

18 year old scorches Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest with a 141 km/h lightning bolt

- Eshan Malinga from Rathnapura crowned as Airtel Fastest and under-19 champ with a scorching 141km/h
- 'Female Slinga Malinga' Shayani Senerathna from Kandy clocks in at 104 km/h to win the open-female category
- Malindu Shehan from Tangalle wins over 19 title at 140 km/h

Sri Lanka's pool of prime fast bowling talent is set to receive a fresh burst of energy as Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest, in partnership with Derana - reached an exhilarating finale with the crowning of its 3 winners.

Emerging as the overall winner of the very first Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest contest was Eshan Malinga, who competed in the under 19 category and set the pace for the entire contest, clocking in at a scorching 141 km/h.

Following closely behind was over 19 winner Malindu Shehan who maxed out the speed gun at the finale at 140 km/h, while crowd favourite who has been dubbed 'the Female Slinga Malinga' by fans; Shayani Senerathna - clocked in at a blazing 104 km/h to take the champion's title in the open female category.

"Airtel is driven by a passion for youth empowerment. We are alive to their needs, and we work with them, anticipating, adapting and creating platforms that enrich their lives. With Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest, we sought to unearth young boys and girls from all over Sri Lanka who had the talent to become fast bowlers and to give them access to world-class coaching and mentoring from their own cricketing heroes to realise their dreams of making it to the national squad.

"The results of our signature youth programme is now quite evident. I am proud to say that whilst some of the boys have been recruited be a part of renowned sports clubs, the highlight truly is that all of the top final girls and the winner of Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest have been called for trials in the national squad. We are all extremely proud of the remarkable improvements and fearless determination shown by all who took part in this competition." Airtel Lanka CEO/MD Jinesh Hegde said.

Notably, the contest also sought to lend support to the runners-up in each category with Mohammed Akeel setting a fiery pace of 134 km/h in the under 19 category, Mohammed Faheem reached a peak speed of 138 km/h in the over 19 category while pace prodigy Malsha Madushani clocked in at an extremely impressive 101 km/h.

The culmination of an exhaustive talent search and training programme designed to seek out and hone the talents of aspiring pace bowlers across the entirety of Sri Lanka, the Airtel Sri

Lanka's Fastest winners were selected from an initial pool of 10,000 aspiring hopefuls from across the country.

Airtel Sri Lanka's Fastest in partnership with Derana commenced in February under the guidance of Sri Lanka's former National Bowling Coach, Anusha Samaranyake, conducting open auditions across 11 districts in Sri Lanka with the goal of identifying gifted, young boys and girls with the potential to eventually play for the national team.

Subsequently, 145 fast bowlers were selected and narrowed down to the top 45 fastest who went through to the second round which included coaching camps and sessions with Airtel's 'Super Star coaching team' comprising of Samaranyake and current Sri Lankan T20 captain and legendary death bowling sensation, Lasith Malinga, together with icons of the Sri Lankan game, Chaminda Vaas, Hashan Tilakaratne and Upul Chandana.

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Image 1- Winner of the of the open female category Shayani Senerathna receiving her prize from Airtel Head of Brands Strategy and Corporate Communications Bharti Airtel Lanka, Charith De Chickera

Image 2- Winner of the over 19 category Malindu Shehan receiving his prize from CMO Airtel Chandrashekhar Singh Chauhan

Image 3- Airtel's Fastest Winner Eshan Malinga alongside C.E.O and M.D Bharti Airtel Lanka Jinesh Hegde and national fast bowler Lasith Malinga

Image 4- The three winners alongside the officials from the Bharti Airtel Lanka and Derana

About Bharti Airtel Lanka

Bharti Airtel Lanka (Airtel Lanka) commenced commercial operations of services in Sri Lanka on January 12th, 2009, and was the fastest operator to reach 1 million customers in the country. With its network footprint panned out across the nation and capturing strategic ranking positions in various areas in less than three years of operations, Airtel has emerged as Sri Lanka's fastest expanding network, thus ensuring coverage across the whole island. Registered under the Board of Investment in Sri Lanka, Airtel provides digital mobile services which include voice and data services. To learn more, visit www.airtel.lk.