

## Core Group welcomes progress in key areas

The Core Group on Sri Lanka led by the United Kingdom, Canada and Germany said that it recognises and welcomes the progress made by the Government of Sri Lanka in rebuilding infrastructure, demining, land return and resettling internally displaced persons.

In a public statement, the Core Group on Sri Lanka (Canada, Germany, North Macedonia, Malawi, Montenegro and the UK) yesterday confirmed that it intends to present a resolution to promote reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka.

"The Core Group pays tribute to the people of Sri Lanka and wishes to highlight our on-going commitment to accountability, reconciliation, and inclusive peace in Sri Lanka.

"It is clear that more needs to be done to address the harmful legacies of war and build a sustainable peace in the country. This month, the United Nations Human Rights Council will consider an important report recently published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on human rights, reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka.

"It has been important for the Core Group to work collaboratively and constructively with the Government of Sri Lanka over the last five years. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

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SRI LANKA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER | SINCE 1918  
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2021 | 16 PAGES | VOLUME - 103 - NO 44 | RS. 30.00 | REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER IN SRI LANKA | LATE CITY ★

# MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY EASTER PCOI REPORT

## MINISTER CHAMAL RAJAPAKSA TO HEAD COMMITTEE REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED BEFORE MARCH 15



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed a six-member Committee to study in depth the facts and recommendations on the course of action contained in the final report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) into the Easter Sunday attacks and the report of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on

National Security which has been submitted to Parliament.

The Committee is headed by Minister Chamal Rajapaksa. Ministers Johnston Fernando, Udaya Gammanpila, Ramesh Pathirana, Prasanna Ranatunga and Rohitha Abeygunawardene are the other members.

The Committee will be provided

with the report of the PCoI and the report of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security by the Presidential Secretariat.

Hariguptha Rohanadheera, Director General (Legal), Presidential Secretariat has been appointed as the Secretary to the Committee in order to facilitate the activities and to carry

out other functions of the Committee. The Committee is required to submit its report before March 15, 2021.

The final report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI) into the Easter Sunday attacks was handed over to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa by the Commission's **▶ TO PAGE 02**

## PM pays homage to Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy

AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday (19) visited the Sri Dalada Maligawa to pay homage to the Sacred Tooth Relic and to receive blessings.

The Prime Minister who arrived at the Sri Dalada Maligawa was received by Diyawadana Nilame, Pradeep Nilanga Dela. The Prime Minister then worshiped the Sacred Tooth Relic and received blessings. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



The Government's community vaccination project for COVID commenced from Meetotamulla, Colombo, yesterday with the inoculation of residents in the area including religious dignitaries. This is an initiative of the Ministry of Health together with Security Forces and PHIs. Here a member of the Maha Sangha gets inoculated. Inset: Nurses and PHIs prepare for the vaccination programme. *Pictures by Dushantha Mayadunne*

## Modi mulls Air Ambulance service for South Asia

A special visa scheme for doctors and nurses and a regional air ambulance agreement for medical contingencies across South Asia and two East African island nations were among the suggestions made by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a workshop on managing COVID-19.

Modi, in his virtual address, said that over the past year a lot had been achieved through regional health cooperation, and urged: "Can we now think of raising our ambition further?"

The Prime Minister floated the suggestion to "create a regional platform for collating, compiling and studying data about the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines among our populations". **▶ TO PAGE 02**



## SPC to purchase 10 m doses of AstraZeneca vaccine

Sri Lanka will purchase 10 million doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from India, officials said.

In January, under India's neighbourhood first policy, Sri Lanka received 500,000 doses of free vaccines. They were administered as a priority to frontline health workers and members of the Armed forces.

The State Pharmaceutical Corporation has signed the order with Serum Institute of India (SII) for 10 million doses, officials said. This agreement has been approved by the Attorney General on Monday.

Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield is being manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute. The SII has collaborated with Oxford University and pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca for making the vaccine. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

## CA considers writ petition on Rambakan Oya forest

NELKA MEDAGEDARA

The Court of Appeal yesterday (19) decided to consider the writ petition filed by Vedha Chief Uruwarige

Wannila Aththo and three others seeking an interim order to invalidate the acquisition of over 5,000 acres of their ancestral land in the

Rambakan Oya forest by Mahaweli Development Authority for an agricultural and livestock development project involving private companies.

According to the petitioners, the Mahaweli Authority is set to distribute these lands among the private companies to cultivate maize. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



## Demerit system to instill road discipline

AMALI MALLAWARACHCHI

The Police is to introduce a demerit points system to curtail road traffic accidents, Police Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana yesterday (19) announced.

Observing that road traffic accidents are increasing at a rapid rate, DIG Ajith Rohana said that Sri Lanka Police is to launch the demerit points system at the earliest possible date.

The DIG made these observations speaking to the media on road traffic accidents, violation of regulations pertaining to quarantine law and arrests made on possession of substances yesterday (19). **▶ TO PAGE 02**



## Trinco oil tanks deal not scrapped - Indian HC

The Indian High Commission in Colombo on Thursday night issued a press statement stressing that the deal between the two countries on the 99 World War II-era Trincomalee oil tanks has not been scrapped.

"There is no truth in reports in some sections of the media that the understanding between India and Sri Lanka on jointly developing and operating the Upper Tank Farm at Trincomalee has been 'scrapped'.

"These reports did not correctly portray remarks made by the Minister of Energy of Sri Lanka at an event on February 17,

2021. The Minister has himself clarified the matter in detail today through a press briefing.

"As indicated in the Minister's briefing also, the two Governments have consulted each other to explore mutually acceptable modalities for jointly developing and operating the facility in accordance with existing bilateral understandings, including the MoU of 2017. "India looks forward to formal discussions on the matter, and expeditious implementation of their outcome to mutual benefit," the press statement clarified. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

## Two arrested for transporting 10,000kgs of refuse tea



One of the lorries that was transporting the refuse tea from Wellambada, Gampola to Colombo.

SHAVINI MADHARA

Two suspects were arrested by the Police Special Task Force while transporting 10,000kg of refuse tea from Wellambada, Gampola to Colombo.

Police Media Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said two trucks were seized in Yakkala yesterday morning with the tea and the two suspects have been handed over to the Yakkala Police for further investigations. **▶ TO PAGE 02**

## Couple arrested with over 1 kg of heroin

SHAVINI MADHARA

A couple has been arrested by the Organised Crimes Division with 1 kilogramme and 750 grams of ICE (Methamphetamine) and 11 grams of heroin during a raid at Welmillia in Bandaragama, Police Media Spokesperson DIG Ajith Rohana said.

DIG Rohana stated that a motorcycle which was in the possession of the suspects was also seized.

Meanwhile, a 25-year-old woman was arrested in the Bandaragama area for the possession of 500 grams of Marijuana.

DIG Ajith Rohana further noted that the three arrested suspects were produced before the Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Police obtained seven days' detention orders for interrogating the suspects.

## Army douses Kerawalapitiya garbage dump fire

Army personnel brought the spread of the fire in the Kerawalapitiya garbage dumping site completely under control yesterday morning, the Army Media Division said.

It said flattening out uneven garbage heaps to avoid any recurrence of such fires began yesterday with the use of heavy machinery and bulldozers of the Army.

The Army said that there was no damage to property or civilians from the fire that broke out at the dumping site around 5.30 p.m. on Thursday.

"The recently-raised Drone Regiment of 15 Sri Lanka Artillery of the Army, together with emer-

gency assistance teams of the Army, Navy and Air Force personnel was yesterday engaged in dousing the fast spreading fire.

"No sooner the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) turned to the Armed Forces for emergency help, Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of the Army, General Shavendra Silva directed assistance teams of sister services and Major General Wasantha Abrew, Commander, Security Forces-West to immediately rush to the scene and take necessary measures to control it.

Accordingly, in order to obtain live and timely foot-

## Ranga Dias, named on Time100 Next Annual List

Ranga Dias, an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Rochester, has been selected by Time magazine for its 2021 Time100 Next Annual List of 100 individuals who are shaping the future of their fields and defining the next generation of leadership. Dias was selected among 19 leaders in the list's "Innovators" category for his creation of a room temperature superconductor.

Dias says developing materials that are superconducting—without electrical resistance and expulsion of magnetic field at room temperature—is the "holy grail" of condensed matter physics. **▶ TO PAGE 02**



## BJP leaders meet Tripura CM over 'Nepal, Sri Lanka' comment

BJP and RSS top brass in the region met Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb on Thursday, following the controversy over his comments that the party has plans to expand to Nepal and Sri Lanka.

BJP's North-East zonal secretary Ajay Jamwal, and RSS's regional in-charge Ullas Kulkarni and state in-charge Nikhil Niwasakar met the chief minister.

The senior leaders discussed the comments that triggered a controversy, inviting severe backlash, a BJP source said.

Other organisational matters were also discussed in the meeting, the source said. "Met regional General Secretary of BJP, Ajay Jamwal ji, Ullas ji of Rastriya swayam Sevak Sangha

and Pranta Pracharak Sri Nikhil ji," Deb tweeted.

Adding to the controversy, state Law Minister Ratan Lal Nath claimed that BJP is the largest political party in the world and people of many countries, including Sri Lanka and the US, are now willing to accept its ideology. "Our chief minister wanted to say that the ideology of BJP would spread in the world and people will be influenced by it," Nath said at an event.

"We feel that the whole world will accept the BJP's thought. Those who are in Sri Lanka are now thinking to accept thoughts of the BJP. America is also thinking to accept. The entire world is now thinking in this line," he added.

(The New Indian Express)



Mass Media Ministry writes to Health Ministry

# 'Give priority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to journalists'

The Ministry of Mass Media has written to the Health Ministry requesting to give priority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to journalists considering the risks posed by them due to the nature of their job.

Mass Media Ministry Secretary Jagath P Wijeweera in a letter to the Health Ministry Secretary has pointed out that journalists have to go out fre-

quently to cover various events and press conferences.

The letter has also pointed out that the media personnel should be considered as frontline workers as they undertake great risks in providing information to the public. The Secretary has also requested to provide COVID-19 vaccine to all officers attached to various institutions coming

under the Media Ministry. The Secretary made this written request on the instructions of Minister Keheliya Rambukwella. Previously, Minister Rambukwella made a similar request from the National Operations Centre for COVID-19 Prevention.

The Media Ministry in a press release said a large number of requests had been received by the Media Organ-

izations and Media Associations asking to provide COVID-19 vaccine to journalists.

The Ministry Secretary has also requested the Health Ministry to provide the COVID-19 vaccine to the Postal Department staff as well as they also under health risks when delivering medicinal drugs, letters and parcels to the people.

# SC orders State, former SLRC Chairman to pay compensation

LAKMAL SOORIYAGODA

The Supreme Court has ordered the State and former Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC) Chairman Prof. Ariyaratne Athugala to pay compensation on media professional Uvinidu Kurukulasuriya and a television viewer for censoring a live television programme in 2008.

The Supreme Court ordered the State to pay the two petitioners Rs.30,000 each and also ordered Prof. Athugala to pay each of the petitioners Rs.50,000 as compensation for violating their Fundamental Rights guaranteed under Article 12(1) of the constitution.

Former Convenor of Free Media Movement Uvinidu Kurukulasuriya and television viewer J. K. W. Jayasekara had filed the two separate Fundamental Rights petitions challenging the decision of the SLRC to prevent them from expressing their views in a television programme titled 'Ira Anduru Pata' (Challenge the Darkness), aired on 'Rupavahini Channel' of the SLRC on November 4, 2008.

In his petition Kurukulasuriya stated that a program producer of the SLRC had invited him to participate this program to discuss the 'Private Television Broadcasting Station Regulations of 2007.'

Prof. Charitha Herath, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Peradeniya and Dhamma Dissanayake, a Senior Lecturer of the University of Colombo also participated as panelists in the programme.

Kurukulasuriya maintains that he was informed that the discussion would be televised live on the 'Rupavahini Channel' for a duration of one and a half hours from 10.30 pm until 12 midnight on the 4th of November 2008. He had also been informed that the viewers would be allowed to direct questions to the panelists via telephone calls during the telecast.

During the course of the programme it had been interrupted only once for a very brief commercial break at 11.00 pm to convey the time. Thereafter around 11.14 pm, after a lapse of approximately 45 minutes from the commencement of the programme the discussion was interrupted and the programme interrupted by a commercial break with the presenter stating; "If issues arise in the society, we must deliberate as to how solutions can be found to resolve those problems. Now we take a short break."

The petitioner said following the

commercial break, the programme did not recommence although the presenter and the panelists were present in the studio.

The respondents had alleged that during the first round of discussion, Kurukulasuriya deviated from the guidelines of the programme and made a political speech alleging that the media was exercising self-restraint and referred to a court case pending against a journalist under the Prevention of Terrorism.

In his judgment, Justice Buwaneka Aluwihare held that nature of the expression being political is certainly not a criterion recognized in the Constitution to limit freedom of expression.

The Supreme Court further elaborated that Constitution of Sri Lanka only curtails free speech to maintain racial and religious harmony, parliamentary privilege, to avoid contempt of court and defamation or to avoid incitement to an Offence.

"Even if it were a criterion for limitation, in the present case the petitioner did not mention the name of any political party or politician whose interests, he sought to advance nor did he state that media freedom in the country would have been in a better state under a different government. He voiced his dissatisfaction with a certain state of affairs, he criticized the incumbent government. It was an opinion, and from the perspective of the SLRC, could be considered political dissent, which however does not call for the restriction of such comment. An expression that is well within the parameters of the law as set out in Article 15, does not lose its legitimacy for being political or for being unpalatable to those who listen to it. If every speech which points out the shortcomings of an incumbent government or politicians were to be interpreted as being a political speech and censored, no legitimate criticism which could promote better governance would ever be made," Justice Aluwihare added.

Petitioner Jayasekara alleged that he along with all the other participatory viewers of the programme were unable to receive the information they sought by watching the programme and even if they wished so. He said viewers were unable to make use of the phone-in component.

A Supreme Court three-judge-Bench comprised Justice Buwaneka Aluwihare, Justice Priyantha Jayawardena and Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya.

# Tremor off Ampara

An earth tremor with a magnitude of 4 on the Richter Scale reported from seas off Ampara with the epicentre at 28km from Paanama yesterday morning, a Spokesperson of the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) Seismic Data and Tsunami Alert Centre said.

He told the *Daily News* that the tremor was reported 10km deep in the sea and it was recorded at the

Pallekele, Hakmana, Buddangala and Mahakanadarawa Seismic Stations.

It was experienced around 11.14am. He said no tsunami alert was issued as there was no such risk.

A series of tremors reported in Kandy, Badulla and Nuwara Eliya and surrounding areas over the past few months.

The GSMB is currently investigating the causes of recent tremors in and around the country.

# All parties in Govt. will work to fulfill people's aspirations -Wimal

Industries Minister Wimal Weerawansa said the intention of the group of 12 political parties within the Government is to make sure that they work together in keeping with the promises given to the people.



Mahinda Rajapaksa work to achieve the people's aspirations to take the country forward.

He added that their attempt is not to cause any problems within the Government, but to make sure that it works in line with the people's

mandate. Responding to questions by journalists following a media event in Colombo yesterday, the Minister said that they have received an appointment to meet President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to discuss the issues facing the country.

He said that their wish is to see the Government led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister

Responding to another question, the Ministry said that he was not intending to leave the Government.

"I will never leave the Government, unless the Government leaves me. There is no need for anyone to panic or come to any conclusions," he added.

# COPE summons SLIC

The Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation (SLIC) has been summoned before the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) on February 23, said COPE Chairman Prof. Charitha Herath.

The Chairman further stated

that the performance on the project of resettlement of families living in high-risk landslide zones in the Kandy District and the Central Province has been scheduled to be summoned on February 24.

# Army douses Kerawalapitiya...

Drone teams of the Army and a Bell 412 Helicopter of the Air Force, equipped with a Bambi bucket jumped into action as other Army and Navy troops began fighting the blaze.

"Troops of the 6 Genunu Watch, 8 Sri Lanka Light Infantry and 1 Sri Lanka Armoured Corps on the guidelines given by their Commanding Officers, together with emergency teams of the Navy and Air Force since Thursday evening (18) were fighting against raging fire until small hours on Friday (19) and managed to bring it under control at twilight although blowing winds had the tendency to reignite the flames due to Methane gas emitting from inside the garbage pile.

"By about 8.00 last morning (19), troops brought the fire completely under control while attending to vulnerable points, still emitting smoke. At about 10.00 am, those Army troops of the 141 Brigade under the supervision of the General Officer Commanding of the 14 Division reached the location with their heavy machinery and bulldozers in order to flatten out uneven garbage heaps to avoid any recurrence. No damage to property or civilians was caused.

"Commander, SF-West, GOC, 14 Division, 141 Brigade Commander and Commanding Officers were present during fire control operations," the Army said in a press statement.

# PM pays homage to Sacred...

After paying homage to the Tooth Relic, the Prime Minister visited the Mahanayake of the Malwathu Chapter Most Ven. Thibbattu-wawe Sri Siddhartha Sumangala Thera to receive his blessings.



Prime Minister Rajapaksa also visited the Anunayake Dimbulkumbure Sri Saranankara Wimaladhamma Thera of the Malwatte Chapter and the Anunayake Niyangoda Vijithasiri Thera of the Malwatta Chapter as well. Afterwards, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa visited the Asgiriya Maha Viharaya and received blessings from the Mahanayake Thera of the Asgiriya Chapter, Most Venerable Warakagoda Dhamma Siddhi Sri Pagnananda Gnanarathana Abhidhana Thera.

The Chief Incumbent of the Asgiriya Maha Viharaya Committee Member Badulu Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya Dr. Murudeniye Dhammarathana Thera was also present.

The Prime Minister also visited the Asgiriya Gedige Rajamaha Viharaya and received blessings from the Anu Nayake of the Asgiriya Chapter Vener-

able Upali Thera. Venerable Dr. Godagama Mangala Thera, Chief Incumbent of the Rangiri Dambulla Rajamaha Viharaya, Committee Member of the Asgiriya Sangha Sabha was also present on this occasion. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister also visited the Asgiriya

Maha Viharaya Pirivena and received blessings from the Chief Incumbent of the Asgiriya Maha Pirivena in Kandy, the Deputy Registrar of the Asgiriya Chapter, the Chief Incumbent, Narampanawe Ananda Nayaka Thera. The Prime Minister then proceeded to the Getambe Rajapavanaramaya in Peradeniya where he received the blessings of the Chief Incumbent, a Senior Committee Member of the Sri Lanka Ramana Maha Nikaya Ven. Keppitiyagoda Sirivimala Nayaka Thera. State Minister Dilum Amunugama, Central Province Governor Lalith Gamage, Diyawadana Nilame Pradeep Nilanga Dela, Basnayake Nilame of the Vishnu Devalaya in Kandy Mahen Ratwatte and other public representatives were present at the religious observances.

# Modi mulls Air Ambulance...

He said, "Can we similarly create a regional network for promoting technology-assisted epidemiology, for preventing future pandemics? And, beyond COVID-19, can we also share our successful public health policies and schemes?"



The special visa scheme could enable medical professionals to travel quickly within the region during health emergencies, on the request of the receiving country, Modi said. Besides India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles and Sri Lanka took part in the workshop.

Modi said when COVID-19 struck, experts voiced concerns about India owing to its dense population, but it met the challenge

with a coordinated response. "In March last year, we were the first to come together for recognising the threat and committing to fight it together. Many other regions and groups followed our early example."

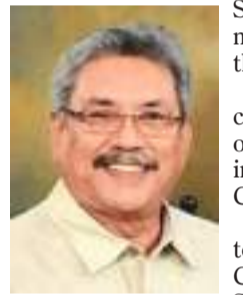
He said the region as a whole had managed to achieve one of the lowest fatality rates in the world.

"The hopes of our region and the world are focused on rapid deployment of vaccines. In this, too, we must maintain the same cooperative and collaborative spirit."

Addressing the experts and health officials of immediate and extended neighbourhood countries, Modi said that India's Ayushman Bharat and Jan Arogya schemes could be useful case studies for "our friends in the region". (*Business Standard*)

# Ministerial Committee to study...

Chairman Supreme Court Judge Janak de Silva at the Presidential Secretariat recently. The Commission recorded evidence from 457 people over a period of 214 days. Among them were former President Maithripala Sirisena, former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Defence Ministry Secretaries, top-level security personnel, intelligence service personnel, as well as those affected by the deadly attacks. The Report comprises 472 pages, 215 annexures and six volumes. Former President Maithripala Sirisena appointed the Commission on 22 September 2019 to investigate and report on the series of terrorist attacks on Easter



Sunday and to recommend necessary action based on the findings.

Eight suicide terrorists carried out deadly attacks on 21 April 2019, targeting tourist hotels and Catholic churches.

The series of explosions took place at St. Anthony's Church - Kochchikade, St. Sebastian's Church - Katuriyapitiya, Zion Church - Batticaloa and in three five-star-class hotels in Colombo, namely Shangri-La, The Kingsbury and Cinnamon Grand. In addition, two terrorists killed themselves by detonating bombs in Dematagoda and Dehiwala.

The series of attacks claimed 270 lives and injured around 500 people.

# Trinco oil tanks deal not ...

Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila told the media recently that negotiations were on with the Indian Government to re-acquire the Trincomalee oil storage tanks leased to the Indian Oil Corporation in 2003.

He however explained that a joint company of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and the Lanka Indian Oil Company (LIOC) would be formed for the operation of the oil tank farm retaining a majority stake for the CPC.

# SPC to purchase 10 m doses of...

Earlier this week, the vaccination was extended to the general public and MPs. About 250,000 out of 500,000 Oxford-AstraZeneca Covishield vaccines have been administered so far, General Shavendra Silva, the Army chief who heads the COVID-19 prevention operations said.

He said the WHO has assured Sri Lanka that it would provide vaccines for 20 per cent of the local population free of charge. He added

that China and Russia had also agreed to donate vaccines to the local population.

The Indian Army and the Russian military have also agreed to provide a quantity of vaccines to the Sri Lankan military.

Sri Lanka has recorded 78,420 cases by last night with 71,000 of them having recovered. At least 430 deaths have been recorded since the outbreak in mid-March last year. (*Live Mint*)

# Demerit system to instill...

DIG Ajith Rohana observed, "According to our legislative system, we have the laws to introduce such a demerit points system. However, we need infrastructure to implement this demerit system successfully. We are developing the infrastructure facilities to introduce the demerit system as early as possible."



