

'Mrs Sri Lanka' beauty queen injured in on-stage bust-up

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The winner of the Mrs. Sri Lanka pageant is allegedly recovering from a head injury after a last-minute struggle over her new crown on Sunday, when another beauty queen ran up on stage and tried to strip her of her victory.

In this photograph taken on April 4, 2021, winner of Mrs. Sri Lanka 2020 Caroline Jurie (2-L) removes the crown of 2021 winner Pushpika de Silva (C) as she is disqualified by the jurie over the accusation of being divorced, at a beauty pageant for married women in Colombo. AFP via Getty Images

The winner of a major Sri Lankan beauty prize has suffered head injuries after a brawl broke out on stage.

Beauty queen Pushpika De Silva won the "Mrs Sri Lanka" title at a ceremony on national TV on Sunday.

Moments later, the 2019 winner seized Mrs De Silva's crown, claiming she could not be awarded the title because she was divorced.

The prize has now been returned to Mrs De Silva, after pageant organisers confirmed she is not a divorcee.

Judges named Ms De Silva the 2021 winner at the Mrs Sri Lanka final in a theatre in Colombo on Sunday night.

But the 2019 winner, Caroline Jurie, stripped Mrs De Silva of her crown, citing a pageant rule that competitors must be married and not divorced.

"There is a rule that prevents women who have already been married and are divorced, so I am taking steps to make the crown go to second place," Mrs Jurie told the audience.

She placed the crown on the runner-up, prompting a tearful Mrs De Silva to walk off stage, a video of the incident showed.

The crown appeared to get stuck in Mrs De Silva's hair as Caroline Jurie tried to pull it off

A tearful Mrs De Silva, far right, then walked off the stage as Mrs Jurie placed the crown on the runner-up

A video showed former winner Caroline Jurie handing the crown to the runner-up

The organisers have apologised to Mrs De Silva, who says she is separated, but not divorced.

In a Facebook post, she said she went to hospital to be treated for head injuries after the incident.

Mrs De Silva said she would take legal action for the "unreasonable and insulting" way she was treated.

"There are a lot of single mums like me today who are suffering in Sri Lanka," Mrs De Silva told a press conference. "This crown is dedicated to those women, those single mums who are suffering to raise their kids alone."

Mrs De Silva branded the incident as an 'insult' on Facebook

The national director of Mrs Sri Lanka World, Chandimal Jayasinghe, told the BBC that the crown would be returned to Mrs De Silva on Tuesday.

"We are disappointed," he said, adding: "It was a disgrace how Caroline Jurie behaved on the stage and the Mrs World organisation has already begun an investigation on the matter."

Police have questioned Mrs Jurie, who is the current holder of the "Mrs World" title, as well as Mr Jayasinghe, about the incident.

The Mrs Sri Lanka World beauty pageant is a major contest in the country. The prime minister's wife was among the guests at the ceremony.

- BBC, Global News, The Sun