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No majority in Eastern province

## UPFA win provincial elections

By Shamindra Ferdinando

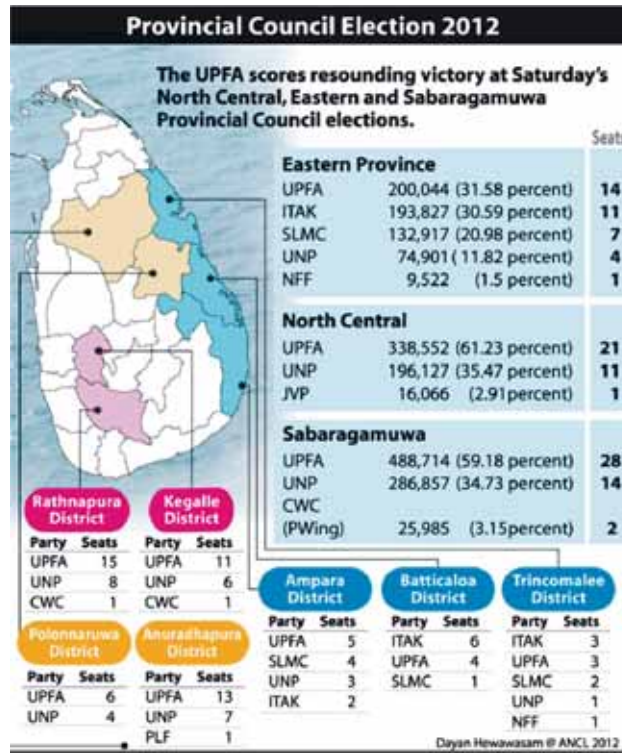
(Island.lk) - The ruling UPFA has comfortably bagged the Sabaragamuwa and North-Central Provinces and secured the highest number of seats in the Eastern Province at Saturday's PC polls. It obtained 488,174 votes (59.18%) and 28 seats in the Sabaragamuwa Province, 338,552 votes (61.23%) and 21 seats in the North Central and 200,004 votes (31.58%) and 14 seats in the Eastern Province. Minister Dallas Alahapperuma told The Island last night that the UPFA was confident of forming an administration in the Eastern Province as the party that had won the council and no one should have any doubts about it. The UNP obtained 286,857 (34.73%) votes and 14 seats in the Sabaragamuwa Province, 196,127 (35.47%) votes and 11 seats in the North-Central Province and 74,901 (11.82%) votes and four seats in

the Eastern Province. The ITAK (or TNA) secured 193,827 (30.59%) votes and 11 seats in the Eastern Province while the SLMC obtained 132,917 (20.98%) votes and seven seats in the Eastern Province. The JVP has lost both seats it had in the previous Sabaragamuwa PC, but retained the single seat it had in the NCP. Minister Wimal Weerawansa's National Freedom Front has sprung a surprise in the East by winning a seat. Minister Alahapperuma said that the result of Sabaragamuwa and North Central Provinces had been a foregone conclusion. The UNP never posed a serious threat in those provinces, whereas the JVP was no longer a politically viable force. The JVP was irrelevant, the SLFP strategist said, adding that the UPFA's victory in the Eastern Province was significant as it contested on its own. The MP said that

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's role in the campaign, at the last phase, made a significant difference and helped the party to regain the province. The first PC poll for the newly created Eastern PC was won by the UPFA in May 2008, less than a year after the liberation of the province. The UPFA won all electorates in the North Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces at Saturday's polls. It also secured the Kalkudah electorate in the Batticaloa District, Seruwila in the Trincomalee district and Ampara in the Digamadulla electorate. Although the UPFA failed to secure the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts, its performance in the Digamadulla electoral district helped it to win the Eastern Province. The UPFA polled 200,044 votes to win 14 seats and the TNA 193,827 to secure 11 seats in the Eastern PC. The SLMC obtained 132,917 votes to

secure seven seats. The UNP ended a distant fourth polling 74,901 votes and obtaining four seats, whereas the UPFA constituent, the National Freedom Front (NFF) polled 9,522 votes to secure one seat. Interestingly, the breakaway JVP faction won its solitary seat in the council, though it contested only the Trincomalee district. The NFF didn't contest in Batticaloa, while it placed one candidate on the UPFA ticket in the Digamadulla electoral district. Minister Wimal Weerawansa yesterday told The Island said that the NFF would never have contested on its own if the UPFA accommodated Wijesekera on its Trincomalee District list. The MP insisted that the NFF didn't undermine the UPFA campaign in Trincomalee.

The UNP campaign in the Eastern Province was led by its National Organiser, Daya Gamage, a former Opposition Leader of the Eastern PC. The Socialist Alliance (SA), comprising three other UPFA constituents, Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Democratic Left Front,



failed in its bid to make an impression in the East, though it contested all three districts. The SA led by Ministers, Dew Gunasekera (CPSL), Prof. Tissa Vitharana (LSSP) and ... CONT ON P8



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By Reggie Fernando - OUR MAN IN COLOMBO  
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