The Island

World leaders enjoy eight-course dinner *World Wiew*

The stillborn artificial Sri Lankan identity *Mid Week*

Cricketers arrive home today

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Mystery of SSP's pouch missing in E. Timor revealed

Last Saturday's recovery of a galkattas, 90 rounds of T 56 ammunition, an expired passport and several photographs near the official residence of SLAF Chief Air Marshal Roshan Gunatilleke at Keppetipola Mawatha has revealed the mystery of the disappearance of a pouch, in 2001, belonging to SSP Sarath Beddewella during his deployment in the East Timor under UN command.

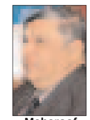
"I have been wondering what had happened to my pouch," Beddewella told *The Island* yesterday. Fielding questions, the officer said someone robbed a set of photographs, a UN badge and some souvenirs he had received from other foreign members of the UN mission and his old passport shortly before the Sri Lankan contingent returned to the country.

"Although, I never suspected anyone, the recovery of my belongings within the high security zone at Keppetipola Mawatha is evidence, the robber had been with me in the East Timor," he said. An angry Beddewela said the other items didn't belong to him. The other items, too, would have been thrown away by the same person or a relative of his, he said.

Police have already identified the person who had thrown away the bag. Police identified the suspect as the wife of the police officer who had been on the UN assignment with Beddewela, a Chief Inspector at the time of his deployment in East Timor. **(SF)**

UNP vows to end dictatorship

by Zacki Jabbar



Maharoof

A thousand youth will lead a massive protest rally at Hulftsdorp today aimed at forcing the "dictatorial Mahinda Rajapaksa regime" to hold a parliamentary election forthwith, so that the people would be given an opportunity to end their sufferings and fears, UNP MP Mohammed Maharoof said yesterday.

He told a news conference in Colombo that the youth would make a public pledge to end the dictatorship that has been foisted on the masses and usher in democracy and prosperity.

"The protest rally with the participation of our leader Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe has been scheduled to commence at 5 00 p.m.

The government has proved time and again that it is not only corrupt and inefficient, but also does not respect human rights, including media freedom, he said. "The only way to end the tyranny is by public protests. This will give the people an opportunity to express their views and install a regime which is not only competent, but also does not create a fear psychosis by its high handed and criminal actions."

Maharoof said that the UNP's public protest campaign had only just begun and would be taken to every nook and corner of the country.

Minor employees of the National Hospital yesterday staged a picket outside the hospital demanding their salary anomalies be rectified without delay (Photo-Siripala Halwala)

Govt. challenges Janaka to reveal his stand on the war

by Shamindra Ferdinando

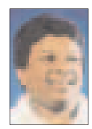
Reiterating President Mahinda Rajapaksa's pledge to defeat the LTTE militarily, the government yesterday challenged retired Major General Janaka Perera, the UNP's Chief Ministerial candidate for the North Central Province to reveal his stand on the ongoing war against terrorism.

SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena and SLFP Treasurer Dallas Alahapperuma said the retired Army Chief of Staff and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe were sharply divided over the security strategy.

Agriculture Development Minister Sirisena said the UNP leader had repeatedly said the war against the LTTE couldn't be won. "We'll prove him wrong," he said, assuring the government's commitment to a negotiated settlement to the conflict. But he ruled out the possibility of a fresh round of talks which would be advantageous to the LTTE.

Media Minister Lakshman Yapa Abeywardene dismissed assertion that New Delhi had demanded an immediate halt to the ongoing offensive. The recent visit by a high level Indian delegation which comprised Foreign and Defence Secretaries and the National Security Advisor had been made out to be an attempt by India to stop war, he said.

Minister Sirisena expressed confidence that security forces would finish off the LTTE in their last bastion in the Vanni. "Would the retired Major General accept our tough stand on the LTTE? Or, will he endorse the UNP leader's policy of appeasement?" he asked.



Dallas

Maithripala

Alahapperuma said the government would never dispute Perera's battlefield record. "In fact, we truly respect him for his battlefield achievements," he said, "but the good General shouldn't forget that he was a party to an unsuccessful war effort."

"We are now engaged in a successful campaign," the minister said, challenging the UNP's leading candidate in the NCP to reveal his stance on the current

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'Ranjan can't dance'

Referring to actor Ranjan Ramanayake's decision to quit Sirasa Dancing Star competition halfway, Minister Dallas Alahapperuma said one could leave a competition halfway claiming that he wouldn't want to deprive another contestant of a chance to win. But the actual reason was that Ranjan couldn't dance.

