



The Island

Sri Lankan forces fight against odds in Singapore

Page 12



Mind your demand

Page 11

Soft state

Page 12

Vol. 27 No. 291 Monday 8th December, 2008 28 Pages Rs. 20 Registered in Sri Lanka as a Newspaper

Late City Edition

Final budget vote: Everybody is confident UNP pins hopes on Karu J

The final vote on the Budget 2009 will be taken after the third reading of the budget and the committee stage debate on the Ministry of Finance and Planning today (8). Speculation is rife that there would be some crossovers today in the House. The UNP is expecting some of its dissidents who are now with the government to return to the party's fold. The government is confident that its votes would increase today.

The centre of attraction in the House today will be Minister Karu Jayasuriya, who is expected to re-join the UNP. However, sources said he was not likely 'to show his hand' so early.

However, the second reading of the budget and the votes of the Defence Ministry and the Extension of the State of Emergency were won by the government with large majorities.

Hands down victory - Nimal

Leader of the House, Health and Nutrition Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said that the Government would win today's vote for the Third reading of the Budget hands down. He said that the Government had a clear majority in the House and that had been consistently displayed in the recent past. None of the Government MPs would cross over to the Opposition but the number of votes for the Government would increase, he said.

UNP will shoot down budget - Tissa

The UNP would defeat the government budget today, UNP General Secretary Tissa Attanayake said. Every lawmaker conscious of the public suffering under this regime must cast his or her vote to defeat the government, he said.

JVP will vote against - Anura

The JVP will vote against the budget, JVP Parliamentary Group leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said yesterday. The budget had not taken into account how to extricate the country from the present economic crisis. Eighty percent of budget allocations were for the ministries under the President and his relations and therefore, the JVP would vote against it, MP Dissanayake said.

LankaCom logo and website information.



Security forces have advanced 8.5 km further north from Omathai to newly captured Puliyankulam and set up a new roadblock in the centre of the town. (Pic courtesy Army Media)

We will not return - UNP dissidents

by Norman Palihawadana



Lokuge

UNP dissident members who joined the Government rejected Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe's open invitation to return to the party in the event of a general election.

"We left the party since there was no democracy and the situation has not improved. There is no need to go back," Sports and Public Recreation Minister Gamini Lokuge said.

Continued on page 2

Festschrift for Prof. Halpe

A festschrift volume dedicated to Prof. Ashley Halpe titled "Arbiters of a National Imaginary: Essays on Sri Lanka - Festschrift for Professor Ashley Halpe", edited by Chelva Kalinganayagam will be launched at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations Auditorium on Tuesday, December 9 at 5:30 p.m. See Page 10

Pakistan fears imminent Indian attack, alerts world

Mukherjee denies having issued any threats



Mukherjee

The Pakistani High Commissioner in London, Wajid Shamsul Hassan, says India is ready to launch a military strike on Pakistan in retaliation for the Mumbai terror attacks, AP has reported quoting Sky News.

Hassan has said British and American officials have to intervene to prevent India from carrying out an attack.

The AP report said: "On the day of the Mumbai attacks, I got some information in London that India was going to act very drastically against Pakistan in retaliation to what happened," Hassan told Sky News.

The senior diplomat alerted the Pakistani government and President Asif Ali Zardari to the threat.

In turn, Zardari urgently contacted high level British and American officials who intervened to calm the situation.

"The president spoke to people in various places and the next day Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke to Mr. Zardari and the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke to Shri Pranab Mukherjee, India's External affairs Minister," Hassan told Sky News. "It was probably because of that reason why the tension that was building up was eased a little."

There was no response to the claims made by Hassan from the Foreign Office.

"We do not comment on security issues," a spokeswoman told Sky News.

Following the attacks at the end of last month, which left more than 170 dead.

Continued on page 2

42 Lankan fishermen detained off Chennai

Chennai, Dec 7 (IANS) At least 42 Sri Lankan fishermen operating in Indian waters were detained in a northern seaford suburb here, the police said Sunday. Apprehended late Saturday night in eight boats by Coast Guard personnel, the fishermen allegedly without valid identities would be quizzed by the Joint Interrogation Committee comprising officials from the Coast Guard, navy and the collectorate to assess threat perceptions, police sources said.

Continued on page 2

Advertisement for Kanilanka Resort & Spa, Kallitara Sri Lanka. Includes images of the resort and text describing its amenities.

SLMC still open for discussion

by Ifham Nizam

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress yesterday said that it was still open for discussions with the Government.

SLMC Deputy General Secretary Nizam Kariyappan told 'The Island' yesterday, responding to a call by the Sri Lanka Muslim Ulama Party, a political movement of Muslim clergy, that the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress must publicise the conditions and demands it had put forward for joining the government.

"So far, we have not received an invitation. On the contrary, the United National Party has been invited to discussions."

He said for the SLMC to join the Government, the Government in turn should look into basic aspirations of the Muslims.

Continued on page 2

Lankan boats found abandoned off Tamil Nadu coast

LTTEers sneaking into TN

RAMESWARAM: Three more abandoned boats were found drifting in the coast on Friday, raising suspicion among officials that LTTE militants, involved in a fierce battle with the Sri Lankan army in the island's north, were sneaking into Tamil Nadu.

The boats found abandoned were located at Arichalmunai, Erandam and Moondram Theedat. Earlier six boats, some with bullet marks and blood stains, were found abandoned off Rameswaram and Nagapattinam coasts, on Thursday.

So many "mysterious" abandoned boats had been found. There was no chance for so many boats to drift to Indian shores.

Continued on page 2

Advertisement for FAX service, including contact information and a diagram of the service flow.