DIG Ajith Rohana pointed out that 15 deaths have been reported in road traffic incidents during the last 24 hours. The DIG also pointed out that during the same period of time, 40 persons have been injured in road accidents.

DIG Ajith Rohana observed, "Out of these deaths eight have been caused by road accidents that occurred yesterday. Seven more persons who have met with road accidents on previous days were hospitalized and were reported dead by yesterday. This is the highest number of

deaths caused by road accidents reported during the recent days."

DIG Ajith Rohana furthered, "It is important that everyone contributes to minimize road accidents. Approximately 40 persons have been injured due to road accidents during the same period of time. 120-125 road accidents were reported during the said time. Around 120 accidents happen daily in the country. These are accidents which are reported to the police, thus we assume that the actual number of accidents that happens in a day is way higher than the reported number. The reasons for road traffic accidents are speed driving, disobeying road rules and regulations, negligence and reckless driving. Therefore Sri Lanka police is planning to launch traffic special operations continuously while introducing a demerit points system."

# Two arrested for transporting...

The DIG noted that the Police have informed the Sri Lanka Tea Board to issue a certificate in respect of the inferior quality of the tea.

The suspects will be produced before the Gampaha Magistrate's Court and further legal action will be taken against them under the provisions of the Penal Code and the Tea Board Act, DIG Ajith Rohana added.



# Core Group welcomes progress...

Consequently, we have engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka in preparation for the Council. The Core Group restates the on-going importance of addressing Sri Lanka in the Human Rights Council. Informed by the report, the Core Group intends to present a resolution to promote reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka," the statement read.

# Ranga Dias, named on Time100...

Such materials could have applications in propelling levitated trains and other forms of transportation; medical imaging and scanning techniques such as MRI and magnetocardiography; faster, more efficient electronics for digital logic and memory device technology, and more. "Let's be clear: hoverboards, magnetic levitation trains and resistance-free power lines are not coming this year or next. But thanks to Ranga Dias, they're closer than they ever were," writes Jeffrey Kluger for Time.



temperature superconductor. Sought for more than a century, such materials "can definitely change the world as we know it," Dias says. This work from Dias's lab was featured on the cover of the journal Nature.

"Everyone on this list is poised to make history," says Dan Macsai, editorial director of the Time100.

An expansion of the flagship Time100 franchise, the second annual Time100 Next list highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future. They are doctors and scientists fighting COVID-19, advocates pushing for equality and justice, journalists standing up for truth, and artists sharing their visions of present and future.

# CA considers writ petition on...

The Court undertook to consider the petition of Wannila Aththo on March 5. The petition opposes the clearance of their native forest lands in Rambankan Oya.

The petitioners include the Centre for Environmental Justice and its Executive Director, W. D. Hemantha Sisira Kumara.

The respondents include Central Environmental Authority Director General P. S. B. Hemantha Jayasinghe, Mahaweli Development Authority Director General B. A. Sunil S. Perera, Director General of Forest Department, Director General of Forest Conservation, Director General of Wildlife Department, and the Attorney General.



Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Thursday opened the newly constructed "Honda Hiitha Nelum Budu Kuluna" (Lotus Buddha Tower) in Polgahawela, Thissamaharamaya. The construction was made with a financial donation by Owner of 'Honda-hiitha' business Manawathilake Warshahannadi. The tower with the Buddha statue is erected at 'Hondahitha' premises in Thissamaharamaya. The Buddha statue is 16 feet tall and 9 feet in width. It has been designed by Ven. Rathnapure Nanda Thera. Pictures by Sooriyawewa Special Corr. Nuwan Jayasekara

# Sri Lanka a flashpoint of Human-Elephant Conflict

Sri Lanka has become the country with the highest number of elephant deaths in the world due to the human-elephant conflict.

It was also revealed that Sri Lanka has the second highest number of reported human deaths in the world as a result of the ongoing human-elephant conflict.

These revelations were made by Dr. Prithviraj Fernando, a scholar with many years of research experience regarding the human-elephant conflict, at a recent meeting of the Committee on Public Accounts (COPA).

A special audit report on the Human Elephant Conflict will be taken up again at the COPA on February 23.

Although the average number

of elephant deaths in Sri Lanka due to the ongoing human-elephant conflict is 272 per year, it was mentioned at the COPA Committee that 407 elephants have died during the past year. It was also pointed out that though the average number of human deaths due to the human-elephant conflict is 85 per year, in the year 2019, 122 human lives have been lost.

Accordingly, the recommendations put forward in Sri Lanka pertaining to minimizing the human-elephant conflict will be considered at the COPA.

The COPA will take up the Performance of the Government Schools on February 24 and the performance of the Sri Lanka Department of Customs will be taken up on February 25.

# Over 130 countries don't have a single COVID-19 vaccine

10 countries administer 75% of world's available vaccine supply

(CNN)- Just 10 countries have administered 75% of the world's available COVID-19 vaccine supply, while more than 130 countries haven't even received their first doses, according to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

It's unfair, Guterres said, that so few countries should control the bulk of the world's vaccine supplies. To address that inequity, the Secretary-General proposed that members of G20 create an emergency task force to promote global vaccine access.

"At this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community," he said in a virtual meeting on Wednesday with the UN Security Council.

Around 188 million vaccine doses have been administered worldwide, according to the digital database Our World in Data. Tens of millions of those doses have gone to the United States, China, the United Kingdom and Israel.

Guterres didn't name the 10 countries that have administered three-quarters of all COVID-19 vaccines. But the US is certainly among them - more than 72.4 million vaccines have been distributed there, and more than 56 million of them have been administered, according to the US Centres for Dis-



António Guterres

ease Control and Prevention. The proposed task force would include members of the Group of 20. That's made up of countries with the world's largest economies, which would provide the money and scientific expertise to make vaccines more accessible for countries in the "Global South," which includes countries in Africa, Latin America and South America. The task force would

perform similar functions as COVAX, an initiative from the Vaccine Alliance known as Gavi and the World Health Organisation (WHO). That initiative was created to buy vaccines in bulk and send them to poorer nations that can't compete with wealthy countries in securing contracts with the major drug companies.

COVAX is working toward delivering 2 billion vaccine doses to countries in the Global South.

Guterres' suggestion comes the same week that Mexico indicated it would file a complaint at the UN Security Council over the "unfair" vaccine rollout, which Foreign Minister Marcel Ebrard said favours richer countries.

Mexico, which signed purchase agreements for the eventual delivery of more than 230 million doses of various COVID-19 vaccines, has delivered 750,000 doses so far.

In January, Guterres urged countries to commit to sharing excess vaccine doses, specifically calling out the richest countries in the world that have received millions of doses.

"The world's leading economies have a special responsibility. Yet today we are seeing a vaccine vacuum. Vaccines are reaching high

income countries quickly, while the world's poorest have none at all," Guterres said in a video message last month. *edition.cnn.com*

## Special Dhamma sermon for late Speaker W. J. M. Lokubandara



A special Dhamma sermon in the memory of late Speaker W. J. M. Lokubandara will be held on Monday February 22 at 3.00 p.m. under the patronage of Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena at the Parliament premises. The Dhamma sermon will be conducted by the Most Venerable Aggamaha Pandita Ananda Mahanayake Thera of the Trincomalee of the Bambalapitiya Siri Vajiramadhipathi, Amarapura Sri Dharmarakshita Maha Nikaya. Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake invites all Members of Parliament to attend this Dhamma sermon.

## UNP extends support to DIG Jasin Arachchi

The United National Party expressed their support for Deputy Inspector General Bimshani Jasin Arachchi following objections over her promotion to the post of DIG Police Welfare.

Speaking to media in Kandy, former UNP Provincial Councillor, Shanthini Kongahage, extended her party's support to the police officer who is currently facing opposition to her promotion.

Kongahage explained that under the UNP Government the 19th Amendment was introduced which enabled the National Police Commission to operate free of political influence. It was this police commission that decided that Officer Jasin Arachchi warranted a promotion to the post of DIG.

Highlighting the experience and professional conduct that Officer Jasin Arachchi has demonstrated throughout her career, Kongahage expressed her confidence that the DIG would continue to carry out her

duties to the best of her ability. Concerns were also raised about the lack of women's representation in decision making positions within the state system.

Kongahage reiterated the UNP's support for equal opportunity afforded to women, while questioning why there was organised opposition to the appointment of the country's first female DIG.

Sri Lankans proudly promote the fact that we elected the world's first female Prime Minister, however, since then we have fallen behind in ensuring that equal opportunity and representation is afforded to women. DIG Jasin Arachchi has achieved much and she must be encouraged and not opposed.

Kongahage urged the Government to ensure that all women are afforded opportunities that are enjoyed by their male counterparts, which will result in a sizable increase in the representation of women in the decision making positions.

## SLAF drones to combat dengue

In a bid to support the national drive mooted to curb the spread of dengue fever within the Western Province, the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) received two drone cameras from the Western Province Governor, Marshal of the Air Force Roshan Goonetilleke on Thursday (18).

Sri Lanka Air Force Commander Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana received the donation at the Air Force Headquarters.

Drones would be deployed to trace the dengue breeding grounds and also to observe the aerial spraying of liquids in breeding prone areas, the SLAF Spokesperson Group Capt. Dushan Wijesinghe said.

New technology would also facilitate authorities to collect aerial footage for analysis and to map the breeding sites.

Further, those could be utilized to safeguard national security when required, Group Capt. Wijesinghe also said.

Western Province Chief Secretary Jayanthi Wijethunga, Western Province Governor Secretary P. Somasiri and Senior SLAF officers were also present at the event.



Western Province Governor, Marshal of the Air Force Roshan Goonetilleke provided the drone cameras to Sri Lanka Air Force Commander, Air Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana at the Air Force Headquarters.

**'Tiny Tots'** the prestigious Pre-School has moved from 24, Mary's Road, Bambalapitiya to **14A, Kensington Garden, Bambalapitiya.**

Parents and prospective parents please take note.

Tele Nos: 2502346 / 0114011154

ADA KOTIPATHI - Saturday  
Draw No.: 1209 Colour: Yellow  
Date: 20.02.2021

**Today's Jackpot**  
**Rs. 109,847,490/-**

Winning tickets are valid for 6 months.  
Development Lotteries Board  
356, Dr. Colvin R. De Silva Mawatha, Union Plaza, Colombo 2  
Tel: 0112 333 846-47 Fax: 2 333 545 Ambulo; www.dlb.lk  
Hotline - 0114 824 824, 0112 333 778

Thursday  
Date: 18.02.2021  
Draw No.: 3528  
Colour: Red

**Total Value of Prizes**  
**Rs. 4,422,220/-**

Winning Numbers  
**33 45 62 63**

English Letter  
**E**

Winning tickets are valid only for six months

**SUPER BALL**  
Draw Number: 1372  
Colour: Green  
Date: 18.02.2021  
Date: Thursday

Winning English Letter and Numbers  
**V 06 25 42 52**

**Total Value of Prizes**  
**Rs. 4,655,620/-**

Winning tickets will be valid for 6 months.

Date: 18-02-2021  
Draw Number: 411 | Colour: Blue

**Super Jackpot has been won**  
**Rs. 14,039,192/-**

English Letter: **Q**  
Winning Numbers: **33 42 46**  
Fate Number: **8**

**Total Value of Prizes**  
**Rs. 17,039,872/-**

**Next Super Jackpot**  
**Rs. 10,000,000/-**

Winning ticket will be valid for 6 months.

Thursday  
Date: 18.02.2021  
Draw No.: 1198  
Colour: Dark Blue

**ADA KOTIPATHI**

**Total Value of Prizes**  
**Rs. 5,099,720/-**

Winning Numbers: **04 62 67 68**

English Letter: **U**

Winning tickets are valid only for six months

Date: 18-02-2021  
Draw Number: 3079  
Colour: Brown

**SUPER JACKPOT**  
**Rs. 2,000,000/-**

Winning Numbers: **09 33 44 49**

Libra

**TOTAL VALUE OF PRIZES**  
**Rs. 11,366,380/-**

# Daily News



The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited,  
LAKE HOUSE  
P. O. Box 1217 No. 35, D.R. Wijewardene Mawatha,  
Colombo 10, Sri Lanka  
Telephone : (011) 242 9211 Fax: (011) 234 3694  
E-mail : editor.dailynews@lakehouse.lk  
news.dailynews@lakehouse.lk  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021

## Celebrating the Mother Tongue

Our mother tongues are considered to be one of the most significant components of our identity. The language we speak outlines our culture and heritage while helping us create a powerful sense of self. February 21 (tomorrow) is International Mother Language Day, a day that should serve as a reminder of the rich variety of mother tongues across the world. However, February 21 is not only a day to cherish the language you spoke as a child. It is also a day that commemorates the struggle for language rights in many places.

The significance of February 21 dates back to 1948 when then-President Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Pakistan's language to be Urdu. The people in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) responded to the military administration's enforcement of the ruling by starting what later became known as the Bangla Language Movement. On February 21, 1952, demonstrators at Dhaka University protested the 'Urdu only policy' and demanded that the Government recognize Bangla as one of the official languages. The police fired bullets to try and halt the protest, killing several students and activists.

In November 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) officially recognized February 21 as the International Mother Language Day to raise awareness of linguistic diversity. Since then, countries around the world have started to celebrate the day. The International Mother Language Day should be taken as a reminder to fight for the preservation of Indigenous languages and cultures. The threat of many languages disappearing around the world is very real, and February 21 should serve as a reminder to preserve and strengthen the languages and associated cultural identities most threatened by powerful pressures of forced assimilation. When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity. Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression — valuable resources for ensuring a better future — are also lost.

According to Ethnologue, a website dedicated to linguistic information, there are currently 6,900 known living languages around the world. While we may not have heard of most of them, some people still use them to communicate and live by. Each of these thousands of different languages, however alien to us, is someone's mother tongue. Around 43 per cent of the 6,000-plus languages spoken around the world are endangered.

A recent UN report explained that only a few hundred languages "have genuinely been given a place in education systems and the public domain", while less than a hundred are used in the digital world. International Mother Language Day recognizes that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on leaving no one behind. The UN believes that education, based on the first language or mother tongue, must begin from the early years as early childhood care and education is the foundation of learning. This year's observance of the International Mother Language Day is a call on policymakers, educators and teachers, parents and families to scale up their commitment to multilingual education, and inclusion in education to advance education recovery in the context of COVID-19.

Sri Lanka has two vernacular languages — Sinhala and Tamil. Sri Lanka is the only country in the world where the majority of people speak Sinhala, but thanks to immigration it is now spoken widely in cities such as London, Toronto and Melbourne. Tamil is the major spoken language in Sri Lanka's North and India's Tamil Nadu, though the dialects are somewhat different. Again, due to the immigration of Sri Lankans and Indians to various countries, Tamil is widely spoken in many countries from Canada to Norway. It is vital that Sri Lankan families living in other countries continue to converse in the vernacular languages with their children lest they slowly fade away. Many universities around the world now offer Sinhala and Tamil for degree courses, which will help produce a new generation of scholars proficient in the two languages.

Here in Sri Lanka, it is vital to teach Sinhala to Tamil-speaking children and vice versa, with English being maintained as a link language. This will create a truly trilingual society where everyone can understand the "other". The lack of trust and understanding between the different communities led to a conflict in this land that pitted brother against brother, sister against sister. That would not happen again if we can all understand each other and respect their traditions and cultures.

It is also necessary to offer all Governmental services in both languages. In Canada, French-speaking officials are posted even to areas where French is not spoken at all, in case a travelling French speaking Canadian coming to such an area needs any Governmental service. We should have the same attitude. All government servants need to be proficient in both languages, so that they can serve in any area of the country. Both original literary works and translations from Sinhala to Tamil and vice versa must be encouraged. All efforts must be taken to nurture the two vernacular languages so that they may last for thousands more years to come.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A different language is a different vision of life.  
- Federico Fellini



Wilpattu National Park

# CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT: THE CHERISHED ROLE OF OUR JUDICIARY

## Part 2

The uncertainty surrounding potential threats to the environment has frequently been used as a reason to avoid taking action to protect the environment. However, it is not always possible to have clear evidence of a threat to the environment before the damage occurs. The "Precautionary Principle" is a response to this uncertainty.

Rio Declaration, 1992' Principle 15 incorporates this principle in the following terms:

*"In order to protect the environment the Precautionary Approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."*

This principle is also incorporated in Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, Preamble; Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, Article 3.3; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Resolution Conf 9.24 (Rev COP13); Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2000 and the Earth Charter, para 6. The Precautionary Principle is of particular relevance and importance in the context of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and living natural resources, Species and ecosystems (similar to that of the destroyed forest area in Wilpattu) are genetically unique and irreplaceable their loss is irreversible. Further, conservation and sustainable use must deal with a particularly high degree of persistent and largely irreducible uncertainty and complexity.

In Article 3.3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN- FCCC, 1992) it is stated that: "The Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects....". By placing a greater emphasis on direct measures to systematically monitor observable effects, a precautionary approach offers a way to be more responsive to harm due to climate change, when the first signals of it manifest themselves in the real world, however ambiguous these first signals may be. Therefore, a truly precautionary principle argues for focusing on solving current problems that may be aggravated by climate change, and on increasing society's adaptability and decreasing its vulnerability to environmental problems in general and climate, change in particular. Hence, this basis provided by the precautionary principle can be utilized in arguments against acts of deforestation of tropical forests, and destruction of eco-systems, as these are problems that aggravate climate change.

**Wilpattu Judgement**  
The Court of Appeal held in the recent case judgement better known as the *Wilpattu judgement* that, the resettlement of the IDP's in an area of over 3,000 Ha in the Manner District since 2009, has been made contrary to law. This judgement which upheld the people's right to environment was a landmark judgement in Sri Lanka jurisprudence pertaining to Environmental Law just as the *Chunnakam Power Plant* case and the *Eppawala Phosphate Case* before it as it explodes and incorporated several international environmental principles in reaching its conclusions in favour of environmental conservation. In addition to holding that settlement of IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) was illegal, the Court in the *Wilpattu Case* also issues an order in the Nature of *Mandamus* ordering the first respondent (Conservator General of Department of Forest Conservation) to take action to implement a tree planting programme under and in terms of the provisions of the Forest Ordinance No 16 of 1907 as amended in any area equivalent to the reserve forest area used for resettlement of IDP's. An ancillary or consequential order was issued directing the seventh respondent, former Minister Rishard Badrudeen to bear the full cost of such tree planting programme applying the Polluter Pays Principle since according to the evi-

## Guest Column

Professor  
SARATH MATHILAL DE SILVA



dence before the Court, he was instrumental in using reserve forest land for the resettlement of IDP's.

### POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE

The core of the polluter pays principle is that the polluter should pay for the any environmental damages caused, the burden of proof of the demonstrating that, the particular technology or practice, product is safe should lie with the developer not the general public. As held by the Court in the Wilpattu case, Judiciary is a part of the State and is bound to protect, preserve and improve the environment for the benefit of the community as directed by Art 27(14) of the Constitution. This crucial acknowledgement paves the way and sets the precedent for the State.

Additional to the so stated polluter pays principle, many other international environmental law concepts, such as intergenerational equity, precautionary principle, the over arching concept of Sustainable development have established a solid foundation upon which Sri Lanka's environmental law jurisprudence can rest. Furthermore, Sri Lanka's treaty obligations under the Environmental and Human Rights Conventions including and not limited to Paris Agreement (2015) and legal concepts like the Public Trust Doctrine as elaborated in this Article, make it crucial that Sri Lankan Government be bound by its obligations to protect and preserve its national resources of the country on behalf of the its citizen, notwithstanding the role by the citizens.

### SOURCES OF PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE

There are two possible sources of Public Trust Doctrine namely, (a) Roman Dutch law in relation to environmental law and (b) the notion of trusteeship in the Law of Trusts. The Doctrine of Public Trust was initially developed in the Roman-Dutch law, particularly with reference to environmental law and the rights of the public to natural resources. Roman - Dutch law which distinguishes between *res nullius* and *res communes*, assigns common ownership to that which comes under the latter category. In assigning natural resources with a sense of common ownership Title I of Book II of the Institutes of Justinian is pertinent. This section states as follows:

*"The following things are by natural law common to all — the air, running water, the sea, and consequently seashore. No one, therefore is forbidden access to the seashore.... for these are not, like the sea itself, subject to the law of nations."*

This notion of 'common to all' or common all mankind underlines the fundamental basis upon which the Doctrine operates: all natural resources such as rivers, forests, air are subject to common, or public ownership and therefore are held by the government in trusteeship for the use of the general public and are managed and utilized for public purposes. The doctrine also affirms that endowments of nature should be freely available to public, irrespective of the social or economic standing of the person. The roots and fundamental basis of

the Doctrine may also be traced to the concept of trust which dictates that property or resources can be held by one person, on behalf of another.

### BASIS OF PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE IN SRI LANKA

The Doctrine of Public Trust in Sri Lanka is the bedrock of the Constitution and elected officials and the arms of the State are mere enforcing agents of the power that is truly vested in the people. In this regard, Articles 3 and 4, Article 12(1) and Chapter VI of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka are of immense importance and have been cited in many cases regarding the doctrine. Article 3 of the Constitution provides that *'in the Republic of Sri Lanka sovereignty of the people and is inalienable. Sovereignty includes the powers of the government, fundamental rights and franchise.'* In order to establish that the officials are custodians of powers held on behalf of the people, it is argued that these powers are vested in the people and are inalienable by virtue of Article 3. Article 4 provides that the legislative power of the people is to be exercised by Parliament, the executive power by the President of the Republic and the judicial power by Parliament through Courts, tribunals and institutions created, established or recognized by the Constitution. Moreover, Article 4(d) provides that

*'the fundamental rights which are by the Constitution declared and recognized shall be respected, secured and advanced by all the organs of government and shall not be abridged, restricted or denied, saved in the manner and to the extent hereinafter provided.'*

Also relevant are the Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties outlined in Chapter VI of the Constitution and mostly importantly Article 28 which provides that "... It is the duty of every person in Sri Lanka — (d) to preserve and protect public property and to combat misuse and waste of public property and — (f) to protect nature and conserve its riches'.

