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National irrigation uplift begins tomorrow

CHANDIMA KARUNARATNE

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will inaugurate the 'Irrigation Prosperity' National Rehabilitation Programme soon. The Irrigation Ministry has launched a massive programme to provide irrigation water in line

with the President's "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" national policy statement. Irrigation Minister Chamal Rajapaksa has launched a national programme called 'Irrigation Prosperity' for the development of the irrigation sector and the rapid upgrade

of rural tanks, anicuts and irrigation canals throughout the country to uplift national food production. Mahaweli Zone Canals and Settlements Common Infrastructure Development State Minister Siripala Gamalath **TO PAGE 03**

Ragama doctor succumbs to COVID-19

MAHINDA P. LIYANAGE and ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The death of the first Sri Lankan doctor due to COVID-19 was reported from the Karapitiya Teaching Hospital (KTH) yesterday (02).

The deceased has been identified as Gayan Danthanarayana (37), a resident of Heenkanda in Ragama. He succumbed to the pandemic **TO PAGE 03**

GOVT WILL ANSWER UNHRC ALLEGATIONS - MINISTER

LANKA WELL POISED TO DEFEND ITSELF

UNHRC SESSIONS FROM FEB 22

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Co-Cabinet Spokesman, Mass Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella yesterday stated that Sri Lanka has the capacity and capability to face allegations of Human Rights violations and will provide forthright answers at the UNHRC

sessions. Responding to a query regarding allegations levelled against the Government by certain foreign forces, NGOs and media outlets, the Minister said the Government's position was very clear **TO PAGE 03**



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Lion Emblem will be set right

- Gen. Gunaratne

Defence Secretary Gen. Kamal Gunaratne said discussions with India on making changes to the Lion Emblem on the National Flag. Responding to a question posed at a virtual media conference, Gen. Gunaratne said that concerns had been raised over some shortcomings in the image **TO PAGE 03**



Despite the closure of shops in lieu of the impending holiday, the sale of National Flags is in full swing with the flags being sold at every street corner. A vendor selling the National Flag ahead of Sri Lanka's 73rd Independence Day celebrations by the side of a road in a Colombo suburb. **Picture by Seneviratne Kahatapitiya.**

India, Japan to partner Sri Lanka to develop Colombo Port's West Terminal

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

Cabinet approval has been granted to develop the West Terminal of the Colombo Port as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with Japan and India, Co-Cabinet Spokesman Mass Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said.

At yesterday's Cabinet media conference at the Government House, Minister Rambukwella said the Government has approved a Cabinet paper with the recommendations of a committee appointed to study the development of the West Terminal. The committee was headed by the Minister **TO PAGE 03**



State to intervene in bringing down prices of essentials

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

The State will intervene in future to provide tax relief to people for essential commodities that are under price controls, Co-Cabinet Spokesman Minister Dr. Ramesh Pathirana said.

He was speaking at the Cabinet media briefing held at the Government Information Department yesterday (02). **TO PAGE 03**

Fertiliser subsidy only for farmers - Minister

NADI MANIKKAGE

Agriculture Minister Mahinda Anura Kumara Dissanayake stated that the fertilizer subsidy will not be given to any major company or institution other than farmers from the next season. **TO PAGE 03**

Solemn 73rd Independence Day celebrations

CHANDIMA KARUNARATNE

Defence, Home Affairs and Disaster Management State Minister Chamal Rajapaksa said all arrangements have been made to hold a solemn and simple Independence Day celebration. He was addressing a special media briefing

at the Government Information Department to explain the 73rd Independence Day celebrations.

The Minister also requested all government institutions and other institutions to hoist the National from today to the seventh to commemorate the 73rd Independence Day which falls on February 4. Arrangements have been made to hold Hindu, Muslim, Catholic and Christian religious ceremonies, including an all night Pirith chanting to coincide with the Independence Day. **TO PAGE 03**

CPC seeks more jet fuel imports with airport reopening

Ceypetco is seeking jet fuel imports following the country's decision to resume international commercial flights and ahead of refinery maintenance in the country. Ceypetco sought through a spot tender one 264,000 barrel cargo **TO PAGE 03**



No adverse reactions from COVID jab so far - Minister

ISHARA MUDUGAMUWA

No adverse reactions or side-effects have so far been reported by nearly 100,000 people who were vaccinated with the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine in Sri Lanka since last Friday. Co-Cabinet Spokesman **TO PAGE 03**



Fugitive drug lord Guna, son arrested in Chennai

CAMELIA NATHANIEL

The Tamil Nadu Q Branch police has arrested Sri Lankan drug trafficker Kimbula Ela Guna, alias Gunasekaran (45) who had links with the LTTE, from the Chennai airport on Sunday night.

Based on Gunasekaran's confession, the Central Crime Branch arrested four people, including his son Kennedy alias Bumma, from a hideout in the city on Monday. Other arrested men have



Ranjan seeks Court intervention to secure Seat

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

Samagi Jana Balawegata (SJB) a writ petition in the Court of Appeal claiming his rights to function as a

Member of Parliament. Ranjan sought an order of Contempt of Court and sentenced him to a term of four years

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