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A total of 280 suspects have been arrested and Mahason Balakaya office raided

(DailyMirror.lk) - The Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) had recovered several office equipments and propaganda materials, which were used in propagating hate speech, from an office at Naththaranpotha in Kundasale on Tuesday morning following the information received during the interrogation of the head of 'Mahason Balakaya' Addressing a news briefing, Police Spokesman SP Ruwan Gunasekara said, based on a statement made by the prime suspect, Widanapathirana Amith Jeewan Weerasinghe (26), a resident in Kengalla, Digana, investigation officers had also recovered seven bottles which had been allegedly kept



to make petrol bombs. The other main suspects who were taken into custody in connection with inciting racism are Suretha Suraweera (Head of the Sinhalese Jathika Balamuluwa), Sampath Anura Sri Kumarasinghe, Arachchikumbure Sobitha Thera, Asiri Chaturanga, Isuru Priyankara Kumara, Sumith Chaminda, Asanka Pradeep Weerasinghe, Jayanath Anton Gunaratne, and Rashmitha Bandara Mahawatte. SP Gunasekara said police had found leaflets, posters, notices, letters, banners, a large number of documents and wristbands inciting racism from the Mahason Balakaya office.

The officers had found four computer central processing units (CPUs), several bank accounts, bank slips and several vehicle permits. During the briefing, SP Gunasekara exposed to media a microphone with a tag 'Mahason Balakaya' and was used by the group to hold press conferences. Meanwhile, a special investigation had been launched with the support of experts to trace the incoming and outgoing calls details of the mobile phones of the suspects. A total of 445 complaints had been received island-wide relating to incidents of damaging houses and shops from March 4 until March 12. Among them, 423 were incident in Kandy Police Divisions and the rest (22) in other districts.

According to reports, a total of 24 religious places were damaged island-wide and among them, 19 were from Kandy. He said in Kandy 60 incidents of vehicle damages were reported while another five reported in other areas. A total of 28 people including 22 individuals from Kandy and another six from other areas had sustained injuries in violent incidents. "We arrested 178 individuals from Kandy of which a majority of 119 were arrested under the State of Emergency. From the arrested, 50 were released on bail while 128 further remanded. A total of 102 individuals from other areas had been arrested. Forty-five of them are on bail while 57 have been further remanded. Therefore, a total of 280 suspects have been arrested," he said.

Japan's Emperor Akihito warmly welcomes President Sirisena

(FT.LK) - President Maithripala Sirisena, who is on a state visit to Japan to further strengthen the long standing bilateral relations between the two countries, met with Emperor Akihito on Tuesday. President Maithripala Sirisena and First Lady Jayanthi Sirisena were given a warm welcome by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko when they arrived at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. Later, both the leaders engaged in a cordial discussion. The Japanese Emperor expressed his pleasure over the visit of President Maithripala Sirisena and said that the long-standing ties between the two countries will be further consolidated as a result of this visit. President Sirisena expressed his thanks to Emperor Akihito for the invitation extended to him to visit Japan and said that it is his expectation to strengthen the relations between the two countries in every sphere. The Emperor, recalled the memories of his visit to Sri Lanka in 1981 said that he was privileged for the opportunity to visit the historical temple of the sacred tooth relic in Kandy. He also mentioned with gratitude the high appreciation and welcome he received from the Sri Lankan people. The Emperor of Japan who acknowledged the assistance provided by Sri Lankans in the time where Japan faced natural disasters mentioned

that Japan is ready to provide assistance to Sri Lanka anytime. After the meeting, Emperor Akihito joined President Sirisena in his tour of the historical Imperial Mansion. President Maithripala Sirisena also addressed an investment forum to drum up stronger business ties with Japan during his ongoing visit to the country and met with government agencies to encourage more assistance for public-centric development projects. The investment forum was held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, where President Sirisena addressed Japanese businesses and called on them to increase investment in Sri Lanka. Investors and entrepreneurs from both countries attended the forum where potential investment opportunities and joint ventures were showcased to Japanese companies. President Sirisena had encouraged Japanese investors to make the most of the government

economic drive that is focused on reforms and strong liberalisation measures, the President's office said in a statement.

Government was to offer a prominent place to local industries while obtaining foreign assistance. Sirisena requested the JICA President to assist in projects that could inspire stronger public entrepreneurship.



(From l to r) - Emperor Akihito, President Maithripala Sirisena, First Lady Jayanthi Sirisena and Empress Michiko. Pix by Sudath Silva

Development Strategies and International Trade Minister Malik Samarawickrama, addressing the forum, said for many decades Sri Lanka had close ties with Japan in various fields and he hoped this visit of President Sirisena would pave the way to further consolidate relations between the two countries. Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Masaki Ogushi, also participated in the forum. Later in the day Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Chairman and CEO Hiroyuki Ishige met with President Sirisena. The Chairman apprised the President of the trade and investment services of JETRO in Sri Lanka and said that they expected to further expand those activities within the country. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Shinichi Kitaoka also met with President Sirisena. During this meeting, the progress of the development projects being carried out in Sri Lanka with the assistance of JICA was discussed in detail. President Sirisena said that the policy of his

The President also highlighted the importance of Sri Lanka's small and medium development projects, which could uplift the economic standards of the people. During this meeting the JICA President pledged to provide assistance in developing the country's tourism field.

Unity of religious diversity



Representatives of Religions in the UK at the Commonwealth Day Observance at the Westminster-Abbey, 12 March 2018

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