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Vidatha and Skills Development Officers should guide rural entrepreneurs - Basil

SANDASEN MARASINGHE
Vidatha and Skills Development Officers should act as pioneers in helping transform the rural youth into entrepreneurs by imparting them with the required knowledge on technology and entrepreneurship, said Presidential Task Force on Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication Chairman and former Minister Basil Rajapaksa.
He instructed Vidatha and Skills



CEB saves Rs. 370 mn from hydropower projects - CEB Chairman

CHANDIMA KARUNARATHNE and SHAVINI MADHARA
Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) Chairman Engineer Vijitha Herath said that due to the recent rains, a saving of Rs. 370 million has been made in generating electricity compared to diesel.
He also said that plans have been made to complete the hydropower projects which were delayed during the previous Good



President tells officials ELIMINATE IMPEDIMENTS TO AGRICULTURE

Priority for cultivation, dairy industry

SLAF to develop model village

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday instructed officials not to disturb the daily cultivation activities of the people who make a living from agriculture since the Government's policy is to develop agriculture on a priority basis.
President Rajapaksa gave this directive during his visit to Kanugahawewa in Kebthigollawa (73 Km away from Anuradhapura) to participate in the "Discussion with the Village" programme. Paddy and Chena cultivation is the main source of livelihood of the people in this area.
It was pointed out that loss of traditional habitat as a result of displacement due to the conflict is a major issue. Therefore, the farming lands have become residual forests. The President was told that marking such lands as reserves by the Wildlife and Forest Conservation Departments during their surveys

makes it very hard for the people to cultivate.
It was thus decided to hand over the lands identified as residual forests when marking reserves according to the Google map after 2012 back to the people for cultivation purposes immediately.
Residents of these villages had to live in welfare camps from 1995 to 1998 and from 2006 to 2008 due to terrorist activities.
They still face a number of serious economic and social issues. The poverty ratio in the village stands at 54% of the total population.
LTT attacks separate Neelawewa when a mine in 2006.



Kanugahawewa in Kebthigollawa to participate in the "Discussion with the Village" programme. Picture by Jeevan Chandimal, President's Media Division



Modern technology to monitor criminals - Public Security Minister

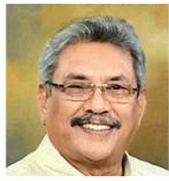
CAMELIA NATHANIEL
Public Security Minister Rear Admiral Dr. Sarath Weerasekera said focus would be placed on using modern technology to monitor criminals as done in foreign countries.
He said that due to laws that are unsuitable for today's society, criminals creep through loopholes of the law and engage



in criminal activities. Addressing a meeting with Police officers, Minister Weerasekera said like in foreign countries, the focus should be on ways of monitoring these criminals using modern technology.
The Minister said that through the use of modern technology, crime prevention could be carried out effectively and advised the police to focus on using the Internet and GPS technology for crime prevention and monitoring

President extends warm greetings to Parliament for joint efforts to surmount global challenges

Reaffirming the cordial relationship that has always existed between Egypt and Sri Lanka, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi has extended his heartfelt best wishes and greetings to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the people of Sri Lanka for 2021. The full text of the message of greetings follows:
"As we bid farewell to



this year and welcome, the New Year 2021, with optimism and hope, it gives me pleasure to

extend to Your Excellency and your people my warm greetings and heartfelt felicitations together with my best wishes.
"With this good occasion, I would like to express my sincere hope that the New Year will usher in a new chapter where our ambitions and aspirations come true through harnessing our efforts to

Mahara Prison riot: Final report handed over to Justice Minister

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA
The Committee investigating the unrest that broke out at the Mahara Prison in its Final Report has recommended the reduction of prison overcrowding, the biggest problem facing the country's prison system.
The Committee led by former High Court Judge Kusala Sarojini Weerawardena

yesterday handed over its 61-page Final Report to Justice Minister Ali Sabry, PC.
Committee Member and Legal Adviser to the Justice Minister U.R. de Silva PC told the Daily News that the committee has also recommended to upgrade the facilities in prison (welfare aspect) with immediate effect.

Desathiya from Lake House newsagents

The *Desathiya* news magazine, published continuously for 42 years by the Government Information Department, can be purchased from Lake House newsagents from the January 1, 2021 issue, in addition to postal distribution and sales at Post Offices. Accordingly, readers can purchase the *Desathiya*, an enriching magazine with in-depth articles on current affairs, from Lake House newsagents islandwide on the 1st and 15th of every month.

First Parliament Sittings for 2021 on January 5

Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake announced that the first sittings of the 9th Parliament for 2021 will convene from January 5 to 8, as decided at the Committee on Parliamentary Business held yesterday (30).
The Committee on Parliamentary Business chaired by the Deputy Chairperson of Committees Angajan Ramana-than also decided to permit the media to enter Parliament for covering Parliamentary proceedings. Accordingly,



journalists will be allowed to enter the premises subjected to COVID-19 health regulations.
Leader of the House

Sinopharm's COVID-19 vaccine shows 79.3% efficacy

Chinese COVID-19 vaccine producer Sinopharm announced that an inactivated vaccine developed by its subsidiary China National Biotech Group (CNBG) has an efficacy rate of more than 79 percent, and confirmed they have officially filed for market approval

Britain approves AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID vaccine

UK: Britain on Wednesday became the first country in the world to approve AstraZeneca and Oxford University's low-cost COVID vaccine, raising hopes it will help tackle rising cases and ease pressure on creaking health services.
The independent Medicines and Healthcare products and Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said the vaccine "met its strict standards of safety, quality and

New Mayor for Jaffna

RASULA DILHARA GAMAGE
Northern Province Special Corr:
Tamil National People's Front (TNPF) member V. Manivannan has been appointed as the new Mayor of Jaffna Municipal Council. Hence, the position of the Mayor in Jaffna has been shifted from the Tamil National Alliance



Rubber motor accessories to be manufactured locally

Steps have been taken to manufacture rubber motor accessories locally with Sri Lankan latex, said Company Estate Reforms, Tea Estate Related Crops, Tea Factory Modernization and Tea Export Promotion State Minister Kanaka Herath.
Accordingly, the State Minister instructed officials to list out the rubber motor items, which can be manufactured locally in order to train local producers to manufacture those

