



NEWSLANKA



WE CARRY THE BROADEST SELECTION OF SL NEWS FOR THE BROADEST CROSS-SECTION OF SRI LANKANS

Established since **1991**. FREE, WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

THURSDAY – 29 MARCH 2018

T: 020 7978 9030

E: info@newslinka.net

ISSUE 1373

SLFP proposes 'broader national' govt. without Ranil as Premier

By Shamindra Ferdinando

The SLFP on Tuesday proposed a broader coalition sans UNP leader and PM Wickremesinghe to implement President Maithripala Sirisena's 2015 mandate. Addressing a packed SLFP auditorium at T. B. Jayah Mawatha, Social Empowerment, Welfare and Kandyan Heritage Minister S. B. Dissanayake said the no-confidence motion (NCM) moved by the Joint Opposition (JO) against PM Wickremesinghe would give Parliament an opportunity to replace the PM. The NCM handed over to Speaker Karu Jayasuriya on March 23 holds the PM Wickremesinghe responsible for Treasury bond scams in 2015 and 2016. Having complained to the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) against treasury bond scams and then supported investigations undertaken by the Committee on Public Enterprises (CoPE) into the fraud, the SLFP couldn't refrain from voting for the NCM, Dissanayake said. UPFA National List MP and Deputy Speaker

Tilanga Sumathipala endorsed Dissanayake's stand. The absence of SLFP General Secretary Duminda Dissanayake and UPFA General Secretary Mahinda Amaraweera, however, raised many eyebrows. Dissanayake stressed that PM Wickremesinghe's complicity in treasury bond scams couldn't be ignored. The minister also referred to the Presidential Commission of Inquiry report on the treasury bond scams while recollecting Wickremesinghe demanding the appointment of Singaporean Arjuna Mahendran as the Governor of the Central Bank in January 2015. The SLFP Treasurer declared that the NCM was aimed at an individual and certainly not the President and the government. The Island sought an explanation as to the culpability on the part of the top SLFP leadership in the far bigger second treasury bond scam. Dissanayake said that as the main coalition partner, the UNP had enjoyed overriding

power and couldn't be reined in. Dissanayake admitted that the SLFP lacked the strength to take remedial measures. The National List MP said so when The Island pointed out that President Sirisena had saved those responsible for 2015 bond scam by preventing the presentation of the COPE report on the CB heist by dissolving Parliament, then re-appointing Ravi Karunanayake as the finance minister in the run-up to 2016 scam. The Presidential Commission was set up in January 2016. Fielding a query from the electronic media, Dissanayake said that it would be the UNP's prerogative to name Wickremesinghe's successor. Dissanayake and Sumathipala refused to be drawn on the possibility of Law and Order Minister Ranjith Maddumabandara succeeding Wickremesinghe. The SLFP had no recommendation or proposal regarding who should be Wickremesinghe's successor, they said. Dissanayake said that they were hopeful of a consensus on the NCM against Wickremesinghe. They, however, declined to

confirm whether President Maithripala Sirisena had officially endorsed the move against Wickremesinghe. Sirisena's parliamentary group consists of 44 members. Dissanayake said that the SLFP understood that far reaching changes were expected by the people and major political parties. Sumathipala said that the vote on the NCM would take place on April 4 after 9 pm. Asked whether it was likely to be a secret vote, Sumathipala said that had to be decided by Parliament by way of a vote. Dissanayake stressed that the SLFP didn't want to topple the government. Referring to the debilitating setback suffered by coalition partners at the Feb 10 ... **SEE P8**



S.B.

JO alleges MPs offered Rs. 100 mn each to vote against no-faith motion

By Shamindra Ferdinando

Members of parliament have been offered as much as Rs. 100 mn each to oppose the no-confidence motion (NCM) moved against Prime Minister and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe. Joint Opposition (JO) heavyweight MP Dallas Alahapperuma alleges. Matara District MP Alahapperuma said so at a public meeting at Verona, organized by the Sri Lanka Pojjujana Peramuna (SLPP) in Italy over the last weekend. Parliament is scheduled to debate and vote on NCM on April 4. The JO handed over NCM signed by 55 members, including four of President Maithripala Sirisena's group to Speaker Karu Jayasuriya on March 21. Declaring that a section of the UNP MPs would certainly vote for the NCM, Alahapperuma said that those who had realised that they would never be able to contest a general election successfully were likely to accept the bribe. Among those present at the meeting were former UPFA Deputy Minister Rear Admiral Sarath Weerasekera, Convenor