### UTILITY OF THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE IN SRI LANKA

The Supreme Court utilizes this Doctrine as a potential tool for a multitude of purposes: (a) to rectify the abuse of discretionary power, (b) to prevent the exploitation of natural resources and (c) to shield the underprivileged.

#### (a). A tool to rectify abuse of discretionary power

It is an essential reality in Sri Lanka that legislature cannot legislate for every possible circumstance. In consequence, the conferring of discretionary power upon public official is essential. However, such discretionary power so conferred are not unlimited, unconstrained power. Unfortunately at present there is a misunderstanding that the term discretion is synonymous with unrestricted power. Discretionary power must be understood to mean to power to decide an approximate mode of action in a given context but only so far as such power is exercised for the benefit of the public. The Supreme Court echoes this

sentiment in *Palihawadana v AG and Two Others* by observing that 'when a power is entrusted to a very high and responsible officer, he may be expected to act reasonably, objectively and without bias while discharging his duties. When a public official exceeds his disciplinary powers the Court on the basis of public trust doctrine can hold such person accountable for his actions'.

#### (b). As a tool to prevent exploitation of natural resources

In *Bulankulama v Secretary Ministry of Industrial Development*, the notion of trusteeship was invoked in relation to natural resources as opposed to public power. In this case the Supreme Court concluded that the Government is the trustee of natural resources of the country. Being such a trustee, the State has an obligation to protect these resources for public use and from exploitation by individuals for private commercial gain. Bulankulama Judgement recognized the right to sustainable development and the obligation of the State to respect the principle of inter-generational equity in exploiting natural resources and granted redress through the somewhat restricted parameters of the constitutional Chapter on Fundamental Rights. Recognizing that there are many operational definitions of sustainable development that are variations of the definitions of use by the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), the Court went on to identify three main principles encompassed by that concept: (a) conservation of natural resources having regard to the principle of inter-generational equity (b) exploitation of natural resources in a sustainable manner (c) integration of environmental considerations into development programmes.

Of particular significance is the Court's stipulation that the proposed agreement should be reviewed within the framework of international environmental law. The Court found that Sri Lanka, as a member of the United Nations, could 'hardly ignore' environmental requirements in the Stockholm Declaration (1972) and Rio Declaration (1992). Justice Amarasinghe went on to state:

*'the inter generational principles in my view, should be regarded as axiomatic in the decision making process in relation to matters concerning the natural resources and the environment of Sri Lanka in general and particularly in the case before us. It is not something new to us.'*

The Doctrine also plays an important role with regard to inter-generational equity which in its simplistic based terms can be described as equality between generations. Inter-generational equity with regard to natural resources entails the notion that one generation must act as guardians of natural resources in trust for the next and future generations. By acknowledging an obligation on the part of the public officials to use and preserve resources in a manner that is consistent with public trust, inter-generational equality will also result in the adoption of practices that contribute to sustainable development through the reasonable use of natural resources and conservation of the environment. When the State fails to safeguard against private and commercial exploitation of common natural resources and degradation of the environment it also fails to fulfill its obligation as a public trustee. Thus it is imperative that public officials are fully aware of the implications of their exercise of public power in this regard.

#### (c). A shield for the underprivileged

Public Trust Doctrine also serves as a shield for the underprivileged. This Doctrine may be used to facilitate the Rule of Law, thereby serving as a shield to protect the minorities and the underprivileged. Public Trust Doctrine dictates that any person or official that exercises collective power does so because such power which is vested in the people is entrusted to them. Therefore ensuring dignity and respect for all regardless of their socio economic standing and belief is a logical extension of the Doctrine as well.

*(The writer is a retired Professor in Law in the University of Sri Jayawardeneperu. He is an Attorney-at-Law and practiced in Courts with PhD in law)*

To be continued



# PROTESTS RISE AGAINST JUNTA IN MYANMAR

## ON MY WATCH

BY LUCIEN RAJAKARUNANAYAKE

Thousands of people continue to protest against the military coup in Myanmar, rejecting an Army claim that it has majority support, despite warnings of long imprisonment by the military rulers. They demand the release of leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who led the Democratic Party to a resounding election victory in November 2020.

At a demonstration in Myanmar's main city, Yangon – the largest there since the deployment of troops on Sunday – protesters marched with red flags signalling their loyalty to the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, and carried signs denouncing the military.

Major junctions were blocked by a “broken down” rally, where drivers left their cars parked across the roads, with bonnets open, and by sit-down protests.

Mass demonstrations were also held in the second-largest city of Mandalay, where students, engineers and farmers were among thousands who took to the streets, and in the capital, Naypyidaw.

This followed claims from a military spokesperson that protests would dwindle and 40 million of the country's 53 million population backed its power grab.

The military has reiterated its promise to hold fair polls, but protesters are demanding the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other politicians from her party, the National League for Democracy.

The United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, Thomas Andrews, said ahead of the rallies that he had received reports of soldiers being transported into Yangon from other regions, adding that he feared “we could be on the precipice of the military committing even greater crimes against the people of Myanmar”.

Aung San Suu Kyi, who has not been seen in public since she was deposed on February 1, appeared in court by videolink on Tuesday. She was previously accused of illegally importing walkie talkies and now faces a second charge for apparently violating COVID regulations in the run-up to November's election. If convicted, this could prevent her from running in future polls.

More than 450 people are confirmed to have been arrested since the coup on February 1. The military has repeatedly blocked communications. Internet blackouts are imposed regularly, and the military has prepared a draft law that would criminalise many online activities and tighten internet surveillance.

Most western leaders have strongly opposed the military move in Myanmar, with moves to increase sanctions on military leaders and restrictions on trading with the military controlled commercial institutions there.

### Iraq - rocket attack

A rocket attack at a US-led military base in Kurdish northern Iraq has killed a civilian contractor and wounded five other people, including a U.S. service member.

The Biden administration said it is still assessing who is responsible for a rocket attack that injured five Americans and killed one foreign contractor working for the U.S. in Iraq.

It was the most deadly attack to hit US-led forces in almost a year in Iraq, where tensions have escalated between US forces, their Iraqi and Kurdish allies on one side, and Iran-aligned militias on the other.

A group calling itself Saraya Awliya al-Dam claimed responsibility for the attack on the U.S.-led base, saying it targeted the “American occupation” in Iraq. It provided no evidence for its claim.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said late Monday the United States was “outraged” by the attack, and that he had reached out to Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Masrour Barzani “to discuss the incident and to pledge our support for all efforts to investigate and hold accountable those responsible.”

In retaliation for an Iranian-backed militia killing a U.S. contractor in December 2019, Trump ordered the drone strike that killed Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top general, and an Iraqi militia leader just outside Baghdad airport. His administration did not consult the Iraqi government in advance, amid concerns it would lead to Soleimani, sparking protests and culminating in the non-binding vote by a majority of the Iraqi parliament last year to expel U.S. troops.

Biden and Blinken seem intent on repairing U.S. ties with the Iraqi government. Asked about responses for Monday's attack, Psaki said diplomacy would be “front and centre to our engagement with our global partners around the world.”

### France - fighting Islamism

France's National Assembly has approved a law to fight Islamist extremism and separatism in an attempt to tackle the root causes of jihadist violence – in response to a wave of attacks that has seen more than 250 people murdered since 2015.

The text, which does not mention any religion, would significantly expand the government's powers to close religious organisations and places of worship, if they are found

to air “theories or ideas” that “provoke hate or violence”.

The legislation offers protection to moderate community leaders who are in danger of being toppled by an extremist “putsch”. It will also require all associations to commit in writing to uphold “republican values” – the liberal, Enlightenment values of France – if they want to receive state subsidies.

In order to crack down on religious funding from countries such as Turkey, Qatar or Saudi Arabia, the law will require associations to declare donations over €10,000 euros and have their accounts certified.

A new crime of threatening a public servant in order to gain “a total or partial exemption or different application of the rules” would be punishable by up to five years in prison. The law proposes stricter criteria for authorising home schooling of children over three-years-old, to prevent parents taking their children out of public schools and enrolling them in underground Islamist structures.

Doctors, meanwhile, would be fined or jailed if they perform a virginity test on girls. Authorities would be banned from issuing residency papers to polygamous applicants.

President Emmanuel Macron's centrist party rallied around the law, with 347 MPs voting in favour, 151 against and 65 abstaining. The text will now be submitted to the upper house, the Senate, where Macron's party does not hold a majority.

The bill was initially presented after the stabbing and beheading of the teacher Samuel Paty by a Chechen Islamist militant unhappy about the display of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a class on freedom of expression, last year.

France's Muslim population is estimated to number about five million, many whose family origins lie in Algeria or other parts of its former empire.

The country has suffered a wave of Islamist militant attacks in recent years, and tackling religious extremism, French identity and domestic security will be big issues in next year's presidential election.

The new law was presented to parliament on the 115th anniversary of the law that enshrined the separation of state and religion in France, the bill has been branded by some on the left as an attack on Islam, and as too weak by the far-right and some conservatives.

France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen has accused Darmanin of not tackling radical Islam head on. “You are restricting everyone's freedom to try to modify the freedoms of a few Islamists,” she said in a debate last week, referring to the curbs on home-schooling.

### EU - China Trade

China last year overtook the United States as the EU's biggest trading partner, the EU statistics agency Eurostat said Monday.

Britain meanwhile, which is no longer part of the European Union, was the third-largest trading partner for the bloc, behind China and the United States, the agency said.

China suffered from the coronavirus pandemic during the first quarter, but recovered vigorously with consumption even exceeding its level of a year ago at the end of 2020, which helped drive sales of European products, particularly in the automobile and luxury goods sectors, while China's exports to Europe benefited from strong demand for medical equipment and electronics.

The downing of the US comes as the EU and China are seeking to ratify a long-negotiated investment deal that would give European companies better access to the Chinese market. Eurostat said the trade volume with China reached 586 billion euros (\$711 billion) in 2020, compared to 555 billion euros (\$673 billion) for the US. EU exports rose by 2.2 percent to 202.5 billion euros while at the same time, imports from the People's Republic of China increased by 5.6 percent to 383.5 billion euros.

EU exports to the United States fell by 13.2 per cent in the same period and imports by 8.2 percent.

### Italy - New PM

Premier Mario Draghi won a confidence vote in Parliament's upper chamber after vowing to do whatever it takes to lead Italy out of the coronavirus pandemic and rebuild its economy into a more sustainable and equitable one for future generations.

The Senate voted 262-40 with two abstentions



Street protests against the February 1 military coup in Myanmar.



Italy's new Prime Minister **Mario Draghi**



Russia's Opposition Leader **Alexei Navalny**

to back Draghi's technical-political government, which he formed at the request of Italy's president to steer Italy through the health and economic crises.

Draghi told senators that Italy has a once-in-a-lifetime chance to rethink and rebuild the country, urging them to unite behind his government, which he vowed will be environmentally conscious, staunchly pro-European and oriented toward technological and digital reforms.

“Today, unity isn't an option, it's an obligation,” Draghi said to applause as he outlined his government programme. “An obligation guided by what unites us all: love of Italy.”

Draghi, the former European Central Bank chief who is widely credited with having saved the euro by declaring to do “whatever it takes” during the European debt crisis, pledged a similar all-out effort to bring Italy out of the pandemic. Since the virus first erupted in Italy at this time last year, the country has reported over 94,000 deaths related to COVID-19, more than any other European country except Britain.

He said the principal aim of his administration was to confront the pandemic and save Italian lives “with all means,” including reinforcing the public health care system, bringing the civil protection and armed forces in to accelerate the nation's vaccination campaign, and ensuring that families can weather the economic fallout from lockdowns.

“The virus is the enemy of all of us,” said Draghi, 73, as he urged politicians to put aside their personal and political interests and assume the same spirit of sacrifice that their parents and grandparents took on after World War II.

The premier said Italy had an opportunity not seen since then to rebuild the country from the ground up using more than 200 billion euros (\$241.2 billion) in European Union recovery funds. His government would be “convincingly” pro-EU and pro-U.S., and that he envisaged reinforcing bilateral relations with France and Germany, in particular.

Draghi's 23-member Cabinet includes politicians in most ministries but puts technical experts in key roles, especially those responsible for ensuring that the funds Italy expects to receive are spent according to EU criteria. Some 37% of the allocated recovery funds must go toward environmental goals, while 20% must be devoted to digital transformation. Draghi made clear that Italians who have lost their livelihoods as a result of virus-related closures would be a top priority, cit-

ing women, young people and other precariously employed workers who have borne the brunt of lockdown measures. But he said some activities would be protected more than others, showing the government would prioritize industries and jobs that fit its environmental and technology-driven focus.

### Navalny - Human Rights

Europe's top human rights court has ordered Russia to release jailed Opposition Leader Alexei Navalny.

The ruling by the European Court of Human Rights demands that Russia set him free immediately and warns that failing to do so would mark a breach of the European human rights convention.

Navalny, 44, an anti-corruption investigator and President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic, was arrested last month upon returning from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have rejected the accusation.

Earlier this month, a Moscow court sentenced Navalny to two years and eight months in prison for violating terms of his probation while recuperating in Germany. The sentence stems from a 2014 embezzlement conviction that Navalny has rejected as fabricated and the European court has ruled to be unlawful. In its Tuesday's ruling, the ECHR pointed to Rule 39 of its regulations, citing “the nature and extent of risk to the applicant's life.”

The Russian Justice Ministry warned in a statement carried by the Tass news agency that the ECHR's demand referencing the rule would represent a “crude interference into the judicial system” of Russia and “cross the red line.”

It emphasized that “the ECHR can't substitute a national court or cancel its verdict.”

In the past, Moscow has abided by the ECHR's rulings awarding compensations to Russian citizens who have contested verdicts in Russian courts, but it never faced a demand by the European Court to set a convict free.

Navalny's arrest and imprisonment fueled a wave of protests across Russia. Authorities responded with a sweeping crackdown, detaining about 11,000 people, many of whom were fined or given jail terms ranging from seven to 15 days.

Russia has rejected Western criticism of Navalny's arrest and the crackdown on demonstrations as meddling in its internal affairs.

### Afghan - NATO

NATO will not withdraw its troops from Afghanistan “before the time is right,” Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said, adding that the Taliban must do more to meet the terms of a 2020 peace agreement with the United States first.

Stoltenberg's remarks came on Monday, days before the defence ministers of the 30 NATO member states discuss the deployment of troops in Afghanistan.

The meeting is their highest-level talks since US President Joe Biden took office promising to work closely with allies after four years of tensions under Donald Trump.

Top of the agenda for the virtual conference will be the fate of the alliance's 9,600-strong support mission in Afghanistan after Trump struck a deal with the Taliban to withdraw troops. The deployment's future hinges on whether President Biden agrees to stick to a May deadline to pull out foreign forces or risks a bloody backlash from the armed fighters by staying put.

“While no ally wants to stay in Afghanistan longer than necessary, we will not leave before the time is right,” Stoltenberg told a media conference. “We see that there is still a need for the Taliban to do more when it comes to delivering on their commitments ... to make sure that they break all ties with international terrorists,” he said.

NATO allies want the US to consult more closely with them after feeling sidelined when Trump cut US troop numbers to 2,500 in January, their lowest figure since the start of the war in 2001.

Taliban violence has surged in recent months amid stuttering peace talks with the Afghan government. The group has warned NATO ministers not to seek a “continuation of occupation and war”. A study mandated by the US Congress has called for a delay in the pullout, warning it would effectively hand the Taliban a victory.

### UN -- COVID vaccines

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the world, the UN on Wednesday led calls for a coordinated global effort to vaccinate against COVID-19, warning that gaping inequities in initial efforts put the whole planet at risk.

Foreign ministers met virtually for a first-ever UN Security Council session on vaccinations called by current chair Britain, which said the world had a “moral duty” to act together against the pandemic that has killed more than 2.4 million people.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres voiced alarm that just 10 nations have administered 75 percent of doses so far – and 130 countries have had none at all.

“The world urgently needs a global vaccination plan to bring together all those with the required power, scientific expertise and production and financial capacities,” Guterres said.

He said the Group of 20 major economies was in the best position to set up a task force on financing and implementation of global vaccinations and offered the full support of the UN.

“If the virus is allowed to spread like wildfire in the Global South, it will mutate again and again. New variants could become more transmissible, more deadly and, potentially, threaten the effectiveness of current vaccines and diagnostics,” Guterres said.

“This can prolong the pandemic significantly, enabling the virus to come back to plague the Global North.”

While the UN voiced alarm over the lack of access to vaccines in the Global South, the EU has been facing intense criticism over the block's handling of the vaccine procurement process. Amid signs that more infectious coronavirus variants are spreading unchecked across Europe, governments and EU leaders have scrambled to speed up vaccine efforts that have been hampered by limited supplies and to find ways to hunt down variants and counter them. The EU announced Wednesday that it has agreed to buy a further 300 million doses of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine and was injecting almost a quarter of a billion euros (almost \$300 million) into efforts to combat virus variants.

Meanwhile leaders of many developing countries have warned of the dangers of unequal access to the vaccines. Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard denounced the “injustice” of what he called a “deepening gap” as wealthy countries “monopolize the vaccines”.

Aid groups say that many people still risk being left out due to a shortfall in Covax funding to arrange the administration and delicate transportation of vaccines as well as conflicts that make inoculation efforts impossible.



World urgently needs a global vaccination plan to fight COVID-19 pandemic.

# Cabinet to receive Easter Commission Report for further discussions: Amaraweera

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has decided to provide copies of the report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry appointed to look into the Easter Sunday attacks to the Cabinet for further discussions, Environment Minister Mahinda Amaraweera said.

He was responding to a question by a journalist at a press conference at the Ministry premises on Thursday.

"The report of the commission is a large one, with many pages. The President has decided to provide copies of the report to the Cabinet and discuss at length the future course of action in this regard," he said.

He added that Colombo Archbishop Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, representing all the Catholics who either died or became disabled during the attacks, has the right, duty,

and responsibility to express his views on the progress of the investigations. The minister said that the government has a responsibility to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and protect the intelligence officers. He also stressed that the situation that arose due to the disclosure of intelligence officers during the period of the last government should be taken into consideration.

"We condemn the Easter Sunday attacks. The commission appointed in this regard has made the necessary recommendations. We as a government will not protect criminals; we hope that these matters will be resolved in court. The government has no intention of hiding the commission's report on the Easter Sunday attacks. The President will take appropriate action in this regard," he added.

## President uplifted living standards amidst COVID-19 pandemic: Gamalath

The President has uplifted living standards amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession, State Minister Siripala Gamalath said. He was addressing a recent meeting held by the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna Medirigiriya Electoral Committee at the Diyasenpura Weekly Fairground.

State Minister Gamalath said that the government has taken steps to make people's dreams a reality.

He added that the public would soon reap the benefits of the newly-launched projects.

"The global economy has collapsed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the President has taken steps to solve the issues brought

on by it. Furthermore, the government has taken steps to uplift rural economy and infrastructure," the state minister said.

He added that certain parties were attempting to prevent the government's efforts to develop the country by spreading false information.

Gamalath also said that a number of projects are to be carried out soon in 53 Grama Niladhari divisions of Medirigiriya and Lankapura.

MP Kapila Athukorala, Medirigiriya Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman Shantha Kumara Wickramarachchi, and Elehara Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman Janaka Nalin Kumara were also present.

**OBITUARY NOTICE**

**PATHIRANA - CHULANI (SC)**  
(Retired Deputy Inspector General of Police)

Beloved husband of Lakshmi, adored father of Ruwanka and Maheshika, father-in-law of Wendall Labrooy (HNB), precious grandfather of Keshorn and Malaika, loving brother of Shanathi and Padma Jayasinghe, passed away peacefully.

Cortege leaves residence at 2.00 p.m. for cremation at Thalahaena cemetery at 3.00 p.m. on 20th of February 2021 (today).

472, Kahanthota Road, Arangala, Hokandara North, Hokandara

# Sri Lanka, Oman celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations

Marking 40 years of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Oman, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi exchanged congratulatory messages on Wednesday, the Omani Embassy in Sri Lanka stated in a press release.

A special event was held at the Oman Foreign Ministry in Muscat to commemorate the occasion, where an agreement on mutual exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, special, service, and official passports was signed between Sri Lankan Ambassador to Oman O.L. Ameer Ajwad and the Omani Foreign Minister, the statement read.

Speaking at the event, Omani

Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi said that he looks forward to enhance the existing bilateral relations between the two countries, especially in the spheres of trade, culture, science, and tourism.

He said that the celebrations were testament to the longstanding ties between Sri Lanka and Oman, and reflected what is achievable through continuous cooperation. Busaidi said it was an honour to celebrate 40 years of diplomatic ties with Sri Lanka, which has shared with them mutual interests and understanding in the pursuit of prosperity.

The Omani Foreign Minister also conveyed his best wishes to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the people of Sri Lanka, the statement added.



Ambassador O.L. Ameer Ajwad and Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi signing the agreement.

**OBITUARY**

**HARRIS ROYSTON (ERIC) AMIT**

Son of Tuan Arifin Amit and Rita Christine (Backhouse) Amit. Loving husband of late Amy, father of Minoli (John Hamilton) Antigonish, son-in-law Peter Tufts (late Iromi) Halifax, son Hilary (Linda Boudreau) New Glasgow, and daughter Udeni (Andrew Roger) Halifax. Sister of Beulah Wahab (Australia), sisters-in-law Monica (England) & Camilla (Sri Lanka). He will be missed by his seven grandchildren: Alistair Hamilton, Claire Hamilton (Glenn Graham), David Hamilton, Julia Tufts (Joseph Daniel), Daniel Tufts, Rene Amit, Dominique Amit, and great-grandchildren: Alec & Eva Graham. Funeral service will be held at St. Ninian's Cathedral Halifax Canada on Saturday February 20, 2021.

103-23 Bay Street, Antigonish N.S. Canada B2G 2G7. minoliamit@gmail.com

## Turkey provides Personal Protective Equipment, ventilators

The Turkish government provided a consignment of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and 10 ventilators to the Foreign Ministry on Thursday. The consignment was handed over to Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage by Turkish Ambassador to Sri Lanka Demet Sekercioglu, the Foreign Ministry stated in a press release.

