

# Newsletter

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December 2025

Volume 12, Issue 02




**ASIA  
LABORATORY  
Animal Day  
2025**

Storms may rise,  
but our vision  
keeps moving  
forward...

16<sup>th</sup> December 2025

*Celebrate with  
compassion, respect  
and honor*

- Awareness talk by Prof. Cynthia A. Pekow
- Panel Discussion
- Circulation of leaflets

 [www.slalas.lk](http://www.slalas.lk)  
[slalasci@gmail.com](mailto:slalasci@gmail.com)

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory  
Animal Science (SLALAS)



## CONTENTS

### • SLALAS News

- Sri Lanka at AFLAS 2025
- Workshop on Zebrafish as an animal model for research
- Workshop on Histopathology techniques for Laboratory Animal Research
- Workshop on Toxicity Assessment
- Celebration of Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025

### • Upcoming Events

### • New Members

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science  
(SLALAS)  
Newsletter

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## SLALAS NEWS

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### Sri Lanka at AFLAS 2025 Congress

The 10<sup>th</sup> AFLAS Congress and the 18<sup>th</sup> Academic Conference on Laboratory Animal Science and Technology of China were held from October 20 to 24, 2025, in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, with the participation of over thousand delegates from across the region and around the world. The event was co-hosted by the Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (AFLAS) and the Chinese Association for Laboratory Animal Sciences (CALAS). Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, Dr. Sachini Amarasekara and Dr. Anusha Senevirathne represented Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science at the AFLAS congress.



SLALAs representatives at AFLAS 2025. (left to right) Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Prof. Marcel Frajblat, Secretary General, International Council for Laboratory Animal Science, Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, Prof. Qin Chuan, President-AFLAS.

## AFLAS 2025 - Lifetime and Youth Awards

AFLAS 2025 announced two prestigious lifetime honours this year: the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) –AFLAS Outstanding Achievement Award and the ICLAS–AFLAS Remarkable Contribution Award, along with the AFLAS Youth Progress Award, recognizing rising talent in the field of laboratory animal science.

- ICLAS-AFLAS Outstanding Achievement Award

This award recognized the scientists and technical experts who have made exceptional contributions to basic and applied research, and to advancing technological progress in laboratory animal science. Honourees demonstrated influential work in areas such as technological development, education and training, animal welfare and ethics, alternative methods, and science communication. Recipients were expected to hold significant academic influence across Asia and internationally. Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, founder president of SLALAS, and Prof Qin Chuan, President, AFLAS/ Vice-president, CALAS was honoured with the ICLAS–AFLAS Outstanding Achievement Award.



Prof. Marcel Frajblat, Secretary General, International Council for Laboratory Animal Science with the AFLAS-ICLAS outstanding achievement award winners 2025 Prof. Qin Chuan (left), and Prof. Mangala Gunatilake (right).

This was a proud moment for Sri Lanka, as Prof. Gunatilake’s long-standing contributions to laboratory animal science, welfare, and education were recognized on an international platform. The award celebrates both her scientific achievements and her sustained efforts to elevate standards of animal welfare and ethical practice in the country.

- ICLAS-AFLAS Remarkable Contribution Award

This award recognized individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the establishment, development, and effective management of AFLAS, and to those who have strengthened AFLAS member organizations through dedicated service. Emeritus Professor Noriyuki Kasai from the Japanese Association for Laboratory Animal Science (JALAS) received the ICLAS–AFLAS Remarkable Contribution Award for his exceptional service and commitment to the advancement of AFLAS.



AFLAS-ICLAS award winners 2025 (left to right) Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Emeritus Professor Noriyuki Kasai, and Prof. Qin Chuan.

- ICLAS-AFLAS Youth Progress Award

The Youth Progress Award recognized young professionals under the age of 45 who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in laboratory animal science and technology. This year, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, was awarded the ICLAS–AFLAS Youth Progress Award, a significant acknowledgement of promising early- to mid-career researchers. Dr. Gunathilake also took part in the Congress’ Youth Camp, which brought together young laboratory animal science professionals from 11 countries. Participants engaged in a diverse range of experiences, including Chinese paper art, nature excursions, cultural immersion activities, and a visit to a laboratory animal facility upholding both scientific learning and intercultural exchange.



Dr. Varuni Gunathilake at the youth camp, AFLAS 2025. A) Young scientists from AFLAS countries B) Young scientists at the youth progress award ceremony C) visiting the laboratory animal facility D-E) Cultural experience.

