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SRI LANKA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER | SINCE 1918

TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2020 | 28 PAGES | VOLUME - 102 - NO 297 | RS. 30.00 | REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER IN SRI LANKA | LATE CITY ★

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New project to give a fillip to MSMEs

In an effort to create a brand name for Sri Lankan made and based products, a Made in Sri Lanka logo with potential for franchising and establishment of e-commerce trade portals and trade stalls islandwide as well as at airports and international centres to facilitate market access for Micro, Small and Medium Scale entrepreneurs will be launched today, Industries Minister Wimal Weerawansa said.

MSMEs play an increasingly vital role in all the economies in the world and

consequently this sector is now considered as the backbone of economies. In Sri Lanka, this sector accounts for about 75% of the total number of enterprises providing 45% of employment and contributing 52% to the GDP.

However, these percentages compared with those in developed and fast developing countries are much less indicating that the Sri Lankan MSME sector should be subjected to further expedited development and converted as a growth-oriented sector. This proposed project is



Picture by Nishanka de Silva

CAPITAL HEIGHTS

RS. 35 MILLION UPWARDS

SHOW APARTMENT READY FOR INSPECTION PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

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SPECIAL MECHANISM TO DISTRIBUTE VEGETABLES

President intervenes to control price hikes



ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has instructed all relevant institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture, to take immediate action to control the unjustified increase of vegetable and fruit prices.

Accordingly, it is planned to distribute products purchased directly from farmers to the Narahenpita, Meegoda and

Welisara Economic C a pilot programme to special mechanism through the Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture Minister Nandana Aluthgama a special discussion with the business community in the Narahenpita Economic Zone in this regard. The Minister informed



Decision on pre-school re-opening in two weeks - GL

Plans to commence academic activities for Grades 1 to 5

Minister of Education Prof. G.L. Peiris says that a decision pertaining to the re-opening of pre-schools will be announced in the next two weeks. Prof. Peiris was speaking at a media briefing said that a definitive date to commence activities of primary grades and tuition classes will be announced in two weeks.

The Minister said that the Education Ministry hopes to commence academic activities for Grades 1 to 5 in schools that have already re-opened in January next year. He said that the Ministry has observed that the resumption of academic activities of students from Grades 1-5 and pre-school is a practical necessity. He however said that any school that re-opens will need to abide by all health guidelines and the ministry will consider all aspects before arriving at a decision as this.



CID has not prevented lawyers' access to Hizbullah - AG

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

Attorney General Dappula De Livera yesterday informed the Court of Appeal that the CID has not prevented attorneys from accessing Attorney-at-Law Hejaz Hizbullah while being detained under CID custody.

Additional Solicitor General Susantha Balapatabendi made these remarks when a writ petition filed on behalf of detained Attorney-at-Law Hejaz Hizbullah was taken up for hearing.

A Court of Appeal two-judge-bench comprising Justice Priyantha Fernando and Justice Sobhitha Rajakaruna fixed the petition for further hearing for today (15). **TOP PAGE 02**

Elected Chairperson of Women Parliamentarians Caucus

State Minister of Primary Health Care, Epidemics and COVID-19 Disease Control Dr. Sudarshini Fernandopulle has been unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the Women Parliamentarians Caucus.

State Minister of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation **TOP PAGE 02**



Minister of Justice Ali Sabry, PC along with Attorney General Dappula de Livera is seen cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the new premises of the AG's Department. Pictures by Nishanka de Silva

MoJ to remain at Hulftsdorp

Condemns baseless allegations based on petty agendas

The move by the Ministry of Justice to shift its offices temporarily to the World Trade Centre until the construction of the 'Adhikarana Piyasa' was complete has been reversed and the Ministry will continue to remain at Hulftsdorp,

an official communiqué from the Ministry stated adding that it was disappointing to see the distortion of facts by those peddling petty agendas.

