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MR presents Budget 2015

(Island.lk) - President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday presented his tenth budget in Parliament. Having presented the budget for the next fiscal year, a smiling President Mahinda Rajapaksa asked the opposition, "How is the Budget presented by a godaya [a country bumpkin]?" He was responding to a UNP MP who had claimed that the country was being ruined by a cabal of 'country bumpkins'. Earlier, the government advanced the presentation of the budget by about one month in view of an early presidential election expected during the second week of January next year. President proposed to increase the minimum monthly income of public servants to Rs. 25,000 inclusive of a 2,200-rupee cost of living allowance increase with effect from January 2015. The special allowance for state employees will be added to their basic salary while the minimum salary will be

increased to Rs. 15,000 per month. The cost of living allowance provided to all state employees will be increased by Rs 2,200 to Rs. 10,000 from January 2015. Thereby, the minimum monthly income of a government sector employee will increase to Rs. 25,000.

will be increased. The government plans to increase the university intake to 100,000 by 2020. The EPF contribution from the employer will be increased upto 14%. Those whose children are serving in the armed forces and police will be paid Rs.

- *Rs. 25,000 minimum monthly income for public servants
- *CoL allowance up by Rs. 2,200; Rs. 5,000 allowance for doctors
- * Allowances for university teachers and non-academics increased
- * University intake to be increased to 100,000 by 2020
- * Employer's EPF contribution increased to 14%
- * Special tax on vehicle imports; USD 100 per casino entry
- * Guaranteed price of paddy up from Rs. 34 to Rs 40 per kilo
- * Basic minimum salary of Rs. 10,000 for private sector
- * 5,000 new teacher assistants to be recruited
- * Mahapola grant increased to Rs 4,000
- * Economic growth of 8.2% expected
- * Budget deficit to be reduced to 4.6% of GDP

The President proposed that the minimum wage of private sector employees be increased to Rs. 10,000 and an increment of Rs. 500 be given to private sector employees drawing less than Rs. 10,000. Allowances for university lecturers, non-academics, doctors and judicial officers

1,000 monthly with effect from January 2015. Mahapola scholarship stipend will be increased from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 4,000 from January next year. Monthly allowance for those who have passed the Grade Five Scholarship examination will be increased from Rs. 500 to Rs 1,500 from January next year; the number of recipients will be increased from 15,000 to 25,000. President Rajapaksa proposed a special tax on vehicle imports, and USD 100 casino entrance tax. The Value Added tax (VAT) will be reduced to 11 per cent from the current 12



A smiling President Rajapaksa on his way to present his 10th budget. Pic by Kamal Boggs

per cent and the maximum Pay As You Earn Tax (PAYE) rate will be fixed at 16%. Bank of Ceylon ... CONT ON P 8

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15 dead and over 200 missing in landside

(asianmirror.lk) - Over 15 people are believed to be dead and over 200 missing due to landslide that occurred in the hill country of Sri Lanka early this morning. More than 10 bodies have already been recovered by teams who are conducting rescue operations, multiple sources confirmed. Meeriyabaddawatta, a village near Haldummulla, was severely affected due to landslide and over 120 houses in the area have been completely destroyed, Sarath Lal Kumara, Assistant Director of the Disaster Management Centre told Asian Mirror. 14 bodies have already been recovered by rescue teams and hundreds are believed to be under the rubble, the DMC further added. Most of the houses that have been destroyed are 'line houses' that are occupied by estate workers. However, rescue missions, which are still underway, are being hampered due to poor weather conditions, reporters on the ground told

Asian Mirror. In addition to rescue workers, military personnel have also been deployed to assist in rescue missions in Koslanda, Haldummulla and Meeriyabedda. Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Amaraweera has confirmed media that over 150 people are missing. The Sri Lanka Army said two camps have been set up in Ampitikanda and Koslanda doe displaced persons. Education officials on Wednesday announced that ten schools in the Haldummulla education division will remain closed till Monday due to the disaster. Meanwhile, people are strictly advised to stay away from the areas that are affected due to possibility of more landslides. President Mahinda Rajapaksa, a short while ago ordered relevant authorities to expedite ongoing operations and rescue those who are trapped in the area.

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