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When we had sars in our eyes

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Eva's Cartier necklace ...

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Captain Grumpy...

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Late City Edition

Democracy rekindled in Batticaloa

LG polls concluded without major incidents

Voter turn out believed to be over 56 per cent

SLMC complains of harassment and rigging

"We silenced our detractors democratically" - TMVP

by Franklin R. Satyapalan, Harischandra Gunaratna and Norman Palihawadana

out toward incidents as such. STF Commandant DIG Nimal Lewke said the polls had been

extremely peaceful. "No incidents were reported despite

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The Local Government polls in the Batticaloa District had ended without major incidents of violence or rigging, Chief Returning Officer and District Secretary Sundaram Arumeinayagam said last night. He said according to initial reports over 56 per cent of the registered voters had exercised their franchise.

Most enthusiastic among the voters yesterday had been the people from the newly cleared areas like Vellaweli, our provincial correspondents said.

Polling had been slow in the morning but it had recorded an increase in the afternoon, Additional Commissioner of Elections W. P. Sumanasiri told *The Island*. He said the election had been very peaceful and with-

President thanks all

"I thank all those who helped make a success of the government's policy of restoring to the people of the East the democratic rights that had been denied to them for nearly two decades through the politics of terror," said President Mahinda Rajapaksa in a message issued after the close of polling in the Batticaloa District yesterday.

The President's message said: "The successful completion of the local government elections in the East held yesterday would bring satisfaction to all those who value democracy. This peaceful election underlines the aim of the government to create an environment in which all our people could live in freedom and harmony.

"My thanks go to all political parties that were courageous to name their nominees for this election in the face of many obstacles and to the candidates; to the voters who participated in the election; to all personal of the Department of the Commissioner General of Elections, all other public officers, and members of the Armed Services and Police that helped in the successful conduct of this election.

"I believe that the representatives of the people chosen in this peaceful election are the harbingers of success in the historic march to strengthen and widen democracy in our country," the President said.



President



Pillaiyan casts his vote at a polling station in Pettalai, Valaichenai, 40 kilometers north of Batticaloa yesterday (10). Pic by Eranga Jayawardena/AP

Bomb blast in Wellawatte kills one, injures six

Bomb placed in flower pot on island

Four school children among victims

by Norman Palihawadana

A bomb exploded near the Roxy Cinema in Wellawatta yesterday morning killing one and injuring six, including four school children. The injured were admitted to the Colombo South Hospital, Kalubowila.

Tension reigned in the area after the blast, which occurred at around 7.00 a.m. and traffic on the Galle Road came to a standstill.

A witness at the scene of the blast said she had been taking her daughter to school when she saw an object in a flower pot on the traffic island. A man had approached the pot and she had warned him not to touch it, but he had tried to pick it up, triggering explosion.

Some people, including four school children, had been injured but she and her children had escaped.

The deceased has been identified as Ajith, the Wellawatte police said.

The injured school children were Fathima Asma (18) and Fathima Asna (18) both students of St. Paul's Girls School, Milagiriya and Thiruchel Dirukshan (16) and Sivnesamurthi (16) both

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SC gives NTT go ahead to sell its SLT shares to GTH

by Chitra Weeraratne

The proceedings of the fundamental rights violation application filed by Parliamentarian Mangala Samaraweera, in respect of the impending sale of Sri Lanka Telecom shares owned by the Nippon Telecom Pvt. Limited to a Malaysian company, were terminated yesterday.

The terms suggested by the petitioner were declared reasonable by the Court.

The terms are that the government of Sri Lanka will not be a

Continued on page 4

TMVP Chief Pillaiyan votes for first time

by Chathura Pamunuwa

Sivanesathurai Chanthirakanthan, aka Pillaiyan, the leader of the Tamil Makkal Viduthala Pulikal, cast his vote at a polling station located at Vipulananda Vidyalaya in Valaichenai yesterday morning.

Pillaiyan told journalists that it was

the first time he had ever voted at an election. He felt strongly that the election was a huge step in the right direction in entering the democratic mainstream. The polls marked a new dawn in the East, he said.

After casting his vote in the Koralepattu Pradeshiya Sabha elections,

he said the people in the East had realised the need for a change.

"Similarly, we, the TMVP, too, have realised the need for a change." He said the results of the elections to the nine local Government bodies would definitely act as a catalyst in the Eastern Province politics.

Recycle or go to Hell, warns Vatican

Failing to recycle plastic bags could find you spending eternity in Hell, the Vatican said after drawing up a list of deadly sins for our times.

The seven, which include polluting the environment, were announced by Monsignor Gianfranco Girotti, a close ally of the Pope and the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, one of the Roman Curia's main courts.

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Influence of power and money has spread - Ranil

by Zacki Jabbar

The influence of power and money has spread its tentacles to all sections of society including the Media, Opposition and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said yesterday.

Addressing the National Congress launch of the 'National Consultation on Policy Development', at the Colombo New Town Hall, Wickremesinghe said that society has degenerated to such an extent that right and wrong is now determined by "power



and money." "The government, after meddling with the media and setting out what can be published or broadcast says "look at the media, there is no censorship whatsoever."

Even state media personnel are knifed and thrown away like mere commodities, Wickremesinghe said "Journalists have been threatened into subjugation by a series of assaults and abductions. Having achieved its objectives, the government has the audacity to speak of media freedom."

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