



**Biotechnology Society of  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (BitSoc)**



**Volume 13 Issue I (April 2021)**

# **BitSoc News**

**E Circulated Newsletter**

**“Research breakthroughs in agricultural biotechnology hold the potential for increasing crop productivity and the resistance of food crop to pests and diseases, thereby helping solve the food crisis.”**

**- Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (1931-2015)  
Renowned Scientist and 11<sup>th</sup> President of India**

**Department of Biotechnology  
Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**



# BitSoc Webinar - “Where do you wish to be after graduation?”

Sri Lanka made a remarkable transition to online tertiary education after closing its higher education institutions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, this keeps students away from extra-curricular activities and their engagement in learning is found to be minimum. The social distance and discrimination from COVID-19 are posing challenges on social cohesion for the mind of students, which may need to be taken care by deliberate counselling with compassion. The career guidance and job placement support at higher education institutions will be increasingly important to mitigate concerns of the students for employment.

BitSoc identified above necessities of the students, and organized a webinar series titled “BitSoc Alumni Webinar Series” to support students to identify their career pathways in the field of Agriculture. The first webinar of the above series was conducted on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 with the title “Where do you wish to be after graduation?” via Zoom with the participation of more than 300 undergraduates. Six past graduates specialized in biotechnology who serve for the country under different capacities were invited as guest speakers for the session.

**BitSoc Alumni Webinar Series - 01**  

## WHERE DO YOU WISH TO BE AFTER GRADUATION?

Spend bit of your time with our past Biotechnology Specialized graduates

  
**Mr. Dilip Kumar Fernando**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
 Avon Pharms Chem  
2002/03 Batch

  
**Dr. Gavini Liyanaarachchi**  
*Research Scientist,*  
 Herbal Technology Division- ITI  
2007/08 Batch

  
**Ms. Thilini Amalka**  
*Scientist*  
 Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board  
2010/11 Batch

  
**Mr. Lakshan Warnakula**  
*Scientific officer*  
 National Science Foundation  
2009/10 Batch

  
**Mr. Nalin Ariyaratna**  
*Assistant Manager*  
 Nestle Lanka Pvt Ltd  
2005/06 Batch

  
**Ms. Malintha Tharindi**  
*Lecturer*  
 Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka  
2011/12 Batch

 **Date :- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**  
 **Time :- 3.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m**  
 **Mode :- Online (Via Zoom)**

**Webinar Link**  
<https://learn.zoom.us/j/63389440748?pwd=QmcwTWlWEVZLoVhTlR2ZS9uMoR3Zz09>

**Organized by**  
 Biotechnology Society of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (BitSoc)  
 Department of Biotechnology,  
 Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management,  
 Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.



The students got awareness on how to balance their academic and extracurricular activities; how to achieve targets; how to improve interpersonal skills; how to develop job skills etc. At the end, there was a question and answers session where lots of questions were raised by the students. The resource persons tried their best to guide the students towards finding their career pathways. As BitSoc, we acknowledge all the guest speakers for the knowledge they have shared with their juniors and commitments they have made adjusting their busy schedules to make this event a success.



# BitSoc Outreach - Establishing New Science Laboratory

With the generous support of the Department of Biotechnology and the BitSoc Society a new science laboratory was established at the Malwana Jayanthi Vidyalaya, Kegalle which has classes from grade one to the ordinary level. At the moment Malwana Jayanthi Vidyalaya is a home to fifty one students who are tutored under sixteen teachers. The aim of this exercise was to construct and donate fully equipped science laboratory to the school, since availability of such laboratory facilities will help mastering the competencies of the students. This issue was brought to attention of the Biotechnology Department of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka by Ms Bavani Rajapakshe who is a past student of the Department of Biotechnology and at the moment teacher of the Malwana Jayanthi Vidyalaya. Based on that request, Department of Biotechnology was able to design and construct the laboratory and handover it to the students by the end of March 2021. The designing process of the science laboratory was done by Mr Chinthaka Bandara, Technical Officer/Department of Biotechnology.

