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2021 Appropriation Bill to be presented today

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mahinda Rajapaksa will present the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill for the financial year 2021 (Budget 2021) in Parliament today.

Following the publication of the 2021 Appropriation Bill in the Gazette on October 6, it was presented to Parliament by Prime Minister Mahinda



Rajapaksa on October 20, 2020 for the First Reading. Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake stated that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance is due to present the

Second Reading of the 2021 Appropriation Bill (Budget Speech) in Parliament at 1.40 pm today.

Subsequently, the Prime Minister will make the budget speech and it is considered as the 75th Budget report of the country. The Appropriation Bill is presented to allocate Rs. 2,678 billion for the service expenditure and

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Deforestation of Northern Sanctuary of Wilpattu

NATIONAL PARK DEFORESTATION ILLEGAL, RULES CA

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

The Court of Appeal yesterday ruled that deforestation of the northern sanctuary of the Wilpattu National Park Forest for the re-settlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) had been made contrary to law and ordered former Minister Rishad Bathiudeen to bear the full cost of the tree planting programme in these areas based on the 'Polluter Pays' principle.

The Court of Appeal two-judge-Bench comprising

Justice Janak de Silva and Justice Nisanka Bandula Karunaratne delivered this judgment pursuant to a writ petition filed by the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ).

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeal Court issued an order in the nature of mandamus ordering the Conservator General of Department of Forest Conservation to take action to implement a tree planting programme in accordance

Bathiudeen ordered to bear cost of tree planting programme



with the provisions of the Forest Ordinance in any area equivalent to the reserve forest area used for the resettlement of IDPs.

SLTDA to provide allowance for tourism sector drivers, guides

IRANGIKA RANGE



Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga has instructed the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) to provide the Rs.15,000 allowance provided by the Government to drivers in the tourism sector within a week, in order to assist those who have lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cabinet approval was granted to pay a one-time allowance of Rs.15,000 and Rs.20,000 each to registered drivers and

Over 11,800 COVID-19 recoveries

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country has increased to 11,806 with 311 more recoveries reported yesterday.

According to the statistics of the Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry, around 5,423 patients are under medical observation.

The total number of COVID-19 positive cases detected in the country reached 17,287 by yesterday morning. Meanwhile,



With the resumption of long distance buses and selected bus routes returning to normality, passengers are seen getting their temperature checked upon disembark.

Moderna says vaccine 94.5% effective

Moderna Inc. said Monday that its developing Coronavirus vaccine candidate surpassed the efficacy rate of Pfizer Inc.'s in a late-stage study.

Moderna said its vaccine hit a 94.5% efficacy rate, topping the 90% threshold reported by Pfizer last week, and noted that it can last for up to six months when stored at standard freezer temperatures of -20 degrees Celsius, compared to the -70 degree temperatures required for the Pfizer vaccine.

The drug maker also said it expects to apply for Emergency Use Authorization with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration within the coming weeks, while the European Medicines Agency's human medicines committee launched a 'rolling review' of the vaccine Monday.

SLAF's first batch of female pilots commissioned

The Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) held the Commissioning and Wings Parade of the 61st Intake of Officers Cadets, 13th Lady Officer Cadets Intake and the No 33rd and No 34th Kotelawala Defence University Intakes yesterday morning (November 17) at the SLAF Academy in China Bay.

On the invitation of the Air Force Commander Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana, taking the salute as the Chief Guest at this prestigious occasion was the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, Major General (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne.

The day's proceedings began on a grand note with the Commissioning Parade led by the Commanding Officer of the Ground Training Wing at China Bay, Group Captain Udaya De Silva marching on to the Parade Ground.



SJB suspends Diana Gamage's party membership

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Leader and Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa in a letter addressed to MP Diana Gamage, stated the SJB has decided to suspend her party membership.

In a letter it is stated that she had failed to comply



10 students score maximum marks at Grade 5 Scholarship exam

Ten students have been able to obtain the maximum number of marks at the Grade 5 Scholarship examination this year. The results of the examination were released by the Department of Examinations yesterday (15) where 10 students have obtained the full marks. The following students have obtained the highest marks:

-Siyathi Vithumsa Karunatilake - Sangamitta Balika Vidyalaya, Galle; Devili Yasasmi Tilakaratne - Sumanajothi Primary Vidyalaya, Ingiriya;



all gun licenses and permits for private security firms, for 2021 has been extended by the Defence Ministry.

Issuing a statement, the Ministry said that the closing date for the renewal of licenses and permits has been extended until February 28, 2021.

Replant mangrove saplings gets impetus

Replant mangrove saplings in coastal and lagoon areas is being implemented on the instructions of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa who is also the Minister of Urban Development and Housing.

This programme has been initiated in order to protect the mangrove environment.



A programme to replant mangrove saplings in coastal and lagoon areas is underway.

