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SRI LANKA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER | SINCE 1918
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2020 | 24 PAGES | VOLUME - 102 - NO 263 | RS. 30.00 | REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER IN SRI LANKA | LATE CITY ★

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WHITE HOUSE RACE ON KNIFE EDGE AS VOTES COUNTED IN KEY STATES

TRUMP DECLARES WIN, VOWS COURT ACTION

US: Americans woke up on Wednesday not knowing who the next US President would be as votes were still being counted in six key states that could swing the bitterly contested election to Republican incumbent Donald Trump or

Democrat Joe Biden. Fueling fears of a constitutional crisis, Trump prematurely declared victory overnight and threatened to demand the intervention of the Supreme Court to stop vote-counting but it counted nonetheless.



"We did win this election," the 74-year-old president told cheering supporters in the East Room of the White



House before the final vote tallies were complete. "This is a fraud on the American public." The Biden campaign

BIDEN CALLS BID TO STOP VOTE COUNTING 'OUTRAGEOUS'

slammed Trump's victory claim as "outrageous, unprecedented, and incorrect" and a "naked effort to take away the democratic rights of American citizens."
"The counting will not stop. It will continue until every

duly cast vote is counted," he said. "If the president makes good on his threat to go to court to try to prevent the proper tabulation of votes, we have legal teams standing by ready to fight to resist that effort." **TOP PAGE 02**

NO NEED FOR COUNTRYWIDE LOCKDOWN - PRESIDENT

IF PUBLIC FOLLOWS RECOMMENDED HEALTH GUIDELINES

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that the country need not be locked down if the public followed the health guidelines issued to them in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
He said the movement of the public cannot be curtailed by imposing curfew indefinitely. Businesses and other operations pertaining to businesses and factories can continue while ensuring that people follow the health guidelines, adding that decisions must be made taking into consideration the livelihoods of the public, the country's economy and all other relevant aspects.
The President noted that the entire coun-

try cannot be under lockdown until a solution is found for the control of the COVID-19 virus, adding that everyone should be prepared to engage in their daily activities while following the recommended health guidelines. He also advised the police to strictly enforce the curfew in the respective areas to control the spread of the virus.
The 'Sawen Sitimu' digital project formulated by the Information and Communication Technology Agency to assist with the COVID-19 prevention drive was also presented to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday during the meeting.
This digital platform provides solutions to two of the biggest challenges in the fight

against covid which is information on the contacts of COVID-19 infected persons and the movements of carriers.
The new platform was introduced by the Chairman of the Information and Communication Technology Agency Jayantha de Silva during the daily meeting of the National Operation Centre for the Prevention of COVID-19.
The Stay Safe Digital Project is based on a QR code and would be implemented in a simple easy to use manner which would be easily accessible and user friendly to state and commercial institutions and the public.
The platform could be accessed on stay-safe.gov.lk and each company could obtain



their unique QR code. This project would be operational from next Saturday. The unique QR code could be obtained by pro-

viding the name of any institution, address and the name of the owner and telephone number.
This QR code could then be printed and displayed on the entrance to that company's office. All those in possession of smart mobile phones could register and their whereabouts could be identified.
The Information and Communication Technology Agency would be taking steps to inform all media in this regard.
During yesterday's meeting the National Operation Centre for the Prevention of COVID-19 updated the President on the COVID-19 situation in the Western Province and throughout the country.



NEWLY APPOINTED AIR FORCE COMMANDER CALLS ON PRESIDENT: The commander of Sri Lanka Air Force Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana called on President at the Presidential Secretariat yesterday morning (4). Air Marshal Pathirana is the 1 Lanka Air Force. He is an officer who has shown prowess flying fighter jets in the fighter. Air Marshal Pathirana also served as a pilot flying the Super Sonic F7 in 1999 was also the Commander of the Kfir Jet Squadron. Following the tradition the Commander called on the President after assuming duties and presented a memento. *Picture courtesy*

PM, French Ambassador discuss education, investment and Hambantota Port

France is keen on establishing more people-to-people contact with Sri Lanka, through initiatives such as scholarship and exchange programmes. This was expressed by the Ambassador of France in Sri Lanka Eric Lavertu when he called on Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees yesterday.
The Ambassador mentioned that a number of Gov-



more student mmes. France being part of the f the Ham-

bantota Port," Ambassador Lavertu said that France is also in the market for more Sri Lankan products, indicating a potential to increase trade relations between the two countries. Both countries are keen to further bilateral trade and investment. Currently, Sri Lanka's major exports to France include apparel, precious stones and pneumatic rubber tires.
During the courtesy call, the French Ambassador also congratulated the Prime Minister on the election victory and spoke highly about the

Government's handling of the pandemic. "We're all in the same boat," Ambassador Lavertu said while noting that the low COVID-19 related death rate in Sri Lanka is indicative of the good healthcare infrastructure that Sri Lanka has invested in throughout the years.
Prime Minister Rajapaksa said that the Government's first priority is to deal with bringing the pandemic situation under control. Thereafter, the focus will be on economic development, the Prime Minister added.



No shortage of essential commodities - Dr. Bandula

Minister of Trade Dr. Bandula Gunawardena reiterated that there is no shortage of essential commodities in the country. The Minister made the observation during an inspection tour of the Pettah Wholesale Economic Centre yesterday. **TOP PAGE 02**

Over Rs. 7.3 bn allocated to provide quarantine relief

DINULI FRANCISCO

The Government has allocated over Rs. 7.3 billion in October to provide relief to the public during the quarantine period in the battle of curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Director General of Government Information Nalaka Kaluwe said.
Following the emergence of the COVID-19 virus in the Divulapitiya area, this amount of funds has been allocated by the Government to provide relief for those who are under the quarantine process.
The Director-General of Government Information in a statement



yesterday also said that the Treasury also hopes to further allocate the required funds at the request of relevant parties, including Government Agents.
Moreover, funds were allocated to provide relief bags to families who have been quarantined in their own homes and to provide a relief allowance of Rs. 5000 for low-income families.
The Government has spent Rs.2,721.27 million for the Gampaha District, Rs. 2,333.60 million for the Colombo District and Rs. 1,310 million for the Kalutara District to provide the allowance. **TOP PAGE 02**

ISIRARA MUDUNAWARU
The Minuwangoda-Peliyagoda COVID-19 cluster exceeded the 8000 mark yesterday, the Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry stated.
Accordingly, the total number of COVID 19 positive cases detected from the Minuwangoda-Peliyagoda cluster has increased to 8,265.
According to the statistics of the National Operations Centre for the

Prevention of COVID-19 (NOPCO) 1,041 of them are employees of the Brandix apparel factory in Minuwangoda, while the remaining 7,225 patients are associates of the infected employees. According to the statistics of the Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry, the total number of COVID 19 positive patients detected in the county had increased to 11,744 by 10 am yesterday. **TOP PAGE 02**

godu COVID-19 cases 8,000 exceed 12,000

One more COVID-19 death reported

The Department of Government Information confirmed that one more COVID-19 death has been reported in the country bringing the total fatalities to 24 as of yesterday evening.
Accordingly, a 79-year-old female, resident of Colombo 13 who had been unwell for over a month had passed away at her residence. It was reported that she had been unwell and was suffering from a chronic illness.
The cause of death was said to be a cardiac arrest due to the COVID-19 infection.

Bulk carriers with fertilizer arrive at Port of Colombo



Curfew pass issuance to be eased

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

Police further eases the method of issuing curfew permits, while the