## AFLAS council meeting

Prof. Mangala Gunatilake and Dr. Sachini Amarasekara participated in the AFLAS Council Meeting, which brought together representatives from all member countries. This year, Hong Kong officially joined AFLAS, further strengthening the regional network. Both Japan and India submitted proposals and delivered comprehensive presentations outlining their capacity, vision, and commitment to hosting a successful congress. Following the presentations, council members cast their votes. Out of a total of 11 votes, Japan won decisively with 9 votes. The Japanese delegation extended a warm welcome to all member countries and announced that AFLAS 2027 will be held in Kyushu, Fukuoka, Japan.



AFLAS Council members 2023-2025

### **Plenary Lecture by Prof. Mangala Gunatilake**

Prof. Mangala Gunatilake delivered a plenary lecture titled “Current Status and Emerging Developments in Laboratory Animal Science in Asia.” In her address, she provided a comprehensive overview of the progress made across Asian countries in strengthening laboratory animal science, education, welfare, and regulatory frameworks. She also highlighted the significant advancements in research infrastructure, accreditation systems, and training programs that are elevating standards across the region. Her lecture further examined key challenges faced by Asian countries, including disparities in resources, the need for stronger regional collaboration, gaps in specialized training, and the importance of consistent legislative and ethical oversight.



Prof. Mangala Gunatilake delivering the plenary lecture

## Thematic sessions - AFLAS International Forum

The AFLAS International Forum brought together the presidents and representatives of all 11 AFLAS member countries to share their achievements, progress, and future directions since AFLAS 2023.

The current President, Dr. Varuni Gunathilaka, and the Immediate Past President, Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, delivered an impactful presentation titled “Rising Strong – Progress and Promise in Sri Lankan Laboratory Animal Science since AFLAS 2023.” The presentation highlighted the remarkable progress Sri Lanka has achieved over the past two years, despite the many challenges the country has faced. The key highlights included capacity-building initiatives that strengthened national expertise in laboratory animal science, comprehensive training programs designed to enhance technical and scientific competencies, improved ethical and welfare standards, promoting responsible and humane research practices, and growing national and international collaborations, supporting sustained advancement in the field.

During the presentation, Dr. Gunathilaka and Dr. Amarasekara expressed their sincere gratitude for the financial support provided by AFLAS, ICLAS, Laboratory Animal Ltd (LAL), and several partner associations, all of which have played a vital role in supporting Sri Lanka’s continued

development in laboratory animal science. The forum also offered an excellent platform to learn from the diverse experiences of other AFLAS member countries. It enabled meaningful discussions on shared challenges, innovative solutions, and collective goals. Through these exchanges, participants were able to identify existing gaps and explore strategies for strengthening regional cooperation and harmonizing laboratory animal science practices across Asia.



Dr. Sachini Amarasekara (top-left) and Dr. Varuni Gunathilake (top-right) at the international forum.

## International Training course on Laboratory Animal Welfare, Ethics and Management

The training course on Laboratory Animal Welfare and Ethics Management brought together experts from renowned institutions, including the University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, University of Nottingham, and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, as well as key organizations in China such as the National Health Commission's Science and Technology Research Institute and China Medical University.

The course began with an opening ceremony, followed by sessions that explored the current status of International and Chinese laboratory animal welfare and ethics management and implementation methods, principles and core concepts of ethical review, and animal research

training practices in the UK. Later sessions focused on topics such as the effective regulation of animal science, supporting ethical review processes, and the impact of artificial intelligence on laboratory animal research. In the afternoon, postoperative care techniques for laboratory animals, strategies for improving and validating *in vitro* models, and approaches to enhancing animal care and use programs under AAALAC international expectations were discussed. Overall, the training successfully promoted knowledge exchange between scientists, Chinese and international experts, strengthening participants' understanding of ethical standards, welfare management, and innovative practices in laboratory animal research. SLALAS representatives also had the valuable opportunity to interact with the international experts, particularly those from the United Kingdom, to discuss specific topics and clarify doubts even after the formal sessions concluded. This extended engagement further enriched the learning experience and led to stronger professional connections between attendees and experts. One of the most interesting aspects shared by the UK experts was the structured licensing system required to conduct animal research. In the UK, researchers must obtain three separate licenses: an Establishment License, a Project License, and a Personal License, each serving a distinct regulatory purpose to ensure accountability and ethical compliance at every level of animal research. This comprehensive framework was particularly inspiring, as it reflects a robust and transparent approach to animal welfare governance. It also highlighted a potential direction for improvement in our own national system.



