

PRESIDENT DECIDES AT COVID MEETING

PASSENGERS FROM UK SUSPENDED

VACCINE PROCUREMENT TO BE EXPEDITED
PRIORITY GROUPS TO BE IDENTIFIED FOR VACCINATION



RAVI LADDUWAHETTY

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday decided to suspend arrival of passengers from the United Kingdom from today due to a new strain of COVID-19 currently spreading across the UK. The decision was taken at the daily meeting of COVID-19 Prevention Committee held at the Presidential Secretariat following a review of the new strain of the virus and its spread. The Government has also decided to continue with the existing procedure of obtaining prior approval from the Foreign Ministry and the Civil

Aviation Authority for all inbound travellers to Sri Lanka in the wake of the discovery of a fast spreading new strain of Coronavirus in certain countries. The revised guidelines on repatriation will be issued once the situation has been reappraised, a Foreign Ministry statement said yesterday. "All flights from the United Kingdom have been banned to Sri Lanka with effect from 2 a.m. today," State Aviation Minister D. V. Chanaka told the *Daily News* last night. "We want to ensure that our borders are secure as this could pose a danger

to the health of Sri Lankans. All tourists originating from England to Sri Lanka or tourists from other destinations who have also been to England in the interim will not be allowed in Sri Lanka until more details are determined," the State Minister said. Any passengers arriving in the island from the UK in the interim will be accommodated at hotels after conducting PCR tests and will be quarantined for 14 days under the supervision of health officials. They will be further subjected to 14 more days of home quarantine.



Passengers checking-in at the Heathrow Airport.

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Tourism under a travel bubble from 26 - Dr. Pathirana

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Co-Cabinet Spokesman Plantations Minister Dr. Ramesh Pathirana yesterday stated that the country is on alert over the new mutant strain of the Coronavirus spreading rapidly in the United Kingdom. The Minister was responding to a question by a journalist with regard to the decision taken by the government to re-open Sri Lanka to foreign tourists from December 26 at the Cabinet media briefing held yesterday. **TO PAGE 02**



Ayurveda Committee allows clinical trial for Dhammika's COVID tonic

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The Pharmacology Committee of the Ayurveda Department has given approval to the anti-COVID-19 concoction prepared by Dhammika Bandara of Kegalle, Co-Cabinet Spokesman Plantations Minister Dr. Ramesh Pathirana said. The Minister was responding to a question by a journalist at the weekly Cabinet media briefing held online yesterday. The Minister further said that the findings of the trials carried out by the **TO PAGE 02**

UN supports

The United Nations has assured Sri Lanka its support in procuring, distributing and administering of the vaccine against COVID-19. This pledge was made yesterday during a meeting between Prime Minister Gotabaya Rajapaksa and a UN delegation comprising UN Resident Coordinator Hanan Singer and



re COVID-19 vaccines

The government's preparedness for the distribution of the vaccine once it becomes available. "We are seeing a danger of COVID-19," Prime Minister Gotabaya Rajapaksa said. "It seems that vaccines will be available that can bring an end to the pandemic." **TO PAGE 02**



The house that collapsed in Medabedda in Galewela. Picture by Kanchana Ariyadasa.

Falling earth kills one, another injured in Galewela

Heavy showers in East, floods in Somawathiya area

SIGIRIYA GROUP CORR and W. PIYATHILAKA,
Medirigiriya group corr

One person was killed and another was seriously injured in a landslide that took place at Medabedda in Galewela yesterday morning.

The deceased has been identified as M.G. Nandasena, 86 of Medabedda. Residents had seen an earth mound moving towards their houses and quickly removed a vehicle and a motorcycle parked in the garden.

As they began taking out furniture and other items from the house, the earth mound had fallen on the house killing one of the inmates which is situated on the Galewela - Matala road. **TO PAGE 02**

PUCSL's fate depends on its efficiency - Minister

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA



Co-Cabinet Spokesman Mass Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said decisions taken by the government on vesting of powers to organizations will depend on their fast tracking of activities embarked on by the government. The Minister made this observation responding to a question by a journalist with regard to the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) at the weekly Cabinet media briefing held online yesterday. **TO PAGE 02**

Easter attack probe PCOI extended till Jan. 31

SUBHASHINI SENANAYAKE and DILSHAN THARAKA

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCOI) probing the Easter Sunday attacks has been extended till January 31 next year. An extraordinary Gazette notification has been issued extending the term of the Commission which came to an end on December 20 has been extended as further hearings will be held before the Commission. **TO PAGE 02**



The Kalpitiya Tourism Zone is now open for local tourists after a lapse of over nine months. This region is popular around the world for Spinner Dolphins, Blue Whales and scenic coral reefs, Eco Friendly Tourism Foundation President Maduraj Fernando said. (Pictures by Prasad Purnamal, Puttalam District Corr.)

RAT tests at all exit points from WP - DIG

Police spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana yesterday said Random Antigen Tests (RAT) will be carried out at 11 exit points in the Western Province covering all modes of transport from today. He also said that this random test will also be carried out at Expressways too.

Addressing a press conference at Police headquarters, the police spokesman said that the objective of conducting these tests at exit points of the Western province is to identify COVID infected persons leaving the province and prevent the creation of sub clusters in the country. **TO PAGE 02**



Easter Attack probe dragging endlessly - JVP



LAHIRU FERNANDO

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCOI) probing the Easter Sunday attacks seems like an endless mega teledrama with no proper script, Jathika Jana Balawegaya

MP, JVP Leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said. He said this Commission at present is functioning with new witnesses who were not even in the preliminary inquiries. **TO PAGE 02**

Minuwangoda Cluster cured of COVID

Recoveries exceed 29,000

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

All COVID-19 positive patients detected from the Minuwangoda garment factory cluster have fully recovered, the National Operations Centre for

Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak (NOCPCO) stated. According to the NOCPCO, the total number of COVID-19 positive cases reported from Minuwangoda garment factory employees and the Peliyagoda Fish Market cluster stands at 33,950. Meanwhile, 25,274 fully-recovered COVID-19 patients from both Minuwangoda (3,059) **TO PAGE 02**