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ISSUE 1150

## Happy Christmas from Newslanka

Next weeks paper, Issue 1151, will be in the shops on Saturday 28th December 2013. The 2014 Calendar will be in that issue.

### Political tussel in Northern Province intensifies

By D.B.S.JEYARAJ

(www.dbsjeyaraj.com) - Sri Lanka's Northern Provincial council is presently entangled in an intricate imbroglio. The newly elected chief minister CV Wigneswaran of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) is at loggerheads with G.A. Chandrasiri the Governor appointed for the Province by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. This titanic clash between the former Supreme court Judge and the retired Army Major-General has virtually paralysed the Northern Provincial council besides raising Constitutional issues of a controversial nature. Though the highly personalised nature of the ongoing tussel may convey an impression that it is a case of Chandrasiri vs Wigneswaran, the problem goes far beyond personal relations. It is at one level an institutional trial of strength between the posts of Governor and chief minister. It could also be interpreted as a tussel between centripetal and centrifugal forces. At another related level it is a public manifestation of the continuing cold war between the Government of

President Rajapaksa and the Tamil national alliance. It is also possible that the current imbroglio is a symptom of a deceptive proxy war waged by extremist Tamil Diaspora elements against the Provincial council system itself and that Wigneswaran has wittingly or unwittingly allowed himself to be converted as its cutting edge. The TNA in general and CV Wigneswaran in particular have sought to paint a picture in which Governor Chandrasiri is portrayed as the villain of the piece. A few like TNA spokesperson Suresh Premachandran charge that the Governor is backed by the President himself. Despite the TNA attempt to lay all blame on the Government and governor a fair scrutiny of the situation would reveal that the TNA cannot be entirely absolved of blame in this matter. Recent events indicate that the TNA could and should have handled the issue with greater finesse and resolved the problem instead of aggravating it. Moreover the political integrity of the TNA too is questionable in

this matter. The TNA takes delight in describing General Chandrasiri as a military governor. Chief Minister Wigneswaran has referred to him in media interviews as the "military official serving as Governor of the Northern Province". TNA leaders continue to denigrate Chandrasiri as a "military governor" in public fora and demand that he be removed and a civilian governor appointed. "MILITARY GOVERNOR" Is the stance adopted by the TNA in this correct? Chandrasiri is a retired Major-General but after retirement has he not acquired civilian status? It does not seem to be fair to keep referring to him as a "military governor" in derogatory fashion and seek replacement on those grounds alone. Precedents have been established where retired officers from the armed



Oath taking ceremony in Oct 2013

forces have been appointed to top posts. Former Army chief Sepala Attygalle and ex-Navy chief Rajan Kadirgamar have served as Ministry secretaries. Several retired Generals and commanders have served as ambassadors and high commissioners. Retired generals Nalin Seneviratne and Asoka Jayawardene functioned as Governors... **CONT ON P6**

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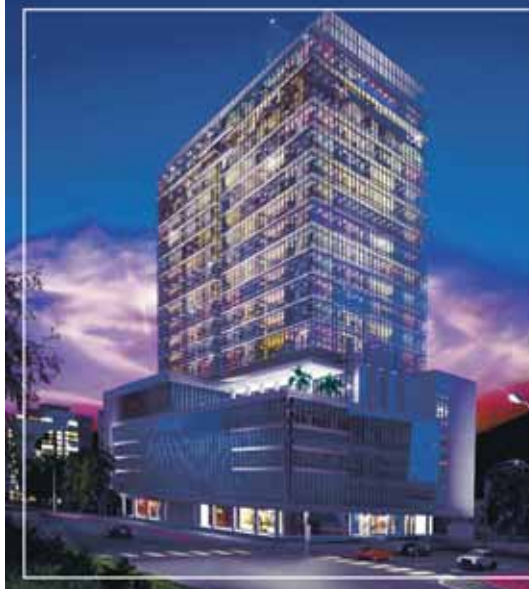
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