SLALAS representatives at the Laboratory animal welfare training course

## Meeting people and cultural experience

It was a great privilege to meet Prof. Marcel Frajblat, Secretary-General of ICLAS, and engage in meaningful discussions on the challenges facing our field, as well as potential approaches and collaborative opportunities for the future. The exchange of ideas was highly insightful and underscored the importance of global dialogue and cooperation in advancing responsible and ethical scientific practices.

The event also featured a two-day industrial exhibition focused on laboratory animal science, offering a wealth of learning opportunities and showcasing remarkable innovations in the field.

Beyond professional interactions, participants had the chance to reconnect with friends made during AFLAS 2023, renewing friendships and strengthening collaborations across countries. They also enjoyed local cultural experiences, including authentic Chinese cuisine, traditional music, and warm hospitality, which made the visit even more memorable.



Dr. Sachini Amarasekara and Dr. Varuni Gunathilake with Prof. Marcel Frajblat (left), SLALAS representatives having a discussion with one of the industrial representatives (right).

*Reported by Dr. Sachini Amarasekara*

SLALAS conducted several workshops aiming the training and education of laboratory animal researchers at local and international level. Below contain the details of the workshops and webinars conducted during the second half of the year 2025.

## Workshop on Zebrafish as an animal model for research

The Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS), in collaboration with the Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka (SAAT-SL) and the Medical Research Institute (MRI), Colombo, have organized a workshop titled “**Zebrafish as an Animal Model for Research.**” This timely initiative was designed to strengthen national capacity in modern, ethical, and translational biomedical research.

The use of zebrafish in biomedical research strongly aligns with the principles of the 3Rs principle; Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement, thereby supporting humane and responsible research practices. Owing to their versatility and translational relevance, zebrafish are increasingly employed in diverse research areas including toxicology, pharmacology, developmental biology, neuroscience, and disease modelling.

A workshop on  
**Zebrafish**  
as an  
animal model  
for research

jointly organized by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS), Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka (SAAT-SL) and the Medical Research Institute (MRI), Colombo

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025 - Theory session  
9 am - 4 pm via Zoom

30<sup>th</sup> August 2025 - Practical session  
9 am - 4pm @MRI

**Course fee**  
**Rs.6000/=**

**For more information :**  
+94 71 631 3030  
(Dr. Anusha Senevirathna Secretary/SLALAS)  
www.slalas.lk

The workshop was conducted in two complementary sessions. The theoretical session was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025, from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., via Zoom. This session provided participants with a comprehensive conceptual foundation on zebrafish biology, ethics, husbandry, experimental design, and regulatory considerations. The resource persons for the online theory sessions were Prof. Mangala Gunatilake (Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo), Senior Prof. Sugandhika Suresh (Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura), Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage (Former Head, Animal Centre, MRI), Dr. Prasadhi De Silva (Faculty of Science, University of Colombo), and Dr. Samanthika Jagoda (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya).

The practical session was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2025, from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., at the Medical Research Institute, Colombo. This hands-on session offered participants practical exposure to zebrafish handling, maintenance, and basic experimental techniques under expert

guidance. The practical component was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Ramani Karunakaran (Head, Animal Center, MRI) and Mr. Gayan Deshapriya (Animal Center, MRI).



**(Right) Dr. Ramani Karunakaran (Head, Animal Centre, MRI) conducting the practical**

The workshop attracted a total of 35 participants from diverse research fields, marking the highest number of participants recorded for a SLALAS workshop to date. The event was successfully concluded with enthusiastic participation and positive feedback, reflecting the growing national interest in alternative and refined animal models.

SLALAS remains committed to promoting scientific excellence, ethical research practices, and capacity building in laboratory animal science in Sri Lanka, and looks forward to organizing similar impactful programmes in the future.



**The SLALAS ExCO Members with the participants of the Zebrafish Workshop at the Medical Research Institute (MRI)**



**Mr. Gayan Deshapriya (Animal Centre, MRI) conducting the practical sessions**



**Awarding of certificates to the participants. (Left) Dr. Ramani Karunakaran (Head, Animal centre, MRI). (Right) Dr. Varuni Gunathilake (President, SLALAS)**

*Reported by Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Secretary/ SLALAS*

## Workshop on Histopathology techniques for Laboratory Animal Research

The Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS), in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya, successfully conducted the “Workshop on Histopathology Techniques for Laboratory Animal Research”. This landmark programme marked the inaugural initiation of this workshop series, being conducted for the first time by SLALAS during the year and represented an important milestone in advancing technical capacity in laboratory animal research in Sri Lanka.



