

Minor tremor in Walapane, Badulla

DISNA MUDALIGE

A minor tremor was reported between Walapane and Badulla area early morning yesterday, a Spokesperson of the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) Seismic Data and Tsunami Alert Centre said.

She told the *Daily News* that the tremor measured 1.8 on the Richter scale and it was recorded at the Palkelele, Hakmana, Bud-dangala and Mahakanadarawa Seismic Stations. It was recorded around 3.29 am. She however said this tremor had no connection with the series of tremors reported in Kandy and surrounding areas over the past few months.

The GSMB was conducting further investigations. Previously, a minor tremor had been reported in Badulla and Nuwara Eliya in March 2019. "We are currently conducting a study on earth tremors covering the whole country and our team will look into this new incident as part of that study," she said.

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100 PLUS YEARS



PRESIDENT APPOINTS THREE-MEMBER COI TO STUDY PRECEDING HR PROBES AND FINDINGS

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed a three-member Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate, inquire into and report or take necessary actions on findings of preceding Commissions or Committees appointed to investigate into human rights violations, serious

violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and other such offences.

The Extraordinary Gazette notification pertaining to this was issued yesterday (21). Supreme Court Judge A.H.M.D.Nawaz has been appointed as the Chairman of the Commission.

Retired Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando and retired District Secretary Nimal Abeysiri are the other members.

The Commission is entrusted with following responsibilities: (a) Find out whether preceding Commissions of Inquiry

and Committees which have been appointed to investigate into human rights violations, have revealed any human rights violations, serious violations of International Humanitarian Law and other such serious offences;

(b) Identify the findings

of the said Commissions and Committees related to the serious violations of human rights, serious violations of International Humanitarian Laws and other such offences and whether recommendations have been made on how to deal with the said facts; **▶ TO PAGE 02**



SRI LANKA APPROVES OXFORD-ASTRAZENECA JAB

FIRST DELIVERIES EXPECTED SOON

SEVERAL MORE VACCINES AWAITING APPROVAL

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Health authorities at the National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA) have granted Emergency Use Authorization for the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Pharmaceutical Production and Regulation Minister Prof. Channa Jayasumana said the British/Swedish vaccine has been approved for emergency use, the first such vaccine to be approved in Sri Lanka, while several other vaccine candidates are in the pipeline for approval at the National Medicines Regulatory Authority.

State Minister Prof. Jayasumana that this is the first vaccine that the country will deploy against COVID-19. The vaccine will be available very soon in Sri Lanka. The first batches will probably be shipped from India, where it is manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) under license as "Covishield". The vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufacturing partner AstraZeneca has been approved for emergency use in the UK and several other countries including India, with the first

doses being released on December 30 last year.

Clinical trials revealed the vaccine was 62 to 90 percent effective, depending on the initial dosage. Despite some uncertainty over trial results, Britain authorised the vaccine for emergency use in December, and



COVID-19 deaths spike to 276 47,983 discharged from hospitals

CHAMIKARA WEERASINGHE

The number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths has soared to 276 with two deaths reported as of yesterday morning.

The National Operation Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 yesterday stated that the country reported 56,075 COVID-19 infections since the pandemic began, of which 47,983 were discharged from hospitals after full recovery.

The Centre said it has recorded 887 persons to be infected with the virus within the 24 hour period from Thursday to Friday (22), of whom 13 were identified as Sri Lankans who came to the country from overseas, and one foreign national who came to the country. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



Two farmers among several farmers on a fast unto death in Hambantota protesting for action against the elephant menace in the district and to gazette the elephant management plan were taken to hospital yesterday due to their deteriorating health condition. The farmers initially launched the protest on Monday (18). **Pictures by Nuwan Jayasekera in Suriyagawwa.**

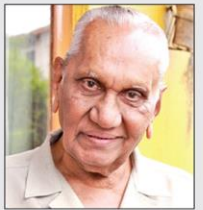
Death of veteran journalist Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa

Veteran Journalist and media personality Dr. Edwin Ariyadasa passed away at the age of 98 yesterday.

Born in 1922 in Galle, he turned 98 on December 3, last year. He was reported unwell subsequently. Ariyadasa was a newspaper editor, author and radio and TV host in both Sinhala and English media. He is also regarded as the longest lived bilingual journalist in Sri Lanka.

He was a student of the Buddhist Mixed School in Unawatuna and Mahinda College, Galle. He entered the University of Ceylon in 1945 and passed out with a Bachelor's degree in Sinhala and English languages.

Dr. Ariyadasa started his journalistic career at Lake House. He had contributed to most of the



Lake House publications including the *Daily News*, *Sunday Observer*, *Dinamina*, *Silumina*, *Janatha* and was the Editor-in-Chief of *Navagaya*.

In addition, Ariyadasa was a prominent film critic, teacher and erudite who performed well until the recent past. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Two Lankan drug traffickers arrested in India

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of India has conducted a major operation culminating in the arrest of two Sri Lankan nationals who were allegedly key players of an international drug trafficking syndicate having links in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Australia.

The accused, identified as M.M.M. Nawas and Mohamed Afnas, had been operating from

Chennai under assumed identities. "They were controlling mid-sea pick-up and delivery of narcotic drugs from Pakistani and Iranian vessels," said the agency spokesperson, K.P.S. Malhotra. They had fled Sri Lanka following a crackdown by the enforcement agencies there.

"Both Nawas and Afnas hold important positions in the multinational heroin smuggling syndicate. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



Shani's petition seeking adequate security fixed for support

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

A Fundamental Rights petition filed on behalf of CID former Director Shani Abeysekera was yesterday fixed for support on March 31 by Supreme Court.

Attorney Gowry Shangary Thavarasa has filed this petition on behalf of former CID Director Shani Abeysekera who is currently in remand custody.

The petitioner is seeking an order directing Inspector General of Police (IGP) to provide adequate security, if he is taken out of the remand prison, for investigations or any other purposes such as recovery of weapons. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



Customs Director acquitted after lengthy bribery trial

Witnesses to face trial for making false allegations

DILSHAN THARAKA

Former Customs Prevention Division Director Ranjan Kanagasabai was yesterday ordered to be acquitted and released from a bribery case by the Colombo High Court.

The Bribery Commission had filed a case against him for allegedly soliciting and accepting a bribe of one million rupees to issue a clear-

ance report pertaining to the goods imported by a vehicle importing private company.

Taking into consideration the evidence that transpired during a lengthy trial, High Court Judge Adithya Patabendige observed that the prosecution had failed to prove charges against the accused beyond reasonable doubts. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



shape&pattern

Ariuna walks away



FR petition on behalf of COVID