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SRI LANKA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER | SINCE 1918

TUESDAY JANUARY 19, 2021 | 32 PAGES | VOLUME - 103 - NO 161 | RS. 30.00 | REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER IN SRI LANKA | LATE CITY ★

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CELTIC SLMOBITEL

INDIA TO SHIP VACCINES TO NEIGHBOURS SOON

India plans to ship off doses of COVID vaccine to its neighbours as part of its vaccine diplomacy in a couple of weeks.

The first destinations would be in India's immediate neighbourhood, like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives and Mauritius to help them kick start their own vaccination processes against the Coronavirus.

The first shipments would be a

goodwill gesture, while subsequently, the countries concerned would get on a payment basis from either the Serum Institute of India (Covishield) or Bharat Biotech (Covaxin).

India started its own COVID vaccination drive on Saturday, with almost 190,000 people getting inoculated on the first day.

Nepal is the latest to ask for Covid vaccines from the government. The Myanmar government declared they

had signed up with Serum Institute for vaccines as has Bangladesh. Foreign minister S Jaishankar promised the Sri Lankan leadership India would make vaccines available to them too.

Government sources said, countries would not be charged much more than Indians are paying for the vaccines even when they do have to pay for the doses. The key is to ensure that India has enough for its own needs before allowing exports of these vaccines. **TOP PAGE 02**

CAPITAL HEIGHTS

RS. 35 MILLION UPWARDS

SHOW APARTMENT READY FOR INSPECTION PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

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ALL SET FOR RE-OPENING OF AIRPORTS ON JAN 21

RS. 420 M EARNED FROM PILOT PROJECT

TOURISM UNDER STRICT HEALTH GUIDELINES

PCR TESTS TO BE CONDUCTED DURING STAY

IRANGIKA RANGE

Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said yesterday that the country has received a revenue of Rs. 420 million from the 1500 Ukrainian tourists who arrived in the country under the pilot project of reopening the country for tourists from December 26, 2020 onwards.

He said that all arrangements have been finalised to reopen the country to tourists from Thursday (January 21) in accordance with the strict health guidelines. All steps have also been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from tourists to locals and vice versa.

He added that the decision to reopen the country for tourists was taken in view of the difficulties experienced by nearly three million people dependent on the industry who are badly affected due to the downturn of tourism.

The Minister stated this at a discussion held with the heads of media institutions at the Mass Media and Information Ministry. The discussion was held under the patronage of Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella.

He added that all steps have been taken to bring in tourists to the country strictly adhering to the health guidelines and rectifying the shortcomings identified during the implementation of the pilot project.

Around 180 hotels certified by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority for following health guidelines will provide accommodation for tourists. **TOP PAGE 02**



A group of Ukrainian tourists taking a selfie with the Government's Pilot of the COVID-19 pandemic with his friend. (Inset) F Weeratunga giving an e group. Pictures by Kanchan.

Sri Dalada Maligawa rituals to continue

ASELA KURULLUWANA

Daily Religious observances and other activities in the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy will continue as usual although several Police officers on duty had contracted COVID-19, Diyawadana Nilame Pradeep Nilanga Dela said. He said that

the daily Thevava ritual Sacred Tooth Relic are conducted by the Maha Sangha Temple of the Tooth open to the public as usual.

He further said that all the staff members of the Sri Dalada Maligawa have undergone Rapid Antigen Testing. **TOP PAGE 02**

Declaration of Defence and Buddha Sasana Ministries under President

Petition fixed for support

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

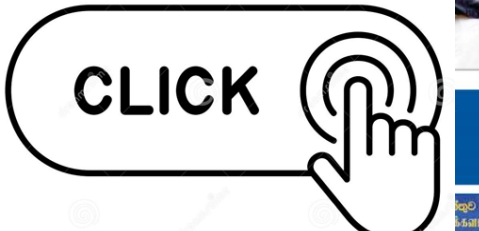
The Fundamental Rights (FR) petition filed seeking a declaration that the President should retain both the Defence and Buddha Sasana Ministries under his purview was fixed for support by the Supreme Court yesterday.