Strike won't affect schools *– Edu. Ministry*

The Education Ministry yesterday said that since it had not been intimated of any strike action on July 10, by educational trade sector unions, anyone joining the strike would be considered absent without leave.

A Ministry press release the Ministry said it was the usual practice for any union to give it prior notice of a proposed strike. This had not been done so far.

Secretary to the Ministry of Education M. M. N. D. Bandara said all schools would function as usual on Thursday.

Since none of the school principals' unions had informed the Ministry of any strike action there wouldn't be a problem in conducting school activities, he said.

The discussions on salary anomalies of teachers and principals were not connected to the proposed July 10 strike, he said. The Ministry requested all in the educational sector to report for work on July 10.

In another statement, the Education Ministry said that teachers and principals on July 1 had submitted their proposals on how to sort out their salary anomalies to the Secretary to the President Lalith Weeratunga. A meeting on this was scheduled for Tuesday. Salaries and Cadre Commission, Treasury and Education Ministry representatives were expected to participate in the meeting and a final decision was expected to be announced, it said.

Kith and kin of politicos in the PC fray

SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena said 267 had wanted to contest the two provinces on the government ticket. He told *The Island* that among the candidates fielded by the SLFP-led ruling coalition were nominees of the UNP Democratic Group. Among the nominees was Amarakeerthi Atukorale, a coordinating secretary to C. A. Suriyaarachchi, non-Cabinet Minister of Land and Land Development. The UNP Democratic Group would field three candidates in the Kegalle District and two in Anuradhapura.

The minister said the breakaway LTTE group, the TMVP had fielded a candidate on the government's Polonnaruwa list. "There are about 7,000 Tamil voters in my electorate," the minister who represents the Polonnaruwa District said.

Our inquiries revealed Labour Relations and Manpower Minister Athauda Seneviratne's son and Private Secretary Dr. Parakrama Seneviratne and his brother-in-law, too, would contest in the Kegalle District. Junior Finance Minister Ranjith Siyambalapitiya's first cousin, who is also his coordinating secretary, would contest in the Kegalle district.

Irrigation Minister Jayatissa Ranaweera's son, Ravindra is on the UPFA's Ratnapura list.

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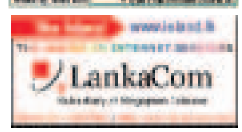
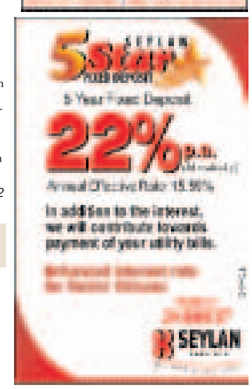
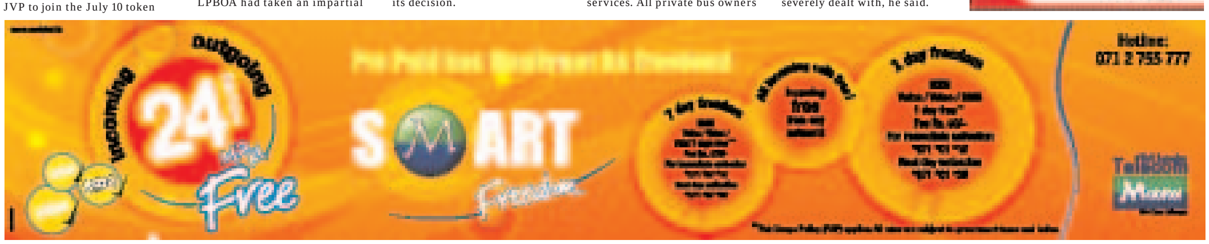




Private bus owners reject strike call

by Don Asoka Wijewardena

The Lanka Private Bus Owners Association has decided not to accede to the request made by the All Ceylon Transport Services Union affiliated to the JVP to join the July 10 token strike.

LPBOA President Gemunu Wijeratne told *The Island* that the LPBOA was not affiliated to any political party and as an association it would not join any politically-affiliated trade union to protest against issues. The LPBOA had taken an impartial decision not to join the strike as it shared a heavy responsibility with the government in the in the public transport sector. The JVP trade union in the CTB had approached the LPBOA to obtain its support and it had already informed the CTB trade union of its decision.

Wijeratne said that if it had been a common demand affecting the entire country, the LPBOA would have acceded to the request made by the CTB trade union, but as a matter of policy the LPBOA would never act irresponsibly to cripple the transport services. All private bus owners had been informed that they were free join the strike on their own, if they so wish, but not as representatives of the association. Bus owners could park their buses at home and any violent activities aimed at disrupting transport services would be severely dealt with, he said.