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ISIS behind Easter attacks

- Former Defence Staff Chief

SUBHASHINI SENANAYAKE and DILSHAN THARAKA

The attack on Easter Sunday was carried out under the full supervision of a foreign terrorist group, former Chief of Defence Staff and former Navy Commander Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne told the Presidential Commission of Inquiry probing the Easter Sunday attacks.

He pointed out that the reason for the attack was the



GOVT. TO OFFER SIX MONTH TOURIST VISAS

RAVI LADDUWAHETTY

The Government has proposed to issue a six months visa to tourists instead of the current one month visa once the BIA reopens, Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said.

A minimum 14 days stay in Sri Lanka will be mandatory according to a new Guidelines report which has been prepared by the Covid 19 Clinical Management Expert Committee of the Ministry of Health and Sri Lanka Tourism.

The report said the



online visa process is mandatory for all international tourists via the online visa application system - Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). They will also have to download an associated smartphone app.

Only visitors with pre-booked and pre-paid booking for a Level 1 hotel for first seven days and thereafter the next seven days in a Level 1 or 2 hotel certified as safe and secure accommodation will be granted visas.

In addition to the visa fee, cost for three PCR and/or Antigen Tests will be levied from each traveller to cover the cost of the tests to be conducted and there will also be a COVID-19 Insurance Cover for a minimum of one month.

Joint committee to study opening of airports

A committee has been appointed to formulate initial measures and health safety guidelines for the resumption of airports according to the stipulated guidelines by the government in an attempt to revive the tourism industry.

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Lanka Sathosa Chairman refutes Anura's claims

Sugar purchased to tender procedure

Lanka Sathosa Chairman Nushad Perera refuted allegations made by Opposition MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Parliament that he was influenced into purchasing sugar from private entities.

Issuing a press release, Lanka Sathosa Limited Chairman Perera refuted the statement made by Dissanayake citing that Lanka Sathosa being the price setter to the nation for essential commodities makes its purchases through government approved tenders and that at no time was he under any pressure by the President to make any purchases from anyone.



Appoint impartial commission to probe Mahara incident - NPP

The shooting of unarmed remandees at the Mahara Prison is a serious incident which warrants an impartial commission of inquiry, National People's Party's (NPP) Attorney-at-Law Lal Wijenayake, told a media briefing yesterday.

"The brutal killing of detainees who are supposed to be protected by the government sets a dangerous precedent," he said. "We are reminded of the shootout which took place at the Welikada prison a few years ago."



One of the suspects in custody.

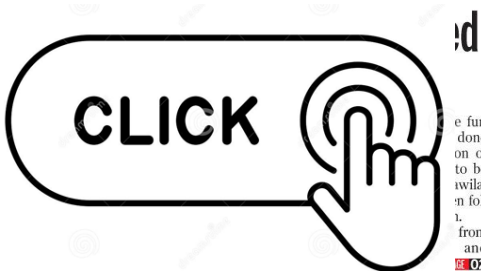
Excise Commissioner General Bodaragama and the raid party.

200 kg of Heroin Four arrested

PRIYANKARA KALUPAHANA and PRASAD PURNAMAL

Four individuals with a stock 100kg of Heroin and 100kg of I with a street value of over Rs. 1 mn was seized by Excise Department officials in Thoduwawa in Marav yesterday.

It was revealed that the mastermind in the case were operating from Dt



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Isolation lifted in several areas, other areas to continue

RUKSHANA RIZWIE

The isolation curfew which was imposed in several parts of the country will be lifted from 5am today while curfew will remain in effect in certain other areas that have been identified as high risk.

The Government Information Department said the isolation curfew imposed in the Wattala Police area excluding Hekitta, Kerawalapitiya, Kurunduhena, Evariwatta and Welikadamulla grama seva divisions will be lifted. In addition to this, the Kelaniya police division and the Peliyagoda police division excluding Peliyagodawatta.

COVID cases reach 27,590 Two prisoners among dead

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The total number of COVID-19 positive patients exceeded the 27,000 mark yesterday, Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry stated.

The total number of COVID positive cases currently stands at 27,590.

Around 20,460 of them have recovered while 6,993 patients remain in hospitals.

The total number of patients reported from Divulapitiya, Peliyagoda and prison COVID clusters currently stand at 24,036 with 362 fresh cases reported yesterday evening.

As reported by the Government Information Department, around 285 from the latest cases have been identified from the Peliyagoda Fish Market cluster.

Sand mining in coconut estates halted

SHAVINI MADHARA

Environment Minister Mahinda Amaraweera has instructed the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) to suspend sand mining licenses for coconut estates immediately.

The Consultative Committee meeting of the Environment Ministry held in Parliament on Friday (4) stated that sand mining in coconut lands has caused severe environmental damage and has reduced reduced coconut yields.

Minister Amaraweera emphasized that extensive sand mining in coconut lands is currently taking place in the North Western Province and in other provinces as well.

He said that this situation was one of the main reasons for the increase in the price of coconut in the market now and that



sand mining was responsible for the annual decline in the coconut harvest.

State Minister D.B.Herath pointed out that many valuable and fertile coconut lands are being destroyed due to large scale sand mining in coconut lands in the North Western Province.

Central Province COVID cases hit 626

ASELA KURULUWANSA and M. KEERTHIRATNE,
Yatawatta Group

The Kandy Provincial Health Department said 626 cases of COVID-19 have been detected from the Kandy, Matale and Nuwara-Eliya districts as of yesterday morning and 379 cases have been reported from Kandy, 194 from Nuwara Eliya and 53 from Matale. During the last 24 hours ending at 6.00 am yesterday (6). Out of the 626, 20 new cases were reported from Kandy and 22 from Nuwara-Eliya. Meanwhile the Bogambara village in Kandy was also declared as an

NLB procurement influenced by then Foreign Minister - COPE

The then Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera had influenced the procurement process of the National Lotteries Board (NLB) which was under the purview of Foreign Ministry in 2017.

This was revealed at the

Even though the then Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera had given an observation stating that suspending the tender was not the right decision, the Cabinet had decided to withdraw the above tender.

Accordingly, the tender for the

printing of scratch lottery tickets which was due to be awarded to Aqua Flex Lanka (Pvt) Ltd had been stopped. The COPE has also observed that this Cabinet decision has been made under the influence of Print Care Secure (Pvt) Ltd.