Accordingly, the Supreme Court two-judge-bench comprising Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya and Justice S. Thuraireja fixed the petition for support on July 9.

this petition naming the President and the Attorney General as respondents.

The petitioner, Aruna Laksiri yesterday sought a date to support this petition on the ground that President should retain Ministry of Buddha Sasana in terms of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Senior Deputy Solicitor General Nerin Palle moved Court to dismiss it since it had been filed under the context of 19th Amendment to the constitution. **TOP PAGE 02**



informed the Colombo Under Magistrate's Court that they have obtained a detention order from the Defence Secretary to detain and question businessman Fazal Mohamed Nisar for a period of three months under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

The suspect was arrested for allegedly sharing defaming posts aimed at Buddhist monks on social media, including Facebook.

Criminal Investigation Department officials told the Magistrate that the suspect **TOP PAGE 02**

State Minister Piyal Nishantha tests positive for COVID-19

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

State Minister of Women and Child Development Piyal Nishantha de Silva has tested positive for COVID-19. In a post on his official FB account the State Minister had stated that he had tested positive for COVID-19.

Sergeant-at-Arms of the Parliament Narendra Fernando told the *Daily News* that the MP had tested positive after undergoing a Rapid Antigen Test. **TOP PAGE 02**

COPE to discuss Special Audit Report on petroleum storage, distribution

The Special Audit Report on storage and distribution of petroleum is to be taken up by the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE), today, Prof. Charitha Herath told the *Daily News*.

Accordingly, officials of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation will be summoned to meet with COPE to discuss several issues related to the storage and distribution of petroleum in Sri Lanka, he added.

SJB seeks Speaker's permission for Ranjan to attend Parliament

ASELA KURULLUWANA

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) yesterday made a request to the Speaker to allow Parliamentarian Ranjan Ramanayake to attend Parliamentary sessions.

Chief Opposition Whip Lakshman Kiriella said that MP Ranjan Ramanayake who was sentenced to four years' RI for Contempt of Court will lose his Parliamentary Seat six months after the delivery of the judgement. **TOP PAGE 02**

HC serves indictments on Rajitha, two others in alleged bribery case

DILSHAN THARAKA

The Colombo High Court yesterday served indictments on Minister Rajitha Senarathne and two others over a case of allegedly causing a loss to the Government.

Parliament sits today, tomorrow

The Committee on Parliamentary Business which met yesterday morning (18), under the patronage of Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena decided to convene Parliament today (19) and tomorrow (20).

Accordingly, the Secretary General of Parliament Dhanmika Dasanayake said that it was decided to continue the business of Parliament while fully adhering to COVID-19 health regulations.

The Secretary General stated that six orders under the Special Commodity Levy Act and a resolution under the Customs Ordinance will be taken up for debate in Parliament today (19) at 10.00 a.m. Accordingly, the time from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. has

been allotted for the Members of Parliament to present Questions for Oral Answers limited to ten questions.

Furthermore, the Secretary General stated that the Adjournment Motion by MP and Leader of Jathika Jana Balawegaya Anura Kumara Dissanayake is scheduled to be taken up tomorrow (20) from 11.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Whilst Parliament sittings for the day shall proceed without a lunch break, a time period of an hour from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. has been allotted for Questions for Oral Answers. Leader of the House Dinesh Gunawardena, Chief Government Whip Johnston Fernando, **TOP PAGE 02**

Mechanism to reopen all WP schools in two weeks

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Education Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris yesterday said the Government is going to create a mechanism to reopen all schools in the Western Province within two weeks.

The Minister was speaking while participating in a media briefing held at Water's Edge, Battaramulla.

He said that the entire programme with regard to the reopening of schools has been done in a structured way. We have gone

forward step by step and now we feel that we have reached a position where even schools in all of the Western Province's three districts - Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara can be opened without undue risk.

We are proposing within the next couple of days to have a meeting with the health authorities and the members **TOP PAGE 02**

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