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151 Lankans in Mid-East jobs died this year

BY W. P. Weerawardena – Airport (ceylontoday.lk) During a period of seven months from the beginning of this year to 31 July, 151 bodies of Sri Lankan workers have been brought back to Sri Lanka from Middle Eastern countries. According to information received from the Health Office at the Bandaranaike International Air Port and the Bureau of Foreign Employment ... Services, dead bodies have been sent from Middle Eastern countries including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia,

Qatar and other countries. Twenty three bodies arrived in Sri Lanka in January, 17 in February, 30 in March, 19 in April, 27 in May, 17 in June and 18 in July. More than 100 bodies were of women between the ages of 20 – 55 years. Medical reports sent with the bodies claimed reasons for death ranging from falling from a height, self-immolating, hanging, heart attacks

(Contd: on P6)

Rajagala excavations confirm chronicle accounts

Text and Pic by Susantha Amarabandu, Ampara Corr (island.lk) Archaeologists have found a stone sundial while excavating Rajagala historic religious site of which the date could be assigned to a period between 1,000 to 2,200 years. The archaeologists have been excavating the site for the past three years and unearthed various artefacts, including the sun dial. Prof. P.B. Mandawala of the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Sri Jaywardenepura said that they had unearthed several building structures including a Daana Salawa (alms hall) of the ancient Rajagalathenna Vihara. According to historical sources, the Ariyawansa Sutta had been preached at this site about 1,000 years ago. "We have dug up an asanaghara (an edifice set up to house the seat or throne) from the site. The sun dial is similar to another found at the

Abhyagiriya site sometime ago. There is another small chaitya in the site but it had been plundered by the treasure hunters years ago." Prof. Mandawala said that they had found stone tablets carved with the Buddha's footprints. "The speciality is that the foot prints have been carved on both sides of the tablet. There were carvings of chathra dandu (parasols) on some of the tablets," he said. They have commenced conserving a building from where an alms bowl made of stone was found. "We have not yet been able to identify for what purpose the building being conserved had been used then," he said.



Prof. Karunasena Hettiarachchi of the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Sri Jaywardenepura said that according to the inscriptions found at the site the monastery containing four chaityas had been built around

(Contd: on P6)

Over 150,000 Sri Lankans suffer from blindness - Dr. Mahipala

Nadira Gunatilleke (dailynews.lk) At present, around 150,000 Sri Lankans suffer from blindness, the main cause for blindness being cataract. Blindness is caused due to cataract and can be reversed through simple surgery, Director General of Health Services Dr. Palitha Mahipala said. According to Dr. Mahipala, Over Rs. 2 million is being invested every year to improve the eye sight of the people, while 39 million are blind in the world and every year one to two million people are

added to the lot. Over 90 percent of the blind population in the world live in developing countries. He said over 60 percent could be treated easily, while blindness of 20 percent could be prevented. Dr. Mahipala pointed out that 80 percent of the blind people could be either treated easily or the blindness reversed" There are 58 qualified eye surgeons covering all parts of the country. The Vision 2020 programme have already provided over 80,000 free spectacles to schoolchildren and also spent between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50 million annually for eye care," he said. If donors wish to offer eye sight for a poor fellow citizen who is unable to see the world, they could log in to www.sightforlife.lk and make the donations. It is a worthy cause as Rs. 3,500 could provide eye sight to a needy blind person. It is much better than having a big bash to celebrate a birthday, he added.

India and Sri Lanka to get closer soon

(ceylontoday.lk) A road and rail link between India's Rameswaram and Sri Lanka's Thalaimannar could be a reality soon as the government of India has asked Asian Development Bank to carry out pre-feasibility study for financing the project across Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. A short boat ride used to connect the railway lines that ended at Thalaimannar in Sri Lanka and Dhanushkodi in India, which was in operation till 1966. The Project may be a combination of bridge and underwater tunnel which may allow unhindered movement of ships. As the project is in the conceptual stage, it is too early to comment on the time bound programme of this project. However, the government of Sri Lanka is yet to give its nod to the project. Minister of State for Road Transport & Highways, Pon. Radhakrishnan



informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday. (The Economic Times)

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