THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

PROFESSOR SENAKE BANDARANAYAKE MEMORIAL LECTURE 2026

The Reservoir Systems and Living Environments: The Rise, Decline and Resurrection of Anuradhapura

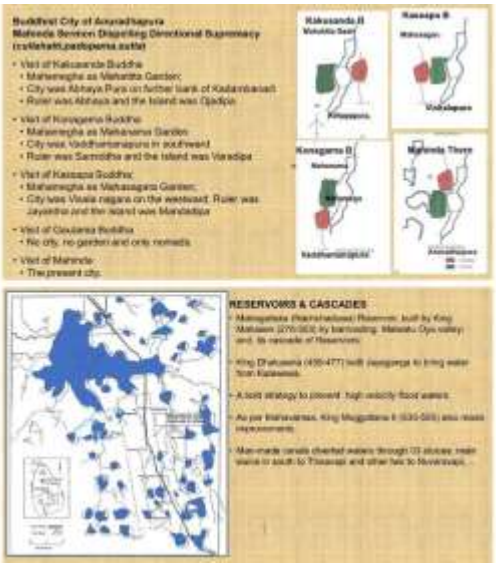
by

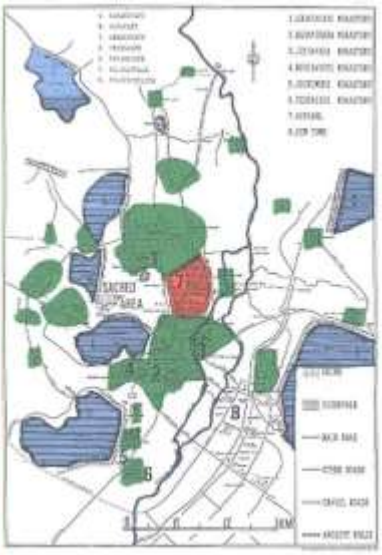
Prof. M.S. Manawadu

The Monthly Lecture Series No: 184 of the National Trust
Friday 27th November 2026 at 6.00 pm
at the Auditorium of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka
No. 6, Independence Avenue, Colombo 7
(For those who join online: https://youtube.com/live/Jctxlk3n60Y)

According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, Anuradhapura was first founded as a rudimentary settlement named Anuradhagama by an Aryan migrant in the 5th century BCE, and developed into the regal capital during the 3rd century BCE, alongside the reservoir systems built in its vicinity. By the 5th century it was known as the capital city of Lankadweepa to many Asian rulers, navigators and scholars. After the middle of the first millennium, the same reservoir systems were greatly instrumental in the gradual decline of Anuradhapura as the island's regal capital. From the mid-19th century onwards, interventions by the colonial administration resurrected the city from its ruins and brought city life back. The lecture examines these events through references in the chronicles, corroborated with Aryan concepts of city planning.







Emeritus Professor Samitha Manawadu was Senior Professor of Architecture at the University of Moratuwa and General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. He is currently Consultant Director (Conservation) of the Wayamba Project for Conservation of Historical Monuments & Sites of the Central Cultural Fund. He graduated from the University of Sri Lanka, Katubedda Campus, in 1977, obtained a Master's degree in Architecture from the University of Moratuwa in 1981, and a Doctor of Engineering in Architectural Engineering from Kyoto University, Japan. A Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, he has held memberships of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Architectural Institute of Japan and the City Planning Institute of Japan. Over almost fifty years as an architect, he has designed several prestigious public-sector buildings in Sri Lanka, including the Colombo Lotus Tower.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures generally on the last working Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the general public.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel.0112682730/ 0719566929