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COVAX ready to give vaccines to SL - Health Minister

COVAX ready to give vaccines to SL
- Health Minister

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL AND AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi told Parliament yesterday that the Government is ready to provide a successful vaccine for COVID-19 for 20 percent of the population through the COVAX facility.

Speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Minister Wanniarachchi revealed that the Government made the request from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), the lead partner of COVAX, on July 20 last year for the facility and Sri Lanka is eligible to receive this facility.

Making these observations in response to a query made by MP Upali Galappatti to be asked from the Prime Minister, she added that Covid-19 Vaccine Committee Chairman and Senior Chief



External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar tells President

INDIAN COVID VACCINES FOR SRI LANKA

- Priority for Sri Lanka in vaccine exports
- Enhanced cooperation in post-COVID era



External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar called on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the Presidential Secretariat yesterday. Picture courtesy President's Media Division

India is ready to give priority to Sri Lanka when exporting the vaccines now being produced in India to prevent COVID-19, the External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar told President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday.

The Indian Minister called on President Rajapaksa at the Presidential Secretariat.

Commenting on the future course of action to control the COVID-19 pandemic, the President stated that Sri Lanka would like to obtain the COVID vaccines which are being produced in India, following an accurate assessment of the need for treatment.

Dr. Jaishankar agreed to give priority to Sri Lanka when his country begins exporting the vaccines to other countries. India currently produces the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine under license at the Serum Institute of India (the world's biggest vaccine producer) as well as the homegrown Bharat Biotech COVAXIN vaccine. The Serum Institute of India plans to initially produce 100 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine for India, priced at INR 200 per dose. It will later produce 400 million doses for the WHO/CEPI/GAVI COVAX initiative from which Sri Lanka plans to obtain COVID-19 vaccines. India's own vaccination drive is slated to begin in a few weeks.

Both the President and the Indian Minister agreed to further

India will remain a dependable partner and friend of Sri Lanka - External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar



MUHAMMAD RASOOLDEEN

India will remain a dependable partner and a reliable friend of Sri Lanka open to strengthening its relationship on the basis of mutual trust, mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity, visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said yesterday.

The Indian External Affairs Minister was addressing a joint press conference with his counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena at the Foreign Ministry in Colombo.

FM lauds India's help in pandemic era

MUHAMMAD RASOOLDEEN

The Indian Government's "Neighbourhood First" policy made a very positive impact on Sri Lanka's health sector and the economy during the critical pandemic period, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said while welcoming his Indian counterpart Dr. S. Jaishankar at his ministry.

Gunawardena was speaking to the press following his bilateral talks with Minister Jaishankar who arrived in Colombo on a three-day visit at his invitation.

Under the "Neighbourhood First" programme, Minister Gunawardena further said that India also extended assistance to repatriate stranded Sri Lankans, who were pilgrims, students and patients.



'All Easter attack culprits will be punished'

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL AND AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

It has been almost two years since the Easter Sunday attacks which were carried out on April 21, 2019 resulting in the deaths of almost 300 and injuries to over 500 and the Government is carrying out extensive investigations regarding this incident.

"As the Presidential Commission investigating the Easter attacks had unravelled many a vital evidence which was not found during the investigations by the Parliamentary Committee appointed during the previous Government, we cannot be satisfied with the investigations carried out by the Parliamentary Committee appointed by the previous regime to investigate the Easter attacks," said Public Security Minister Rear Admiral (Rtd) Dr. Sarath Weerasekera.

He said this in Parliament yesterday, in response to a question raised by MP Nalin Fernando. MP Fernando questioned the Government



if they were satisfied with the investigations carried out so far with regard to the Easter attacks during the past one year and eight months.

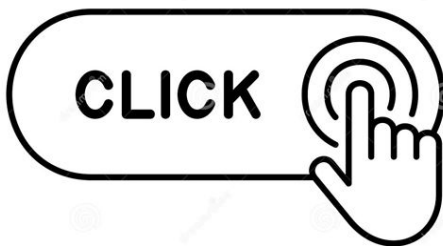
He also asked what action the current Government would be taking pertaining to those found to have been connected with the Easter Sunday bombings.

"As the investigations of the Presidential Commission appointed to investigate the Easter attacks is scheduled to conclude by January 31, further details regarding the investigation could be obtained. The Colombo Crime Division, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Terrorism Investigation Department (TID) are carrying out the investigations into the attacks targeting eight

Dhamma schools to reopen on Jan. 17

The Department of Buddhist Affairs in a media advisory noted that all Dhamma schools that had been closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic are to re-open on January 17. The advisory noted that the guidelines are only applicable to Dhamma schools that are outside the isolated zones.

