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LEISURELAND

UNP keeps missing CMC winners 'at a safe location'

Several members of Independent Group III, which won control of the Colombo Municipal Council earlier this month, are reportedly being kept "at a safe location" by the United National Party till they take oaths on June 3.

Among the "missing" Independent Group members are leader Annapillai Rajendran, mayor elect U Imtiyaz, and deputy mayor elect Kankanamage Chandrasena.

"We are also trying to find them," said Ratnam, a member of Independent Group III, who contested the election. "They have been missing for the past two

days." He said that both of Rajendran's mobile phones have been switched off and that neither he nor his family were at home.

"We even visited his house," he said. "It is closed. We think his family must be with him." Rajendran had been receiving "unwelcome phone calls", Ratnam also said.

Asked how Rajendran could be contacted, UNP mayoral candidate Sirisena Cooray claimed that the Independent Group leader had a new mobile number which he did not know. Rajendran's telephones were switched off when this newspaper attempted to contact him.

Meanwhile, UPFA mayoral candidate Vasudeva Nanayakkara said that his party wanted to back Independent Group III. "Tell them that I intend backing them and liberating them from any bondage they may have," he said.

Ratnam said that all but nine of Independent Group III's fifty-nine contestants have agreed to submit their res-

ignations from the CMC. However, the law decrees that all contestants in the list must step down before the UNP can replace any of them.

"The nine dissidents are not willing to resign," Ratnam confirmed. "They are backing the UPFA. They have a problem with Rajendran and have formed a different faction with their own leader."

Independent Group III, supported by the UNP, polled 40.24% of the vote in the May 20 election and won 23 seats. The UPFA notched 27.85 per cent and won 14 seats.

Continued on page 4

N and E will be developed, President assures Bishops

President Mahinda Rajapakse has requested the Bishops of Jaffna and Mannar to urge the civilians to immediately bring to the notice of the police and security establishment, provide the necessary evidence and assist investigators, whenever violence is unleashed on civilians in the North and East.

In the event of civilians encountering any difficulty in complaining to the police or military authorities, such complaints could be directed to the government peace secretariat, the President told the Bishops.

President Rajapakse held a discussion with the Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Thomas Saundaranayagam and Bishop of Mannar Rt. Rev. Rayappu Joseph at Temple Trees on Tuesday and the focus of the talks were on the North and East security situation and the day to day living of the civilian population of the two provinces.

At the talks, the Bishop of Mannar stressed the need to transform the entire district into a peaceful region where civilians of all communities could live without any fear or harassment. The Bishop also discussed the killing of civilians in the region.

Continued on page 4



KLATEN, Central Java INDONESIA : Earthquake victims struggle to get hold of relief foods dropping from an Indonesian Air Force helicopter in Klaten, Central Java, 31 May 2006. While the death toll from the 27 May earthquake that rocked Indonesia's main island of Java has risen to at least 5,846, despite the ramped-up aid effort involving troops, volunteers and overseas medics, pockets of victims in the worst-hit areas south and east of the ancient city of Yogyakarta said they had not yet received badly-needed supplies. AFP

President calls APC on devolution

by Wijitha Nakkawita and Ranil Dharmasena

President Mahinda Rajapakse has called for an All Party Conference tomorrow (2) to discuss the devolution of power to the North and East, in the aftermath of the European Union's ban on the LTTE as a terrorist group and the request of the Co-Chairs that the Government should seek a political solution, senior official sources said yesterday (31).

Invitations to all political parties, to attend the conference to be held at the Presidential Secretariat, have been sent out sources said.

Tomorrow's meeting will be the fourth All Party Conference to be held after President Rajapakse was elected in

November 2005. Associated with the President will be senior government ministers, advisors and Secretary to President Lalith Weeratunga.

The President has been consulting his senior ministers and advisors on the devolution of power as a political solution to the problem in the North and East during the past weeks and is keen to apprise the international community of the Government's proposals before possible talks with the LTTE, sources said.

British Navy chief Band here

Admiral Sir Jonathan Band, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff of Britain, will arrive in Sri Lanka today on a four-day visit, the British High Commission announced yesterday.

During his visit, Admiral Band will meet with the armed forces commanders and the Defence Secretary. He will also visit the Trincomalee Naval base and scheduled to address a British funded course on Maritime Humanitarian Law, that would be attended by Naval officers from Sri Lanka and other regional navies.

"His visit will mark the continuing excellent and longstanding relations between the Royal Navy and the Sri Lankan Navy. After the tsunami, the Royal Navy Frigate HMS Chatham was deployed to the East coast of Sri Lanka to assist in relief work and reconstruction" the British High Commission said.

Villagers flee LTTE terror

from Suraweera Arachchi - Welikanda Corr

There has been an exodus of villagers from the Welikanda area after a number of attacks mounted on home guard bunkers and civilians.

The LTTE attacked home guard bunkers of the Ruhunuketha and Namalgama villages but after 13 civilians working under a contractor in area were lined up with their hands tied and gunned down by the LTTE Monday (29) some people of these villages have fled in fear.

People in fear of further attacks by the LTTE are getting ready to flee but the Army has strengthened security in the area while police have issued guns to villagers for self defence.

Duminda remanded

by Priyalal Sirisena

The Chief Magistrate for Colombo, Kusala Sarojini Weerawardena, yesterday remanded UNP Western Provincial Councillor Duminda Silva till June 05.

Silva was arrested and produced before the Chief Magistrate, by the Colombo Crime Division yesterday, on allegations of assaulting a foreigner.

Earlier, suspect Duminda Silva had filed an anticipatory bail application asking the Court to prevent the police from arresting him. However, the Magistrate had postponed hearing of

the application. The lawyers appearing for the suspect said that while the anticipatory bail application was pending he had been arrested by the CCD. However, the Judge ignored the objection and ordered Silva to be remanded him till June 05.

Nightclub brawl

Silva was alleged to have assaulted causing injuries to a foreign woman at a night club on May 26.

When Court was informed that the suspect had got himself admitted to a private hospital, the Judge ordered that he be sent to the Prison hospital. He will be produced before Court on June 05.

Kohona to head govt team at Geneva talks

The Government delegation to the Geneva talks with the LTTE on the SLMM's safety and security will be headed by Dr. Palitha Kohona, head of the Government Peace Secretariat an Information Department press release yesterday (31).

The request for talks with the LTTE by the Norwegian peace facilitators came after the meeting between Norway's Minister of International Development and former Special Envoy Erik Solheim and President Mahinda Rajapakse on May 26.

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