a 'International Transactions Reporting System' (ITRS) to monitor cross border and internal transfers of foreign currency.

Foreign News

Asian shares rise to three-and-a-half-week high on U.S.-China trade optimism, oil climbs

Asian shares climbed to a 3-1/2-week high on Wednesday and European and U.S. markets looked set to follow on growing optimism that the United States and China were inching toward a trade deal that could lift a major threat to the global economy. Japan's benchmark Nikkei .N225 rose 1.1 percent, while China's Shanghai Composite .SSEC and the blue-chip CSI 300 .CSI300 rebounded 0.8 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively.

Chinese markets were also boosted after Beijing signaled more support for domestic spending on items from autos to home appliances. President Donald Trump also wrote on Twitter overnight that "Talks with China are going very well!"

Wall Street's S&P 500 .SPX gained nearly 1 percent on Tuesday, extending its rebound from 20-month lows touched around Christmas to more than 9 percent. The so-called fear-gauge, the CBOE Volatility Index .VIX, dipped to 20.09, its lowest in a month, from an 11 month-high of 36.20 touched just two weeks ago. A reading below 20 is widely considered as calm.

Trade hopes also spurred further gains in oil prices. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures CLc1 rose above \$50 per barrel overnight for the first time in 2019. They advanced another 1.2 percent in Asian trade to \$50.38.

U.S. bond yields also climbed, with the benchmark 10-year Treasuries yield US10YT=RR rising to 2.720 percent, compared with its one-year low of 2.543 percent hit just before Friday's strong payrolls data. ([reuters.com](#))

World Bank warns of 'darkening skies' for global economy

The World Bank is warning of increasing risks, or what it calls "darkening skies", for the world economy. In its annual assessment of global prospects the Bank predicts continued, though somewhat slower, growth this year and next. The Bank's forecast for the global economy is expansion this year of 2.9% and 2.8% in 2020. But overhanging the broadly favourable outlook are rising concerns that could mean economic performance falls short. There is certainly some good news in this report. While the global economy is slowing down it's likely to be what the Bank's economists call a "soft landing". The slowdown started in the middle of last year and it has so far been "orderly". The predicted slowdown is focused on the rich countries, particularly the US, although it will continue to expand more rapidly than either the Eurozone or Japan according to the Bank's forecasts. The US slowdown is the result of the fading impact of President Trump's tax cuts and by 2021 its growth will have almost halved - to 1.6% compared with 2.9% last year.

On the other hand, growth in emerging markets and developing economies is likely to gather pace somewhat despite the continued cooling down in China - a process which began at the start of the decade. ([bbc.com](#))

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