Course Fee  
**Rs: 7500/=**

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science, in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya, organizes the workshop on:

### Histopathology Techniques for Laboratory Animal Research

25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025- Theory and Practical Sessions from 9am- 4pm  
@Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya

Course Content

**Register Now**

<https://forms.gle/7AS7UCUGBe8jgV2W7>

Further Details: [www.slalas.lk](http://www.slalas.lk) +94 71 631 3030  
Dr. Anusha Seneviratne  
Secretary/SLALAS



**SLALAS members and Resource Panel. (Left to Right): Mr. Amila Vimarshana Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, Prof. Kavindra Wijesundara, Dr. Samanthika Jagoda, Dr. Thushari Gunawardena, Dr. Sathyamalee Indunika**

The two-day, full-time workshop was held on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya. Designed to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, the workshop provided participants with comprehensive exposure to essential histopathology techniques relevant to laboratory animal research.



**Inauguration of the workshop by Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, President – SLALAS**

The programme was highly interactive and featured intensive hands-on training sessions and practical demonstrations, enabling participants to gain firsthand experience in tissue processing, staining techniques, and basic interpretation of histopathological findings. These practical sessions enabled the participants to gain a deep understanding on the critical role of histopathology in experimental design, disease modelling, and the interpretation of research outcomes.

A total of 15 participants representing researchers and academics from diverse biomedical and veterinary research fields were registered for the workshop. Feedback from participants highlighted the strong value of the practical components and the opportunity to engage closely with experts in veterinary pathology, making the programme both highly informative and professionally enriching.



**Theoretical sessions conducted by Prof. Kavindra Wijesundara**



**Conducting practical sessions at the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya.**

The successful conduct of the *Workshop on Histopathology Techniques for Laboratory Animal Research* was the result of the tireless efforts, strong commitment, and effective collaboration between the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya.

The workshop was expertly coordinated under the leadership of Prof. Kavindra Wijesundara, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, who served as the main resource person. SLALAS also acknowledges the valuable contributions of the other resource persons, Dr. S. A. Sathyamalee Indunika, Dr. D. P. H. Wijesekara, and Dr. Thushari Gunawardena, whose sessions significantly enriched both the theoretical and practical components of the workshop.

Furthermore, the commitment and assistance of the non-academic staff members, Mrs. W. R. Jayaweera, Mr. M. S. E. Premalal, Mr. R. M. P. Rathnayake, and Mr. T. M. I. P. K. Bandara were instrumental in ensuring the smooth conduct of the workshop.

SLALAS also acknowledge Dr. Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, who successfully coordinated the event and played a pivotal role in strengthening collaboration between SLALAS and the Faculty of

Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science. SLALAS looks forward to continuing collaborative efforts in advancing excellence in laboratory animal science in Sri Lanka.






**Dr. Varuni Gunatilake - President, SLALAS (Right) officially handing over the token of appreciation for the main resource person and the coordinator of the workshop Prof. Kavindra**



**The participants of the workshop, resource panel and SLALAS**


*Reported by Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Secretary/ SLALAS*

## Workshop on Toxicity Assessment

**A WORKSHOP ON TOXICITY ASSESSMENT**

jointly organized by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS), Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) - Section D, Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka (SAAT-SL), and Department of Zoology & Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo.



**CONTENT**

**Theory**

- Introduction to *in vitro* and *ex vivo* toxicity assays
- Duckweed toxicity assay
- *Allium cepa* root tip assay
- Liver slice culture for hepatotoxicity
- Other *in vitro* models

**Hands-on experience**

- *Allium cepa* root tip assay
- Liver slice culture for hepatotoxicity

**WHEN & WHERE**


Oct 28-30, 2025 - Theory session  
5 pm - 8 pm via Zoom

Nov 1, 2025 - Practical session  
9 am - 4 pm  
@ Department of Zoology & Environment Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo

**INVESTMENT**

Rs.7500/=

10% discount for undergraduates



+94 71633030 (Dr. Anusha)  
+94 718197804 (Dr. Nadeesha)

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saatrilanka@gmail.com

The *Workshop on Toxicity Assessment* was jointly organized by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) in collaboration with Section D of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS), the Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka (SAAT-SL), and the Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo. This collaborative initiative was designed to enhance knowledge and practical skills in alternative and ethically responsible toxicity assessment methods.

The workshop attracted a total of 20 participants from a wide range of backgrounds, including undergraduates, postgraduates, academics, and researchers, reflecting the growing interest in alternative toxicity testing approaches across multiple disciplines.

The programme comprised a comprehensive theory component conducted over two days, delivered online via Zoom. The theoretical sessions covered key topics such as:

- Introduction to *in vitro* and *ex vivo* toxicity assays,
- The duckweed toxicity assay,
- The *Allium cepa* root tip assay, liver slice culture for hepatotoxicity assessment, and other *in vitro* toxicity models.

