

## Afghan commission declares Karzai winner

KABUL — Afghanistan's election commission has canceled Saturday's presidential runoff and proclaimed President Hamid Karzai victor of the war-ravaged nation's tumultuous ballot. Independent Election Commission chairman Azizullah Lodin announced

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## Mahinda Balasuriya new police chief



President Mahinda Rajapaksa appointed Senior DIG Mahinda Balasuriya the new Inspector General of Police yesterday (02).

He succeeds IGP Jayantha Wickremaratne who retired from office yesterday.

IGP Balasuriya is the senior most police officer in the department.

Balasuriya, who is an old boy of Ananda College, Colombo, joined the Police Department in 1978, and has held a number of key posts, including those of Senior DIG, Range I and Range III.

# Gota says Gen. Fonseka alerted him to US move

## On fast track to nation building



One hundred children from the Vanni took a train ride to Colombo yesterday to participate in an art exhibition together with an equal number of children from the families of war heroes. The exhibition organised by the D. S. Senanayake College, Colombo, will be held today (03) and tomorrow at the National Art Gallery as part of a fund raising programme to rebuild the Omanthai railway station.

(Picture by Nishan S. Priyantha)

by Shamindra Ferdinando

Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said the government would do everything possible to thwart US moves to use Chief of Defence General Sarath Fonseka as a 'source' against the Sri Lankan political and military leaders. The government had acted swiftly and decisively after Gen. Fonseka had brought the planned US action to his notice, the Defence Secretary said.

Rajapaksa told *The Island* that General Fonseka, who was in the US on a brief visit had

alerted him last Friday (October 30) to the US move. A US government official had contacted Gen. Fonseka on Wednesday (October 28) and informed him that there was a requirement to 'interview' regarding the Defence Minister in connection with alleged human rights violations during the war against

the LTTE. When Fonseka had pointed out that the President held the Defence portfolio, the US official had said that he referred to Gotabhaya Rajapaksa.

Responding to our queries, the Defence

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## Twelve Sri Lankans lost in asylum sea tragedy



A dozen Sri Lankan asylum-seekers are feared dead after their vessel capsized in heavy seas as they sailed direct from Sri Lanka, apparently in an attempt to avoid the Rudd government's "Indonesian solution".

As aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Flying Doctor Service scoured the Indian Ocean for any trace of those still unaccounted for, a Newspan taken for *The Australian* showed support for the Rudd government had slumped as the asylum-seeker debate dominated the headlines.

Primary support for the Coalition rose seven points to 41 per cent, level with the ALP, which also polled 41 per cent.

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## Lankan asylum seekers admit living in Indonesia



Most of the Sri Lankan asylum seekers in a stand-off with Australian authorities off the coast of the Riau Islands have admitted that they have been living in Indonesia for years. They have thus provided the Rudd Government with leverage to convince Indonesia to take them back, Australian media reported yesterday.

*The Age* newspaper said the development was seen by Australian officials as a possible circuit-breaker to the stand-off, which had caused much political and diplomatic anguish.

*The Age* report said: Indonesia's senior official in charge of the matter, Sujatmiko, said he was unaware of the history of the asylum seekers but asked that all information be passed to him as a matter of urgency.

In written messages thrown off the Oceanic Viking, the Australian customs ship that has been home to the 78 ethnic Tamils for the past two weeks, the asylum seekers said they had been living in Indonesia for as long as five years.

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## Lanka's breast feeding rate an amazing success story - UNICEF



by Dasun Edirisinghe

Sri Lanka's breastfeeding campaign initiated in 1979 when the rate of breastfeeding was a mere 10 per cent had increased

to 76 per cent during 30 years, Chief of the Health and Nutrition Section of UNICEF Sri Lanka Dr. Moazzem Hossain said.

A baby could survive for six months on mother's milk alone even without a single drop of water," Dr. Hossain said at a press conference in Colombo.