CB extends suspension of Perpetual Treasuries for another six months



ETI Directors released on bail

SUBHASHINI SENANAYAKE AND DILSHAN THARAKA

Fort Magistrate Priyantha Liyanage yesterday ordered the release of Nalaka Edirisinghe, Jeevaka Edirisinghe, Anjali Edirisinghe, and Asanka Edirisinghe, who served as directors of ETI Finance and Swarnamahal Jewellers, on a surety of Rs.1 million each.

The Magistrate also imposed a travel ban against them and ordered to inform the Department of Immigration and Emigration in this regard. The suspects were also ordered to appear before the CID every two weeks.

The Magistrate ordered that the case to be taken up again on March 3 and that a further report be filed on that day. Attorney-General Dappula de Livera had instructed the CID to arrest the former board of directors of ETI Finance and Swarnamahal Jewellers and produce them in the court with regards to unauthorised acceptance of deposits worth Rs.13.7 billion, misappropriation, and money laundering.

It is reported that the Attorney-General has also decided to file indictments in the High Court against them. On the instructions of the AG, the Criminal Investigations Department arrested Jeevaka Hemal Edirisinghe, Anjali Deepa Edirisinghe, Nalaka Primalal Edirisinghe, and Asanka Srimal Edirisinghe last Tuesday and produced them at the Fort Magistrate's Court, yesterday.

China's economy to expand by 7.9% - WB

The global economy is expected to expand 4 percent in 2021, with China's economy expected to expand by 7.9 percent this year, the World Bank said on Thursday, assuming an initial COVID-19 vaccine rollout becomes widespread throughout the year.

Police nab two COVID-19 escapees

RIKSHANA RIZWIE

Out of the five prisoners who had fled the Gallella COVID-19 treatment facility in Polonnaruwa, police have been able to arrest two individuals, the latest being a 52-year-old individual by the name of Nimal Wasantha who was arrested by the Arachchikotrappa police yesterday afternoon.

Police said this individual had been arrested on a robbery case and had been detained in the Negombo prison. He was thereafter identified as COVID-19 positive after which he was sent to Gallella. "We have asked the public not to allow these individuals to remain at their residences and action will be taken against those aid and abet these individuals," Media spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said.

He said that another individual was arrested in Chilaw yesterday for harbouring a COVID-19 infected person and concealing that information from police.

This individual has been ordered to follow quarantine procedures and will be charged in court in respect of the provision of the penal code with the offence of harbouring a suspect as well as under the provision of quarantine and prevention of diseases ordinance.

Public servants to return to work from next week

NUWAN HETTIARACHCHI

Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration J.J. Ratnasiri said that the heads of State Institutions will be able to call on all public servants to return work from next week.

"Accordingly, all public servants should be prepared to perform their duties as usual and transport arrangements can be made as long as it is within the range of the office," he said.

Over 39,000 COVID-19 recoveries

ISHARA MUUDUGAMUWA

The number of people who had recovered from COVID-19 in Sri Lanka crossed the 39,000 mark yesterday. According to statistics of the Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry, the total number of coronavirus recoveries reported in the country increased to 39,023. The total number of COVID-19 positive cases detected

Monk's death caused by suffocation

RAKSHANA SRIYANATHA

Police Media Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana stated that the suspects arrested in connection with the murder of Ven. Udevala Dhammasiri Thera in the Kodikanda Forest Monastery are the parents of a Buddhist monk.

The post mortem conducted by Judicial Medical Officer D.K. Wijewardena at the Negombo Hospital on January 5th revealed that the murder of the monk at the Kodikanda Forest Monastery was caused by suffocation.

Based on investigations, three suspects were arrested by the Mirihana Special Investigation Unit in connection with the murder and were produced before the Avissawella Magistrate's Court on the 5th while one suspect was remanded until the 19th for an identification parade.

Police Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said that the Police found a diary, a bank book and another file of the deceased monk at a house in Makola North and that the monk had been detained at the house.

The suspects have been identified as the mother and father of a young monk who live in the Aranya monastery, Hanwella Police along

Govt. plans to make Western Container Terminal operational by year end - Minister

SANDASEN MARASINGHE, CAMELIA NATHANIEL AND AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The Government is planning to bring the Western Container Terminal of the Colombo Port to operational level by

and Shipping Rohitha Abeysunwardena yesterday (06) revealed in Parliament.

Minister Abeysunwardena said, within the government's ruling period, its objective is to bring six terminals of the Colombo Ports to operational level. This

by Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Minister Abeysunwardena observed.

Minister Abeysunwardena made these observations in reply to National People's Power leader MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake questioned government's plan for

developed until 1320 m in length. If we can add more 200 m to what is available now, we shall be able to give service to two ships each with a 300 m length. With this, the port will be able to get more revenue, with which the rest of the terminal can be developed."

wardena pointed out, "When the Yalapanaha government came, the three cranes that we had ordered were not purchased. Yalapanaha government cannot afford to purchase. There was a loss of revenue amounting to USD 360 Million due to this decision. The then

