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SLMC pledges support to MS, but won't topple UPFA-run Eastern PC

SLMC leaves Government

By Shamindra Ferdinando

Having quit the SLFP-led UPFA government, the SLMC on Sunday declared its support to Opposition presidential candidate Maithripala Sirisena. The SLMC also revealed that it was seeking an electoral agreement with the main Opposition UNP to contest on its ticket at the next parliamentary election, while assuring the government that it wouldn't topple the UPFA-run Eastern Provincial Council (EPC). Addressing the media at SLMC headquarters, Darussalam at Slave Island, SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem said that the party had joined Maithripala Sirisena's camp to ensure the re-

establishment of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution. Hakeem stressed that as the party strongly believed in good governance and accountability the re-establishment of the 17th was high on its agenda. Flanked by members of his parliamentary group as well as other elected and nominated members at Provincial Councils and Local Government bodies, Hakeem said that he had given up justice portfolio in accordance with a unanimous decision taken by the party. The repealing of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution in September, 2010 to pave the way for the 18th Amendment had caused turmoil in the country. The

18th Amendment had caused irrevocable damage, Hakeem said, asserting that people of all communities wanted to see what he called a reversal of the situation. The 18th amendment was passed in parliament with a majority of 114 votes. The required 2/3 majority was obtained with 161 members voting for it and 17 against it. The eight-member SLMC parliamentary group voted for the 18th Amendment. The SLMC contested the last parliamentary election on the UNP ticket in April 2010. Subsequently it switched allegiance to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Responding to a query regarding the

SLMC's position at the EPC, Hakeem said that his party was committed to UPFA-SLMC provincial administration though two SLMC ministers had quit their portfolios. Hakeem insisted there was absolutely no dispute with the government as regards the running of the EPC. The SLMC leader dismissed the notion that he was having discussions with the five-party Tamil National Alliance (TNA) to decide the future of the EPC. The UPFA polled 200,044 votes to secure 14 out of the total 37 seats at the EPC. The TNA won 11 seats after securing 193,827 votes whereas the SLMC which contested alone, won 7 seats with 132,917 votes. CONT ON P12

TNA decides to support Maithri

(ColomboGazette.com) - The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has decided to back common opposition Presidential candidate Maithripala Sirisena at the Presidential election next year. TNA leader R. Sampanthan made the announcement at a press conference this morning in the presence of other TNA members. The TNA said that it had offered unconditional support to the Government and had not signed an agreement. TNA Parliamentarian M.A Sumanthiran said that the TNA had also not discussed withdrawing troops from the North, as alleged by the Government. The TNA said that before reaching the decision it had given careful consideration to the positions and pronouncements of the two main candidates at the upcoming

Presidential election and has also undertaken an extensive process of consultation to hear the views of the Tamil speaking people, particularly those in the North and East. "As the political leadership of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, we have a historical duty to guide our people and the wider citizenry in the choice they will be called on to make at the election. The values of democracy, good governance and rule of law have suffered unprecedented assault under the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime. The TNA therefore believes that it is essential for the health of Sri Lanka's democracy that the authoritarian and dictatorial trajectory on which the Rajapaksa regime has set the country be reversed urgently," it said. The TNA feels the Rajapaksa regime has only brought pain and suffering to the Tamil

speaking peoples of this country and instead of pursuing reconciliation, the Rajapaksa regime has permitted extremist groups to carry out attacks against minority peoples and their places of religious worship. "We have taken note of and welcome the Common Opposition Candidate's undertakings, amongst others, to abolish the Executive Presidency, repeal the Eighteenth Amendment, restore independent commissions and guarantee primacy to the rule of law. The TNA believes that genuine restoration of democracy to the country will only be meaningfully achieved when the Sri Lankan state is structured to accommodate the aspirations of all its diverse peoples to meaningfully access state power, and when all Sri Lanka's citizens are treated equally. We sincerely hope that in the ... SEE P 12

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