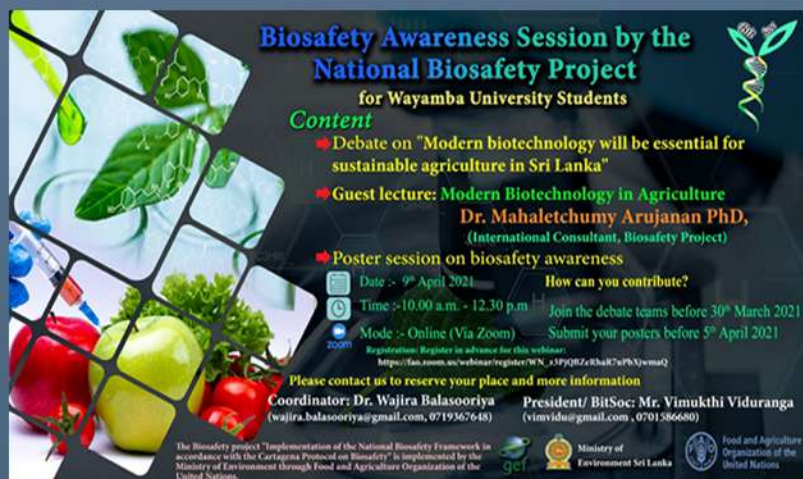


The opening of the laboratory was conducted ceremonially with the participation of the academic staff, nonacademic staff and representatives of the BitSoc Society on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Principal, teachers and students expressed their heartfelt gratitude to all academic and nonacademic staff members, BitSoc representatives and rest of the invitees who have contributed in numerous ways to make this effort a success.





# Inter-Batch Collaborative Debate Competition



**Biosafety Awareness Session by the National Biosafety Project for Wayamba University Students**

**Content**

- Debate on "Modern biotechnology will be essential for sustainable agriculture in Sri Lanka"
- Guest lecture: **Modern Biotechnology in Agriculture**  
Dr. Mahaletchumy Arujanan PhD,  
(International Consultant, Biosafety Project)
- Poster session on biosafety awareness

**How can you contribute?**

- Date :- 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- Time :- 10.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
- Mode :- Online (Via Zoom)
- Registration: Register in advance for this webinar:  
<https://lms.zoom.us/j/90123456789>
- Join the debate teams before 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- Submit your posters before 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Please contact us to reserve your place and more information**

Coordinator: Dr. Wajira Balasooriya  
([wajira.balasooriya@gmail.com](mailto:wajira.balasooriya@gmail.com), 0719367648)

President/ BitSoc: Mr. Vimukthi Viduranga  
([vimvidu@gmail.com](mailto:vimvidu@gmail.com), 0701586680)

The Biosafety project "Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety" is implemented by the Ministry of Environment through Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

BitSoc organized inter-batch collaborative debate competition concurrent with the biosafety awareness session organized by National Biosafety Project for the students of the Wayamba University. Topic of the debate was "Modern Biotechnology will be Essential for Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka". This debate competition was coordinated by Dr B.L.W.K. Balasooriya, Senior Lecturer/Department of Biotechnology. Prof. D.P.S.T.G. Attanayaka, Prof. N.S. Kottearachchi and Dr B.L.W.K. Balasooriya served on the judging panel. Twelve students have participated in the initial round and the opposing team won the debate.



BitSoc Inter-batch Collaboration Debate

Based on the marks scored at the initial round, eight students were selected for the final round conducted during the online webinar on "Awareness Session on National Biosafety Project (Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety)" implemented by the Ministry of Environment through United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.



**BitSoc Inter-batch Collaboration Debate**

*Concurrent with the Biosafety Awareness Session by the National Biosafety Project*

**Topic**  
Modern biotechnology will be essential for sustainable agriculture in Sri Lanka

**Date :- 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
**Time :- 08.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m**  
**Mode :- Online (Via Zoom)**

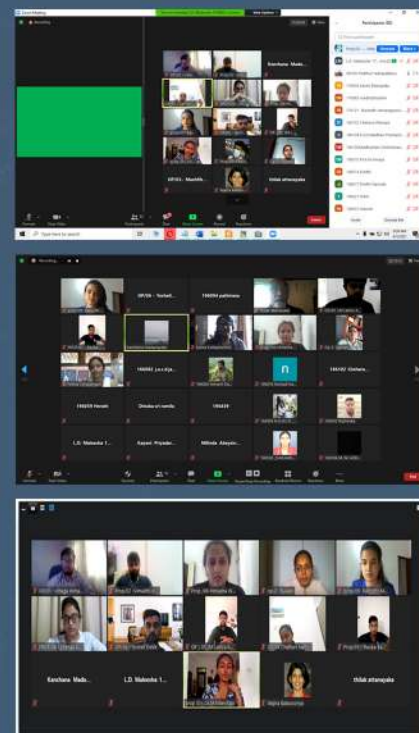
**Coordinators: Dr. Wajira Balasooriya, Mr. Shehan Kurera**