Foreign Secretary Prof. Colombage expressed the Sri Lankan government's gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Turkey, while recalling the ever growing mutual cooperation between the two countries. The Foreign Secretary also referred



Turkish Ambassador to Sri Lanka Demet Sekercioglu with Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage and other officials.

to the increased importance of bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Turkey in recent times, especially in the economic sphere, the statement read.

Senior officials of the Foreign Ministry, as well as diplomatic staff of the Turkish Embassy in Colombo participated in the ceremony, the Ministry added.

## SLAF 70th anniversary to be held on March 2

Unveiling the official logo designed for the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), Air Force Chief Marshal Sudarshana Pathirana stated that the SLAF will celebrate its anniversary on March 2.

A 'Pichcha Mal Pooja' will be held on March 1 at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya prior to that, he added.

In keeping with the longstanding Air Force customs, the celebrations will be held at the SLAF Base in Katunayake following the 'Air Force Day Parade'. All other Air Force establishments will also join the event while following similar military customs.

Following ceremonial proceedings, the special commemorative cover and stamp will be launched as well, Air Marshal Pathirana said.

He added that in recognition of the exceptional services rendered to the nation, President's Colours will be awarded to the No. 5 Fighter Squadron and the No. 6 Helicopter Squadron on March 5 at the SLAF Base.

The annual Air Force Cycle Race will be held on March 7 for the 22nd consecutive year, and the Air Force Commander's Rugby Cup will be held on March 20, 21, 26, and 27, the Air Marshal added.

The Housewives' companion

Classifieds on Daily News

**Obituary Notice**

**Maniccam Muthuluxmi**

Beloved wife of late Kanthar Maniccam, loving mother of Thayalan, Thayamani, Thayapary, Thayaparan, Thayanithy and Thayananthan, loving mother-in-law of Rajaratnam, Navabharathy, Rajendram, Thayaliny, precious grandmother of Janagan, Branavan, Preman, Praveen, Delginia, Rateesh, Lagithan, Kasika, Kabilaash and Karthik, loving grate grandmother of Vikshan, beloved daughter of late Sinnathural and late Nagamma, loving sister of late Thangamani, late Annaluxmi, Seevaratnam, Navaratnam, Nageshwary and Mahaluxmy passed away in Colombo on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The viewing will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Saturday from 8am to 8pm at A.F. Raymond (Pvt) Ltd at 115, D.S. Senanayaka Mawatha Colombo 8. Cremation takes place on 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday at, 11am at, Borella Hindu Cemetery.

Navabharathy Branavan. 0770703361

## SL, India hold virtual meetings on agri-product diversification

The Sri Lanka Consulate General in Mumbai, together with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), connected Sri Lankan fresh fruits exporters (avocado and passion fruit) with high-end supermarkets in Mumbai through virtual B2B meetings recently. This was a follow-up discussion on the programme launched by the Consulate in September, 2020, to promote and diversify Sri Lanka's agri-products to the Indian market, in line with the government's Export Economic Policy, the Sri Lankan Consulate General in India stated in a press release.

Twenty online B2B meetings took place between five leading fruit and vegetable exporters from Sri Lanka; namely CR Exports Pvt. Ltd., Development

Interplan Ceylon Pvt. Ltd, Forbes and Walker Fine Foods Pvt. Ltd, HJS Condiments Pvt. Ltd., JAGRO Pvt. Ltd; and high-end supermarket chains in India such as Nature's Basket, More Retail, Star Bazaar, and East West Agro (a Mumbai-based fresh fruits importer), the statement read.

The supermarket chains represented at the meetings are high-end consumer product outlets with a reach covering all of India. Nature's Basket, which is owned by the RPSG Group, has over 36 neighbourhood convenience stores in Mumbai, Pune, and Bangalore, with a diverse product portfolio. Star Market, a joint venture by the Tata and Tesco companies, is present across 48 stores in Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Kolhapur,

and Hyderabad. More Retail, which is the fourth largest supermarket chain in India, is owned by Amazon and Samara Capital Pvt. Ltd. More Retail offers two types of stores: hypermarkets and supermarkets. The company has 22 hypermarkets spreading across New Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Thane; they operate 651 supermarkets all over India. East West Agro is a Mumbai-based fresh fruit importer, which has been engaged in the agri-product trade for more than a decade.

Both Indian and Sri Lankan participants appreciated the joint effort, especially during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic to stimulate more business taking place between the two countries. Given the close proximity and the

unique duty concessions offered to Sri Lanka for agri-products under the Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA), Sri Lanka is well-positioned to utilise this untapped export potential, the statement added.

In addition to avocado and passion fruit, the Sri Lanka companies have received inquiries on the possibility of exporting other products such as mangoes (during off-season in India), liches, and soursop from Sri Lanka. India imports avocado from Latin America and Europe and passion fruits are imported from South Africa as the local supply of avocado and passion fruits in India are not sufficient to fulfill the local demand, the Consulate General said.

UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe appointed D.N. de Zoysa as a new member of the Galewela Pradeshiya Sabha recently to fill the vacancy created by the death of Ratnayake Mudiyansele Wijetunga Banda. UNP Deputy Leader Ruwan Wijewardena, UNP General Secretary Range Bandara, and Dambulla UNP Chief Organiser Priyan Wijeratna were also present. Picture by A.A.L. Dias, Matale District Group Corr.

**SL INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATED IN LAOS**

The Sri Lankan Consulate in Laos celebrated Sri Lanka's 73rd Independence Day recently. The event was organized under the supervision of Consul Manilay Thiphalsany Chancery Damith Aluge.



**IN THE SUPREME COURT LIST OF CASES FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22**

JAYANTHA JAYASURIYA P.C. (C.J.)  
PRIYANTHA JAYAWARDANE (P.C.) (J)  
YASANTHA KODAGODA P.C. J.

**COURT NO. 501 (FROM 10.00 A.M. - 11.30 A.M.)**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. SC. CHC Appeal No. 86/14  
- HC (Civil) 167/13  
2. SC. CHC Appeal No. 15/15  
- HC No. 105/13  
3. SC. Appeal No. 49/15  
- HC No. 40/10  
4. SC.HC.CA. LA 460/19  
- HCCA 219/11  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 102/17  
- HCCA 111/09  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 15/2021  
B.P. ALUVIHARA (P.C.) (J)  
JANAK DE SILVA (J)  
A.A.U. WENGAPPULI J.  
**COURT NO. 502 (FROM 10.00 A.M. - 11.30 A.M.)**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 69/19  
- HCCA 09/13  
2. SC.HC.CA. LA 265/20  
- HCCA 152/11  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 100/18  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC. (Spl.) LA 158/20  
- HC 31/18  
(Top of the list)  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 16/15 - CA 182/00  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 30/19  
- HCCA 494/07  
(Top of the list)  
2. SC. Appeal No. 155/12  
- HCCA 286/93  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**LEAVE TO PROCEED**

1. SC. Application FR 315/20  
**COURT NO. 502 CONTD...**  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC. (Spl.) LA 88/17  
- CA 506/11  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 263/18  
- CA 188/18  
3. SC. (Spl.) LA 385/18  
- CA 1030/00  
4. SC. (Spl.) LA 44/20  
- CA 05/08  
5. SC. (Spl.) LA 139/20  
- CA 204/15  
**(FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)**  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 61/16  
- HCCA 251/07  
2. SC. Appeal No. 74/18  
- HCCA 101/15  
SISIRA J. DE ABREW J.  
MURDU N.B. FERNANDO P.C.J.  
A.L.S. GOONERATNE J.  
**COURT NO. 403 (FROM 10.00 A.M. - 11.30 A.M.)**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 28/20 - CA 80/12  
2. SC. Application FR 365/19  
3. SC. HC.CA. LA 378/19  
- HCCA 68/16  
4. SC. HC.CA. LA 32/21  
- HCCA 28/19  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 217/14  
- HC 96/05  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC. HC.CA. LA 262/17  
- CA 126 - 127/08  
2. SC. HC.CA. LA 56/18  
- HCCA 30/17  
3. SC. (Spl.) LA 254/19  
- HC. MCA 58/18  
4. SC. HC.CA. LA 388/19  
- HCCA 61/16  
5. SC. HC.CA. LA 179/20  
- HCCA 120/16  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. Application FR 275/15

PRIYANTHA JAYAWARDANE (P.C.) (J)  
MURDU N.B. FERNANDO P.C.J.  
YASANTHA KODAGODA P.C. J.

**COURT NO. 403 (FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)**  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 37/14  
- HCCA 12/08  
L.T.B. DEHIDENIYA J.  
K.K. WICKRAMASINGHE J.  
M.A. SAMAYAWARDHANA J.

**COURT NO. 404 (FROM 10.00 A.M. - 11.30 A.M.)**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. SC. Application FR 531/11  
2. SC.HC. LA 55/19  
- CHC 230/19  
3. SC.HC.CA. LA 105/20  
- HCCA 15/19  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 214/15  
2. SC. Application FR 287/15  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 284/18  
- HCCA 63/13  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 210/19  
- CA 238 - 239/13  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. CHC Appeal 23/13  
- HC (Civil) 278/11  
2. SC. Application FR 340/20  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 215/20  
2. SC. Application FR 240/20  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 319/20  
- HCCA 49/19  
2. SC.HC.CA. LA 10/21  
- HCCA 14/14  
3. SC.HC.CA. LA 11/21  
- HCCA 20/16  
4. SC.HC.CA. LA 29/21  
- HCCA 68/17  
5. SC. (Spl.) LA 01/21  
- HC 40/19  
(FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. (CHC) Appeal 47/14  
- HC. (Civil) 182/10  
2. SC. Application FR 327/15  
**IN THE COURT OF APPEAL LIST OF CASES FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22**  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)

MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 AT 09.30 A.M.**  
**FOR JUDGMENT**  
1. 2196/02  
Writ of Cert (Arjuna Obeysekera J.) (P/CA)  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 411/19  
Writ of Cert  
2. 368/20  
Writ of Cert with WRT 17/21  
3. 50/21  
Writ of Cert  
4. 215/14 PHC  
5. 348/18 HC  
6. 390/19 HC  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 12/19 HC  
2. 262/19 HC  
3. 373 - 374/19 HC  
4. 388/19 HC  
K. PRIYANTHA FERNANDO (J)  
SAMPATH B. ABAYAKOON J.  
**COURT NO. 107 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 308/15 HC  
2. 178/16 HC  
3. 354/17 HC  
4. 333/19 HC  
5. 352/19 HC  
6. 238/19 HC  
7. 262/19 HC  
**COURT NO. 107 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**CONTD**  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 12/19 HC  
2. 262/19 HC  
3. 373 - 374/19 HC  
4. 388/19 HC  
K. PRIYANTHA FERNANDO (J)  
SAMPATH B. ABAYAKOON J.  
**COURT NO. 107 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 272/19 HC  
2. 274/19 HC  
3. 310 - 318/19 HC  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 109/20  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 284/18  
- HCCA 63/13  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 210/19  
- CA 238 - 239/13  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. CHC Appeal 23/13  
- HC (Civil) 278/11  
2. SC. Application FR 340/20  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 215/20  
2. SC. Application FR 240/20  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 319/20  
- HCCA 49/19  
2. SC.HC.CA. LA 10/21  
- HCCA 14/14  
3. SC.HC.CA. LA 11/21  
- HCCA 20/16  
4. SC.HC.CA. LA 29/21  
- HCCA 68/17  
5. SC. (Spl.) LA 01/21  
- HC 40/19  
(FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. (CHC) Appeal 47/14  
- HC. (Civil) 182/10  
2. SC. Application FR 327/15  
**IN THE COURT OF APPEAL LIST OF CASES FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22**  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)

MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 AT 12.30 P.M.**  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 436/20  
Writ of Cert  
2. 462/20  
Writ of Cert  
3. 46/21  
Writ of Cert  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 AT 02.00 P.M.**  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. 440/20  
Writ of Cert WITH 422/20  
Writ of Cert  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 OTHERS FOR JUDGMENT**  
1. 341/17  
Writ of Cert (Arjuna Obeysekera J.) (P/CA)  
2. 347/18  
Writ of Cert (Arjuna Obeysekera J.) (P/CA)  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 347/19  
Writ of Cert  
2. 168/20  
Writ of Cert  
3. 202/20  
Writ of Cert  
4. 308/20  
Writ of Cert  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 390/20  
Writ of Cert  
**NOTICE**

**RETURNABLE**  
1. 386/20  
Writ of Cert  
K. PRIYANTHA FERNANDO (J)  
SAMPATH B. ABAYAKOON J.  
**COURT NO. 107 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 308/15 HC  
2. 178/16 HC  
3. 354/17 HC  
4. 333/19 HC  
5. 352/19 HC  
6. 238/19 HC  
7. 262/19 HC  
**COURT NO. 107 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**CONTD**  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 12/19 HC  
2. 262/19 HC  
3. 373 - 374/19 HC  
4. 388/19 HC  
K. PRIYANTHA FERNANDO (J)  
SAMPATH B. ABAYAKOON J.  
**COURT NO. 107 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 272/19 HC  
2. 274/19 HC  
3. 310 - 318/19 HC  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 109/20  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 284/18  
- HCCA 63/13  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 210/19  
- CA 238 - 239/13  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. CHC Appeal 23/13  
- HC (Civil) 278/11  
2. SC. Application FR 340/20  
**(FROM 11.30 A.M. - 12.45 P.M.)**  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 215/20  
2. SC. Application FR 240/20  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 319/20  
- HCCA 49/19  
2. SC.HC.CA. LA 10/21  
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- HCCA 68/17  
5. SC. (Spl.) LA 01/21  
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(FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. (CHC) Appeal 47/14  
- HC. (Civil) 182/10  
2. SC. Application FR 327/15  
**IN THE COURT OF APPEAL LIST OF CASES FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22**  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)

MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 AT 09.30 A.M.**  
**FOR JUDGMENT**  
1. 2196/02  
Writ of Cert (Arjuna Obeysekera J.) (P/CA)  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 411/19  
Writ of Cert  
2. 368/20  
Writ of Cert with WRT 17/21  
3. 50/21  
Writ of Cert  
4. 215/14 PHC  
5. 348/18 HC  
6. 390/19 HC  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 12/19 HC  
2. 262/19 HC  
3. 373 - 374/19 HC  
4. 388/19 HC  
K. PRIYANTHA FERNANDO (J)  
SAMPATH B. ABAYAKOON J.  
**COURT NO. 107 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 308/15 HC  
2. 178/16 HC  
3. 354/17 HC  
4. 333/19 HC  
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1. 272/19 HC  
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**COURT NO. 301 AT 12.30 P.M.**  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 436/20  
Writ of Cert  
2. 462/20  
Writ of Cert  
3. 46/21  
Writ of Cert  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 AT 02.00 P.M.**  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. 440/20  
Writ of Cert WITH 422/20  
Writ of Cert  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
**COURT NO. 301 OTHERS FOR JUDGMENT**  
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**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 390/20  
Writ of Cert  
**NOTICE**

12. 648/00  
(F) DC  
13. 915/00  
(F) DC  
14. 1250/00  
(F) DC  
15. 1334  
- 1338/00  
(F) DC  
16. 984/08  
Writ of Cert  
17. 778/09  
Writ of Cert  
18. 145/12  
Writ of Cert  
19. 159/12  
Writ of Cert with WRT 160/12,  
WRT 161/12  
20. 201/13  
Writ of Cert  
21. 114/14  
Writ of Cert  
22. 191/14  
Writ of Cert  
23. 337/15  
Writ of Cert  
24. 150/18 HC  
25. 391/18 HC  
26. 416/18 HC  
27. 10/16 REV  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. 183/18 HC  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 279/16 HC  
2. 277/17 HC  
N. BANDULA KARUNARATNE (J)  
R. GURUSINGHE J.

**COURT NO. 205 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 175/16 HC  
2. 283 - 299/16 A HC  
DEVIKA ABEYRATNE J.  
P. KUMARARATNAM J.

**COURT NO. 110 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 210/15 HC AB  
2. 30/18 HC  
3. 113/18 HC  
4. 124/18 HC  
5. 384/18 HC  
6. 173/19 HC  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 88/15 HC  
2. 152/16 HC  
3. 196/18 HC  
DEVIKA ABEYRATNE J.  
P. KUMARARATNAM J.

**COURT NO. 110 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 366/17 HC  
2. 404/18 HC  
3. 44/20 HC  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 92/14 HC  
2. 16 - 17/15  
3. 58/16 HC  
4. 259/16 HC  
5. 64/17 HC  
6. 148/18 HC  
M. T. MOHAMMED LAFFAR J.  
K. K. A. V. SWARNADHIPATHI J.

**COURT NO. 206 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 612/10  
Writ of Cert with WR 611/10  
2. 623/11  
Writ of Cert  
3. 210/15  
Writ of Cert with WRT 219/15  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 390/18  
Writ of Cert  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 353/14  
Writ of Cert  
DR. RUWAN FERNANDO (J)  
M. SAMPATH K. B. WIJERATNE J.

**COURT NO. 302 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 06/19 TAX  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. 46/19 TAX  
2. 48/19 TAX  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 04/19 TAX  
DR. RUWAN FERNANDO (J)  
M. SAMPATH K. B. WIJERATNE J.

**COURT NO. 302 OTHERS FOR JUDGMENT**  
1. 123/08 PHC  
(Dr. Ruwan Fernando J.)  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 03/18 TAX  
2. 08/18 TAX  
SOBITHA RAJAKARUNA J.  
DHAMMIKA GANEPOLA J.

**COURT NO. 303 AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 142/19  
Writ of Cert  
2. 488/19  
Writ of Cert  
3. 556/19  
Writ of Cert  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 474/19  
Writ of Cert  
SOBITHA RAJAKARUNA J.  
DHAMMIKA GANEPOLA J.

**COURT NO. 303 OTHERS FOR SUPPORT**  
1. 316/19  
Writ of Cert

2. 337/19  
Writ of Cert  
D. N. SAMARAKOON J.  
PRADEEP KIRTISINGHE J.

**COURT NO. 108 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 03/15 TAX  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 13/16 TAX  
WITH TAX 15/15  
PRASANTHA DE SILVA J.  
S. U. B. KARALLIYADDE J.

**COURT NO. 109 AT 12.30 P.M.**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 65/14 PHC  
2. 75/16 PHC  
**COURT NO. 109 AT 12.30 P.M.**  
**CONTD..**  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. 50/18 PA  
PRASANTHA DE SILVA J.  
S. U. B. KARALLIYADDE J.

**COURT NO. 109 OTHERS TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. 03/17 PHC  
2. 09/17 PHC  
3. 62/17 PHC  
**CIVIL APPEAL WESTERN PROVINCE (COLOMBO) LIST OF CASES FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22**  
A.A.C.J. RAJARATHNA (H.C.J.)  
R.P. HETTIARACHCHI (H.C.J.)  
(AT 10.00 A.M.)  
**FOR JUDGMENT**  
145/15 (F) A,B,C,D  
HCCA/Colombo  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
LA 196/19  
HCCA/Colombo  
LA 197/19  
HCCA/Colombo  
123/17 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
02/21 RA  
HCCA/Colombo  
144/10 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
27/17 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
**FOR SUPPORT**  
LA 130/18  
HCCA/Colombo  
LA 107/20  
HCCA/Colombo  
LA 88/20  
HCCA/Colombo  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
186/18 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
187/18 (F) A,B  
HCCA/Colombo  
181/18 (F) A,B,C  
HCCA/Colombo  
63/15 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
259/17 (F)  
HCCA/Colombo  
09/18 RA  
HCCA/Colombo

PRIYANTHA JAYAWARDANE (P.C.) (J)  
MURDU N.B. FERNANDO P.C.J.  
YASANTHA KODAGODA P.C. J.

**COURT NO. 403 (FROM 01.30 P.M. - 03.00 P.M.)**  
**TO BE RESUMED**  
1. SC. Appeal No. 37/14  
- HCCA 12/08  
L.T.B. DEHIDENIYA J.  
K.K. WICKRAMASINGHE J.  
M.A. SAMAYAWARDHANA J.

**COURT NO. 404 (FROM 10.00 A.M. - 11.30 A.M.)**  
**TO BE MENTIONED**  
1. SC. Application FR 531/11  
2. SC.HC. LA 55/19  
- CHC 230/19  
3. SC.HC.CA. LA 105/20  
- HCCA 15/19  
**FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED**  
1. SC. Application FR 214/15  
2. SC. Application FR 287/15  
**FOR GRANTING OF LEAVE**  
1. SC.HC.CA. LA 284/18  
- HCCA 63/13  
2. SC. (Spl.) LA 210/19  
- CA 238 - 239/13  
**FOR ARGUMENT**  
1. SC. CHC Appeal 23/13  
- HC (Civil) 278/11  
2. SC. Application FR 340/20  
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Writ of Cert  
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ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
MAYADUNNE COREA J.  
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1. 440/20  
Writ of Cert WITH 422/20  
Writ of Cert  
ARJUNA OBEYSEKERE J. (P/CA)  
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**RETURNABLE**  
1. 386/20  
Writ of Cert  
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**COURT NO. 301 OTHERS FOR JUDGMENT**<

DISHAN JOSEPH

Most Sri Lankans in Colombo city would have caught a glimpse of robust women, of African descent dancing to pulsating drumbeats. We have applauded the performances of the African Manja group. But have we truly understood their origins, displacement and hardships hidden behind their smiles. I firmly believe that after their generations have lived here for 500 years, they too are very much Sri Lankan.

For centuries Ceylon had been a maritime domain for foreign traders, and defiant conquerors. All these foreigners left behind their ancestors, who with time integrated into our society.

There were many nationalities that lived here in those ancient times - Arabs, Europeans, Indians and Africans. Due respect has been given to all, but people of African origin are forgotten, perhaps because their humble ancestors once came to Ceylon as slaves?. In 1807, the British Parliament passed the Act abolishing slavery. Chief Justice of Ceylon Sir Alexander Johnston also recommended the abolishment of domestic slavery. But we must understand that the Africans were brought to Ceylon first by the Portuguese as a cheap workforce. We can adduce the name Slave Island in Colombo 2 is derived from the heavy presence of African slaves.

When the Portuguese built their fort in Colombo, the slaves were daily ferried by boat to work. The Dutch engaged in this practice later.

