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'V2025: A Country Enriched' launched

By Uditha Jayasinghe

(FT.LK) - Presenting a united front, President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe yesterday jointly unveiled the Government's policy framework titled 'V2025: A Country Enriched', which detailed the broad goals that the two parties wished to achieve over the next few years.

The launch, which gave prominence to youth and reconciliation, did not feature speeches by Sirisena or Wickremesinghe but instead had a discussion where the two leaders answered questions from young people including members of the youth parliament who joined them onstage. The choreographed event at the BMICH was also attended by ministers, MPs, top public officials and members of the diplomatic community. "A Consensual Government is a new concept to everyone. It is new not just for the politicians but for the people and even the world. It brings together two deeply antagonistic parties in the hope of developing Sri Lanka. Understandably this cannot be done easily. We have to start thinking communally. We have to think 'this is for our

family, for our children'. Only then will we come together to develop on a common platform shared by all communities," President Sirisena said. The Prime Minister, responding to questions in his turn, emphasised the opportunities available to the youth and called on young people to ask their conscience if the Government was rolling out policies that benefitted them.

"If we are doing something good then you can support that," he said, adding, "we are giving something new to a new generation. We have accepted the challenge and we are now moving forward. When we came to power we had to deal with high levels of debt. When we increased VAT everyone blamed us but because of it we have now managed to make the economy more stable." Both leaders concurred that the Government had created space for open deliberation, discussions and adjustment of ideas. They both stressed that the country has the building blocks to embark on a new chapter of growth and development. Sirisena stressed that the development should be equitable and inclusive, recapping the benefits of new laws such as the Right to Information and the 19th

Amendment.

"Today politicians are scared to do wrong because they know that the law can catch up to them. Anyone living in civilised society should have shame and fear. Only animals live without these. When I say fear it does not mean suppression or fear for their lives but they should fear to do wrong because they



President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe responding to questions from youth representatives during the 'V2025: A Country Enriched' launch - Pic by Lasantha Kumara have to face the repercussions of that law. This is being felt by politicians now," ... SEE P14

SriLankan Airlines cautions public on fake airline survey

SriLankan Airlines issued a notice to the general public over a fake airline survey currently circulating on the internet and social media including messenger apps, mentioning



SriLankan Airlines is offering free tickets. The airline said that it was not a SriLankan Airlines promotion as claimed.

"This is a malicious and false site that is attempting to prey on our valued customers. Please do not access any sites that are not directly linked to SriLankan Airlines webpage. The airline is currently offering a "Partner flies free" promotional offer that can only be accessed via www.srilankan.com", the Airline said.

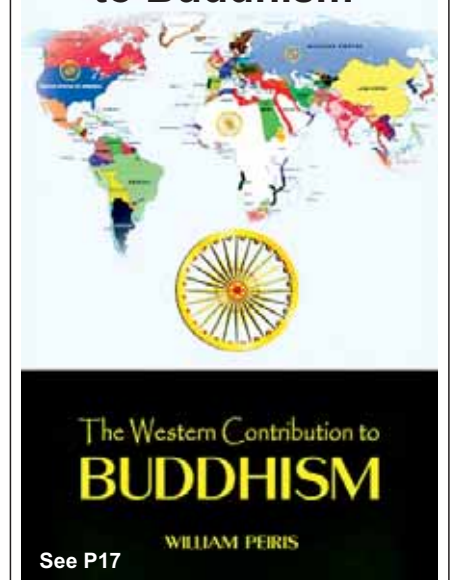
It further said that SriLankan Airlines would not undertake any responsibility with regard to promotional campaigns not carried out directly by the airline. They advise general public to log onto their website for any promotional offers and refrain giving personal information to any other websites mentioning SriLankan Airlines.

Well done Dilshan



Dilshan Weerasinghe with his Bronze Medal at the International Biology Olympiad SEE P16

'Western contribution to Buddhism'



See P17

Provisional support for 20th Amendment

By Chathuri Dissanayake

(FT.LK) - The Government made a crucial breakthrough by winning provisional support from the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) for the 20th

during a meeting which party seniors held with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe based on assurances that several amendments would be introduced to the draft Bill during the committee stage. The provisions that would have enabled

dissolved will be among those to be removed, Daily FT learns. Attorney General Jayantha Jayasuriya also attended yesterday's meeting to discuss the contentious constitutional amendment which has been defeated by two provincial councils, with the Northern and the Eastern provincial councils deferring to vote until 7 September. During the discussions the TNA members had insisted that their support for the 20th Amendment was contingent upon amendments to be adopted during the committee stage. The debate is expected to take place during the third week of September. The Prime Minister held discussions with the Attorney General and several party leaders regarding the amendment on Monday and Tuesday. The current draft of the 20th Amendment has already been defeated by two provincial councils, with the Northern Provincial Council deferring

its vote to 7 September along with the Eastern Provincial Council.

"We have agreed to support the 20th Amendment if certain amendments are made during the committee stage discussions. The Government needs the support of the TNA if they are to pass the proposed amendments. The AG is to inform the Court about the amendments to be incorporated," TNA MP M.A. Sumanthiran, who was present at the meeting, told Daily FT. "We discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and it was evident that the purpose of this amendment has not been communicated to the public correctly. There are a number of changes to be brought to the proposed 20th Amendment as well, and these were discussed at the meeting,"

CONT P14



Minister Faiszer Musthapha Amendment to the Constitution. The TNA pledged conditional support



TNA MP M.A. Sumanthiran Parliament to exercise the powers of the Provincial Councils while they stood

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