The Ministry noted that the decision to move to the World Trade

Centre was reached after careful consideration of the need to ensure that there was no additional burden on the public or lawyers and court registers if the Supreme Court was fragmented and unnecessarily shifted. **TOP PAGE 02**

GOVT. REQUESTS PUBLIC NOT TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA REMEDIES FOR COVID-19

RUKSHANA RIZWIE

The Government yesterday requested the public to refrain from using local remedies for COVID-19 widely circulating on Social Media.

In a press release, the State Ministry of Promotion of Indigenous Medicine, Development of Rural Ayurvedic Hospitals and Community Health requests not to use local medicine formulas published online claiming as cure for COVID-19. The ministry says even though some local medicine is used to raise immunity it is essential to follow health guidelines published by the ministry of health approved by WHO to prevent COVID-19.

Maldives considering President's request to bury COVID-19 deceased Muslims in the Maldives

The Maldives Government says it is considering a request from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to facilitate Islamic funeral rites in the Maldives for Sri Lankan Muslims who have died from the COVID-19 virus.

Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid yesterday took to his official twitter account to say that that Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is considering the special request from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. "On special request from Sri Lankan President, President Solih is consulting stakeholder authorities of the Government of Maldives to assist Sri Lanka in facilitating Islamic funeral rites in the Maldives for Sri Lankan Muslims succumbing to COVID-19 pandemic"

"President Solih's decision is based on the close longstanding bilateral ties between Sri Lanka & Maldives, and to ensure help to face the challenges of the pandemic. This assistance will also offer solace to our Sri Lankan Muslim brothers and sisters grieving over burial of loved ones," Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid said.

Swiss Govt regrets illegal adoptions from Sri Lanka

The Swiss Government has acknowledged that authorities failed to prevent the illegal adoptions of children from Sri Lanka until the 1990s, Swiss and international media reported yesterday.

In a statement issued last night, the Swiss Government regretted adoptions had gone ahead **TOP PAGE 02**

ICG seizes 3 tonnes of turmeric bound for Sri Lanka

Over three tonnes of turmeric that was being illegally smuggled from Tutucorin to Sri Lanka was seized by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Saturday night. The value of the seized turmeric is claimed to be INR 500,000.

The country fishing vessel named 'Miga Periyavan' with five crew members was spotted by the ICG ship Vaibhav about 51 nautical miles southeast of Tutucorin. On searching the boat that was found under mysterious circumstances, the ICG personnel found more than three tonnes of



turmeric in 88 bags with 35 kg in each bag. The seized turmeric, boat and the detained men were brought to the old harbour in Tutucorin and handed over to the Customs Department for further investigations on Sunday. **(Times of India)**

New Public Security Secretary assumes duties

Major General (Retd) Jagath Alwis assumed duties as the new Secretary of the Ministry of Public Security yesterday.

The event was attended by Minister of Public Security Rear Admiral (Retd) Sarath Weerasekera, Defence Secretary Major General (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne and Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva, among other guests. The Ministry of Public Security was established in November in addition to the 28 Ministries already established.

People disappointed with Govt - Ruwan

SHIROMI ABAYASINGHE and Mapakadawewa Group - HM RANJITH KARUNAWIRA

The Deputy Leader of the United National Party Ruwan Wijewardene stated that the current Government which came into power promising much reform and justice has been rejected by its own supporters within a short time. Wijewardene made these statements when he called on the Chief Incumbent of the Mahiyangana Rajamaha Viharaya Ven. Muruthdenjye

Dhammaratana Thera yesterday. He said the UNP Government was accused of selling the country's national resources to the international community, but said that his party had not done so as claimed but the incumbent Government was already in the process of doing the same.

He said steps have been taken to clear 6,000 acres



of forest in Mahiyangana and Maha Oya areas and hand them over to companies closely associated with ruling members of the Government. He said that the country was in a state of lawlessness and that the leaders who said that one law would prevail over this country and all of its citizenry are not even **TOP PAGE 02**