He said that the Sri Lanka's successful national programme of breastfeeding was one of the reasons for selecting Sri Lanka as the next venue of Asia's breastfeeding Forum.

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## US move to question Gen. Fonseka

# It's wrong for US to seek privilege info - FM

'Whatever he knows is privileged'

Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama yesterday said whatever Gen. Sarath Fonseka knew in his capacity as the former Army Commander and the present Chief of Defence Staff was privileged and it was wrong for the US to ask him to reveal it without the agreement of the government of Sri Lanka. He said the Green Card was a visa arrangement and that could not make the allegiance of the CDS to the Government of Sri Lanka be subordinated to any other country.

Minister Bogollagama was answering a question whether the CDS, a Green Card holder would be subject to US laws and obliged to answer questions by the Department of Homeland Security. President Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Government of Sri Lanka stood firmly behind the Office of the Chief of Defence Staff of Sri Lanka and would not allow that high post to be denigrated or made vulnerable, said Minister Bogollagama.

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Lanka won't allow CDS post denigrated

Q. The main function of the Dept of Homeland Security (DHS) is to protect US from terrorism. So why does it want to question Defence Secretary of Sri Lanka on HR?

A. That is an interesting matter which will be the subject of much discussion as to why a department that has its main function to safeguard the US from terrorism wants to question a person who was largely responsible for defeating terrorism here.

Answering another question as to whether CDS Gen Sarath

Fonseka being a Green Card Holder will be subject to US laws and will be obliged to answer questions put to him by DHS, he said: "The Green Card is a visa arrangement. The holding of a green card cannot make his primary allegiance to the Government of Sri Lanka be subordinated to any other country. Whatever he knows is his capacity as CDS and former Army Commander is privileged, and it is wrong to ask him to reveal it to any others, without the agreement of the Government of Sri Lanka."



Bogollagama

## Lankans sent to Saudi as drivers end up as shepherds

By Norman Palihawadena

Hundreds of Lankans sent for employment as domestic drivers to Saudi Arabia have ended up as shepherds, Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council Opposition leader Ranjan Ramanayake said yesterday.

Mr. Ramanayake who claims to have first hand

knowledge of working conditions of Sri Lankans in the Middle East and who had been a frequent traveler to those countries told *The Island* last week that about 350 Sri Lankans were living under a bridge in Jeddah in a place called Serphina with out adequate food and other facilities. He also said they were people who were either chased

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## Largest cruise ship squeezes under Danish bridge

KORSOER, Denmark — The world's largest cruise ship cleared a crucial obstacle Sunday, lowering its smokestacks to squeeze under a bridge in Denmark.

The Oasis of the Seas

— which rises about 20 stories high — passed below the Great Belt Fixed Link with a slim margin as it left the Baltic Sea on its maiden voyage to Florida.

Bridge operators said

that even after lowering its telescopic smokestacks the giant ship had less than a 2-foot (half-meter) gap.

Hundreds of people gathered on beaches at both ends of the bridge,

waiting for hours to watch the brightly lit behemoth sail by shortly after midnight (2300GMT; 7 p.m. EDT).

"It was fantastic to see it glide under the bridge.

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Limbo dance: The Oasis of the Seas clears a crucial obstacle, lowering its smokestacks, to squeeze under the Great Belt Bridge as it leaves the Baltic Sea with barely 2ft to spare

## JVP not sure of 'Sarath'

by Dasun Edirisinghe

The JVP will not field its leader Somawansa Amarasinghe as the party's presidential candidate, JVP General Secretary Tilvin Silva told *The Island*. He said the JVP continued to look for a common candidate who was neither JVP nor UNP.

The JVP's priority, he said, was the abolition of the executive presidency.

Gen. Sarath Fonseka, he said, would not be the JVP's presidential candidate. The General, he said, had not announced his entry into politics and the JVP would decide on its candidate after the government declared a presidential election.



Tilvin

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