



President discusses long-term economic recovery with private sector

It is easy to import everything and sell. If we do so we will not be able to build a strong economy.

Growth of the economy must take place in a manner that secures the wellbeing of all segments of the society. In this regard the contribution and new approaches of the private sector are pivotal, said President Gotabaya Rajapaksa during a discussion with private sector entrepreneurs at the Presi-

dential Secretariat on Thursday evening.

President Rajapaksa stated that his objective is to bring about a balanced growth in all sectors of the economy and suggested to the private sector to come up with measures that would help achieve this goal and identify obstacles that stand in the way, the President's Media Division said in a communiqué.

The President decided to meet

private sector entrepreneurs with the aim of reviving the economy which is in the doldrums with the spread of COVID-19 and achieving long-term economic development.

Thursday's meeting was with the second such group. Leading businessmen representing various sectors including tourism, building and road construction, communications technology, hotel and hospitality, herbal products, livestock, dairy, salt

production, agro products, minor export crops, organic farming were present at the discussion.

Entrepreneurs hailed President Rajapaksa's consistent and systematic policies to build a strong economy and praised concessions provided for economic growth in the 2021 budget.

Enlightening the President on the current situation of their businesses, they explained the prevail-

ing issues faced by them. Lack of skilled manpower, institutional inefficiency, shortage of building materials, lethargy of some employees and difficulty in finding new markets were among the main issues they mentioned.

"Economic empowerment of all segments of the society is a priority. Farmers comprise 35% of the population of our country. Agriculture is linked to the livelihood **▶ PAGE 02**

ICG seizes 9.7 kg gold in Gulf of Mannar



The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) yesterday said it had seized 9.7 kg gold from a fishing boat in the Gulf of Mannar off the Tamil Nadu coast and arrested five persons, Indian media reported.

The operation was launched at 10 pm on Thursday along with a Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) team onboard a Coast Guard ship and the suspect boat's movement was closely monitored.

In a daring midnight joint operation with Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Indian Coast Guard ship C432 **▶ PAGE 02**

IMPRISON QUARANTINE

DILSHAN THARAKA and RAKSHANA SHRIYANTHA

Those who violate home-based quarantine rules could face up to three years imprisonment as well as a fine in Court, Police Media Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said.

The Police Media Spokesman said that quarantine rules should be followed when undergoing home quarantine and that it is strictly forbidden to leave the house or allow any persons from outside to enter the house, including close relatives not living in the same household.



-BASED FORS

Over 95,000 people currently under home quarantine

In addition they should respond immediately if instructed by health authorities to undergo PCR or other COVID tests.

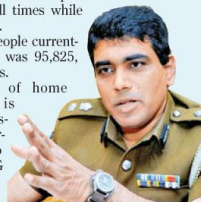
The Police Media Spokesman stated that if there are any issues or needs such as illness, medicine, food etc., the relevant telephone numbers to contact have been noted in the notice pasted on the door of every quarantined house.

"By calling those numbers quarantined persons can seek any assistance. Officials will respond and assist immediately in resolving issues". The Police Media

Spokesman urged home quarantined persons to stay at home at all times while respecting quarantine rules.

He said the number of people currently under home quarantine was 95,825, belonging to 35,114 families.

The highest number of home quarantined people is from the Gampaha district at present numbering 14,332, according to police spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana.



PM tells Election Commission members

Explore possibility of holding early PC elections



Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday urged the newly appointed members of the National Election Commission (NEC) to explore the possibility of holding the Provincial Council elections at the earliest and look

into the legal action required for that. Prime Minister Rajapaksa made these remarks when he met the NEC members at his official **▶ PAGE 02**

42 Kandy schools to reopen from Monday

ASELA KURULUWANA

Central Province Governor Lalith Gamage said that 42 out of 45 Schools within the Kandy City limits which are currently closed due to the spread of COVID-19, will be reopened on Monday (14).

He said it was decided to reopen the schools with the consent of all after discussions with the members of the Central Province COVID-19 Committee.

However, the Trinity, Thakshila and Kalaimagal schools in the outskirts of the city would remain closed for a further period.

He also urged parents to pay special attention to the safety of schoolchildren on their way to and from school.

The Governor said that the Ministry of Transport has informed that steps will be taken to increase the number of buses during the school opening and closing hours. **▶ PAGE 02**



Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa visited the Bellanwila Raja Maha Viharaya yesterday and engaged in religious observances. He called on the Chief Incumbent of the Bellanwila Raja Maha Viharaya Most Ven. Bellanwila Dhammarathana Thera and received his blessings. The Prime Minister also briefed the Ven. Dhammarathana Thera on the steps taken by the Government to uplift the living standards of the people despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Picture courtesy Prime Minister's Media Division

Five arrested for flying drone near SLAF Base



AMILA PRABATH, ANURADHAPURA ADDITIONAL CORR.

Five persons, including a woman, have been arrested by the Anuradhapura Police on Thursday for illegally flying a drone camera near the Anuradhapura Air Force Base.

The suspects were identified as a woman and four men residing in Boralessgamuwa, Ganemulla, Ibbagamuwa and Horana.

According to Police, the suspects are employees of an advertising agency in Boralessgamuwa.

A private company had given them a contract to produce a documentary about the Thammannapura Vidyalaya in Anuradhapura located near the Anuradhapura Air Force Base.

The suspects have said they had flown the drone camera for filming purposes for a documentary on the school. **▶ PAGE 02**

Audit report finds glaring wrongdoings in setting up 'Sharia' University

RUWANTHA NITHULGASPIITTA

The Hira Foundation chaired by Former Governor of the Eastern Province A.M.L.Hizbullah, has been accused of committing a number of wrongdoings and abuses of power in violation of the country's common

law and regulations when initiating the controversial private 'Sharia' University in Batticaloa, according to a report by the Auditor General.

The Special Audit Report on the Establishment and Maintenance of the Batticaloa Private University has

also pointed out that the Hira Foundation, acted in a manner which amounts to an interference in the normal functioning of one Ministry, two Pradeshiya Sabhas and several other state and semi-government institutions. **▶ PAGE 02**

Country lost US\$ 2,790 mn due to airport closure - Prasanna

MAHINDA ALUTHGEDERA

The Government has lost around US\$ 2,790 million by way of levies and other revenue due to the closure of the Airport for tourist arrivals because of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Tourism Minister Prasanna Rana-tunga said.

"With the closure of the airport, tourist arrivals have been completely disrupted and a huge amount of money owed to the tourism industry has been lost from March 19

to October 30," he said. The Tourism Minister said that the country had lost around US\$ 2,700 million that would have accrued from the tourism development levy charged from foreign tourists arriving in the country. **▶ PAGE 02**

COPA meeting on Human-Elephant conflict reveals

Sri Lanka records highest annual elephant deaths, second highest human deaths in world



Boy accidentally hangs himself

ASELA KURULUWANA

An eight-year-old schoolboy from Norwood, Hatton died yesterday when he accidentally hung himself with a rope

Sri Lankan wins Four Star Major