

Envoy hails Indo-Lanka partnership

MOHAMMED RASOOLDEEN

Sri Lanka has been a consistent partner of the Indian people and society, Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay said on Tuesday. **TOP PAGE 02**



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INDIAN COVISHIELD VACCINE ARRIVES TODAY

CONSIGNMENT OF 500,000 VIALS TO BE HANDED OVER TO SRI LANKAN GOVT

HEALTH WORKERS, ARMED FORCES / POLICE FIRST IN LINE

VACCINATION



ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

A consignment of 500,000 doses of the India-manufactured Oxford/AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine is scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka at 11:00 am today (28). Head of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination Plan and National Development and Principal Advisor

to the President Li said. The consignment is scheduled to arrive in Sri Lanka and the India will officially COVID-19 vaccines to the government. Indian High Com-



workers," Weer that there are h workers and Police and Secu- el who have to and the third elderly popula-

World's best stock rally is in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka stocks have returned a world-beating 30% so far in 2021 as domestic investors get more active.

Local traders have bought a gross 155 billion rupees (US\$ 802 million) worth of equities this month through Tuesday - already 45% of the total domestic purchases last year, according to data from the Colombo Stock Exchange. That's as overseas investors continue to exit the market, dumping a net \$25 million of shares in January on top of the \$273 million sold in 2020, data compiled by Bloomberg showed.

"As the pandemic rebound got underway, abundance of global liquidity, substantial rate cuts

and domestic retail participation have helped fuel the rally," Joshua Crab, a Hong Kong-based money manager at Robeco, said in an interview. "Keep in mind the currency has also weakened, which makes exports more competitive, encourages tourism and introduces inflation, which helps nominal assets like equities."

The March selloff saw the CSE All Share Index plunge 32% as a dearth in tourism, increased political uncertainty and concerns about debt sustainability weighed on risk appetite. Since then, the Central Bank cut its key rate by 200 basis points and provided liquidity, helping the island nation beat a recession. **TOP PAGE 02**

'No influence on NMRA to approve COVID-19 vaccines'

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

We did not at any point in time exert any influence on the National Medicine Regulatory Authority (NMRA) to approve COVID-19 vaccines, Head of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccination Plan and National Development and Principal Advisor to the President Li said.



allowed to perform its task unhindered. "At least 50 to 60 percent of the target group that we are looking at can be vaccinated during the course of the year. This time frame could be expedited," he said.

He further said that the Chinese Government has also informed us that they are willing to donate 300,000 vaccine doses of its Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine to Sri Lanka. Once the NMRA goes through its studies and approves Sinopharm, we can start the procurement process. **TOP PAGE 02**

Responding to a question by a journalist at the special media conference held yesterday at the Government Information Department, he said that the NMRA was

China donates 300,000 vaccine doses to Sri Lanka



Responding to a recent request by the Sri Lankan Government, China has decided to donate 300,000 Coronavirus vaccine doses to Sri Lanka to jointly fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, although the production capacity of the vaccine

is still limited compared with the huge domestic and international demand.

The vaccine doses are expected to be handed over to Sri Lanka in mid-February after the due procedures in both ends are completed. **TOP PAGE 02**



Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday (27) visited the Anunayake Thera of the Amarapura Muliawansika Nikaya Most Ven. Yogyane Sobitha Thera, at the Yogyana Jayasundaramaya, on his 66th birthday. The Prime Minister wished health and long life to the Anunayake Thera who is also the Chief Incumbent of the Yogyana Jayasundaramaya and Kirulapone Siri Allamethiniyaramaya. Industries Minister Wimal Weerawansa also participated in the event. *Picture courtesy Prime Minister's Media Division*

State Minister Arundika Fernando tests COVID-19 positive

SANDESEN MARASINGHE

Coconut, Kithul, Palmyrah, and Rubber Cultivation Promotion and Related Industrial Product Manufacturing, and Export Diversification State Minister Arundika Fernando has tested positive for COVID-19. **TOP PAGE 02**



CB undergoes self-quarantine for second time

ASELA KURULUWANSA

Wildlife and Forest Conservation Minister C B Rathnayake commenced self quarantining yesterday (27) for the second time following Coconut, Kithul, Palmyrah, and Rubber Cultivation Promotion and Related Industrial Product Manufacturing, and Export Diversification State Minister Arundika Fernando testing positive for COVID-19. **TOP PAGE 02**

SLPA, Indian, Japanese companies to develop ECT - Cabraal

SHIRAJIV SIRIMANE

The East Container Terminal (ECT) to be developed as a transshipment hub cannot be developed without foreign assistance, said State Minister for Money & Capital Market and State Enterprises Reforms Ajith Nivard Cabraal.

"The Sri Lanka's Port Authority would keep the controlling stake of 51% and would offer the remaining 49% to other investors, he said.

He was speaking a special press conference at Water's Edge yesterday. "Some have made a misjudgment thinking that this is a venture where only India is involved but Japan too would invest." **TOP PAGE 02**

AG's Dept opposes bail application of five PNB officers

DILSHAN THARAKA

The Attorney General's Department yesterday informed the Colombo High Court that they strongly oppose the bail application of five Police Narcotics Bureau (PNB) officers who are in remand custody on suspicion of being involved in drug trafficking. When the bail application was taken up before Colombo High Court Judge Man-

jula Thilakarathne, Deputy Solicitor General (DSG) Dileepa Pieris appearing on behalf of the Attorney General informed Court that it is a very serious offense for officers of the Police Narcotics Bureau, which is responsible for conducting raids on drug traffickers in the country, to use their official powers to transport narcotics and get involved in drug trafficking. **TOP PAGE 02**

Anticipatory bail applications of former Swarnamahal Directors dismissed

SHAVINI MADHARA

Colombo Chief Magistrate Mohammed Mihal yesterday dismissed the anticipatory bail applications filed by the four former Directors of Swarnamahal Financial Service PLC seeking the prevention of their arrest.

The Magistrate made this order considering the withdrawal of the relevant anticipatory bail applications by the defendants. The anticipatory bail applica-

tions were submitted by Nakala Edirisinghe, Jeewaka Edirisinghe, Anjalee Edirisinghe and Asanka Edirisinghe who were recently accused of criminal misappropriation, cheating, money laundering and other offenses.

The suspects had stated that there is information that the CID was planning to apprehend them with charges leveled against them over misappropriation of finances at Swarnamahal Financial Services PLC. **TOP PAGE 02**

PCol probing Easter Sunday attacks officially concludes proceedings

440 witnesses give evidence

SUBHASHINI SENANAYAKE and DILSHAN THARAKA

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry probing Easter Sunday attacks which examined 440 witnesses for more than a year officially concluded its proceedings on Monday (26). Former Director of the

Criminal Investigations Department (CID) SSP Shani Abeyssekera who is currently in remand custody testified before the PCol for the second day via Skype technology while undergoing treatment for a heart attack at Ward 42 of the Colombo National Hospital last Monday. **TOP PAGE 02**

Police recruitment drive in North

