

COVID-19 recoveries top 40,000

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA
The number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 in Sri Lanka crossed 40,000 mark yesterday.

According to the statistics of the Epidemiology Unit of the Health Ministry, the total number of Coronavirus recoveries reported in the country increased to 40,317. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Tuition classes to restart after TAKING HEALTH GUIDELINES into account - GL

CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The focus has been placed on giving the green light to start tuition classes from January 25, said Education Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris.

He said that this decision would be made after taking into account the health guidelines specified by the health authorities.

The Minister was responding to a question raised by Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa under Standing Orders 27/2 in Parliament yesterday.

The Opposition Leader noted that there are **▶ TO PAGE 02**



Two Kandy MC Members remanded on BRIBERY CHARGES

SHAVINI MADHARA

The two members of the Kandy Municipal Council, who were arrested by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption on charges of soliciting a bribe of Rs.150,000, were ordered to be remanded till January 19 by Colombo Chief Magistrate Mohammed Mihail yesterday.

The Bribery Commission informed the Court that the two suspects have solicited a bribe of Rs.150,000 from the complainant to expedite the rest of the administrative work through the officers of the **▶ TO PAGE 02**

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FOUR ETI FINANCE DIRECTORS ARRESTED

On charges of criminal misappropriation, cheating, money laundering and other offences

DILSHAN THARAKA

The Criminal Investigations Department (CID) on the directive of Attorney General Dapula de Livera arrested four Directors of Edirisinghe Trust Investments (ETI) Finance on charges of Criminal Misappropriation, cheating, money laundering and other offences at ETI Finance yesterday.

They are Jeewaka Edirisinghe, Anjali Edirisinghe, Asanka

Edirisinghe and Nalaka Edirisinghe, who served as Directors of ETI Finance and Swarnamahaj Jewellers.

Coordinating Officer to the Attorney General State Counsel Nishara Jayaratne told news media that according to the final report of Presidential Commis-



sion Of Inquiry, there was evidence that the directors of ETI Finance had used the deposits in undisclosed accounts for personal gain and had persuaded the public to accept deposits, indicating that the ETI Finance was a well-run financial institution at a time of severe liquidity crisis.

Evidence before the Commission has revealed that the ETI Finance Company had illegally obtained Rs.6,480 billion in deposits by maintaining undisclosed accounts with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) and that Swarnamahaj Jewellers had illegally obtained Rs.7.2 billion in deposits from the public without being registered with the CBSL and without a valid license, she added. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

More CREDIT FACILITIES to small and medium scale rice producers - PM



Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday instructed officials to provide credit facilities to small and medium scale rice producers to support their businesses. The Prime Minister made this directive while was participating in a discussion with **▶ TO PAGE 02**

UGC to REOPEN on Monday

ANURA PREMALAL

The University Grants Commission (UGC) which has been temporarily closed due to the discovery of an COVID-19 infected person, will reopen on Monday, its Chairman Prof. Sampath Amarantunga said yesterday.

He said the UGC was temporarily closed after a security guard and one of his associates was found COVID-19 positive. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



PREPARING FOR SCHOOL REOPENING AFTER COVID-19 CLOSURE: Schools will be re-opened under the new normal situation on Monday, while adhering to strict health guidelines. Here, parents cleaning and disinfecting a School in Badulla town prior to its opening. Picture by C.Gamage, Soranotota Group Corr.

CBK DISAPPOINTED over SLFP's situation



ANURA PREMALAL

Former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga yesterday expressed disappointment over the state of affairs of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

The former President was responding to questions from journalists after she paid floral tributes to the statue of her father the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike at the Galle Face on the occasion of the late Prime Minister's 122nd birth anniversary. Expressing her views about the current status of the SLFP

founded by her late father, Bandaranaike said today the party was in disarray and was on the wrong path.

She also accused the current SLFP leader former President Maithripala Sirisena of holding the leadership in an illegal manner.

"At present the SLFP has lost its path. I am still in the SLFP. I came to this place because I wanted to come earlier. I have not been invited to this event. But we don't need invitations to come. I never went to the UNP. Sirisena went to the UNP. At present the SLFP has been sold. So we have nothing to add," she added.

