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Debate on bond report and PRECIFAC report on February 6

(colombogazette.com) - Parliament will debate the reports of the Presidential Commission which investigated the treasury bond scam and the Commission of Inquiry appointed to investigate into serious acts of fraud and corruption on February 6, the Speaker's office said today. The debate was earlier set to take place on February 20 and 21st. The report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry to investigate and inquire into the Issuance of Treasury Bonds by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka

and the report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry to investigate and inquire into Serious Acts of Fraud, Corruption and Abuse of Power, State Resources and Privileges (PRECIFAC) were handed over to the Secretary General of Parliament on the 17th of January 2018. Speaker Karu Jayasuriya was urged by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and some political parties to hold the Parliament debate before the Local Government elections on February 10. Wickremesinghe had proposed that the

debate be held on February 8. However, at a special party leader's meeting today, the Elections Commission said that holding the debate on February 8 would have a negative impact on the elections. As a result the Speaker decided that the debate will be held on February 6. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says the United National Party (UNP) will continue to work with President Maithripala Sirisena till 2020. Wickremesinghe said that the United National Front decided it will ensure the

unity of the Government is maintained and that it works with President Maithripala Sirisena till 2020. The Prime Minister expressed these views today at a rally staged in Anuradhapura by the UNP for the Local Government elections. Wickremesinghe said that the UNP is the largest political party in Parliament. He said that the UNP and the Government will continue what it started in 2015 following the Presidential elections.

JO/SLPP won't accept LG polls postponement

(Island.lk) -Addressing the media at the Nelum Mawatha office of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prof. Peiris said that the Leader of the House Lakshman Kiriella (UNP) and minister Mahinda Samarasinghe (SLFP) at the January 24 party leaders' meet had strongly opposed the Joint Opposition/SLPP push to have the debate ahead of the Feb 10 poll. Prof. Peiris emphasised that Kiriella and Samarasinghe wouldn't have taken up what he called a consensus position without specific instructions from the PM and the President respectively. Referring to recent statements, including an interview given by Kiriella to Irida Divaina (Jan. 28), Prof. Peiris said the President and PM were still exploring ways and means of putting off scheduled poll. The former law professor pointed out that Kiriella had said the relationship between the President and the PM would improve after the conclusion of

the election. The SLPP chairman said NEC member Prof. Ratnajeewan H. Hoole has asserted the institution in terms of Local Authorities Ordinance-Section 76 could postpone Feb 10 poll in case the debate on bond commission and PRECIFAC reports took place after the conclusion of campaigning. Leader of the JO parliamentary group Dinesh Gunawardena yesterday told The Island that the yahapalana partners and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) jointly opposed proposed debate before the forthcoming election. According to JO MP, Ministers Kiriella, Samarasinghe, Nimal Siripala de Silva, MP Ravi Karunanayake and Opposition Leader R. Sampanthan, MP, opposed an early date for debate. They acted contrary to the public sentiment and allocated Feb 20 and 21 for the debate. Gunawardena pointed out that MP Karunanayake in spite of being named in the

Bond Commission report represented the UNP at the party leaders' meet chaired by Speaker Jayasuriya. Gunawardena said that he was really surprised to learn that a scheduled poll could be put off on the basis of a parliamentary debate. An election could be stayed only by a court of law on a judicial matter, Gunawardena said, urging the government to face the electorate. Both Prof. Peiris and Gunawardena said the Bond Commission recommendations now in the public domain were more than sufficient for the people to identify the culprits. Gunawardena said that thanks to the heavy portage of treasury bond scams since March 2015 those who had been responsible for the first and the second far bigger treasury bond scam were known. The MP said that the UNP and the SLFP certainly owed an explanation to the people as to why they opposed an early debate at January 24

party leaders' meet. Prof. Peiris alleged that President Sirisena had deceived the country when he told media last Friday an unholy alliance in parliament opposed proposed early debate. Now the names of all those members of parliament present on that day were known, the electorate could reach their own conclusion, Prof. Peiris said.



The Earl and Countess of Wessex arrive in Sri Lanka and are welcomed by Sri Lankan State Minister of Foreign Affairs Wasantha Senanayake and Mrs. Senanayake

Royals in Sri Lanka

His Royal Highness The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex, arrived in Sri Lanka today. Their five day visit will focus on the long-standing UK and Sri Lanka relationship, the Commonwealth, education and young people. During the visit Their Royal Highnesses will meet young people overcoming challenges from a variety of communities across Sri Lanka. During their visit to the Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Ratmalana, they will meet able and differently-abled young people following the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme, and witness how the scheme helps the communication impaired integrate into society in meaningful ways. The Royal couple will also meet with young athletes and para-athletes who will represent Sri Lanka at the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia. British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka James Dauris said: "We are delighted to have The Earl and Countess of Wessex in Sri Lanka to celebrate the strong links between our two countries, young people and the Commonwealth. Their visit comes just two months before we host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London and allows us to celebrate our Commonwealth links and the important role young people will play in developing its potential." His Royal Highness The Prince Edward is the youngest child of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. Their Royal Highnesses will represent Her Majesty The Queen at the 70th anniversary celebration of Sri Lanka's independence on Sunday. The Earl and Countess will also travel to Kandy where they will visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

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