

## PRESIDENT TO ADDRESS THE NATION ON WEDNESDAY

The Special Address to the Nation by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will be telecast over all television and radio channels at 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday (November 18), a President's Media Division release said.



## Sri Lanka's COVID-19 recovery rate exceeds 70%

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 in Sri Lanka has crossed 11,000, improving the national recovery rate to over 70 percent, Editor of the Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) Dr. Haritha Aluthge stated yesterday.

Dr. Aluthge said that over 70 percent of the COVID-19 positive patients reported so far in the country have totally recovered and were discharged from hospitals.

"Most countries have not been able to achieve this success in managing the disease," he added.

"The COVID-19 recovery rate of the country reflects the success of all the measures



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa participated in religious observances at the Sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhiya, Anuradhapura yesterday seeking blessings on the people in Sri Lanka and the world. Picture courtesy Presidential Media Division

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## Quarantine isolation order relaxed in several Police divisions

Lockdown in 19 Police areas until further notice

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

The quarantine isolation order has been relaxed in several Police divisions, especially in Kurunegala, Kuliyaipitiya, Horana and Ingiriya Police areas and in the Police areas of Ruwanwella and Mawanella in the Kegalle District, Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said.

However, he said that the quarantine isolation order remains as it is in respect of 15 Police areas in Colombo and Gampaha districts. There are 13 Police areas in Colombo and six in Gampaha district. These 19 areas will experience lockdown until further notice. **TOP PAGE 02**

## Health authorities can decide on COVID-19 burials - Keheliya

ASELA KURULUWANA



Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella yesterday said that the Cabinet of Ministers has no right to take any decision on how the funeral arrangements of COVID-19 victims should be made.

"It is unfair to expect a decision from the Cabinet of Ministers over the funeral arrangements of COVID-19 victims as such decisions are taken by the health authorities," he said.

The Minister reiterated that the Cabinet has not taken any decision with regard to the burial of COVID-19 infected persons though the Cabinet members discussed several proposals made in this regard at the last Cabinet meeting.

He said the President gave instructions to the Health Minister to look into the possibility of burying COVID-19 deceased individuals, at the Cabinet meeting and it does not in any way imply that the Government has given approval for the burial of persons who die of COVID-19.

"The health authorities will decide whether the burial of COVID-19 victims is possible or not in the future," he said.

## COVID-19 RELATED EXPENDITURE MARCH TO NOV. EXCEEDS RS. 5,000 BILLION

### Concessionary allowance granted to families

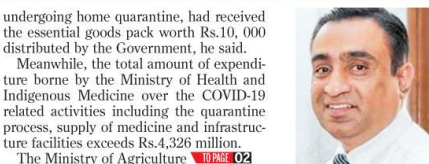
LAHIRU FERNANDO

Expenditures over COVID-19 related affairs in Sri Lanka from March 31 to November 13 exceeded Rs.68 billion, the Government said.

Issuing a news release, Director General of Government Information Nalaka Kaluweva said the Government has spent Rs.68.64 billion of public funds so far on COVID-19 measures and of that the highest amount

has been allocated to provide the families with the Rs. 5,000 allowance during the lockdown period. Accordingly, 12.7 million families have received this concessionary allowance during this period.

Out of 12.7 million families, 11.3 million families had received this allowance in April and May and 1.4 million families had received it during October and November. In addition, 46, 411 families, which are



undergoing home quarantine, had received the essential goods pack worth Rs.10, 000 distributed by the Government, he said.

Meanwhile, the total amount of expenditure borne by the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine over the COVID-19 related activities including the quarantine process, supply of medicine and infrastructure facilities exceeds Rs.4,326 million. The Ministry of Agriculture **TOP PAGE 02**

## Neluwa - Lankagama road project built on par with industry standards - Johnston



Highways Minister Johnston Fernando while expressing regret over the virulent social media campaign against the Neluwa - Lankagama road project said that this stretch of road is being built on par with industry standards.

Minister Fernando, after having seen social media posts that a section of road had been washed away, rushed to Lankagama with Parliamentary Sampath Athukorala and inspected the project. **TOP PAGE 02**

## Dilum warns bus owners against charging higher fares

ASELA KURULUWANA

Transport State Minister Dilum Amunugama said that legal action will be taken against bus owners who charge more than the fares set by the Government.

"The route licenses of five bus services have already



been received from passengers that they are being charged more than the stipulated amount as bus fares and that they are not being issued tickets.

He was speaking to the media after receiving blessings from the Mosr Ven. Mahanayake Theras of the Malwathu and Asgiriya Chapters on Saturday. Amunugama said that the Transport Commission has **TOP PAGE 02**

## ASEAN nations sign world's biggest FTA

Asia Pacific nations (ASEAN) including China, Japan and South Korea on Sunday signed the world's largest regional free-trade agreement, encompassing nearly a third of the world's population and gross domestic product.

Top officials from 15 nations that also include Australia, New Zealand and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations inked the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP - nearly a decade in the making - on the final day of the 37th ASEAN Summit hosted virtually by Vietnam.

"The completion of negotiations is a strong message affirming ASEAN's role in supporting the multilateral trade system," Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said ahead of the virtual signing ceremony. The agreement will contribute to "developing supply chains that have been disrupted due to the pandemic as well as supporting economic recovery," he said. **TOP PAGE 02**



## "National Programme for Uplifting Rural Economy"

### Four new national schools for Kandy, nutritious package for pregnant women

DINULI FRANCISCO

Four new national schools will be constructed in Kandy at a cost of Rs. 100 million for each at a cost of Rs. 400 million and a nutritious package worth Rs.2,000 for 10 months will be provided for pregnant women under the programme "National

Programme for Uplifting Rural Economy".

The Government initiated this programme to develop physical, infrastructure and human resource facilities.

The "Social Infrastructure Development Committee" discussed the issues and the solu-

tions for the problems of the rural people in the Kandy District and the development programmes that need to be implemented.

The discussion was held at the Kandy Secretariat on Saturday (14).

Several matters were discussed at the Development **TOP PAGE 02**

## Leave for prison officers cancelled

DILSHAN THARAKA

Leave for all prison officers has been cancelled with immediate effect, Commissioner General of Prisons Thushara Upuldeniya said.

Accordingly, all prison officers are ordered to report back for duty by 8.00 a.m. today (16). He said that 437 inmates of the Welikada prison had tested positive for COVID-19 so far and 108 inmates tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday.

"Out of the infected there were 12 prison officials and all other infected inmates were moved to the Kandakadu Rehabilitation Centre for treatment," he said.

## CWE driver, assistant gone missing while transporting goods

MAHINDA P. LIYANAGE, Galle Central Special Corr.

A driver and a driver assistant of the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment (CWE) have reportedly gone missing while they were on duty transporting a consignment of goods from the Boossa CWE Wholesale Stores Complex, Rathgama Police said.

The consignment of goods worth Rs.4,917,000 was to be dispatched to two retail shops in Homagama. The Rathgama Police had received a complaint regarding the incident.

The lorry with the registration **TOP PAGE 02**