Former President Sirisena also paid floral tributes at the late Prime Minister's statue yesterday morning.

NO CORRUPTION or fraud in repatriation

Free quarantine facilities for all expat

CAMELIA NATHANIEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The Government will definitely not allow any corruption or fraud to take place in the repatriation of Sri Lankan migrant workers and if this happens, he will definitely oppose it as a Government Minister, said Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa.

The Opposition raised concerns in Parliament yesterday regarding the



repatriation process and alleged that there is serious corruption with regard to the process where Sri Lankan migrant workers are being exploited.

Refuting reports that Sri Lankan expatriate workers have to undergo compulsory paid quarantine in Hotels, Minister Namal Rajapaksa said yesterday that all the Sri Lankan expatriate workers would be



Opposition MP Kabir Hashim raised the issue that migrant workers were being charged unnecessarily and forced to opt for private **▶ TO PAGE 02**

are registered with the expectation of returning to Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Ministry of External Affairs and our Ministry in collaboration with the **▶ TO PAGE 02**

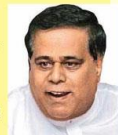
ankans REPATRIATED, another 69,000 plan to return

IEL and AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

repatriated more than 61,750 Sri Lankans to their home countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sri Lankans from 137 other countries are under the Standing Order

observation answering a question under the Standing Order

De Silva pointed out, "Of workers from 15 countries are registered with the expectation of returning to Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Ministry of External Affairs and our Ministry in collaboration with the **▶ TO PAGE 02**



'Over Rs. 90 mn to repatriate Sri Lankans working in ME'

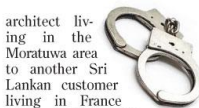
The Government has spent more than Rs. 90 million for Sri Lankans working in the Middle East (ME) who are awaiting repatriation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Minister of Labour Nimal Siripala De Silva yesterday (08) said in Parliament. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

FINANCIAL RACKET: Nigerian, two others arrested

DILSHAN THARAKA

Three suspects including a Nigerian National were arrested by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) over a financial fraud racket via hacking email accounts last Wednesday.

They were arrested in connection with obtaining Rs.300,000 fraudulently from a Sri Lankan who is living in France by hacking his email account. Investigations have revealed that a Nigerian had hacked into an email sent by an



architect living in the Moratuwa area to another Sri Lankan customer living in France who had obtained his services, changed the bank account number mentioned in the E-mail message and sent it to the relevant person.

According to the message, the person had credited Rs.300,000 to the account.

Following the complaint lodged by the victim, the

35-year-old Nigerian national was arrested in the Nugegoda area and the CID also discovered 22 fake national ID cards, 18 Bank passbooks, 29 ATM cards, 12 mobile phones, a laptop and Rs. 290,000 in cash believed to have been obtained fraudulently, in his possession. The other two suspects (aged 55 and 65) are residents of Maradana and Wellampitiya.

They were produced before the Colombo Chief Magistrate's Court yesterday and ordered to be remanded until January 21.

Dayasiri TESTS COVID-19 positive



MAHINDA PLIYANAGE, Galle Central Special Correspondent

State Minister Dayasiri Jayasekera has been admitted to the Hikkaduwa COVID Treatment Centre as he had contracted COVID-19, the Galle District Health Services Director's Office confirmed. "Following PCR tests carried out on him, he had tested positive for the Coronavirus," health sources said.

Repatriation Process "PEOPLE CENTRIC AND TRANSPARENT"

Foreign Ministry sets the record straight



The Foreign Ministry will continue facilitating repatriations without any financial burden on Sri Lankans, Foreign Secretary Jayanath Colombage asserted responding to misinformation in the public domain.

The Foreign Secretary made it clear that the role of the missions is strictly confined to organizing repatriation flights for returnees, providing all

logistical support and quarantine at Government facilities free of charge.

The returnees are drawn from the list of overseas Sri Lankans registered in the Missions and Posts and repatriated depending on their vulnerability levels and on a **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Committee to look into SPREAD OF UNKNOWN cattle viral disease

Mahara Prison unrest

SUBASHINI SENANAYAKE and RAGAMA GROUP CORR.

Damage ESTIMATED at Rs 65 mn

Railways to transport AGRICULTURAL produce