These sessions provided participants with a strong conceptual understanding of modern toxicity testing strategies that align with the principles of the 3Rs. In addition to the theory sessions, participants were provided with valuable hands-on training in selected techniques. The practical sessions focused on the *Allium cepa* root tip assay and liver slice culture for hepatotoxicity and were conducted at the Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, allowing participants to apply theoretical knowledge in a laboratory setting.



**Conducting practical sessions at the faculty of zoology and environment science, University of Colombo. Resource person Prof. Uthpala Jayawardena (Left)**

The theoretical sessions were facilitated by an eminent panel of resource persons, including Dr. Ureshani Karunaratna (Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura), Prof. Uthpala Jayawardena (Open University of Sri Lanka), Senior Prof. Sugandhika Suresh (Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura), and Dr. Varuni Gunathilake (Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura). The practical sessions were successfully conducted by Dr. Ureshani Karunaratna (Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura), Prof. Uthpala Jayawardena (Open University of Sri Lanka) whose guidance greatly enhanced the hands-on learning experience. The session was coordinated through the collaborative efforts of Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, Dr. Vindhya Kulasena (University of Colombo), and Dr. Devanmani Halwatura (University of Colombo) representing SLALAS and SLAAS respectively.

The workshop was well received by participants, who appreciated the balance between theory and practice and the opportunity to engage closely with experts in the field. SLALAS remains committed to fostering capacity building, promoting alternative and ethical research methodologies, and strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration in laboratory animal science and biomedical research in Sri Lanka.



**The resource person, Prof. Uthpala Jayewardena awarding of certificates for the participants after the completion of the workshop**



**The President SLALAS, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake officially handing over the tokens of appreciation for the main resource persons of the workshop at the practical sessions. Dr. Ureshani Karunarathna (Left) and Prof. Uthpala Jayewardena (Right)**



**The participants of the workshop and the members representing SLALAS, SLAAS and SAAT-SL**

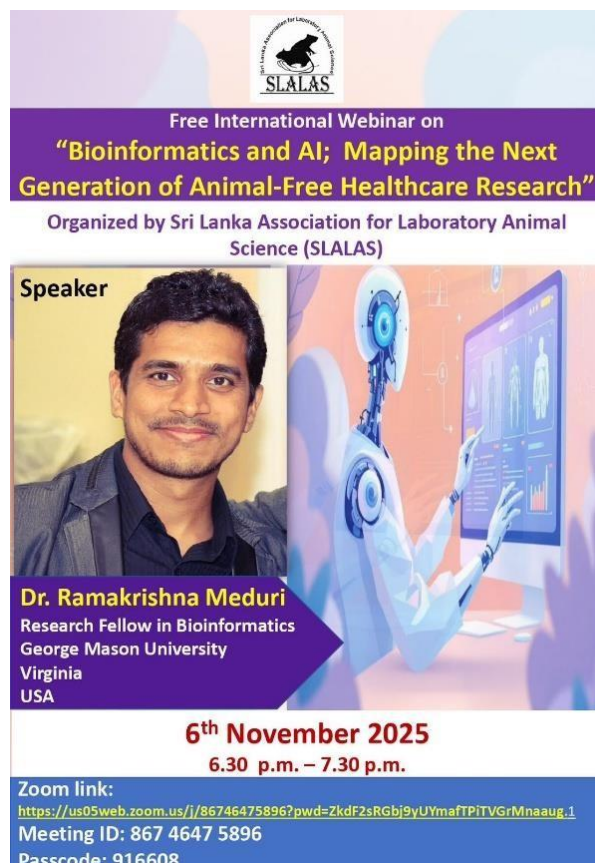
*Reported by Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Secretary/ SLALAS*

