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## Coalition cheer at UNP 70th

(FT.lk) - President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said they are committed to fulfill the promises they made and lead the country towards economic stability and establish a prosperous nation while ensuring democracy and freedom for the public. Participating as the Chief Guest at the 70th Anniversary Celebration of the United National Party (UNP) held at the Campbell Park in Borella under the patronage of the UNP leader Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, the President said his Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the UNP, together are able to build the country standing on the same stage as both parties share a common stance on many fields. The UNP 70th anniversary celebrations were organised under the theme 'New Country to Gather People in the Forward March'. Addressing the massive gathering, President Sirisena noted that a large number over 6.2 million people who voted to elect him as president were UNP members and appreciated their tireless efforts to give him the opportunity change the course of the country. The President said the two parties are committed not to allow any foreign forces to dominate the sovereignty of the nation and the people and to work together for many years. Commending the work carried out by former leaders of the UNP to serve all Sri Lankans, the President stressed that the UNP can take the lead

role to overcome the present political instability and economic crisis while establishing lasting reconciliation and peace in the country. The President also stressed that action will be taken to build the country by strengthening national reconciliation, democratic freedom within the Unity Government. He asserted that there will be not be any opportunities for corruption, malpractices, robberies, wastage and nepotism in the country. All these things had been rejected by the people on 8 January 2015, he added. Leader of the UNP, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe addressing the convention said the UNP will lead Sri Lanka towards economic stability and create a better country for the future generation. He said the party is focused on future of the country and will work to ease the debt burden loaded by the Rajapaksa administration on the country so the future generation will not have to inherit the burden. Sri Lanka's debt burden will be reduced significantly by the year 2020, he added. The Prime Minister said the UNP is committed to ensure human rights and economic development in the country. The UNP has been a major political force in Sri Lanka and it is the major political entity that shaped Sri Lanka's recent history. Expressing delight over the participation of leaders of other political parties at the UNP Convention, ... **SEE PAGE 11**



President Maithripala Sirisena and Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe along with UNP Chairman Malik Samarawickrama and former President Chandrika Kumaratunga all smiles during the UNP's 70th Party Convention on Saturday - Pic by Pradeep Pathirana



Presentation of the Tournament T-Shirt (from left): Thanveer Siddique - Fortune, Ravi Dias - Tokyo Cement, Ashan Malalasekera, Arinam Holdings, Muthiah Muralitharan, Kushil Gunasekera - Founder Chief Trustee FoG and Mahela Jayawardene. Picture by Herbert Perera

## Murali Harmony Cup to launch on Sep 20 in Kilinochchi

(Dailynews.lk) - The 2016 Murali Harmony Cup will be launched on September 20 in Kilinochchi, organisers confirmed on Thursday. The Murali Cup is a reconciliation cricket tournament that promotes unity, goodwill, teamwork, the spirit of fair play and service to disadvantaged rural communities in post-war Sri Lanka. The tournament is organised by former Sri Lanka cricketer Muthiah Muralitharan's charity the Foundation of Goodness with assistance from the Sri Lanka Army. The 5-day event featuring U19 schoolboys and U23 women cricketers is being played at five grounds across Northern Sri Lanka in

the towns of Jaffna, Oddusuddan, Mankulam and Kilinochchi. This year's tournament is the fifth edition since the inaugural event in 2012, and includes a total of 24 teams meaning a total of 360 cricketers, most from disadvantaged rural schools from across the island. "It is a proud moment for me to see the 5th consecutive edition of the Murali Harmony Cup take place in the North as it continues to foster friendship and unity between communities from all across the island," tournament founder Muralitharan told the media. "I wish all the players the best and hope they will enjoy the new experiences that this tournament will bring." **SEE P22**

## Death sentence for Duminda!

(FT.LK) - The high profile Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra murder trial came to a dramatic end yesterday, with ex-Parliamentarian Duminda Silva, a close ally of former Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa being sentenced to death for the murder of the SLFP politico by the Colombo High Court yesterday. A three judge bench of the High Court issued death sentences on Silva and four others when the verdict was delivered on the assassination of Premachandra, a former SLFP parliamentarian who was gunned down in Kolonnawa five years ago. The bench announced a divided verdict in the high profile case with the majority decision in favour of sentencing Silva and four others to death. High Court Judge Pathmini N. Ranawaka delivering the majority verdict before a packed court house yesterday noted that the prosecution had proved during the trial that Silva had led the others in the

attack that resulted in Premachandra's murder. Judge Ranawala held that medical reports submitted into evidence by the prosecution had shown that Silva had been under the influence of alcohol during the brawl. The verdict also rejected the argument put forward by the defence at trial that Silva had been shot first by the Premachandra faction. President of the trial-at-bar High Court Judge Shiran Guneratne differed in his verdict, exonerating all 13 accused in the murder trial due to the lack of integrity of the witnesses produced by the prosecution at trial and its inability to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubt. The majority judgment acquitted eight other accused in the case. Anura Thushara De Mel, Chaminda Ravi Jayanath alias Dematagoda Chaminda, Sarath Bandara and Priyantha Janaka Bandara were four others also convicted

of the Premachandra murder and sentenced to death by the High Court. Silva and four others were charged with unlawful assembly and attempted murder. Legal counsel for Duminda Silva, President's Counsel Anil Silva commenting on the verdict said that it was the first time in the country's legal history that an accused with a 'life-threatening' illness was being sentenced to capital punishment. In his statement on the dock shortly before the verdict was delivered, Duminda Silva told court that he was innocent of the charges. A tearful Hirunika Premachandra, who has regularly attended

the trial proceedings into her father's killing told reporters outside the court room that the verdict in the case may have been very different if the Government had not changed last year. **SEE P6**



Duminda Silva smiles as people greet him prior to the judgment - Pix by Pradeep Pathirana

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