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### Disaster Relief Fund to help employees in emergency situations

RASIKA SOMARATHNA
The Government is considering setting-up an Employee Disaster Relief Fund to provide assistance to employees experiencing severe financial need due to unexpected and unavoidable emer-gencies such as the current COVID 19

Labour Minister Nimal Siripala de

Silva said yesterday it is high time for Sri Lanka to have a guaranteed fund like some other countries have to provide emergency assistance to employees dur-

emergency assistance to employees dur-ing an unexpected disaster.

The Minister told the 'Daily News' that his ministry has already set the wheels in motion to establish such a fund and talks have begun with employ-

Organization among

He said employers employees and if possible, other donors could contrib-ute to such a fund where the monies will be kept in reserves.

### CAPITAL HEIGHTS



RS. 35 MILLION **UPWARDS** 



SHOW APARTMENT READY FOR INSPECTION PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

+94 763112233



#### DIVI NEGUMA CASE: 'PROSECUTION FAILED TO PROVE THE CHARGES'

# BASIL RAJAPAKSA, THREE OTHERS REQUEST ACQU

Former Minister Basil Rajapaksa Former Minister Basil Rajapaksa and three others who had been indicted in the Colombo High Court had made a request through their lawyers to acquit them from the Divi Neguma case, without calling defence evidence, on the basis that porsecution evidence has failed to establish the commission of the offence charges gargingt acqued in offence charges against accused in the indictment.

The Attorney General had filed indictments against former Minister Basil Rajapaksa, former Secre-

tary to the Ministry of Economic Development Dr. Nihal Jayasin-ghe, former Director General of Divi Neguma Department Kithsi-ri Ranawaka and former Deputy Director General of Divi Neguma Department Randuk Tillskesiri in Department Bandula Tilllekasiri in Department Bandula Illiekasırı in the Colombo High Court for allegedly committing criminal breach of trust with regard to Rs.2,992 million while being utilised for the Tsurumath Nivahana' program during the January-2015 presidential election

election.
President's Counsel Gamini

Marapana with Navin Maranana PC and Jaya appearing fo this applicat Judge R. Gi Section 200 Criminal Pro Court to rectal, on behat accused, in the evidence tion totally commission

Travel ban lifted



# **Two ministries** to be set up

MAHINDA ALUTHGEDARA

The government has decided to set up two new ministries by issuing a special gazette noti-fication by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

According to government

According to government sources, the two new ministries are named as the Ministry of Technology and the Ministry of Public Security.

According to the Extraordinary Gazette Notification, the Ministry of Defence has the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff, the Armed Forces, the Staff, the Armed Forces, the State Intelligence Service, the Coast Guard of Sri Lanka, the Sir John Kotelawala Defence Uni-

versity, and the Defence Services Command College. Rear Admiral Dr Sarath Weeraskera, State Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government, is tipped to be sworn in as a Cabinet Minister for this Public Secu-rity Ministry post, sources

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka and its affiliates under the Minand its aimilates under the Ministry of Technology, Information and Communication Technology Agency, Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Response Forum, Sri Lanka Telecom and its subsidiaries, Industrial Technology Lanka,

### Nivar cyclone to intensify over next 48 hrs

RUKSHANA RIZWIE

A low pressure area over the Bay of Bengal which has developed into a depression, 370 km away from Trincomalee is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm named Nivar within the next 48 hours

The Meteorology Department warned that although the cyclone may make landfall in Tamil Nadu coast, those living in the North and East belt should take necessary precautions.

#### Relief period for hotels to settle electricity bills extended

Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga says the Ellinister of routins i rassamia randuning assy the Electricity Board has been requested to grant hotels and holiday inns registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority a grace period of six months to settle electricity tariffs.







Over 5,000 Government schools re-opened for the third term across the Island, except in the Western Province yes-terday. Although classes are being conducted from Grade 6 to 13 only, the Ministry of Education reported a low turnout in most schools. It is envisioned that this turnout would gradually increase in the coming days. Pictures by Karadeniya Correspondent, Anuradha Priyadarshana

#### Scientists see success with Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine Sri Lankan born doctor leading vaccine development Scientists at the University of Oxford say their experi-

Scientists at the University of Oxford say their experimental COVID-19 vaccine shows a strong immune response among older people. The early results raise hopes that the vaccine can protect the people most at risk of getting severely ill from the new cornavirus.

Dr. Andrew Pollard leads the University of Oxford study. He told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on Thursday that he was "delighted" that early results show a strong immune response "even in those over 70 years of age."

### **National List slot: UNP Working Committee** nominates Ranil



Former Prime Minister and Leader of the Unit-Former Prime Minister and Leader of the United National Party Ranii Wickremesinghe's nomination to the UNP National List post to Parliament which is currently vacant, was finalized yesterday, former Minister Arjuna Ranatunga's media division announced in a release.

The release cited that Ranii Wickremesinghe was previously nominated for the post of National Member of Parliament by the National Organizer of the party Navin Dissanayake and former Member of Parliament Arjuna Ranatunga.

## Akila Viraj resigns as **UNP General Secretary**

#### SHIROMI ABEYSINGHE AND S.M.WIJAYARATNE

Akila Viraj Kariyawasam has resigned from the post of General Secretary of the United National Party stating that it was time to give an opportunity to newcomers to hold the mantle in the party.

#### 'Independent Commissions were not independent'

# SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The Independent Commissions set up by the previous Good Governance Government were never independent, said Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) Kal-

utara district Parliamentarian Mahi-nda Samarasinghe in Parliament

yesterday.

He said he made this statement as a representative of the then Consti-tutional Council and the same fact was obvious as it consisted of Civil Society activists. TOPME 02

#### COVID-19 positive cases top 20,000; total recoveries 14,497

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA
Sri Lanka has recorded 400 new
COVID-19 infected persons yesterday
increasing the country's total number
of COVID positive cases to 20,171

while total infections from the dual

"Of them, 3,059 were from the Minuwangoda cluster and all other 13,580 were from the 10,000 to 1

#### **PCol probing Easter Sunday terror attacks**

#### 'Rs. 4 bn worth transactions made through two bank accounts belonging to former EP Governor'

#### LAHIRU FERNANDO

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Monetary transactions amounting to four billion rupees had allegedly taken place through two bank current accounts belonging to former Eastern Province (EP) Governor M.L.A.M. Hizbullah between 2016-2019.

This was revealed during the testimony of the former Manager of the Bank of Ceylon's Kollupitiya branch before the Presidential Commission of Investigation (PCoI) probing the Easter Sundav terror attacks

probing the Easter Sunday terror attacks

yesterday.

She said these bank accounts by the name of Sri Lanka Hira Foundation (SLHF) and Batticaloa Campus Private Limited which were founded by Hizbullah Limited which were founded by Hizbullah had been allegedly opened in the Kollupitiya branch and Hizbullah himself and two other individuals namely Abdul Cadre Mohamed Samsudeen and Ahmed Faleel Mohamed had been named as authorized persons to handle the transactions of these accounts.





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