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This notice was displayed at the National Hospital OPD, yesterday listing the essential drugs that had gone out of stock. (Photo- Kamal Bogoda)

Clergyman shot dead in Ampara, wife critically injured

by Hemantha Randunu
Two armed men raided a Pentecostal church in Ampara on Sunday night and shot dead its pastor. They then shot his wife seriously injuring her. She was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of the Ampara Hospital in a critical condition.

The deceased has been identified as 37-year-old Samson Neil Edirisinghe and his wife, 31-year-old

Shiromi Edirisinghe. He had previously served as a brother of the Salvation Army. Police investigations revealed that the killers had arrived on a motor cycle entered the church by force and shot the husband and wife with a T 56 rifle. Till noon yesterday, Police were unable to say who the suspects were and establish their motive. Police said they did not rule out the possibility of LTTE involvement and would get a clear picture once the wife recovered. "If she recovers she should be in a position to tell us a reason for the attack and

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Killings and abductions increasing by the day - Ranil
by Zacki Jabbar

Despite the number of security forces personnel and civilians being killed, increasing by the day, the government continues to boast about winning the battle against the LTTE, Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said in Uva Paranagama, on Saturday. Speaking after declaring open the UNP's, Uva Paranagama branch office, he said that in addition to war casualties, armed groups were abducting innocent Tamils and demanding ransom for their release from family members. Failure to comply meant certain death.

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Authorities pass the buck as patients suffer

Severe drug shortage grips Col. Nat. Hospital

by Don Asoka Wijewardena

A severe shortage of essential drugs at the Colombo National Hospital has led to doctors directing over 4,500 patients to purchase their prescribed drugs from private sector pharmacies. About 15 essential drugs, including those needed for by-pass, diabetic and post-surgical patients, are out of stock. The GMOA has instructed all OPD doctors to prescribe drugs that can be purchased from pharmacies. The Director General of Health Services Dr. Ajith Mendis had, however, warned doctors not to instruct patients to buy drugs from private pharmacies, Colombo National Hospital sources said. GMOA General Secretary Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya told *The Island* that the most essential drugs, such as insulin, aspirin, atorvastatin, losartan, omeprazole, ferrous Sulphate,

calcium lactate, carveditol, lactulose, Salbutamol, beclathayne, and Tab Ismin, had been out of stock over past few days and both clinic and OPD patients were affected. He said the first-line drugs for cardiac and diabetic patients had been out of stock for the past seven days. Health authorities had turned a blind eye to the situation at the National hospital. The 2008 budget had allocated Rs.800 billion for the Health sector, but the situation in the Ministry and the way of handling matters of immediate concern left much to be desired, he noted. Colombo National Hospital Director Dr. Hector Weerasinghe said that the patients warded at the national hospital were not affected by the drug shortage because arrangements had been made to carry out 'local purchase' of the required drugs from State Pharmaceuticals Corporation outlets.

But a large number of clinic and OPD patients visiting the hospital daily for treatment were greatly affected. The poorer patients were unable to purchase drugs from private pharmacies. In accordance with the hospital policy he had placed orders with the Medical Supplies Division for drugs about a year ago and he therefore was not at fault over the shortage, he said. Medical Supplies Division Director Dr. Hemantha Beneragama said that the MSD had been supplying around 1,200 kinds of drugs to State-run hospitals and of this 400 drugs had been considered essential. The MSD had been placing orders with the SPC, which had at times failed to deliver the required quantity on time. The SPC, in some cases, was forced to import the required drug as some essential drugs were not manufactured locally.

Tigers in a corner
— Army chief

by Norman Palihawadena



The LTTE is in total disarray and has lost its fighting capability, Army Commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka said yesterday. "Several area and group leaders among the fighting cadres have died and there is no one lead them or give instructions," he said. He said the troops were forging ahead and would soon capture more areas held by the Tigers. The big names among their fighting cadres were no more, he said. He said he believed that Prabhakaran was either injured or indisposed but the news was being kept a secret to prevent the LTTE cadres being demoralised.

Forces capture 600-metre LTTE bunker line
by Harischandra Gunaratna

Security forces destroyed another LTTE bunker line in a pre dawn attack and secured around 600 metres along the Uilankulam -Andankulam road in Parappakandal, Mannar. The attack commenced around 5.30 a.m. and forced the enemy to retreat further into its territory. According to the Media Centre for National Security, the bunker line had been covered with a soil bund in order to prevent the mortars fired by the army from exploding.

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Counting begins after low turnout, violence mars Pakistan polls

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistan's 64,000 polling booths started tallying votes in parliamentary elections marred by shootings and allegations of rigging by parties faithful to President Pervez Musharraf. Pakistanis fearful of militant attacks voted Monday for a new parliament in a key step toward democracy after eight years of military rule under President Musharraf, whose political survival hangs in the balance. Musharraf promised to work with

the new government regardless of who won the vote, after a year of turmoil that has seen an explosion in Taliban militancy and growing public disaffection with Pakistan's support of the U.S.-led war on terror. "I will say from my side, whichever political party will win, whoever will become prime minister and chief ministers, congratulation to them on my behalf. And I will give them full cooperation as president whatever is my role," the president told state television.

Public antipathy over Musharraf's support of the U.S.-led war on terror could count against his political allies, as could his recent declaration of emergency rule and purging of the judiciary to safeguard his controversial re-election as president in October. An overwhelming victory by the opposition, headed by Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, or PPP, could leave Musharraf politically vulnerable to impeachment.

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PPB gets new head

Chairman of the Public Performance Board Prof. Somaratane Balasuriya has been replaced by former Chairman of the Film Corporation Ashoka Serasinghe with immediate effect.

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