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CBSL bond issue

COPE Chairman Handunetti vows to 'reveal all'

By Dharisha Bastians (FT.LK) - The Central Bank's controversial bond auctions in 2015 and 2016 under former Governor Arjuna Mahendran continued to haunt the UNF-led Government on Tuesday, dominating heated debates in Parliament amid allegations that ruling party members were attempting to influence a legislative oversight committee to change its report on the controversy.

Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) Chairman Sunil Handunetti on Tuesday vowed to "reveal all" when he tabled a report on a 21-month investigation into the controversial treasury bond auction, amid apologies from Government committee members and calls by the Joint Opposition for the resignation of the Prime Minister over the scandal.

Making a brief intervention in the House last evening, Handunetti said he would tell the country everything that happened during COPE deliberations on the CBSL bond report. "We were planning to present the report. But a decision was taken at the Committee to present the report on the 25 October or during this week. The Committee will meet at 2.30 p.m. on 26 October. A part of the report has been sent for translation. We will discuss the matter further tomorrow and will submit the final report within the course of this week," he said.

Joining the heated debate, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe



Ranil Wickremesinghe



Sunil Handunetti

requested Parliament to have faith in the Parliamentary Committee system and to wait till the report was published. "You are calling me a thief but all the thieves are there on your side. Please go in front of the mirror to find thieves. The Central Bank incident was considered by the last Parliament. I have

appointed the Pitipana Committee which has recommended assigning the investigation to Parliament. Thereafter the general elections were held. Now COPE is investigating this. We all need to find out the reasons for this," he told the House. Responding to an allegation by UPFA MP Wimal Weerawansa that there was an attempt to prevent the COPE report on the bond auctions being presented to Parliament, Wickremesinghe

expressed confidence in COPE Chairman Sunil Handunetti and said the report would be tabled in the near future.

"The outcome could have several reports. We all elected a COPE Chairman and have faith in him. We need to strengthen the Committees of Parliament. I know the Chairman is shouldering a difficult task. If this investigation was conducted during the previous President's tenure the report would not have come out for at least 10 years," said the Prime Minister.

Handunetti stormed out of a third day of deliberations on the CBSL report on Monday, alleging that UNP members of COPE were trying to influence the Auditor General to change his report. In a remarkable development, UNP COPE member and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Harsha De Silva apologised to Handunetti, if the Chairman had felt that the UNP members had wronged him and said any slight had been wholly unintended.

"When he left the meeting last evening, I ran after him," said the Deputy Minister, "I said Sunil, please

don't go." De Silva said the UNP had "great respect" for Chairman Handunetti who had conducted affairs admirably within the legislative watchdog committee. He categorically denied that the UNP was carrying out a contract to protect certain individuals.

"I always work only according to my conscience, and my conscience is clear," De Silva told the House last evening. He claimed that the UNP did not threaten the Auditor General as claimed in media reports. "I spoke to the Auditor General today for 45 minutes. I asked him about what has been reported in the press. I asked him if we had threatened him or insulted him. He replied that we had only been debating the technicalities," the Deputy Foreign Minister charged. Members of COPE were going public with allegations that...**SEE P12**

Sri Lanka gets more generous this year



Sri Lanka has moved up three notches and ranked fifth in the 2016 World Giving Index (WGI) compiled by the UK based Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and released on Monday. About 148,000 people in 140 countries were surveyed as part of the Gallup World Poll by the CAF to compile this year's index, which

looked at sub categories of number of people donating money, participation in helping a stranger and participation in volunteering time. Sri Lanka was ranked eight last year and ninth, the year before. Myanmar continues to top the list as the most generous country followed by the US, Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

Congratulations Ashley Palipana

Ashley recently won a British Citizen Youth Award. See P17 for more information.



Hartal in Jaffna over deaths of two students

By P.K.Balachandran (newindianexpress.com) - The Chief Minister of Sri Lanka's Northern Province, C.V.Wigneswaran, has appealed to the people of the province, especially the youth, to be calm as they mourn the killing of two university students by the police. In a statement released from London, the Chief Minister said that while conveying his condolences to the bereaved families, he would appeal to the people not to express their anger and grief in ways which would have unpleasant consequences. Wigneswaran said that he would not comment on the incident before the court had given its verdict. All that he would say now is that the apparently, doctrine of using minimum force had not been observed by the police.

University students Nadaraya Kajan and Pavunraj Sulakshan, who were on a motorcycle, were killed late at night on October 20, when the police opened fire on them at a checkpoint because they

did not stop when asked to. One boy was shot in the chest and the other died when the motorcycle crashed. Both were in their early twenties. The police tried to cover up the killing by claiming that the boys died in an accident. But the government medical officer had certified that one of the boys had died of bullet wounds. The hartal called by all Tamil political parties and organizations, was peaceful and total. Government offices, banks and commercial establishments were shut as no one turned up for work. Schools and the university were shut. All public transport vehicles were off the roads from 6 am to 6 pm. Sources in Jaffna said that there were no untoward incidents. Students of ten universities in the South held demonstrations in

support of the protest in the Tamil North. President Maithripala Sirisena had ordered the arrest of the five policemen manning the checkpoint and a Jaffna court had remanded them till November 4. For their safety the policemen were sent to Anuradhapura prison.



Northern Province Chief Minister, C.V.Wigneswaran



A gang allegedly called the 'AAVA' has claimed responsibility for an attack on two policemen in Chunnakam n Monday(24). In a leaflet it was claimed that the attack was in retaliation for the student deaths. See inside for more.

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