The road Ferry Lane in Slave Island was sadly the point where these innocent men and women were assembled, counted and ferried. Subsequently the British also used some African labour to lay the pioneer railway lines in Ceylon. Even in India there is a clan called Siddi (Africans who arrived centuries ago from the Bantu clan of South East Africa) who have hopelessly adapted to Indian life living in Gujarat, Karnataka and Hyderabad.

For months I tried to make contact with the shy African-Sri Lankans. I finally decided to visit Puttalam with my friends Ravi and Sathieshchandran. One of the last such families of direct African origin lives in Puttalam.

The name Puttalam is derived from the Tamil word "upputhalam" - uppu meaning salt and thalam meaning area of salt production. To this day Puttalam duly upholds its fame by producing world-class salt that would enhance any cuisine.

We travelled by jeep on the long drive to Puttalam. We went via the old route - passing through Waikkal, Kochchikade and Chilaw. We passed many beautiful Catholic churches. We finally reached Puttalam, a distance of almost 136 kilometres. At the junction, I made inquiries to find the village of Sirambiyadi (also spelt as Sirambi Adi), the home of this last clan of resilient Africans.

We drove for five kilometres and noticed signboards warning us of elephants. There were many wild donkeys meandering about. The jeep continued on a sand road, bordered by thick foliage. After 10 minutes, we spotted some small houses in a secluded neighbourhood. It was afternoon. There were no fences or gates. This is a real community in every sense of the word. We boldly walked towards a house painted in lemon yellow colour.

We were surprised when a tall dark woman walked towards us. She stood still and smiled. Within seconds three other African women came out from another house, followed by the barking of an excited dog. In my mind, I was thinking whether these people still spoke Creole or a form of Portuguese dialect but was stunned when they spoke perfect Sinhalese with no accent. Indeed they have lived here for decades and Sri Lanka is their beloved home. We sat in the garden full of trees and a cool breeze set the tone for two hours of amazing discovery.

The oldest of the four women, Juliet explained, "We are the last Africans of old Ceylon. I assume we are children from the fifth generation. Our great grandfather was Martin Manuel. I am 60 years old. These women here are my three sisters - Jenny Florence, Maria Jacinta and Sherine Alex." I was again mesmerized by their Catholic names. They all shared a beautiful dark complexion and naturally curly hair. They were blessed with sharp features and piercing radiant eyes.

Florence added, "Our ancestors came

# A SLICE OF AFRICA IN PUTTALAM

## THE CULTURE OF AFRICAN-SRI LANKAN PEOPLE IS ON THE VERGE OF VANISHING



Last of the African-Sri Lankan people in Puttalam

here when this country was under Portuguese rule. We have heard our grandfather say that at one time there were almost 4,000 soldiers and workers of African descent who worked very hard to build the Colombo Fort. Of course, the fort is no more and is a historic memory. Our father's surname was George. We have been living here for dec-

ades. We have had some of our clan living in Batticaloa and Trincomalee, but I have never met them; we have zero contact. Today, we are happy that after much representation by our grandparents, we all have Sri Lankan identity cards."

Jacinta remained silent and smiled. Talkative Juliet kept up the momentum. "Those days when we went to school, children would direct rude comments and jokes at us. We were hurt as children, but with time, we did not care. Thankfully, today our seventh generation of children goes to school, and there is no discrimination." By now, three curious children joined us. The eldest of the three is Chundapa (grandchild of Juliet). They do not have any visible African facial features. Juliet pointed to the teenage girl "See Chundapa, her father is a Sinhalese, so she does not bear an African or Catholic name." The young girl giggled and hid behind a tree. In this remote village there are 22 families of African descent laced with inter-marriage. Their respected leader is Peter Lewis who works as a lottery ticket seller.

The clan's grand matriarch is 85-year-old Emaliyana Marcus-Jerome, the proud mother of the four sisters - Juliet, Jenny, Jacinta and Sherine. She approached, walking cau-

“ Our ancestors came here when this country was under Portuguese rule. We have heard our grandfather say that at one time there were almost 4,000 soldiers and workers of African descent who worked very hard to build the Colombo Fort. Of course, the fort is no more and is a historic memory. We have been living here for decades. We have had some of our clan living in Batticaloa and Trincomalee, but I have never met them. Today, we are happy that after much representation by our grandparents, we all have Sri Lankan identity cards ”

stand the African lyrics, but the women sang their hearts out. Jenny played and danced with vibrant energy, she would have looked more awesome if she was clad in a printed ankle-length gown, which is their traditional dress. Soon old Emaliyana joined the singing.

This humble musical rendition in a remote coconut grove will remain a golden travel memory forever.

The women stopped and added, "We perform as a 12-member choir and band - six men and six women. We have sung at the BMICH and sang during CHOGM event in Colombo. In 2012, we were taken on a tour to our ancestors' homeland in Mozambique. It was our first time on a plane and we were very happy. We enjoyed the visit. Our people in Mozambique were very surprised to see us."

But life is not a rainbow for these women. Their husbands work as fishermen and masons doing odd jobs. Their houses were built with the support from a Germany-based NGO. The women earn an income by performing at a few shows maybe thrice a year.

They are cut off from Colombo. Keeping their religious faith, they faithfully attend mass at the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity located nearby. The Kaffirs of old Ceylon are a forgotten people. I wonder how they will move on in this post-COVID-19 period. Perhaps within the next 20 years these last four African-Sri Lankan sisters will vanish from our cultural spectrum.

The beautiful historical journey of these people has not been well documented or appreciated covering 500 years. Since this visit to Puttalam we made many efforts to trace other original African-Sri Lankans living in Negombo, Kalpitiya and Trincomalee and we remain hopeful to find them in the future.

tiously. The old lady reminisced, "I have happy memories growing up here in Puttalam. Those days our men worked in the salterns and some did basic level government jobs. My mother was a resourceful cook. On festive days like Easter and Christmas, she would spend hours roasting a whole pig with the help of some women. If we could not get a pig, we roasted a few chickens. Our meals were a big family affair. We enjoyed the fellowship. Our clan got together around a fire - we sang and danced. We sing old songs in Portuguese. We do not speak Creole anymore, I cannot remember if my grandparents spoke this dialect. Over the years we adapted to rice and curry."

It was time to appreciate some Kaffir music and dance. Jacinta and Jenny got their instruments - a rabana (small drum), a pair of polished coconut shells, two silver spoons and an empty glass bottle. Juliet took the coconut shells and began a beat, within seconds Jenny followed with pulsating beats from the drum. We did not under-



“ On festive days like Easter and Christmas, my mother would spend hours roasting a whole pig with the help of some women.

If we could not get a pig, we roasted a few chickens. Our meals were a big family affair. We enjoyed the fellowship. Our clan got together around a fire - we sang and danced. We sing old songs in Portuguese. We do not speak Creole anymore, I cannot remember if my grandparents spoke this dialect.

Over the years we adapted to rice and curry ”



# Army's reforestation and beautification project

## Walking amidst the Splendour of Nature



The walking path in Battaramulla has attracted many health-conscious people from different areas



PRABHATH ATAPATTU

It is an eye-catching scene especially in the dawn and dusk along the route that leads from the Environment Authority to the Army Headquarters in Battaramulla; young and old citizens of Sri Lanka clad in sports attire jogging and engaging in physical exercises for a healthy physique. Developing the concept of the contemporary leaders of the country to build a healthy nation, the Army-maintained jogging path under the shade of indigenous herbal trees is open for the people from all strata.

Not only the people close by but also the ones far away have made it a part and parcel of their daily routine to come with their family members for recreation. The surrounding paddy fields, once an unattended breeding ground for mosquitoes and serpents, have become a treasure trove of cultivation for paddy and minor crops thanks to the untiring efforts of dedicated soldiers under the guidance of professionals.

The canals and water streams around the area have become operational and a home for amphibians and freshwater fishes. Prominence has been given to the natural environment. This mega task *Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak* (Tree-friendly New Country) was implemented in line with the policy statement of the President *Saabhagye Dekma* (Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour) for the use of citizens irrespective of their social backgrounds. *Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak* was carried out under a few phases. Initially, some saplings were planted on both sides of the road



The miracle of transforming a barren and marshy land into an agricultural land with beautiful ponds is a result of adhering to the motto 'Nothing is Impossible' of the military leadership. Empowering the Government's policy of reforestation and beautification of the country's urban and semi-urban areas with modern facilities to fulfil the requirements of the people, the Sri Lanka Army under its *Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak* programme has implemented a series of development projects covering the whole country

which leads to the Army Headquarters and simultaneously a 12-acre abandoned paddy land adjacent to the Army Headquarters was brought under the plough. The construction of the 2.6 kilometres-long jogging path around the paddy land was the next step. Under the instructions of Army Commander General Shavendra Siva, the dream of an outdoor mega gymnasium with a children's park became a reality in a very short period. Presently, people of all ages benefit from the modern sports utilities. There are three zones for physical training with accessories in a pleasant panoramic view.

The Government's environment-friendly green project concept for urban forests, green paths, green roofs and agroforestry systems for a healthy nation is empowered by the Army. A few users of the walking path commented with a spontaneous overflow of genuine feelings about the revolutionary change of their surrounding and facilities provided by the defenders of the nation. Their comments encouraged those who engaged in this task. A female teacher who used the walking track admired what she enjoyed, "I am Mishra Khan from Kollupitiya. I visited my sister and she drove me a walk and that is why I am here today. I think that the Army is doing a fantastic job. The place and pace here is lovely. I think everyone is very health conscious. This is a really great initiative. The atmosphere is wonderful and everyone is obtaining the maximum use of this. To be honest they have done a very fantastic job and especially Army Commander General Shavendra Silva."

She added, "because of him we are being updated on what is happening in the country and I think we are one of

the very few countries in the world that has been able to handle the COVID-19 pandemic well and he is in the forefront. As a citizen I highly appreciate that."

The miracle of transforming a barren and marshy land into an agricultural land with beautiful ponds is a result of adhering to the motto 'Nothing is Impossible' of the military leadership. Empowering the Government's policy of reforestation and beautification of the country's urban and semi-urban areas with modern facilities to fulfil the requirements of the people, the Sri Lanka Army under its *Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak* programme has implemented a series of development projects covering the whole country.

Another resident of Battaramulla walking along the jogging path with his spouse and two children expressed his views regarding the facilities enjoyed by them.

"I am an executive officer in a Government department. I am busy round the clock with my official work. This is actually a dream for me to use this walking path and sports equipment in an excellent friendly environment. I highly appreciate the service of physical training instructors deployed in the area, free of charge. I thank General Shavendra Silva and the Army for his initiative to make all these things available for us. I come to the walking track with my family. I highly appreciate the President's effort of building a healthy nation." Commenting further, he said, "I am a frequent traveller. I have seen hundreds of jogging tracks in various countries. I think this is the best place. This walking track and the environment are excellent."

Health, be it mental or physical is a prerequisite for living a good and fruitful life. Buoyant health together with a strong mind brings happiness, pleasure and contentment. Keeping it in mind the contemporary society is highly concerned about maintaining good health. A healthy nation is always a blessing for development. Realizing it as a most important fact, the Government gives pride of place to uplift the health condition of its nation. The Government has commenced a number of projects providing infrastructure to the people since education and health are both long-term investments. Infrastructure facilities such as well-equipped jogging paths, gymnasiums and the service of qualified physical training instructors for the public in spite of the expenses,

can be considered as a genuine effort taken on behalf of the people.

The people of this country are fortunate enough to tread on the threshold of a bright future. The Sri Lanka Army has extended its fullest support to the Government to materialize future goals.

The people of this country have been enjoying the freedom with their family members in a secured environment. It is apparent that at any time of the day, they can have pleasure with utmost freedom with their family



members in a well-secured atmosphere. They have understood the reality and lined up with the country's leadership. The Sri Lanka Army, keeping its ultimate vision of giving priority to National Security, is committed to contributing to the Government's plan of reforestation in urban and semi-urban areas to build green cities. The aim is to beautify the cities while providing infrastructure to the people. The Army has already started planting 100,000 saplings all over the country in order to increase the forest density

and beautify the cities under its mega reforestation drive.

The dream of every citizen of this Pearl of the Indian Ocean to enjoy the freedom and security blended with pleasure in a peaceful and prosperous environment has come true. Parents with their children, young and old, can be seen moving in groups with an utmost feeling of safety in this leisure area. Though the memories of the past are still living in the minds of the people, it will fade away with the dawn of the new era.



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# Biden pledges \$4bn for global COVID-19 vaccine programme

**US:** US President Joe Biden pledged \$4 billion in US aid to the Covax global COVID-19 vaccination programme during his virtual meeting with other G7 leaders on Friday, White House officials said.

An initial \$2 billion will be released "by the end of this month," with the rest coming over the next two years, said a senior White House official, who asked not to be identified, on Thursday.

Covax is a global project to procure and distribute coronavirus vaccines for at least the most vulnerable 20 percent in every country, allowing poorer nations to catch up with the rush by dozens of wealthy countries to vaccinate.

"The United States is really excited to be making our first contribution to Covax," the White House official said. "We do think it is vital to take a role in beating the pandemic globally."

Although the United States is "prioritizing" domestic needs, assistance to other countries "decreases the risk to everyone in



US President Joe Biden

the world, including Americans, and also decreases the risk of variants," the official said.

For now, the focus is on contributing funds for purchase of new vaccines but "when we have a sufficient supply it is our intention to

consider donating surplus vaccines," the official said. Group of Seven leaders will be discussing international coordination on ending the deadly and disruptive pandemic when they meet virtually.

- AFP



# Hackers target Myanmar Government websites

India, US put pressure on Myanmar Generals

**MYANMAR:** Hackers attacked military-run Government websites in Myanmar Thursday as a cyber war erupted after authorities shut down the internet for a fourth straight night.

A group called Myanmar Hackers disrupted multiple government websites including the Central Bank, Myanmar Military's propaganda page, state-run broadcaster MRTV, the Port Authority, Food and Drug Administration.

Meanwhile, A young protester died Friday, more than a week after being shot in anti-coup demonstrations in Myanmar, offering a fresh source of anger inside the country as international pressure grows on the generals who seized power.

A rally on February 9 in the capital Naypyidaw turned violent when police fired rubber bullets at demonstrators, though doctors at the hospital later told AFP that at least two people had been critically wounded by live rounds.

Mya Thwate Thwate Khaing, who turned 20 last Thursday as she lay unconscious in a hospital bed, was shot in the head. A doctor confirmed her death Friday, adding that her body will be examined. Thousands of people ral-



A protester offers flowers and kneels on a road before a Police officer in Mandalay, Myanmar as protests in Myanmar against the military coup that removed Aung San Suu Kyi's Government from power have grown in recent days.

lied across the country to protest against a military coup that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian Government from power earlier this month.

"We are fighting for justice in Myanmar," the hacking group said on its Facebook page.

"It is like mass protesting of people in front of government websites."

Cybersecurity expert Matt Warren from Australia's RMIT University said it

was likely the aim of the hacking was to generate publicity. "The sorts of attacks they would be undertaking are denial of service attacks or defacing websites which is called hacktivism," he told AFP. - AFP

# WHO urges COVID vaccine makers to uphold pledges



WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

**SWITZERLAND:** The World Health Organization urged COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers to make good on their commitments as the planet's poorest countries await their first doses.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the Covax facility - the global COVID-19 vaccine procurement and distribution effort ensuring poorer countries can access doses - was now ready to begin.

Around 336 million AstraZeneca-Oxford doses and 1.2 million Pfizer-BioNTech doses - the only two vaccines with WHO approval - are set to start being shipped out later this

month through Covax. "At the beginning of the year I issued a call to action to ensure that vaccination of health workers was under way in all countries within the first 100 days of the year," Tedros told a news conference. Friday "marks the half-way point, and we have made progress, but we are not there yet."

"With the emergency use listing of two versions of the AstraZeneca vaccine this week, Covax is ready to roll out vaccines and is waiting for several manufacturers to make good on their commitments," he said, without elaborating.

On Monday, the WHO gave the seal of approval to the AstraZeneca

vaccine being manufactured in plants in India and South Korea, meaning it can now be shipped out via Covax.

The facility is set to issue its final distribution list for the first wave of deliveries next week. The first doses will be delivered by the end of February, with the bulk in March.

Around 145 economies are set to receive enough doses to immunise 3.3 percent of their collective population by mid-2021.

During his news conference, Tedros noted that countries in Europe - which have been striking their own deals with manufacturers - were aiming to vaccinate 70 percent of their populations in a similar same time

frame. Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Keith Rowley, chairman of CARICOM, the 15-member Caribbean Community, voiced fears that small states, lacking bargaining power, would be shut out of the global vaccination drive.

"As there is the understandable rush to receive the vaccines and inoculation of our various populations, we are more than a little bit concerned that there is, or is to be, hoarding and price-gouging as well as undue preference in some quarters," Rowley told the WHO press conference, via video-link.

"We are all yoked to an invisible destroyer. It is my hope and plea

that... on this occasion, the rich take care of the poor. "All we ask as members of the family of nations is that we not be forgotten, ignored - or worse, taken advantage of in this business of life and death." The WHO launched its annual Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for 2021 on Thursday, saying \$1.96 billion was needed to fund another year of battling the pandemic.

The plan's six objectives are to suppress transmission; reduce exposure; counter misinformation; protect the vulnerable; reduce death and illness; and accelerate equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics. - AFP

# One-third of US military refusing COVID vaccine - Pentagon

**US:** Pentagon officials said Wednesday that about one-third of the US military are declining to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, despite significant coronavirus infection levels in the forces.

Major General Jeff Taliaferro revealed the high refusal rate in Congressional hearing, as the US Defense Department continues to classify covid vaccines as optional because they have yet to receive full approval from the Federal Drug Administration.

"Acceptance rates are somewhere in the two-thirds territory," said Taliaferro, stressing that the figure is based on "very early data."

Pentagon Spokesman John Kirby said that there was no

detailed military-wide data on vaccinations, but said more than 916,500 had been administered so far.

Kirby said the level of refusal is on par with that of the general population, where the vaccine has not been offered nearly as widely.

"We in the military basically mirror the acceptance rates of American society," Kirby told reporters.

The Government has tapped the military and National Guard to help vaccinate the general public.

Kirby said that by the end of this week, more than one million members of the military will have received vaccine shots.

The Pentagon makes most standard vaccinations mandatory for military personnel.

But because the covid vaccines have only been approved on an emergency basis, they cannot be forced on people, Kirby said.

"There is a real limit, legally, that we have, to make it mandatory for our troops and their families."

He noted that Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has received the vaccine.

"What the secretary wants is for the men and women of the department to make the best and most informed decision for them and their health and the health of their families," Kirby said.

- AFP



The Pentagon makes most standard vaccinations mandatory for military personnel.

# Man sentenced to four months for coughing on police

**DENMARK:** A young man was sentenced Thursday to four months in jail after he coughed at Danish policemen while shouting "corona", the Supreme Court said.

The 20-year-old was returning home from a birthday party in the city of Aarhus when he was stopped by police in March last year during Denmark's first semi-lockdown.

Standing just half a metre (less than two feet) away, the man yelled "corona" at two officers and coughed in their faces, a court statement said.

While he did not have the coronavirus, the man acknowledged being intoxicated, and was arrested by the unamused agents.

A district court declined to convict him, but an appeals court later imposed a three-month sentence.

Denmark's Supreme Court ruled that the coughing, combined with shouting, constituted a "threat of violence against a police officer" and added a fourth



month to the sentence based on an updated law. - AFP

# Robot cheers up German patients

**GERMANY:** Cleaning robot Franzi makes sure floors are spotless at the Munich hospital where she works, and has taken on a new role during the pandemic: cheering up patients and staff.

"Can you move out the way, please? I need to clean," trills the robot in German when people block her pre-programmed cleaning route.

"You need to move! I really want to clean!" she squeaks at those who still don't get out of the way. And if that doesn't work, digital tears begin to stream from her LED-light eyes.

"Visitors are not allowed in the pandemic, so Franzi entertains the patients a bit," says Constance Rettler of Dr. Rettler, the company in charge of cleaning the Neuperlach hospital that provided the robot.

Three times a day, Franzi bustles through the clinic's



Cleaning robot 'Franzi' (R)

entrance hall, her feet automatically mopping the floors. Amused patients take photos of her, and some even stop to chat to the metre-high robot.

"Ah, there you are my friend," cries one elderly lady with a drip on her arm upon catching sight of Franzi. "One of our recent

patients came down three times a day to talk to her," smiles Tanja Zacherl, who oversees hospital maintenance.

Created by a company in Singapore, Franzi was originally named Ella and spoke English before coming to Munich early this year.

Yet her German is perfect

as she tells her interviewers that she "never wants to grow up" and that cleaning is her passion.

When prompted, she can also sing classic German pop songs and even rap.

Rettler is adamant that the robot is not taking jobs away from real human beings but instead is supposed to "support" her flesh-and-blood colleagues, who have become harder to come by during the coronavirus pandemic.

"With the pandemic, there is lots of extra disinfecting work to be done in hospitals," says Rettler.

"While Franzi is cleaning the floors, our employees can concentrate on doing that."

A robot has its limits however. It is still unable to get into tight corners, and if it hits an obstacle, it bursts into tears and remains stuck until rescued by a human.

- AFP

# Scientists call for universal coronavirus vaccine

**US:** The prestigious journal Science on Thursday published an editorial calling for a global effort to develop a universal coronavirus vaccine that would remain effective against other members of the same virus family that might cross over to humans.

Wayne Koff, head of the Human Vaccines Project, and Seth Berkley, who leads the global vaccine alliance Gavi, said that although the COVID-19 pandemic was far from over, humanity now possessed the

tools to end it and was undertaking the most rapid immunization campaign in history.

But, they warned: "More virulent and deadly coronaviruses are waiting in the wings. Thus, the world needs a universal coronavirus vaccine."

SARS-CoV-2 belongs to a diverse group of viruses, of which there are thousands, characterized by their crown-like appearance, which comes from the spike proteins that dot their surfaces.

They are capable of infecting a wide range of animals, from bats and pangolins to pigs and mink.

Four coronaviruses are known to cause common colds in humans, and historically they have been deemed a low priority for research.

That changed with the 2002 SARS-CoV-1 outbreak that eventually killed some 8,000 people with a fatality rate of 10 percent.

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012 was 34 percent fatal.

