

Plans to reopen WP schools before Feb 15

SITHARA SENANI

The possibility of reopening schools in the Western Province before February 15 under full health safety measures will be explored, Education Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris said. He was addressing the media after an observation tour of several schools including Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Colombo and Nalanda College, Colombo yesterday (29) to seek information from Principals, teachers and students on how school education is conducted now, the success of the online learning system, health provisions, etc.

Although schools in other provinces that were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic were reopened, schools in the Western Province were not reopened for all grades due to the prevailing high risk situation. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



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100 PLUS YEARS

LAKE HOUSE



COVID-19 VACCINATION DRIVE LAUNCHED AT IDH

ASTRAZENECA COVISHIELD VACCINE ADMINISTERED AT SIX HOSPITALS

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Sri Lanka's COVID-19 vaccination drive was launched yesterday at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases (IDH) under the patronage of State Minister of Primary Health Services, Pandemics and COVID Prevention Dr. Sudarshini Fernando and High Commissioner of India Gopal Baglay. A total of 5,286 persons had received their first vaccine dose by last evening.

The process of administering the AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine donated by India commenced yesterday at six selected hospitals in Colombo District. Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama became the first medical officer in the country to be vaccinated against COVID-19. He was administered the jab at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases. Thereafter, the special nurse of the hospital Champika Geetha received the vaccine. Speaking on the occasion, State Minister Fernando said due to the commitment and dedication of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the COVID-19 vaccination drive in the country has expedited. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



The vaccination drive was formally launched at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases and COVID-19 Prevention Dr. Sudarshini Fernando and High Commissioner of India Ananda Wijewickrama, a consultant specialist at the hospital. The vaccination drive was held in the presence of General Shavendra Silva, Commander of the Army and Head of the COVID-19. Pictures by Niroshana Batopola and Rukmal Gamage

Pavithra transferred to IDH

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi who tested positive for COVID-19 a few days ago was transferred to the National Institute of Infectious Disease (IDH) for further treatment on Thursday evening.

Issuing a statement yesterday, Minister Wanniarachchi stated that although she was unable to attend the first vaccination programme since she is currently receiving treatment at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, she would like to express **▶ TO PAGE 02**



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COVID-19 vaccination programme to be carried out in transparent manner - Army Commander

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

The entire COVID-19 vaccination programme will be conducted in a very transparent manner, General Shavendra Silva, Head, National Operations Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak (NOCPCO), Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of the Army said yesterday. He was speaking to the media at

the Colombo Army Hospital where a group of Army personnel working in the frontlines against the transmission of COVID-19 were given the first few doses of the vaccine.

The Army Commander said: "The Government of Sri Lanka especially the President initiated action against COVID-19 by appointing a Task Force on January 26, 2020. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



DHANUSHKA GODAKUMBURA

A special audit report has revealed that a number of irregularities had taken place during the implementation of the Kumbukkan Oya reservoir project during the Yahapalana period.

The audit report reveals that Rs. 108 million had been spent on the

project even before the commencement of the project.

It reveals that Rs.11 million had been spent before the commencement of preliminary work and Rs. 86 million had been spent for low-land development activities prior to preliminary evaluation reports or approval. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Sri Lanka Cricket summoned before COPE

The Chairman of the COPE Committee Prof. Charitha Herath stated that Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has been summoned before the Committee on the 11th of February.

The National Child Protection Authority has been called before COPE on the 12th of February where the Special Audit Report on the National Child Protection Authority relating to child abuse in Sri Lanka will be taken into discussion.

The project of Resettlement of families living in High-risk Land Slide Zones in the District of Kandy of the Central Province is scheduled for February 24.

The Environmental Audit Report on the Plastic imports and management in Sri Lanka is scheduled to be taken up on February 26, the Parliament media division in a communiqué stated.



White van presser: Case against Rajitha fixed for March 2

DILSHAN THARAKA

The case filed against former Minister Rajitha Senarathne and former State Pharmaceuticals Corporation (SPC) Chairman Mohammad Rumi in connection with the controversial White Van Press Conference was yesterday fixed for March 2 by the Colombo High Court.

The case was taken up before the Colombo High Court Judge Damith Thotawatta. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Murder of youth: Police on trail of PS member

AMALI MALLAWAARACHCHI

The Police have commenced investigations to arrest a member of a Pradeshiya Sabha who is suspected to be involved in the murder of 24-year-old youth in Meetiyaigoda police division recently, DIG Ajith Rohana yesterday (29) stated.

DIG Ajith Rohana furthered that it has been revealed that the murder was planned by the member of the Batapola Pradeshiya Sabha who is now evading police arrest.

The suspect is a resident of Dommie Jayawardena Mawatha, Eranaawila, Meetiyaigoda. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Stern action for breaking animal quarantine regulations

AMALI MALLAWAARACHCHI

Strict legal measures will be taken against a person who has brought pet birds into the country without following proper animal quarantine regulations, Police Media Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana yesterday (29) said.

According to the DIG, the said

person has brought in 62 domesticated birds into the country from Doha, Qatar on January 7, 2021.

"Any animal brought into the country should undergo a quarantine process. The said pet birds were brought in under a name registered as a company in Boralesgamuwa. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Death threats against several VIPs CID completes probes on 'Podi Lassi,' 'Kosgoda Tharaka'

S. DEEYAGAHAGE

Southern Province Roving Cor.

The CID has submitted a report to Galle Chief Magistrate Harshana Kekunawela yesterday stating that it has completed investigations into the incident where underworld criminal Arumahandi Janith Madhusanka alias 'Podi Lassi' with another notorious

gangster 'Kosgoda Tharaka' had made death threats against several VIPs including the President, the Defence Secretary and several prison chiefs.

'Podi Lassi' is still in custody and the investigation into the incident has been completed and reports have been sent to the Attorney General, the CID had reported. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

Over 2,800 quarantine law violators arrested

The Police have arrested 2,823 people as of yesterday for violating quarantine rules, Police Media Spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana said.

These people have been arrested since October 30, 2020. According to DIG Rohana, legal action has been taken against 2,751 persons so far.

"In the last 24 hours ending at 6.00 am yesterday, 15 persons were arrested for not wearing face masks and not adhering to social distancing measures," he added.

The Police Media Spokesman further stated that if people in the isolated areas continue to abide by the quarantine rules officials will be able to lift the isolation status at the earliest.



UNP to hold 'Public Days' - General Secretary

SHIROMI LAKSHMIPATHY

Former STC Chairman's appeal fixed for argument

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

An appeal filed by former

na fixed the appeal to be taken up for argument on February 3.

on December 19, 2019. Through this appeal application, the accused-appellant