**Proposing Team**

- Bawantha Sampath 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
- Vimukthi Viduranga 3<sup>rd</sup> Year
- Shenaz Amath 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
- Prabhodi Malshani 1<sup>st</sup> Year
- J.A.M.Nikeshala 1<sup>st</sup> Year
- Himasha Withana 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

**Opposing Team**

- Vihaga Himansa 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
- D.R.K Rathnayaka 3<sup>rd</sup> Year
- Lahiru Kavinda 1<sup>st</sup> Year
- Yoshell Delille 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
- L.D.C.M Nanayakkara 1<sup>st</sup> Year
- Mushfika Hafil 3<sup>rd</sup> Year





# Ongoing Events

## BitSoc- AgDraw 2021

BitSoc decided to carry out a drawing competition "BitSoc - AgDraw 2021" under the theme of "Dream Agriculture in 2030" during the COVID-19 pandemic as an online competition. Drawings were called from undergraduate and postgraduate students registered in local universities. The artwork submission period was from 5<sup>th</sup> January–10<sup>th</sup> February 2021. BitSoc decided to select 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places under the categories of best art and most popular art and cash prizes and certificates will be awarded. Additionally, a certificate will be issued for all participants.

As the most popular art, the drawing which received highest number of likes/votes via the BitSoc official facebook page will be selected. The best drawing is going to be selected by a judging panel consist Dr Nimali De Silva (Senior Lecturer, Department of Nano Science and Technology, Faculty of Technology, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka), Ms Thiloka Kariyapperuma (Professional Artist) and Ms Dameesha Abegunawardana (Lecturer, Department of Livestock and Avian Sciences, Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka) which is in progress at the moment. All 55 drawings are now open for voting. **Voting period will be closed by 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**



**YOU CAN VOTE NOW**

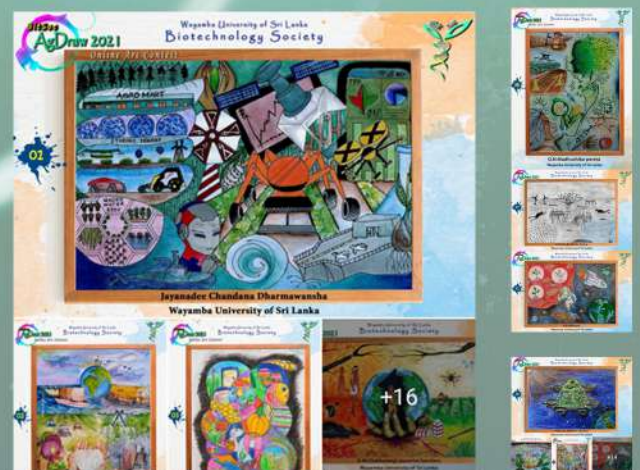
React to your favourite drawing to win the most popular category in **BitSoc AgDraw 2021** online art competition

Don't forget to like our page as well

Best of luck to all the participants

Biotechnology Society - BitSoc  
Visit the BitSoc official Facebook page

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Department of Biotechnology,  
Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management,  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.




Biotechnology Society - BitSoc added 19 new photos.  
Album BitSoc AgDraw Art Gallery 02 · 1 d · 16

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'BitSoc AgDraw 2021' තේමාවට අනුව ඔබගේ ව්‍යාපෘති සහිත ලද විෂය කර්මයක් ඉදිරිපත් කරන්න. See more

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka  
Biotechnology Society  
Online Art Contest

H.M.Sahani Hansika Dilrukshi  
UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYAWARDENEPURA



Wagamba University of Sri Lanka  
Biotechnology Society  
Proudly Present

**BitSoc AgDraw 2021**  
Online Art Contest

Contest Theme  
**Dream Agriculture in 2030**  
Artwork submission period  
January 05, 2021- February 03, 2021  
Submit your entries to  
agdraw.bitsoc@gmail.com

For more details, please visit our Facebook page

Biotechnology Society - BitSoc  
Contact us  
Viduranga - 071-9134545 / Kason - 077-5432903  
Email - bitsocwys@gmail.com

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Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.