Koff and Berkley wrote there was a risk that SARS-CoV-2 may mutate in ways that will render current vaccines less effective – as has already been seen with the South African variant – or even become ineffective. Moreover, the potential is growing for other coronaviruses to jump the species barrier.

"Modern agricultural practices, viral evolution, and relentless human encroachment on the natural environment mean there is an increasing risk of people encountering previously isolated animal populations that harbor new strains with pandemic potential," they said.

"With human migration, population growth, urbanization, rapid global travel, and climate change hastening the spread, it has never been easier for outbreaks to turn into epidemics and escalate into pandemics."

On the other hand, they argued, advances in biomedical research, computing and engineering sciences had ushered in a new era in vaccine discovery.

High performance supercomputers can help identify new "antigens" – key viral proteins that induce immune responses, which vaccines use to train our bodies.

Databases of genetic sequences of animal coronaviruses can be used to model how they will evolve. And research into how immune systems decline with age can help improve vaccine design. - AFP

# US accepts talks with Iran



The group which sealed the 2015 deal includes the United States and Iran as well as Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

**US:** The United States said Thursday it was ready to meet with Iran and reversed Donald Trump's claims of new UN sanctions, providing an opening to jumpstart nuclear diplomacy.

Hours after Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with his European counterparts, the United States welcomed a proposal to convene talks of all nations that were part of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The EU political director, Enrique Mora, afterward proposed via Twitter an informal meeting of all participants, saying the nuclear accord was at a "critical moment" – ahead of a weekend deadline for Iran to restrict some UN nuclear inspections.

"The United States would accept an invitation from the European Union High Representative to attend a meeting of the P5+1 and Iran to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Iran's nuclear program," State Department spokesman Ned Price said.

The group which sealed the 2015 deal includes the United States and

Iran as well as Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

Former President Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord and instead imposed sweeping sanctions aimed at bringing Iran to its knees.

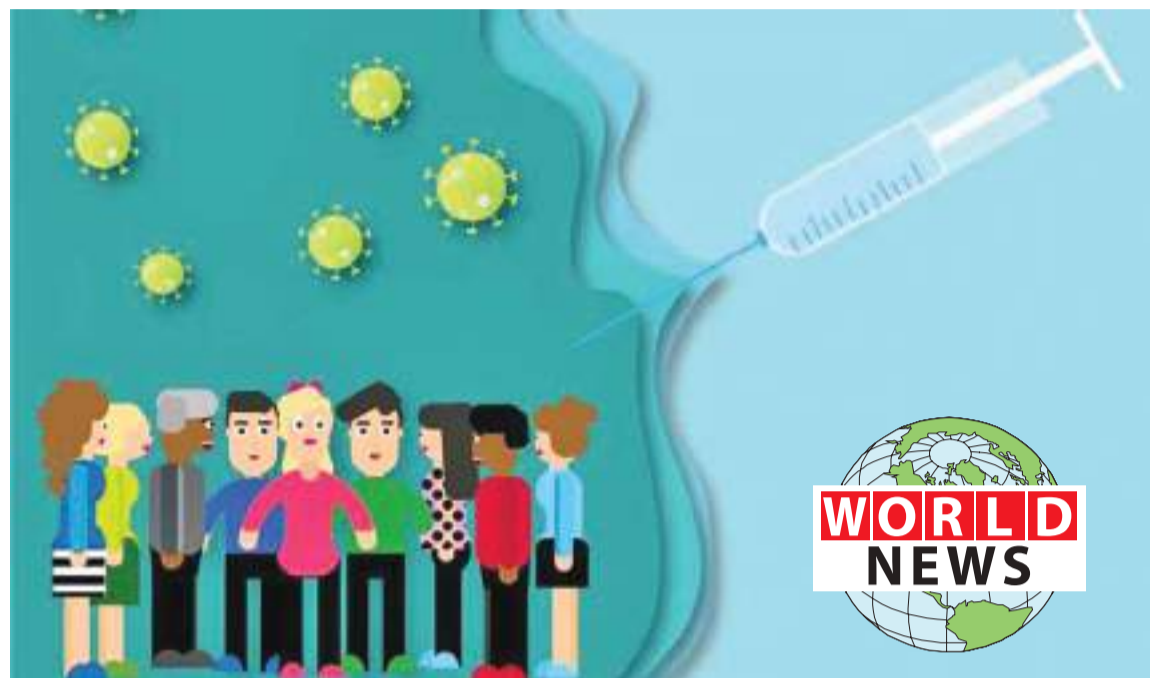
But President Joe Biden has supported a return to diplomacy, saying that the 2015 accord was effective in reducing Tehran's nuclear programme.

It remains to be seen if Iran will also be willing to sit down with the United States.

Iran has insisted that the United States first lift sanctions before it returns to full compliance with the 2015 accord, reversing steps it took in protest against Trump's measures.

In one step Thursday, the Biden administration said it was no longer contending that the United Nations had imposed new sanctions on Iran.

In a letter, the acting US Ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Mills, said that sanctions said to be reinstated in August "remain terminated." - AFP



**WORLD NEWS**

# Senator's Mexico trip draws ire in storm hit Texas

**US:** Texas Senator Ted Cruz faced fierce criticism Thursday after he flew to a Mexican holiday resort while millions of people in his state have struggled without power or water due to a winter storm.

As political rivals called for his resignation, Cruz justified the flight by saying that his one-night stay in Cancun was to drop his children off before he flew home.

Social media photographs showed Cruz taking the flight on Wednesday as the southern United States, which rarely sees severe winter conditions, was hit with extreme cold temperatures.

Across Texas, utility companies struggled to restore power, seven million people in the state were told to boil water before consuming it, and authorities opened 300 emergency "warming centers."

Rolling blackouts were imposed as power stations and wind turbines froze up.

"With schools cancelled for the week, our girls asked to take a trip with friends. Wanting to be a



US Senator Ted Cruz (Republican -Texas) (R) walks with an unidentified person at the Cancun International Airport in Mexico before boarding his plane back to the U.S.

good dad, I flew down with them last night and am flying back this afternoon," Cruz said in a statement.

"My staff and I are in constant communication with state and local leaders to get to the bottom of what happened in Texas. We want our power back,

our water on and our homes warm."

In televised comments to reporters he added: "It was obviously a mistake. In hindsight, I wouldn't have done it." Cruz was

filmed at Cancun airport on Thursday before his return flight. - AFP

# Democrats' reform bill to offer citizenship to 11 mn

**US:** Democrats unveiled legislation Thursday for President Joe Biden's plan to create a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants, saying there is no justification for denying them a permanent home in the United States.

Top Democrats said the legislation, blocked for more than a decade by Republicans, is "long overdue," noting that most of those it will address have lived in the country for many years, with homes, businesses and US-born children and grandchildren.

It will offer an eight-year path to citizenship for most of the 11 million.

Some, including people brought to the country as children – so-called Dreamers – and farmworkers, will get an immediate path to permanent residence or a "green card," allowing them to work legal-

Others addressed include tens of thousands of people who remained in the United States for years under temporary protected status (TPS) due to violent upheavals or natural disasters in their home countries.

And, underscoring the Biden administration's reversal from former president Donald Trump's strident anti-immigration policies, the legislation also proposes to stop branding undocumented immigrants as "aliens" in US law.

Instead, they will be called the less pejorative "non-citizens." "It's time to bring all 11 million



A migrant family using all means after crossing the Rio Bravo river on the US-Mexican border in their quest for asylum in El Paso, Texas on February 10, 2021.

undocumented out of the shadows," said Democratic Senator Bob Menendez.

"We have an economic and moral imperative to pass big, bold and inclusive immigration reform that leaves no one behind, not our dreamers and TPS holders, not our farmworkers and meatpackers, not our essential workers, not our parents, friends, and neighbours," he said.

The legislation followed through on Biden's announcement on January 20, his first day in office, to

overhaul US policies toward undocumented immigrants as well as people arriving at the US-Mexico border seeking to enter for work or as refugees.

A major focus is the Dreamers, people who were brought to the United States illegally as children and grew up there.

Biden was vice president in the administration of president Barack Obama who sought to open a way to citizenship for the Dreamers, only to be forced to compromise for short-term measures with

Republicans. Obama's successor Donald Trump attempted to reverse the Dreamers programme as part of more than 400 Executive Orders he put through to curb immigration and punish the undocumented.

Besides offering a pathway to citizenship for millions already living in the United States, Biden wants to take a more forgiving policy at the border, ending Trump's "zero tolerance" approach and reuniting families separated by it. - AFP

# Australia slams Facebook news blackout

**AUSTRALIA:** Australia's Government said that Facebook was "heavy-handed" and "wrong" for introducing an unprecedented local ban on sharing news in response to pending legislation that would force the social media giant to pay for content.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the US firm gave no notice it would revoke users' ability to post links to news articles or view the Facebook pages of news outlets from anywhere in the world.

"Facebook was wrong, Facebook's actions were unnecessary, they were heavy-handed, and they will damage its reputation here in Australia," he said.

The surprise move early Thursday came as retaliation for laws proposed in Canberra that would force social media giants to pay for Australian news content shared on their sites.

Frydenberg said the government remained "absolutely committed" to implementing its plan, which passed the House of Representatives late Wednesday and is now before the Senate.

"What today's events do confirm for all Australians is the immense market power of these media digital giants," he said. "These digital giants loom very, very large in our economy and on the



digital landscape." Facebook has been engaged a lengthy war of words with Canberra over its regulatory push, which tech firms fear could create a global precedent that could require dramatic changes and hit their business model.

Communications Minister Paul Fletcher had also raised concerns that blocking news media on the popular platform in Australia could boost the spread of misinformation. - AFP

# Mafia boss wins right to listen to music in jail

**ITALY:** An Italian mafia boss in solitary confinement has won a legal fight to be allowed to listen to music, Italian newspaper La Repubblica said Thursday.

Domenico Strisciuglio, 48, had been sentenced to more than 20 years under Italy's strict prison regime for murder and other Mafia-related crimes.

After a denial from prison authorities, his lawyer turned to the courts to allow him to buy a CD player so that he could expand his entertainment options beyond watching TV in his cell.

Judges in Sassari, the Sardinian town where Strisciuglio is imprisoned, agreed that listening to music was part of the



man's constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Letting him have a CD player is in line with "his primary rights to exercise a cultural activity" which cannot be limited by any form of detention, the judges said in a ruling quoted by La Repubblica.

They also noted that regular TV channels Strisciuglio has access to do not offer programmes "able to satisfy someone who has an interest in listening to music."

Strisciuglio, who was part of a Mafia family from Bari in southeastern Italy, won another case in 2019, when judges said he could be allowed to watch TV after midnight. - AFP

# PERSEVERANCE ROVER MAKES MARS TOUCHDOWN AFTER 7 MONTHS

**US:** After seven months in space, NASA's Perseverance rover overcame a tense landing phase with a series of perfectly executed maneuvers to gently float down to the Martian soil Thursday and embark on its mission to search for signs of past life.

"Touchdown confirmed," said operations lead Swati Mohan as mission control at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena erupted in cheers.

The autonomously guided procedure was in fact completed more than 11 minutes earlier, the length of time it took for radio signals to return to Earth.

Shortly after landing, the rover sent back its first black-and-white images, revealing a rocky field at the landing site in the Jezero Crater, just north of the Red Planet's equator.

More images, video of the descent and perhaps the first sounds of Mars ever recorded by microphones are expected in the coming hours as the rover relays data to overhead satellites.

US President Joe Biden hailed the "historic" event.

"Today proved once again that with the power of science and American ingenuity, nothing is beyond the realm of possibility," he tweeted.

During a press call,



NASA's Perseverance rover touched down on Mars on Thursday.



This NASA photo shows the first images from NASA's Perseverance rover as it landed on the surface of Mars on Thursday. - AFP

NASA Associate Administrator Thomas Zurbuchen

landing phase's contingency plan, to emphasize how well things had gone, and

admitted he violated Covid protocol by hugging people because of the emotions of the moment.

Over the coming years, Perseverance will attempt to collect 30 rock and soil samples in sealed tubes, to be eventually sent back to Earth sometime in the 2030s for lab analysis.

About the size of an SUV, the craft weighs a ton, is equipped with a seven foot- (two meter-) long robotic arm, has 19 cameras, two microphones and a suite of cutting-edge instruments to assist in its scientific goals.



Members of NASA's Perseverance rover team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California react in mission control after receiving confirmation that the spacecraft successfully touched down on Mars on Thursday. - AFP

The spacecraft carrying Perseverance careened into the Martian atmosphere at 12,500 miles (20,000 kilometers) per hour, protected by its heat shield, then deployed a supersonic parachute the size of a Little League field, before firing up an eight-engined jet-

pack. Finally, it lowered the rover carefully to the ground on a set of cables.

Scientists believe that around 3.5 billion years ago the crater was home to a river that flowed into a deep lake, depositing sediment in a fan-shaped delta. Perseverance ended up

landing about two kilometers (a mile) southeast of the delta, NASA scientist Ken Farley said, in a geologically significant area.

Mars was warmer and wetter in its distant past, and while previous exploration has determined the planet was habitable, Per-

severance is tasked with determining whether it was actually inhabited.

The rover is only the fifth ever to set its wheels down on Mars.

The feat was first accomplished in 1997, and all of them have been American. - AFP

## PANDEMIC TRANSFORMS WORK ATTIRE



A store displaying casual men's attire on Madison Avenue in New York.

**US:** Suits and tailored shirts are out, sweatpants and pajamas are in: remote working is changing work clothes habits, and while vaccines may bring back some formality, old-school office attire should emerge from the pandemic far less starched and strict.

"For the last year, everybody has just been dressed from the waist up, wearing a nice short for Zoom calls," quipped stylist Sascha Lilic. Many workers who have already returned to offices notice a new relaxed vibe.

"I saw someone wearing just their socks when they walked through to get something from another department," recalled Deanna Narveson, a journalist in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

"I think I've been dressing slightly more casual myself," added Narveson, who nevertheless makes sure she puts on "real clothes" when working from home. According to employees at several companies, the casualness has happened by itself without management or HR teams intervening.

"Shorts and T-shirts at the Pentagon was pretty new," said Matt Triner, boss of IT consulting firm Hunter Strategy, which the US government has contracted to do several projects.

The relaxation of dress codes in the professional world was already under way long before the pandemic, with the tech sector and start-up generation leading the way. It was even catching on at banks.

"We have had a 'flexible' dress code policy for almost two years now, which encourages our people to use their own judgment for what is appropriate to wear for their work day," said a spokesperson for Goldman Sachs.

The pandemic has seen the trend toward comfort accelerate, though.

"Suits and ties were already going away in IT. The pandemic gave the last hangers-on an excuse to let go," said Triner. The trend has been catastrophic for formal menswear companies like Brooks Brothers and the parent company of Men's Wearhouse, which both declared bankruptcy last year. New

York designer David Hart, a specialist in luxury men's ready-to-wear items, has taken "a step back" from tailoring from the time being to focus on knitwear, masks, sweaters and polo shirts.

The pandemic will have "lasting consequences" in the way people dress for work, particularly men, according to Lilic.

"The outfit will become more casual. It will still be a suit, but there might be a drawstring waist or elasticated waist," he said. Lilic, who has worked with several major fashion houses including Hugo Boss and Elie Saab, predicts more loafers and a lot fewer ties. "The open collar shirt is going to be great," he told AFP.

The shift is already visible among fashion brands, which are pushing more and more cotton and linen jackets as well as polo shirts and even simple sneakers.

Workplace looks will become more individualistic, but also respectful of the office environment, Lilic believes.

"It will respect more of your personality," he said. "But I don't think it is going to be so impactful on men's fashion that everybody's going to turn up in their banking office as a rapper."

Appearance, and some formality are "still important to some customers," said Triner, though "as customers get younger, this is changing rapidly," he added. "I think the suit will stay but it won't have the blatant physical effect. It will less (be) something to hide behind," said Lilic.

For American designer David Hart, "there will be a strong urge for men to start dressing up again" after the pandemic. "I think that people will start dressing up for themselves and not because they are required to for work," he said, confident that the rise of men's fashion will continue. Hart, whose brand was built on tailored jackets and trousers, even dreams of a post-pandemic world where "suits and ties will become disruptive." "The man wearing a suit will be the new rebel," he said. - AFP

## DOLLY PARTON POLITELY SAYS 'NO' TO STATUE

**US:** After thousands of people voiced support for proposed legislation that would immortalize Dolly Parton with a statue on the Capitol grounds of her home state Tennessee, the American icon has - at least for now - graciously declined.

"I am honored and humbled by their intention but I have asked the leaders of the state legislature to remove the bill from any and all consideration," Parton posted on social media.

"Given all that is going on in the world, I don't think putting me on a pedestal is appropriate at this time," the 75-year-old said.

"I hope, though, that somewhere down the road several years from now or perhaps after I'm gone if you still feel I deserve it, then I'm certain I will stand proud in our great State Capitol as a grateful Tennessean."

Long a staunch advocate for keeping politics out of her public persona, Parton's announcement



Country superstar Dolly Parton performs in concert in Nashville, Tennessee in 2015.

comes after the veteran country superstar said she twice turned down a Presidential Medal of Freedom from Donald Trump.

The writer of classics including

A Tennessee state representative last month introduced a bill to erect a statue in Parton's likeness at the statehouse grounds in Nashville. More than 25,000 people signed an online petition to replace controversial statues of Confederate officers with Parton, calling her a "true Tennessee hero."

The petition urged lawmakers to "replace the statues of men who sought to tear this country apart with a monument to the woman who has worked her entire life to bring us closer together."

Revered by people from a variety of backgrounds for decades, Parton, a longtime philanthropist, has been popping up in the news of late, especially after donating \$1 million to Vanderbilt University.

The funds went towards developing Moderna's coronavirus vaccine. A child of Appalachia who grew up in poverty, in 2016 Parton also raised \$9 million for Tennessee wildlife relief. -AFP

## COVID AN EXCUSE TO STRIP TROPICAL FORESTS - INDIGENOUS GROUPS

**FRANCE:** Governments worldwide are using the COVID-19 pandemic to push through destructive development projects and roll back protections of indigenous groups, according to a global report on deforestation and rule of law released Thursday.

An assessment by the Forest People's Programme of post-pandemic stimulus plans in Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Peru found that projects such as mines, industrial agriculture plantations and dams were fuelling a rise in rights abuses.

Those five countries contain the majority of the world's tropical forests.

"During the pandemic, governments have not only failed to stop land grabs and human rights violations by corporate actors, but have rewritten and reversed hard-won pol-

icies that are vital to protecting human rights," said Myrna Cunningham, president of the FILAC indigenous rights group.

Numerous studies have shown the vital role indigenous groups play in averting climate change and biodiversity loss.

They are crucial guardians of some of the most carbon-rich and biodiverse lands on Earth, yet the report outlined how they have come under increasing threat as governments seek to power their economic recovery.

In Brazil, where deforestation of the Amazon last year reached the highest level in over a decade, the government had instigated a "campaign to roll back protections of indigenous people's rights," according to Sofea Dil, a researcher at Yale Law School who worked on the report. - AFP



In Colombia, deforestation of the Amazon has accelerated by 80 percent during COVID lockdown.

## 6 CHILDREN KILLED PLAYING WITH OLD BOMB IN UGANDA

**UGANDA:** Six children were killed and five others injured in northwest Uganda after an old explosive they found in the bushes detonated as they played with it, police said Thursday.

Three children died instantly while three others succumbed to injuries en route to hospital in Adjumani, a district of West Nile region that witnessed years of conflict and insurgencies.

"The children were playing in the bushes on Tuesday afternoon when they came across an object, and it exploded as they were playing with it," Josephine Angucia, a regional police spokeswoman, told AFP on Thursday.

"Preliminary investigations suggest the explosion was from a hand grenade abandoned during the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency that affected West Nile region, and in particular, Adjumani which was greatly affected."

Five children were seriously wounded and being treated at the district hospital, Angucia said.

It was the second fatal accident in Adjumani in less than two weeks involving leftover munitions, with a separate recent explosion killing two people, the police spokeswoman said.

In the 1990s, government forces battled rebels from the West Nile Bank Front and the LRA across northern Uganda, with civilians suffering a horrific toll.

The West Nile Bank Front was



Unexploded Ordnances discovered in Lamwo, Uganda

crushed by the end of the decade but the LRA survived, continuing its bloody rebellion against President Yoweri Museveni until being forced out of Uganda in 2006.

The United Nations says the LRA killed more than 100,000 people and abducted 60,000 children in a campaign of violence that spread beyond Uganda to Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. - AFP

## ATTENTION: Importers, Local Manufacturers and Suppliers of Domestic Refrigerators

Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority is planning to introduce a Minimum Energy Performance (MEP) label for refrigerators which will be initially launched on voluntary basis. To make Refrigerator importers, local manufacturers and suppliers aware of this initiative, it is expected to convene a Suppliers' Forum at 1400 hrs on 24th February 2021 at Orchid Hall, BMICH.

All the importers, Local Manufacturers and suppliers of domestic refrigerators are invited to participate at the forum. Please be kind enough to confirm the participation of your representative before 1500 hrs on 22nd February 2021 by a phone call to Ms. Amani on 0112677445 ext. 407 or sending an email to [amani@energy.gov.lk](mailto:amani@energy.gov.lk), giving the details of the representative.



**Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority**  
1st Floor, Block 5, BMICH  
Baudhaloka Mawatha,  
Colombo 00700  
Tel : 0112677445  
Facsimile : 0112682534  
Web : [www.energy.gov.lk](http://www.energy.gov.lk)

## STATE MINISTRY OF PRISON MANAGEMENT AND PRISONERS REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT OF PRISONS

### INVITATION FOR BIDS

#### PROCUREMENT OF LANDSLIDE MITIGATION PROJECT AT KEGALLE PRISON

බන්ධ/ඉ2/කැමැල්ල/තායයාම/2019

On behalf of the Department of Prisons, the Chairman of the Department Procurement Committee, Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09 invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for **Landslide Mitigation Measures of Kegalle Prison** under the Contract No.: බන්ධ/ඉ2/කැමැල්ල/තායයාම/2019

- The Period of Completion of work is **180 Days** and it includes Construction of Retaining walls, Concrete drains and associated Earthworks at the premises of **Kegalle Prison**.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding.
- To be eligible for contract award, the successful bidder shall not have been blacklisted and fulfill following requirements:
  - Should be registered under **Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA)** (success to ICTAD) as a contractor with the specialty of **Building and Civil Engineering (C-6)** or above with previous experience in **Landslide Mitigation or grade(SP-3)** under Soil nailing and slope Stabilization **within the last 5 years** and should have valid registration during Bid evaluation period.
- Qualification requirements to qualify for contract award include:
  - Average annual volume of construction work performed in last three years shall be at least **Rs. 40.2 Mn.**
  - Experience in the construction of at least one contract of similar nature and complexity equivalent to the Works over the last 5 years and it should be at least 70% completed.
  - The minimum amount of liquid assets and/or credit facilities net of other contractual commitments shall be not less than **Rs. 6.70 Mn.**
  - Proposals for the timely acquisition of essential equipment and staff.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application addressed to the Chairman, Department Procurement Committee, Prison Headquarters along with the receipt upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Rs. 5,000.00** per bid in cash to the Finance Division at Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09, from **22nd February 2021 until 15th March 2021 from 09.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs** during working days except weekends.
- Sealed Bids may be submitted in duplicate to the address as Chairman, Department Procurement Committee, Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09 by registered post or be deposited into the Tender Box provided at the Reception of Prison Headquarters at or before **14.00 hrs on 16th March 2021**. Bids will be closed at **14.00 hrs on 16th March 2021** and bids will be opened soon after the bid closing at **Auditorium of Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09**. The late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend in person.
- Bids shall be valid up to **22nd of June 2021**.
- All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security of **Rs. 200,000.00** in favor of the Commissioner General of Prisons, Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09 obtained from a commercial bank registered under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in the format given in the bidding document and shall be valid **from 16th March 2021 to 22nd June 2021**. Bid securing declaration and insurance guarantee shall not be accepted. It shall be unconditional guarantee encashable on first demand written in favor of the Commissioner General of Prisons for the sum mentioned.
- The selected successful bidder shall be required to submit an unconditional performance security using the standard form, written in favor of the Commissioner General of Prisons within 14 days of acceptance of bids for a sum equivalent to five (5%) of the initial contract price as a security from a commercial bank operating in Sri Lanka and approved by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The performance security should be valid from **27.04.2021 to 06.12.2022**. In the event of default on the part of the contractor resulting from breach of agreement of relevant conditions herein, Commissioner General of Prisons may be with written notice terminate the contract and encash the performance security without recourse.
- Site visit would be held on **03rd March 2021** commencing from **11.00 a.m** at the site location.
- Pre-Bid meeting will be held on **08th March 2021 at 10.00 a.m.** in the Auditorium, Prison Headquarters, 150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09.
- The Chairman, Procurement Committee, Prison Department reserves the right to accept any one bid or all bids without giving any reasons and his decision will be final and conclusive.
- Prison Department will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Director Engineer of Prison Headquarters through below contacts.
 

Attention : Director Engineer  
Address : Department of Prisons, Prison Headquarters, No.150, Baseline Road, Colombo 09.  
Telephone : 011- 4677177/011-4677179  
Fax : 011- 4677180  
E-mail : [prisonengineering@gmail.com](mailto:prisonengineering@gmail.com)

**Chairman**  
Department Procurement Committee  
Department of Prisons

**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given under Section 9 of the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 of the incorporation of the following Companies.  
1.) Name of the Company : **RIVIDCO PROJECTS (PRIVATE) LIMITED**  
Registered Office : No. 91/1/8, CEMETERY ROAD, MAVITTHARA, PILIYANDALA, SRI LANKA.  
Incorporated Date : 18th APRIL 2017  
Registration Number : PV 121685  
R & S Corporate Services Company Secretaries

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**St. Peter's College Old Boys' Union**  
**Special General Meeting Postponed**  
Due to revised COVID-19 prevention guidelines issued by the Health Authorities of Sri Lanka and in consultation with the Patron, the President and the Committee of Management (COM) of the St. Peter's College Old Boys' Union have been reluctantly compelled to postpone the Special General Meeting scheduled to be held on the 25th of February 2021.  
The new date will be notified when the situation permits.  
**By Order of Committee of Management**  
Johann Andrew Perera  
Hony. General Secretary  
St. Peter's College Old Boys' Union  
Colombo 04  
February 18, 2021



State Ministry of Coconut, Kitul and Palmyrah Cultivation  
Promotion and related Industrial Products  
Manufacturing & Export Diversification

## Coconut Development Authority

### NOTICE!

#### Development of Coir Industry - 2021

##### Granting of Investment Assistance for Development Activities

The Coconut Development Authority has decided to grant investment assistance for developing the Polytunnel method in the aim of improving the standard of products under the Coir Industries Development Programme. As such applications are hereby invited for development activities mentioned below for this purpose.

- Open Polytunnel
- Closed Polytunnel

If you are engaged in the coir industry and wish to contribute to the development of these items, you may download an application form from the Coconut Development Authority Website: [www.cda.gov.lk](http://www.cda.gov.lk) or you may obtain them through our officers mentioned below. It is hereby informed that applications thus obtained should be duly completed and sent to the Chairman, Coconut Development Authority, No. 54, Nawala Road, Narahenpita, by registered post to be received on or before 05.03.2021.

- North Western & Eastern Provinces - Mr. H.R. Chandana (Tel. No. 071-4406774)
- Central Province - Mr. Chanaka Ranasinghe (Tel. No. 071-3376526)
- Southern Province - Mr. Rangajeewa (Tel. No. 071-8079866)
- Northern, North Central Provinces - Mr. Nalaka Herath (Tel. No. 071-9609226)
- Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces - Mrs. Madhushani (Tel. No. 071-0880792)
- Western Province - Mr. K. Somachandra (Tel. No. 071-8364081)

It is further informed that incomplete or applications received late will be rejected without intimation.

The words "Obtaining Polytunnel Investment Assistance - 2021" should be marked on the top left-hand corner of the envelope containing the application.

**Chairman,**  
**Coconut Development Authority,**  
No. 54, Nawala Road, Narahenpita,  
Colombo 05.  
Tel. No.: 0112502502-4

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## PROCUREMENT NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR PRODUCTION WORK OF THE CARPENTRY TRAINING SCHOOLS OPERATING UNDER THE NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT - 2021.

### INVITATION FOR BIDS

- Sealed bids are invited by me, the Chairman of the Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Governor of the North Central Province / Chief Secretary of the North Central Province from fully qualified and eligible bidders for purchase of materials required for production work of the Carpentry Training Schools operating under the North Central Provincial Department of Industries Development - 2021.
- Interested and eligible bidders in this matter could obtain further details from the Provincial Director, Provincial Department of Industries Development, Viskam Piyasa, Kada Panaha, Anuradhapura (Tel. Nos. 025-2221858 / 025-2227781) and bid documents could be inspected at this office.
- A complete set of bid documents (in English) could be obtained during normal working days from 22 February 2021 up to 12 March 2021 between 9.00 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. from the Provincial Director, Department of Industries Development Viskam Piyasa, Kada Panaha, Anuradhapura, by submitting a letter of request and paying the non-refundable fee and submitting the Registration Certificate issued under the Companies Act or the Business Registration Certificate for each of the procurements mentioned in the column below.
- The relevant bidder should have fulfilled the minimum requirements and eligibilities for this procurement work.

Category No.	Name of Procurement	Value of Bid Guarantee (Rs.)	Validity Period of Bid Guarantee	Non-refundable Bid Document Fees (Rs.)
NCP/IDD/E4/Miscellaneous Material/01- 2021	Miscellaneous Material required for Carpentry Products	180,000.00	up to 28 June 2021	5,000.00

- Duly completed bids according to bid conditions should be sent to the "Chief Secretary, Chief Secretaries Office, 4th Floor, Provincial Council Building, North Central Province" to be received at or before 10.00 a.m. on 15 March, 2021 or could be inserted in the Procurement Box kept at the address mentioned herein. Bids should be prepared in two copies and marked as original and duplicate and enclosed in separate envelopes and these two covers should thereafter be inserted in a single envelope and marked with the name of the procurement and submitted.
- Bids will be opened at 10.00 a.m. on 15 March 2021, immediately after closing of accepting bids at the Chief Secretary's Official room of the North Central Province in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives. Bids received late will be rejected.
- A Bank Guarantee as Bid Security obtained from a commercial bank operating in Sri Lanka and registered at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to the value as mentioned in the column above in favour of "Provincial Director, Department of Industries Development North Central Province" valid up to the date mentioned in the column above or the receipt obtained after paying this amount in cash to the Provincial Department of Industries Development should be submitted with the bid.
- The decision of the Procurement Committee regarding this procurement is deemed final.

**Chairman,**  
**Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Hon. Governor,**  
**Chief Secretaries Office**  
**North Central Province**

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# Employment Opportunities

## Trainee Supervisor. BOI Company

We are a BOI company in the Ratmalana area exporting 100% of our products to the U.S.

We wish to hire **TWO TRAINEE SUPERVISORS.** If you have advanced level (Science) qualifications,

please forward your CV to:- [mona\\_tissa@eureka.lk](mailto:mona_tissa@eureka.lk)

Human Resources Manager, No.70, Attidiya Road, Ratmalana

## Notice on resumption the activities of business of new market owned by Eravur Urban Council located at Trincomalee Road

As per the advertisement of new market published trilingual mentioned in part IV (B) by the Gazette notification of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 2215 dated 12.02.2021, those who had rental leasing permit in this regard are hereby requested to submit the documents regarding the rental agreement and verify the relevant documents to the Secretary of our Urban Council during office hours, if you are willing for resuming the business in future at the same market who had the leasing permit for doing the business before 23.03.2021.

It is informed you, when you fail to submit and verify the same that you will be deemed as non-holder of permit at the same market.

M.S. Naleem  
Chairman,  
Eravur Urban Council

## Employment

Daily News

# Classifieds

**320**  
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Personal

**602**  
Real Estate

**Urgent requirement** for the following categories of Hawaii Restaurant. Basic salary (per month).  
\* Rice & Curry Cooks - Rs. 90,000/= \* Kitchen Helpers - Rs. 40,000/= \* Juice & Fruit Salad Makers - Rs. 50,000/= \* Counter Helpers - Rs. 40,000/= \* Kottu & Rotty Makers - Rs. 65,000/= - Rs. 70,000/= \* Cleaning Staff - Rs. 40,000/= . Company will be providing food & lodging as well as 04 days off per month. Please kindly call for interviews. 0773658648. 011861

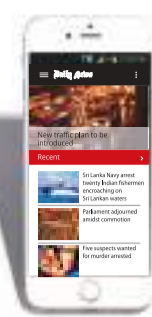
**Philatelic & Coins**  
**Monthly stamp** and old coin and bank notes sales fair conducted by the Sri Lanka Independence Philatelic Association will be held on 19,20, 21 February at the Public Library premises Colombo 07. 0779785111 Jagath. 010741

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(State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation)  
**ARTHUR C CLARKE INSTITUTE FOR MODERN TECHNOLOGIES (ACCIMT)**

**Call for Expression of Interest for jointly undertake further developments to secure product certification, regulatory approvals and commercialization of**

**COVID 19 Testing Apparatus: Loop Mediated Isothermal Amplification based viral DNA detection**

This project was initiated as a collaboration between the Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies and the University of Moratuwa.

The purpose of the project is to develop a testing apparatus to identify Covid 19 patients. The process adapted would be similar to RT-PCR, and instead of using thermal cycling for reacting the viral DNA, the proposed process uses a constant temperature range.

The project team has developed an initial prototype and looking for a prospective collaborator to jointly undertake

- further developments to secure requisite certification
- process required to obtain regulatory approvals
- product commercialization

If interested please submit your written interest to Director General & CEO of the Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies on or before March 05, 2021

For further information please contact Eng. Kavindra Jayawardena, Director Communication Engineering of the ACCIMT on

Tel: 011 2650838/569/461 E-Mail: kavindraaccimt@gmail.com

**Director General & CEO**  
**Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies**  
272, Bandaranayake Mawatha,  
Katubedda, Moratuwa.  
Tel. 011-2650838  
Fax. 011-2650662

## INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) Educational Publications Department

**Procurement of Printing Papers for Braille Press - 2021**  
[Contract No: EPD/F08/03/2021]

1. The Chairman, Department Procurement Committee on behalf of the Department of Educational Publications now invites sealed bids for Procurement of Printing Papers for Braille Press from eligible and qualified bidders possessing the minimum one year experience. Complete details may be seen in the bidding documents. Expected delivery period is 06 to 08 weeks. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security as indicated below,

Description	Bid Security
Printing Papers	Rs. 75,000.00

- Bidding will be conducted following National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedure.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Chief accountant, Finance Branch (6th Floor), Department of Educational Publications (Telephone: 011-2787515) and inspect the bidding documents free of charge from 09.00 am to 03.00 p.m. during working days.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders from the Procurement Division on submission of a written application on or before 03.00 p.m. 15th March 2021 and upon payment of a non refundable fee of Rs. 2000/= in cash.
- Bids must be delivered to the Finance Branch (6th floor), Department of Educational Publications Isurupaya, Battaramulla at or before 11.00 a.m. on 16th March, 2021. Bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address given above. Late bids shall be rejected.

Chairman,  
Department Procurement Committee  
Educational Publications Department  
Finance Branch (6th Floor),  
"Isurupaya",  
Battaramulla.  
20.02.2021



## UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA, SRI LANKA FACULTY OF MEDICINE

### Inauguration of Academic Programme

The Academic Programme for the New Batch (2019 A/L) of Medical Students will commence on **Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. An Inauguration Programme will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 8.30 am in the Hoover Auditorium, Faculty of Medicine.

Only enrolled students will be allowed inside the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

**This will be implemented strictly due to the prevailing COVID crisis.**

Address : Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Jaffna  
Adiyapatham Road,  
Kokuvil,  
Jaffna.

- Students those who are outside of the Jaffna Peninsula have to report on 5th of March 2021.
- The hostel accommodation for those students will be provided since 5th of March 2021

Registrar  
University of Jaffna



### THE COMMITTEE ON HIGH POSTS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA TO EXAMINE THE SUITABILITY OF PERSONS APPOINTED/NOMINATED TO THE STATE SERVICES AND STATE CORPORATIONS

The Committee on High Posts of the Parliament of Sri Lanka is due to examine the suitability of the persons appointed / nominated to the following posts:-

No.	Name and Address	Designation
1.	Mr. Anusha Polpita No. 67, Dewala Road, Nugegoda.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Industries
2.	Mr. J.J. Rathnasiri No. 15/18/1, 1 <sup>st</sup> Lane, Jambugasmulla Road, Nugegoda.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Public Services, Provincial Councils & Local Government
3.	Mr. M.K.B. Harischandra No. 405, Hanwella Road, Galagedara, Padukka.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Wildlife & Forest Conservation
4.	Major General (Retd.) K. Jagath Alwis No. 58/42B, 16 <sup>th</sup> Lane, Ananda Balika Mawatha, Pitakotte.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Public Security
5.	Mr. Jayaantha de Silva No. 995/6, Park Lane, Rajagiriya.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Technology
6.	Mr. S.R. Attygalle No. 23, Madapatha, Piliyandala.	Appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Finance
7.	Major General (Retd.) V.R. Silva No. 149/7, Green Valley, Athurugiriya Road, Homagama.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Prison Management & Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs
8.	Mr. D.P.G. Kumarasiri No. 06, Darshanapura, Pallekale, Kundassale.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Estate Housing & Community Infrastructure
9.	Mr. N.H.M. Chitransanda No. 101 B, Uraliya, Panirendawa, (NWP)	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Provincial Councils & Local Government Affairs
10.	Prof. Ranjith Dissanayake No. 120/10 A, Vidya Tower, Vidya Mawatha, Colombo 07.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Rural Roads and other Infrastructure
11.	Mr. M.N. Ranasinghe No. 772/1, Palewatia, Battaramulla.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Production and Supply of Fertilizer and Regulation of Chemical Fertilizer and Insecticide Use
12.	Mr. S.T. Kodikara No. 83 B 20, Oval View Residences, Palaagasthuduwa Road, Borella, Colombo 08.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of National Heritage, Performing Arts and Rural Arts Promotion
13.	Mr. S. Arumainayagam No. 34.2/4, Albert Place, Albert Crescent, Dehiwala.	Appointed as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification

Any organization or individual desirous of making representations with regard to the above appointments/nominations should send duly signed written memoranda under registered cover to **The Secretary, Committee on High Posts, Committee Office, Parliament of Sri Lanka, Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte** on or before **06 March 2021**. Representations may also be faxed to fax No. 011-2777300 or be sent via email: [highposts\\_c@parliament.lk](mailto:highposts_c@parliament.lk).

The Committee may require such memoranda to be supported by oral evidence. The advertisement is also available in the Parliament Website ([www.parliament.lk](http://www.parliament.lk))

Secretary to the Committee  
Secretary General of Parliament

Parliament of Sri Lanka  
Sri Jayawardenepura kotte  
20 February 2021

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# Pradeep Lakshantha was an excellent third row forward

## ALTHAF NAWAZ

The game of rugby is a highly body contact game. One needs to maintain a good physique and have supreme skills in handling the oval shaped ball. Pradeep Lakshantha was one of them who was a tower of strength in any side he played in the third row as an immaculate player, who also had kicking skills piloting his team to victory while taking part in school, club and at the national level.

Pradeep was born in 1969 and had the rare honour of being a member of a family with two other brothers who locked horns in competitive rugby. His father was late N.T. Lalith Ananda and Hema de Alwis was his mother, both of them were very enthusiastic in observing their children excelling in sports. Pradeep's

other two younger brothers were Viraj Prashantha and Champika Nishantha who also handled the oval shaped ball from their younger days ending up by representing the country while the sister Yamuna Eishanthi concentrated on her studies.

Pradeep was popularly known as 'Rambo' in rugby circles from the time he represented school. From his younger days he was very fond of engaging in sports and had a liking towards playing football and cricket. With his enrollment as a primary class student at Isipathana College where he ended up completing his school career, he initially took part in playing cricket in the under-15 age category. He also played football with one of the pioneer clubs in the game, the Saunders Sports Club com-

peting in the under-15 age group. The Saunders team was coached by late P.D. Sirisena.

Pradeep was involved with his school friends down Chitra Lane where he was residing and went on to play rugby with them using mango seeds and plastic bottles. He used to witness the matches with them at Havelock Park. This enabled him to get into the college junior rugby team at the age of 15 years. He gradually matured into a prominent player and established a regular position in the College first XV team. He learnt the basics of the game from his junior coaches Gaminu Indrasena and M.D. Ifthikar from 1983 to 85. He locked horns in a dual role either as a flanker or a Number eight player under Chandana Deepthi's captaincy in



1985, in 1986 under Selvin Salley and in 1987 under late Nilantha Laksmiwewa which could be regarded as the 'Golden Era of Isipathana Rugby' where the green jersey boys dominated the game winning several championships. His senior coaches from 1985 to 87 were O.W.R.

Perera and Maxwell Dias. He was a member of the 1985 inaugural R. Premadasa Trophy winning team. In 1987, Sri Lanka national team toured Wales under Hisham Abdeen and he was also a member of that squad. In addition to his positional play in the 'pack' he was a gifted player with great kicking skills. One of his unforgettable moments was against Royal College in the Milroy Fernando Trophy match when he fired a 40-metre penalty awarded by referee Anton Benedict to make it a 16-all draw after Royal were leading 16-13.

In 1987, soon after school, he joined the Havelock Sports Club and played a phenomenal role with some other stalwarts in the game in that era. After monitoring his performance, he

was appointed to lead the Colombo Schools in 1987 and later led the Park Club under-24 team in 1990 and the senior team in 1991. In 1986, he toured with the Sri Lankan team to Taipei occupying the flankers position. He was 19 years old when he played in the under-20 team.

He got the National call in 1988 and toured Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei in 1988 and 1989. He was chosen to represent Sri Lanka at the Hong Kong 'Sevens' in 1989. At the age of 22 years in 1990, he played for Havelock Sports Club in the flanker position before becoming the skipper of their team in 1991. While being a young lad he played in the National team with some of the great players in that era

like Palitha Siriwardena, Hisham Abdeen, Sudesh Abeyasinghe, Aruna Udawalagedara, Chaminda Rupasinghe, Hemantha Yatawara and Roger Rodrigo. He became a regular in the National team in both formats of the game the sevens and fifteen-a-side format.

After school, he worked at ANZ Grindlays Bank from 1988 to 1999 as a Bank Officer whilst completing the game. He was sponsored by the Jade Gardens Sports Club to compete and be a part of the Mercantile Football tournament.

He is enjoying married life and has a 23 year old daughter who attends Texas State University while working in a corporate position at business IT company.

## Thimansa outstanding athlete and swimmer

(UPANANDA JAYASUNDERA  
Kandy Sports Special  
Correspondent)

Thimansa Thewnaki Herath, a Grade Eleven student of Lexicon International School, Kandy is an outstanding Athlete and an up and coming swimmer. Her Athletic Coach was Sanjeeva Weerakkody and the Swimming Coach A. Nandana of the School. Thimansa started her athletic career in 2015 and at the start she won the 75 metre race representing Iris House of the school and she went on to win 50 metre race, Long Jump and was adjudged the Best Athlete at the Under 11 age category and in 2016 she secured the second place in the 200 metre event at the Kandy District Athletic Meet as the sole winner among the girls who participated.



Thimansa Thewnaki Herath.  
(Text & Pic. by Upananda Jayasundera-Kandy Sports Spl.Corr.s.)

At the Junior John Tarbat Athletic Meet she received a merit award and she

secured the School Under 16 Championship and again she won the third place in 100 metre and 200 metre races at the Kandy District Athletic Meet conducted by the Department of Education, Kandy.

While participating in athletics Thimansa started swimming under a Private Swimming Coach practicing at the Swimming Pool of Dharmaraja College, Kandy undergoing strenuous practice for 10 months before she participated at the swimming contest organized by the Kingswood College in the year 2015 and she secured the third place in the Backstroke. In the following year she secured the second place at the same swimming meet in the Backstroke and she is involved in swimming to

keep herself quite fit to do athletics. She wants to continue her pet sport of athletics to become a National and International level athlete in short distance running.

