

The 26th Students' National Conference of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) organized by the CA Students' Society, was held recently at the Hotel Galadari - Grand Ballroom. Themed "Dream - Focus - Excel" the conference was lauded by the participants including students of other professional bodies and over 20 student delegates from member bodies in the SAARC region.

The Keynote Speaker at the conference was Mr. Channa De Silva - Group Managing Director of LR Global Lanka Asset Management Company Ltd who inspired over 700 participants at the event with his keynote address "What makes a person successful is his ability to dream." He also congratulated the society on the selection of the theme, which he called was apt and motivational.

Mr. Reyaz Mihular, Patron of CA Students' Society and a Partner of KPMG Ford Rhodes Thornton & Co. in his speech mentioned that, "In the past a dreamer was viewed as insane, whereas especially after the world renowned Martin Luther King, Jr. people have realized that it is no longer holds true. Today the ability to win the world lies on the power of dreaming and it is very important that although we may be tempted to deviate from our dream we should never lose focus from it."

The student panel discussion was definitely one of the highlights where students representing Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India got the opportunity to share their views on what is expected from the corporate world in reaching their career aspirations. This was followed by the corporate panel discussion where Mr. Suren Rajakarier - Partner of KPMG Ford, Rhodes, Thornton & Co.; Mr. Mahendra Jayasekara - Managing Director, Lanka Tiles PLC; Mr. Suresh Shah - Director, Carson Cumberbatch PLC; Mr. D.P Kumarage - Chief Executive Officer, Peoples Leasing PLC; Ms. Nilanthi Sivapragasam - Chief Financial Officer, Aitken Spence Group; and Mr. Justin West - Head of New Business Opportunities, (ICAEW) shed light on employers' expectations of the budding Chartered Accountants and means of bridging the expectations gap.

Mr. Dananjaya Hettiarachchi - Corporate Trainer and HRD Consultant in an inspiring presentation that got the audience dumbstruck for closer to an hour, urged that if one aspires to be a better communicator he must first be a better person as our words are infused by our thoughts and character. He argued that most of us remain "good" because the environment in which we live allows us to be so. Therefore if one needs to be "great" he needs to move himself from a "full option" environment to a "no option" environment where he is compelled to be "great".

Mr. Govinda Tidball, CEO, Splendor Media (Pvt) Ltd. added different flavor to the conference with a touch of insights shed on power dressing. "How you dress reflects on your personality, so you should be clear as to how you want to protect yourself and dress accordingly" he said.

The conference turned to be a great success and was commended highly by the participants. Commenting on the conference, Mr. [Faizan Umer Paracha](#) , a delegate from Pakistan said, "The conference was amazing and the panelists were great. I really learned a lot; and especially what a student and the corporate sector expect from each other. The presentations by Mr. Dananjaya Hettiarachchi and the Mr. Govinda Tidball turned out to be a very interesting session that enlightened us on soft skill development".

The final round of the annual CA Students' Quiz Competition was held where KPMG Ford Rhodes Thornton & Co. emerged as winners, placing BDO Partners as runners up. The participants too were given an opportunity to exhibit their knowledge and win prizes.

The CA Students' National Conference is one of the most sought-after events in the student calendar of the country and is one of the most attended student conferences in Sri Lanka.

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Softlogic Holdings PLC joined hands as the Platinum Sponsor of the conference. The National Development Bank PLC and Peoples' Leasing Company PLC joined as Gold and Silver Sponsors, respectively. The Bronze Sponsors were MAS Intimates and IAS while the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) joined as the supportive partner.

