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Late City Edition

Vol. 27 No. 293 Wednesday 10th December, 2008 32 Pages Rs. 20 Registered in Sri Lanka as a Newspaper

## AG slams Health Ministry, SPC over waste and irregularities

### ...reveals serious shortcomings in overseas-funded projects

by Shamindra Ferdinando

With ministries under heavy pressure to stop wasting taxpayer's money and restore financial discipline, the Health Care and Nutrition Ministry has been censured by Auditor General S. Swarnajothi in his

2007 annual report to Parliament.

The AG has also faulted the ministry for underutilization of foreign aid which he estimated at 75 per cent and 73 per cent in two consecutive years and mismanagement of ten foreign funded projects.

The AG said that despite an

increase in financial allocation for health and a resultant significant improvement in health care during the 2005-2007 period, the ministry had failed to tackle waste, corruption and irregularities.

Among a series of irregularities was the failure of officers responsible for ten foreign fund-

ed projects implemented by Nimal Siripala de Silva's ministry to submit financial statements as requested by donor agencies. Authoritative sources said that this had prevented the donors and the AG's Department from knowing the actual amount spent on these heavily funded projects.

These projects had been also badly affected by the absence of effective internal audit, recruitment of staff outside the approved limit, non-rendition of documents in support of payments, non-recovery of specified taxes and fraudulent payments.

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### Ayeth Paninawadha?



President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday met the remaining members of the UNP Democratic Group at Temple Trees where he received an assurance that they wouldn't follow Karu Jayasuriya.

Pic Chandana Perera

### LTE hit-and-run units targeted by commandos

- Army returns more bodies
- SLAF recovers arms, ammo

The army has deployed elite troops in the East to neutralise LTTE units engaged in hit and run tactics in the wake of a series of attacks in the East, particularly targeting the breakaway LTTE faction and police.

Army headquarters said that commandos had zeroed-in on a group of LTTE cadres operating in the Bakmitiyawa jungles Monday morning killing four.

"We recovered their bodies along with four T 56 assault rifles," an army spokesman told *The Island* last night.

On Tuesday the bodies of eleven

LTTE cadres, including seven women killed in confrontations east of Mankulam over the past two days, were handed over to ICRC representatives to be moved across the frontline and handed over to the LTTE.

Air force headquarters spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara said that their ground troops had recovered four T 56 assault rifles and 240 rounds of ammunition from Kandalkadu, south of Trincomalee. He said that the recovery was made on information received by the SLAF (SF)

### India releases names, photos of Mumbai gunmen

MUMBAI, India (AP) - Indian police have released the names of the nine suspected Islamic militants killed during last month's attack on Mumbai. Chief police investigator Rakesh

Maria gave the gunmen's names and aliases at a briefing Tuesday. He showed photographs of eight of the men.

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## Naveen won't follow Pa-in-law Karu

### ● Karu hurt by President's attitude

by Dilanthi Jayamanne

Non Cabinet Minister of Investment Promotion Naveen Dissanayake will not return to the UNP although he is the son-in-law of ex-Public Administration Minister Karu Jayasuriya who re-converted to the UNP on Monday. Following Jayasuriya's return to the UNP there was widespread speculation that his son-in-law would follow suit.

Dissanayake yester-

day told *The Island* that his father-in-law returned to the UNP due to some differences he had with President Mahinda Rajapaksa. "I tried my best to bring about a settlement but Jayasuriya was hurt and determined to return to the UNP," Dissanayake said.

At the voting on the third reading of the Budget on Monday afternoon, Dissanayake was not present in Parliament and senior SLP sources said that he had earlier informed the President about his inability to be present due to some personal commitment at the time of voting.

Minister of Justice Dilan Perera commenting on Jayasuriya's action said that he was a gentleman in whatever party he belonged to.

UNP Gampaha District MP Dr.

Jayalath Jayawardena said that Jayasuriya's return had given a big boost to the UNP. "The UNP has been placed on a winning path by Jayasuriya's return and the Working Committee endorsing him as deputy leader," he said.

He expected more dissident UNP MPs to return to the party and claimed that it was due to the struggle put up by him along with MPs Johnston Fernando, Thalatha Athukorala

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Karu



Naveen

## Pakistan offers USD 10 m credit line for Lanka eNIC project

by Shamindra Ferdinando

Following the controversy over alleged irregularities in the evaluation of bidders for the eNIC project, *The Island* learns that Pakistan has offered a USD 10 million credit line to Sri Lanka to facilitate the proposed project if National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) secured the contract.

Sri Lanka's decision to replace the existing NIC is part of its efforts to thwart National Identity Card forgery and threats on national security.

During a visit by a group of Sri



NADRA facility

Lankan journalists to NADRA headquarters in Islamabad last week, its Deputy Chairman Tariq Maliq said that they could comfortably meet Sri Lanka's requirement. NADRA chairman Ali Arshad Hakeem and Maliq emphasised that they were the lowest bidder. Their offer of a USD 10 million credit line wouldn't go unnoticed, they stressed.

Pakistan established NADRA in 2000 during Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf tenure as the Pakistani leader.

They expressed confidence that Sri Lanka would take into consideration

their expertise as well as their offer of USD 10 million credit line and their being the lowest bidder. A Sri Lankan delegation had visited NADRA's state-of-the-art facility to take a first hand look at the operations. Tariq said, NADRA had also sent a team to Colombo.

Maliq said that the issue of Computerised NICs to Pakistanis would help prevent a range of fraudulent activity. It would also facilitate Pakistan's efforts against terrorism while enhancing the country's law enforcement apparatus.

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## Cancer hospital looks to public for funds to purchase drugs

By Dilanthi Jayamanne

A public fund will be initiated for the Maharagama Cancer Hospital by the Health Ministry to purchase necessary drugs for cancer patients. The need for cancer control drugs at the hospital is such that the public too would have to contribute towards their purchase.

A spokesperson for the Cancer Control Programme said yesterday (09) that several awareness programmes will be carried out for the public to induce them to contribute towards the fund. At present the Health Department alone cannot cater to the requirement.

The shortage of several drugs at the Maharagama Cancer Institute was brought to the notice of Health Minister

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## UNP picks nominations committee

The UNP has set up a six-member nominations committee to select candidates to contest the forthcoming Central and Wayamba provincial councils.

Except for S. B. Dissanayake's selection by the party as the Chief Ministerial candidate for the Central Provincial Council no other nominees have been selected, UNP sources said.

The Nominations Committee comprises Messrs Rukman Senanayake, Tissa Attanayake, S. Swaminathan, S. B. Dissanayake, Jayawickrema Perera and Joseph Michael Perera.(NP)

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