The Lexicon International School, Kandy has appointed Thimansa as the School Games Captain for the year 2020 - 2021 as she is the first athlete of the school who has participated in many athletic races and become the champion among girls. Thimansa being a bright Student her ambition is to continue athletics as well as her studies and to become an Air Hostess in the future. She is thankful to her Athletic Coach, Sanjeeva Weerakkody for the support and guidance given to her to improve her talent in athletics.

## Oshada Attanayake a versatile sportsman

(DILWIN MENDIS  
Moratuwa Sports Special  
Correspondent)

Twelve year old Karateka, member of the school under thirteen cricket pool and athlete Oshada Attanayake has brought honour and fame to Napokuna Junior School, Sandalankawa. Last year he joined Sandalankawa Central College. He was admitted to Napokuna Junior School when Chinthaka Rathnasuriya was the Principal of the school in 2014 and his first class teacher was Mrs. Ruvini.

When he was at his former school he participated in the Inter House Athletic Meets in 2015 and 2016. In both these years he did 50 metres and 4x50 metre relay and came second and third respectively. In 2016 he participated in the Divisional Tournament as a member of the Inter House Relay team and did 4x60 metres.

As he took an interest in Karate his parents Sampath Attanayake and Sure-

ka Rajapakse admitted him to the ISKU Karate Academy in 2015 and he came under Sugath Kumara. His first Karate Meet was SFFK Open Karate Championship in 2017 and he got a certificate for ending up in the first sixteen in the under eight age group.

In 2017 he participated in the Karate-Do Federation Kurunegala District Meet and got a merit certificate for Best performance and in the fourth Open Semi Contact Karate Championship held in Colombo he won a Gold Medal for Kumite.

In the following year in the under nine age group he received a Certificate for participation and at the International Open Karate Championship and at the 6th Karate Championship he won a gold for Kumite in the under nine age group. In the same year participating in a higher age group at the North Western Province Meet and 35kgs category he won a gold for Kumite and



in the All Island Karate-Do Association Tournament he grabbed another gold for Kumite at the under ten age group and in the Sri Lanka Friends SSKF Championship he got a bronze for Kumite and finally at the second Sri Lanka Schools Karate Association-Do Championship he received a silver. During his karate career he has won nine medals which includes six gold one silver and two bronzes.

Oshada following his father Sampath Attanayake's footsteps was selected to the Under 13 cricket pool last year but could not participate in the matches due to Coronavirus. He is an all round cricketer left hand bat and a medium pace bowler.

When he represents Sandalankawa Central he will be in the third generation of Attanayake family to play cricket as his grand father Peris Attanayake too represented Sandalankawa Central at cricket.

## Sri Lankan Olympic stars of yesteryear

### Boxer Leslie Handunge was a multi talented sportsman

Leslie David Perera Handunge was an outstanding boxer who had the rare opportunity of representing the country at two Olympic Games.

He made his appearance at the 1948 London Olympic Games as well as the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games.

He also has the distinction of being the first boxer from Sri Lanka to make his appearance at the London Olympic Games and the first to record a win in the preliminary rounds.

Handunge was born in Kandy on June 18, 1921 and joined Trinity College for further studies. His brothers and sisters were also well-known sportsmen and sportswomen in their respective fields at that time.

While keeping the family tradition, Handunge took to boxing at the age of 15 and had the privilege of captaining the Trinity College Boxing Team in 1939.

He was certainly a multi-talented sportsman and also



Leslie Handunge

displayed his prowess while representing the school in rugby, cricket, athletics and hockey.

Handunge won his maiden National Boxing title when he bagged the flyweight class event while representing the Government Services Sports Society in 1944.

He was also the undefeated champion in the light heavyweight category until his time of retirement.

In 1947, He entered the

Agriculture Faculty of the Peradeniya University to obtain a Degree in Agriculture and in the following year as an undergraduate he won the Manning Cup for the Best Boxer at the National Boxing Championship Meet.

This success also helped Handunge to earn a place in the National Team which would compete at the 1948 London Olympic Games.

At the pre-Olympic Games competition in England, Handunge defeated J. Herlae and Charles C. Dhahi and his performances were highly commended by the 'Weekly Sports Review' of London.

He made a tremendous start to his London Olympic Games campaign when he knocked-out his first opponent Portario of Uruguay.

In his next contest, Handunge once again proved his talent by dominating the proceedings against his opponent from Italy.

However, much to the sur-

prise of many onlookers and journalists, the Italian boxer was declared as the winner.

After his Olympic Games campaign, Handunge entered the Loughborough College to obtain a Diploma in Physical Education and became the first Ceylonese to receive this Diploma.

He was able to make an impact while at the University when he bagged the bantamweight title at the Inter-University events in Ireland in 1949.

He was appointed as Team Captain of the Sri Lankan contingent for the Helsinki Olympic Games and had the better of Jesus Stello of Mexico in the first-round bout. However, Handunge was beaten in the next round by David Dower who incidentally was the bantamweight European and World champion. Handunge, who was popularly known as 'Joe Louis of Ceylon,' then announced his retirement from the sport at the age of 31. (C.D)

## New jerseys and champions trophy introduced for FSK Miandad Premier League



The new jerseys being handed over to members of the Miandad Sports Club, Sainthamaruthu

(Text and Pictures by: I.L.RIZAN, Addalachenai  
Central Correspondent)

Miandad Sports Club, Sainthamaruthu has introduced the new jerseys and champions trophy for the FSK Miandad Premier League limited over cricket tournament at a ceremony held at the

National Youth Services Council Training Centre in Sainthamaruthu recently.

This tournament is organized by the Miandad Sports Club President A. Faiz while Maruthoor Warriors, Maliga United, Shantham Challengers and Poly Lions teams

from the area will participate. Trophies and prizes will be awarded to the champions and runner-up teams of the tournament.

Tournament for the FSK Miandad Premier League trophy will be held on February 19 and 20 at the Sainthamaruthu Bolivarian

Playgrounds. The FSK Miandad Premier League President S.M.Ameer, Charman M.J.M.Kalidh, team captains and club officials were all present and unveiled the new jerseys, tournament flag and introduced the champions trophy at the event.

## Gihan Ebert will lead the Antonians this year



HAFIZ MARIKAR

St. Anthony's College, the first school to resume cricket in Kandy this year after a break of nearly eleven months played their second game that too was a friendly on Thursday and Friday against Thurstan College in Colombo. On the first day Antonians taking the first turn made 227 and Thurstan College at the end of the first day were 29 for 4 at stumps.

Antonians have been a competitive force in cricket since their admission in 1903. The team has played fearless, positive, and an aggressive brand of cricket and is considered as one of the top teams this year, and are led by a fine right-hand bat

and a right arm off spin bowler Gihan Ebert who is considered to be a top player to have played for last four years. The all-rounder has given a good display to score runs and wickets he is an automatic due to his all-round skills. This time too they are lucky that the side has a talented coach Suneth Gayan Gunthilaka,

This time in the tournament they are in division one Group Z with Nalanda College, S. Thomas' College, Richmond College, Maliyadeva College and Prince of Wales in the inter-school under 19 tournament.

The first round league games will start on March 15 and end on April 9th and the final round will be after Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Last year their most important game the big match against Trinity College which would have been the 104th

encounter was not played, This time they are hoping to play it.

Cricket was introduced to St. Anthony's by Rev Fr. Andrew Van Landenberg O.S.B. in 1903, and a team known as 'St. Anthony's College Cricket Club' consisting of staff and schoolboys was formed under the captaincy of Fr. Andrew himself. The inaugural match was played against Colombo Carlton Cricket Club. The very first inter-school match was played against Dharmaraja College in 1904.

This school has been one of the premier cricket playing schools in the island for over a century and has produced some brilliant cricketers and a majority of these players represented the country and premier league clubs with distinction. Antonians boast of a very rich cricketing history dating back to 1903. The very first inter-school cricket

match was played against Dharmaraja College, Kandy, which was won by the Antonians by 109 runs. Since then, Antonians have dominated the school arena up to around 1993.

Antonians came into lime light during the 1916/1920 period, which is most appropriately called the Jack Anderson era, the charismatic batsman, who was the hero of almost every game that was played in that era and his record individual score of 291 runs against S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia has not been broken in a top division game to date. Further, SACK have the honour of producing the first ever 'Schoolboy Cricketer' in 1956 Wijepala Premaratne. Since then, they have produced six more 'Schoolboy Cricketers', namely Charlie Joseph (1960 and 1961), Franklyn Burke (1962), Bernard Perera

(1976), Muttiah Muralitharan (1991), Sajith Fernando (1992). This is a remarkable achievement for an outstation school that plays in the premier league.

During the pre test era St. Anthony's produced many more prominent cricketers like A.C.M.Lafiri, Ronnie Stephens, Doranegama Brothers and Sims Brothers, who should have been automatic choices to the National team then.

Since, Sri Lanka obtained test status many Antonians have represented the country. Mahesh Gunathilake who led the Antonians in 1971 had the honour of being the first wicket keeper in the inaugural test match against England in 1982 played at Sara Stadium. Apart from Mahesh, Ruwan Kalpage, Piyal Wijetunga and Muttiah Muralitharan are the other Antonians who went onto play for Sri Lanka with

distinction. Incidentally, all three of them who played in the same team in school had the privilege of representing the country in a test match played at Tyrone Fernando Stadium, in Moratuwa.

The other cricketers who excelled for Antonians were Angelo Liyanage, Pradeep Fernando, Marlon Vonhagt, Rienzie Perera, Damian Nadaraja, Angelo Wickramasooriya, Nuwan Kalpage, Indika Galagoda and Prasad Ranawaka to name a few. St. Anthony's College, Kandy has also the distinction of producing the world's greatest spin bowler, Muttiah Muralitharan and his record of 800 wickets in Test cricket will remain for many more years.

This year Gihan Ebert is leading the side with Nim-

naka Jayathilake as his deputy. The rest in the squad are Chamindu Wickremasinghe, Asitha Wanninayake, Mohammed Kamil, Tharindu Imahewage, Chandimal Herath, Anjala Bandara, Lahiru Abeyasinghe, Divyesh Ramiah, Yasiru Gamarachchi, Bimsara Jayasekara, Damitha Bandara, Kaneesha Rajapaksa, Jayodya Amarasekara, Kavindu Bandara, Kaveesha Piyumal, Janith Rathnasiri, Mohamed Aqil, Sasheena Mathew, Ishara Maduwantaha, Dinura Ganegoda, Ravindu Kasthuriarachchi, Induwara Galapitigeand Thisara Ekanayake. (Coach) Suneth Gayan Gunthilaka, (Assistant Coach) Susantha Basnayake, (Trainer) Priyantha Kumara.

**WORLD OF SPORTS**

**(FEBRUARY 20) LOCAL EVENTS VOLLEYBALL**

(Women's Super League): Navy SC vs Mahauswewa SC Army SC vs NYSC Air Force SC vs Hirdaramani SC Ports Authority SC vs MAS Casual Line (All matches at Dadella Volleyball House)

**FOREIGN EVENTS CRICKET**

(Pakistan Super League): Karachi Kings vs Quetta Gladiators at Karachi (Sheffield Shield): Tasmania vs Queensland at Hobart (4th day) (Women's T20 Challenge): Highveld Lions vs Warriors Knights vs Dolphins (Both matches at Durban)

**FOOTBALL**

(Premier League): Southampton vs Chelsea Burnley vs West Bromwich Liverpool vs Everton Fulham vs Sheffield United (Women's International Friendly): Mexico vs Costa Rica France vs Switzerland

**(FEBRUARY 20 & 21) LOCAL EVENTS TENNIS:**

Colombo Open at SLTA Courts, Green Path SSC Open at SSC Courts, Maitland Place

**BADMINTON:**

Senior Nationals at SLBA, MBA, Otter AC Indoor Stadium

**FOREIGN EVENTS TENNIS:**

Australian Open at Melbourne

**GOLF:**

The Genesis Invitational at Riviera Country Club, California

**(FEBRUARY 21) LOCAL EVENTS VOLLEYBALL**

(Women's Super League): Navy SC vs NYSC Mahauswewa SC vs Army SC Air Force SC vs MAS Casual Line Ports Authority SC vs MAS Casual Line

**FOREIGN EVENTS CRICKET**

(Pakistan Super League): Lahore Qalandars vs Peshawar Zalmi Islamabad United vs Multan Sultans (Both matches at Karachi) Australian One-Day Cup Tasmania vs Queensland at Hobart (Women's T20 Challenge): Cape Cobras vs Titans Warriors vs Dolphins (Both matches at Durban)

**FOOTBALL**

(Premier League): West Ham United vs Tottenham Hotspur Aston Villa vs Leicester City Arsenal vs Manchester City Manchester United vs Newcastle United (Women's International Friendly): Germany vs Belgium

# Chamika topples top seed at Badminton Nationals



Niluka Karunaratne in action

**DHAMMIKA RATNAWEERA**

Chamika Karunaratne created a major upset on the third day of the National Badminton Championships, which continued at the SLBA, MBA, and Otter AC Indoor Stadiums, yesterday. Chamika, the youngest brother of the Karunaratne family, showed his prowess when he defeated top seed Lochana de Silva in straight sets 21-11, 21-10 to reach the Men's Open quarter-finals. Meanwhile, defending champion Niluka Karunaratne also came out with a solid performance to enter the quarter-finals of the Men's Open. Niluka, who is hoping to win his 17th National title, defeated Siyath Senaratne in straight sets 21-12, 21-11. In contrast, Dinuka Karunaratne lost his first set

21-23 but came back to beat Buwaneka Gunatilleka 21-10, 21-10 in the remaining two sets and enter the quarter-finals of the Men's Open. In the Women's Open, defending champion Dilmi Dias was also knocked-out from the pre quarter-finals as she lost to the unseeded Ashini Fernando 21-15, 21-19. However, Chandrika de Silva and Nadesha Gayanthi qualified to play in the quarter-finals of the Women's Open. **Results:** **Men's Open (pre quarter-finals):** Chamika Karunaratne beat Lochana de Silva 21-11, 21-10. Ranthushka Karunathilleka beat Chirath Illeperuma 20-22, 21-14, 21-8. Niluka Karunaratne beat Siyath Senaratne 21-12, 21-11. Lahiru Weerasinghe beat Shamika de Silva 21-14, 21-9. Dumindu Abeywickrama beat

Nilesh Wijesekera 21-12, 21-17. Viren Nettasinghe beat Sachin Dias 11-21, 21-15 and walk over. Rasindu Hendahewa beat Chaniru Mirando 21-7, 21-11. Dinuka Karunaratne beat Buwaneka Gunatilleka 21-23, 21-10, 21-10. **Women's Open (pre quarter-finals):** Hasini Ambalangodage beat Pravina Wijesundara 21-11, 21-10. Chandrika de Silva beat Jananuwani Amanda 21-13, 21-18. Ashini Fernando beat Dilmi Dias 21-15, 21-19. Thiyana Vidanarachchi beat Wasana Egodage 21-14, 21-14. Sasini Hansamali beat Janavee Ratnayake 21-14, 21-12. Hasara Wijayarathne beat Keshani Attanayake 21-7, 21-9. Nadesha Gayanthi beat Chamudi Abeywickrama 21-16, 24-26, 21-11. Madushika Dilrukshi beat Suhansi Vidanage 21-9, 21-16.

## Vaas Fast Bowling Coach for WI series

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) yesterday appointed Chaminda Vaas as the National Team's Fast Bowling Coach for the upcoming Tour of the West Indies. His appointment comes following the resignation of David Saker, who was the

National Fast Bowling Coach. Vaas currently serves as a Fast Bowling Coach at the High-Performance Centre of SLC, working with Emerging and National Team Players. During his illustrious career for Sri Lanka, Vaas captured



**Chaminda Vaas** 355 Test wickets from 111 matches and also 400 One Day International wickets from 322 games.

## Pressure on Djokovic in Australian Open final, says Medvedev

**MELBOURNE, FRIDAY:** Daniil Medvedev insisted the pressure was all on Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open final after the Russian breezed past Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets in the semis on Friday.

Medvedev, now into his second Grand Slam decider on the back of a 20-match winning streak, said the world number one has "more things to lose" on Sunday. Djokovic, with 17 major titles, has won all eight of his Australian Open finals and is looking to close the gap on the record of 20 Slam trophies held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

"I like that I don't have a lot of pressure because he never lost in eight times that he was here in the final," said the 25-year-old world number four.

"So it's him who has all the pressure, getting to Roger and Rafa in the Grand Slams (list)."

"So I just hope that I'm going to get out there, show my best tennis. As we see I can beat some big names if I play good."

"For sure he has more experience, but more things to lose."

Medvedev, a 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 winner against Tsitsipas, has now beaten 12 top-10 players and lifted three trophies during his winning run.

Friday's win included "one of my best shots in my career" - an off-balance backhand that rocketed past Tsitsipas to break for 6-5 in the final set.

"That was the moment that I won the match," he said. "The shot was unbelievable, I think one of my best shots in my career."

"Actually, my legs were facing the other way of the court because I



Russia's Daniil Medvedev hits a return.

didn't have time, so I have no idea how I made this, and I was really happy about it."

He said the lessons learned in his debut Slam final, when he came from two sets down to give Nadal a huge scare at the 2019 US Open, would help him on Sunday.

"It's experience, it was my first Grand Slam final against one of the greatest. On Sunday I'm going to come against one of the other greatest," he said. "I played against Rafa in this crazy US Open match. It's an experience that maybe, if we're going to have some crazy match, can turn some things for me and not against me." - **AFP**

## Lisal down Sandaru in Boys' U-14 final



Lisal Goonatillake in action

Lisal Goonatillake produced a fine performance to win the Boys' Under-14 Singles' title on the penultimate day of the Colombo Open Tennis Tournament, which continued at the SLTA Courts in Green Path yesterday.

The schoolboy from S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, showed a lot of promise while overcoming Sandaru Guruge in straight sets 6-3, 6-3 in the final encounter.

**The results:** **Boys' Under-14 Singles (final):** Lisal Goonatillake beat Sandaru Guruge 6-3, 6-3.

**Boys' Under-18 Singles (semi-finals):** Chathurya Nilaweera beat Kiran Vairwanathan 6-1, 6-4. Thehan Wijemanne beat Kavisha Rathnayake 6-1, 6-4.

**Girls' Under-18 Singles (semi-finals):** Oneli Perera beat Hasali Gajaba 6-4, 6-0. Vishmi Serasinghe beat Saneshi Willorarachchi 6-0, 6-3. **(A.N)**

## SL-Kazakhstan clash for FIBA Asia Cup

Sri Lanka will take on Kazakhstan in the second match of the FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers window-3 Group 'F' fixture at the Isa Town Basketball Arena in Manama, Bahrain, on February 22.

The Lankans would look for an improved performance in this outing after having suffered a 52-111 defeat in the hands of the same opponents in the curtain-raiser match.

Sri Lanka were outplayed in the earlier game as they trailed 12-28 at the end of the first

quarter and were later down 29-53 at half time.

Sri Lanka are fielding a young and inexperienced outfit for this event and suffered heavy defeats in away matches at the hands of Palestine (102-60) and Jordan (100-45) in February, 2020, during the first window of matches in Group 'F'.

Sri Lanka were schedule to play Kazakhstan at home in November, but the second window was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**(A.N)**



Action from the first match between Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan.

## Under-23 Cricket to start on March 4

The Inter Club T20 Cricket Tournament, Conducted by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) will commence on March 4 with the participation of 26 teams.

The teams are slated in four groups where they will

meet each other before the top two teams qualify for the quarter-finals.

Colombo Cricket Club are the reigning champions, while Chilaw Marions SC were the runners-up last year.

**The teams**

**Group 'A':** Badureliya CC, CCC, BRC, Negombo CC, Galle CC, Nugegoda S and WC, Kandy Customs CC.

**Group 'B':** NCC, Colts CC, Air Force SC, Lankan CC, SLPA SC, Bloomfield.

**Group 'C':** Chilaw MCC, SSC, Moors SC, Police SC, Kalutara TC, Kurunegala YCC.

**Group 'D':** Ragama CC, Army SC, Saracens SC, Panadura CC, Tamil Union, Navy SC, Sebastianites SC **(A.N)**



Members of SLR, National Team players and officials from Dialog Axiata visited the elders home in Battaramulla.

## Dialog, SLR launch community project

Dialog Axiata PLC, in collaboration with Sri Lanka Rugby (SLR), launched a series of community projects for the year whilst adhering to the COVID-19 safety

guidelines mandated by the Ministry of Health.

Kick-starting the first project for 2021, a group comprising members from the SLR and National players in

association with the Dialog Team set-off to spend the day with the seniors of the Kalukapuge Luwis Perera Elders Home in Battaramulla.

**(A.N)**



Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa (right) and State Minister Thenuka Vidanagama at the opening ceremony. Pic by Sudath Nishantha

## Lankan Twins teams to enter Cricket Record Books

**ANURADHA ABEYSEKARA**

Sri Lanka will create world cricket history by launching the first ever 'Twins' cricket team on February 21 at the Fisherman Villa Hotel, Wadduwa, commencing at 5.00 pm.

Sri Lanka Twins' Association, headed by its founder Upuli Gamage and her twin sister Chamali Gamage, has laid the foundation to

form two twins cricket teams, namely Senior and Junior comprising over 40 Sri Lankan twins. The association is waiting for approval from Sri Lanka Cricket to become an affiliated member.

The Senior team will participate in few local friendly matches in May, before they host the inaugural international tourney in August with

the participation of teams from India, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria. The Sri Lankan twins' teams are continuing their practices at CCC grounds under the watchful eyes of coach Supun Kumarapperuma. They also expect to conduct many events for twins parallel to the announcement of National Twins' Day on August 23.

## Drawn game at Thurstan Grounds

**HAFIZ MARIKAR**

Thurstan College forced a draw to their Inter-Schools Under-19 practice match against St. Anthony's College, Katugastota, which concluded at

Thurstan Grounds in 4/63, Punthila Kumara Colombo yesterday.

**Chief scores**

**St. Anthony's:** 227 (Ghana Ebert 63, Chandimal Hearth 54, Anjala Bandara 29, Mohamed Kamil 21, Vihasa Thewmika

**Thurstan:** 94 and 278/9 (Bawantha Jayasinghe 123, Kames Silva 99, Lahiru Abeyasinghe 2/8, Tharindu Lamaheewege 2/40, Gihan Ebert 2/54).