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Ravi K's fate hangs in balance

By Ashwin Hemmathagama

FT.LK) - The wait for a decision on the fate of Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake continues as Parliament was told that an official ruling was required.

According to Speaker Karu Jayasuriya, the next step of the no-confidence motion signed by 32 MPs against Minister Karunanayake will be announced in Parliament.

"I received the motion. A Presidential Commission is investigating the matter and it is sub judice and the Attorney General is contacted. I will decide what can be done with regard to the motion after I receive the Attorney General's response," said Speaker Jayasuriya, who also stated that the matter was also taken up at the party leaders meeting.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who ensured the House that all proceedings would be conducted with the utmost transparency, said: "Are you asking the Foreign Minister to go before the UN office in Colombo with a mat and start a demonstration there? The Speaker will inform the

House of his decision."

Chief Opposition Whip Anura Kumara Disanayake said the motion has not been entered in the order book of Parliament. "First, it should be entered into the order book before consulting the Attorney General."

In response, the Prime Minister stated that he also got to know about the motion from the media. "I too came to know about the motion from newspaper reports. I did not see it. The Speaker will act accordingly; we have no objection to his decision. He will enter the matter in the order paper on Wednesday or on Thursday," he said. The Speaker said that he would wait for the Attorney General's opinion and let the House know whether the motion could be entered in the order book and could be taken up for debate in the House.

No-Faith motion

By P.K. Balachandran

(LankaBusinessOnline.com) - Thirty two members of the Joint Opposition in the Sri Lankan

parliament on Thursday submitted to the Speaker a Motion of No Confidence against Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake for alleged financial links with Arjuna Aloysius, a businessman involved in the 2015 Central Bank bond scam.

Leader of the National Freedom Front, Wimal Weerawansa, told the media that due to the bond scam, Karunanayake is ineligible to hold the post of Foreign Minister.

This is the second time that Karunanayake will be facing a Motion of No Confidence. In March 2016, he was subjected to one in which he was accused of misleading parliament about the state of the economy. But that motion was defeated comprehensively in June.

Opposition MP Weerawansa said that he was appalled by the answers Karunanayake gave to the Presidential Commission investigating the scam on Wednesday.

The Foreign Minister had told the commission that he was not aware that his wife, Mela, had leased, and then bought, a posh penthouse for LKR 165 million with money advanced by Arjun Aloysius.



Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake

Karunanayake was Sri Lanka's Finance Minister at the time and the bond market came under his ministry, hence there was a conflict of interest. Karunanayake's said that the deal on the penthouse was struck by his wife Mela through Global Transport and Logistics, the company he had founded.

But he had resigned from the chairmanship of that company after he became Finance Minister in January 2015. SEE P12

Prime Minister vows to eliminate corruption in Govt.

(FT.LK) - Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Sunday said his Government would not tolerate corruption and vowed to remove those involved in corruption if investigations proved them guilty. In a hard-hitting speech in Hatton, the Premier said the United National Party was not a party of "thieves" and if investigations proved that there were thieves in the UNP, they would be removed.



"This Government will not keep anyone who is corrupt. Our party is not a party of thieves. We will remove the thieves if there are any but let us do this transparently," the Premier said. The Prime Minister said that if any matter was left uncovered, those reports would be probed and now anyone could be questioned. He said those who voted for the Government wanted a society free of corruption and if the Government failed to deliver this the public would vote them out the next time and warned the members of the Government against indulging in corrupt practices.

The Prime Minister's comments come amidst the controversy surrounding Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake and the Opposition's call for his resignation.

Speaking further, the Prime Minister Wickremesinghe said his Government was investigating all corruption cases and no one could escape.

He said the Government was investigating all corruption cases during the previous regime and the police had filed cases into some of them. Some have been brought to the attention of the Attorney General.

"We have filed cases over the previous Government's corruption. They are going on. No one can escape," he said. He said when the Central Bank Bond issue allegations were made against the Government, he appointed an internal probe and later it was referred to a parliamentary committee headed by an Opposition member. "Nobody opposed that," he said. The Premier also pointed out that now there is legal freedom to even question a Minister.

"Today there is so much freedom that ministers are brought in for questioning. Was that how it used to be? Before, the Attorney General was the President's disciple. The Attorney General would have been removed or taken by a white van," the Premier said.

The Prime Minister, criticising the mainstream media, said those media outlets pandering to the Rajapaksa regime were now saying that there are thieves in the present Government.

Recalling the killing of journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge and the disappearance of Prageeth Ekneligoda, the Premier said that now when the Government investigates these cases, the media says it is a threat to national security.

SriLankan Airlines and Harry J?

(AsianMirror.LK) - A Japanese consortium in partnership with Sri Lankan business tycoon Harry Jayawardena is likely to buy a 49% stake in SriLankan Airlines, Sri Lanka's cash-strapped national carrier. The Japanese consortium consists of All



Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. (ANA), the largest airline in Japan and Japan Airlines (JAL), the country's second largest.

Informed government sources said the Japanese group partnered with Jayawardena is now the front-runner for the deal.

Their mission is to transform the SriLankan Airlines into a financially viable business entity while the government controls 51% share of the company.

The Japanese group has already held a discussion with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and other key state authorities.

"The discussion was positive. They seem to have a viable plan to resurrect the airline which has been driven to the ground over the past few years," a highly placed government source said, on Monday.

Harry Jayawardena has served as the Chairman of SriLankan Airlines when the national carrier was a profitable entity.

Congratulations to Dinesh Priyantha

(DailyNews.LK) - Para athlete and javelin champ, Dinesh Priyantha has extended his heroic performance from the Rio Paralympics Games to secure Sri Lanka's first silver medal at a World Para Athletic Championship.

Dinesh Priyantha, with 57.93 meters secured Sri Lanka's first ever silver in F-46 Javelin Throw at the World Para Athletics Championships London 2017, beating Guo Chunliang of China, while India's Guarjar Sundar Singh took the Gold medal.

At the 2016 Rio Paralympics, Dinesh Priyantha won Sri Lanka's only medal when he took bronze in in the same discipline with 58.23 meters. Sergeant Dinesh Priyantha Herath is a retired disable soldier from the Gajaba Regiment of the Sri Lanka Army.

The Sri Lankan Contingent to World Para Athletics Championship was powered by Dialog Axiata PLC.



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