of the Patriotic National Forum Dr Nalaka Godahewa and Chairman of the Global Sri Lanka Forum (GSLF) Wasantha Keerthiratne. The JO Chief Organiser said that whatever the outcome of the NCM, the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe coalition would certainly lose its two-thirds majority in Parliament. The government group consists of 107 (106 UNP + 1 SLMC) and 44 SLFPers. Four SLFPers have signed the NCM. Secretary General of Parliament W. B. D. Dassanayake said that a simple majority out of those present in parliament at the time of the voting was sufficient to adopt a NCM. Dassanayake said so when The Island asked him whether 113 votes were

required to pass NCM against PM Wickremesinghe. Parliament comprises 225 members. The official explained had there been only 20 members at the time the vote was taken, simple majority meant 11. Former State Minister Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha yesterday said that parliament as well as the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) should be seriously concerned about the possibility in an attempt to bribe members of parliament. Prof. Wijesinha said that he had made two complaints to the CIABOC about attempts to bribe members of parliament. The CIABOC had questioned him on both allegations and he had named all those

involved, he added. In response to our query, Prof. Wijesinha has sent us the following statement: "The first was in 2015 when I reported that a top UNPer (name withheld), on Christmas Day 2014, told me and my sister that he had to go to see the leader of a minority party (name withheld) who was demanding money to support Maithripala Sirisena for the presidency. The second was when I reported that Nahil Wijesuriya had told me that, when he supported the UNP in 2001 at a senior UNPer's request, the Rs 60 million he gave, in the form of two cheques into the hands of the top UNPer, was used to bribe MPs to cross over to bring down Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's government. "Bribing MPs is nothing new, the father of a top UNPer (names withheld) would describe how he had bribed MPs in 1964 to bring down Mrs Bandaranaike's government. I do not think this is confined to one side or the other, but given the massive resources the UNP has at its disposal now after the ...**SEE P8**



Dallas

Rajiva

Championing shared links at the UK Foreign Office

Representatives from BRISLA, the British Sri Lankan Association, were invited to an exclusive reception at the United

Kingdom's Foreign Office. The event saw high-profile dignitaries in attendance including Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with a warm discussion on the future of global growth and shared collaboration. The Foreign Secretary commended BRISLA's pioneering efforts to promote social cohesion, trade, healthcare and education between the UK and Sri Lanka in a sustainable manner. Mr Johnson MP also commented on the need to deepen strong links between Commonwealth nations including Sri Lanka to facilitate and foster shared

growth. Chairman of BRISLA, Dr Zimar Sivardeen highlighted, "This reception was a flagship event showcasing shared responsibilities and collaboration in a developing world. Through a special series of events BRISLA will also be celebrating and championing this cause." Dr Sivardeen and members of the BRISLA committee are planning to hold a Commonwealth Luncheon with distinguished guests and will be attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April. This event will facilitate discussions and raise the profile of citizens and shared links between UK, Sri Lanka and globally.

The event also provided an opportunity to engage with countries across the Commonwealth and wider world encompassing Europe, Africa and Asia including the Nigerian Ambassador, New Zealand High Commission and representatives from the Royal Commonwealth Society.



REGGIE FERNANDO - IS NOW IN COLOMBO
Give him a call on 00 94 11 2 645 766

Fly to Colombo for £421
Call 0208 748 3535

LycaFly
CALL US 24x7 on 0207 132 32 32

FAST CASH
MONEY IN MINUTES TO SRI LANKA

Brightsun TRAVEL
24x7: 0203 603 2044

Taprobane Travel
Great offers on flights & hotels. See page 3. 0207 434 3921

NEWSLANKA COLOMBO OFFICE: + 94 77 446 40 90
CALL CHANDIKA NOW We can accept payment in SL rupees & we can help with artwork. Tell your friends.

FREE PERSONAL CLASSIFIEDS
NOW YOU CAN ADVERTISE YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY RENTALS IN UK & SRI LANKA, ECT...
FREE OF CHARGE
AND IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS, IT ONLY COSTS £6 PER WEEK.
FOR FULL DETAILS GO TO PAGE 26 OR WWW.NEWSLANKA.NET