**AgDraw 2021**  
Online Art Contest

**MEET the JUDGES**

**Dr. Nimali De Silva**  
Senior Lecturer  
Nano Sciences and  
Technology Department  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

**Ms. Thiloka Kariyapperuma**  
Professional Artist

**Ms. Dameesha Abegunawardana**  
Lecturer  
Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka  
Biotechnology Society



# Congratulations

## Certificate of Recognition for Scientific Publications

Prof. N.S. Kottearachchi, Professor/Department of Biotechnology was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for scientific publications in indexed journals for the years of 2017 and 2019 at 5<sup>th</sup> Wayamba University Research Awards (WURA), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka which was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Dr D.R. Gimhani, Senior Lecturer/Department of Biotechnology was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for scientific publications in indexed journals for the year of 2017 at 5<sup>th</sup> Wayamba University Research Awards (WURA), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka which was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.



## Best Presenter Award at Innovations in Agriculture Session, 5<sup>th</sup> WURC

Dr D.R. Gimhani, Senior Lecturer/Department of Biotechnology received the Best Presenter Award for the research titled "Assessment of Genetic Basis of Grain Pigmentation in Sri Lankan Rice Germplasm" at the Innovations in Agriculture Session in the 5<sup>th</sup> Wayamba University Research Congress (WURC), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka which was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Prof. N.S. Kottearachchi, Dr J.A.A.C. Wijesinghe and Ms J.W. Welagedara are the co-authors of this research. The abstract was published in the proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> WURC.





# Kursk State University Award



Mr H.A.C.R. Hanchapola, Temporary Demonstrator attached to the Department of Biotechnology has been awarded the certificate of appreciation for the best report on the research topic “Analysis of Polymorphic Single Nucleotides in Selected Genes of Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) and Expression of *Os06g0318500* Gene in Relation to Salinity Tolerance” at the All – Russian (National) Research and Practice Conference “YOUTH SCIENCE – DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGROINDUSTRIAL COMPLEX” held on 3-4 December 2020, Kursk State, Russia. This research was conducted under the supervision of Prof. N.S. Kottearachchi and Dr D.R. Gimhani with the financial assistance from National Research Council.

## Best Presenter Award at Biotechnology Session, 19<sup>th</sup> AGRES

Ms Dushani Wehale, final year student of the Department of Biotechnology, received the award for the best presenter at the Biotechnology Session in the 19<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Research Symposium (AGRES), Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka which was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2021. The title of her research was “In silico analysis of allelic variation of drought responsive ERF genes in Sri Lankan rice germplasm”.



## Best Presenter Award at Biotechnology Industrial Training Session

Ms Dananjani Bandara, final year student of the Department of Biotechnology received the award for the best presenter at the Biotechnology Session in the 15<sup>th</sup> In-Plant Training Symposium, Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. The event was held on 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.





# Staff Contributions

## 19<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Research Symposium (AGRES) 2020



19<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Research Symposium of the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka was held successfully on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 under the coordination of Dr B.L.W.K. Balasooriya, Senior Lecturer/Department of Biotechnology. Dr K.M. Mewan and Dr P.S. Warakagoda, Senior Lecturers of the department were served as the chairpersons of the advertising and publication sub committees of the 19<sup>th</sup> AGRES.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Wayamba University Research Congress (WURC) 2020



The 5<sup>th</sup> Wayamba University Research Congress under the theme “Our Innovations for National Development” was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at the Kuliypitiya premises. The event was organized by the Senate Research and Higher Degrees Committee (SRHDC) of the University. Dr B.L.W.K. Balasooriya and Dr K.M. Mewan, the Senior Lecturers of the Department of Biotechnology served as the co-chair and the coordinator of the the Innovations in Agriculture Session of the 5<sup>th</sup> WURC respectively.

## First Volume of BIT



Launching of the 1<sup>st</sup> volume of the Biotechnology Industrial Training (BIT) Executive Summaries of 16 students has taken place on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the closing ceremony of the In-Plant Training Symposium 2021. Dr D.R. Gimhani, Head/Department of Biotechnology remarkably handed over the first two copies of the BIT to Senior Prof. Udith K. Jayasinghe, Vice Chancellor/Wayamaba University of Sri Lanka and Prof. J.C. Edirisinghe, Dean/Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamaba University of Sri Lanka.

# COMING SOON....

- BitSoc- AgDraw 2021- Winners
- Biotechnology Day 2020

Edited by Dr P.S. Warakagoda and Ms M.H.F. Mushfika (Assistant Secretary, BitSoc- 2020/2021)

Designed by Mr Malinda Kavindu [1<sup>st</sup> Year BSc (Agriculture) student]

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