

The showers are coming

The Meteorological Department yesterday issued a warning to the public that there would be heavy showers accompanied by lightning and thunder during evenings and in the night.

With the commencement of the inter-monsoonal season, this weather pattern would last till the end of November, the Met Department said.

Govt to speed up rehabilitation of two tanks

by Franklin R. Satyapalan

The Government has decided to accelerate the rehabilitation of the Yoda Wewa (Giants Tank) and Ahathi Murruppu tank at a cost of Rs 270 million to increase cultivation of paddy by a further 4,000 acres during the forthcoming Maha season, Director General of Irrigation (DGI) H. P. Shelton Somasiri said.

The Government has also decided to accelerate the de-mining process in pace with the ongoing resettlement process. A total of 6,212 persons belonging to 1980 IDP families would be resettled in 19 Grama Sevaka divisions in Mannar District tomorrow (Thursday), Secretary to the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief U. L. M. Halaldeen, said.

The decision to accelerate the de-mining and resettlement process was taken to beat the oncoming monsoon and this was also a request made to President Mahinda Rajapaksa by a Tamil Nadu Local Government Assembly delegation led by Indian Government's Union Minister T. R. Baalu, Presidential Secretariat sources said.

Senior Presidential advisor and MP Basil Rajapaksa, who heads the Presidential Task Force on Resettlement, Development and Security of the Northern Province is spearheading the development programmes and the resettlement process.

Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Rischard A. Badhiudeen said that all together 45,000 IDPs were being resettled in the Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya Districts in batches of 2,000 to 2,500 and they are provided with dry rations for six months and a resettlement allowance and transportation in SLTB buses daily since last Friday.

by Dilanthi Jayamanne

As swine flu spread to two schools in Colombo and Kandy, the Epidemiology Unit said it had stopped counting the number of those who had contacted the new influenza A/N1H1 virus. The Health Ministry yesterday inaugurated an islandwide awareness programme in all schools and it had given up counting the number of cases since it was widespread. It is non fatal, but unless treat-

ing. If such conditions persist, seek medical assistance as early as possible, the spokesman advised.

The affected numbers have reached over 130, including school children. The aim of the Unit was to prevent the spreading of the new influenza A/N1H1 to schools. "But now that the worst has happened, we have decided to stop quarantine and encourage those who are affected to stay at home and rest," he said. The patients do

not have to admit themselves in the infectious diseases hospital, as done before.

However, pregnant mothers, elders and those ailing from chronic diseases are the risk groups who should take care. He warned the public not to neglect colds by allowing them to fester. Take proper medication. "Swine flu is not fatal, but one may die if a cold is neglected as it could turn into pneumonia," he said.



President Mahinda Rajapaksa shares a light moment with Navy Commander Vice Admiral Tisara Samarasinghe and Chief of Defence Staff General Sarath Fonseka at the Defence Services XV vs Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union President's XV rugby match played at Navy grounds in Welisara yesterday. Defence Services won the match 15-9. (Pic by Kamal Bogoda)

Now, Opp. accused of jeopardising national immunization programme

Health Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva on Tuesday (October 20), told Parliament that a politically motivated campaign, launched by the Opposition over the death of a 13-year-old student after receiving the Rubella vaccination, had jeopardised the national immunization programme.

An irate de Silva said that the immunization programme had become victim number one, due to some persons taking advantage over the recent

death thus disrupting the entire programme.

He said that the Rubella vaccine was included in the national immunization programme in keeping with recommendations made by a group of child specialists as far back as 1966. This particular injection had been recognised and approved by the World Health Organisation, he said in response to a statement critical of the Health Ministry made by the Chief Opposition Whip.

Chief Opposition Whip Joseph Michael Perera said that two students, one from Wariyapola and another from Matara died due to negligence on the part of the Health Ministry. He emphasised that Health Minister could not wash his hands off the rapidly deteriorating situation. He accused Minister de Silva of failing to do his job while accusing him of importing low quality medicine at the expense of the lives of the children. (SI)

Peter Hayes warns, 'don't repeat mistakes committed by developed countries'

by Ifham Nizam

British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Dr. Peter Hayes requested the developing nations not commit the same mistake that the developed nations did 100 years ago by ignoring the impact of environment. They should learn from the bitter lessons the world has experienced, he said.

Dr. Hayes was the guest of honour at the 18th APPEJ World Congress of Environmental Journalists, which commenced on Monday in Colombo. Addressing nearly 100 journalists representing many countries across the world at the three-day event, the High Commissioner said that they are in the process of finding out different ways for development.

Speaking on the climate change issue, he said that the United Kingdom is taking a lead role by appointing committees, committing money and resources to help the whole world.

The Chief Guest, Environment and Natural Resources Minister Patali Champika Ranawaka, said nearly seven million people in Sri Lanka had been affected severely in the dry zone due to unexpected changes in the monsoon pattern.

The minister said while devel-



(Left) The Island Journalist Ifham Nizam receives the Best Environmental Journalist for the year 2006 from British High Commissioner Dr. Peter Hayes. (Right) Divaina Journalist Jagath Kanaherarrachi collects the award for the year 2008 from Environment and Natural Resources Minister Patali Champika Ranawaka. Pix. by Sujatha Jayarathne

oping nations address the issue of climate change, they also have to demand substantial emission reduction targets from the developed countries considering their historical responsibility for the present crisis.