## Bioinformatics and AI: Shaping the Future of Animal-Free Healthcare Research

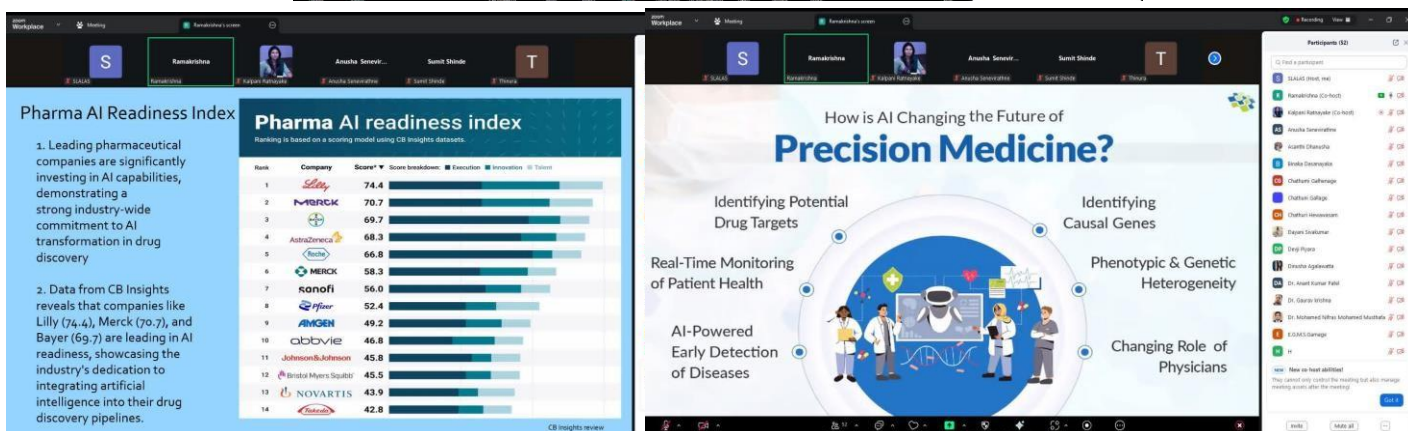
The Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) successfully conducted a webinar titled “**Bioinformatics and AI: Mapping the Next Generation of Animal-Free Healthcare Research**” on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The event was organized under the guidance of Dr. Kalpani Ratnayake, Executive Committee Member of SLALAS, as part of the Association’s ongoing efforts to introduce cutting-edge scientific advancements to the local research community.

The webinar featured Dr. Ramakrishna Meduri, Research Fellow in Bioinformatics at George Mason University, Virginia, USA, as the distinguished resource person. Drawing on his extensive expertise, Dr. Meduri provided valuable insights into the rapidly evolving roles of bioinformatics and artificial intelligence in advancing innovative, animal-free approaches to healthcare research. His presentation highlighted global trends, emerging methodologies, and the transformative potential of computational tools in shaping ethical and sustainable research practices.

The event attracted the participation of more than 45 attendees, including researchers, academics, and postgraduate students from diverse scientific backgrounds. The session served as an engaging and informative platform that enhanced awareness, fostered interdisciplinary thinking, and encouraged participants to integrate advanced bioinformatics and AI-based approaches into their ongoing and future research endeavours, in alignment with international best practices in animal-free research.



The graphic is a promotional poster for a webinar. At the top left is the SLALAS logo, which includes a silhouette of a dog and the text 'Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)'. Below the logo, the text reads 'Free International Webinar on "Bioinformatics and AI; Mapping the Next Generation of Animal-Free Healthcare Research"'. Underneath that, it says 'Organized by Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)'. The central part of the graphic features a portrait of Dr. Ramakrishna Meduri on the left and a stylized illustration of a blue robot interacting with a computer screen on the right. Below the portrait, the text identifies him as 'Dr. Ramakrishna Meduri, Research Fellow in Bioinformatics, George Mason University, Virginia, USA'. To the right of the robot, the date and time are listed: '6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 6.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m.'. At the bottom, the Zoom link is provided: 'Zoom link: https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86746475896?pwd=ZkdFZsRGbj9yUjYmaFtPITVGrMnaaug.1', along with the Meeting ID '867 4647 5896' and Passcode '916608'.



Some clips from the webinar on *"Bioinformatics and AI: Mapping the Next Generation of Animal-Free Healthcare Research"*

Reported by Dr. Anusha Senevirathne, Secretary/ SLALAS

## Celebration of Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025

The Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025 was proudly celebrated by SLALAS, reaffirming the collective commitment to ethical, humane, and scientifically sound use of laboratory animals in research, education, and testing.

**ASIA LABORATORY**  
Animal Day  
2025

Join us at 6.30 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025

*Refined Handling of Mice  
for Better Welfare and  
Better Data*

Awareness talk by  
**Prof. Cynthia A. Pekow**  
Veterans Affairs  
Puget Sound Health Care System  
USA  
Former President of International Council  
for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS)

www.slalas.lk  
slalasci@gmail.com

BEEZ  
ZJP

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory  
Animal Science (SLALAS)

*Storms may  
rise,  
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forward...*

**ASIA LABORATORY**  
Animal Day  
2025

16<sup>th</sup> December 2025

*Celebrate with  
compassion, respect  
and honor*

- Awareness talk by  
Prof. Cynthia A. Pekow
- Panel Discussion
- Circulation of leaflets

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slalasci@gmail.com

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory  
Animal Science (SLALAS)

This year's celebration was originally scheduled for 29th November 2025, as announced by the AFLAS. However, due to the unforeseen Ditva disaster, which significantly affected several regions of the country and disrupted normal academic and institutional activities, the event had to be postponed. The decision to reschedule was taken with careful consideration of the safety, well-being, and emotional readiness of participants, in keeping with the core values of care and responsibility that Asia Laboratory Animal Day represents.

