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# Daily News

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## EASTERN TERMINAL WILL NOT BE SOLD, LEASED - PRESIDENT

GOVT TO RETAIN OWNERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION

INVESTMENT VITAL FOR PORT'S FUTURE PROSPECTS

NO HARM TO COUNTRY'S SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa yesterday assured trade unionists that the Eastern Container Terminal (ECT) of the Colombo Port will not be sold or leased. The President met the Ports Authority Trade Union representatives at the Presidential Secretariat on their request to discuss about the ECT. The President stressed that he would not allow any harm to the country's sovereignty and independence from the investments made. "The former Government has made an agreement to sell the ECT to India. Following discussions the incumbent Government had with

India, it has now been agreed to retain 51 per cent of its ownership and the administration of the Eastern Terminal with the Ports Authority," the President said. He pointed out that the ECT would be subject to sustainable development under the investment project. He said the ECT development project was planned after careful consideration of regional geopolitical facts, the country's sovereignty, generation of income and job opportunities. He explained that India contributes to 66 per cent of re-exports at the ECT. Bangladesh contributes 9 per cent to the

shipment volumes and the rest are shipments from other countries. The President said the plan is to develop the Port as a shared investment where 51 per cent of shares would be owned by the Sri Lankan Government, while the Adani Group of India and others could invest in the rest (49 per cent). The President, asking the Trade Unionists not to harbour any doubts on the investment, also requested their suggestions for further improving it. Ports Minister Rohitha Abeygunawardena, Secretary to the President Dr. P.B. Jayasundera and other officials participated.



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## PCR tests for Speaker, MPs, staff

A total of 463 PCR tests were carried out for Parliamentarians and staff yesterday (13) at the Parliament Complex. The Speaker and 15 other Government and Opposition MPs volunteered to undergo PCR tests. **TOP PAGE 03**

## Attorney General withdraws case

### TMVP leader, four others acquitted

SIVAM PACKIYANATHAN, Batticaloa special corr.



The Tamil Makkal Viduthala Puligal Party (TMVP) leader and MP Sivanesadurai Chandrakanthan, former Eastern Provincial Council member Edwin Silva Krishnananthraja, Kanaganayagam alias Gajan Mama, Army officer M.Kaleel and former Army officer Mathusinghe alias Vinoth were acquitted from all charges by Batticaloa High Court Judge D.Sosaitathan who delivered the verdict when they were produced before the before him yesterday (13). **TOP PAGE 03**



Air Force Commander Air Marshal Sudharshana Pathirana greeted by the German Shepherd 'Kyra' during his interaction with the dogs after the ceremony. **Picture by Gayan Pushpika.**

## EU provides over Rs. 8 bn in grants to SL

The European Union (EU) announced the signing of three grants worth EUR 35.75 million (Rs. 8.26 billion) which will support Sri Lanka's justice sector, help improve food safety, and strengthen efforts to mitigate climate change. The grants were signed on behalf of the Sri Lankan Government by Treasury Secretary S.R. Attygalle and were presented by the Ambassador of the European Union to Sri Lanka Denis Chaibi.



EU, the Treasury Secretary said that these grants will reinforce the Government's efforts to strengthen the justice sector, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Sri Lanka and to improve food safety and quality targeting exports. **TOP PAGE 03**

## Ajith Prasanna bailed on two sureties

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA



The Court of Appeal granted bail for retired Major, Attorney Ajith Prasanna who was ordered to be released on two sureties of Rs.500,000 each. Prasanna had been remanded by the Colombo Magistrate's Court over an allegation that he had intimidated witnesses in a case before Magistrate's Court

during two media conferences. The Court of Appeal two-judge bench comprising Justice Priyantha Fernando and Justice Devika Abeyratne decided to grant bail after taking into consideration the fact that he would be refrained from making comments to media over judicial matters. **TOP PAGE 03**

## SL out r

CAM

The passing-out 20 Air Force dogs at the Sri Lanka ake, under SLAF Sudarshana Pathi



## Sajin Vass' money laundering case trial on March 1

DILSHAN THARAKA

The case filed against former UPPA MP Sajin de Vass Gunawardena over money laundering charges amounting to over Rs.300 million was yesterday fixed for further trial on March 1 by the Colombo High Court. The case was taken up before Colombo High Court Judge Damith Thotawatta. Sajin de Vass Gunawardena was indicted by the



Attorney General (AG) on charges of money laundering amounting to over Rs.306.26 million, under Section 3 (1) (a) of Money Laundering Act No 05 of 2006 as amended by Act No 40 of 2011. At a previous hearing, he was given Indictment and was released on a cash bail of Rs. 500,000 and two sureties of Rs. 5 million. **TOP PAGE 03**

## Over 20 kg of heroin found from Kosgoda

MAHINDA PLIYANAGE and LAHIRU FERNANDO

Police Special Task Force (STF) seized 20 kilograms of heroin worth Rs. 240 million hidden near an electricity pole in the Kosgoda area on Tuesday. Police Media Spokesman DIG

Ajith Rohana said the haul of narcotics has been handed over to the Police Narcotics Bureau by the STF for further investigations. It is believed these drugs belong to underworld figure Kosgoda Tharaka. On Tuesday alone, the Police have conducted another two raids on

drugs where 50 grams were recovered in Peliyagoda area and 20 grams recovered in the Mt. Lavinia area. Two suspects have been taken into custody in connection with these drugs. Police are continuing raids on drugs on a daily basis, the media spokesman said.

## Random RAT tests for those leaving Western Province

LAHIRU FERNANDO

Random Rapid Antigen Tests will be conducted on individuals leaving the Western Province, Police Media Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said. This initiative was re-implemented at 11 exit points of the Western

Province, since yesterday he said. It was first implemented from December 18 to January 5. DIG Rohana said in the Colombo North and Colombo Central Police Divisions where the quarantine curfew was lifted, there is a risk of occurring new sub clusters as

the inmates of these areas are not adhering to the quarantine regulations. According to him, the police officers in Mufti have observed that people in these areas flock in groups and wear no face masks despite the health guidelines. **TOP PAGE 03**

## Vajira, Range get UNP posts

Ravi absent Akila



## New UK variant of COVID-19 found here

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Sudath Samaraweera said the new UK variant of COVID-19 was found in a person who arrived

United Kingdom was confirmed to have been infected with this new variant from research conducted by a team led by Prof. Neelika Malavige of the Immunology and Molecular Medicine