He said "There should be equality and a common goal, with different responsibilities if we are to keep to the two centigrade threshold. We have to be mindful of the limited carbon space available for us, the developing countries, to improve our economies.

"At the Copenhagen negotiation, we had to voice our deep concerns regarding any effort made to dilute the agreed targets

set for the developed countries by the Kyoto Protocol and also the commitments of UNFCCC."

Ranawaka said that he was happy to be at the launch of the world congress on 'Educate to End Climate Poverty' at a critical juncture where the global community has to develop a common position during the forthcoming climate change debates in Copenhagen.

He said according to IPCC, it was necessary to keep the temperature increase below a two centigrade threshold in the 21st century.

To achieve this goal, Sri Lanka suggests reducing worldwide carbon emissions by

around 85 per cent by 2050, with a peak around 2020. Annex 1 countries would have to target an emission peak between 2012 and 2015, with 49 per cent cuts by 2020 and at least 85 per cent cuts by 2050.

The figure 49 was calculated based on the historic responsibility of Annex 1 countries for their past emissions as a result of which the present crisis has arisen, to which all countries, without exception are exposed and made to suffer.

He also said that IPCC has warned that under business as usual scenario, the world faces diminished food security especially in developing countries. Crop yield could fall by as much as 30 per cent by 2050 in Central and South Asia. As many as 1.2 billion Asians could be faced with severe water shortages, from reduced rainfall and as a result of melting glaciers.

Developed countries should reduce their domestic GHG emission by at least 49 per cent below 1990 levels in the commitment period from 2013-2017.

That means their total emission reductions will be determined by applying the principle of historical responsibility or carbon debt and addressing the needs of developing countries. The figure 49 per cent was calculated considering the historical emission, he added.

Loss... From page 1

The All Share Price Index lost 99.74 points (3.24 percent) and the Milanka lost 150.98 points (4.34 percent) with turnover declining to Rs.763.7 million, down from Rs.885.2 million on Monday.

Part of the panic was also attributed to the arrest of Raj Rajaratnam over the weekend in the US over insider dealing allegations where he and his company (Galleon Group) is said to have made over US\$ 25 million in illegal gains.

The European Commission issued the following statement earlier this week:

"The Commission has completed a thorough investigation into the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and in particular whether Sri Lanka is living up to the commitments it made to respect international human rights standards when it became a beneficiary of the European Union's GSP+ trade incentive scheme which provides for additional trade benefits.

"The report comes to the conclusion that there are significant shortcomings in this area and that Sri Lanka is in breach of its GSP+ commitments. We will now consult with Member States on whether to prepare a proposal with a view to temporarily suspending these additional trade benefits," it said.

A verdict on whether or not Sri Lanka is to get the GSP Plus trade concessions extended is expected to be made in January next year. Trade deficit contracts, reserves up

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's trade deficit contracted for the eight consecutive month US\$ 115.6 million in August 2009 from US\$ 500.9 million in August 2008.

The cumulative deficit for the first eight months of this year too contracted to US\$ 1.6 billion compared to the deficit of US\$ 4 billion during the corresponding period of last year.

The Central Bank said official reserves reached US\$ 3.8 billion by the end of last August, enough to finance imports for 4.6 months, buoyed by a contracting trade deficit, inflows to government securities amounting to a little more than US\$ 1 billion and absorption of US\$ 2.5 billion from the domestic foreign exchange market.

It said the reserves position had improved to US\$ 4.5 billion by October 13.

Court issues notice on Aravinda in F&G case

The Attorney General's Department yesterday revealed a clandestine transaction involving the crisis-ridden Finance and Guarantee Ltd (F&G) and former national cricketer



Aravinda de Silva and his sister Araliya which enabled them to acquire properties belonging to the company in lieu of their deposits.

The shocking disclosure was made by Deputy Solicitor General Yasantha Kodagoda when he appeared before the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court.

Kodagoda alleged that F&G properties which had been acquired by Aravinda and Araliya had been also undervalued. He said that ongoing investigations had shed light on the illegal transaction. The Court issued notice on de Silva and his sister.

F&G is part of the troubled Ceylinc Group now grappling with a deteriorating financial crisis.

The Court was also told that F&G properties had been illegally transferred amidst an attempt to workout a repayment plan.

Lankan illegals paid smuggling ring \$45,000 each to enter Canada

(AHN) - The Sri Lankans caught over the weekend by the Canada Border Services Agency guards pointed to a man named Abraham Lauhenapessy as the head of a human smuggling ring behind their attempt to enter Canada illegally.

The Sri Lankans said they paid up to \$45,000 per head to Lauhenapessy - also known as Captain Bram - who had been involved in the human smuggling trade for over 10 years. Bram is also behind the attempt of 254 Tamils to enter Australia illegally. For the Australian attempt, he charged \$15,000 per person. Children and infants are charged the full amount.

Bram commandeered the M.V. Ocean Lady, which was intercepted by CBSA agents on Sunday and towed to Victoria. The 76 Sri Lankan males aboard the vessel are now in a Vancouver facility undergoing processing to see if they would qualify to be accepted by Ottawa.

However, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney has indicated it would be difficult for the illegal migrants since the federal government of Canada does not want to create the impression that are two methods of entering the country - one by the legal immigration route and the other illegal means which abuses its asylum system.

The Tamil community in Canada is pressuring Ottawa to take in the 76 illegal migrants for humanitarian reasons. The group sent two lawyers to assist the Sri Lankans, but the lawyers were not permitted to see the probable asylum seekers.