Despite this challenge, the spirit and purpose of the celebration remained strong. The event was successfully conducted as an online event on 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2025, bringing together academics, researchers, postgraduate students, and undergraduates to reflect on the evolving role of laboratory animal science in Asia.

The program contained few important sessions. After the welcome by the Assistant Secretary Mr. Amila Wimmarshana, there was an introduction session by Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, President of SLALS. She briefed the activities of the day and intruded the program. This was followed by the lecture on "History and need of celebration of Asia Laboratory Animal Day" by Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Founding President of SLALAS. She explained the initiation and announcement of Asia Laboratory Animal Day by AFLAS, the progress, and how SLALAS actively engaged in the

celebration of this day since its beginning. Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, the former President of SLALAS further detailed the celebration of this important day in 2024. She emphasized the importance of **remembrance and respect for laboratory animals** and invited all participants to observe a moment of reflection, expressing gratitude and acknowledging the invaluable sacrifices made by laboratory animals in advancing science. She further detailed the activities carried out in last year to celebrate Asia Laboratory animal day; especially the planting a “Maila tree” in the University premises of University of Colombo.

Highlighting the importance of the view of international experts, there was an awareness talk by Prof. Cynthia A Pekow, Former President of the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS). Prof. Pekow talked about “Refined Handling of Mice for better welfare and better data”, which was a novel introduction of such a technique to SLALAS community. Finally, Dr. Varuni Gunathilake explained her view in future direction of SLALAS as an association and also the celebration of Asia Laboratory Animal Day. She emphasized that it is not only a day of recognition, but a commitment to the future. She appreciated and greatly acknowledged the enthusiastic participation of young researchers in the program. The event was ended with the launch of the e-leaflet on the "Asia Laboratory Animal Day Celebration 2025".

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2024, the Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (AFLAS), declared 29th of November as the "Asia Laboratory Animal Day".</li> <li>The establishment of this commemorative day marks an important step forward in the field of laboratory animal science and technology in Asia.</li> <li>It aims to enhance attention to animal welfare and ethics while emphasizing the vital role of laboratory animals in advancing biomedical research.</li> </ul> 	 <p><b>Asia Lab Animal Day</b></p> <p>The establishment of Asia Lab Animal day marks an important step forward in the field of laboratory animal science and technology in Asia, aiming to enhance attention to animal welfare and ethics while emphasizing the vital role of laboratory animals in advancing biomedical research.</p>	<p><b>SLALAS</b></p> <p>Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science</p>  <p><i>"Celebrating Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025"</i></p>	 <p>SLALAS was established in 2012, under the Presidency of Prof Mangala Gunathilake.</p> <p>Since then, we have conducted 12 annual scientific sessions and international conferences, which brought local and international researchers and academics under one umbrella. We have represented Sri Lanka in many international events such as Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (AFLAS).</p>	<p><b>Executive committee 2025/2026</b></p>  <p><b>What we do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote 3R principle by annually conducting the Certificate course in LAS.</li> <li>Conducting specific training on laboratory animal welfare.</li> <li>Promote the use of alternatives to animal experimentation.</li> <li>Develop and implement harmonized protocols / guidelines for the use and care of animals.</li> </ul>	<p><b>About SLALAS</b></p> <p>Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) established in 2012, is the umbrella organization which brings together all researchers who are interested in laboratory animal science.</p> 
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E-Leaflet launched at the celebration

A notable highlight of the celebration was the active involvement of undergraduate students through collaboration with the ZSJP and BEES student associations from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the University of Colombo, respectively. Their enthusiasm and engagement underscored the importance of nurturing ethical awareness and scientific responsibility among the next generation of researchers. SLALAS sincerely acknowledges and appreciates their contribution to the success of this event.

Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025 served not only as a commemorative occasion but also as a platform for dialogue, learning, and inspiration. It reinforced SLALAS’s ongoing mission to strengthen laboratory animal science in Sri Lanka.

