


**PRESIDENT DECIDES AT 6TH "DISCUSSION WITH THE VILLAGE" PROGRAMME**  
**FARMERS PERMITTED TO CARRY ON TRADITIONAL CULTIVATION UNTIL ISSUES RESOLVED**  
**PERMANENT SOLUTION TO WILD ELEPHANT PROBLEM**



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said permission will be granted to farmers to engage in their traditional cultivation activities continuously without any disruption until related issues are resolved. The President arrived at this decision focusing on issues raised by the farmers attending the 6th in the series of programmes "Discussion with the Village". The "Discussion with the Village" programme was held in Wedikachchiva village in Medirigiriya in the Polonnaruwa district on Saturday (16). Wedikachchiva in the Medirigiriya Divisional Secretariat located around 45 km away from Polonnaruwa city belongs to Zone "D" of the Mahaweli Development project.

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**PUBLIC SECURITY, JUSTICE MINISTERS TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL**  
**NEW THREE-MEMBER HIGH COURT MOOTED**  
**CASES TO BE HEARD DAILY**  
**AIMED AT CLEARING BACKLOG OF CRIMINAL CASES**

**CAMELIA NATHANIEL**  
Public Security Minister Rear Admiral Dr. Sarath Weerasekera is scheduled to meet Justice Minister Ali Sabry, PC today (18) to discuss the setting up of a three member High Court in order to hear cases on a daily basis and clear the backlog of criminal cases. He said this yesterday during a meeting with a group of senior Police officers of the Wayamba (North Western) Province. "Due to the delay in the legal process of criminal cases, the victims are further aggrieved and the perpetrators are given a chance to escape justice and continue with their criminal activities." He said this has resulted

in the increase of criminal activities in society. Therefore, Minister Weerasekera said that he would discuss this issue with the Justice Minister and implement a mechanism to conclude these cases fast by hearing them on a daily basis. Citing an example of the injustice meted out to the victims, the Minister said, "When an 11-year-old child is molested, it takes a long time for the case to be heard and a verdict to be given. Over such long periods of time, evidence is lost and sometimes incriminating evidence may be forgotten. Due to these long delays the victims have to face numerous social implications."

**Lanka congratulates India on vaccination drive**



**DISNA MUDALIGE**  
Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa congratulated his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for India's landmark launch of the COVID-19 vaccination drive on Saturday. "Congratulations PM @narendramodi and the Government of India on taking this very important step with this massive COVID-19 Vaccination drive. We are starting to see the begin-

ning of the end to this devastating pandemic," he posted in his Twitter account also sharing the Indian Premier's address to the Indians during the launch. Replying to the above comment, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi replied: "Thank you @PresRajapaksa. The tireless efforts of our scientists and frontline workers have played a crucial role in the fight against this pandemic."

**Govt. to present draft for new Constitution before year end - Minister G.L.**


**ASELA KURULUWANA**  
The Government expects to present the draft for a new Constitution to Parliament before the end of this year, Education Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris said. He was speaking to the media after meeting Ven. Kappetiipola Sri Virala Nayaka Thera in Kandy on Saturday.

He pointed out that a Committee headed by Donmesh de Silva, PC has been appointed for the purpose, adding that the 1978 Constitution needs to undergo comprehensive changes to suit the contemporary times.

**Private bus strike put off**

**IRANGIKA RANGE**  
The private bus operators strike scheduled to begin from midnight today by all private bus associations has been put off pending solutions.

**New curriculum based on self-study for Grade 6, 10 students in 2023**  
**ASELA KURULUWANA**




From 12.00 midnight to 08.30 am yesterday (17th) 567 Sri Lankans arrived at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) from Dubai, Mali, Doha, Australia, Japan and India. All those who arrived in the country were subjected to PCR tests and were sent for quarantine in military operated quarantine centres.

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study in g to State an a Pro- r' g the official letterhead of the Association in his facebook page protesting against the prison administration.

**Do not tolerate interference in probes - IGP tells OICs**

**DILSHAN THARAKA**  
Inspector General of Police (IGP) C.D. Wickremaratne yesterday issued a Special Circular for the respective Officers In Charge (OICs) of all Police stations and all superior officers of the Police to take legal action against persons who attempt to interfere with Police investigations claiming to be his associates.



**911 Parliament staff members subjected to PCR tests**  
**32 MPs test negative for COVID-19**

**CAMELIA NATHANIEL**  
On the instructions of the Speaker and the Secretary General of Parliament, in consultation with the officials including the Director General of Health Services, the Members of Parliament and Staff serving in the Parliament were subjected to PCR tests on January 13 and 15 at the Parliament Complex. Under this programme, 32 MPs and 911 Parliament staff members and those attached to other divisions and security details had undergone the PCR tests. None of the 32 MPs subjected to PCR tests had tested positive.

**Woman arrested with Rs. 20 mn worth heroin**  
**DILSHAN THARAKA**  
A 58-year-old woman was arrested with 1.648 Kgs of heroin worth over Rs.20 million from the 'Sirisanda Uyana' housing scheme in Borella by the Special Task Force (STF) last Saturday.

**Will work to solve people's problems - Sajith**  
Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa said that he considers any problem faced by the poor as a national problem and that he would not hesitate to speak about them. He made the above comment participating in the Opposition Leader's Mobile Service' held in Okkaraipitiya, Battala in Monaragala on Saturday. "The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) is not a traditional opposition party that objects to all the moves and creates unnecessary problems."

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