

US President-elect Joe Biden delivers a message of hope, unity and healing

US President Elect Joe Biden spoke to a deeply divided nation last night, making a plea for unity and understanding after four years of turmoil and conflict fomented by President Donald Trump, who showed no indication Saturday that he plans to concede and continued to push the falsehood that he had won the election.

Speaking in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, Saturday night, the

President-elect reached out to voters who supported Trump. "I understand the disappointment tonight. I've lost a couple of times myself. But now, let's give each other a chance," Biden said. "This is the time to heal in America."

Biden said he was humbled by the trust and confidence that America has placed in him.

"I pledge to be a president who

seeks not to divide, but unify, who doesn't see red states and blue states, but only sees the United States."

"I sought this office to rebuild the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation, the middle class and to make America respected around the world again," Biden said. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris introduced her running mate,



President-elect Joe Biden with VP Elect Kamala Harris.

Expressways re-open today

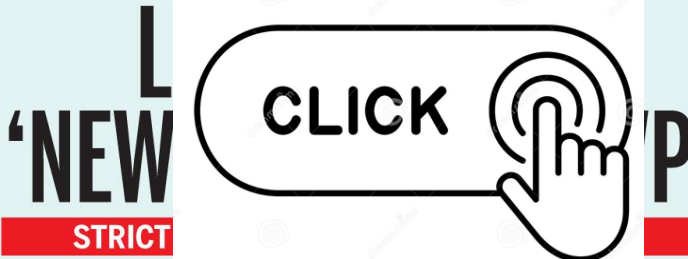
CAMELIA NATHANIEL

All Expressways and entry points to the Western Province have been reopened from today with the lifting of the quarantine curfew at 5.00 am.

Officials said that the entry and exit points of the Southern Expressway in the Western Province, which were closed during the 10-day curfew, have now been reopened.

Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said that despite the expressways being opened police personnel would be deployed to monitor movements and advised the public not to leave their homes unless it was absolutely essential.

The DIG also noted that while the curfew has been lifted offices should only engage staff that are vital for operations and desks and computers should be placed with a one metre distance between them and other facilities for washing hands and maintaining health guidelines should also be provided.



SEVERAL POLICE AREAS IN COLOMBO REMAIN UNDER LOCKDOWN SOME AREAS IN GAMPAHA, KALUTARA, KEGALLE AND KURUNEGALA ISOLATED

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

The COVID Task Force has taken a decision to lift the quarantine curfew imposed in the Western Province (WP) and several other areas on the recommendations of the Director General of Health Services.

Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said the quarantine curfew has been lifted from 5.00 am today (9) from the Western Province and from other areas where the quarantine curfew was imposed.

However, he said on the recommendations

of the Director General of Health Services and the observations of the Epidemiology unit of the Health Ministry, it has been decided to isolate 25 police areas in Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kegalle and Kurunegala Districts in addition to the Municipal Council area of Kurunegala and the GS division of Wekada West in Panadura.

DIG Rohana said that quarantine rules and regulations will strictly be enforced in the areas where the isolation order has been issued.



President, PM congratulate US President-elect, VP

CHAMINDA PERERA

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa were among the stream of world leaders to congratulate US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their victory in the 2020 US Presidential election.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa while congratulating the US President elect and his running mate Kamala

Harris said that he hoped to work closely with Joe Biden.

The President in a tweet said that he looked forward to working closely with the new US President to strengthen the bilateral relations.

"The Government & the people of Sri Lanka join me in extending our warmest congratulations to President-elect @JoeBiden and Vice President-elect @KamalaHarris on this historic victory.

Maintain distance, hygiene under 'New Normal' conditions - Chief Epidemiologist

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Sudath Samaraweera yesterday said that the partial lifting of the quarantine curfew imposed in the Western Province doesn't mean the danger of COVID-19 is over and people can continue their daily activities as usual.

Making a special statement yesterday, Dr. Samaraweera said the decision to further isolate several areas within the Colombo Municipality limits was taken in order to bring down the movement to zero and take necessary measures to control the



spread of virus since majority of COVID-19 cases currently found in the Colombo District had been identified through these locations.

He further said that the patients with some kind of link with Peliyagoda and Minuwangoda COVID clusters are still reporting from certain areas of the country and majority of cases were reported from Colombo Municipality area.

He said the infected persons were reported from around the country, which means the disease had already spread to all districts in the country.

New lease of life for remote Velanvita, Akkara Seeya in Haldummulla

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

The Velanvita and Akkara Seeya villages in the Haldummulla area in the Badulla District where the residents were suffering from extreme poverty and lived with the least amount of facilities,

are now experiencing a stage of rapid development. The majority of the proposed development goals have already been fulfilled and the rest is expected to be reached within the next two months, according to the President's Office.

The President's Media Unit stated that around 48,000 residents live in Haldummulla in the Badulla District which is the most underprivileged Divisional Secretariat Division in the Badulla District. However, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

had embarked on an inspection tour of these two villages Velanvita and Akkara Seeya in the Haldummulla area in the Badulla District during his programme "in conversation with a village" on September 25.



Development work in the Haldummulla area is continuing at a pace after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's visit to the area a few months back where the President was privy to first hand information on the needs of the villagers in this area. (Pictures by Sagara Lakmal de Mel, President's Media)

COVID positive cases reach 13,702

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

A total of 13,702 COVID-19 positive cases have been detected so far and 5,662 among them are still under medical observation Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Sudath Samaraweera said yesterday.

Dr. Samaraweera stated that the total number of COVID-19 positive cases detected from the

Minuwangoda-Peliyagoda cluster has increased to 9,937 with the detection of 445 new cases including 86 from the Horana garment factory and 17 from the Welisara Economic Centre on Saturday (7).

He said that more than 600,000 PCR tests have been conducted within the country so far.

Grace period to pay water bills for those under quarantine

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

Consumers under quarantine or curfew or living in isolated areas have been given a grace period to pay their water bills, Water Supply Minister Vasudeva Nanayakkara said.

Addressing a media briefing in Colombo on Saturday (7), the Minister said water bills had to be paid as usual.

Need collective, detailed plan to fight COVID - JVP

DINULI FRANCISCO

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), while appreciating the measures taken by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19 claimed that the government does not have a long-term plan for controlling the spread of this virus.

Speaking at a media briefing yesterday,

281,784 families in Gampaha receive Rs.5,000 allowance

AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

By last Friday 281,784 families in Gampaha District who lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 lockdown have been given an allowance of Rs. 5,000 each, Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said yesterday.

He said the government had spent Rs. 1,408,920,000 to provide this relief.

The government has allocated Rs. 2,721,270,000 to pay an allowance of Rs. 5,000 to 544,254 families in the Gampaha District who lost their livelihood due to the COVID-19 epidemic, Minister Ranatunga pointed out.



New public transport strategy in force

Office trains, long distance buses to ply

IRANGIKA RANGE

A new COVID-19 transport strategy will be carried out to ensure the safety of passengers as well as protecting the public transport industry hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vehicle Regulation, Bus Transport Services, Train Compartment and Motor Car Industry State Minister Dilum Amunugama said this will be enforced in the Western Province with the lifting



of the quarantine curfew from today.

Amunugama told journal-

ists in Kandy recently that this strategy comprising three proposals has been submitted to Health and Security officials for approval.

"We have to consider some bus fare revision if the buses are carrying passengers only upto the seats available and accommodating just one passenger per seat as recommended by Health authorities.