### Refined Handling of Mice for Better Welfare and Better Data

Cynthia Pekow, DVM, DACLAM, CPIA  
Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System



Lecture by Prof. Cyntia A Pekow



Talk by Dr. Sachini Amrasekara

**History and Need of Asia Laboratory Animal Day**




Prof. Mangala Gunatilake  
Dept. of Physiology  
Faculty of Medicine  
University of Colombo

Google image

Asia Laboratory Animal Day 2025 - SLALAS - MG

Talk by Prof. Mangala Gunatilake

*Reported by Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, President/ SLALAS*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Sessions and International Conference 2025**

*Pre-Conference Workshop on*

### **Building A Competence Based, Fatigue-Resilient Culture of Care**



**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025**

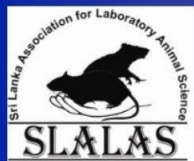


**Faculty of Medicine, Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka**

For more information: +94716313030/ [slalasci@gmail.com](mailto:slalasci@gmail.com)

Dr. Anusha Senevirathne

Secretary, SLALAS



# Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science

## 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE – 2025

*Ethics, Collaboration and Popularization:  
Shaping the Future of Animal Research*

Scan for Registration



24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026  
At Renuka City Hotel, Colombo

### Awards

- Best Oral presentation
- Best Poster presentation
- Prof. Vera Baumans Award for best Journal Publication
- Best orator award

Contact : Dr. Anusha Senevirathne,  
Secretary, SLALAS  
+94 716313030

For more information visit  
<https://slalas.lk/13th-sessions/>

Participant category	Conference (2 days)
Member	LKR 5,000.00
Non-member	LKR 6,000.00
Foreign delegates	USD 55

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/uy91AaeNaM1S78qx6>



## Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science

13<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Sessions and International Conference

SCAN FOR REGISTRATION



# Introducing the Keynote Speaker



Date  
**24/01/2026**



Location  
**Renuka City Hotel,  
Colombo**

Contact

Dr. Anusha Senevirathne  
Secretary, SLALAS  
+94 716313030



### **Prof. Neelika Malavige**

*MBBS(Col), MRCP(UK), AFHEA,  
DPhil (Oxon), FRCP (London),  
FRC Path(UK)  
Department of Immunology and  
Molecular Medicine  
University of  
Sri Jayewardenepura*



# 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## INTRODUCING OUR GUEST SPEAKERS



Scan for Registration



24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026



@ Renuka City Hotel Colombo, Sri Lanka



+94 716313030  
Dr. Anusha Senevirathne  
Secretary, SLALAS



<https://slalas.lk>

Participant Category	Conference (2 days)
Member	LKR. 5,000.00
Non-Member	LKR. 6,000.00
Foreign Delegates	USD 55

## WELCOME NEW LIFE MEMBERS

<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Number</b>
<b>01</b>	Mr. U.S. Layan Rasanjula	Research Assistant, University of Ruhuna	SLALAS/2025/152
<b>02</b>	Dr. Dulan Jayasekara	Lecturer, University of Sri Jayewardenepura	SLALAS/2025/153
<b>03</b>	Dr. Egwin Julie Eugene	Senion Lecturer, International College of Business & Technology (ICBT)	SLALAS/2025/154
<b>04</b>	Ms. Hiruni Malshani Weerasinghe	Research Assistant, University of Sri Jayewardenepura	SLALAS/2025/155
<b>05</b>	Ms. L.P. Sithara Vinodani	PhD Reading, University of Sri Jayewardenepura	SLALAS/2025/156
<b>06</b>	Ms. Sathya Sambavathas	Senior Lecturer, Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Jaffna	SLALAS/2025/157
<b>07</b>	Ms. P.G. Nirmal Hansani Dharmasiri	Graduate Research Assistant, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Sir John Kotelawala Defence University	SLALAS/2025/158
<b>08</b>	Mr. Buddhika Prabath Dharmasena	Lecturer (Probationary), Sabaragamuwa University	SLALAS/2025/159
<b>09</b>	Dr. Mohamed Musthafa Mohamed Nifras	Lecturer (Probationary), Department of Unani Pharmacology, Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo	SLALAS/2025/160
<b>10</b>	Dr. A Sujeevi Dammadonna	Lecturer (Probationary), The Open University of Sri Lanka	SLALAS/2025/161
<b>11</b>	Ms. P.K. Shalini Kaushalya Wijerathne	Research Assistant, Institute of Biochemistry Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo	SLALAS/2025/162
<b>12</b>	Prof. Gregory Lawson	Board Qualified and Laboratory Animal Veterinarian	SLALAS/2025/INT004